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***Contested Urban Green Space: An Analysis of Right to the City and Affordable Housing Discourses in Cape Town***

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**Abstract:**

With rapid urbanisation, local governments are increasingly put under pressure to manage urban space in a way that benefits all citizens. Urban space often become contested and economic, political, social, and environmental interests shape how these spaces are used and managed. In the context of Cape Town, two mayor interests that determine spatial development are urban greening and affordable housing, these specifically intersect in well-located areas in the city. This study explores the renewal of the Rondebosch golf course, and how discourses of the right to the city, urban green agenda, social justice and economic development influence how actors view and lay claim to this urban space. By performing a critical analysis of discourses that underpin arguments of affordable housing, the making of urban space, and interpretations of environmental sustainability and urban wellbeing held by the various stakeholders in the case. This study finds that there are various representations of these narratives that essentially hinder the use of social housing to transform urban space and address spatial inequality. But that the struggle for the right to the city and spatial justice does reveal the opportunity for the development of alternatives.

Key words: Urban Green Space, Right to the City, Affordable Housing, Critical Discourse Analysis

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I dedicate this thesis to my mom, Louise, who is the one person I know will read this in full, make detailed notes, and have long conversations with me over a topic that has been following me around for a couple of years

## List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
BEPP	Built Environment Performance Plan
BNG	Breaking New Ground
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CoCT	City of Cape Town
DA	Democratic Alliance
DAG	Development Action Group
DHS	Department of Human Settlements
MOSS	Municipal Open Spaces System
MSDF	Municipal Spatial Development Framework
NASHO	National Association of Social Housing Organisations
NIMBY	Not-In-My-Backyard
NPC	National Planning Commission
NU	Ndifuna Ukwazi
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
RGC	Rondebosch Golf Club
RTC	Reclaim the City
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SPCA	Sybrand Park Civic Association
TOD	Transit-Orientated-Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
WCG	Western Cape Government

## 1. Table of Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.1. Research aim and questions</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.2. Structure of thesis</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>2. BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1. Cape Town’s natural environment</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2. Cape Town’s spatial development</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.2.1. Cape Town’s spatial inequality and spatial apartheid.....	11
<b>2.3. Housing in the city</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.3.1. The Housing crisis .....	16
2.3.2. Current social housing in Cape Town.....	16
<b>2.4. The Case of the Rondebosch Golf Course lease renewal</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>3. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>3.1. Critical Realism</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>3.2. Case Study Design</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>3.3. Methods of data collection and Sampling approach</b> .....	<b>22</b>
3.3.1. Semi-structured interviews .....	22
3.3.2. Text Analysis .....	23
<b>3.4. Ethical considerations</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>3.5. Analytical approach: Critical Discourse Analysis</b> .....	<b>25</b>
3.5.1. Fairclough’s dimensions .....	26
<b>3.6. Positionality</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>3.7. Limitations</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>4.1. Urban Political Ecology</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>4.2. Greening the city and green orthodoxy</b> .....	<b>30</b>
4.2.1. Green orthodoxy .....	31
<b>4.3. The Right to the City</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>4.4. Important concepts</b> .....	<b>33</b>
4.4.1. Wellbeing .....	33
4.4.2. Spatial Justice.....	34
<b>5. ANALYSIS OF KEY POLICY FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>5.1. Key housing legislation and policy</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>5.2. Key environmental sustainability policies</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>5.3. Key spatial development frameworks</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>6. COMPETING NARRATIVES OF URBAN GREEN SPACE</b> .....	<b>38</b>

<b>6.1. Spatial inequality and spatial apartheid .....</b>	<b>38</b>
6.2. Interpretations of urban green space .....	42
6.2.1. Environmental implications .....	42
6.2.2. Development constrictions.....	43
6.2.3. Urban greening.....	44
6.2.4. Alternatives .....	46
6.3. Representations of ‘community’ .....	47
<b>7. IMPLICATIONS OF COMPETING NARRATIVES.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>8. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>53</b>

### List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Cape Town’s biophysical assets and destination places

Figure 2: Dot map of ‘social tapestry’

Figure 3: Dot map of average household incomes

Figure 4: Apartheid city planning

Figure 5: Affordable housing programmes

Figure 6: Fairclough’s dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis

Table 1: Semi-structured interviews

Table 2: Documents for analysis

Table 3: Key legislation and policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to current projections, 68% of the global population will be living in urban areas by 2050 it is thus crucial for local governments to ensure that their cities can manage the pressures of urbanisation on the natural environment upon which their cities depend (UNDESA, 2018). Key in this effort are climate change strategies that reduce a city's carbon emissions and planning and policy that promote urban sustainability, climate resilience and liveability (Venter et al. 2020). Urban green spaces play an important role in these strategies because they provide valuable ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration (Pasquini & Enqvist, 2019). Beyond that they also provide spaces for city dwellers to interact with the natural environment, which has various physical and mental health benefits (Anguelovski, Connolly & Brand, 2018; Barton & Pretty, 2010; Roberts 2010). Investment in these spaces is thus a key focus for city development. Urban planners, developers and local governments therefore have to make sure to protect existing urban green spaces and develop new ones that are for the benefit of all. This push for urban greening forms part of the 'green agenda', which focuses on addressing environmental and sustainability concerns through development (Haase et al., 2017). However, rapid urbanisation leads to an increase in the need for housing and other social services land in sprawling cities is thus becoming increasingly valuable and is in some cases contested spaces (Haase et al., 2017; Sheppard, 2006). Contested in the sense that there are various conflicting interests in urban land; housing and commercial development sometimes clash with other interests like environmental protection, cultural heritage and social interests which lead to wider discussions of what urban land should be used for. These are never simple conflicts but often embody complex historical, political, ecological and justice issues.

This study is based in the city of Cape Town, South Africa, which is among the cities in the world with the most green spaces, but is also experiencing an acute housing crisis. In a city with one of the highest levels of inequality in the world, questions of who benefits from urban development and urban green spaces are crucial in understanding the dynamics of these contested spaces. There have been various cases where development interests and socio-environmental interests have clashed (Cilliers, 2019; Ernstson, 2014; Graham & Ernstson, 2012). The case that this study focuses on, that of the Rondebosch golf course, brings to light another dynamic, namely that of the role of government, since the land on which the golf course is built is owned by the municipal government (NU, 2019).

In early 2020, the lease for the Rondebosch Golf Club from the City of Cape Town (written as "the City" in this thesis) came up for renewal. As this is well-located public owned land, local housing activist groups, Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU) and Reclaim the City (RTC), responded, among others, with a call for the land to be repurposed for affordable housing. Affordable housing provided and subsidised by the state is a highly contested subject in Cape Town, with its history of displacement and slow implementation of urban transformation. The municipal

government of Cape Town decided in early 2021 to renew the lease of the golf club but those who opposed this renewal do not plan to give up on their claim and are additionally campaigning for affordable housing developments on other similar sights within the city.

This specific case is of interest because it represents the intersections of narratives of spatial justice and wellbeing within the context of urban green spaces. Spatial justice, which “involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them” (Soja, 2009, p.3), is crucial for urban development in South Africa, where the legacy of apartheid spatial planning is still reverberating in the inequality of urban spaces. Further, wellbeing “is a function of the resources and external factors that affect how that person is able to live (in the broadest sense), the internal choices that a person makes and their effects on that person, how that person perceives their (*sic*) individual needs are being satisfied, and their (*sic*) perceived level of SWB [social wellbeing] or happiness” (Higgs 2006, p. 333). Wellbeing is thus subjective but in an urban setting, can be linked to the physical and psychological health benefits that urban green spaces provide (*ibid*). In a city that is in desperate need of well-located housing for low-income groups, where and how do these narratives of spatial justice and urban wellbeing come into play? And considering the impact that South Africa’s historical racial segregation has on city planning, what is at stake when the green agenda becomes an elite racialised agenda?

### **1.1. Research aim and questions**

This research projects aims to explore the land use management decisions in the making of a city, in terms of who and what gets prioritised. Specifically, I explore these decisions in the context of urban green spaces and affordable housing in Cape Town. The research questions are:

1) What are the dominant land use narratives among stakeholders of the Rondebosch golf course case?

1a) Who do stakeholders argue should benefit from specific land use forms and why?

2) In what ways are these narratives informed by discourses of the right to the city, spatial justice and the green agenda?

3) What are the implications of competing narratives for access to the basic human needs of urban (green) space and housing in Cape Town?

## **1.2. Structure of thesis**

This analysis of the Rondebosch golf course case is used as an entry point into the larger discussions around contested urban green spaces. I start by putting the case into context in chapter 2, introducing the city's natural environment, spatial development, and the current housing crisis. This is followed by an introduction to the case, including key stakeholders and events. In chapter 3, I outline the research methodology that informs this study; critical realism, followed by the outline of the research design; case study and methods; semi-structured interviews and critical discourse analysis of selected texts. In chapter 4, I outline the field of urban political ecology and frame the various theories that this study is based in, Green Orthodoxy and Right to the City and some important concepts. Chapter 5 is an analysis of key legislation and policy related to the case. In chapter 6, I present my analysis of the selected texts, where I draw on interviews and documents. Followed by a discussion on the wider implications of this case in terms of the main theories and the role of social housing and urban green space. I then conclude this study in chapter 7 with a brief discussion of the research questions and relevance of this study for future research.

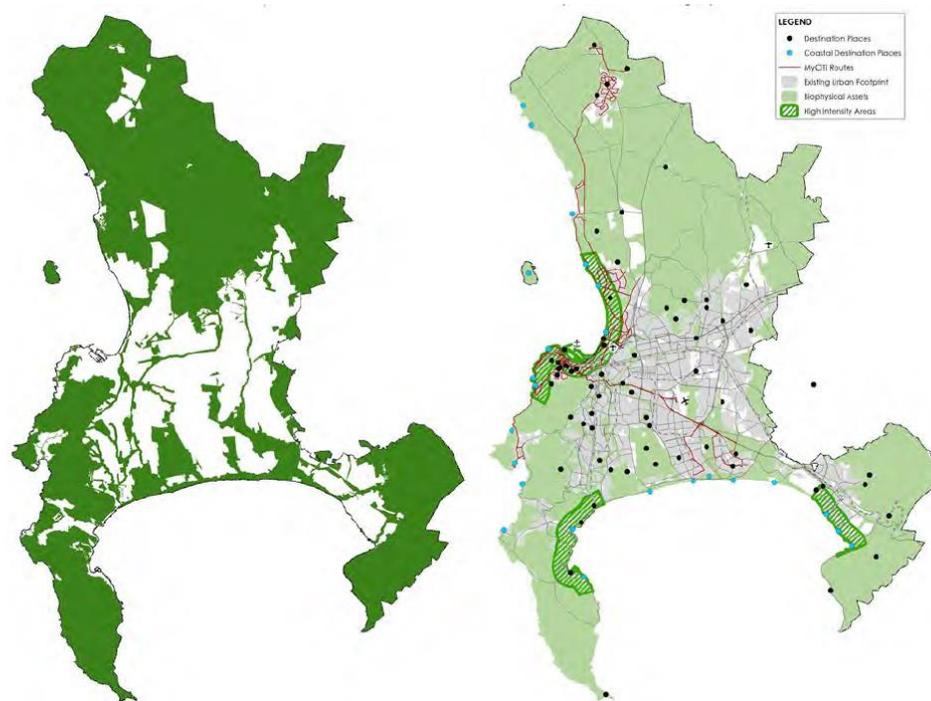
## **2. BACKGROUND**

To understand why the Rondebosch golf course case has been so controversial, it is first important to determine the context in which it took place. In the following section, I introduce the land that it occupies and the broader green urban space network that it forms part of. In Cape Town, both the management of urban (green) space and the housing crisis has its roots in spatial apartheid, which I define and trace the roots of before outlining the housing crisis and state housing mechanisms that attempt to address it. This forms the context for the last section in this chapter, the description of the specific case.

### **2.1. Cape Town's natural environment**

Cape Town municipality has approximately 160sq meters of natural green space (nature reserves, parks and public open space) per person, which is mainly due to the significant land covered by the Table Mountain National Park (CoCT, 2018). The city falls within the Cape Floral Region, the planet's smallest floral kingdom that covers less than 0.5% of the landmass of Africa but is home to nearly 20% of the continent's flora (CoCT, 2018). Biodiversity

protection is thus crucial, not only as environmental policy but also as natural resource for the ecosystem services it provides (CoCT, 2017a).



*Figure 1: Cape Town's biophysical assets and destination places (Source: CoCT, 2019)*

Figure 1 shows Cape Town's biophysical assets, which include conservation areas, natural vegetation, coastal areas and beaches, as well as the city's network of rivers and wetlands, agricultural areas and "other sites and landscapes with scenic, recreational or place-making qualities" (CoCT, 2018, p.18). And, in the second map, Cape Town's destination places, which include both nature-based places like Table Mountain and Cape Point and public spaces like squares, parks and sports facilities. While the first map in Figure 1 indicates the vast ecosystem dependence of the city, the second indicates the biophysical assets that are important to the City; specific biodiversity conservation areas, tourism attraction, public recreation areas and assets that provide economically viable ecosystem services.. With a population of nearly 4,7 million in 2021 and an estimated increase to 5,5 million in 2030, the built environment will be increasing exponentially thus posing an ever-increasing threat to the biophysical environment (WCG, 2019). As Betancourt (2016, p.262) observes:

In Cape Town, while the abundant natural beauty still offers a broad array of open public space options, political and economic forces are pushing to convert natural public spaces (like Piness Vlei wetland) into privatized commercial hubs.

