THE POLITICS OF CLAIMS-MAKING ON CAPE TOWN’S URBAN PERIPHERIES: THE ITHEMBA FARMERS’ LAND OCCUPATION

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Geography
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Abstract

This paper investigates land occupation on the urban peripheries of Cape Town and the use of de facto land rights to sustain survival strategies and to make broader claims for accessing the state and accessing the city. Using extensive qualitative research in Cape Town with the Ithemba farmers, I investigate the politics of claims-making among a group of ‘squatting farmers’ who have established their access to land owned by the state and explore their insurgent practices and livelihoods. In doing so, I examine the disconnect between policies and lives on the ground indicating desires for equitable and integrated human settlements supporting peoples’ hybrid livelihood strategies and contesting ongoing experiences of social and spatial exclusion post-apartheid. This work is situated within broader discussions of the peripheries as sites of contestation and agency and brings the land question into conversation with contemporary processes of urbanization and unemployment in South Africa.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... ii  
Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................... iii  
List of figures ................................................................................................................ vi  
List of Acronyms .......................................................................................................... vi  

1. **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction – Struggles for land in Cape Town**  
   1.1. Struggles for land in Cape Town: from Khayelitsha to Ithemba ............................... 1  
   1.2. Research statement and objectives ........................................................................ 3  
   1.3. Chapter breakdown .................................................................................................. 4  
   1.4. Context of the Ithemba farmers’ land occupation .................................................... 5  
   1.5. Legislative framework for informal land rights in South Africa ............................... 8  
   1.6. Theoretical framework ............................................................................................ 14  
   1.7. Research Methods ................................................................................................. 19  

2. **CHAPTER TWO: Rethinking the land question on Cape Town’s urban peripheries**  
   2.1. The agrarian question of labour in contemporary South Africa ............................... 24  
   2.2. Urbanization and livelihood diversification ............................................................ 25  
   2.3. The land question on the urban peripheries ............................................................ 27  
   2.4. Mapping Cape Town’s apartheid geography .......................................................... 29  
   2.5. Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 41  

3. **CHAPTER THREE: Politics of claims-making at Ithemba**  
   3.1. Overview of the Ithemba conflict ............................................................................ 42  
   3.2. Disputed narratives ................................................................................................ 45  
   3.3. Establishing *de facto* rights to land ....................................................................... 47  
   3.4. Strategies of struggle: food sovereignty and smallholder rights ............................... 51  
   3.5. Land as a platform for claims-making ..................................................................... 59  
   3.6. Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 67  

4. **CHAPTER FOUR: Land and livelihoods at Ithemba**  
   4.1. Hybrid Livelihood Strategies .................................................................................. 69  
   4.2. Farming-based livelihoods ...................................................................................... 70  
   4.3. Livelihoods beyond farming .................................................................................... 82
5. **CHAPTER FIVE: Layers of legality, authority, and exclusion at Ithemba**

5.1. Government-farmer relations .................................................................89
5.2. The ‘will to improve’ ..............................................................................89
5.3. Governmentality and deepening claims to land at Ithemba ......................93
5.4. Differentiated citizenship and relative rights to land among the Ithemba farmers ..........96
5.5. Contesting a notional community at Ithemba .......................................96
5.6. Elite pockets of power ...........................................................................98
5.7. Race and resentment ............................................................................105
5.8. Conclusion ..........................................................................................108

6. **CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion - Reflecting on the politics of claims-making and citizenship at Ithemba**

6.1. Politics of claims-making .................................................................110
6.2. Rethinking the urban peripheries ........................................................111
6.3. The land question and access to the city ...........................................111
6.4. Contesting historical legacies through integrated human settlements ........112
List of Figures

Figure 1  City of Cape Town Locality Map of Erf (plot) 996 with shaded area indicating the location of the Ithemba farm (courtesy of the Surplus People Project)
Figure 2  Classification of residential areas in Cape Town prior to and after 1950 Group Areas Act
Figure 3  Map of Cape Town residential areas by race under the Group Area Act. The Ithemba farm is indicated in red within a former coloured area adapted from Oldsfield (2003 pg. 197)
Figure 4  Map of Ithemba farms (indicated in white) and surrounding area of Electric City, Blue Downs, and Eersterivier (adapted from City of Cape Town Planning and Building Development Management Locality Map and courtesy of the SPP)
Figure 5  Satellite images illustrating the change in settlement at Ithemba between 2005 and 2015, with notable human settlement and building occurring in 2009

List of Acronyms

ANC  African National Congress
CCT  City of Cape Town
DA  Democratic Alliance
DAFF  Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
DRDLR  Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
EFF  Economic Freedom Fighters
ESTA  Extension of Tenure Security Act
GEAR  Growth Economic Employment Redistribution
IPILRA  Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act
IFA  Ithemba Farmers’ Association
LFTEA  Less Formal Township Establishment Act
LRMF  Land Rights Management Fund
MEC  Member of the Executive Council
PIE  Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land
PLAS  Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy
PLAAS  Institute of Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies
RDP  Reconstruction and Development Program
SPLUMA  Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act
SPP  Surplus People Project
TRA  Temporary Relocation Area
(WC)DHS  Department of Human Settlements (of the Western Cape)
WCHC  Western Cape High Court
WCPG  Western Cape Provincial Government
1. CHAPTER ONE
Introduction - Struggles for land in Cape Town

1.1. Struggles for land in Cape Town: from Khayelitsha to Ithemba

On Easter Monday April 6th 2015, reports emerged of a mass land invasion in Khayelitsha approximately twenty kilometres from the Cape Town central business district. Five hundred people had allegedly invaded state-owned land and began clearing vegetation and erecting structures on the land over a period of several days (Eye Witness News 2015). In response to the land occupation, the Economic Freedom Fighters’ (EFF) - a radical socialist party that emerged which has dominated headlines with their controversial and calls for Zimbabwe-style land occupations and expropriation without compensation - made a nationwide call to “identify open and unoccupied land wherever they choose” and indicated the invasion was part of a wider campaign that would involve land occupations in upper-class areas such as Bishopscourt, Camps Bay and Rondebosch Commons (Phakathi 2015). The local City of Cape Town (CCT) government condemned the land invasion ‘in the strongest possible terms’ and responded soon after the initial occupation by dispatching the Cape Town Anti-Land Invasion Unit to break down the erected structures (Phakathi 2015). An interim interdict was ordered to prevent further access to the land on April 8th, prompting the ‘invaders’ to respond to what they claimed was their unlawful eviction by initiating court proceedings against the state. They appealed to protection under the Prevention of Illegal Eviction From and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (PIE) and argued the Anti-Invasion unit had unlawfully dismantled their structures (Denel vs. Khayelitsha Occupiers 2015).

In newspaper articles about the invasion, those at Khayelitsha expressed their occupation as a response to their inability to find work and the failure of the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape to provide affordable housing, sanitation, water, and electricity (Eye Witness News 2015). Their occupation was framed as a way of vocalizing claims to land, access to state provisions, and making demands for integrated human settlement through both existing legal and insurgent channels. This was for example demonstrated by the EFF’s provincial spokesperson’s statement “if you want to remove the people from this land, they must provide alternative land” (Phaliso 2015).

The judgement on the case (Denel Soc Limited vs. Occupiers Erf 52676 Khayelitsha, 2015) delivered in June 2015 determined the respondents did not have rights as occupiers on the land and had not been settled on it before June 6th, the recent Khayelitsha invasion speaks to a broader politics of
claims-making unfolding on Cape Town’s urban peripheries\(^1\). Although the Khayelitsha invasion did not successfully translate into tenure security and service delivery, their use of land to sustain diversified livelihood strategies and to more broadly contest historical exclusion from urban opportunities and state provisions underpins land occupations in other areas of Cape Town including Mfuleni, Penhill, Jacobsdal, Philippi, Tamboerskloof and lastly, Ithemba – the focus of my thesis. Struggles over land in these areas, framed in terms of desires for farming and integrated human settlement, speak to the often overlooked ways land on the urban peripheries is being leveraged to facilitate broader demands for inclusion within the government’s post-apartheid dispensation and opportunities for work – and the potential for land as a basis of counter-hegemonic struggles in the city.

The Ithemba farmers are a group of approximately three hundred mostly poor, landless, and homeless people who began occupying state-owned land just a few kilometres away from the invasion at Khayelitsha approximately thirty years ago. The Ithemba farmers – like those at Khayelitsha - have used legal and extra-legal processes to sustain their \textit{de facto} rights to the land and to develop survival strategies drawing together land-based practices and continued access to the city. Both through an attempted legal settlement appealing to their long-term occupancy rights and by mobilizing around food sovereignty and farmer rights, the Ithemba occupants have continued to exercise \textit{de facto} rights to land – while securing legal representation, access to basic services, and a promise of tenure security in the form of a lease on alternative land or \textit{in-situ} development.

Land remains powerfully intertwined with notions of citizenship and entitlements in South Africa and has significant material value for livelihood security and for articulating demands for what Ferguson refers to as a ‘rightful share’ in the country’s wealth (2015). Both of these land occupations indicate the politics and possibilities of strategies from below that “connect rural and urban contexts, link formal and informal livelihoods, move between legality and illegality, and evade or invite governmental attention” (du Toit and Neves 2014, 847). Land occupations in the city reflect changing meanings and uses of land tied to historical loss and contemporary joblessness, urbanization, income inequality, and competition over resources. Moreover, land struggles in the Cape Metropole evoke a politics of difference and exclusion. Instead of seeing parallels between their struggles; for example, an

\(^1\) In this work I alternatively refer to the urban periphery as the rural-urban divide, urban edge, urban fringe and urban margins. I do not use these terms in a geographical sense, but tie it to conceptual notions of space and social experience, highlighting historical experiences racialized exclusion and access to the city.
older coloured woman at Ithemba spoke to me about the Khayelitsha invasion and did so in terms of exclusionary rights to land and ideas around a ‘rightful share’. She told me:

It’s not our land yet, we are still illegal here …but other people can’t just come in and take land here. I don’t know if you know what’s going on in Khayelitsha, around this corner - they burn the bush there, two – three weeks ago and now the people are taking the land. They are doing what they want to do. And they throw the stones at the people in the vehicles and burn tires and everything … we now so scared that they come in here. If they don’t get in there, they could come here (interview, April 2015)

Access to and control over land is not without its messy divisions and tensions along lines of race and class. I explore the legal and insurgent channels through which land has been accessed through both legal and insurgent channels – and the internal politics mediating differentiated land rights at Ithemba.

In this work, I investigate how struggles for land on the ‘outskirts’ of the city illustrate a politics of claims-making. As Gillian Hart notes in regards to the Bredell Occupation that occurred outside of Johannesburg in 2001, “it also dramatized land issues as a key potential site of counter-hegemonic struggle singularly lacking organized social forces, yet widely available as the basis for mobilization that could move in significantly different directions” (2002: 308). Taken together, the Ithemba occupation and the Khayelitsha invasion (as well as other land invasions in part for farming in Cape Town at Mfuleni, Penhill, Jacobsdal, Phillipi and Tamboerskloof and beyond) indicate a salient politics of claims-making premised on access to land as a basis of political inclusion and access to the city. The EFF’s support for land invasion - its incendiary calls for the landless to ‘take what is rightfully theirs’ and for a ‘new vision of agrarian revolution’ (Aliber 2015, Davis 2015) – cannot be wholly dismissed. Their demands for the state to use its capacity to expropriate land in the ‘public interest’ and for equitable access to South Africa’s natural resources and land (outlined in Section 25 of the constitution) resonated within emerging demands from below and evoke the 1955 Freedom Charter’s declaration that ‘the land should be shared among those who work it! … all shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose’. While these claims have been readily dismissed as neo-populist provocations, they indicate that struggles for land are expressed in conjunction with demands for inclusion in the post-apartheid period.

1.2. Research statement and objectives
This work argues access to land on the urban peripheries is crucial to the survival strategies and demands for inclusion among the urban poor in post-apartheid South Africa; its multifold uses illustrate the potential of the peripheries as sites of insurgent politics and practices. Using research on the Ithemba Farmers’ land occupation near Electric City, Cape Town, I investigate how the farmers’ *de facto* land rights have sustained hybrid land and urban-based strategies– and have been used by marginalized
populations to leverage demands for a ‘rightful share’ in the city and in the state. The objectives of this thesis are to:

1. Explore how land occupation has been used to establish *de facto* land rights sustaining insurgent practices and livelihoods that reflect peoples’ desires for hybrid livelihoods and integrated human settlements on the fringes of the city

2. Examine how land access on the urban peripheries has supported and sustained diversified livelihood strategies drawing together agriculture practices and urban income streams amidst high unemployment and homelessness in present-day South Africa

3. Investigate how broader experiences of racialized and classed exclusions can be reproduced within insurgent claims for inclusion - and historically situate them within apartheid legacies of social and spatial planning

My thesis attempts to contribute to new directions for land and agrarian questions in South Africa that shift the focus from a largely rural context to one linked to contemporary conditions of unemployment, urbanization, and land and urban-based livelihoods prevalent to the lives of many South Africans today. Furthermore, this work exists in conversation with broader discussions about claims-making and informality within urban space within geography, attempting to engage with the peripheries as potential spaces of contestation and agency, and question essentialist thinking about the peripheries as sites of poverty, marginality, and destitution.

1.3. Chapter breakdown

In the remainder of this chapter, I provide a brief summary of the Ithemba farmers’ occupation as well as the legal framework surrounding informal land rights in South Africa, my theoretical framework and methods. In Chapter Two, I bring discussions of the land question in relation to contemporary livelihood strategies and land struggles on Cape Town’s urban peripheries. I situate these contestations within the legacies of Cape Town’s historical social and spatial development under apartheid. In Chapter Three, I introduce my findings and investigate how the Ithemba farmers have established their *de facto* claim to land – and used it as a platform for making broader claims for livelihoods, political inclusion, and access to the city. Chapter Four examines how land has furthermore been used to support and sustain diversified livelihood strategies combining urban opportunities with land-based practices, illustrating how many at Ithemba have fallen into hard times. Chapter Five then explores the layers of legality, authority and exclusion mediating the relationship between the government and the farmers, and internally within the insurgent social order created on the farm. Lastly, Chapter Six provides some
concluding thoughts about the Ithemba occupation and the possibilities and limitations of insurgent claims for inclusion on Cape Town’s urban peripheries in the post-apartheid period.

1.4. Context of the Ithemba farmers’ land occupation

The Ithemba farm is located within the Cape Town Metropole close to the border of the Wineland District Municipality (Haysom 2012) – and lies adjacent to Electric City (as depicted in Figure 1 on the following page). The land was formerly used as a military base and a portion of the ground is currently used as the facilities for the Ithemba Labs, a scientific research facility operated by the National Research Foundation from which the farming group derives its name. The Ithemba farm is comprised of 189 plots, each roughly 65 by 35 metres in size and is home to an approximate 300 people, of which an estimated eighty households are farming.

The Ithemba Farmers’ Association (IFA) was established in 2003, according to a report written by Kofi Hope, a former manager at the Surplus People Project, an NGO which supported the farmers (2010). While technically the IFA is comprised of general members and an executive committee, the term ‘IFA’ was used by the farmers and other stakeholders to denote this smaller steering committee; it was also referred to it as ‘the executive’ or ‘the committee’. This governing body at the time of my research was made up of a chairperson, treasurer, secretary, and two sub-committee members) and had been elected five years ago. They are responsible for: allocating plots and overseeing the waiting list for land, collecting monthly subscription fees of R30 from the farmers; negotiating with the government and

Figure 1: City of Cape Town Locality Map of Erf (plot) 996 with shaded area indicating the location of the Ithemba farm (courtesy of the Surplus People Project)
representing the farmers’ interests in discussions about resettlement and in-situ development; securing resources, support, and services for the farmers; and mediating conflicts on the land.

Membership to the IFA reflected how the farmers and squatters are a highly stratified group, with a small number of predominantly coloured people controlling informal landholding rights and access to resources. The majority of those living at Ithemba are ‘coloured’, while only a handful of plots are owned or farmed by ‘Africans’ and there is one white household; of the thirty-one farmers I spoke to, two are African, one is white, and the rest are coloured. Those who ‘own’ plots are referred to as ‘farmers’ or ‘owners’ and a large number of them do not live on the property, but reside in nearby Eersterivier, Electric City, and Kuilsrivier and visit the farm several days a week or on the weekends. Some visit only when necessary – for example to collect money for an animal being sold, to provide supplies, or to pay workers. Many of the farmers hire farm hands to work on their plot and protect their land from theft or ‘squatters’; workers are compensated with access to accommodation and the workers I spoke to were paid wages between R800 and R1000 a month ($75 to $92 CAD). There is also a class of ‘wealthy’, coloured businessmen who hired others to do their livestock or crop farming. The executive was also exclusively coloured and comprised of relatively well-off and connected men and women who collected pensions or had access to other income streams, owned transportation and held waste food contracts with Shoprite and other supermarket chains.

The majority of those who live at Ithemba however, are poor and lack access to alternative housing or other sources of income. Some are hired as workers on peoples’ plots, while others do not farm and have gained access to land not through the IFA, but by ‘squatting’ on the land. It was evident that access to land at Ithemba is most central to the livelihoods of those who were the most marginalized at Ithemba, whose livelihoods, survival strategies, and rights of residence are tied to the land there to the greatest extent and whose voices was the least present within the association. Only a handful of plots had been allocated to African farmers and the two African farmers I spoke to explained their experiences of disenfranchisement. In chapter five, I elaborate on dynamics of exclusion and investigate experiences of racialized exclusion and resentment towards declining material conditions in the post-apartheid period, focusing on the feelings of resentment some of the coloured respondents expressed towards Africans. In this work, I draw on Mollett and Faria’s understanding of racialization as “a process

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2 Under apartheid, the population was divided into four racial categories: ‘white’, ‘coloured’, ‘African’, and ‘coloured’. While I recognize them as racialized social constructs, these terms continue to be salient in terms of expressing identity. Furthermore, in this work I use the term ‘black’ in the sense of black consciousness in South Africa to denote African and coloured commonality
whereby human differences are accorded differential treatment based upon hierarchical and stereotypical discourses and imaginings” (2013, 117-8) to better understand how experiences of exclusion along lines of race and class have been reproduced within the politics of claims-making at Ithemba and the use of insurgent practices to contest the legacies of apartheid exclusion, peoples’ livelihoods and struggles at Ithemba are highly stratified and have reproduced exclusion along lines of race and class.

Housing ranges significantly at Ithemba, reflecting these socioeconomic disparities. Many of the workers are housed in shacks built of scrap metal and wood, though a handful of farmers lived in large well-built and maintained houses with many rooms, nice yards, and solid structures for their animals. Some plots have been abandoned and people who were not farming have moved onto them and built small swelling. None of the houses have electricity, although two households I spoke to had purchased solar panels and two others had generators. A main water pipe also runs along the main road at Ithemba which leads to the power station at the back of the property, and people have illegally linked into the water and have access to a drip system.

The contribution of farming to peoples’ livelihoods at Ithemba vary drastically, ranging from being a mainstay, a supplementary source of income or food, as a weekend hobby, or as the basis of wage-labour relationships. Livestock farming is most widely practiced and most frequently with pigs because they are easy to feed, have large litters, and sell for several hundred rand each (approximately several hundred $ CAD depending on their size). However, chickens, goats, sheep, cows, ducks, rabbits, dogs, and fish are also bred at Ithemba. Others were growing crops – spinach, cabbage, potatoes, butternut, onions, tomatoes, herbs and medicinal plants - either exclusively or in addition to their livestock. In terms of agricultural production, livestock agriculture at Ithemba predominantly serves niche markets for meat in the townships or ceremonial or cultural needs, which they are able to meet at low prices in markets untapped by large food retailers (du Toit and Neves, 2014). The farmers sell their livestock – alive or slaughtered – to people who show up at their gates or to returning customers. Those who have the money to wait and access to refrigeration slaughter the animals themselves and sell the meat in small packets to their neighbours in the neighbourhoods where they live or to braai stalls in Khayelitsha and Gugulethu for higher prices. Vegetables are sold at roadside stalls and in some cases from peoples’ plots or are resold at train stations and street vendors.

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3 barbeque
Many people use their plots in ways that have little to do with agricultural production or distribution that tie together urban incomes, state transfers, and social networks of exchange (du Toit and Neves 2014). Furthermore plots at Ithemba support a range of businesses such as fruit wholesaling, roof thatching, palette building and a mechanic - all speaking to the complex layers of legality and informality at Ithemba. The Ithemba occupation has been shaped by distinct social and spatial networks of distribution, exchange, and social reciprocity that mediate differential access to: on and off-farm work, wages and kin networks as well as farming inputs, transportation, feed, seeds, training and support, breeding stock, expired supermarket food waste for pigs (and people), market access, and processing opportunities. In chapter three, I outline how survival strategies at Ithemba sustain off-farm and non-farm related incomes and provide access to urban opportunities.

1.5. Legislative framework for informal land rights in South Africa
Constitution

South Africa’s constitution outlines an expansive protection of socioeconomic and livelihood rights (Beall et al. 2002). Section 27 for example, protects social security and assistance in cases where people are unable to support themselves as well as rights to food and water, while Section 25 protects peoples’ rights to land and rights to adequate housing in Section 26. However, the Constitution has not translated into protections for the mass numbers of unemployed and impoverished citizens in post-apartheid South Africa. Specifically in terms of land, Hall observes, “the hard-won provisions in the Constitution for expropriation of property, for land reform purposes and with compensation, have been barely used, despite plenty of political rhetoric to the contrary” (2014, 7). The Constitution was designed to balance protections from both illegal evictions and unlawful occupations and the protection of private property rights with needs for redress in the ‘public interest’, defined as including ‘the nation’s commitment to land reform and to reforms intended to bring about equitable access to all South Africa’s natural resources’ in Section 25.5 of the Constitution.

South Africa’s democratic transition involved attempts to drastically expand citizenship rights to redress entrenched inequalities and exclusion associated with colonial and apartheid injustices. In recent years, South Africa’s system of non-contributory state transfers has drastically expanded and alongside it, so have opportunities for political and economic inclusion through the grant system. However, the progressive and inclusive protections in the constitution have not been widely nor consistently implemented to protect the landless, homeless, wageless, and those unable to afford service delivery in practice. While the Constitution and subsequent legislation in the years following 1994 lay the
foundation for inclusive formal citizenship rights, such protections were curbed when the ANC abandoned its socially expansive Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) and replaced it with Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), a market-led approach including austerity and liberalization measures (see Bond 2000, Miraftab and Wills 2005, Hunter and Posel 2012).

**Occupancy rights**

The 1996 Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act of 1996 (IPIRLA), the Extension of Tenure Security Act of 1997 (ESTA) and the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land of 1998 (PIE) are all key pieces of legislation protecting occupancy rights and tenure security.

IPIRLA confers people with informal rights to land in cases involving land being taken without force, openly, and without permission of the registered owners. Land must have also been occupied continuously for five years or more prior to 31 December 1997. IPIRLA was significant in determining that “no one with *de facto* occupation, use, and access rights to land could be deprived of those rights without their consent or compensation on a basis similar to that of expropriation” (Claassens 2015, 80).

ESTA is intended to extend the long-term tenure security of occupiers of land and regulate evictions. ESTA focuses on land on which occupiers are not the registered owners and on which they have either the owners’ express or tacit consent to occupy the property. Section 4 of ESTA outlines the measures created to facilitate the long-term tenure of security for occupiers, and provides grant subsidies to enable occupiers and those in need of long-term tenure to acquire rights to land and to facilitate on-site or off-site development. In 2012, the government admitted its failures securing tenure and other relative rights of farm-dwellers and workers. Amendments were put forth in the 2013 ESTA Amendment Bill, further developing regulations on the rights of occupiers and mechanisms for handling disputes in an attempt to address high rates of evictions among occupiers, to protect rights for secondary occupiers, and provide alternative accommodation for evictees. Yet the failure to implement the existing act is the biggest obstacle to protecting those with tenure insecurity and the amendment will do little to improve their lives and access to land if legislation already in place is not enforced.

4 Consent becomes more difficult to dispute by the owner the longer the person has been in occupation of the land, thereby creating grounds for people to claim status as a long-term land occupant. Furthermore, subsequent court cases have determined grounds for giving equal weight to tacit and express consent (PGWC 2003)

5 De Jager writes, ESTA “has not accomplished its goals. An oversimplified ‘one-size-fits-all approach has had unintended consequences such as the widespread demolition of farm worker accommodation, farmers hesitating to employ workers who need accommodation, and a near-total freeze on the development of farm worker housing and related services” (2015, 123)
PIE came to replace the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1952 - an apartheid-era legislation used to enforce influx controls. PIE prohibits unlawful evictions and puts procedures in place for the eviction of unlawful occupiers, giving special consideration to the rights of the elderly, children, disabled persons, and female-headed households. PIE enables local authorities to carry out evictions in the ‘public interest’ (see above for definition), provided it is not ‘just and equitable’ for the occupants to remain on the land and in cases where unlawful occupiers have been on the land for over six months, the court must consider whether alternative land can be made available by the municipality or other organ of the state for their relocation. Furthermore, in determining whether an eviction order should be granted, section 6 of the act indicates that the court must give consideration to the circumstances under which the unlawful occupier occupied the land, the period they have resided on the land, and the availability of suitable alternative accommodation or land to them. It is worth noting that PIE has almost never been implemented.

Informal land access

The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) emerged in 2006 in response to longstanding criticism of the ‘willing buyer, willing seller’ model (for an overview of the shift of land reform from pro-poor to market-driven see Cousins and Scoones 2010; Lahiff 2007; Hall 2004, 2015; Aliber and Cousins 2013; Aliber 2015). Existing land reform resources have been channeled towards fewer numbers of commercially viable black producers and those excluded from state provisions or tenure security are framed as threatening the state and its security and development, and have evoked fears of Zimbabwe-style land appropriations. (see Aliber and Hall 2012; Cousins and Scoones 2010; Bernstein 2013; Cousins 2013). Through PLAS, the state has directly purchased land instead of disbursing grants used by beneficiaries to buy land through the market (Hall 2015). Though explicitly pro-poor and aimed to assist black people with insecure tenure rights, PLAS has operated through relatively short-term leases that provide little tenure security (de Jager 2015) and holds producers to production standards outlined in agreed to business plans complying to a criteria of ‘production discipline’ operating on a use it or lose it basis as of 2011 (Hall 2015, 138).

The Municipal Commonage policy has historically involved municipalities or churches providing land to poor local inhabitants to supplement their incomes and support grazing and subsistence production (Claassens 2015). Much of the land held under commonage was released to commercial farmers under apartheid. However Ruth Hall suggests that prioritizing access to public land
through municipal commonage for example, could play a crucial role within the livelihoods of people maintaining an urban base and supplementing their incomes with livestock or cultivation (Hall 2015).

Lastly, the CCT’s 2007 Urban Agriculture Framework attempts to promote agricultural activities among poor urban families and increasing their access to land, infrastructure, extension services and inputs. The program aims to support urban agricultural development through: home-base activities on back or front yards; community-based activities on public facilities; open spaces or un-utilized land; micro-farmers engaged in vegetable gardening and animal husbandry; and small-emerging farmers attempting to farm full-time (CCT 2007). However much of the support that the city provides is contingent on tenure security, which excludes those with the most vulnerable tenure arrangements and who are the most reliant on subsistence-based cultivation and keeping livestock – despite the policy’s emphasis on using under-utilized land. The limited scope and resourcing of the framework has meant that it is inapplicable to those who need it most.

**Equitable human settlements**

Here I briefly outline the government’s approach of providing suitable alternative land or supporting in-situ development for occupiers associated with some of the legislation mentioned above – as well as proactive measures being taken to prevent unlawful occupations and to address the continued social and geographical exclusion of the urban poor from the city. Hendler suggests there has been a continuation since 1994 of ‘apartheid-era segregation and matchbox structures’ on the urban peripheries that have been ‘unfavourable to peoples’ access to the city by virtue of their separation from public facilities and opportunities to work, socialize, and shop (Hendler 2015, 99). Land use management strategies and frameworks have emerged in an attempt to address these inequalities and outline the importance of building more equitable and integrated human settlements that connect historically disenfranchised populations on the margins of the city to existing urban infrastructure, livelihood opportunities, infrastructure, transportation, churches, schools, and shops – by exploring in-situ development, identifying alternative land for relocation, and targeting informal areas for tenure upgrading. (Oldsfield 2003; PGWC 2003; HDA 2004; Hunter and Posel 2012).

James’ observation, “the desire to acquire or retain access to land exists alongside the real or desired capacity to earn money in the urban sector” (2001, 93) and reflects the large number of urban dwellers who draw together urban and land-based incomes and resources and the numerous ways that land on the fringe of the city supports survival strategies in the absence of wage labour (Claassens 2015). Attempts to proactively prevent land occupations developed from the 1997 White Paper, which
recognized the imperative of overcoming the historical legacies of spatial planning in post-apartheid housing settlements by outlining the importance of addressing “urban landlessness and homelessness by directing development of affordable housing and services to unused or under-used land within present urban boundaries and close to employment opportunities” – and further indicates land evictions should be a last resort to deal with land invasions (Department of Land Affairs 1997, 35).

More recent legislative frameworks and policies have promoted spatially, socially, and economically integrated human settlements, such as the 2004 ‘Breaking New Ground’ program for the development of sustainable human settlements and the 2013 Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA). SPLUMA attempts to create a uniform system for developing socially and economically inclusive and sustainable human settlements intended to address the vestiges of spatial planning and land use laws based on racial inequality and segregation and to better integrate informal land use into formal land use management. Finally, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (DAFF) has highlighted in its 2012/13- 2016/17 Strategic Plan that an encompassing framework is needed that uses ‘agriculture to support residents of informal settlement on the fringes of towns and cities’ (DAFF 2012).

These and other policies highlight the expectations that have been placed on municipalities to provide its residents with affordable housing in mixed land-use zones and to stimulate local economic development for those unable to access formal land and property markets (Hendler 2015). He further indicates:

Financially and economically sustainable cities offer a platform from which the urban poor could pursue a better quality of life, provided that municipalities engage with their demands and channel sufficient resources to collectively identified areas. The key question is whether the state (in all spheres – local, provincial and national) has the political will as well as the capacity to implement the required macroeconomic, social, and local infrastructure strategies (2015, 99).

Similarly du Toit suggests new ways of thinking about equitable human settlements, local government, and land use and spatial planning provide promise for contesting apartheid spatial legacies (2013). At present, the hybrid livelihoods of urban dwellers are not adequately supported by existing laws and policies and informal land access and agricultural pockets of production and distribution in the city are misaligned with existing frameworks.

Beyond legal rights: informality and claims-making

As indicated above, comprehensive legislation exists to protect informal land rights, to create mechanisms for accessing land, and to support integrated and sustainable settlements. However there remains a disconnect between existing policies - or the failure to implement or enforce them - and
peoples’ everyday lives and desires. Despite the progress made in the post-apartheid period in rolling out access to state services and cash transfers, historical exclusion from accessing state resources and urban opportunities have not adequately been addressed. Hendler notes that “new housing schemes have continued the apartheid pattern of rows and rows of ‘matchbox’ structures located on the urban periphery. The continued spatial marginalization of the majority, inherited from the last, has persisted” (Hendler 2015, 102). Rising inequality and the disappearance of work opportunities have intensified conditions of homelessness, landlessness, and precarious livelihoods and have seen people “take initiative to advance their rights to decent housing” (Hendler 2014, 94).

Claims for accessing land, for receiving support from the state, and accessing land have occurred beyond existing legislative channels in the post-apartheid period - and reflect demands for new kinds of claims for inclusion and distribution (Von Holdt et al. 2011, Holston 2009). These channels, according to du Toit and Neves, have been “an important means for marginalized and politically restive populations to register their demands” (2014, 848). Miraftab and Wills’ analysis below is useful for understanding the limitations of SPLUMA and other such policies supporting integrated sustainable settlements and land use policies;

“A planning practice that relies not merely on the high commands of the state but on situated practices of citizens entails an epistemological shift. Planning theory and education in articulation of citizen participation need to be explicit about working with both the resources of the state and the resources of citizens, but the latter should not be limited to those spaces of public participation sanctioned by the state as invited spaces of citizenship but needs to include the invented spaces of citizenship.” (2005, 211).

Desires for integrated human settlement and tenure security that address peoples’ historical exclusion from accessing state resources cannot simply be achieved through existing state channels. Here, Holstons’ work on insurgency and claims-making is useful for understanding how exclusion has been contested through everyday struggles for basic resources on the urban peripheries (Holston 2009), alongside Miraftab and Wills’ work on invented or invited spaces of citizenship, which recognize the range of spaces within the informal arena where citizenship is practiced. Invited spaces are produced when grassroots struggles are supported by NGOs and legitimized by donors or government interventions, while invented spaces are created from the collective actions of the poor and directly confront authorities and challenge the status quo (2006). These spaces however are mutually constituted and dynamic in nature and can be used to understand the shifting nature of the struggles at Ithemba. The Ithemba occupation represent far more than struggles over housing; their use of occupation to establish de facto rights and to support opportunities for housing, agricultural and urban wage-earning opportunities, access to urban infrastructure and transportation, social networks, schools and shopping –
illustrate struggles for integrated human settlements and indicate more broadly a politics of claims-making unfolding on the urban peripheries.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

To situate my investigation of land’s significant value and contributions to livelihoods and as a basis of claims-making in post-apartheid South Africa, I explore the peripheries as a space for claims-making, and ‘informality’. Specifically, this work focuses on the urban peripheries as potential sites of counter-hegemonic struggles, taking the form of land occupations. The urban margins have been assumed to be spaces of poverty and desolation, but I draw on scholarship rethinking them as dynamic and ‘emergent spaces of invention and agency’ (Holston and Caldeira 2011, 18) – and as sites for new forms of urban citizenship. This thinking follows work striving to ‘decenter urban analysis’ (Roy 2011, 232) and to question pre-conceived notions of ‘the core’ and ‘the margins’, by highlighting the overlooked ways they constitute one another in the building of the urban and underpin historical and contemporary experiences of exclusion and struggles for a ‘rightful share’.

My work at Ithemba is grounded in understandings of struggles not as automatically existing, but as situated within and shaped by histories, memories, livelihoods, landscapes, and identities - and is influenced by Gramscian scholarship on how struggles emerge from everyday realities (Hart 2002). Consequently, I attempt to develop ‘critical ethnographies’ – wherein categories used to make sense of the world become more sophisticated and aligned with everyday practices to “contribute to the production of concrete concepts” (Hart 2008, 687) – by focusing on land, identities, and struggles on Cape Town’s urban peripheries as contingent, complex, and dynamic. Hart highlights the importance of grasping “complex back-and-forth processes of contestation and acquiescence through which multiple, interconnected arenas in state and civil society have been remaking one another – and to the slippages, openings, contradictions and possibilities of alliances” (2008:684).

Li’s work on ‘the will to improve’ and governmentality is helpful for understanding how the Ithemba farmers have assembled their claims to land, and the forces that threaten to destabilize them (2007). Li explains how state interventions are “are assembled from diverse elements – discourses, institutions, forms of expertise and social groups whose deficiencies need to be corrected, among other things” (263, 2007). This dynamic and dialectic relationship demonstrates how the state is drawn together as a heterogeneous entity, and how its mandates, capacities, interventions, and attempts to reach ‘the right disposition of things’ do not always align (Foucault 1991). This framework helps to engage in the complex ways both legal and extra-legal claims have been forged on the state - and how the
negotiations over the tenure security, material resources, and supports they have received and been promised. The demands of the Ithemba farmers and the nature of their struggles reflect dialectic processes of contestation, negotiation, and compromise. By tracing how land has been assembled as a basis of livelihoods and claims-making on the urban peripheries, I highlight the ‘messy conjectures’ and power relations within the Ithemba farmers’ negotiations with the government (Li 2007) - and the internal tensions within the farming community that reveal the layers of legitimacy, formality, and legality within the farmers’ occupation.

Peripheries as sites of contestation

A central focus of this thesis is how land is socially produced, contested, and inscribed (Li 2014, Blomley 2003). Blomley indicates that tools of inscription are used to create a world wherein “space is marked and divided into places where people are put” (2003, 127). In the process, space is both desocialized and depoliticized - and used to enforce exclusionary access to and control over land (Blomley 2003, 127). South Africa’s history of racialized land dispossession and continued experiences of differentiated citizenship – defined by von Holdt et al. as the differential distribution of treatment, rights, and privileges among formally recognized citizens according to differences in education, property, race, gender and occupation (2011) - rests on the use of land as an instrument of exclusion. Boundaries have often been constructed as neutral and natural, yet these spaces and their inscription as frontiers have frequently involved enforcement, violence, and exclusion to protect private property rights (Blomley 2003). According to Hart, “boundaries are always socially constructed and contested; and the specificity of a place – however defined – arises from the particularity of interrelations with what lies beyond it, that intersect or come into conjuncture in particular ways” (2002, 35).

The demarcation of land under Western property systems in state divisions in landscapes and ways of being in the world that do not necessarily reflect the practices of those they attempt to control (Blomley 2003). It is therefore important to question the power and politics behind the construction of boundaries and their spatiality as sites of struggle and questioning state legality and legitimacy. I conceive of the urban margins as important boundaries and sites of contestation - and investigate how divisions between the urban periphery and the core have been produced in relation to historical and ongoing experiences of exclusion.

AbdouMaliq Simone’s work highlights the importance of peripheries to urban life - as possible ‘generative space’ and as sites for ‘potentially destabilizing the centre’ (2010). He refers to peripheries as ‘space in-between’, of which one prominent form is the ‘interstitial zone between urban and rural’
(45). His work stresses that the periphery cannot be topographically defined, but is understood as a “range of fractures, discontinuities, or ‘hinges’ disseminated over urban territories” and as a potential space for innovation and adaption (2010, 45). Similarly, Caldeira and Holston refer to the peripheries as the ‘popular and politicized way of designating the settlement of people beyond a city center’s perimeter of urbanized and legalized services’ and suggest that as sites, ‘both place and concept shift in location and meaning through time’ (2011, 21). Central to their understanding of the peripheries is the ‘social production and circulation of space’ through which the centre and the peripheries are connected and constructed (Holston and Caldeira 2011, 21). They identify the peripheries as “the site of unprecedented demands by residents for citizen rights – rights to urban services and infrastructure as well as to political and legal participation” (2011, 21).

Rethinking informality

Constructions of the peripheries are intertwined with the distinctions drawn between formal and informal – and the assumptions that exist around informality on the margins as ‘legally, socially, spatially and visually’ illegitimate (McFarlane 2012). McFarlane and Roy’s analyses move beyond dualistic thinking around formality-informality that has tended to overlook dynamic survival strategies, networks, politics and claims that challenge the ‘urban centre’. McFarlane works towards an understanding of both formality and informality as ‘particular forms of practice’ (2012, 90) that are negotiated and valued in ways that are constantly shifting. Similarly, Roy explains informality as:

a heuristic device that uncovers the ever-shifting urban relationship between the legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, authorized and unauthorized... that serves to deconstruct the very basis of state legitimacy and its various instruments: maps, surveys, property, zoning and, most importantly, the law (2009, 81)

McFarlane, too, indicates this ostensible division between formal and informal has been widely conceived in terms of spatial and organizational dualisms (2012). ‘Informality’ he suggests ‘is often assumed to be territorialised within “slum settlements on the legal, political, economic, social and environmental margins of the city’ (2012, 91). Second, he argues that ‘informality is represented by unorganised, unregulated labour, although in practice, such labour is often highly organised and disciplined’ (2012, 91). Drawing on the above scholarship, I aim to render visible the complex relationships between formality and informality - and the periphery and the centre - and the ways they constitute urban life (McFarlane 2012). I question the Ithemba occupation as occurring within space marginal to the city, and furthermore challenge sweeping divisions between formal and informal that fail to recognize the everyday realities and struggles that shape peoples’ livelihoods and desires for urban opportunities. This is accomplished by engaging with the often unwaged, extra-legal, unregulated - yet
highly organized - networks for on and off-farm production, distribution, and exchange occurring on the peripheries at Ithemba that tie the margins to the city ‘centre’ (McFarlene 2012, 91). Miraftab suggests that,

By showing that formal and informal spaces are not self-contained sites of politics but porous, each shaping the other (Hassim 1999: 12), feminist scholarship in South Africa strengthens the more general feminist challenge to binary constructs such as public/private and active/passive, and to the traditional assumption that political participation and citizenship only takes place in the sphere of formal politics (2006, 205)

These strategies from below beyond legal channels highlight struggles on the urban peripheries in the post-apartheid period.

Claims-making on the peripheries

Since 1994, economically marginalized populations have experienced expanded rights as citizens and legal protections attempting to redress the racialized exclusion of black South Africans under apartheid. Monson suggests the rolling out of liberal rights “introduced a pathway to more substantive inclusion in the city for politically excluded ‘black’ South Africans and:

‘produced a de jure citizenship that was both political and material. Although this form of citizenship was non-racial, the material effects of history produced a highly stratified citizenry - those who had already gained full citizenship through their existing capacity to access rights, such as to land and housing, and those entitled to these rights but subject to their ‘progressive realization’”(2015, 134)

The expansion of peoples’ legally protected rights has, according to Miraftab and Wills, not provided sufficient channels for addressing the realities and immediate needs for those unable to access their legally protected rights (2005). Frustration over differentiated experiences of citizenship and continued economic and urban exclusion have underpinned the emergence of ‘insurgent’ or invented/invited citizenship from peripheral spaces and marginalized populations (Holston 2009; von Holdt et al. 2011; Miraftab 2006). These alternative forms of citizenship are ‘active, engaged, and grounded in civil society’ (Friedmann 2002, 76) and express a ‘claim for inclusion by the structurally excluded’ (Monson 2015, 149). They move beyond formal citizenship rights to an array of entitlements, which have been conceived by some as a ‘right to the city’ (Blokland et al. 2015).

People have relied on both legal and extra-legal channels for making claims for constitutionally protected rights to land, mineral wealth, housing, service delivery, and water for those who cannot access them through the market. Miraftab and Wills suggest:

The legal procedures and formal channels … are used when advantageous and defied when they are found unjust … When formal channels fail, the poor use extremely innovative strategies, which create alternative channels and spaces to assert their rights to the city, negotiate their wants, and actively practice their citizenship (2005, 207)
Von Holdt et al. (2011), du Toit and Neves (2014), Monson (2015), and Miraftab and Wills (2005) bring discussions about insurgent citizenship into the South African context and investigate how claims for resources have been framed in the post-apartheid period in ways that evoke ‘traditions of popular struggle’ and that have been used to contest the entrenchment of unequal citizenship (du Toit and Neves 2014, 848; Blokland et al. 2015).