The protection of urban green spaces and the use of these in spatial planning is included in the following discussion on the city's spatial development.

## **2.2. Cape Town's spatial development**

Cape Town is South Africa's oldest and second largest city, it is also considered its most segregated (Turok, Visagie & Scheba, 2021). Its spatial development is characterised by highly unequal, racially segregated neighbourhoods, that range from the poorest informal settlements which mainly consist of shacks to affluent neighbourhoods with wealthy housing estates and some of the most expensive real-estate in the country (Miller, 2018). Johnny Miller's (2018) *Unequal Scenes* project shows ariel images of these stark inequalities in terms of spatial development. Moreover, Stewart (in Hoek, 2021) argues that spatial inequality is not just about where and how one lives but about how one moves, as travel distances and forms of commuting is disproportionately more expensive, less accessible and less safe for lower income communities. Tracing spatial inequality thus means historicising the city's housing, transport and neighbourhood developments in an attempt to understanding the roots of this structural problem. But first a note on the difference between spatial inequality and spatial apartheid.

Spatial inequality is defined as: "inequality in economic and social indicators of wellbeing across geographical units within a country" and is particularly visible in who has ownership of and access to land and urban space (Reclaim the City, 2017a). As well as the way that land ownership and access has been used as a form of political and economic control. Tracing the roots of spatial inequality thus goes beyond only looking at historic land use and occupation but also the socio-economic and political consequences of land appropriation and access control. Especially how land appropriation was used as a form of colonial violence and control. Spatial apartheid, in my understanding, is not just used to describe spatial inequality in the South African context or the effects of apartheid spatial planning. But is a political project with the intentional creation of spatial inequality through land use management and planning (Miller, 2018). Spatial inequality is thus less politicised than spatial apartheid. I thus make use of spatial inequality in more general discussions on the urban spatial landscape and spatial apartheid when wanting to emphasize the socio-political implications.

### 2.2.1. Cape Town's spatial inequality and spatial apartheid

Figures 2 & 3 show two dot maps of Cape Town, figure 2, of the 'social tapestry' of the city, based on census data of the racial composition of the city and figure 3, shows the average household incomes for the same time. From these two figures it is evident that the areas with higher monthly incomes are in predominantly white neighbourhoods and those with low monthly incomes are in the predominantly black and coloured neighbourhoods. Although this is not the only way to measure spatial inequality, it already gives a clear image of the city's socio-economic and racial landscape. In this section, I trace how this reality has come about.

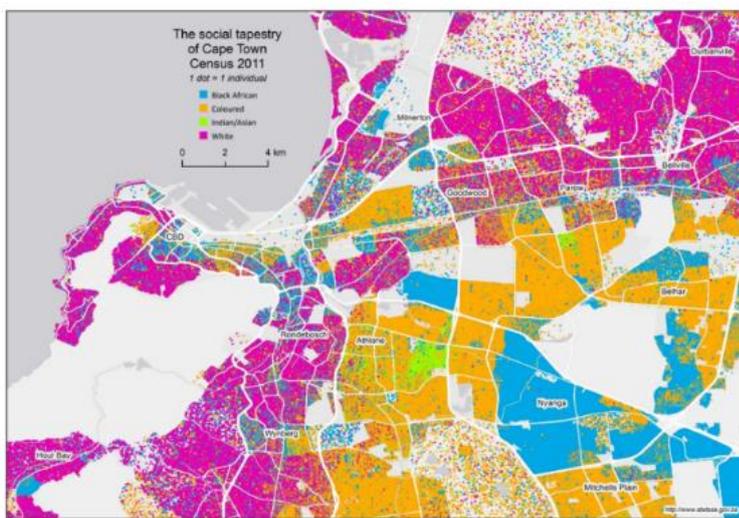


Figure 2: Dot map of Cape Town's racial distribution (Source: Frith, 2021)

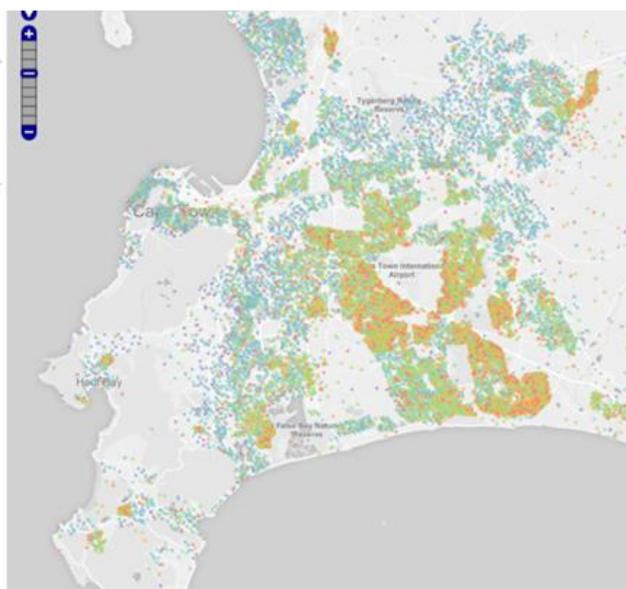


Figure 3: Dot map of Cape Town's average household income (Source: Frith, 2021)

The almost three centuries of colonial rule in Cape Town started with the establishment of a European settlement around the Castle of Good Hope and the dispossession of Khoikhoi land. Spatial control was enforced by the Dutch colonialists and later the British through force, urban planning and land-use management (Strauss, 2019). By the time the Union of South Africa was established in 1910, there were already segregated areas in the flourishing trade city.

In the 1950s, Apartheid spatial development policies and laws created racially segregated neighbourhoods in urban areas, the Rondebosch golf course, for example, falls in an area that was designated a white area, this led to the forced removal of coloured and black people who were living along the Black River during that time (Duphelia-Mesthrie, 1995). The Urban Areas Act resulted in the forced removal and relocation of an estimated 3.5 million people, between 1960-1983, most who were relocated to the urban periphery (Duphelia-Mesthrie, 1995). Figure 4 shows an example of how the apartheid city was laid out and specifically how buffer zones were created between residential areas using open land like golf courses. This and other apartheid policies lead to highly unequal neighbourhood development and with increased white car ownership from the late 1950s onwards, suburbs were developed, creating sprawling cities that were highway dependent (Harrison & Todes, 2014). In the late apartheid era, patterns began to change, as influx control was starting to disappear and informality increased, businesses moved away from central business districts (CBDs) and cities spread out more.

### **2.3. Housing in the city**

The focus of post-apartheid spatial planning was therefore to address the segregation and unequal spatial development patterns of apartheid, new visions of ‘compact-integrated’ cities were created that were characterised by higher density, mixed-use development and transit-orientated development (Harrison and Todes, 2014). This period was also defined by land reform and restitution policies and large-scale public housing development. In the early 1990’s, an estimated 1.5 million housing units were needed to house the population of whom large groups were housed in “substandard dwellings in overcrowded townships” (Scheba, Turok & Visagie, 2020, p.18). Housing was thus a priority for the newly elected African National Congress (ANC) government “which recognised its significant role in transforming a deeply divided society” (Jones & Datta 2000:18) and the right to adequate housing was enshrined in the Constitution. Government also placed specific focus on the redevelopment of

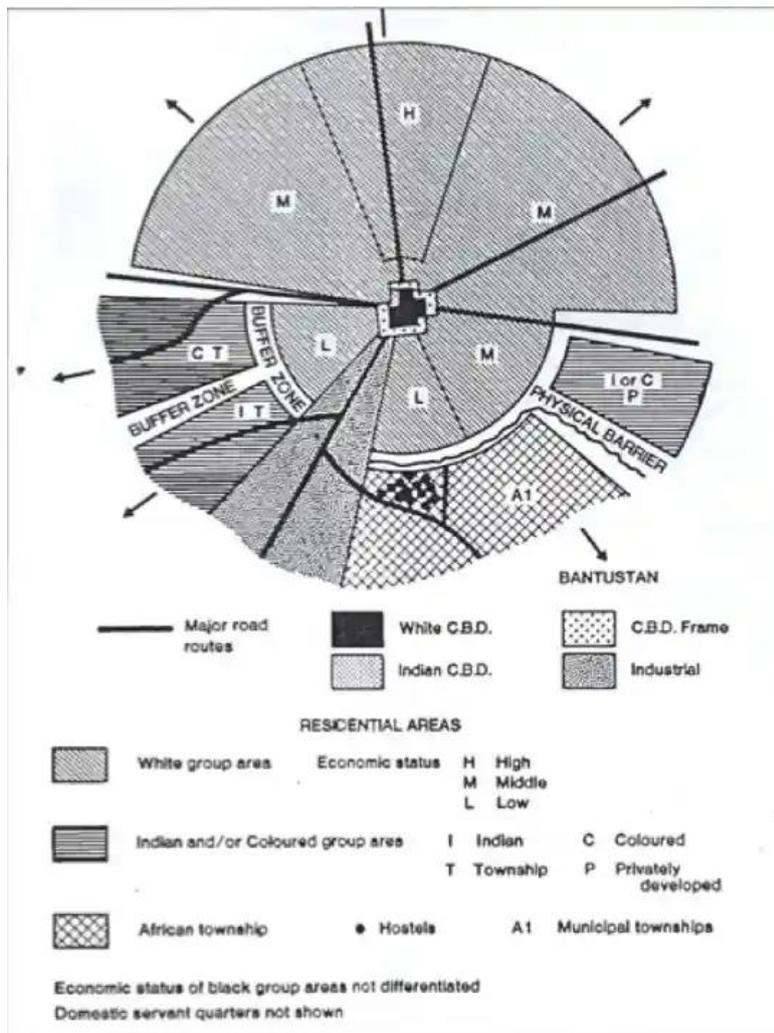


Figure 4: The layout of the apartheid city (Source: Kay, 2007)

townships to improve services, urban amenities and promote economic development and on informal settlement upgrading and service provision. To address the housing crisis, national government established the **Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)**, which aimed to deliver 1 million subsidised houses in five years (DHS, 1994). Although the programme argued that housing is more than a shelter, that it needs to form part of socially and economically integrated communities, the RDP failed to overcome the spatial inequality established by apartheid spatial planning (Tissington, 2010; Scheba, Turok & Visagie, 2020). Due to existing housing markets forces, land availability and the focus on quantity or quality, most of the 1.5 million housing units were built on the urban periphery, only exasperating spatial inequality (Tissington, 2010; Scheba, Turok & Visagie, 2020).

After a decade of housing delivery, and in response to the failures of RDP, national government developed a new housing framework in 2004; **Breaking New Ground (BNG)**,

which hosts a broader range of housing delivery mechanisms, not just RDP, to address the various housing needs of different socio-economic groups, one of these mechanisms is the national social housing programme (Tissington, 2010). BNG also makes an important shift from providing 'housing' to establishing 'sustainable human settlements' thus focussing on spatial transformation, more integrated planning and neighbourhood development. Housing is approached as a key point in achieving a wider set of socio-economic rights (Tissington, 2010). However, BNG still lacks clear strategies to make the intended policy shift and thus have not brought about the intended change and the broader outcomes of the policy are not achieved due to the focus on largely quantitative outcome namely numbers of houses produced, and budgets spent (Charlton & Kihato 2006; Tissington, 2010; Scheba, Turok & Visagie 2020). Figure 5 outlines the various affordable housing mechanisms that form part of the Department of Human Settlements' mandate, as outlined by Weber (2018). Indicating how different housing mechanisms are used based on income groups and how various forms of rental and ownership structures are employed to address the various housing needs.

Following BNG, the **Social Housing Act** (Act 16 of 2008) and **Social Housing Policy** (2009) was accepted, defining Social Housing as: "a rental or co-operative housing option for low-income persons at a level of scale and built form which requires institutionalised management and which is provided by accredited social housing institutions or in accredited social housing projects in designated restructuring zones" (RSA, 2005, p. 8). Tissington (2010, p. 33), argues that although the policy presented a shift away from "thinking about housing in relation to individuals and individual housing units, to thinking in terms of projects", the policy relies on social housing "as a panacea for urban regeneration and low-income inner city housing" and that the location of social housing "fail to match the income affordability levels of the majority of individuals and households in inner city areas" (Tissington, 2010, p.?). Therefore, although the policy argues that social housing should be built on well-located land and be supported by an investment in social infrastructure, this is not always what happens in practice (Tissington, 2010). A crucial element of the success of the social housing policy, is the role of the which plays an important role in facilitating spatial integration by releasing state-owned land for development, allocating funds and implementing the social housing policy

Despite these housing programmes and spatial development strategies, South African cities still have problems of low density, insufficient public transport and housing development

along the urban periphery that have inadequate access to economic opportunities (Scheba, Turok & Visagie, 2020). State-led housing programmes have exacerbated these problems and together with the thus difficulty of high-density affordable housing in good locations (Tissington, 2010). Private development patterns also have a role to play, especially in Cape Town, as it not only reinforces fragmentation and exclusion by following a predominantly low density, suburban, car-dominated trajectory, but is also highly influenced by market forces and international investments (Turok & Watson, 2001).

Housing type	Definition	Eligible market
<b>Affordable housing</b>	"Housing that comprises units valued under R500 000, including housing in former African, coloured or Indian townships, government-subsidised housing and new housing developed by the private sector" (Tissington, 2011: 40).	Not regulated because it is not an official housing category, but usually includes <b>households earning less than R15 000 per month (pm)</b> .
<b>BNG/ Free basic housing</b>	Units in a national housing project, built according to the Breaking New Ground ( <b>BNG</b> ) policy. The beneficiary receives ownership of a free house in a national housing project.	<b>Households earning less than R3500 pm.</b>
<b>Community Residential Units</b>	Government-owned rental stock, usually consisting of redeveloped hostels or abandoned buildings.	<b>Households earning R800 - R3500 pm.</b>
<b>Gap housing</b>	Housing that caters to households earning more than would qualify them for a government subsidy, but less than would enable them to get a home loan from a bank. Government housing programmes that cater to this market are <b>Social Housing, Inclusionary housing, and Finance-Linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP)</b> .	The official definition of the 'gap housing market' is <b>households who earn R3 500 - R7 000 pm</b> , but due to banks' reluctance to provide home loans to low-income earners, in reality the gap market is <b>households earning R3500 - R15 000 pm</b> .
<b>Social housing</b>	Rental housing for low-income groups that is managed by a Social Housing Institution and regulated by the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA).	<b>Households earning R1500 - R15 000pm.</b>
<b>Inclusionary housing</b>	Housing provided through public-private partnership for low-income and lower-middle income households in areas they might otherwise be excluded from due to market forces.	Not specified, but the low- to lower-middle income bracket comprises <b>households earning from R1500 to about R15 000pm.</b>

Figure 5: South Africa's affordable housing programmes (Source: Weber, 2018))

### 2.3.1. The Housing crisis

The unequal development of housing during apartheid, the continuing social and spatial inequalities and the failure of government to provide adequate affordable housing has led to the current housing crisis (Tissington, 2010). One in five people live in informal housing, which in most cases means a backyard shack, often a one room house made from corrugated iron with none or limited access to water and electricity (UNHRC, 2016). The City (WCG, 2019) estimates that over 500 000 households will need additional housing by 2028, which neither the private or public sector can provide by following its current development trend. Taking into consideration the levels of poverty, which has been exacerbated by the global pandemic, the only way to address this housing crisis is through the state's affordable housing programmes, specifically that of social housing (Turok, Visagie & Scheba, 2021).

### 2.3.2. Current social housing in Cape Town

In March 2019, the Western Cape government committed to build an additional 91 000 new housing units within the Cape Town metropolitan area, consisting of BNG, GAP and Social Housing mechanisms (WCG, 2019). The city at that time had a backlog of approximately 360 000 – 400 000 units, which refers to the number of registered housing applications, thus not including those who have not registered for state funded housing (WCG, 2019). Most notably for this study is the 10 000 units that has been designated for the inner city which is an indication of a move within the Human Settlements department to focus more on well-located land in the city and implementing social housing policy (WCG, 2019). Considering the need for land for housing development in a city with high urban sprawl and low density there are a lot of opportunities for infill projects as well (CoCT, 2021). However, most of the affordable housing developments in the city are large scale projects in peripheral and semi-peripheral areas (Scheba, Turok & Visagie, 2020). The problem is not just that well-located land is expensive and that the Cape Town property development market is highly competitive, but that there are many pieces of state-owned land that are contested (NU, 2019). The land that the Rondebosch golf course covers is an example of this.

## 2.4. The Case of the Rondebosch Golf Course lease renewal

This study focuses on the events surrounding the renewal of the Rondebosch Golf Club lease, taking the City's lease renewal announcement (Cape Argus, 2020) as starting point, I explore

the responses to this announcement and the ensuing public discussion and engagement between actors. The main timeframe of analysis is between this announcement and the City's later announcement to renew the lease and covers the public participation process that the City established during this time and the wider public discourse, including the City's engagement with stakeholders and the public as well as the public engagement of NGO's and social organisations and neighbourhood organisations. First, a brief description of the main actors in this case, namely Ndifuna Ukwazi, Reclaim the City, the City of Cape Town and Sybrand Park Civic Association. Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU) is a legal NGO that does activist research, campaigns and litigation in land justice cases, they specifically support social movements and working-class people by providing legal support and research (NU, 2020). One of their most significant cases is the attempted sale of the Tafelberg site by the City, which NU argued should be used for social housing (NU, 2020). It is also through this case that the members of Reclaim the City (RTC) came together and formed this social movement which advocates for affordable public housing and opposes evictions and displacements of tenants and working-class people in the inner city (RTC, 2020). RTC has various social campaigns, protests and actions and several building occupations in the inner city. The City, in this case, refers to the municipal government of Cape Town, which is run by the Democratic Alliance (DA), the main political opposition party to the ruling African National Congress (ANC). Cape Town is the DA's main base of operations, and their 'flagship' municipality, national politics thus also play out on the municipal scale. Sybrand Park Civic Association (SPCA) is an organisation made up of residents from the Sybrand Park neighbourhood that is adjacent to the Rondebosch golf course. Its goal is to promote "active citizenship, which advocates that all our residents have roles and responsibilities to society and the environment" (SPCA, 2016). Although these are not the only actors in this case, these are the ones that I will focus my analysis on since they were the most active in the public participation process.

On 7 February 2020, the City advertised in the Cape Argus (2020) newspaper the proposed renewal of the lease of the 45,99 hectares of public land in question to the Rondebosch Golf Club (RGC). The land had been leased to the Club for over 83 years and the proposal was to renew the lease for ten years, with a two-year notice period. Since this land is public owned land the proposed renewal of the lease had to be advertised and opened for any comments or objections from the public (NU, 2020). The property is zoned for Community Facility Use and Public Open Space and is one of the ten out of the 24 golf courses and driving ranges in

Cape Town that is on public land (SERI, 2020). At that time the Rondebosch Golf Club was paying a rental fee of R1058 (approx. 63 EUR) per year, and since there had already been discussions on the use of public land being leased to golf courses within the context of the existing housing crisis (NU, 2019; CoCT 2020a; DAG 2020) there was active public engagement on the topic (CoCT, 2020).

In the discussion leading up to this event, NU (2019) had released a City Leases report that questions the lease of parcels of state-owned land for the use of golf courses, bowling greens and parking lots and laid out how the City could use these for affordable housing instead. There had been discussions on the use of golf courses and intensifying development on public land before, where the then deputy mayor, Nielson, had stated that there is a possibility that Cape Town has too many golf courses and that the City's land use management needs to be reviewed (CoCT, 2016). And in 2012, Development Action Group (DAG), along with others, had identified the, then named, Mowbray Golf Course as a potential land parcel to be used as key in Cape Town's spatial transformation (DAG, 2020). The response to the renewal of the Rondebosch Golf Club's lease was thus not a novel one, it had been part of the conversation on spatial transformation in the city for years.

The City (CoCT, 2020b) thus opened up the renewal of the lease for a public participation process between 7 February and 9 March 2020, during which it received a total of 1827 objections and 113 comments (in support of the renewal). The objections included a formal submission, online submissions and a petition submitted by NU with 1682 objections, a petition signed by 100 members of ANC Ward 39 and 45 online petitions from the general public. Arguments include the opportunity to address apartheid spatial planning, providing housing for those who are suffering and homeless, reviewing the City's land use strategies for public land and addressing spatial inequality through "people first" planning (CoCT, 2020b, p.79). Arguments are also made that it is not justifiable as a public green space, that it has ecological value, but this needs to be combined with affordable housing for a mixed-use space. Whereas the comments in support consisted of 95 from the Sybrand Park Civic Association, one from the Pinelands Ratepayers & Residents Association and 17 online submissions from the general public. The arguments for the renewal include its asset to the community as public space, the role it plays in mitigating flooding, the biodiversity of the site, the role it plays as landmark and the role it plays as a "green lung" (CoCT, 2020, p.81). These comments will be discussed more in-depth in the analysis (chapter 6), but it is

important to note that the arguments that are made by the public are not that much different from those made by the main actors in this case. I will however supplement the arguments made by NU, RTC and SPCA with more specific ones from the public comments.

During this period of public participation, RTC and its members staged a ‘symbolic occupation’ on the Rondebosch golf course on the 29th of February 2020, a protest criticising the City’s “failure to redistribute public land for affordable housing or for social housing” (Hendricks, 2021). The protest put the issue in the public eye and was covered widely in the media. During the time leading up to the City’s decision on whether to renew the lease there was an internal consultation with different municipal departments, where specifically the Human Settlements Department commented that there was no conflict with ongoing projects at that time and most of the other departments commented that renewing the lease is in line with the City’s spatial development framework (CoCT, 2020). Representatives from the City and the various civic organisations also used this time to gather public support for their respective arguments through the media (CoCT, 2020; Vos, 2020; Booij, 2020; RTC, 2020; Hendricks, 2020). These will be analysed in the next section but what is important to mention at this time is that the City already had an existing relationship with NU and RTC due to clashes over building occupations and both organisations calling the City out over its failure to release land and this strained relationship influenced the way that these groups represented and engaged with each other (Clark, 2021; Hendricks, 2021).

On 20 October 2020, the City conditionally approved the renewal of the lease for ten years, including a two-year cancellation clause which would allow the lease to be reviewed after two years. The reasons cited include economic and community benefits and environmental constraints (CoCT, 2020c). The press release also mentions that although the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) has declared that this site is not viable for housing, that the City’s Draft Human Settlements Strategy, which at that point was still open for public comments, would look at alternatives for the City’s management of public land, especially golf courses and potential infill housing opportunities (CoCT, 2020c). NU & RTC (2020) argued that even though the lease amount was increased to R10 000 (approx. 590 EUR) a year, this only “masks the City’s failure to redistribute public land”, thus seeing the renewal as “a missed opportunity to leverage well-located public land to directly address entrenched spatial inequality and contribute to the reimagining of a more just and equal city” (NU & RTC, 2020, n.p).

### **3. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

In this thesis I use the renewal of the Rondebosch Golf Course lease as case study to explore the wider themes of social housing development and urban green spaces and how these are prioritised in urban land management. This informed my choice of methods, as Yin (2002) argues that case study design is more than just a way of doing background research, it informs the choice of methods. I thus chose to do semi-structured interviews with relevant actors to get a better understanding of the case, followed by a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of key texts that included sections of the interviews and official submissions, reports and press statements among others. My choice to combine CDA with case study design was informed by the aim of this study, which has not been to decide who is wrong and who is right i.e., whether the site should be used for social housing or kept as a golf course but to explore what the dominant narratives are in the case and what these reveals of the larger developments and debates around land use management in Cape Town. Taking this, as well as my personal ontological approach to research into account, I thus approach this case from a critical realist perspective. In the following section I first outline critical realism as methodical approach and case study as design, followed by the research design and methods of data collection used in this study, including short descriptions of the specific data that was used. I then outline CDA as an analytical approach and discuss my positionally as researcher and the limitations of the study.

#### **3.1. Critical Realism**

In my approach to this case, I attempt to untangle some of the complex socio-ecological and socio-political dynamics to explore what this case reveals of wider affordable housing, urban green space and land use management discourses. In order to guide this, I employ a critical realist approach specifically because it guides me to acknowledge that cause and effect relationships in the case can be misleading, as these are represented by different interpretations by actors in the case. Critical realism is based on the belief that the world around us is socially constructed, but that there is a reality that exists “independently of our knowledge of it” and that “the reality out there is more than our experiences, sense-data or experiments tells us it is” (Muller, 2015, p.5). Therefore, the way that we (as scientific researchers and as humans) conceptualise reality is simply a way of knowing that reality,

there is however a distinction between that reality and the way that we interpret and describe it. There are thus phenomena that are not directly observable, which critical realists are comfortable with using theoretical terms to describe these phenomena. Using a critical realist approach means continuously asking what the past or ongoing events are that influence discourses and arguments made by actors and acknowledging that as a researcher I can never fully represent the case but only present my interpretation of it.

### **3.2. Case Study Design**

Case study design is an in-depth study of one (or more) cases with the aim of a detailed and intensive analysis of “a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context” (Yin, 2002, p.13). The ‘case’ is traditionally limited to a location, such as a community or organisation and since the boundaries of a specific case are not always clear, it is important to study the context and the dynamics that arose from the case being situated in a specific setting (Bryman et al, 2011). Stake (1995 in Bryman & Bell et al., 2011) describe three types of case studies; intrinsic cases; which focuses on the insights from a single specific situation, instrumental case studies; in which the case is used to form a better understating of a broader issue and multiple or collective cases; in which various cases are compared to understand a phenomenon. Stake (1995) does note that the differences between these are often blurred. In this thesis I will employ an instrumental case study, since I am interested in what this specific case reveals of the broader discussions on social housing and urban green spaces, however I do include another case in my discussion to compare how the City has approached similar cases in a different way.

One critique that is often given of case study design is whether it has external validity or generalisability, but case study researchers do not see a case study as a ‘sample of one’ and that one case cannot be used to represent the whole of a social phenomenon but that it can be used to analyse that social phenomenon in a real-life context (Bryman, 2012). Yin (2002) sees the goal as to expand and generalise theories, thus an analytic generalisation instead of a statistical one. Another challenge is that the analysis is dependent on the researcher’s perception of the case, and thus the reliability and validity of case study design is questioned (Bryman & Bell et al., 2014). In this aspect researchers need to depend on multiple sources of evidence and research strategies, to use theoretical propositions to guide data collection and

analysis and to be systematic about it (Yin, 2002). How I approach this is outlined in various parts of this chapter.

### **3.3. Methods of data collection and Sampling approach**

The starting point for data collection in this study was the summary of the public participation process that the City held between 7 February and 9 March 2020 and includes the comments and objections from organisations and individuals (CoCT, 2020b). By using this document, I was able to identify key actors and an overview of the main arguments that were made for and against the renewal of the lease. I then used two methods of data collection; semi-structured interviews with actors and a collection of relevant documents related to the case. This section outlines the sampling approach; how and why the data was collected, the method of semi-structured interviews and a brief description of the data that was collected. The analysis of the data through critical discourse analysis will be discussed in the next section.