It is through the ‘mundane conditions of everyday life’ that these insurgent demands on the margins emerge and that hopes for the transition towards full citizenship rights are expressed (Monson 2015); the Ithemba farmers’ land occupation has been used to meet everyday needs in the absence of alternatives and their struggles express broader political claims over space in the city. Monson articulates that land occupation is a political process that is linked to struggles over citizenship; it has both been a “tool in the national struggle for the political life of ‘black’ South Africans and racial equality in South Africa” (Monsom 2015, 136) and combines “the mundane politics of ‘surplus’ life with the revolutionary politics of the anti-apartheid struggle, embodying an insurgent claim for both the material and political rights of citizenship” (2015, 136). ‘Illegality’ according to Holston and Caldeira, makes access to land and housing possible. That is, regardless of its specific complexion, illegal occupation is both the only means of access to land for most citizens, and paradoxically, an illegality that initiates the legislation of property claims. That struggles for legal property in turn regularly and predictably mobilizes citizens into broader movements to demand full “rights to the city”, new kinds of participation in law, and a new participatory citizenship of equality (2011, 22)

Although land struggles and squatting have long occurred in South Africa, the kinds of demands and claims that have emerged in the post-apartheid period can be understood as a ‘new politics of distribution’ as explained by Ferguson in his new book (2015). Distributive claims are, according to Ferguson:

rooted in a conviction that citizens (and particularly poor and black citizens) are the rightful owners of a vast national wealth (including mineral wealth) of which they have been unjustly deprived through a historic process of racialized dispossession – a conception that provides a very different, and much more politicized justification for cash payments than is available in the usual framework of ‘social assistance’ (2015, 26).

These new ways of thinking about making claims and a ‘rightful share’ are contextualized within the disappearance of waged labour in South Africa and changing livelihoods. Du Toit and Neves indicate households in South Africa use a heterogeneous mix of income streams and activities derived from agrarian production, reciprocal exchange, formal and informal employment, and state cash transfers (2014). They further elaborate that these strategies “involve the integration from ‘below’ of urban and rural spaces, formal and informal income, and which simultaneously take shape outside the regulatory spaces conferred by the state, and make use of the rights and opportunities created by law and formality”
(2014, 834). Their analysis of hybrid livelihoods and survival strategies is central to my thesis and for grappling with how livelihoods on the urban margins are assembled and the significant ways that land on the urban margins support and sustain them.

Politics of differentiated citizenship

According to Blokland et al., urban citizenship is about ‘expressing, if not producing, difference, and how the fragmentation of claims affects urban citizenship and the right to the city with its universal, all-inclusive ideal’ (2015, 657). Similarly, Von Holdt et al. emphasize how rapid processes of class formation and growing competition over resources on the urban margins have intensified struggles over identities in the post-apartheid period and have shaped processes of inclusion and exclusion (2011). Du Toit and Neves use the concept of ‘adverse incorporation’ to highlight that although large numbers of the poor black majority are excluded from wage-earning opportunities, they – as the ANC’s political base – are central as voters and also as consumers (2014). Du Toit and Neves analytic moves beyond simplistic notions of informality, exclusion, marginalization, and precarity that fail to capture nuanced conditions of diversified livelihoods, wagelessness, and counter-hegemonic struggles in contemporary South Africa (2014). Similarly, Ferguson notes,

people whose labor is no longer wanted have acquired other kinds of power – specifically, political rights within a democratic regime whose political base is precisely the impoverished and historically excluded masses of “the poor”. And this regime has felt the need to “deliver” a range of goods and services to people whose claims are increasingly based neither on labor nor its reproduction but instead on such things as citizenship and political pressure. (2015, 12)

These more dynamic understandings of inclusion and informality in South Africa are useful for understanding uneven experiences of political and economic inclusion central to my analysis of the Ithemba farmers’ livelihoods, land occupation, and the experiences of uneven membership and hierarchies on the land.

1.7. Research methods

My fieldwork took place between February and June 2015, during which time I lived in Cape Town and visited the Ithemba farm on a frequent basis to conduct interviews and direct observation. It is also worth noting that during my time conducting research at Ithemba, I also interned with the Institute of Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape with Ruth Hall. Her insight into my research, my attendance to their 20th anniversary conference and symposium, as well as the policy analysis work that I carried out for her and Ben Cousins were incredibly informative and provided a space and a stimulating academic context in which to develop my thoughts and situate my findings. I also interned once again for the SPP, although it was predominantly in the capacity of doing
my own research but also accompanied the SPP on some of their fieldwork and attended events, with the Rural Women’s Assembly opposing farm worker evictions being of note. The SPP generously provided me with logistical support, opportunities to discuss my work and thoughts, and access to documents. At the end of my field research, I had the opportunity to present my findings to the staff of the SPP and had a very constructive conversation about my research and how the SPP can use my findings to move forward in their relationship with the Ithemba farmers and best support their struggles. I will also create a community report to share with the SPP and the Ithemba farmers upon the completion of my thesis. It was incredibly helpful to have the support and opportunities to develop my research through academic and policy oriented discussions at PLAAS and through the SPP’s advocacy and community-based work.

I was able to gain entry to the Ithemba farmers using connections to the SPP that I had developed during my time as an intern for the SPP in 2013. During this time, I had visited Ithemba with a staff member of the SPP, and had spoken with some of the farmers and taken photographs for the SPP. Consequently, I went into my fieldwork with a basic familiarity with Ithemba and used the SPP’s relationship with the IFA to secure research permission and to gain access to Ithemba. Over time, I developed my own connections with farmers with no familiarity or relationship with the SPP. Conversations with farmers both who supported and questioned the IFA, revealed hierarchies and experiences of exclusion among those at Ithemba - as well as varying and complex relationships with government actors, the SPP, the Right to Agrarian Reform for Food Sovereignty Campaign in South Africa (Food Sovereignty Campaign - which the IFA is a member of), and squatters.

I conducted most of my interviews in English, although had the help of an Afrikaans translator, Jane, for some of them. The majority of land occupations at Ithemba are coloured and spoke Afrikaans as their first language and English as their second. An Afrikaans translator, Jane assisted with some interviews where people felt more comfortable speaking Afrikaans or switching between Afrikaans and English. Jane’s past experience working at Ithemba for the SPP and her familiarity with the area, not far from her home in Delft, lent invaluable insight and created a more comfortable and familiar atmosphere for interview and focus group participants. I also spoke to several people whose first language was isiXhosa, however those I spoke to were comfortable speaking to me in English and no translator was required.

The methods I used to collect data during my fieldwork included semi-structured interviews, focus groups, direct observation and document/ policy analysis. I selected key informants using snowball and convenience sampling based on their accessibility and knowledge about the changing
conditions of smallholder production (Berg 1998; Overton and van Dierman 2003). Smallholders were also selected using snowball and convenience sampling and considerations were made to ensure widespread representation of gender, age, race, socioeconomic standing and farming type to represent diversity at Ithemba to the best of my ability.

Before explaining my methods, I want to briefly detail some of the limitations I experienced during my fieldwork. I had some difficulties conducting extensive direct observation because concerns for my safety. During my first visit to Ithemba, I was warned not to wander the farm on my own because of incidences of car theft, robberies and assaults. I was therefore forced to rely more heavily on direct observations made while being accompanied in some cases while walking between farms and learning much about the daily happenings at Ithemba in casual conversations that occurred during these times. This proved to be a good time to probe or corroborate information, to ask questions about peoples’ practices at their farms and to see the various day to day activities of those living and working at Ithemba.

Furthermore, I was unable to conduct as many focus groups as I had hoped due to internal politics and animosity among the farmers at Ithemba. Divisions were rife because of attempts to create competing committees and charges against the existing committee of lacking transparency, democracy and accountability resulting in members of the IFA both being dismissed and leaving the association. I also intended to use stratified quota sampling based on the IFA’s membership list and a matrix to stratify the population and ensure proportional representation (Berg 1988). However, the membership lists I received from Ithemba were out of date. Snowball and convenience sampling became the most effective methods because of challenges contacting the farmers to arrange to meet. Many of those at Ithemba did not have cell phones and those that did often were unable to charge them because of the lack of electricity at Ithemba - therefore I relied heavily on personal connections I made with farmers to seek out research participants.

First, I carried out twenty-five semi-structured interviews with smallholders at Ithemba and an additional 6 key informant interviews with NGO workers, consultants, and government officials. Participants were asked for their verbal consent and permission to record before interviews were started and questions focused on: their agricultural practices and the contributions of subsistence/ small-scale production to their incomes, multiple livelihoods strategies, and household food security; the obstacles and opportunities associated with production, off/ non-farm incomes including remittances and state transfers to smallholders; the significance of accessing urban resources, opportunities and networks to
their ability farm, work and live; their struggles for land at Ithemba; and the affective qualities of farming and living at Ithemba and the multifold meanings of land to them. While I had prepared an interview question guide, I loosely followed it and developed it over time as my research became more nuanced, in order to address the messy and complex convergence of forces, actors, beliefs, conflicts, and contradictions that emerged on the ground. I also found a semi-structured format fitting because it allowed people to talk about their life histories, which allowed us to develop a closer personal relationship and for rich details to emerge. Smallholder interviews were bookended by interviews with staff at the SPP, the DRDLR (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform), Phuhlisani (a consulting firm hired through the DRDLR), as well as executive members of the IFA.

Second, six focus groups were held with smallholders at Ithemba on an informal basis for the reasons mentioned above – but involved discussions with women, youth, livestock farming, semi-subsistence producers and elite farmers. These small group discussions furthered my understanding of livelihood struggles and strategies at Ithemba, land’s meanings and uses, justifications for the land occupation and processes of claims-making and relationships between farmers, NGOs, government and the IFA.

Third, direct observation was carried out at Ithemba, most often before and between interviews. Observations and interactions with small-scale farmers engaged in their day-to-day farming activities at Ithemba were gathered after receiving their permission to participate in my research. These explorations gave me a better understanding of the scope and scale of smallholder production, labour relations, and access to/ participation in informal markets for agricultural and non-agricultural production at Ithemba. I got an idea of how many people were living at Ithemba, how regularly people were there, who lived there and who didn’t, who had workers on their farm and who didn’t, who was squatting, farming or using Ithemba for other business opportunities, what kinds of crops were being grown and the range of livestock, the existence and distribution of food waste contracts, the presence of the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements and the farmers’ relationships with each other, the SPP, and surrounding community members.

Fourth, I have used document and policy analysis during and after my research at Ithemba. Through my internships at PLAAS and the SPP, as well as through contact with the IFA committee members and other research participants, I was able to gather an extensive collection of documents pertaining to Ithemba’s land struggles, court proceedings, government interactions and the police framework and legislation pertaining to their case.
Generalizability and Positionality

I think it is important to briefly reflect on my role as an outsider doing research in South Africa, and to recognize the impacts my positionality had on my research and the relationships that I formed. My socio-economic, racial, and gendered positionality afforded me many privileges throughout my research. For example, I often felt that being a young women, Canadian, and perceptively coloured meant I was received as less of a threat or an outsider and people at Ithemba went out of their way to make sure I was safe. I also recognize that my interactions, knowledge, and ability to understand the struggles and situated realities of those who participated in my research was limited, in part for these very reasons. I am also left feeling uncomfortable with how disconnected my life and work felt from those who had participated in my research once I returned to Canada. I have spent a time reflecting on my research as extractive and self-enriching experience of such academic research and engagements, although having had the opportunity to present my initial findings to the SPP created a productive space for thinking through the SPP’s relationship with the IFA and how the support that they provide can become more inclusive, equitable, and accessible way. I intend on submitting a report to the SPP further elaborating on this following the completion of my thesis.
2. CHAPTER TWO
Rethinking the land question on Cape Town’s urban peripheries

In this chapter I explore Cape Town’s ‘interconnected historical geographies’ (Hart 2008, Miraftab 2012) to investigate how past experiences of dispossession, displacement communities, livelihoods associated with apartheid’s exclusionary landscape have shaped contemporary urban struggles for accessing the city and accessing the state. I engage with the land question by bridging historical processes of dispossession with displaced urban futures and contemporary urban desires, livelihoods, and claims. I first explore the land question in relation to the changing nature of agriculture, urbanization, and livelihoods amidst the crisis of labour in South Africa. I do this in order to situate the Ithemba farmers’ land occupation and their demands on the state for inclusive citizenship and access to urban opportunities. Land is profoundly tied to experiences or memories of loss, and peoples’ assertion of themselves as political subjects (James 2013); its occupation has been used to express wider claims for a ‘rightful share’ in the state and to support hybrid livelihoods on the urban fringes.

2.1. The agrarian question of labour in contemporary South Africa
The land question in the most basic sense is concerned with how land is used and accessed, and the various ways it is associated with the reproduction of labour and capital (Ntsebeza and Hall 2007). It has been particularly salient in South Africa because of the history of dispossession, racialized spatial planning, and ongoing experiences of loss, inequality, and injustice in South Africa. The ‘agrarian question of labour’, which examines the changing conditions of labour and its contributions to livelihoods and reproduction, provides a useful starting point for exploring the land question in South Africa. Agriculture is not linked to land in the same ways it was in the past. Very briefly (and far from comprehensively), the decline of South Africa’s peasantry occurred because of: land dispossession under colonialism; influx and labour controls; the underdevelopment of the black Bantustans and the creation of a cheap migrant labour system (see Wolpe 1972, Bundy 1979, 1988); the consolidation of white commercial agriculture and agro-food retailing since 1994; and limited land redistribution and barriers to accessing land post-apartheid, O’Laughlin et al. 2013, Hall 2010). The number of smallholder farmers as a percentage of the population has declined over the last fifteen years in South Africa

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6 Agriculture in South Africa today is marked by a highly concentrated, shrinking class of predominantly white commercial producers; the number of farms in South Africa has decreased from an estimated 60 000 in 1994 to 37 000 as of 2012 (Bernstein 2014, 26)

7 Du Toit and Neves indicate that by 2010, 70% of food was marketed through formal retail outlets, and of this six supermarket retailers control 94% of it (2014, 839)
(Cousins 2013, O’Laughlin et al. 2013). Fewer fields are being cultivated and less intensely, while a larger portion of smallholder income comes from off-farm income, livelihood diversification, and state grants, instead of agricultural production (Ferguson 2013, Cousins 2013; O’Laughlin et al. 2013; Aliber and Hart 2009). However, land access and land-based practices contribute in a multifold of ways to survival strategies on the urban peripheries, as indicated in the following section.

Bernstein examines a ‘new agrarian question of labour’ to investigate how the reproduction of labour is increasingly fragmented, insecure, and dependent on ‘informal’ and ‘survival’ activities within the contemporary crisis of employment (2004). Throughout much of the Global South and in South Africa in particular, the disappearance of low-waged, low-paid jobs has meant that the majority of workers have become superfluous to contemporary capitalism (2004; Seekings and Natrass 2005; Marais 2011). Building on this, Ferguson observes:

For it was at just the moment that the post-apartheid ANC regime came to power, with a mandate to transform the economic conditions of the poor and working-class people who made up its political base, that a worldwide economic restructuring undermined the low-wage employment that had long provided the entire region with its economic core (2015, 5)

While the South African economy has experienced growth since apartheid, much of it has been jobless growth. Du Toit and Neves expand that:

growth has not been ‘good for the poor’: without land, poorly educated and mostly unskilled, without access to jobs and without significant prospects for prosperity in the informal sector they appear increasingly to be ‘left behind’ – superfluous to the labour needs of the economy (du Toit and Neves 2014, 834)

The disappearance of low-waged, low-skilled labour has contributed to high levels of unemployment, inequality, and poverty in South Africa. Both the absolute number of poor people in South Africa has increased and income distribution has become more unequal; forty-one per cent of households receive only ten percent of income (Seekings and Natrass 2005, 254). More recent statistics indicate 25.5 percent of the population was unemployed as of April-June 2015, while the expanded definition of unemployment including discouraged job seekers was 35.6 percent and 63.1 percent among youth (StatsSA 2015).

2.2. Urbanization and hybrid livelihood strategies

As urbanization and population growth have occurred, access to urban markets, opportunities, infrastructure, and transportation have become increasingly crucial for the urban poor and their survival strategies – and have become intertwined in dynamic and significant ways that indicate how formal and informal, rural and urban, and legal and extra-legal space, labour, markets, and state access supplement, sustain, and subsidize one another (du Toit and Neves 2014). Over sixty percent of South Africans are
considered urban today, while desires and opportunities (real and perceived) have become increasingly associated with the cities (Hendler 2015, 85). This is supported by Ferguson’s observation that: “the dreams and ambitions of poorer South Africans focus less on smallholder farming, and more on urban living, consumer goods and ever-elusive ‘business’ (2013, 167). Livelihoods in post-apartheid South Africa often combine farming activities, government grants, formal and informal labour and reciprocal exchange – within and beyond existing markets and regulated spaces by the state (du Toit and Neves 2014). I briefly elaborate on these dynamics below.

(1) Urban resources and opportunities

Seeking and Nattrass suggest half of households in South Africa assemble survival strategies on the margins of the formal economy and constitute a ‘marginal working class’ (2005) of unemployed and underemployed, rural and urban people whose social mobility is restricted by their limited access to social networks, skills, and because job-seeking costs restrict their ability to secure stable employment (du Toit and Neves, 2014). According to Neves and du Toit, “Informal entrepreneurs survive by trading in tiny economic niches defined by locational advantage or by culturally specific desires and markets not yet occupied by ‘big retail’” (2013, 845); the case of Ithemba indicates that many livelihood opportunities depend on informal networks for purchasing, breeding, and selling livestock intended for traditional and ancestral practice.

The survival strategies of those eking out a living on the urban fringes have drawn together highly localized and socially negotiated relationships that with the decline of agriculture and manufacturing, hinge less on production, and more on accessing networks of distribution and exchange. Ferguson terms this as a shift towards distributive labour, defined as the “ways in which people who do not have access to wage labor capture a piece of the wages earned by those who do” (2015, 99). Du Toit and Neves build on this thinking around changing livelihoods to suggest that:

Far from being abandoned by the state or excluded from its laws, South Africa’s marginalized poor live assertively within them, assembling survival strategies out of fragmented resources, evading the law when they need to, but insisting, when they can, on the rights and entitlements due to them as citizens (2014, 846).

(2) State transfers

The disappearance of waged labour for the majority of South Africans have precipitated a greater number of dependents relying on remaining links to wages and widespread dependence on the country’s comprehensive state transfer system for stable income streams. Ferguson indicates people have looked to the government as a direct provider and growing numbers are “receiving a livelihood via direct distribution rather than as a market exchange for labour” (2015, 22). Within South Africa’s
comprehensive state transfer system, grants have become a sizeable component of household income; sixteen million people (30 percent of the total population) and forty-four percent of all households receive at least one type of government grant (Ferguson 2015). Du Toit and Neves note,

Cash transfers are predictable and accrue to people universally as citizens. They play a vital role in anchoring distributive strategies, lubricating the gears and supplementing the benefits from processes of reciprocal … cash transfers – particularly the higher-value pensions and disability grants – also subsidize job-seeking behaviour, informal business and agricultural production and investments in assets such as homesteads (2014, 844-845)

(3) Land based practices

Interstitial urban space has been used as part of land-based practices combined with other urban wage-earning opportunities, or what Slater and Twyman refer to as ‘hidden livelihoods’ (2003). What is known about livelihoods and pockets of production in the city suggests informal markets for livestock and agriculture - and extra-legal activities associated with them - contribute to the livelihoods of the poor in significant ways. These survival strategies and cultural practices are combined with state transfers, non-farm wages, and formal market access or agro-food chains in ways that highlight land’s diverse uses and meanings on the urban peripheries (see Du Toit and Neves 2014, Slater and Twyman 2003). While agricultural production has become largely supplementary to other forms of employment, state transfers, remittances and income streams8, Du Toit and Neves note that:

Land-based activities, despite their marginality, continue to be significant in augmenting the livelihood activities of many vulnerable households; even small-scale and marginal activities can, in aggregate terms, be significant. Additionally, agriculture plays a key role in grounding and anchoring the redistributive economy of practices of reciprocal exchange (2014, 845)

Shackleton and Shackleton suggest that understanding land in terms of its “multiplicity, complexity, and sustainability” is an aspect of the land question that has been under-explored (2015, 193). The contribution of crop yields, natural resource harvesting, and the multifunctional uses of livestock – such as its contribution to social standing, celebrations, and ceremonies – are often overlooked when calculating the contribution of land-based production and distribution on the urban margins (Shackleton and Shackleton 2015; Ferguson 2013, 2015).

2.3. The land question and struggles on the urban peripheries

Beyond its contributions to livelihood security, land has important material value and bearing on peoples’ political identities, claims, and social networks on the urban margins (Fey and James 2010). Ferguson highlights the ‘crucial and undervalued contributions of ‘nonproductive’, ‘cultural’ and

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8Agriculture however continues to be important to some of the poorest South Africans. According to Havnevik et al., sixty percent of households continue to depend on agricultural employment (2007)
‘social’ uses of land, for example in terms of providing shelter, a platform for business or ‘entrepreneurial’ activities, for maintaining ancestral connections, as a place of respite or retirement, or a source of pleasure or income (Ferguson 2013, 167). He elaborates,

what people do with land is very complex, and not at all obvious … and the mechanisms that turn land into livelihoods are as much social as they are technical, and may turn less on producing goods than on accessing sources of cash and other support (2013, 169).

By understanding that the land question is not synonymous with the agrarian question, and that land’s value is not reducible to its production capability, it becomes possible to recognize land’s multifold meanings and values on the urban peripheries – and provides more expansive ways of engaging with the land question in an urban context.

Hart and Sitas suggest ‘social and spatial interconnections’ between land, labour, and livelihood questions have been ignored at the expense of engaging with the complex realities of the poor and alternatives to land reform (2004). Hall furthermore suggests that the “poor and landless in South Africa have articulated broader demands for livelihoods – demanding jobs alongside, rather than instead of, demands for land” (2004, 223; see also Hart 2002). Discussions around land need to engage with the reality of urbanization and recognize that land struggles, policies, and reform are not exclusively rural issues but are intertwined with the urban struggles of millions of backyard dwellers and those living in poorly serviced informal settlements who are struggling for affordable housing, service delivery, livelihoods, and ‘economic justice’ (Du Toit 2013) - conditions that certainly precipitated peoples’ occupation of land at Ithemba. Investigating the land question in relation to urban counter-hegemonic struggles for land, livelihoods, and inclusive citizenship on the urban margins – creates possibilities for reconfiguring apartheid spatial legacies and aligning existing practices and livelihoods with needs and desires for equitable and inclusive access to the city and human settlement on the urban margins (Hendler 2015; du Toit and Neves 2014).

Demands for land have not become less important in the contemporary period; O’Laughlin et al. write “The link of South Africa’s dispossessed to land and farming have been significantly eroded, but land remains a core focus of democratic politics and of efforts to establish social identity” (2013, 4). Land has been occupied to support peoples’ abilities to meet their everyday needs and to while contesting exclusionary land access and ownership. Occupation has been a form of claiming space and gaining access to the city by supporting practices and demands for inclusion or strategically evading government attention. It has potential as a powerful platform to support claims-making for inclusion, equality, and a ‘rightful share’ in the state. Bernstein notes that land invasions and occupations are the
most intensive form of struggles against the fragmentation of labour, contestations of class inequality, and collective demands for better living conditions; he writes “Such actions, driven by the desire to obtain land for farming as a basis (if not necessarily an exclusive basis) of livelihood and reproduction, manifest an agrarian question of labour” (2007, 46). He thereby suggests land be understood as a contested terrain that is “intimately, and inevitably, bound up with ideas about inequality and social (in)justice and the political struggles informed by such ideas” (Bernstein 2007, 27). For many of the disenfranchised on the urban fringes, these demands have been most forcefully expressed through extra-legal organization and struggles, as explore below (du Toit and Neves 2014).

Extensive scholarship has traced what have been referred to as ‘new social movements’ in South Africa, which brought a renewed hope for struggles on the left following the government’s pursuit of neoliberal economic policies. Some of these movements include organizing around service delivery (Miraftab and Wills 2005; McDonald and Pape 2002); the Anti-Eviction Campaign (Miraftab 2006; Oldsfield and Stokke 2006); the Treatment Action Campaign (Heywood 2009; Robins and von Lieres 2013) and Abahlali baseMjondolo in Durban (Pithouse 2006). Such movements, Hart suggests, emerged from frustration over the democratic transition in the 1990s and brought a renewed hope in South Africa as a site for counter-hegemonic struggles against neoliberal capitalism (Hart 2013). She however indicates that many of these movements had begun unravelling by 2003/4 and since this time, discontent have been expressed in terms of ‘movements beyond movements’ (Hart 2013). These movements indicate the intertwining of struggles over land, livelihoods, political inclusion, service delivery, health care, and urban opportunities beyond single issue struggles and are useful for thinking through the livelihoods and strategies of struggle at Ithemba. Hart suggests these movements illustrate the dialectic between protest and containment and the highly localized nature of these struggles, through which “subaltern populations situated in asymmetrical relations of power rework these forces in the multiple arenas of everyday life” (2013, 87).

2.4. Mapping Cape Town’s apartheid landscape

Land continues to be deeply laden with historical loss in South Africa and the country’s history of brutal racialized loss and apartheid. In this section I map out contemporary land struggles in Cape Town in relation to colonial and apartheid geographies. Kepe et al. observe “land carries a powerful symbolic charge for many black South Africans not only because of their recent memories of racialized land dispossession of their land but also because inequalities in land ownership ‘stand for’ and evoke the broader inequalities that post-apartheid policies have yet to undo” (2008, 145). Consequently,
discussions around land reform and how land is used, controlled, owned and positioned as property, resource, identity and entitlement - are politically salient and intertwined with demands for historical justice (Bernstein 2007, Hall and Ntsebeza 2007). Narratives evoking historical loss in South Africa however have often reinforced static and abstract narratives demonstrating “a disjuncture between how the past is imagined and what historical evidence tells us about the actual patterns of land settlement and loss over time” (Hay 2014, 746). The land reform program has widely been conceived as a panacea for historical injustices and burdened with expectations to achieve economic development, poverty alleviation, and historical redress. Walker cogently observes this type of simplistic thinking confuses the material and symbolic aspects of land, and cautions “‘Land’ in the abstract should no longer be regarded as a proxy for ‘a better life for all’ although material land may well lead to a better life for some” (2015, 249; see also du Toit 2013).

The 1913 Natives Land Act is frequently evoked as the landmark moment in South Africa’s history of dispossession by restricted the leasing and purchasing of land among Africans outside of native reserves and made sharecropping illegal (Claassens 2015). In broad strokes, it precipitated the displacement of black people from their land and means of reproduction thereby paving the way for the migrant labour system, the development of native reserves, and making cheap labour available for white-owned industry, mines and commercial farms that developed early industrial capitalism in South Africa (see Aliber and Hall 2012; Lahiff 2007; O’Laughlin et al. 2013; Cousins 2013; Aliber and Hart 2009; Hall 2004; Baipheti and Jacobs 2009 for a more comprehensive and detailed account). The Act certainly had profound rural and urban impacts on the spatial and economic development of apartheid and post-apartheid cities (Hall 2014). However, it is often used to express a ‘master narrative’ of dispossession presenting loss as ‘an unproblematic, linear, and evenly-experienced process’ (Hall 2014).

As such, geographically and temporally situated processes of displacement and differential experiences of loss across race, gender, class, ethnicity, generation and locality have been overlooked or omitted (Walker 2008, Hall 2014). Recent scholarship has developed spatially and temporally dynamic accounts of land and loss in relation to contemporary processes of urbanization, joblessness, and population growth (see Walker 2008; Beinart and Delius 2015; Hendler 2015; Pityana 2015, and Ferguson 2013). These analyses recognize changing desires for and uses of land beyond the limited scope of land reform and agricultural production – and highlight emerging struggles connecting land to demands for broader access to the state and access to the city. The work of Beinart and Delius, Pityana, Claassens, and Walker and Cousins in the recently published ‘Land Divided, Land Restored’ provide
valuable contributions complicating narratives surrounding the 1913 (2015). Walker, drawing on Hay’s work (2014) cogently suggests that:

While dramatic acts of dispossession did occur, ‘for most people dispossession was far less concrete’, with successive generations facing increased restrictions on their mobility and freedom to access land over time – ‘generally dispossession was cumulative, better understood as a slow loss of rights to land rather than a single, momentous experience of forced removal’ (2015, 247).

Dispossession is better understood as a complex and layered process, relating to multiple, gradual experiences of dispossession prior and subsequent to the 1913 Act, and as an ongoing process in South Africa today (Beinart and Delius 2015; Hendler 2015). Pityana notes that dispossession began shortly after the arrival of the first white settlers in 1652 with the decimation of the Khoi and San people and approximately ninety percent of land had been appropriated by 1913 (2015, 167). The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts - the latter expanding the amount of land held in the reserve system) - however “cemented the highly unequal and unstable outcome of prior black dispossession” (Claassens 2015, 82).

Hall observes that the land question has predominantly been concerned with the material aspects of poverty and inequality stemming from the legacy of the 1913 Land Act and points to the need to look at the social and spiritual legacies associated with the division and erasure of communities (2014). Dispossession has not simply been experienced in terms of the loss of land or as a consequence of physical displacement but has constrained livelihoods, place-making, and ‘subject formation’ across generations and rural and urban space (Doshi 2013, 845; Mollett 2014; Nixon 2011). Residential segregation, influx controls, pass laws restricting land, labour, and mobility continue to be re-articulated through peoples’ ongoing exclusion from resources that provide social security, and shape conditions for the reproduction of labour, and how claims on the state are formed and how laws evaded (Hart 2002).

The SPP’s account of dispossession under apartheid suggests 3.5 million people were forcibly removed from their land between 1960 and 1983, the height of the apartheid period (1983). However, these numbers do not account for dispossession occurring before 1948. Furthermore, Walker further notes that accounts of dispossession tied to the 1913 Act have linked loss to agriculture and the countryside at the expense of recognizing the considerable urban dimensions of land and claims to it – as well as the tremendous urban, social, and economic changes that have occurred since 1913 that have tied peoples’ livelihoods, wealth, identities, and their uses of and desires for land to increasingly urban aspirations (Walker 2015, 2008; Hall 2014). Hall adds that the continued eviction of farm workers and
Resident, landless and homeless people must be recognized as post-apartheid dispossession \(^9\) (Hall 2014).

Access to the city in apartheid and post-apartheid Cape Town

Colonial and apartheid policies involved differential economic incorporation, citizenship rights, and entitlements along lines of race and rurality. Policies—including pass laws, influx controls, labour regulations, and forced removals - attempted to prevent disenfranchised black populations from accessing the city with the effect of creating a ‘displaced legacy of urban poverty and inequality’ (Hall 2014, 7). Contextualizing discussions about the land question and contemporary land struggles within dynamic and layered experiences of dispossession and apartheid landscapes is crucial for investigating socio-spatially situated geographies of post-apartheid land and livelihoods and for grasping the increased importance of land on the urban peripheries within current social and economic conditions. Post-apartheid segregation continues to delineate racialized patterns of inequality and access to economic, political, and social networks and opportunities – though they have been shaped by ‘rapid class formations’ since the official end of apartheid\(^{10}\) (Oldsfield 2003, von Holdt et al. 2011).

In Cape Town, the stark racial divides and exclusionary access worked into city planning are reflected in the post-apartheid landscape. Field writes;

\[
\text{[Cape Town] and its rural hinterlands have been shaped by the painful exclusion and oppression of people classified as ‘African’ and ‘coloured’ by colonial, segregationist and apartheid regimes. Forced removals were a significant aspect of the making of Cape Town, and both their effects and affects are still evident today (2001, 9).}
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The social and spatial mapping of current struggles for land and insurgent claims in Cape Town can be better understood by historically situating the confinement of black populations to the urban peripheries far from economic opportunities, infrastructure, and existing networks. Though complex processes of racial mixing, racial desegregation and in some cases re-segregation have occurred along income and class lines since 1994, ‘black’ people in Cape Town remain excluded from infrastructure and urban opportunities – while networks formed around African and coloured employment, residential settlement, socializing, shopping, and daily live continue to reflect segregated boundaries drawn and enforced during apartheid (Oldsfield 2003). Cape Town continues to reflect the apartheid landscape of a

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\(^9\) Bernstein writes “while official data on farm employment and wages have to be treated with considerable caution, they suggest a consistent trend of declining farm employment from about 1.2 million in 1990 to 940 000 in 2002, and continuing thereafter. In all, 40 per cent of farm workers lost their jobs between 1993 and 2006” (2015, 113-4)

\(^{10}\) Von Holdt et al. elaborate that rapid class formation has occurred since 1994 and have involved the emergence of a new elite and an ‘underclass of unemployed and precariously employed’ – which has led to intense struggles over inclusion and exclusion within and between these various stratifications (2011). Oldsfield further notes “In many areas, formerly segregated neighbourhoods appear to be increasingly polarised, demonstrating the growing importance of class differentiation, and, at times, a consequent reinterpretation of racial identities” (2003, 190).
predominantly white city centre that today remains highly exclusionary and inaccessible for the majority (still predominantly African and coloured population) living on the urban periphery. The experiences of those living, farming, working and residing at Ithemba and the location, practices, struggles associated with their land occupation are best understood in relation to the localized history of Cape Town’s spatial and social development. Cape Town’s history of settler colonialism, slave labour, and trade shaped the development of “South Africa’s most cosmopolitan pre-apartheid urban area” (Field 2012, 10) into one of marked social and spatial inequality.

Building Cape Town: from slavery and diamonds to apartheid

Segregation and forced removals were a reality in Cape Town long before apartheid policies were implemented (Hall 2014). European settlement began in the Cape in 1652 at the expense of the Khoi and San people living on the land (Bickford-Smith 2001). Under Dutch then English colonialism - which replaced the Dutch in 1806 and continued until 1910, Cape Town developed from a small colonial outpost to become an important port and South Africa’s second largest city in the 20th century (Field 2012, 88). Settlers began importing slaves from East Africa, Madagascar, the East Indies and a small number from Angola and West Africa, who provided a significant source of labour for the initial development of Cape Town and who have had a huge impact on the cultural and linguistically diverse composition of the Cape (Field 2012, Bickford-Smith 2002, Western 1981).11

The abolition of slavery in the Cape Colony in 1841 and the resulting financial compensation former slave owners received provided an influx of capital into the city, a significant portion of which was used to build Cape Town’s grandiose city centre and to a lesser extent, construct residential tenements on the periphery of the city to house former slaves and the majority of African and coloured workers (Miraftab 2012, 285). Shortly thereafter, the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1869 brought an additional flood of money into the region, which was used to build infrastructure to facilitate the export of these riches to Europe; the development of the railway, port, and housing increased the value of property in the city and made it the economic powerhouse of the Western Cape (Miraftab 2012, 285). The injection of capital into Cape Town brought about rapid urbanization and infrastructure development in the predominantly white city centre, while African and coloured workers were housed on the underdeveloped urban fringe (Mirabtab 2012). Furthermore, white agricultural land expanded around the city and farms producing wheat and wine developed up to 100 kilometres from the city.

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11 Bickford-Smith does excellent work tracing the ‘forgotten history of African Capetonians’ to dispel the myth that Africans were newcomers to Cape Town. She for example details the large numbers of isiXhosa speaking people who came to Cape Town in the 1830s in search of migrant and permanent work and in response to the cattle killing of 1857 (2002, 16)
centre (Wilkinson 2000) - some of these areas like Stellenbosch and Constantia continue to have agricultural land and wine production.

Prior to 1800, wealth and gender were greater determinants of social standing and mobility than race according to Bickford-Smith (2002, 16). After slavery was abolished, all men were given the right to vote in local elections provided they earned above a certain wage or owned property (Bickford-Smith 2001, 16). Municipal legislation affording citizens multiple votes in accordance to their property ownership and income, though few African and coloured men earned enough to vote; thereby exclusionary urban citizenship was fostered and the concentration of capital in the white city centre afforded through this legislation exacerbated the underdevelopment of the racialized urban peripheries (Miraftab 2012, 288).

‘Non-whites’ and second class citizenship under apartheid

The apartheid state imposed control over the migration, settlement and work of not simply Africans but all ‘non-white populations’, and legally imposed their treatment as second-class citizens in the 1950s (Miraftab 2006). Attempts were made to clear the Southern Suburbs and city centre of all Indian, African, and coloured people following the Group Areas Act using brutal forced evictions to dump black bodies on the urban peripheries (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014). The consolidation of Cape Town’s white city centre was balanced with the selective inclusion of the black urban fringe (Coetzer 2013). The selective urban inclusion of racialized bodies was at the centre of the development of Cape Town as a highly unequal and exclusionary landscape marked by continued experiences of differential citizenship.

Spatial and social policies protecting the white city centre attempted to keep Africans out of the Western Cape to the greatest possible extent, and to contain them to the urban peripheries when this was not possible. However, apartheid in the Cape centred on the differential incorporation and exclusion of African and coloured people into opportunities for labour, migration, and urbanization. Because of Cape Town’s history of slavery and its development as a port city, the city was home to a large number of people from mixed African, Asian and European descent and following the election of the National Party in 1948, was declared a ‘coloured labour preference area’ (Miraftab and Wills 2005). This meant the shortage of white low-wage labour in the wake of World War II would be remedied by giving coloured people priority for jobs over Africans. This preference was further implemented through policies forcing employers to pay fees to register contracts with African workers, while retail and commercial businesses were banned from African Group Areas, reflecting limited work opportunities today (Bickford-Smith 2001). The Coloured Labour Preference Policy resulted in the majority of low-
skilled manufacturing jobs in the Western Cape being dominated by workers categorized as coloured – though many of these jobs no longer exist (Humphries 1989).

Together with the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Group Areas Act, “opened the way for more complete segregation in Cape Town in socially pervasive ways encroaching on peoples intimate and personal lives” (Bickford Smith 2002). The 1950s Group Areas Act expanded to apply to all races (Field 2002) and “established procedures for carving out urban areas in South Africa into distinct racially segregated quarters as part of the National Party’s policy of apartheid or separate development’ (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2000, 35). The 1960s and 70s were consequently spent restructuring towns in line with apartheid legislation policies and ensuring that racially divided areas for living, working, socializing, and commuting were adhered to, to the greatest possible extent (Bohlin 2004). Racial segregation was drastically rolled out in deeply personal and pervasive ways that deemed relationships and marriage between those classified as black and white illegal while, “Other laws aimed to segregate schools and universities, political organizations, buses and trains and taxis, ambulances, and hospital wards, sport and music, restaurants and theatres, parks and beaches, benches and public toilets, libraries and post offices, even graveyards” (Bickford-Smith 2001, 22-23). One of the greatest tasks the apartheid state faced in Cape Town however was imposing separate residential areas under the Group Areas Act, and the containment of black populations to the urban fringes long before that.

Residential segregation

Bickford-Smith notes that most low-income neighbourhoods in Cape Town were racially mixed (2002) and that people of all races had lived in what came to be known as the ‘Cape Flats’ prior to the 1950s. Before the 1950 Group Areas Act, urban segregation laws only applied to Africans - though housing prices in suburbs such as Claremont and Rondebosch all but excluded coloured populations from living there and coloured pockets tended to exist on smaller plots around white areas to meet their

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12 Western explains that all racial groups were affected by the Group Areas Act, however the desire to achieve the ideal apartheid model was weighed with the desire to move as few whites as possible. Therefore the burden of dispossession fell on African and coloured populations. For example, poor white populations in Cape Town were incentivized to move to white areas through free compulsory education ; (1981)

13 Western notes that in 1936, 37 percent of residential areas in Cape Town were ‘mixed’, which was far higher than in Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth, and East London

14 The Cape Flats falls “east of the Southern Suburbs railway line (east of the Cape Flats line) and south of the Northern Suburbs railways line” (Fields 2001, 25)
needs for labour (2002). However, residential segregation of populations in Cape Town unfolded long before the Group Areas Act in 1950 and traces the transition from racist attitudes touting European superiority into the imposition of racially segregating urban planning policies. The colonial government of the Cape of Good Hope implemented the Natives Location Act in 1884, and determined that ‘locations’ – the precursors to townships (Oldsfield 2003) – would be created to house urbanizing black populations (Coetzer 2013).

Steps to confine black populations to the urban hinterlands – where they could remain socially and geographically distant from the white city centre – emerged out of concerns over sanitation, labour containment, and ‘Native encroachment’ in the late 19th century and such thinking was catalyzed by an outbreak of the bubonic plague in a black workers’ tenement in 1901 (Bickford-Smith 2001, Miraftab 2012, Coetzer 2013). Racialized rhetoric around sanitation presented black urban settlements on the ‘septic fringe’ as health hazards and further justified the selective urban inclusion of black people involving their residential segregation on the outskirts of the city but the continued accessibility to their cheap labour (Miraftab 2012, 291, Bickford-Smith 2001). The Natives Reserve Locations Act in 1902 further designated specific municipalities as exclusionary zones where Natives could no longer live (Coetzer, 2013) and shortly thereafter, segregation became an official policy in government institutions and was common in private facilities like theatres, bars, and on sports team – but was not ubiquitous nor always enforced (Bickford-Smith 2001, 16). These policies were the preliminary steps towards planning and protecting ‘white space’ from the potential ‘threats’ posed by Africans that would later become central to the apartheid regime (Coetzer 2013. 81).