#### **3.3.1. Semi-structured interviews**

In semi-structured interviews, the researcher uses an interview guide, but the interviewee is given the space to respond in any way they wish (Bryman et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews are useful in case study research because, informed by the research questions, I could create a space for discussion that allowed interviewees to fully represent their narratives. For the interviews, I focussed on representatives from the various organisations who are involved and who have been the spokespersons in terms of the specific case. Table 1 outlines these interviews. The aim was to provide more extensive details for the case study and form the basis for and feedback into the discourse analysis. In other words, the interviews will both semi-guide the discourse analysis of the documents and media and at the same time be treated as a resource in the discourse analysis. There are two significant actors who I did not manage to secure interviews with, the City of Cape Town and Rondebosch Golf Club, I address this in the limitations.

Table 1: Semi-structured interviews

<b>Semi-structured interviews</b>		
<b>Civic and social organisations</b>		
<b>Representative</b>	Organisation	Role
<b>Michael Clark</b>	Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU)	Researcher, Spokesperson for RGC case
<b>Karen Hendricks</b>	Reclaim the City (RTC)	Woodstock chapter leader, occupier at Cissie Gool House Spokesperson for RGC case
<b>Querida Saal</b>	Development Action Group (DAG)	Researcher, focus on human rights, urban development and land reform
<b>Malcolm McCarthy</b>	National Association of Social Housing Organisations (NASHO)	Recently retired (after RGC case) as general manager of NASHO, so did not speak as representative but as expert with direct knowledge of case
<b>Richard Hill</b>	Sybrand Park Civic Association (SPCA)	Chairperson of SPCA Wrote report submitted in public participation process
<b>Expert interviews</b>		
<b>Name</b>	Organisation	Research field
<b>Nobukhosi Ngwenya</b>	University of Cape Town	Community-based planning and development of human settlements, namely informal land occupations.
<b>Mercy Brown-Luthango</b>	University of Cape Town	Creation of sustainable human settlements, the management of urban land and the operation of the urban land market.

### 3.3.2. Document Analysis

The documents that were chosen for analysis were done based on the actors that I identified from the City’s public participation process. I looked specifically at submissions for and against the renewal of the lease by the different organisations and the deputy mayor’s recommendations to the City on the lease renewal. From there I included any reports that these submissions were based on and press releases, opinion pieces in online publications and radio interviews from the different actors throughout the case. I then supplemented these with data collected from the interviews. Collecting data from the RGC proved to be just as difficult as with the interview process, however the club did not participate in the public participation process nor were there any press releases or radio interviews easily available. It is possible that this is a strategic decision from the club’s side not to get involved in the public discourse. However, without any data from the club I do not want to speculate as per their position. Table 3 outlines the texts that were used for analysis and a brief description of each.

Table 2: Documents for analysis

Documents for analysis		
Title	Date	Description
<b>Ndifuna Ukwazi</b>		
<i>City Leases: Cape Town's failure to redistribute land</i>	March 2019	Report on the City's failure to release public land for affordable housing development
<i>Cape Town's course of injustice: Subsidising the rich to exclude the poor</i>	28 January 2020	Op-ed by Michael Clark (NU researcher) in the Daily Maverick
<i>Ndifuna Ukwazi submission</i>	9 March 2020	Comment on the renewal of the lease, submitted for public participation process
<i>Rondebosch Lease Renewal: A Missed Opportunity To Redress Spatial Apartheid</i>	30 October 2020	Joint press statement by RTC and NU after the lease renewal announcement
<i>Justice too long delayed is justice denied</i>	8 February 2021	Press statement in response to Mayor Dan Plato and Mayoral Committee Member for Human Settlements, Malusi Boo's public comments
<b>Reclaim the City</b>		
<i>Golf course land to be used for housing</i>	4 March 2020	Radio interview with Karen Hendricks (RTC chapter manager) on SAfmSunrise about protest on RGC
<i>City of Cape Town's Draft Table Bay District Plan</i>	13 June 2021	Response to the City's Table Bay District Plan, Karen Hendricks on behalf of RTC
<i>Harbor Arch Development Plan</i>	October 2019	Response to Harbour Arch Development, Karen Hendricks (recording) on behalf of RTC
<i>Living Heritage</i>	24 September 2020	Video short for Human Rights Day 2019, with various members of RTC
<b>City of Cape Town</b>		
<i>Rondebosch Golf Club's lease renewal</i>	21 October 2020	Press release on the renewal of the lease
<i>Are golf courses suitable for development?</i>	16 January 2020	Press release
<i>Recommendation From The Executive Mayor</i>	20 October 2020	Recommendations from executive Mayor on lease renewal, including internal departments report and public participation comments
<i>City Adamant That Rondebosch Golf Course Not Suitable For Housing</i>	August 2020	Radio interview with James Vos, Mayco member for Economic Opportunities and Asset management on Radio 786
<i>Rondebosch Golf Club not suitable for housing, says City of Cape Town</i>	22 January 2020	Radio interview with James Vos, on CapeTalk
<b>Development Action Group</b>		
<i>Development Action Group submission</i>	9 March 2020	Comment on the renewal of the lease, submitted for public participation process
<b>Sybrand Park Civic Organisation</b>		
<i>Rondebosch Golf Club Lease Renewal: City of Cape Town Policies that endorse renewal</i>	31 May 2017 (Updated March 2020)	Report prepared by Richard Hill based on CoCT policy, used by SPCA as submission for public participation on lease renewal
<b>Various</b>		
<i>Capetonians fight for land</i>	22 March 2019	Interview on eNCA with Tim Modise  With CoCT MayCo member for Human Settlements, Malusi Boo, and NU researcher Nick Budlender

### **3.4. Ethical considerations**

To make sure that my research conforms to the principal of informed consent (Bryman et al., 2011), I made sure to inform everyone that I interviewed what the research is about, what the purpose of the research is and what the nature of their involvement would be. I sent out a brief synopsis of this together with the interview request and discussed this and my approach to the case as a Human Ecologist at the start of each interview. I received consent from all of the interviewees to record interviews for use of this research and to use their names and made sure to clarify whether they are speaking to me as a representative of an organisation or as an individual representing their personal opinions. This was particularly significant in the interview with Richard Hill, who is a representative from the SPCA, an inhabitant of the neighbourhood and an environmental assessor and wrote the report that the organisation submitted in support of the renewal of the lease. I navigated this by treating his interview as supporting text to the report and clarifying throughout the interview from which perspective he is talking.

One potential ethical issue considered during the analysis was representation. My aim was to make sure to not represent the actors in this case as ‘heroes’ or ‘villains’ but rather to analyse how they represent themselves and other actors (Fairclough, 2001). Since most of the text that I analysed were publicly available the approach of using actors’ own representations brought in a more nuanced understanding of the case. Another potential ethical issue is my own interest in the case, since I have, as a resident in Cape Town, taken part in public participation events and supported claims for social housing by RTC, I had to make sure to not allow my bias to dictate the interviews. I did this by making sure not to ask leading questions in interviews and acknowledging my bias in cases where it was relevant.

### **3.5. Analytical approach: Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a form of language analysis that views discourse as a form of social practice through which meaning is created (Janks, 1997; Jorgenson & Phillips 2002). Discourse is defined as; “an interrelated set of texts” (Phillips & Hardy 2002, p.3) and seen as a social and practical construct that we use to create different perceptions of reality, these representations in turn contribute to constructing reality (Jorgen & Phillips 2002). CDA studies do not only focus on the discourses that are created but also the socio-political contexts in which social practices take place. A CDA study thus explores the relationship

between discourse and reality in an attempt to reveal which forms of power, injustices, inequalities and ideologies are produced and reproduced in society through specific discursive events (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). Jorgenson and Phillips (2002) argue that “the purpose of CDA is not to decide what is true or false in a discourse because ‘true’ reality can never be revealed outside the discourse”, some interpretations of CDA are thus based in Critical Realism.

CDA has been criticised as being too broad, and especially in Fairclough’s discussion, challenging to understand and use. However, it is beneficial to explore and map out different representations of a discursive event. In my own experience, it was only after reading discussions on how CDA can be applied (Janks, 1997; Phillips & Hardy, 2011; Jorgenson & Phillips, 2012) that I could consolidate my own readings of Fairclough’s work with the task of analysing the available data. Below I lay out how I decided to employ CDA and Fairclough’s dimensions.

### 3.5.1. Fairclough’s dimensions

Fairclough (2001) outlines the three dimensions of CDA as the text, the discursive practice and the social practice. The text is the description stage, where the researcher focuses on formal features such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence coherence and syntax, which is what discourses and genres are realised from. The discursive practice is the interpretation stage, where the researcher focuses on the recurring themes, the discourses that these themes support, representations by various actors and intertextuality; “how producers of texts, like authors and journalists, use discourses and genres that already exists to create a text” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 12). And finally, the sociocultural practice is the explanation stage, where the researcher focuses on the structures of a society or an organisation and the social, political, economic context. Fairclough (2012) argues that these three dimensions are interrelated, and the researcher thus can move between the three throughout the analysis of a text.

Following Janks (1997), I began with one text for each actor, i.e., the submissions and comments for the public participation process, looking for patterns in the discourse and themes related to the theoretical framework and key words related to the research questions. Next, I analysed paragraphs relating to themes according to Fairclough’s example questions and other (Janks, 1997; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) applications thereof. The text analysis

template that I used can be found in appendix A. I ended up choosing three main themes that related best to the theoretical framework: spatial inequality and spatial apartheid, interpretations of urban green space and representations of ‘community’, which form the basis of the analysis.

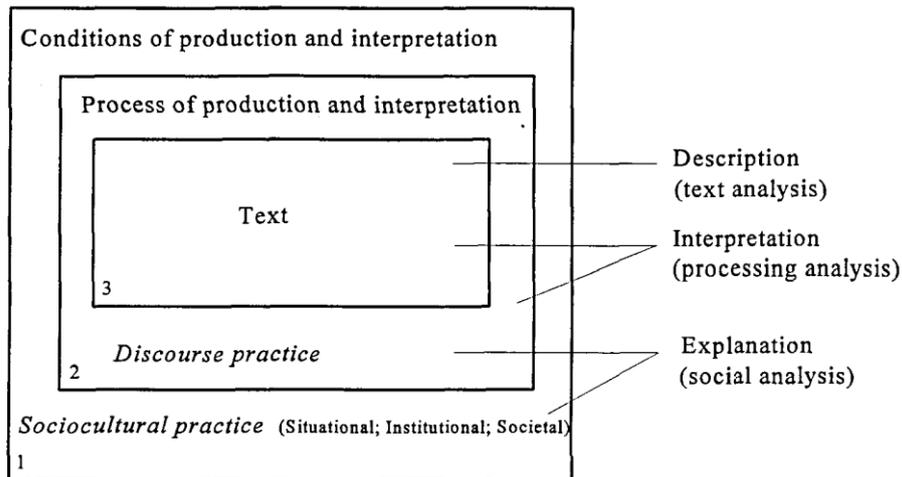


Figure 6: Fairclough's dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis (Source: Janks, 1997)

### 3.6. Positionality

This study has been of personal interest to me, as I have taken part in and supported the push for social housing in the inner city since I first moved to Cape Town in 2016. I thus chose the case because I had been following its development from the start. As a student of human ecology, I am also acutely aware of the immense threat of climate change and the limitations there are to urban development. I am aware of my positionality in this study; I am a white woman of Afrikaans heritage living in a neighbourhood in Cape Town where people of colour have been historically displaced and evicted from. And I can make these arguments of social and spatial justice, but I make them from a position of privilege, I do not know what it is like to have the threat of eviction over my head, or what it is like to spend half of my salary on transport or having to remove all of my belongings from the shack that I live in every time it floods. I am aware of these realities, I read about them on the news or see stories being told on social media, but I will never be able to know what it is like. I thus approach this study with the understanding that my personal experience has given me a specific view of the case and that although I would wish to make a larger contribution, the main benefit of this study will be my own academic pursuits.

### **3.7. Limitations**

The main limitations of this research were the lack of access to two of the main actors; the City of Cape Town municipal government and the Rondebosch Golf Club (RGC). For the City this was mitigated by including media statements and radio interviews, which supported the core documents and helped map the discourses that support the City's arguments. And questions regarding the more technical and political aspects of the case were thus covered in interviews with industry experts. I did however receive a confirmation from the City's research department on 2 August that they could help me with my research and interview request, after being bounced around between departments for four months. However, with the application process and waiting time this would not have been feasible for an August submission of this thesis. I do think that the additional texts are enough in the end to get a clear picture of the City's narrative. In terms of the RGC, this has been discussed in the section on texts for analysis, and although it limits the discussion on the narratives of all the stakeholders, it has shifted this research into more of a discussion on representations, which is also key in understanding the relationships between the relevant actors and the decision-making process.

The COVID-19 pandemic and severe lockdown restrictions in South Africa have also limited this study, although I have previous knowledge and experience of the places and organisations in the case, my study might have been a more in-depth understanding if I was able to do in-person and on-site interviews. Although this might have been possible, I made the personal decision not to put myself or anyone else at risk and thus did all interviews over the phone or videocall. This also gave me the opportunity to focus more on the way that the narratives in this case are represented to the public, who also play a role in cases like this.