Counter to the common belief forced removals began in Cape Town after the Group Areas Act in 1950, as early as 1901 Africans in District Six and other pockets of the city were removed mostly to Ndabeni - the first African location - far from the city centre (Bickford-Smith 2001, 15). Twenty-five years after the initial displacement, the Cape Town municipality carried out a second forced removal – resulting in some people being twice forcibly removed from District 6 and then again from Ndabeni -

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15 However, Bickford-Smith notes that by 1900, some white areas like Orajezicht, Milnerton and parts of Camps Bay had clauses in their title deeds excluding coloured and Africans from ownership (2002, 21). This can be understood in relation to what Western refers to as the de jure residential segregation imposed by market mechanisms in Cape Town (1981, 36)

16 Hunter and Posel note “It is especially important to differentiate informal settlements from formal townships. The latter are segregated urban areas built mainly in the 1950s and 1960s to stabilize black labour during a boom in the industrial economy. Racially structured, these spaces were also formed through the patriarchal vision of planners; indeed, the four-roomed “family” houses that constitute the architectural backbone of townships were mainly allocated to married men with employment” (2012, 290)

17 For a compelling detailed account of African life and resistance in Ndabeni, see Bickford-Smith 2002
and demolished the township to develop an industrial area. Those displaced were moved to Langa, located even further from the city centre and white suburbs (Bickford-Smith 2001, 18). Langa was the only African township between 1927 and 1959, and it became rapidly overcrowded as a result – consequently, housing projects were established in Nyanga and Gugulethu 1959-1962 (Field 2012, 88). Around this time, The Slums Act of 1934 played a big role in facilitating forced removals and imposing separate racial areas on the grounds of unsanitary and overcrowded conditions targeting mostly African residents (Bickford-Smith 2001).

Though the municipality of Cape Town refused to officially impose racially separated residential areas under the Group Areas Act, the Group Areas Board used railway lines, highways, industrial areas, and gold courses to demarcate racially defined areas and to create buffer zones between them - thereby demarcating the rudimentary boundaries of the Cape Flats (Bickford-Smith 2001; Field 2012, 125). Dhupelia-Mesthrie, drawing on the ‘Reports of the Department of Community Development 1961-1971’, indicates that by 1971, 27 985 families (mostly coloured) had become victims of the Group Areas Act (2000, 35). The majority of those who were forcibly removed were dumped in racially delineated areas of the Cape Flats (see Map 1), and in her recent work, Dhupelia-Mesthrie indicates that the new inhabitants of the flats shared little affinity for their new homes (2014). The flats were associated with ‘the bush’ and perceived as inhospitable, barren, lacking community, poorly

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<th>Residential Area</th>
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Figure 2 - Classification of residential areas in Cape Town prior to and after 1950 Group Areas Act

18 Oldsfield suggests: “the differences between African and coloured employment patterns lie in the disparate geographies that shape where residents go every day and how and with whom they travel. These patterns and their associated daily routines such as shopping and socializing link coloured and African residents to different urban facilities and networks” (2003, 194-195)

Miraftab succinctly observes that “Undoubtedly, the complex dynamics of the twentieth century’s urbanization of the Cape Colony is critical to the formation of Cape Town as an apartheid city and hence its post-apartheid struggles for urban development” (2012, 293). Today, the Cape Flats continues to be disconnected from employment opportunities, infrastructure, transportation, and many of continue to lack access to housing, service delivery, sanitation, and food security. Hunter and Posel note that though over two million RDP houses have been built since 1994, the number of informal settlements has drastically increased – in part this has been because houses have been built on cheaper land far from existing infrastructure (2012, 290).

The loss of opportunities for employment, urbanization, and settlement have underpinned the struggles that poor African and coloured people face surviving on the urban fringes while searching for stable work and depending heavily on state pensions, disability and child care grants (Oldsfield 2003). Colonial dispossession, apartheid segregation, and the exclusive urban citizenships they invoked inform contemporary geographies of employment and settlement in Cape Town reflecting classed and still highly racialized levels of exclusion. Oldsfield’s work on Delft South indicates how the majority of Africans have not found formal employment opportunities in areas

Figure 3. Map of Cape Town residential areas by race under the Group Area Act. The Ithemba farm is indicated in red within a former coloured area adapted from Oldsfield (2003 pg. 197)
formerly defined as African under the Group Areas Act and today, unemployment is high and those with work are employed in low-skilled and low-wage jobs, for example as gardeners and cleaners in former white neighbourhoods, middle-income coloured areas, and industrial areas. She further indicates coloured residents have found work in northern parts of the city where Afrikaans is widely spoken and closer to former coloured neighbourhoods - though with the loss of jobs in industry and manufacturing that were predominantly held by coloured people, unemployment has risen (Oldsfield 2003). The social and spatial geography of the Cape Flats continue to be stigmatized as an undifferentiated site of ‘poverty, crime, and hopelessness’ (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014), while those living on the urban peripheries struggle to gain access to the city because of the shortage of jobs, increasing costs of transportation, housing shortages and limited access to electricity and water (Hunter and Posel 2012; Oldsfield 2003; Miraftab 2006).

Apartheid was not simply about using residential segregation, pass laws and influx controls to make black bodies invisible within the white city centre. It attempted to erase the everyday lives, homes, identities, communities, and social and material connections black people inscribed into the city. Building on this, Field lucidly notes; “Displaced people not only lost much materially and emotionally, but their sense of self and identity were potentially ruptured through an aggressive, racist social dislocation. Forced displacement was experienced by most as an attack on their sense of belonging to people, times, and places” (2012, 11). Some important work has engaged with the struggles and sadness associated with the erasure of peoples’ experiences in Cape Town of forced removal, their dynamic and in some cases multiple processes of dispossession and displaced opportunities and futures associated with past loss – and the important steps that must be taken to recognize racialized injustices (see Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2000, 2006, 2014; Field 2001, 2014; Hall 2014). These attempts to invisibilize the black presence in the city is part and parcel the paucity of urban history and academic work recognizing the social and spatial geographies of peoples’ rural and agricultural practices on the margins of the city.

Situating agriculture in Cape Town’s past and present

Bickford-Smith’s work tracing the ‘forgotten history of African Capetonians’ recognizes the longstanding presence of Africans in the city; she indicates that large numbers of isiXhosa speaking people came to Cape Town beginning 1830s in search of migrant and permanent work and later, in response to the cattle killing of 1857 in the Eastern Cape (2002, 16). The number of Africans had

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19 For example, as of April-June 2015 expanded unemployment (including discouraged job seekers and not economically active) among white populations was 8.3% compared to 39% among black Africans and 28.6% among coloured populations.
increased to 8000 by 1900, mostly in District 6 (2002, 16). During World War II, influx controls were temporarily relaxed and many Africans came to the city searching for work and were settled in or forcibly removed to the townships in Langa and subsequently, Nyanga and Gugulethu (Bickford-Smith 2001). These areas though certainly have developed into densely inhabited informal settlements and shack dwellings, also have historically rural histories tied to the practices and ties maintained by African populations bringing their rural lives into the urban fringes to whatever extent was possible or necessitated within survival strategies. Informal markets, subsistence production, and social, cultural, and ceremonial practices associated with keeping cattle, crop, and small livestock for eggs, meat, or sacrifice have been important in numerous ways for many of those living on the outskirts of the city – particularly in the context of being excluded or forcibly distanced from infrastructure, employment, transportation, shopping, and mobility around the city.

Most significant in fleshing out the significant historical agricultural practices on the urban fringe is Field’s rich analysis of the development of Windemere from farmlands on the edge of the city (2012). Field highlights how Windemere was a “proverbial halfway station between the rural and the urban” in the early 1900s enabling people to maintain an urban lifestyle and employment while living in a ‘semirural squatter community’ where they could keep sheep, cattle, goats, and other livestock (2001b, 119). He further notes farming outside of Cape Town’s city centre enabled many African residents to maintain rural practices and connections associated with their lives in the Eastern Cape (Field 2012). The forced removal of those classified as Africans to Nyanga, Langa, and Gugulethu was followed for many by the movement of agricultural ties and networks with them, and the culturally inscribed practices and markets associated with for example, the keeping of livestock for cultural and ancestral ceremonies (Field 2012).

The rural, memories, identities, social networks, and processes of place-making that tie people to land, livestock and farming, have historically shaped and been shaped by multiple and dynamic experiences of dispossession and displaced urban poverty and inequality across rural and urban space and generations (Hall 2014). These historical experiences and processes have impacted the social and geographical landscape of Cape Town’s urban periphery and impact existing informal networks associated with keeping, slaughtering, and selling livestock and practicing agriculture in pockets of production, distribution, and social networks contributing to peoples’ survival strategies, ancestral ties, memories, identities, sources of pleasure, and desires in significant ways today. They furthermore underscore the occupation of state land for agriculture (among other uses) in Cape Town at Ithemba,
Mfuleni, Penhill, Jacobsdal, Robertpi, Tamboerskloof - as well as a way of forging claims on the state for inclusion in the governments’ post-apartheid dispensation. Engaging with how Cape Town’s rural-urban divide has been historically, socially, and spatially constructed is important for mapping out contemporary experiences of exclusion shaping livelihoods, settlement, and employment opportunities – as well as emerging struggles over land and insurgent claims for access to the city today (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014; Hart 2008).

Complex networks and opportunities for production, distribution, and social exchange that exist on the rural-urban divide are part of important survival strategies and lives that have been strategically drawn together across rural and urban, formal and informal and legal and illegal strategies, landscapes, spaces, resources and networks. By engaging with the textured and socially differentiated lives, livelihoods, and counter-hegemonic struggles on the fringes of the city and the ways they have been shaped by layered experiences of forced removals, dispossession, and displaced futures, it becomes possible to question the divide between the city and its hinterlands. For the millions of historically marginalized and excluded, life on the outskirts of the city has become the centre of their existence, questioning who the ‘city centre’ is accessible, useful, and desirable for (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014). Dhupelia-Mesthrie’s observation that “The view from Rylands was not one of being on the edge of things but at the centre” speaks to the overlooked and poorly understood situated realities and everyday lives of the majority of Cape Town’s residents and their experiences of differential citizenship across race, class, gender, ethnicity, and location (2014, 368).

2.5. Conclusion
This chapter has examined changing land questions in South Africa, first in terms of the contemporary crisis of employment and then in terms of historical experiences of dispossession. I then examined how land struggles and farming practices in Cape Town have been shaped by historical legacies of social and spatial exclusion, focusing on how the peripheries were constructed as sites of containment for black populations. This overview has attempted to temporally and socially situate the Ithemba farmers’ present day livelihoods and examine how their land, livelihoods, and settlement are situated within historical experiences of displacement, dispossession, and differentiated citizenship in South Africa, to thereby indicate the importance of understanding the land question in relation to contemporary processes of urbanization and agelessness.
3. CHAPTER THREE
The politics of claims-making at Ithemba

In this chapter, I use my findings to examine how the Ithemba farmers have strategically established *de facto* land rights on Farm 996 using by both using and evading legal channels and insurgent practices. In turn I examine how the farmers have leveraged their land access to make broader demands for livelihoods, access to the state, and access to the city. First however, I provide an overview of the Ithemba conflict and examine disputed narratives concerning the farmers’ presence on the land.

3.1. Overview of the Ithemba conflict

Drawing from interviews and secondary sources including official documents, media coverage, academic literature, meeting minutes, and reports from the SPP and research institutes, I provide an overview of the Ithemba farmers’ land occupation of the land, the PGWC’s attempts to evict them, and subsequent negotiations that have drawn the SPP, the DRDLR, the City of Cape Town, Phuhlisani, Electric City Residents Association, the Food Sovereignty Campaign, and others into conflict.

The land at Ithemba was bought by the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) from a private land owner in 2001. While many of the farmers who are currently on the land claimed to have settled after this time, it was suggested in several interviews and in Hope’s report for the SPP in 2010 that the first farmer, Mr Ndollo, had been on the land since approximately 1990, and in some accounts as early as 1985. The farmers therefore suggest their land rights are protected under the IPILRA (interview, June 2015). In 2008 and 2009, the Western Cape Department of Human Settlement (WCDHS or DHS for short) officials reportedly became aware people were settled on the land and after allegations were made that informal rights to land were being sold at Ithemba. Shortly after in March 2009, the DHS received an interdict against the farmers to prevent further settlement and threatened to evict the farmers (Phaliso 2009). At this time, the farmers sought the

Figure 4: Map of Ithemba farms (indicated in white) and surrounding area of Electric City, Blue Downs, and Eersterivier (adapted from City of Cape Town Planning and Building Development Management Locality Map and courtesy of the SPP)
assistance of the SPP to fight their eviction from the land. In June 2009, the farmers agreed not to allow new occupants on the land, in exchange for eviction proceedings being put on hold while a settlement is reached.

However, in September, the CCT determined Farm 996 would be appropriate land for building a temporary relocation area (TRA) to provide emergency housing to residents experiencing flooding in Khayelitsha, and began attempts to secure land from the DHS and rezone it from agriculture to housing. In December 2009, the CCT approached the PGWC Ministry of Local Government, Environment Affairs, and Development, attempting to use the Less Formal Township Establishment Act (LFTEA) to designate 2.4 ha of land at Farm 996 for a TRA. It was around this time that the WCPG accused the farmers had brought new occupants onto the land in contravention of their agreement. The IFA responded to these allegations with a signed affidavit disputing the government’s claim there are not 450 people squatting on the land like the WCPG had claimed (Hope 2010) - although interviews and secondary documents indicated a substantial increase in land occupants at this time. On October 16th 2009, the IFA, supported by the Food Sovereignty Campaign, protested against the TRA and the farmers’ impending eviction.

In February 2010, the farmers received notice they must vacate the land by March 1st, 2010. The IFA approached the DRDLR and aired their grievances about their inability to access alternative land, the destruction of their livelihoods that will occur, and their exclusion from negotiation processes with the WCDHS and CCT. The DRDLR provided the farmers with legal representation through the Land Rights Management Facility (LRMF)20, and provided the farmers with legal representation. On March 17th, the farmers held a march to the DHS office in Cape Town, allegedly attended by 500 people, and present a memorandum challenging their eviction and detailing their entitlements to land, livelihoods, tenure security, and smallholder support. Their protests were framed in terms of contesting an ‘apartheid style forced removals’ (NGO Pulse 2010a) as well as a struggle for food sovereignty that was supported by the SPP and other groups of landless people associated with the Food Sovereignty Campaign (Hope 2010, NGO Pulse 2010b).

Following the March protest, the IFA was able to a meeting with the Member of the Executive Council (MEC), and the DHS, at which the Minister determined the IFA would be part of future public participation processes and ensured the farmers would not be evicted from the land. An agreement was

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20 The LRMF provides legal support to people faced with tenure insecurity and eviction
made to reach a ‘win-win’ situation, but was short lived; a notice appeared in the provincial gazette that construction of a TRA would begin on April 30th, 2010 (PGWC 2010).

On April 22nd 2010, a section of land on Farm 996 was designated under the LFTEA as a less formal settlement to be used for the TRA (WCHC Case No. 13251/2010). Chennells Albertyn, the IFA’s legal representation, sought an interdict against the farmers’ eviction on the grounds that their livelihoods were being threatened, that they were excluded from public participation, and that the land was designated for a TRA without an environmental assessment occurring. In June, the IFA instituted interdictory processes against the WCDHS in the Western Cape High Court (WCHC) to prevent them from implementing the decision to build the TRA and argued in court against the extra-judicial eviction of 157 households at Ithemba, both as long-term (pre-1997) and ordinary (post-1997) ESTA occupiers (WCHC Case No. 13251/2010).

Prior to a judgement being made in September 2010, the state attorney of the case sought an out-of-court settlement with Chenells Albertyn. In this settlement, IFA poultry and vegetable producers were offered a 9 year, 11 month lease on a 20 ha portion of land at Penhill Farms, while those with livestock were offered a 5 year lease on Farm 996 (WCHC 13251/2010). The CCT soon after acknowledged that construction of the TRA had been stopped on account of public opposition, indicating a victory for the farmers and a step forward in securing their tenure security either on Farm 996 or on alternative suitable land. To aid with this process and determine what needs existed on the land, the SPP conducted a survey of IFA members and identified 114 households. The proposed settlement at Penhill put forward in the out-of-court settlement however, was halted when the Penhill farmers initiated court proceedings to protect their informal land rights and prevent the IFA from settling there; their application was upheld by the WCHC on December 9th, 2011 (WCHC 10475/2011).

In response to the conflict with the Penhill farmers, the DRDLR informed the PGWC and the CCT that the department would fund the purchase of suitable agricultural land in terms of its land reform program. However, this land was envisaged as commonage land to be transferred to and managed by the CCT, even though the CCT does not have a commonage policy. In November 2012, a survey conducted with the DHS provided conflicting information with that conducted by the SPP and led to a conflict between the farmers; the IFA indicated the DHS survey included households the association did not recognize as having landholding rights, including some who had gained access to plots through informal land sales. This conflict resulted in a strained relationship between the DHS and the IFA. Phuhlisani - a Cape Town-based consulting group conducting work on land reform and rural
development - was funded by the DRDLR through the LRMF to mediate and find a solution to the conflict. In August 2013, Phuhlisani employees began conducting a land rights enquiry and a socio-economic survey, holding meetings with stakeholders (including the DRDLR, IFA, DHS and CCIT), and investigating alternative land use. However, a review of the LRMF’s mandate in December 2013 brought an end to Phuhlisani’s work at Ithemba.

Prior to the closing of the file, Phuhlisani outlined possible solutions to the conflict, including: (1) using section 4 of ESTA to establish off-site settlement facilitated by ESTA subsidies provided in cases of eviction (although it has only been used a handful of time by the state and would require a high level national legal intervention) (2) using the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) Program to acquire land for farming, although the DRDLR indicated that it would be difficult to address the IFA’s needs through PLAS because it was not designed for large groups and as a leasehold model it would not enable construction of a formal or informal settlement on the land (3) returning to the court or (4) conducting an in-situ upgrade recognizing the status quo of tenure rights on the land. Rick de Satge (one of the Phuhlisani consultants working on the Ithemba file). Harry and Ronald from the SPP, Juanita van Sitters at the DRDLR, and the majority of farmers I spoke to all agreed that the fourth option was the best solution.

The most up-to-date information at the time of my fieldwork was from a stakeholder meeting on April 15th, 2015. The minutes from this meeting, as well as a conversation about it with Harry from the SPP who attended it, indicated that a new consulting firm had been appointed to come up with a mixed development plan for optimal human settlement and urban agriculture use; the WCDHS was considering offering the farmers a portion of Farm 996 for in-situ development (provided their land use would be compatible with the surrounding area and the department’s intention for human settlement development in the future). There was also a discussion about erecting a fence with one access point around the farm to decrease theft and to prevent animal-vehicle collisions on Old Faure Road. My interviews with the farmers indicated widespread support for both mixed use development of the land and more secured and controlled access to the farm.

3.2. Disputed narratives

In accounts of the Ithemba occupation by the IFA, SPP, research reports, and in newspaper articles, the IFA is portrayed as a group of underprivileged farmers whose primary livelihoods is farming, whose practices are informed by low-input sustainable methods, and who are struggling in solidarity with other smallholders and landless people as part of the Food Sovereignty Campaign (Hope
Haysom for example presents them as a vibrant farming community practicing urban agriculture and increasing household and regional food security in underserved informal settlements, including Khayelitsha, and Gugulethu (2012). Furthermore, because of their relationship with the SPP, the farmers’ struggle has been framed as a fight for food sovereignty and smallholder rights (Hope 2010). The SPP has provided the farmers with invaluable technical, farming, and capacity-building support to contest their eviction; this has taken the form of training workshops on agroecological farming methods, providing the farmers with writing support and access to technology to correspond with the government, assisting with media and mobilization campaigns, and creating opportunities for solidary building and knowledge exchanges with other ‘urban farmers’, landless or tenure insecure people, and smallholders in the Western and Northern Cape (interviews, March and June 2015).

The occupation of land at Ithemba however, is underpinned by fundamentally disputed narratives. Rick de Satge, indicated how the nature of claims at Ithemba are contested:

Depending on who you speak to, Ithemba members have been on the land for 20 years, there’s a long established history of smallholder production there etc. So I think that was to some degree a narrative promoted by SPP. If you look at the media stuff and the campaigning stuff they did around Ithemba, which was linked to their food sovereignty and broader programs, they promoted this idea that Ithemba had been in occupation of this land, there was this flourishing community of smallholders on the land that had been there for some time (interview, June 2015)

I elaborate on the internal tensions at Ithemba and exclusionary processes at play in chapter four, however, I briefly explore here disputed narratives concerning: first, when the land was settled; second, who has access to it, and third; how it is used.

First, a disconnect exists between the farmers’ accounts of the duration of their occupation and the story told by historical satellite imagery of the farm. While some of the farmers indicated they had been on the farm for upwards of twenty years and that Ithemba was a long-established farming community (Haysom 2012), satellite imagery (see map 1) does not indicate visible large-scale settlement on Farm 996 until 2009 (although this does not preclude the possibility of land being used for grazing or that shelter was strategic settlement under the tree coverage, which was mentioned by several of those who had long been settled on the land).

Second, there were disputed accounts of who had access to land at Ithemba in terms of membership to the IFA and socio-economic disparities among those who live at Ithemba. The IFA was presented as a democratic body representing and negotiating on behalf of its members by Hope (2010) and Haysom (2013). However, general membership to the IFA was not clearly delineated and was complicated by some people not paying their subscription fees, being excluded from meetings, and...
 contesting the authority and accountability of the executive committee. Tensions between those living, working, and farming on the land underpinned differentiated membership and relative rights to land at Ithemba. Furthermore, while land at Ithemba was framed as for poor and landless people, settlement by small number of relatively wealthy people who had little or nothing to do with farming lived on the land or had plots there. These processes of exclusion and differentiated pose challenges in terms of reaching a settlement and addressing diverse desires for land, housing, and livelihoods at Ithemba.

Third, there was a disjuncture between how land was used at Ithemba. Ithemba was presented as supporting the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and sustainable urban agricultural practices (Haysom 2012; Hope 2010; Phaliso 2009). Yet a notable disjuncture existed between those using the land for farming and those using it to support a range of other uses and needs including for housing, tenancy and worker agreements, as a platform for businesses and as a platform for networks for distribution or social exchange. Conversations with the executive members about farming at Ithemba were framed in terms of smallholder production, food sovereignty, and agroecological production. Yet these frameworks did not necessarily translate into agricultural practices, and beyond the committee, the majority of those I spoke to were unfamiliar with these concepts and were unfamiliar with the SPP and the support they provided to the IFA. For most of those living at Ithemba, farming was one of many components of their livelihoods - and contributed in starkly different ways. This brings up questions about the salience of a food sovereignty framework to peoples’ everyday lives and struggles.

3.3. Establishing de facto rights to land

The mismatch between practice and policy and the drawing together of numerous government departments with varying and sometimes contradictory mandates and political wills, has been a source of frustration and uncertainty that continues to cloud the farmers’ tenure situation and their access to water and electricity. The government’s ability to find a solution to the Ithemba farmers’ land occupation has also been complicated by exclusionary hierarchies and contested informal rights to land reflecting uneven livelihoods and demands among the farmers which are explored in greater detail in chapter four. However, using existing state channels to make claims as well as invented and invited spaces of citizenship, the Ithemba farmers’ occupation illustrates how legal and extra-legal access to state provisions and land on the urban peripheries constitute one another and indicate the possibilities of insurgent claims to achieve material benefits – including alternative accommodation, legal representation, SPP support, drip-irrigation taps and portable flush toilets (which I elaborate on in chapter six).
Figure 5 - Satellite images illustrating the change in settlement at Ithemba between 2005 and 2015, with notable human settlement and building occurring in 2009.
Formal spaces of claims-making at Ithemba

In addition to the constitutional and legislative frameworks used above, the Ithemba farmers’ invoked PIE and to its special considerations for the elderly, children, disabled persons, and female-headed households in an attempt to establish their long-term occupancy rights. Furthermore, Chenells Albertyn framed the farmers as ESTA occupiers in the court case against the DHS and used the following sections of the constitution to challenge the designation of part of Farm 996 for a TRA because of the ‘adverse and material impacts’ it would have on the rights of the Ithemba farmers in terms of:

Section 22 - The right to choose and practice a trade, occupation or profession
Section 24(a) -The right to an environment not harmful to their health and well-being and to have the environment protected
Section 25(1) - The right to access to land and legally secure tenure in respect of land and the right to property and to protection against deprivation of property
Section 33 - The right to just administrative action including the right to be heard

Rick de Satge further indicated how the Ithemba farmers have been able to establish and sustain their access to the land; in response to my inquiry about what legislation provides the basis for providing the farmers with alternative land, Rick de Satge indicated;

[O]nce people have an occupancy claim, they obtain an occupancy right … In terms of PIE, the state can take you off – the state has 48 hours and the anti-land invasion unit can come and knock your dwelling down. They’re entitled to that but if they don’t pick that up, you can’t be evicted without a court order. That’s in terms of the constitution and that’s been enshrined in the tenure legislation. And then linked to that is now suitable alternative accommodation – you can’t just be booted off and thrown in the street (interview, 2015)

Juanita von Sitters, an employee at the DRDLR office in Cape Town, explained why the DRDLR were involved in the Ithemba case:

It’s because we have the facility to provide legal representation that we assisted them. Through the LRMF, we appointed a facilitator (Phuhlisani) to investigate their needs so we could see through our mandate of giving people access to land, and we may be able to resettle or accommodate them in another way… We have a responsibility to put suitable people on land and to ensure farming is done sustainably – so it’s not a right, you have to be able to do it (interview, June 2015)

She elaborated that their ability to accommodate the farmers was not a given but depended on their budget, on the farmers’ particular needs, and what resources they have to allocate to them. The farmers’ de facto land rights occurred alongside demands beyond existing formal and legal channels – which alone have been unable to address the immediate needs and demands of the poor, such as those at Ithemba. The above legal channels indicate what legal mechanisms and legislative mandates have been invoked in the occupation at Ithemba. The farmers have been able to gain access to the state and assert their occupation rights on the land - translating into a deepening of their claims on the land.

Insurgent spaces of claims-making
Claims on the state for tenure security on Cape Town’s peripheries - and more broadly for political inclusion and urban opportunities - have not been forged through legal channels alone. The Ithemba farmers’ have deepened and sustained their claims to the land by strategically establishing their extra-legal presence on the land and mobilizing around entitlements to livelihoods, smallholder rights, and urban inclusion beyond those protected by the state. These strategies of struggle have been dynamic and have changed over time. For example, the farmers attempted to avoid government attention from their occupation at first, but when their presence became visible and their control over the land was threatened, they strategically began to mobilize. The initial land occupants used the trees on Old Faure Road to detract attention from their livestock grazing and crop cultivation. Sipho, an African man in his late forties who farms with pigs, explained to me he has been at Ithemba ‘since the beginning of this thing – I think it was 2007, 2006 but I’m not quite sure. But you see, this place before, it was just bushes here’ (interview, April 2015). He went on to tell me:

> we knew the government would be totally against that because we are just grabbing the land from the government – we decided that those trees along the road there, we must leave it like that so the people mustn’t see what’s happening inside there (interview, April 2015).

However, as the farmers grew in numbers and their presence on the land was discovered by the government, the IFA formed to mobilize and contest their eviction. Ronald, a former employee at the SPP, responsible for information, media, and outreach, explained:

> I think they were very much influenced by having to resist being evicted so that forced them to become quite organized, by forming a specific association. Before that, things were much more informal but because they were facing so much pressure from the different government departments trying to evict them, they formed themselves into an association with a set of rules, leadership and a clear identity (interview, March 2015)

The idea that the farmers’ presence on the land emerged from their livelihood needs and their struggles were situated in their everyday practices was further explained by Harry, a manager at the SPP:

> I don’t know if people see it from their perspective that they’re occupying land. I don’t know whether if you were to ask people, they’d explain that they are simply finding a way to have shelter, a means of livelihoods, a means of income. People need both access to land for production but also for residential purposes and this is the only way to pursue that kind of livelihood in this context … They’re contributing towards their own livelihoods and the community, especially when the land is lying fallow (interview, June 2015).

His comment illustrates how struggles are actively constructed within the context of peoples’ everyday lives, beliefs, and practices and illustrates how “Political interests and identities do not follow automatically from the positioning of a class (or sections of a class) in the structure of socio-economic relations; rather, they must be actively constructed” (Hart 2002, 28). Below, I investigate how the farmers have used the banner of food sovereignty and smallholder rights to secure material resources
and sustain their extra-legal presence on the land – as well as the gaps and tensions that exist within this framing of their struggle.

### 3.4. Strategies of struggle: food sovereignty and smallholder rights

In this section, I investigate how food sovereignty has been mobilized as a strategy of struggle to justify the farmers’ land occupation and contest corporate control over food production, the government’s failure to support smallholders, and to support sustainable production and household food security. I also explore the tensions between the framework as a mobilizing discourse and the urban realities and multifold ways land contributes to livelihoods at Ithemba beyond farming.

The justification for the Ithemba land occupation has been foremost expressed in terms of desires to farm and to protect long-established practices of agricultural production at Ithemba, and this framing of their struggles has been strategically cast. This for example, was evident in the farmers’ court case application in which their legal representation indicated, “Other than those residing on the land, it is primarily used for farming activities ex. Crop and livestock farming. Farming the land is the only means of income and food security for the association members” (CTH 2010). The articulation of the farmers’ claims to those outside of the association – including to the media, through legal representation, and in terms of social mobilization – has relied upon language of dispossession, self-sufficiency, a vibrant farming community, food sovereignty, poverty reduction, and sustainable production. The farmers have used this discourse as part of their efforts to sustain their access to land and deepen their *de facto* land rights.

Framing the farmers’ occupation using the language of food sovereignty emerged from the Ithemba farmers seeking the support of the SPP, and the subsequent resources the organization has provided to the farmers in terms of logistical, technical, organizational help and practical farming knowledge. Ronald suggests that the language of food sovereignty has influenced the way that the farmers’ struggles have been more broadly articulated: “It’s given people a more combative approach so they are in a better position to contest” (interview, March 2015). In my conversations with IFA executive members Craig, Margaret and Jacob and Cynthia (the latter two who are on the sub-committee), I was told about the relevance of food sovereignty to them in terms of using organic, low-input, sustainable methods to grow their own healthy and GMO free foods.

Jacob indicated the importance of growing his own food, framed in terms of sustainable farming:

> To me, it means a big deal. The reason why is because at the end of the day, it would teach me how to live my life in the future as well. Plant today to have a better life tomorrow. You have to use the seasons to make sure you have the necessary food and energy in that plants to sustain yourself (interview, April 2015)
Cynthia is very involved in the SPP and the IFA. She attends many of the SPP’s workshops and attends the events, conferences, and meetings they convene with other groups of smallholder farmers. While I was doing my research at Ithemba, she was helping to organize a farmers’ day at Ithemba with entertainment, food, and activities for the children. She explained how important growing her own food was also important to her:

To me, it’s a big help because at the end of the day, you can’t only rely on Shoprite, Pick n’ Pay and all those places. You have to do something for yourself, to start your own business, and to start feeding your own family out of your own garden. And that’s what I learned from the SPP … You know, in the beginning people never used to worry about that. Because they didn’t know what it was all about. Until SPP told them what it’s all about and how to live up to their dreams, how to do their own gardening, how to sort themselves out. And now, a lot of people are very interested. When they hear there’s a workshop, they all want to go. Because they know when they go to any of the workshops, they gonna learn and it’s helpful. And then they come back and they explain to the other people and they teach them. So there’s a big need here by us so I’m glad that the people is really interested now (interview, April 2015)

Cynthia described how she had learned from the SPP’s workshops how to plant without chemicals, use manure for the pigs, mix the ground, and save and share seeds. Cynthia grew up in Wellington but moved to Cape Town at sixteen. She explains how she came to Ithemba 3 or 4 years ago:

my oldest boy was 2 years old when I used to come to the farm. At that time, I was living in Mfuleni and things were bad … one of my friends stayed on the farm and I came to her one day and she said ‘go ask him for food, he’ll give you’. Some of the stuff is not off, it’s like tomorrow’s stuff but it has to come off the shelves. I was a bit scared but then I came and I asked him and he was nice. He was talking to me and he encouraged me a lot. And that’s when our friendship started. When I moved to the farm, he was still here and I asked him for veggies and he said ‘you can come fetch everyday’ and I came and I offered to help clean the place and that’s how I started working with him. And when the people who worked for him started stealing, he chased them and he asked me to stay on. Not to stay oh his farm – I stayed on my farm but I come down every day to give the pigs food and water’ (interview, April 2015)

When I later asked Cynthia about the farmers being resettled, she told me

I’d rather stay here. You know why? For the fact that there’s a lot of people over the road who struggle. It’s difficult out there. The state doesn’t understand that it’s so difficult here and a lot of people from over the road come and beg here. And if we have to move, it’s going to effect a lot of lives. It’s going to bring a lot of lives to zero. Because we are actually now a life support system for the people on the other side also. Like I said to you, these trucks, when they drop food here – some of them has packets that are complete, they not even broken or rotten – nothing. It’s just thrown out because it’s too small or too big or you know? The size wasn’t right or the kilo wasn’t right so they get thrown out. What’s wrong with eating that? So there’s other people who also need food, and if we move here, it’s going to be very hard for those people.

Not only Cynthia, but Jacob, Craig, Margaret, Henry, Ricardo all also mentioned how the food waste deliveries contribute to their food security and that of people in surrounding residential areas and informal settlements.

Ronald indicated that the people the SPP works with may not use the vocabulary around food sovereignty to situate their struggles or their farming practice. While some of the executive members had a familiarity with the vocabulary around food sovereignty, there were other farmers whose
knowledge of farming was limited to sustainable low-input methods that overlapped with those taught by the SPP, for example like seed saving and transplanting. Martin, Robert and Serena for example had never received training or support from the SPP but explained to me how they save their seeds year to year – others farmers expressed desires to learn more about farming and receive support and training for low-input sustainable methods.

Contesting corporate control over food production
Ronald explained to me how the SPP engages with food sovereignty in the work they do with groups of landless or land insecure people.

We [the SPP] support mainly rural communities among the poor who are struggling for what we call food sovereignty and agrarian reform. The people we work with might not call it that but that is the theoretical political framework that we are trying to situate our work in …You can go and try to get it theoretically perfect and so on, but for us, as a guide to practical interventions, it’s basically control of the land and control of the food, democratic control. It’s about producers and consumers getting control away from these elite institutions into the hands of more democratic institutions. It’s got a lot of implications … but the starting point will have to be that those who produce and eat the food should have democratic control over that process and it should be oriented towards supporting the progressive struggles of poor people (interview, March 2015)

Craig is coloured and fifty-four years old and indicated he had been farming at Ithemba since 2006. He is the chairperson and central spokesperson from the association. He identified with food sovereignty - in the sense of it supporting their desire as smallholders and landless people to have more control over how they produce and consume food. He indicated:

We will stay and fight for food sovereignty. We are on the Food Sovereignty Campaign, and the SPP is here giving us back up and helping us write letters, showing us the right ways … Food must be available for everybody and we don’t want Monsanto’s seeds and everything because those seeds are GMOs. All the indigenous seeds are being destroyed and it’s being destroyed by this Monsanto. So this is the type of stuff we are fighting against. We must fight for this country, for this land so that people must know that the food people are giving us, that’s the food the poison is in ... Who is eating it? These poor people. So why can’t we make our own gardens and plant our own fruit and farm ourselves? They want to stop us and the Western Cape government and they are the ones who gave money to the big commercial farmers but they don’t want to help us. We need to be pushed out. Understand that people must know that we are going to stop them. We are one of the groups that is stopping them, hitting back (interview, March 2015)

Craig’s remarks illustrate his familiarity and knowledge about food sovereignty through the SPP and their solidarity-building efforts and training workshops. His comments elucidate his understanding of the framework as a way of contesting the provincial government’s failure to provide smallholders with agricultural support, tenure security, and to support peoples’ rights to healthy and culturally appropriate foods.

Contesting the government’s failure to support smallholders
The framework has also been used to challenge the government’s failure to support smallholders and the concentration of land reform resources into a fewer number of black commercially-oriented producers. The committee members I spoke to loosely used the language of food sovereignty and
smallholder rights to frame their farming at Ithemba in terms of sustainable production and forged insurgent demands for smallholder rights. Land occupation was used to contest their exclusion from smallholder support – including irrigation, inputs, extension services, veterinary services, seeds and so forth. Craig for example told me,

They say with this farming we can’t help you – you can’t produce. We are producing – on a small term but on our terms, in our ways…The Western Cape government is not looking after its emerging small farmers. They are just giving support to the big farmers. They have farms that are 600 hectares of land and some people have 6 farms and only use a portion of it. The other parts of the farm are laying barren, empty, it’s not being worked. So how can they say that there is no land for the other farmers, for the people of the Bantu? You will hear them say that Malema is wrong, that Mugabe is wrong. We agree with some of the stuff and don’t agree with other parts but we must take so we can eat” (interview, March 2015).

Cynthia elaborated;

I look at those people, they really trying very hard. And for the state to sit back and not even help them, it’s sad. Because there’s a lot of farmers who got big land, which they do nothing on. Now, you get these small farmers and the state just say aghh, it’s not our problem and they must sort themselves out. It’s not fair.” (interview, April 2015).

Similarly, Andrew while recognizing the land is not there’s to keep, justified their presence on the land as follows:

“There’s a lot of people here, people are settled here, people are farmers not squatters and government says help the small farmer but how do you help the small farmer if you break them down? In the legislation of our country, there’s nothing made for farming. They give the people houses but these people don’t want houses. What must they do with a house? What must they do with a house? They’ve got pigs … Some of the farm hands prefer houses because they’re only staying on the farms. But the owners, the people who actually own the animals, what must we do with a small government issued house? What do you do with your animals? (interview, April 2015)

Andrew came to Ithemba approximately five years ago. He is in his late thirties or early forties and though he keeps pigs on his farm, his primary source of income comes from fixing cars from his plot. Tied to the claims being forged on the state to recognize the farmers’ struggles for food sovereignty and smallholder rights are conceptions that land occupations are considered a legitimate form of land occupation, a policy the SPP has promoted in response to the shortcomings of land reform addressing the needs of landless poor people. Harry is the manager at the SPP and is responsible for the SPP’s support for and engagement with Ithemba. He visits the farm, attends meetings at the farm, and helps the farmers with their correspondence with the government and other groups of people struggles for land access and tenure security with the government. Harry explained that in the failure of the land reform program,

The alternative is that if the state can’t provide enough farms or land for people – because I mean they mention all of these constraints, they can’t expropriate without compensation – people must do what they must do. So in the case of Ithemba, they’ve occupied state land and now it’s a challenge on the state to evict them from that land. I think in particular when there’s state land - and we’ve said as an organization that we see land occupation as a legitimate way of doing land reform – so people need to occupy land and they need to produce. The state needs to then come up with an alternative and engage with people (interview, June 2015)
Margaret, another committee member indicated the meaning of food sovereignty for her was very tied up in the work of the SPP and the support they were providing to the farmers. She indicated that the SPP has created a lot of opportunities for her to learn and improve her farming:

The whole committee is on the food sovereignty campaign … They [the SPP] show all the people how to plant, about the seeds, it must be organic, you mustn’t use GMOs and stuff like that. And how do you – you plant something and after you must keep the seeds and share it with somebody, a neighbour or whoever. Yes, they learn us a lot of stuff and we are very glad to have them around us. If there’s every a problem, we always phone for Harry … ‘Harry so and so and so. Can you help us here?’ (interview, April 2015)

Margaret is one of the executive members on the IFA and is sixty-four years old and coloured. She has been staying at Ithemba with her husband for ten years, making her one of the longest established farmers. She lives at Ithemba with her husband in a large house they have built over many years. They continue to own a home in Blackheath, where the daughter now lives but explained that “the house is too big and expensive – we can’t pay to live there anymore, it’s too much for us” (interview, April 2015). Margaret used to work in catering, while her husband is a retired plumber, and continues to work close by as a night cleaner for R4500 ($410 CAD) a month. In addition, they both receive pensions from the government. Margaret and Theo appeared to be among the most influential, well-resourced, well-connected at Ithemba. They received waste contracts and had a truck, though they were saving to buy another vehicle. Similarly, Margaret indicated to me how from the SPP and the IFA’s learning and mobilization around food sovereignty; she attends many of the workshops and has had chances to travel to conferences. She mentioned:

And when the SPP is going away they phone me and I say ‘I’m going!’ I’m going to Zambia next week, hey? I’m going for 4 days and then in May, I’m going to Mozambique and in June, I’m going to Turkey overseas for two weeks (interview, April 2015)

Margaret, Cynthia and Craig’s enthusiasm indicated how the SPP has provided valuable support for their farming and opportunities to learn and practice low-input farming methods. Food sovereignty has been used as an organizing framework to contest the farmers’ failure to support smallholders and to provide them with land.

Sustainable farming and food security
The land occupants have evoked the government’s underutilization of the land in contrast to the farmers’ use of it for sustainable agricultural production. Craig explained how:

When there was bush, they didn’t want to come in here and do anything. But now that we’ve cleared the land and worked it – like I told you we were 36 and we grew and grew and grew and now the land is getting clear. Nothing grew here – nothing was in the soil. It was just sand, barren. But we fixed it. Now it’s easy to work (interview, March 2015)
It was for this reason that Craig felt they had earned the right to stay on the land and indicated, “if people want to farm, they must just go and farm. And if the government wants to fight them, resist because resistance is the only weapon we’ve got” (interview, March 2015). Christian also contested the government’s ownership of the land, on the grounds they had done nothing to support the farmers; “The government doesn’t assist us. So from my point of view, I don’t see the land belongs to them. We have to survive on our own”; he laughed and described it as the survival of the fittest (interview, April 2015).

Food sovereignty was introduced to the IFA by the SPP, and has been used to express the farmers’ rights to food, to provide them with the language to further contest the government’s ownership of the land, and to frame their smallholder production as sustainable. Ronald explained how the SPP uses food sovereignty as a theoretical political framework to guide their work. He explained; “you can go and try to get it theoretically perfect and so no, but for us, as a guide to practical interventions, it’s basically control of the land and control of the food, democratic control, It’s about producers and consumers getting control away from elite institutions” (interview, March 2015). He elaborated that the work they do is primarily rural and is concerned with increasing access to land and tenure security for landless people, smallholders, farm workers and dwellers. He indicated at Ithemba, they have worked to provide the farmers with hands-on agroecological farming workshops, as well as technical and capacity-building support (interview, March 2015).