Another limitation was that the case itself was quite small in comparison to similar cases like Tafelberg and RTC's building occupations and thus only those who were directly involved had knowledge of the case. Other understandings of it, by researchers, experts and politicians were thus through the representation of the case in the media or public discourse. Since there were other respondents in the public participation process that I based my sampling on that either did not respond to me or were too unsure of their knowledge of the case to take part in interviews comfortably, there might be discourses that I have missed out on or did not take into account. This study is thus not a comprehensive analysis of all the stakeholder narratives,

but I would argue, given the complexity of the case, it provides a valuable insight to some of the dominant narratives.

#### **4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is based in Political Ecology, which is, according to Bebbington (2011, in Tetrault 2017, p.17) a “a sort of umbrella term” underneath which various traditions of political and ecological research coexist thus it is “not a theory, but rather a common space for reflection and analysis”. To understand the use of the Rondebosch golf course as an urban green space and the socio-political implications thereof, I use the theory of green orthodoxy, which sees the development and use of urban green space as a potential threat to socio-economic equality. Since some arguments in this case relate to who has the right to access urban green space and make decisions as to how public land should be used, I also include the theory on Right to the City, which focuses on the discussion around the rights that urban inhabitants have to make the city into their own space. This chapter outlines these theories and how I apply them in this study in more detail and touches on the important concepts of spatial justice and wellbeing that form part of the exploration of this case.

##### **4.1. Urban Political Ecology**

Of the various definitions of political ecology, (discussed at length in Robbins, 2012; Perrault, Bridge & McCarthy, 2015; Tetrault, 2017; Svarstad, 2018) I find most resonance in Enrique Leff’s (2012, p.19) interpretation, which is also most applicable to the case discussed in this thesis.

Political ecology explores the power relations between society and nature embedded in social interests, institutions, knowledge and imaginaries that weave the life-worlds of the people. It is the field where power strategies are deployed to deconstruct the unsustainable modern rationality and to mobilize social actions in the globalized world for the construction of a sustainable future in the entwining of material nature and symbolic culture.

A study based in this field thus takes a critical approach to the power relations between society and the systems and structures that it has created to engage with and control the

nature that it is embedded in (Leff, 2012). It is critical of and specifically interested in the dominant power discourses that are created and employed to maintain existing power structures (Tetrault, 2017; Hickox, 2018). Situating this research within *urban* political ecology is not just about exploring the society-nature power relations in the urban form but also about how “highly uneven and deeply unjust urban landscapes” such as Cape Town produce unique forms of these relations (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003, p.899). Using an urban political ecology approach thus means entangling the various socio-ecological and socio-political relations by exploring the historic and spatial dimensions of the political, economic and governance systems of Cape Town within the context of the current socio-ecological crisis. Therefore, revealing the inter-dependency and relationships between the various actors (civil society, government institutions, political parties, commercial entities and the wider public) involved in this case by analysing the way that they interpret and form their own narratives of urban ecology and the right to the city.

#### **4.2. Greening the city and green orthodoxy**

One of the ways cities and local governments are mitigating the risks of climate change is through urban greening and green infrastructure solutions (Sandström, 2002; Pauleit et al., 2011; Pasquini & Enqvist, 2019). Green infrastructure is often referred to as ‘green space’ and ‘urban nature’ in sociological research and is defined as “the connected network of multifunctional, predominantly unbuilt, space that supports both ecological and social activities and processes” (Venter et al., 2020, p.203). Pasquini and Enqvist (2019) argue that the green infrastructure solutions not only serve as a tool for climate change adaptation and Urban Heat Island (UHI) mitigation but also provide valuable ecosystem services that is essential to human wellbeing (Venter et al., 2020). Urban greening attributes to a city’s image as liveable and desirable, which is a key motivator for municipalities like Cape Town that relies substantially on its image as a destination place (Haase et al., 2017). Supported by initiatives like the Local Governments for Sustainability network (ICLEI) and UN Cities programmes, sustainability narratives give cities a moral authority or economic imperative to become greener (Anquielovski et al., 2018). Despite the crucial role that urban greening plays there are growing concerns over unequal patterns in the development of green infrastructure and that the equitable access and distribution of quality urban nature, which is valued as a human right, is developing unequally along racial and socio-economic lines (Gobster, 1997;

Sheppard, 2006; Haase et al., 2017; Anguelovski et al., 2018; Venter et al., 2020). These concerns are explored under the theory of green orthodoxy.

#### 4.2.1. Green orthodoxy

Urban greening is often presented as tool for sustainable development and often forms part of “urban renewal, upgrading and revitalization projects” which are “in reality first and foremost market-driven endeavours primarily catering for higher income residents” (Haase et al., 2017, p.43). In this context, Anguelovski et al. (2018, p.417) describe a ‘green space paradox’ in which socially vulnerable citizens are being excluded from new green amenities because of the developmental orientation of urban greening, even though they are often the ones who fought for these amenities as part of environmental justice movements. This paradox is the first layer of green orthodoxy, the second is the a-political or post-political nature of green development, where the environmental, social and spatial impacts of urban greening are made a-political in the sense that these are seen as democratic and for the benefit of all even when they are not (Swyngedouw, 2007; Angelovski et al., 2018). The need for more environmentally sustainable cities and the perceived universal benefit of urban greening thus obscures the fact that this is an unequal process and that cities have deep social and spatial inequalities. An example of this can be found in green or ecological gentrification, where the increase upgrading and renewal of urban areas through greening projects lead to the displacement of poor and low-income citizens (Haase et al., 2017). Layering this over the legacy of apartheid spatial planning in a city like Cape Town, it is crucial to ask who benefits from urban greening projects.

Despite these arguments the call is not for the elimination of new green amenities but the re-politicisation of sustainability discourse in the sense that race and class is put at the centre of green planning, that there is an acknowledgement of socio-spatial inequalities, an in-depth treatment of socio-ecological trade-offs and a multi-actor governance approach that focuses on the co-production of urban green spaces (Haase et al., 2017; Angelovski et al., 2018).

### **4.3. The Right to the City**

A core argument for urban land activists is that all citizens have the socio-economic rights to own, access and engage with urban space. Since these are rights-based arguments they often go further than mere discussions on property ownership and the design of public space to

include discussions on systemic inequalities, empowerment, and identity. The Right to the City, which explores these, is a concept first established by Henri Lefebvre in 1974, and is defined by David Harvey as (2008, p.939):

the collective right of the inhabitants of cities, in particular of the vulnerable and marginalised groups, that confers upon them legitimacy of action and organisation, based on their uses and customs, with the objective to achieve full exercise of the right to free self-determination and an adequate standard of living.

Following on this, Morange & Spire (2020, p.13) argue that the right to the city approach in cases in North America and Europe has prioritised “question of value and private property and sometimes the question of the right to work and of daily lives”, whereas in cities in the Global South “issues of urban inclusion, participation and local democracy, or of access to some basic social and economic rights” have been more of a focus. This is significant, since two main examples of civil organisations that use the right to the city discourse in South Africa is Abahlali baseMjondolo, a shack dwellers movement that advocates for the rights of those who live in informal settlements and Reclaim the City, who use various campaigns, including building occupations to advocate for inclusive urban housing practices (Huchzermeyer, 2014; Reclaim the City, 2017a). Morange & Spire (2020, p.13) continue to argue that one aspect that is present in cities around the world, but more emphasised in the right to the city rhetoric in the Global South is the “selective recognition by the State and granting rights to some citizens” and not others. This brings in questions of empowerment and political alienation, which in the context of South Africa, has historically been drawn along racial lines. I think Morange & Spire’s (2020) critique is useful to understand how the right to the city rhetoric is used in a South African context, especially since it is not just used to claims spatial rights but socio-economic and political rights as well.

Since the right to the city is expressed in various iterations in the discourse and quite contextual, I will use Lefebvre and Harvey’s theory but focus mainly on using the interpretations and contextualisation of it that has been done by scholars in the global south (Bond, 2010; Samara, He & Chen, 2013; Huchzermeyer, 2014, 2017; Morange & Spire, 2020). What makes the case discussed in this thesis interesting is that the right to the city is expressed not only by the social movements (which are traditionally the organisations that are

studied in relation to this theory) but also to varying degrees by other stakeholders. These ways are explored in more detail in chapter 6.

#### **4.4. Important concepts**

Two important concepts that form part of this study are spatial justice and wellbeing. In the following sections I briefly describe these and how they relate to theoretical framework.

##### **4.4.1. Wellbeing**

The concept of wellbeing has become increasingly important in urban research; Jane Jacobs (1961) sees cities as centres for wellbeing, which depends on the unique character and personality of individual cities, and in city development, where the Global Wellness Index and Knight Frank's City Wellbeing Index yearly rank global cities in terms of wellbeing criteria (OECD, 2020; Knight Frank, 2021). Yet, according to Higgs (2006, p.332) the term wellbeing has "different connotations for different constituencies: for some, it concerns poverty; for others, it is the physical elements; for others, it involves spirituality and mental fitness". It is thus a highly subjective concept that aims to assess a person's quality of life beyond concepts such as 'health' or 'standard of living'. Du Plessis (2018, p.200) argues that wellbeing is "one of the things that feed into a person's ability to execute valuable acts or to reach valuable states of being" and that it thus depends on various inputs from the natural and social environment. Strong links have been made between the environment, human health and wellbeing, in terms of the ecosystem services that the environment provides and the psychical and psychological health benefits of urban green spaces (Barton & Pretty, 2010; Hamman, Biggs & Reyers, 2015; Gaffaney, 2017; du Plessis, 2018). In the South African context, du Plessis (2018) explores the promise of wellbeing in Section 24(a) of the constitution; "everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or well-being" and argues that the protection of the environment thus fulfils a basic need, as human health and wellbeing depend on the state of the natural environment.

In the context of this thesis the various interpretations of wellbeing that stakeholders have thus reveal not only what their visions of a future city could be but also their view on the importance of the natural environment and the fulfilment of basic needs in relation to their claims of the right to urban space. It is thus linked to the theory of green orthodoxy in that wellbeing and health are two of the arguments that support urban greening discourses.

#### 4.4.2. Spatial Justice

To understand spatial justice, it is important to first understand how space is produced and controlled. Harvey (2001, p.56) argues that space is socially produced and is both a product and a process used to “ensure societal cohesion and assert ideological and political power and control”. While Edward Said (in Soja, 2009, p.2.) states that:

Just as none of us are beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.

Access to and control over space is thus a power struggle that plays out not just in the urban spatial development frameworks, zoning regulations and property development but in the public discourses of whom urban land belongs to and what these land claims are based on. But Edward Soja (2009, p.3) states spatial injustices play out in the “normal workings of an urban system, the everyday activities of urban functioning” that is a source of “inequality and injustice in that the accumulation of locational decisions in a capitalist economy tends to lead to the redistribution of real income in favor of the rich over the poor”. Addressing these injustices are thus not just about addressing class and racial segregation in urban spaces but in essence about exercising ones right to the city.

Edward Soja (2009, p.3.) thus sees spatial justice as addressing the spatial injustices, it thus “involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them”. In the South African context, spatial justice is thus connected to “redressing past spatial imbalances and exclusions; including people and areas previously excluded, and upgrading informal areas and settlements” (van Wyk, 2015). Spatial justice specifically forms part of the right to the city narratives in this study.

### **4.5. ANALYSIS OF KEY POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The following section is an introduction and discussion of the key policy documents that are important to the Rondebosch golf course case. Since I already presented social housing legislation and policy in the background section, this section will focus more on wider policy frameworks. I will discuss three policy sections; human settlements, environmental sustainability and spatial development frameworks. Since an in-depth analysis of these

documents are beyond the scope of this thesis, I will focus on the relevance of the documents to the case at hand, analysing the documents that stakeholders have referred to in interviews and media statements and newspaper articles in particular. Table 3 outlines the relevant legislation and policy documents in terms of the three tiers of government and three policy sections.

Before discussing these, it is important to note that the structure of governance in South Africa plays a role in the power and mandate that these documents have. The three tiers of government consist of the national, provincial and municipal levels, “which have legislative and executive authority in their own spheres, and are defined in the Constitution as distinctive, interdependent and interrelated” (RSA, 2021). In terms of affordable housing for example, policy is made on national level but is enforced on municipal level, the mandate of spatial justice for example forms part of the national Spatial and Land Use Management Act (SLUMA) but is the responsibility of municipal government. Politics also plays a role in this case since the provincial (Western Cape) and municipal (CoCT) governments are both run by the Democratic Alliance (DA), which is the main opposition party to the national government, the African National Congress (ANC). These political dynamics play a role in how policy is developed and implemented (McCarthy, Interview, 22 July 2021).

*Table 3: Key legislation and policy*

	Key legislation and policy		
	National	Provincial	Municipal
<b>Housing</b>	Constitution Section 26 Social Housing Act (2008) Social Housing Policy (2008)	Isidima (2007) Living Cape (2017)	The City of Cape Town’s Integrated Human Settlements Five Year Plan (2012-2017) The Human Settlements Strategy (2021)
<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	Constitution Section 24 The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (1998) National Framework for Sustainable Development (2008)		Environmental Strategy for City of Cape Town (2017) Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for City of Cape Town (2017)
<b>Spatial development</b>	National Development Plan (2008) Integrated Urban Development Framework (2016) Spatial and Land Use Management Act (2013)		Municipal Spatial Development Framework (2018) The Five-Year Integrated Development Plan 2017 – 2022 The Built Environment Performance Plan (2019/20)

#### 4.6. Key housing legislation and policy

**Isidima: The Western Cape Sustainable Human Settlements Strategy (2007)** already made provision for the release of parcels of well-located publicly owned land for affordable housing but with the absence of a social housing policy (at that time) it was used for other forms of GAP income housing (WCG, 2007). Densification and spatial integration form a key part of provincial and municipal spatial development frameworks and together with the focus on transit-orientated-development is the key elements outlined in **Living Cape: A Human Settlements Framework (2017)**. The human settlements strategies that play an important role in the discourse of this case, are the City's **Inclusionary Housing Policy (2021)** and the Draft **Human Settlements Strategy (2021)**. The main implications of these are an incorporation of environmental strategies specifically focusing on climate change and urban resilience. And an approach to informality and land occupations that has been critiqued by activists as criminalising these and the people who see land occupations as their only form of housing provision (CoCT, 2021). There is also a push for the revision of the City's land use management strategy and the provision made for more infill housing on locations such as golf courses (NU, 2019).

#### 4.7. Key environmental sustainability policies

In response to South Africa's resource heavy economy and global climate change discourses, the **National Framework for Sustainable Development** was adopted in 2008, mapping out pathways to a more sustainable future (Swilling & Annecke, 2012). In line with the National Development Plan (2012), the emphasis is on developing a green economy which views biodiversity as an economically quantifiable asset and national climate change responses. Swilling and Annecke (2012) outline how this framework has influenced some policy shifts, including a national programme by the Department of Human Settlements to include more sustainable resource-use initiatives into their national housing projects. **The Environmental Strategy for City of Cape Town (2017)** recognises historic disparity in quality of living environments, including pollutants and environmental hazards, and access to natural spaces. And argues that; "the City's approach to managing its environmental assets must occur within a framework that recognises and addresses the (above) social and economic challenges" (CoCT, 2017a, p.6). This policy also focusses on the environment as an irreplaceable asset and the ecosystem services that it provides to the city and its residents.

The City's Environmental Strategy also includes various policies, including a Climate Change Policy and the **Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for City of Cape Town (2019)** of which one of the policy's guiding principles is "No ecology without equity – no equity without ecology" and equal access to public and natural spaces and ensuring job creation and skills development is important aspects (CoCT, 2019, p.36).

#### **4.8. Key spatial development frameworks**

Spatial development frameworks form the key policy space where affordable housing and urban environmental sustainability intersect. The **National Development Plan (2012)** aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 and sets out five spatial principles for human settlement development: spatial justice; spatial sustainability; spatial resilience; spatial quality and spatial efficiency. While the plan for environmental sustainability and resilience focusses on environmental protection, reducing carbon emissions, increasing renewable energy outputs, building ecological resilience and improving agricultural practices (NPC, 2011). The 2016 **Integrated Urban Development Framework's** foundation is that jobs, housing and transport should be used to promote urban restructuring and spatial transformation that addresses the legacy of spatial apartheid. The City of Cape Town has integrated this into its **Municipal Spatial Development Framework (2017)**, which provides the city's long term spatial development vision and includes SDF's for individual districts (CoCT, 2017d). The spatial strategies set out in the City's **Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP) 2019/20** aims to address spatial apartheid, through a transit-orientated-development (TOD) and associated densification approach, specifically along three improvement districts. The key elements of this approach are mixed developments around planned public transport to facilitate densification that in turn strengthens the transport routes. In terms of the case, it is crucial to understand that most of the planned social housing projects form part of the Voortrekker Road Corridor Improvement District outlined in the BEPP (CoCT, 2019). The area that the Rondebosch golf course covers does not fall within this, or any of the other improvement districts and is thus not a designated area for the development of social housing.

## **5. COMPETING NARRATIVES OF URBAN GREEN SPACE**

In the following section I present and discuss the findings of the analysis of the chosen ‘texts’ related to the case. ‘Texts’, as described in CDA, are defined as visual and verbal forms of communicating discourse. I thus use the interviews, documents and other sources as outlined in tables 1 and 2. These are presented according to three themes, chosen based on the theoretical considerations: spatial inequality and spatial apartheid, interpretations of urban green space and representation of community. Following the different interpretations of the themes presented by different stakeholders, I also discuss how these relate to certain discourses, which in turn, determined the outcome of social practices. I thus focus specifically on answering the first two research questions. Although there is a wide range of stakeholders in this case (as outlined in the case description), for each theme I will only focus on those where the themes were most dominant or whose discursive contributions were most dominant or relevant.

### **5.1. Spatial inequality and spatial apartheid**

In which I argue that NU and RTC approach this theme from a social and spatial justice perspective and the City approaches it from a service provision and economic development perspective.

#### **5.1.1. Spatial justice**

Both NU and RTC’s arguments for the need to address spatial apartheid is based in discourses of spatial and social justice. From a legal perspective, the call for spatial justice is based in the (international) discourse of human rights. NU (2019, p.3) asks:

How is this use of land [as golf course] more important than a home? How is it prioritised over the rights of thousands of residents living in backyards and informal settlements? How can it stand in the way of bringing working-class people back into the areas from which they were violently evicted?

Spatial and social justice is seen as a way to realise the human rights and the basic needs of the poor and address the displacement and social disadvantages and violence caused by apartheid. Both NU and RTC regularly refer to the constitutional mandate of government to

provide adequate social housing (CoCT, 2019; RTC, 2020), Karen Hendricks adds that “all people have the right to dignified housing”, elaborating on her interpretation of the wider discourse of human dignity, that housing is not just a form of shelter but “the foundation for democratic participation as residents of this city and our historical right to live in the city” (Interview, 28 June 2021).

The way that spatial justice can thus be achieved according to these discourses is through the development of affordable housing in the inner city, specifically social housing, as the aim of social housing is to reduce spatial inequality and develop social amenities and economic opportunities close to where people live. The set structure of the arguments and ‘logical’ layout of the NU texts used in this analysis supports their claim that social housing is the answer to address spatial apartheid. The layout of the argument (starting with the housing crisis, the City’s failure to deliver, followed by the City’s obligations and the inefficient land management) and the visual layout of the report on City leases (NU, 2019), leaves little room for conclusions other than that the land should be used for affordable housing. In holding the city responsible for the impact of ‘failing to manage state-owned land’, NU (2019, p.5). argues that; “...the City is effectively subsidising inverse densification and hampering the implementation of development around transport nodes” thus presenting the release of this land for affordable housing as the next logical step.

Karen Hendricks speaks from the lived experience of a housing activist and an occupier of Cissie Gool House, she sees the right to decent housing not just as an individual but a universal right and building affordable housing in well-located areas is thus described as being for the “social good of the public” (Interview, 28 June 2021). This right is being threatened, since “the housing crisis is deepening even more. And yet, the City of Cape Town, or the local government can go about leasing its best public land, and really not using it for the social good of the public” (Interview, 28 June 2021). The key to developing affordable housing in well-located areas is argued to be the release of state-owned land in the inner city. This argument is supported by referencing SPLUMA, which; “tells the city, including the municipal planning tribunal that you must not approve the development that is not spatially just. The City has the power to refuse developments that continue this history of exclusion” (Interview, 28 June 2019).

NU and RTC hold the City responsible for addressing spatial inequality (NU & RTC, 2021) and create explicit links between urban problems, including inverse densification, poverty

and inequality, inefficient municipal legislation and the City's (mis)management of public land. Arguing that the "acute housing affordability crisis and extreme levels of inverse densification" is exacerbated by the City's inadequacy and thus has social implications and financial implications; even stating that "the City is actually losing millions of Rands" (NU, 2019, p.8). Throughout their 2019 report the authors return to the "Failure of the City", even using the City's own reports to prove its incompetence (NU 2019, p.5). This strong discourse of the failure of the City (and the public frustration in this) to deliver affordable housing undermines the image that the City of Cape Town often presents of itself as an inclusive city that is working for its poorer citizens (CoCT, 2019). And although they are acknowledging the complexity of the act of releasing land, specifically the role of "collusion, budget cuts, and a lack of imagination" and political will, they argue that the mismanagement of public land "often sees our best land disposed of to the private sector" (NU 2019, p.1). Thus, linking the City's land management failure to the larger discourse of the property market as driver of inequality in the city. This discourse is specifically prominent in RTC's (2020; 2021) discussions on how private property development is driving gentrification causing displacement and evictions of the urban poor and is a critique of neoliberal economics and how it causes inequality through the commodification of housing.

The discourses that support these interpretations of spatial justice by NU and RTC are thus the responsibility of the state in housing provision, the failure of the state in doing not only that but also in addressing spatial apartheid, a critique on the neoliberal housing market and the right to the city for the urban poor. In social practice, these discourses play out in both organisations' opposition to the renewal of the Rondebosch golf course lease and the claim that the land should be used for social housing. The tools used by these organisations; protests, symbolic occupations, legal cases and public engagement with the City to advocate for these rights are often also prominent in spatial justice discourses (Soja, 2009).

The City, on the other hand, in its role of provider of social housing to address spatial inequality sees its mandate as housing provision which is constricted by working within the current urban frame i.e. the existing spatial patterns and zoning designations and is thus pathway dependent. In the recommendations made by the executive mayor as to whether the lease should be renewed, the spatial planning arguments outlined by different internal City departments focus on whether the renewal of the lease falls within the existing development framework. The Department of Human Settlements, for example, notes that it "currently has no development plans for the property, and, therefore, has no objection to the renewal of the

lease” (CoCT, 2020c, p.68). Specifically because the focus is on social housing developments in other parts of the city, specifically those that are in line with the city’s Transit-Orientated-Development (TOD) framework (Booi, 2020). And even though “the issue of spatial inequality is a key focus area within the City of Cape Town”, the use of this specific land parcel for the purpose of social housing is not seen as viable (CoCT 2020b, p.69). City officials, Malusi Booi (Mayoral Committee member for Human Settlements) and James Vos (Mayoral Committee member for Economic Opportunities and Asset Management) confirm this in various radio interviews (Booi 2020; Vos 2020a, 2020b). They also bring up the discourse of service provision, as their approach to housing provision focuses on the housing backlog (Booi, 2020). Tissington (2010, p.6) describes this role of housing provision as; “‘speeding up delivery’, ‘reducing backlogs’ and ‘eradicating informal settlements’”, thus focussing on “attaining minimum standards (for example, the number of housing units ‘delivered’) rather than achieving a social impact, such as improved services and tenure security”. In aligning the recommendation with the City’s strategic intent, i.e., development plans, Cape Town as “An Opportunity City” is focussed on, where the objective is to “leverage the City’s assets to rationalise and optimally utilise City assets” and “to stimulate economic benefit for Cape Town” (CoCT, 2020b, p.56). This optimal utilisation of City-owned assets reveals the influence of a neoliberal discourse in City management, which depends on the private market to provide the majority of housing and the belief that economic development and social development can be achieved through large scale development projects.

These discourses of pathway dependency in development, service provision and neoliberalism play out in social practice in three ways; first in the form of the City focussing on large scale housing projects on the urban periphery, since this is where land is more cheaply available, large scale housing projects can be developed and thus deliver higher volumes of housing (Turok, Visagie & Scheba, 2021). These developments have been criticised for perpetuating spatial apartheid (Tissington, 2010; Turok, Visagie & Scheba 2021) and are seen as ‘inadequate’ by the members of RTC (2021). Second, in the City’s decision to renew the lease and third in the City’s focus on discourses of economic development, using the various ways that the RGC saves the City money as their justification. In the wider discussion, this also plays out in the City’s response to housing activists like NU and RTC who challenge the City’s housing strategy, specifically its neoliberal approach and

its land use management strategy, which is argued to be a form of “subsidising the rich” (NU, 2020).

## **5.2. Interpretations of urban green space**

In which I focus on the environmental implications of additional development on the Rondebosch golf course and the various interpretations of these concerns, including a specific look at the discourse of greening the city. And a look at how these implications influence the development of alternatives envisioned specifically by NU and Richard Hill.

### **5.2.1. Environmental implications**

Under environmental implications, three main concerns have been raised; the threat to biodiversity in the area, the development restrictions caused by a significant portion of the land being below the flood line and the golf course’s contribution to the urban green corridor (CoCT, 2020a, 2020b; Hill, 2017, 2021).

Although biodiversity preservation forms an important part of environmental policy and environmental justice in Cape Town (see background and literature review sections), it does not form such a significant part of this case. This is mainly because although the area along the river is quite biodiverse, it does not form part of any of the natural protected areas in the city (CoCT, 2017). The main actors who make arguments for the preservation of the biodiversity are the residents of the area and SPCA (in CoCT 2020b, p.81-3):

The golf course is an asset to the community; Walk dogs, for exercise and serves to lift the character of the suburb. Observe different bird species: Thick-knee, fiscal shrike, guinea fowl, hadeda, plovers and the Egyptian geese. In the river itself flamingos, ibis, herons and pelican. This doesn’t even begin to cover it and they feel this biodiversity is worth protecting and preserving.

The property is a vital ecological area for both birds, trees and shrubs. Building work and subsequent housing there would eliminate these to a very significant extent... The lease continuing for the Golf Club would exceed the expected cost for the City of

Cape Town, should it take over the land again and maintain it for the various ecological and social benefits.