Tensions within a food sovereignty framework at Ithemba

My research initially intended to explore the meaning of food sovereignty and its articulation on the ground at Ithemba. Although I suspected people’s familiarity, understanding, and interest in food sovereignty would vary greatly, I did not anticipate the immense stratifications and complex, hybrid livelihood strategies people used to survive at Ithemba. However, soon into my fieldwork I realized that Ithemba’s location on the urban periphery precipitated ties to urban networks, agro-food retailers and commercial farmers, informal settlement, off-farm employment and heterogeneous sources of income that had little to do with farming and did not fit at all comfortably within the dialogue around food sovereignty. I realized that the contradictions, tensions, and stratifications that emerged as I got further into my fieldwork provided a far more textured and nuanced basis for investigating what I saw as a fascinating case for rethinking informality on the peripheries and engaging with the spaces of contestation and agency emerging from them. So began my analysis of how land sustains survival strategies combining urban opportunities with land-based practices and claims for political inclusion and access to the city on the urban peripheries.
Despite the ways food sovereignty has been mobilized as a strategy of struggle, there was a disconnect between how it was used to present the farmers as a community of smallholder producers practicing sustainable agriculture and the hybrid livelihood strategies, differentiated livelihoods, and urban or commercial farming desires of many of those I spoke to at Ithemba. I briefly highlight some of these tensions within the IFA’s mobilization of food sovereignty discourse to examine how Ithemba is a struggle for more than smallholder holder rights and rights to food – and to indicate how the farmers’ struggles more broadly embody insurgent demands for rights to hybrid livelihoods, political inclusion, and access to the city.

Access to farming knowledge and support

Beyond the committee, the majority of farmers I spoke with had never heard of the SPP, and were unaware they existed or provided workshops, training, and support for those at Ithemba, though many expressed an interest or desire to improve their farming knowledge and production. Some indicated they would only hear about the workshops months after they had happened and, others suggested that workshops were only held for committee members or for certain individuals – though Margaret explained to me how she likes going to the training session and events but often it is the same people who go (herself and Cynthia) because other committee members are busy. Sipho noted that the committee “pick and choose their favourites – they must go to the workshops. If you are not their favourite, you are not going” (interview, April 2015). Jacob was the most recent member to join the sub-committee and had met several of the SPP staff members once or twice. He told me:

Many of the farmers know these guys [the SPP] by face but don’t know what they stand for, or don’t know why they are in the area, or why are they bringing people into the area to do research on urban farming or whatever. I would love for them to promote themselves among these farmers, because actually most of these farmers don’t know them. SPP only knows a few farmers here and that’s mostly the executive but Ithemba farms doesn’t only exist of the executive. There are a lot of farmers here who need them (interview, April 2015)

There was evidently a disjuncture between the general members’ and the executive members’ access to learning opportunities, farming support, and solidarity-building opportunities.

Sustainable farming vs. commercial aspirations

Peoples’ engagement with subsistence agriculture came from practicing farming in the ways they were familiar with or could afford (for example saving seeds, transplanting, organic planting), opposed to out of explicit concerns or interests in low-input sustainable production. For the most part, it was really only those with the disposable income to purchase seeds - and in some cases fertilizers and pesticides – who had the privilege to grow food to feed themselves and for many, this came from an enjoyment of farming more than out of a necessity to supplement household food consumption. Many of
those who could not afford to or did not know how to use chemical inputs indicated a desire to learn how to. Tina for example, indicated told me: “No, I don’t buy any chemicals because I don’t believe in chemicals. I believe in buying manure. Manure is best.” When I probed why this is, she laughed and said “because it’s not right, I was raised by manure style”. When I later inquired about whether farming was significant to her and if farming in the way that she grew up with continued to be important, her response was, “I would use those chemicals if I get, but I’ve never been exposed to chemical farming. Do you know anything about chemicals? Do you have any?” (interview, April 2015). This encounter spoke to the contradictions within peoples’ farming practices at Ithemba in terms of the low-input methods they could afford or were familiar with, and their desires to farm on a larger scale involving for input-heavy, chemically-intensive methods. Jacob indicated most of the people at Ithemba have no knowledge about or interest in sustainable farming practices. When I asked if people were practicing sustainable farming, he said:

No, nothing is actually happening here. There’s one lady with hugo beds who grows tomatoes and veggies and different plants to keep for herself. Me, I’m doing it with small birds and whatever I’m not using as breeding stock. I’ll eat so that’s the way I’m supporting my food supply … but to have people feeding themselves here on Ithemba Labs and to learn them to feed themselves is also a big struggle … it’s going to be a struggle to teach people simple things like to reuse the water they use for their dishes for their planting. It’s going to be a very big task to teach people to have food sustainability for the future (interview, April 2015)

Autonomy vs. choice
For those at Ithemba, farming is part of peoples’ strategies to ‘survive, thrive and endure’ and reflects the best available livelihood option. The assembling of livelihoods at Ithemba indicates the temporal and dynamic nature of peoples’ survival strategies and distributive labour on the fringes of the city, formal markets, and social and reciprocal networks on occupied land. There is a disjuncture between the knowledge and low-input, low-cost practices associated with food sovereignty that have the potential to improve peoples’ access to healthy and affordable foods – and the daily struggles and desires on the urban margins involving diversified livelihood strategies that often have little to do with farming. Instead, people assemble heterogeneous wage-earning activities or networks for exchange to allow them to buy food and other necessities from the shops. Recognition of peoples’ urban aspirations, their complex uses of land, and the diverse nature of their livelihood strategies must temper assumptions that people want to be full time small-scale farmers growing food to feed themselves. Farming is certainly a significant component of people’s desires to stay at Ithemba, but it must not preclude all of the other things that people do with land – nor assume that farming is a desirable choice (see Li 2014).

21 Raised farming bed
Rethinking food sovereignty at Ithemba

Food sovereignty, as a strategy for mobilization, has been central to the farmers’. With the support of the SPP and their mandate that ‘land occupation is a legitimate way of doing land reform’, the farmers have been able to gain access to government resources and legal channels, SPP support for mobilizing against their eviction and for improving agricultural production, to resist their eviction, to develop solidarity building opportunities with other groups practicing urban agriculture and faced with tenure insecurity; and to sustain their presence and claim on the land. Its centrality to the farmers’ struggles and their insurgent demands on the state cannot be dismissed. However, a greater alignment between food sovereignty and increasingly urbanized and non-farming based livelihoods strategies is needed to better reflect the changing dynamics work, urbanization, and insecurity on the urban fringes – and understanding their occupation beyond in terms of food sovereignty and more broadly as a struggle for livelihoods, political inclusion, and access to the city.

3.5. Land as a platform for claims-making

While above I examined how the farmers have established their de facto land access by framing their occupation as a struggle for smallholder rights and food sovereignty, I now explore how land has been used at Ithemba as a platform for insurgent demands and practices for socially and spatially integrated human settlement, reflecting access to the city. Lahiff writes, “land occupations – the most direct expression of demand for land – have been rare and almost entirely restricted to peri-urban areas, where demand is primarily for land for housing rather than for agricultural production” (2007, 1584). While housing is certainly a significant drive for land occupations and agricultural production - as indicated by the invasion of land at Khayelitsha and also by many peoples’ settlement at Ithemba, focusing on urban land struggles simply in terms of struggles for housing overlooks the multifold ways that land supports broader claims on the state in terms of livelihoods, access to the city, and access to the state.

Demands for Livelihoods

With the disappearance of work, and a falling into hard times for many living at Ithemba, the farmers have used invented and invited spaces of citizenship to gain access to land and sustain hybrid livelihood strategies. The dynamics of these livelihoods will be explored in the following chapter. The occupation of land at Ithemba was framed for some as a contestation of coloured and African historical exclusion from the city under apartheid and displaced urban and livelihood opportunities. Craig framed his historical exclusion from land first in broad terms of the dispossession of indigenous peoples under
colonialism and then linked these forms of loss to his own experience of forced removal under apartheid and unemployment post-apartheid. He told me:

In my eyes, the land belongs to us. People just came into this country and took the land away from our ancestors and it’s about time the indigenous people took the land back. The government says we are illegal on the land but how can a person born in this country be illegal? When they came to this country, they didn’t have title deeds … We are the Khoisan people and descendants of them. And that’s why we are fighting because everywhere we are trying to do our agriculture in our ways, in organic ways because we know the land. We know the land, we know the earth and we are the custodians of the earth (interview, March 2015)

Craig went on to elaborate: “I’m a child of the District 6 and I saw how they break down our places where we used to live” (interview, March 2015). Craig had come across Ithemba while collecting firewood to sell, and met a man from Khayelitsha who was grazing his cows on the land. This man encouraged Craig to start farming at Ithemba. He explained how he has been a yacht builder but had lost his job in the early 2000s, when the ship building plant closed down. He said he was unable to find work, “so I thought what must I do? I will come back to do agriculture” (interview, April 2015).

Similarly, Sipho and Tina’s move from the Eastern Cape elucidate the decline of the countryside under apartheid and their search for work in Cape Town. Tina and Sipho came to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape searching for work. Tina grew up in Butterworth in the Transkei. She is in her fifties and moved to Eersterivier in 1992 after receiving a job in Cape Town with a healthcare and insurance company, but started working in health care doing HIV testing, after her sister died from HIV/AIDS and Tina took in her five children. Tina told me;

Apparently my grandfather was a white guy from overseas but he was picked up by the black people and grew up in the Transkei. We ended up using the surname of the family that raised him and at that time, he was a person who was busy with farming but he didn’t have a farm. He was busy with planting and he had a big land for farming and we also did that in the home as well. We had big gardens – fruits, veggies, and mielies and corn and everything. We were planting all that. We never struggled. We had cows, we had goats, We had pigs as well (interview, April 2015)

Tina still lives in Eersterivier but comes to Ithemba several times a week to take care of her plot and do the planting and watering. She grows vegetables including mielies, tomatoes, spinach, pumpkins, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, onion, and also keeps pigs. She explained she plants sometimes to give to the pigs, sometimes to sell (people come to Ithemba to buy her vegetables and make packets to sell at the train station), sometimes to give away, and sometimes to eat. Tina explained that her interest and some of what she knows about farming came from what she learned as a child, although she has attended workshops on pig farming as an adult and is able to make money from it to supplement her income as a health care worker.

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22 Maize that is turned into a course flour and is widely consumed
Similarly, Sipho grew up in a small town in the Eastern Cape. He came to Cape Town in 1989 and also worked as a representative, but began farming full time after he became unemployed. He still lives in Eersterivier but makes his entire living from pig farming and occasionally grows crops including spinach and peanuts, which he produces for his own consumption. He explained that growing up, he did stock and crop farming, especially with maize and indicated in the Eastern Cape, farming:

“It’s a big thing up there. Our parents grew up doing that – looking after herds of cattle, sheep, and all that thing, goats and that” (interview, April 2015). He indicated that their family was not making a complete living from farming and that his father did work and travelled to Johannesburg and Cape Town, but that while he was gone, “those must do something for us so we must have something to eat” (interview, April 2015).

While farming is significant as Sipho’s only source of income, it is also tied to memories and practices of his past, home, health, desires for economic growth, and hopes for the future. He also thinks it’s important to grow his own food because it’s fresher and healthier; “I pick it up from my garden and it goes straight into the pot. It’s also a way of saving money”. Sipho also sees farming as his future and it is intertwined with his hopes to one day return home;

“I told you I’m from the Eastern Cape and I’m wondering what I’m doing here because as the years go by, I’m becoming older. I want to spend my last days at home and do exactly what I’m doing here. I’ll transport my pigs or sell them and buy other ones there because this is what I’m used to” (interview, April 2015)

The continuities between apartheid dispossession and post-apartheid urban opportunities and employment in Cape Town are stark, and connections between historical exclusion and contemporary joblessness were explained to me at Ithemba. Farouk and Juliet, Jacob, Craig, Margaret, Martin, Anthony, Evan, Gavin, and Jessica explained they had grown up in previously coloured areas including Elsies River, Bishop Lavis, Mitchell’s Plain, Hanover Park, Eersterivier, Bonteheuwal, Blackheath, and Kensington; since then they had moved between many of these former coloured areas searching for jobs and affordable housing, after losing stable employment.

While unemployment among Cape Town’s African population remains disproportionately high, the disappearance of low-skilled, low-waged manufacturing jobs in post-apartheid Cape Town contextualizes the widespread incidents of coloured unemployment and material decline of those who settled at Ithemba after losing stable work. Stark levels of unemployment and jobless growth in South Africa is made concrete by those at Ithemba faced with unemployment and few prospects of finding jobs in the formal job market. This context of job loss for example broadly situates for example Ricardo’ account of losing his job working on a grape farm in Stellenbosch, Henry being laid off his job in a car manufacturing plant and Ali in a factory making bottles.

Many of those who lived at Ithemba explained how they had fallen into hard times after losing access to waged labour. Jacob, for example, is a coloured, middle-aged man who has lived at Ithemba
for two years with his wife and two sons. He is one of the two sub-committee members. I spoke to him outside of his small well-maintained home in his tidy yard, where he had several sturdy hokkies\textsuperscript{23} and his pick-up truck parked. Jacob works for a window-frame building company but farms as an additional source of income and because he gets a lot of pleasure from it. Jacob explained how during his time at Ithemba he has expanded breeding from parrots to pigs, goats, rabbits, sheep, goldfish and a variety of ducks, quails, cockatiels and other birds. Over the last four months, he had sold 5 pigs, a ram, a sheep and several goats “so there’s money coming in but unfortunately you have to spend money to make money as well. Maybe we’ll spend a few rands on a chicken and sell them and use that money to buy some lambs and goats” (interview, April 2015). Jacob grew up near Bishop Lavis and learned about farming from his father, who raised chickens, rabbits, and birds in the backyard. He developed an interest in parrot breeding as a teenager and has kept birds all his life; even when he lived in Malibu, he had 42 cages of birds (although because of financial problems in 2009, he sold many of them). Two years ago he found out about Ithemba and decided “I will come here and start over again. That’s how I started farming on this piece of ground” (interview, April 2015).

Jacob was animated when talking about his farming at Ithemba. He described his love for farming, the enjoyment he gets from working with animals, and how special it is to teach his sons about farming. When I asked him why he had come to Ithemba, he told me: “Just because I love animals. I love the breeding of animals, the farming is in my blood so I’ll keep on doing what I have to do” (interview, April 2015). He explained to me how he sees farming as a way for teaching the children who do not go to school; he hopes to create a crèche or communal property to teach them ‘life’s important lessons’ and give them an opportunity to learn and play and feed themselves (interview, April 2015).

Therefore, land’s ability to support livelihoods, agricultural production, and housing needs at Ithemba was framed as a justification for their occupation; in the absence of work, housing or income generating opportunities (or after having lost access to them in some cases) – farmers explained their land occupation as their right to survive and ‘do something for themselves’, regardless of the land officially belonging to the PGWC. Some of those with connections to farming in rural and urban areas as children, had turned to agriculture to supplement their incomes or as the basis for their livelihoods.

Sipho explained that “because of lack of employment the people, they decided they must do something, just to have something in their pockets to eat. So they decided they must make this thing like

\textsuperscript{23} a shelter or cage for an animal
it is today” (interview, April 2015). Evan, a coloured farmer in his late fifties who lived in Eersterivier and was a retired carpenter, also told me

This land is not ours, but we are supposed to do something for ourselves. The poor people, they have no jobs and I mean you need to put food on the table for your kids. When the provincial government came in 2008 and told us we were illegal, we said ‘yes, we illegal but here’s a cut out from the newspaper with the minster saying that if there’s vacant land, you should use it so that’s what we did. We took the opportunity and we made use of the land … And up to today, we are still here but we didn’t get help from any of them. If you want to plant crops, if you want to have animals, you have to do with the little bit you’ve got. If you get help here, you could be bettering yourself here (interview, April 2015)

Similarly, Alena lives at Ithemba with her husband and their daughter and has been on the farm since 2008. She is coloured and in her early forties. Her husband works for the City of Cape Town. They have one of the larger and well-maintained homes at Ithemba and were in the process of putting up a fence around their property and fixing up the cages and hokkies for their animals when I spoke to her. She indicated that “the property obviously belongs to Provincial Housing but you live here while they aren’t here because what must we do? You do what is necessary” (interview, April 2015). She was also adamant that “We aren’t staying here as squatters like [the government] says we all are – we’re here because we want to be farming” (interview, April 2015). Despite her husband’s job for the government, Alena explained how they still sometimes do not have enough money to live and must sell their animals to get money for food or slaughter them to eat.

Finally, Andrew outlined the farmers’ occupation as emerging from their livelihood needs;

We are not acknowledged as farmers here. We’re here illegally. We know that. We cannot steal the ground and expect it to become ours but all we ask is that we have a place for farming. Just to do something (April 2015)

The land occupation at Ithemba has been shaped by spatialized and racialized patterns of employment and residence in Cape Town - and their connections to present-day urban desires and aspirations. Dispossession for many at Ithemba was not linear experience, but an uneven process that for some was experienced generations ago yet continues to differentially shape the labour, land, and settlement of white, coloured, and African people in Cape Town. These experiences of loss open up productive spaces for how struggles for livelihoods are rooted in past and ongoing social and geographical exclusions. They also help situate how demands for land have been expressed in conjunction with demands for livelihoods.

Access to the state

The land occupation at Ithemba has also been used to leverage demands for access to direct state transfers, housing, and a lease, electricity, and water.
Grants

Monthly state transfers were recognized as an important source of household income but were frequently framed by those at Ithemba as a basic entitlement – and often an inadequate one - due to them as marginalized citizens. Henry for example indicate how in the absence of earning a wage to work at Ithemba, they rely on child support grants to get them through the month:

“Yah, we get child support, but it’s for the children. That’s what I told my boss – I can’t steal from my children’s money. So, you understand, it’s for the children. Now we are forced to use it for ourselves. It isn’t fair” (interview, April 2015).

State transfers were the most sizable source of income for many of the households I spoke to and sustained peoples’ ability to buy basic necessities, pay for transportation into the city, and subsidize job-searching activities. However, understandings of these state transfers were consistent with Ferguson’s observations that they are not conceived of as a gift – but were understood in more radical terms as a rightful share, illustrating new forms of distribution and claims-making at Ithemba.

Housing

The resettlement negotiations emerging from the land occupation, has been a way of gaining access to housing for farm workers. Harry highlighted how critical it is to understand the conflict at Ithemba and the need for land on the fringes of the city in relation to contemporary needs for housing and land. He explained to me that many of the people living at Ithemba had lost their homes to the banks. Andrew explained:

Now a lot of people who came here didn’t have residence, so this became their place to stay, their livelihoods. It’s everything. It’s what they are, it’s who they are. They’re blood and sweat is laying on the ground. They can’t just break them down (interview, June 2015)

Farm workers explained how their occupation of the land at Ithemba was primarily as a way of securing housing. Serena and Harold, Henry and Claire, and Ricardo all indicated they could not afford housing and had been unable to get a government house; Henry outlined his attempt;

We used to stay in an informal settlement in Muizenberg. There, we applied for a house and so on. We still on a waiting list – 8 years now, we on a waiting list for a house. So last year, they told us we are supposed to go to the civic centre or somewhere to also put our name down there and to get a green card or whatever (interview, April 2015)

He continued; “If I had decent job, I would have lived in a house. There you can have a kettle, you don’t need to make a fire in the morning”. Ricardo also explained,

I applied for one of those RDP houses but they said in the meeting, they’re only going to build and give the houses from next year onwards. I’m not sure if I’m going to get one because there are a lot of people on the waiting list. I must now wait and see (interview, April 2015)
Ricardo shared that he and his wife attend a church close to the farm that is looking to buy land and if they do, the minister said Ricardo and his wife can build a house on the property. Serena also explained although they are grateful to have somewhere to stay, they would be happy to leave Ithemba if other accommodation was made available to them;

“If the government said ‘here’s a house for you’, I wouldn’t jump – I’d roll out of this house. I can’t say I’m fed up because at least we’ve got a place to stay but we’ve got small children growing up here. They notice all this stuff and tomorrow my child ends up like that” (interview, April 2015)

Serena and Harold, Henry and Claire, and Ricardo’s occupation of land at Ithemba in response to conditions of unemployment and homelessness indicate how insurgent practices are contesting long waiting lists for government housing and the disappearance of waged labour using land occupation to ensure their ability to provide themselves with shelter and basic necessities. This links back to Hendler’s observation that the urban poor have “take[n] initiative to advance their rights to decent housing” (Hendler 2014, 94). The workers’ struggles over housing and their claims on the state for suitable accommodation have also shaped the direction of negotiations at Ithemba. In several conversations with farmers and key informants, mention was made that considerations were being made in government negotiations to provide housing for farm workers not interested in receiving land, provided their household had not already received government housing. Andrew noted that:

“The guys [WCDHS workers] told me that everyone wants a farm but there are a lot of people here who aren’t farming. So they talked about dividing the people up and decided if you already received a house, you can’t qualify for the ground. They decided that some people can be offered houses and some people can be offered ground where people can move to farm. Some of the people here, mostly farm hands, want houses so there’s talk about dividing the two” (interview, June 2015)

This comment, while difficult to verify, indicated that differentiated desires for housing among the most marginalized at Ithemba were being recognized to some degree at Ithemba and indicate hope that their interests will be represented within the government negotiation.

**Lease, electricity and water**

Desires for electricity and water were widespread, however these issues were considered secondary to receiving a lease from the state. First, many of the farmers explained to me their struggles accessing water. Sara for example explained how some days she cannot access water because she is located far from the connection on the main road – and some days she is unable to hire transportation to fetch the water for her (interview, April 2015). Ali also explained how access to water depends on the location of your plots; “The other people have stronger water than us – we have very little, it takes half an hour to run a bucket full of water, maybe an hour and sometimes no water for two days” (interview, April 2015). Gaining access to electricity was linked to increasing safety and agricultural production on
the farm; because people used paraffin lamps and gas stoves and most of the houses were made of wood, there were concerns about fires. One of the farmers in fact, explained to me how a two year old boy was killed last year in a house fire; “We’ve had a few bad fires because a lot of the structures are made from wood and they’re standing in the sun every day. It’s so dry. Just a spark, and it burns like a matchstick” (interview, April 2015).