These examples show that the perceptions of biodiversity in the area is based on the lived experiences of the inhabitants of the area, who directly benefit from the access to the area next to the river. Biodiversity and ecosystem services are also linked to the economic implications that the upkeep of these have for the City, revealing discourses of ecological modernisation (the economic benefits of moves towards environmentalism). Biodiversity is raised by the City in some cases (James Vos 2020b; CoCT, 2020a) and the recommendation by the deputy mayor to renew the lease “the golf course plays an important role in the environment, as it is home to many different trees and shrubs, many of them indigenous to the Western Cape. No less than 75 different species of birds have been observed” (CoCT, 2020c, p.66). But is not mentioned in the City’s press release (CoCT, 2020b) and does not come across as one of its main environmental concerns. Richard Hill (2017) also includes biodiversity in his report, however it is not one of the main reasons. Although it is seen as important by NU, Michael Clark (Interview, 7 April 2021) argues that it forms part of the NIMBY (Not-in-my-backyard) argument that NU had encountered during the public engagement process that NU had with the local neighbourhoods.

#### 5.2.2. Development constrictions

The main concerns with regards to the flood line are described in detail in Hill’s (2017, updated in 2020) report, which draws on a range of existing CoCT policies, specifically the City’s Floodplain and River Corridor Management Policy (2019). The main arguments for not building below the flood line are that the area is in a low-lying wetland that floods during periods of heavy rain. Hill (2017) notes that the canal system was specifically built to stop water from the river from overflowing into the neighbouring Sybrand Park and onto the fairways of the golf course instead. The City (2020a) also states that; “the golf course was designed to prevent neighbouring properties from flooding”, almost presenting it as if the main aim for developing the golf course was flood management and not for recreational and commercial purposes. For Hill (Interview, 19 June 2021) the concern is also the stormwater system, which during heavy rain gets into the sewage system and causes a health hazard. Hill (Interview, 19 June 2021) argues that the river that runs next to Sybrand Park and the golf course has been dredged and widened twice its original size in the 30 years that he has lived

there due to the catchment area being hardened by developments and concrete. Although these arguments are made from an environmental assessor's perspective, and thus a discourse of ecological modernisation, no formal Environmental Impact Assessment has been made on the site and Hill (Interview, 19 June 2021) is careful to note that as well. The more interesting discourse analysis is how the notion of the flood line has been used in in the wider narratives on why this parcel of land is viable or not viable for development.

The City (2020c) claims that more or less half of the land is below the 100-year flood line, whereas NU contests this by saying that according to their research it is only one-third and that two-thirds of the land would thus be viable for development (NU, 2019). In discussing these two claims with Richard Hill (Interview, 19 June 2021), he contested NU's research by saying that, from his perspective it is definitely more than a third of the land that is under the flood line. And also how "The Southern District Plan of the City of Cape Town's Spatial Development Plan and Environmental Management Framework (2011) shows (admittedly at a small scale) the 1 in 50 and 1 in 100 year floodplains associated with the Rondebosch Golf Course" (Hill, 2017, p.2). Both the City (2020c) and NU (2019) state their claims as fact and base their arguments of whether the land can be used for housing development or not on these interpretations of the flood line's location. The interesting aspect of this is thus not which of these two are right, i.e. what part of the land technically falls under the flood line but how these actors, and others (Hill, 2017; RTC, 2020, Vos 2020a) are using their interpretation of this reality to support their argument for or against the renewal of the lease. These also highlight discourses of environmental control and the limits thereof.

### 5.2.3. Urban greening

The second argument that Hill (2017) makes is the Rondebosch golf course's role in ensuring the continuity of open spaces and biodiversity corridors in the urban environment. His argument is supported by policy (CoCT, 2012), that specifically highlights the importance of creating and maintaining the Metropolitan Open Space System (MOSS) which is argued as significant for urban environmental conservation. The fact that the same focus on maintaining the MOSS is found in the 2012 MSDF but not in the 2017 MSDF indicates a shift in policy direction, since the City's spatial development strategy became more focussed on Transit-Orientated-Development. However, being identified as part of the MOSS, means that the claim that development of this area should be avoided to maintain the open space system, is

supported by the City's environmental policy (CoCT, 2009; Hill, 2017). The environmental discourse that comes to light in the discussion on open spaces and biodiversity corridors is environmental conservation beyond the direct use of ecosystem services by taking into consideration wider environmental threats such as climate change. But also alludes to the discussion on urban greening and the role that green spaces play in spatial inequality and 'green apartheid'. Another comment in the public participation process (CoCT 2020b, p.81) highlight this: "I long for in the city are more "green lungs", there will be no place for play and refreshing of air through green plants", if the land is used for housing development".

Michael Clark (Interview, 7 April 2021) argues that there is a need to rethink urban green spaces and look at them in terms of the role that they can play in inclusionary form of development, that the use of this specific green space should be as a "seam rather than a barrier" (NU, 2020, p.18). He states that the fact that most of the sites in the City Leases (NU, 2019) report are urban green spaces on publicly owned land highlights the role of urban green and open spaces under apartheid spatial planning. Where these were used as buffer zones in municipal spatial planning to segregate communities, an apartheid-era land use tool that needs to be addressed (Clark, Interview 7 April 2021). Access is also an important theme that shows the discourse of social justice; golf courses are viewed as barriers to inclusion, many (NU, 2019; Hendricks, 2020; DAG, 2020) argue that the land is not accessible to the public, although it is accessible to neighbouring communities after hours (Hill, 2017). But other arguments from the public for opposing the lease challenge this as "a green space that is only enjoyed by an exclusive few serves no useful public purpose, no matter how green it is" (CoCT, 2020, p.81). It is thus not just about access, it is also about the right to the city, to inhabit and shape the city. As is argued by another participant (CoCT, 2020, p.83):

The use of the site as a golf course effectively deprives the majority of Cape Town residents of access to a site that has significant social value. The site can potentially offer access to green space for recreational purposes that benefits the broader public, in particular adjacent low-income neighbourhoods, and address the need for affordable housing.

The environmental discourse noticeable in these arguments is one that sees urban ecology from the perspective that there needs to be a balance in the urban ecosystem, a social and an environmental one

#### 5.2.4. Alternatives

The consideration of environmental constraints has produced two discourses of alternatives; one of alternative sites for affordable housing development (Hill, 2021; CoCT 2021) and the other of ecologically sensitive development (Clark, 2021; NU, 2019).

NU's (2019, p.13) proposal for the development of the land, for example, illustrates a focus on alternatives to the current single land use development; "Our proposal envisages a mixed-use, mixed-income development on the site that aims to minimise the environmental impact of the development, is respectful of the flood line and prioritises density and affordability". The focus is on "water sensitive urban design that minimises environmental degradation and improves the recreational and aesthetic appeal" (NU, 2019, p.11). This proposal uses the spatial strategies that the City advocates for as well (CoCT, 2019; CoCT, 2017a; 2017b); densification, mixed-use development for social equality, and an alternative view of what urban green space is and can be used for.

There is also a discussion on alternative sites for affordable housing development in the area (DAG, 2020; CoCT, 2020). Specific sites that have been part of the conversation in the past, namely the Mowbray golf course (DAG, 2016), the Ysterplaat, Wingfield and Youngsfield military airfields are being considered again (CoCT, 2021). Although there are various elements that inform this discussion on alternatives, including developmental and environmental constraints, economic incentives and political discourses, Richard Hill (Interview, 19 July 2021) brings up the local perspective:

And so, if I'm looking at my local area only and I haven't done analysis of the whole city. I would say the Mowbray golf course should go before the Rondebosch Golf Course. And I am sympathetic to the need for affordable housing. Close proximity to jobs in the CBD makes a difference.

And mentions that NIMBY arguments do play a role, since he might see the Mowbray golf course as more suitable, due to it being located on higher-lying land but that the members of the King David golf course, which is next to the Mowbray golf course and has recently merged to form the Mowbray King David golf course, might feel different (Hill, Interview 19 July 2021). It is this discussion on alternatives that later led the City to review its land use management of golf courses and potentially creating housing infill sites on selected golf courses (CoCT, 2021). But since this is only in discussion it is uncertain whether these proposals will lead to fruition.

### **5.3. Representations of ‘community’**

In which I explore which communities are the ones that are represented as being impacted by the decision for the renewal of the lease. This theme reveals some of the power and economic discourses that underpin these narratives.

The City’s (2020b) first reason for the lease renewal is the ‘economic and community benefit’ that the Rondebosch Golf Club provides. These include the economic contribution of golf as a sporting industry, the charity games that the club hosts and the maintenance costs of the course that the club covers, “all at no cost to the City” (CoCT, 2020b, np.). The golf club is thus presented as doing the city a favour and as a driver of social change, contributing to the economic development of the city and social benefit of the community. The discussion on community benefits is two-fold; the RGC’s golfing community which is described as having a “diverse membership and successful youth development programme” and the residents who live in the surrounding neighbourhoods, who have access to the “multi-use facility and publicly accessible parkland” provides access to green spaces (CoCT, 2020b, np.). The City (2020b) argues that golf clubs play a role in transformation in the sporting industry, however whether this eludes to social or racial transformation is not clear. Underpinning these arguments is a neoliberal economic narrative that sees economic and social benefits as one and the same, and viewing the rate and tax payers as the community who should benefit.

Residents of Sybrand Park, which is described as “a mixed-race neighbourhood... which was prior to the end of apartheid a lower middle-class area of whites” and thus “probably more of a multiracial community than other parts of the southern suburbs”, sees the golf course as beneficial to their neighbourhood (Hill, Interview 19 July 2021). As do other public participation participants (CoCT 202b, p.82):

The golf course is a tremendous asset for Sybrand Park in that it provides a lovely, open green space in the face of rapid urbanisation where such space is becoming increasingly rare. Besides golf, it is used by the residents of Sybrand Park for walking and jogging. It enhances the property values in the area.

Discourses of urban wellbeing and the role of access to green space play a role here, and the protection of this space for the benefit of the immediate community. There are also concerns

on the capability of the local transport and social infrastructure and whether these will be able to support new housing developments (CoCT, 2020b). Another argument that was made is more about exclusion (in CoCT 202b, p.82);

When I bought the property in Sybrand Park I paid high simply because of its location and its proximity to the golf course... I am also fully aware of the effects of crime if a housing plan like that which is proposed is granted... Please do not allow for my family to be put at risk by shack dwellers and or the crime that comes with them.

Although this was only expressed in a few cases, it begs the question; to what extent are discourses of community wellbeing, environmental protection and development concerns linked to this discourse of exclusion? Since the only resource accessible for this study is the one public participation document, more in-depth research would be needed to answer this question.

In her reasoning on why the land use as golf course is significant, Karen Hendricks (2020) juxtaposes experiences of being evicted with the privilege of playing golf; “the privileged and the luxury of the wealthy, is being prioritized by the City of Cape Town ... and it’s a fact that people need affordable housing”. And thus questions which “community” will derive this “exceptional benefit” (CoCT, 2020). For her, and for RTC, the community who should benefit from the City’s access to a land parcel like this are poor and working-class people, especially those who have been displaced or evicted from their homes in the inner city (Hendricks, 2020). The discourses of social and spatial justice is highlighted in the concept of ‘living heritage’, which Hendricks (in RTC, 2020) defines as; “How we live, our culture, our tradition, our norms, it is about what is important and what matters to us as communities”.

NU (2019, p.3) advocates for equality and urban justice for “all Capetonians” but questions the City’s focus on ‘community’ as exclusive by showing the stark contrasts between the urban poor who are “trapped in the cycle of poverty” and the rich, who they argue are being “subsidised” by the City. One of the primary drivers of this structural inequality is the skewed pattern of land ownership and the acute shortage of well-located affordable housing. “This means that wealthy residents who happen to enjoy golf have their pick of which huge tract of public land they would like to utilise” (NU, 2019, p.4).

These different interpretations of community thus reveal the interpretation that various actors have of the right to the city. In social practice these different ideas of who the community is that are and should benefit from this specific parcel of land and the ecosystem services it provides are what informs their arguments on the lease renewal. It also influences how they represent other actors, for example the City's claim that "NU's "toxic legacy" of organised land invasions is the biggest obstacle to social housing sites in central Cape Town", (NU, 2020, p.3) might be based on their interpretation that the community that should benefit are rates and tax payers and the golfing community that contribute to the economic development of the area. Similarly, Hendricks (Interview, 28 June 2021) states that:

We will continue to engage the city. Regarding the regarding the codesign of this site, or this development. We will continue to push the basics. So that those basic services are un-interrupted. And we will continue to push, and affordable housing in well-located areas of the city.

This statement reveals the interpretation that RTC has that all citizens, especially poor and working-class citizens have the right to the city and are the community who should benefit from the actions of the City. In the next section I discuss wider implications of the narratives in the case.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS OF COMPETING NARRATIVES**

In the following section, I discuss the implications of competing narratives for access to the basic human needs of urban (green) space and housing in Cape Town, thus answering my third research question. I do this by looking at the social outcomes of the case and comparing it to a similar case, namely the River Club.

Since the lease has been renewed, the direct impact of the case has been minimal in terms of changing the land use management of the City. There has been one crucial shift; the City has started to review its land use strategy, looking at public owned land on a case by case basis and potential housing infill sites on golf courses and other land parcels, have been included as options on in the Table Bay district plan (CoCT, 2021). But in the context of the housing crisis this might not be radical enough, since there are no structural implications and no mandate for the City to actually implement these changes that it has suggested. The language in the City's (CoCT, 2020c) statement on the lease renewal supports this arguments:

All workable options continue to be explored in a balanced and holistic manner and in accordance with due process to see how to enable the increase of affordable accommodation stock in Cape Town and to enable greater spatial transformation in the city.

What this case has shown is the important role that social movements play in leveraging the state to fulfil its constitutional mandates, and although the success is based on years of work by these and other organisations (DAG, 2016), what is evident is that the state needs to be held accountable for its land use management strategies. In addition to this, Karen Hendricks (Interview, 28 June 2021) points out that private developers also have a role to play in putting pressure on the City to develop an inclusionary housing strategy, which would be another way to include affordable housing units in new housing developments. But Michael Clark (Interview, 7 April 2021) points out that one of the main barriers to social housing developments is the lack of political will, as one of the determining factors is the relationship between city government and private property developers. Both Hendricks and Clark conclude that these developments cannot happen without the investment of the City and thus argue that there needs to be a continuous engagement with the city by civic organisations, leveraging social power and legal discourses to bring about spatial justice.

The environmental discourses that form part of the case; ecological modernisation, environmental control and limits and green orthodoxy, point to a developmental approach to urban green spaces and the economic incentives of protecting these. A similar case that many interviewees have referred to is the River Club case, which is on a similar site further down the river from the Rondebosch golf course (Horber, 2021). In the case, the land falls in the floodplain but despite environmental concerns the City has approved the development of this site. The difference between these two sites is that the River Club site is set to be a R5 billion (approx. 290 000 EUR) development that will raise the majority of land on the site to build an office park that will predominantly host Amazon's South African headquarters (Horber, 2021). An analysis of this case would be a whole research project in itself, but what is significant for this study is that the environmental concerns and developmental constraints that the City argued were the crux of the renewal of the Rondebosch Golf Club's lease, do not pose a threat when there is enough financial incentive to deal with these. If the developments had been reversed, and there had been an economic incentive to develop the Rondebosch golf course, would the case have turned out differently?

This case reveals a need to rethink urban land use management in terms of affordable housing; in how public owned land is used and released for social housing projects (NU, 20219). And I would argue in terms of urban green space as well; to rethink how spaces like this are perceived predominantly in economic terms (including the economic incentives of ecosystem services). To shift the focus to how urban green spaces can be used as a form of spatial and environmental justice, contributing to the wellbeing of all citizens. This case presents an opportunity to approach the housing crisis in a different way, by looking at the way that urban land is used in a more radical way.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Urban land management strategies that attempt to address the pressures of rapid urbanisation and the effects of the climate crisis are put under even more scrutiny in the city of Cape Town, when taking into consideration the legacy of spatial apartheid and the ensuing housing crisis. One particular area where these strategies are influenced by competing interests is that of well-located public owned land. In this thesis I discussed how the case of the Rondebosch golf course highlighted debates on what public land should be used for, who benefits and should benefit from it. I employed a critical discourse analysis to explore what the dominant discourses are among stakeholders with regards to spatial transformations, access to urban (green) space and perceptions of environmental limitations, to understand what the wider implications are for discussions on affordable housing and urban land use management.

In terms of dominant narratives, I found that those who support the renewal of the lease; the City, SPCA, argue that environmental constrictions on development, the social benefits for the residents who live in the adjoining neighbourhoods and economic benefits to the city justify this renewal. An analysis of key documents, a personal interview (SPCA) and radio interviews (CoCT) revealed that this narrative is based on discourses of environmental protection and wellbeing in terms of SPCA, and discourse of neoliberal economic development and environmental controls in terms of the City. In contrast, I found that those who oppose the renewal of the lease; NU and RTC, argue that the need for affordable housing in well-located areas, the need to address the housing crisis and the spatial inequality in the city justify the termination of the lease and the redevelopment of the land for affordable housing. Their arguments are informed by discourses of spatial justice, the responsibility of the state and the right to the city for the urban poor.

Various discourses inform the dominant narratives in this case, I used Critical Discourse Analysis to determine the extent to which interpretations of right to the city, spatial justice and the green agenda informed these narratives. I found that there were main interpretations of the right to the city, first a more explicit one among housing activists at NU and RTC, which was based on spatial justice and a historical connection to inner city areas, thus a sense of 'living heritage'. Whereas the SPCA and others who took part in the public participation process, used the right to the city in context of their right to green spaces and their right to the services provided in the area that they live. Where the first iteration of right to the city is based in social justice and thus forms part of political discourse, the second is based on wellbeing and thus forms part of environmental discourse. The green agenda forms a big part of the narrative for the protection of the golf course as a green space and biodiversity area, but this is an argument that is seen as exclusive by housing activists in that greening the city, when not used to the benefit of poor and working-class residents, is a continuation of spatial apartheid.

The implications of these narratives for wider discussions on the urban green spaces and affordable housing in Cape Town are shown in the outcome of the case and the social discourse it has influenced. But comparing the case to the City's response to the River Club development, shows that this is not just a question of environmental constraints and the budget needed for state subsidised housing but on of economic incentives for the City. The implications for urban green space in Cape Town are that the focus of ecological modernisation that drives the protection of biodiversity and green spaces, means there is a focus on the economic benefits of green spaces. There thus needs to be a stronger push to develop and maintain green spaces that are not just spatially and socially just but that are not just seen as commodities by the City that can be sold when the economic benefits outweigh the environmental ones. In terms of affordable housing, the City has reviewed its human settlements strategy to include a case-by-case analysis of the land parcels that it owns and an analysis of potential housing infill sites, specifically looking at nearby golf courses. And although this is not an overall structural change, it does represent an opportunity to explore alternatives in the housing mechanisms of the state. Since the mandate of social housing is to transform urban spaces so that they are more spatially and socially just, the development of social housing can be used to explore these alternatives in land use management. I would argue that there is also a need for more of an emphasis on how these alternatives can be environmentally and spatially just. And that the implications for research would be to explore

alternatives in and outside of the state's housing provision mechanisms that help foster in just sustainable transitions.

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### Appendix A: Text analysis template

Text analysis template
<p><b>The Text. Description stage (Text analysis): focuses on formal features such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence coherence and syntax, which is what discourses and genres are realised from (Fairclough 1989, p 26).</b></p> <p>Analytical tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language used to describe an event an actor (example), reveals attitude</li> <li>• Modality: degree of agreement of author with a statement, what types of sentences (statements of fact, predictions, hypotheticals, evaluations)</li> <li>• Transitivity: how events and processes are connected (or not connected) with subjects and objects, role of agency</li> <li>• Orientation to difference</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discursive practice. Interpretation stage (Processing analysis): The production, distribution and consumption of texts, how the text is produced and consumed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on the expression of reoccurring themes (Fairclough 1995:202); how do these support different discourses?</li> <li>- Which discourses are drawn upon in the text? Are these ideological? Is the ideology explicit or invisible?</li> <li>- Representation: of actors and of social events, who or what was emphasized as drivers of change?</li> <li>- Situational context: questions about time and place</li> <li>- Intertextuality: how producers of texts, like authors and journalists, use discourses and genres that already exists to create a text (description from Fairclough), inclusion of other voices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social practice. Explanation stage (Social analysis): social practice, the structures of a society or an organisation, the social, political, economic context.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What social reality does the text produce?</li> <li>- What are the surrounding social conditions that govern these discursive practices?</li> </ul>

## **Appendix B: Interview Guides**

### **Interview 1: Michael Clark – Ndifuna Ukwazi – 07/04/21**

#### Questions:

1. Can you just tell me a little bit about how Ndifuna Ukwazi became involved in the case?
2. Can you tell me a bit about your relationship with Reclaim the City?
  - a. And specifically, how you approach different cases that you work together on. For example, the Tafelberg case versus this case, what are your different approaches?
3. What is your response to the local government, and how they are managing state land?
  - a. What do you see as your relationship with them?
  - b. And also their role in providing well located land for social housing?
4. What is the current state of the Rondebosch Golf course (legal) case?
5. Can you elaborate on NU's reasoning for choosing the specific sites mentioned in the report? Most of them are green spaces and I was wondering how this has impacted the choice of the sites?
6. What has been your engagement with the public around this case, and then specifically the homeowner's association and those who live in the area?
7. How do you respond to the claim that the area around the river by the golf course is rich in biodiversity and should thus not be developed on?
8. How do you respond to NIMBY arguments?
9. What do you think are the barriers to the development of social housing in the city?

### **Interview 2: Nobukhosi Ngwenya – African Centre for Cities – 22/04/21**

#### Questions:

1. Could you tell me a little bit more about your own research? Specifically in terms of informal land occupations?
2. Can you tell me why you specifically chose the four sites that you discuss in your paper on conflicting rationality?
3. What are the differences that you see in how groups approach land occupations and building occupations?
4. In the Rondebosch site there were no actual land occupations, only a couple symbolic ones, what do you think is the significance of these?
  - a. What do you think the impact of symbolic land occupations are?
5. Can you tell me a bit more about your work with Reclaim the City?
6. Do you work with any other social organisations? How does their approach differ from Reclaim the City's?
7. In an interview you did on the Just Transport Podcast on Hlulani, the interviewer was using the word hijacking to describe informal building occupations. And I was wondering specifically about how language is used from both the City and the occupiers side? And what have you noticed in how language is used to bring across their case, but also to portray the other side?
8. Can you maybe tell me, what is your knowledge of the case, and as well, your perception, your understanding of it?
9. In your research, have you come across discussions on environmental sustainability and how has either the occupiers or the city government approached to this?
10. How do you think, from an urban planning approach, could there be a space for both large numbers of social housing developments and urban green/ ecological spaces?

### **Interview 3: Mercy Brown-Luthongo - African Centre for Cities – 18/05/21**

#### Questions:

1. Could you tell me a little bit more about your own research?
2. How would you describe the relationship between the community-based organizations that you work with and the city?
3. What is your understanding of the Rondebosch Golf course case?
  - a. Do any of the organisations that you work with have similar cases?
4. What do you think the role of community-based organizations are in bringing actual change? And, specifically in terms of social housing in Cape Town?
5. From your research and from your work at DAG how do you see this factor of environmental spaces or green spaces, factor into spatial planning and spatial transformation?
6. Do you see any opportunities for rethinking how state-owned spaces like the golf course are used? And if so, can you elaborate?

#### **Interview 4: Karen Hendricks – Reclaim the City – 29/06/21**

##### Questions:

1. Can you tell me more about your role in RTC and your involvement in the Rondebosch Golf course case?
2. How and why did RTC become involved in the case?
  - a. Why specifically this site?
  - b. Why do you think the site is more appropriate for social housing?
  - c. Did you approach this site differently to others? How and why?
3. Can you elaborate on your relationship with Ndifuna Ukwazi?
4. What is your relationship like with the City of Cape Town?
  - a. What do you think their response to your claim reveals about their approach to social organisations and social housing?
5. To what extent does the fact that the land is currently being used as a golf course play a role in RTC's choice to oppose the renewal of the lease?
6. How do you respond to the claim (by some who supported the renewal of the lease) that the area around the river by the golf course is rich in biodiversity and should thus not be developed on?
7. How does RTC approach urban green spaces and environmental sustainability in its housing strategies?
8. What do you think are the barriers to adequate social housing on well located land?

#### **Interview 5: Querida Saal – Development Action Group – 07/02/21**

##### Questions:

1. Could you tell me a little bit more about your own research at DAG?
2. To which extent are you (personally as well as DAG as an organisation) involved with the Rondebosch Golf course case?
  - a. What has been your response to the City's decision to renew the lease?
  - b. To what extent do you support/ agree with Reclaim the City and Ndifuna Ukwazi's claim that the land should be used for social housing?
3. What role do you think rights-based activism plays in the case? Specifically in terms of right to urban space, adequate housing and well-being?
4. In your own work, and maybe in the work done at DAG in more general terms, to what extent do you see green urbanism and environmental sustainability playing a role?
5. What do you think the role of community-based organizations are in bringing actual change? And, specifically in terms of social housing in Cape Town?
6. What do you think are the barriers to adequate social housing in the city?

#### **Interview 6: Richard Hill – Sybrand Park Civic Association – 14/07**

##### Questions:

1. What has been your involvement? How did you come about to write this report?
2. What is your understanding/ opinion on the case?
3. Do you know if any recent EIA's have been done on the site?
4. I realise that you have not done an EIA on the site, but if you were to, what would be the key environmental and socio-economic assessments points or criteria that you would focus on?
5. You referenced a lot of policy, however from another reading of policy, for example social housing, it could be argued differently. I'm trying to understand how policy plays a role or can be used to make specific arguments. Do you think there are any conflicts in these policies?
6. I wanted to ask you about Municipal Open STH Spaces, these were included in the 2012 MSDF but not in the 2017 one. So my question is two-fold, one how are these spaces decided on/ regulated? Is there a significance in it being included in the one framework and excluded in the next?
7. Then with regards to the environmental sustainability of a golf course, if there were no river, would the same arguments be made?
8. Could the biodiversity and water management be maintained if there were housing developed in the space? (What would the impact on the soil be?)
9. Could there be a scenario where social housing is built on the site?
10. Could you see any other developments, maybe a school or urban park, built on the site?
11. Do you know of anyone at the Sybrand Park Civic Association that I could talk to?

**Interview 7: Malcolm McCarthy – NASHO (retired) – 22/07/21**

1. Could you tell me a little bit more about your own work at NASHO?
2. And elaborate on specific research you have done?
3. To which extent are you (personally as well as NASHO as an organisation) involved with the Rondebosch Golf course case?
  - a. What has been your response to the City's decision to renew the lease?
4. Can you maybe tell me, what is your knowledge of the case, and as well, your perception, your understanding of it?
5. Can you tell me more about the role that Social Housing Institutions play in land releases?
6. In your own work, and maybe in the work done at NASHO in more general terms, to what extent do you see green urbanism and environmental sustainability playing a role?
7. To what extent would you say social housing contributes to urban well-being?
8. What do you think are the barriers to adequate social housing in the city?