The absence of lighting on the road outside of the farm as well as on the farm was also described as a problem and prompted demands for electricity – or a lease so the farmers could secure their own contracts with Eskom, the largest electricity supply company in South Africa. Andrew explained,

The people come steal around here and the reason for that is the power. It’s so dark and you can’t see. Power would make a massive difference, you could get electric fencing, you could get a flood light … you could get so many things. It’s massive. I don’t know how you can be a farmer without power, but we seem to do it.

Andrew however suggested that if the farmers were able to get a lease to the land, they would be able to organize among themselves access to electricity and water. This was expressed by a number of the other farmers as well. He explained:

We don’t wanna move – our kids are in school, you cannot just move like you’re opening up a wrapper with a sweet inside. This is your life. You’ve settled here, your roots are here. You can’t just move to Malmesbery or something … We just need a little bit of assistance. Actually, we just need a lease … if we get granted a lease on this ground, Eskom can give us electricity. The minute we get a lease everything will change – drainage will come in, power will come in, we’ll be acknowledged as the owners of the farm (interview, April 2015)

Sipho further indicated:

The stumbling block is that the land is not ours, we’ve just grabbed this land … There must be a lease agreement or title deeds and then the government will help you. That is where this committee is lacking because if they do have meetings with government, after these years they would say ‘we’ve got a title for this piece of land’. The government can do fencing here because what the government is doing is not helping you financially, it is helping with equipment, doing fencing, giving you wheelbarrows and all those things you can use, bringing water nearer and all those things. That’s how the government works (interview, April 2015)

Cumulatively, the farmers’ *de facto* land rights were used to sustain claims on the government most centrally for access to a lease – but also for electricity and water. These struggles were framed largely in terms of entitlements to housing, water, and service delivery due to those unable to afford it or to find stable employment. While access to water and sanitation services was secured at Ithemba, securing a lease to the land at Ithemba or alternative land was central to peoples’ livelihood security and continued presence on the land.

**Access to the city**

Lastly, the farmers’ *de facto* rights to land at Ithemba have indicated pertinent desires for their continued or improved access to urban infrastructure, opportunities, and networks afforded to them by their location at Ithemba. These claims, much like in terms of livelihoods, were tied to contestations of
racialized exclusion to the city under apartheid – and the legacies of these social and spatial barriers in Cape Town that prohibit many African and coloured people from accessing the city – or having the resources, income, or infrastructure to easily do so. Some of the farmers, including Amanda, Andrew, and Alena explained how the government wanted to relocate them to land far from their present location but continued access to transportation, work, social networks, schools, and shopping was imperative to them; Alena stated “This is our home now. The kids are in school here. Parents are working. Now they put you somewhere else and they put you in a play that’s way out. Maybe there’s no bus or train or a taxi that’s nearby us” (interview, April 2015). Therefore, demands for access to housing and service delivery at Ithemba exist in relation to desires to maintain existing land and urban-based livelihoods, social networks and urban infrastructure. Amanda simply put it as ‘Our whole life is here, we’re settled’ (interview, April 2015). Rick de Satge explained to me how the farmers’ have sustained their land occupation by combining housing with farm and non-farm work, and urban informal markets and networks;

Their location is part of their critical success factors because they have local markets at hand. They don’t have long chains of transport costs. Wherever alternative land was identified, it was usually far away. And that would make agriculture for the majority of people completely unviable because they’d have the costs of going back-and-forth, they wouldn’t have the immediacy to look after their stuff and be close to shops and schools and facilities and the other things that they need. So it just wasn’t going to work (interview, June 2015)

He elaborated that;

What alarmed me slightly from when I was engaging with the province was “you’ll have a township here – sort of dense urban grid of houses and you’ll have agriculture adjacent” but I think the key thing that works for people in Ithemba is that their production is in their home and that enables them also have some measure of security to protect their livestock, to protect their crops and as soon as your separate people from their production, you’re going to undermine the viability of the whole process.

What Ricks’ comments indicate is the disconnect between policies supporting integrated human settlements, government approaches on the ground, and desires for equitable inclusion in the city supporting hybrid livelihood strategies, access to urban infrastructure, existing social and livelihood networks, and housing. The farmers’ claim on the land indicates the establishment of insurgent practices sustaining integrated settlements from below.

3.6. Conclusion

Within the fiercely contested terrain of post-apartheid South Africa and demands for inclusion, the farmers at Ithemba have used their occupation of land to makes claims for livelihoods, access to state resources, and urban infrastructure and opportunities. Taken seriously, these insurgent claims illustrate the possibilities for marginalized populations to claim their ‘rightful share’ in the post-apartheid dispensation to move beyond conversations around land reform as a panacea for equality, justice, and
democracy (Walker 2008, 2015; Hall 2014) - and open up space for engaging with the situated practices and realities of those on the urban fringe as they exist today in relation to land-based and urban desires, survival strategies, and insecurities.

In this chapter, I explored how the land occupation at Ithemba has been sustained through demands for formal rights and insurgent claims – and how land has been used a platform for making broader claims for livelihoods, political inclusion, and access to the city. I have explored how people who had not previously been recognized by the government through the land reform process - or have been overlooked in the government’s provision of service delivery or housing - have used a range of formal and informal spaces through which to make claims on the state and assert their *de facto* rights to the land. By using their land occupation as a platform for both demanding inclusion and strategically evading government attention, the lines between legal and illegal, formal and informal, rural and urban have been blurred and spaces for counter-hegemonic struggles have emerged on the peripheries. In sum, these struggles indicate claims for equitable mixed land settlement to support access to urban networks and infrastructure, land-based activities, housing, food security, sanitation and service delivery, and access to urban resources and opportunities.
4. CHAPTER FOUR
Land and livelihoods at Ithemba

4.1. Hybrid livelihood strategies

Having established the importance of land as a basis for claims-making on the urban peripheries in chapter three, I explore how insurgent land access has sustained survival strategies and urban opportunities on the periphery of the city. In this section, I investigate how hidden livelihoods drawing together heterogeneous land-based practices and urban streams of income and state transfers have been assembled in response to contemporary conditions of unemployment and homelessness.

The case of the Ithemba farmers reveals that livelihoods framed in terms of smallholder agriculture were not simply sustained by agricultural production – and even less frequently result in household food security. Rather, land is significant to those at Ithemba in less obvious ways that bolster multiple livelihood strategies combining agricultural and non-agricultural wage earning opportunities, but also act as a source of shelter, pleasure, identity and belonging. Building on the idea that production is just one of the many ways that land carries meaning, in this section I investigate the heterogeneous survival strategies of those at Ithemba drawing together networks of production, exchange, distribution, and reciprocity. While the occupation at Ithemba has been strategically framed in terms of supporting the livelihoods of impoverished landless people and smallholder, in reality people have hybrid livelihood strategies drawing together farming, non-farm and off-farm income, state transfers, social networks to varying degrees huge socio-economic discrepancies overlooked by the IFA’s presentation of their struggles. In this section I outline how livelihoods have been assembled and have combined farming, non-farm or off-farm income, and waged/distributive labour.

4.2. Farming-based livelihoods

Farming has been framed as a primary livelihood activity, though in practice it contributes to peoples’ livelihoods to varying degrees at Ithemba; for some it is their entire livelihood and a significant source of food security, stability, and income in the absence of other opportunities, while for others it is more significant as an additional income stream, a supplement to household food consumption, and an opportunity to tap into informal markets based on the significance of livestock for cultural and social practices. Agriculture bolsters the survival strategies of stratified groups at Ithemba; the most marginalized are most dependent on production for household consumption or income from agricultural labour to purchase food and basic necessities - while better off farmers have the disposable income to invest in expanding their production as an additional income stream, or simply as a leisurely activity.
For the most part, farming is a secondary or an important supplementary activity among other survival strategies and livelihood diversification practices that have facilitated peoples’ continued presence and use of the land. Jacob indicated:

most of the farmers here are doing it on the sideline to make sure there is extra income on the side. But there are also people doing this full time to support their families off these pigs and goats and whatever they are farming with. But I don’t see a lot of people who are (interview, April 2015)

The survival strategies assembled at Ithemba are indicative of the falling contribution of agricultural production to incomes and increasing reliance on non-agricultural production, grants, and off-farm labour to earn wages. While farming is central to some peoples’ survival strategies, the livelihoods of those at Ithemba reflect Ferguson’s observation of the disconnect between visions of smallholders putting food on the table by growing it and the prevalent desires of those at Ithemba to earn wages to buy food from the store (2013). For some at Ithemba farming is primarily for household production, while for others it is a hobby or a supplementary source of income or activity in retirement or on the weekend farming for people who continue to live and work in the city. These distinctions within farming type are reflective of class divisions and the widespread differentiation that exists among those at Ithemba.

**Farming for subsistence and semi-subsistence**

Those farming for semi-subsistence relied on agriculture as their main source of income and often produced for household consumption by growing their own vegetables or slaughtered their own animals for meat was a way of saving money or to sell for cash to buy food. Aside from farming, families were reliant on state grants and those engaged in subsistence or semi-subsistence based production were the poorest and most desperate.

Serena and Harold are both coloured and in their early forties. They have lived at Ithemba for six years and inherited their plot from the farmer they had worked for when he decided it was too expensive to travel from Strand to Ithemba every day. They have five children and though Harold occasionally finds work doing odd jobs around the farm, like for a man who runs a roof thatching business from his plot or Martin, who make wooden pallets. Harold used to work for a sign-making company but has been out of work for a number of years. Neither he nor Serena have work off the farm. Harold is from the Northern Cape and grew up around sheep farming, while Serena had work taking care of pigs in Jacobsdal and Blackheath, and learned about farming in the process. They stay in a three-room shack made of corrugated tin and a wooden frame. Their income is limited to the child-care grants they receive for four of their children, the odd job Harold is able to get often in exchange for a little bit of money for
bread or candles, and the occasional pig they are able to sell. They keep pigs and plant to sell and vegetables to eat. Serena does most of the planting and showed me the seeds packets she had recently planted: *mielies*, carrots, beetroots, cabbage, lettuce, potatoes, sugar beans, spinach, squash, and onions. Some of the seeds (like the onions and beetroot) were given to her by her father who also stays at Ithemba and had saved them from past years - but most were bought from the supermarket. Serena explains:

> growing vegetables saves you a lot of money and you don’t have time or money to go to the shops. It’s a lot when you have 5 children to feed … you can’t manage so you put seeds in the ground to feed the boys. Because there’s no income here, you have to plant (interview, April 2015)

Juliet and Ali have lived at Ithemba for five years. They are Muslim and have three children, ages five, fifteen, and seventeen. Farming plays a central role within their livelihood strategies; selling small animals and cultivating for subsistence is the basis of how they survive, alongside child grants and to a lesser extent money they receive from Juliet’s brother on occasion and small bits of work Ali does helping others on their farms or with their businesses at Ithemba. Juliet grows green peppers, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, pumpkins, watermelon, butternut, and squash - and also keeps chickens, geese, rabbits, ducks, love birds, budgies, finches, cats, dogs, and even some fish. Juliet explained to me that people come to Ithemba from around the area looking for animals to buy on the black market and slaughter themselves or come looking for small pets for cheaper than they can find at the pet store. They count on these informal markets for their living; last year they had sold thirty-five chickens and twenty-four geese, and that she was able to sell about 7 lovebirds every three months for R45 ($4 CAD) each to people coming to the farm looking for livestock and pets. She explained though that they had had to sell off their bigger livestock because they were strapped for cash and could not afford to feed them. Some of their breeding stock had also died because they did not have enough food for them, and they had resorted to feeding their animals a portion of their household food to keep them alive to sell.

They had previously led a comfortable life, having owned a car, a home, and had travelled around the country when Ali had been a professional dancer for the Cape Town Ballet Company but he had stopped dancing at thirty-five and though he had worked in a bottle factory for a few years, he had been out of work for some time. He was searching for work teaching ballet to children and had small contracts in Mowbray, but the work was inconsistent and few hours, and it was difficult and expensive for him to travel there. They were financially struggling when we spoke; for several weeks they had not had the money to refill their gas tanks or buy food for their animals so had been cooking basic meals over the fire outside or eating cold cut sandwiches. One of the other farmers also elaborated on their
financial challenges and indicated “Some of their animals barely have food. They feed them the food from the house when they have – literally, when they have. That’s after they eat” (interview, April 2015). Juliet explained to me that aside from having a place to live for free, she was drawn to Ithemba because:

I always loved animals and gardening. My mother also loved gardening and where I grew up, my aunty used to always make gardens and I used to help her. I had cats and lovebirds and rabbits and I mean, who wouldn’t love farming? It’s not for everybody because it’s a lot of work (interview, April 2015)

Juliet was getting ready to plant vegetables for the family to eat, but was waiting for money to come through so she could buy sand to cover the ground, speaking to the significant ways that non-agricultural and distributional sources of income supplement agricultural production. Despite their financial hardships, Juliet expressed to me how much she enjoys staying at Ithemba and is hopes it will be profitable in the future, is happy to farm there, as well as her hopefulness about the future;

You can make a living from farming but everything must be just right. It’s a struggle at the moment. If we can grow bigger, we can make a living from it and grow our own vegetables and have our own animals to eat. We could live from the food we grow and sell it and make real living. We just need to have a good start (interview, April 2015).

The situations of Juliet and Ali and Serena and Harold illustrate how subsistence and semi-subsistence farming at Ithemba draw on accessing state transfers and non-farming sources of income. Agricultural production – in terms of production but also to earn wages to buy food and basic necessities - is both constrained and necessitated by limited access to non-agricultural income and is illustrative of the significant intertwinements of household food production, social grants, access to informal markets, and distributive and social networks of labour.

Farming as a primary source of income

Sipho, Christian, Nicholas, Sara, and Cynthia all derive their primary source of income from agricultural production at Ithemba. Apart from Sara and Cynthia receiving monthly child-care grants, all of these producers expand their production by re-investing their livestock and crop sales into their farming. Sipho, who as indicated earlier, came to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape and farms full-time, is animated when talking about his farm and reiterates how far he’s come throughout our conversation.

“I started this thing with nothing. I’m telling you, with nothing. I was unemployed then. I didn’t have money – not even R300 ($28 CAD) to buy a piglet” (interview, April 2015). He currently has twenty piglets and when I asked him how many pigs he sells a year, he said:

I don’t want to lie to you. It depends. If I’m selling a pig alive, there’s no profit I’m making. Really. Because if you can count the amount of food that pig has eaten up to that stage, if you are saying to them, the pig is R2000, they say it is a lot. They are looking for something closer to R800, meaning which you are not covering the expenses. So for that reason, I’ve decided no, instead of selling a pig, if I’m not under pressure and there’s a pig I want to slaughter, I must slaughter and sell meat. Because if you are selling meat, you almost triples that amount. But it’s not everyone
Sipho elaborated on the ways he is able to derive extra value from his pigs; he slaughters the pigs himself and sells the meat as packets in Eersterivier, where he lives – though the downside is that he must wait for people to receive their pay cheques at months end to pay him. He was also in the process of negotiating with the municipality of Khayelitsha to have a small stand for selling meat to braai stalls “because for each and every piece of meat being bought from you, you know there is cash going into your pocket” and further explained that this cash could be invested into his farming in a manner that will help him expand his livestock farming (interview, April 2015).

Farming similarly contributes to Christian’ livelihoods much in the same way as Sipho. Though technically a worker, Christian is able to make a living for himself exclusively from farming, while also hiring a worker to take the cows out to graze, who he pays R750 a month and who sleeps in a caravan on the farm plot and helps him keep an eye on the property. He knew nothing about farming when he came to Ithemba but grew up listening to stories about farming from his father. Christian had finished school and was living at home with his family in Stellenbosch, not working when his parents told him that they had received a plot of land at Ithemba and he was going to live there and farm it. He was shocked but agreed and has been farming at Ithemba for the last seven years and has come to enjoy the work he does there and make enough of a living to support himself and to contribute to his family.

His father is a carpenter and still lives in Stellenbosch with his mother and sisters, but they come down on weekends to help out occasionally. Christian keeps cows, sheep, goats, chickens, ducks and geese and selling them is his only source of income. If he doesn’t sell them, he doesn’t have any money coming in and elaborated for me on the balancing breeding and selling and investing in the right amount of food and stock. He sells his livestock through informal networks to people who come to the farm from Khayelitsha, Mfuleni, Eersterivier and Makhaza. Christian says every month is different and some years you make money and some years you lose, but he earns around R2000 ($178 CAD) a month from farming, which he said goes far because he lives alone. He said: “anything can happen here on the farm. Anything can go right or wrong – you can’t see your future” but elaborated if he were to go get a job in the city, he knows he would feel like something was missing and he’d end up back here on the farm because this is what he loves now.

Sara, like Sipho, also sells meat instead of pigs for slaughter when she can; she packages the meat and stores it in her parent’s freezer in Elsies River before selling it there for R100 per packet.
Sara’s story of how and why she came to Ithemba was one of the most interesting. She, besides Tina, is the only woman I spoke to who farms alone (though Cynthia lived alone, her and Craig works together and he provides her with one piglet whenever his pigs have babies). Sara is coloured and is in her early thirties. She quit her job as a manager at Checkers to begin farming with livestock at Ithemba. She explained to me she came to Ithemba because

“Because I want to do my own thing. I don’t want to work for a boss. At Checkers, I had to solve your problem but my problem’s not being solved. You see? So this is now my problem, I must sort it out.” (focus group, April 2015).

She also mentioned that meat was getting expensive so she thought that if she could start farming, she could save money by not having to buy it – and would be able to make a living selling it at lower prices than people could find at the supermarket. She began learning about farming at Mfuleni, and was told about Ithemba. She was given a plot in the very back of the farms, far away from the main road and access to water – where it is the most difficult to retrieve water and isolated from the other plots. She hired a de-logger and with the help of her father, she cleared the bush and also built a wooden four-room house (which she received a notice to take down by the WCDHS but ignored, with no repercussions). She began farming with one pig and at the time that I spoke to her, she had 50 pigs, approximately 20 chickens and a handful of goats and sheep - although she had recently lost a few of the latter to theft. Sara told me

I have a child and it’s very hard to stay here. You must have guts to be on your own. The water is very slow, some days there isn’t water and some days there isn’t transport to get your water here from the main road. And getting the food here for the pigs is also difficult (focus group, April 2015)

She indicated she had taught herself a lot of what she knew about farming and has asked people around her for advice: “sometimes the people don’t want to teach you because they think you’re going to bring them down” (focus group, April 2015).

Sipho, Sara, Christian, and Cynthia’s experiences indicate the significance of farming as a main source of income on the rural-urban divide and the networks and infrastructure – both social and physical – that have emerged in response to agricultural demands for production, consumption, and distribution on Cape Town’s urban fringes.

**Farming as supplementary income**

Numerous residents at Ithemba indicated that while they wished to farm full-time, they relied on other forms of income to feed their families. Some of those who farm as a secondary source of income include people in their retirement, nearing retirement, or among a class of ‘business class’.

**Farming in retirement**
Margaret and Theo decided to move to Ithemba to have a quiet place to stay and to farm during their retirement, though as indicated earlier, they continue to own a home in Blackheath:

You know, there in Blackheath, there’s a road next to my house and the cars up and down and all the crime and stuff. I don’t like that - I like the life that is easy here. Me and my husband, we sit here and we watch the pigs and stuff because my grandmother was a pig farmer so I think I inherit that from here. But no one else – my mother or anything – was a farmer. I don’t know why but I love my pigs. They so cute. I got a lot of pigs. I sold everyone last year November – I only had 4. And now I have almost 70 again. And Monday night, another 9 piglets were born and that was 3 mummies and there’s still 9 mummies that must give babies now. So I don’t know where all the pigs is going.

Margaret explained they’ve faced a lot of obstacles farming at Ithemba, there is a lot of work being on the committee, and they are still faced with a lot of uncertainly. She says,

I want the land on my name. I want a lease agreement. I want to know this is mine … But there’s also a lot of trouble – every morning I’m busy, every day there’s people. This is the problem. This is the problem. Sometimes I feel like I can’t take it anymore. Me and my husband was talking the other night and I said. Why don’t we sell all this stuff and go get us a small place – just a one bedroom flat and we stay there until we go on. We can do that, we have pensions, he go clean every night in a place here in Stock Road and they pay him 4500 so there is an income for us. So we said, we can take that and buy a small flat and we can pay the flat every month. But to go to a flat and just sit there, we gunna get old very quick. Here, we help ourselves, we do exercise, this is helping us (interview, April 2015)

Robert is a retired roads worker who grew up growing vegetables and learning about farming from his father. He lived in Eersterivier, where he had a garden while he worked, but told me he moved to Ithemba the day he retired because “I knew it was the one thing I could do”. Robert lives with his wife and their young son. They receive a child grant and also a pension, which is enough for them to live off of while living in the small structure on their plot. Robert was the only farmer I spoke to strictly cultivating vegetables, although he used to keep chickens but they had died. He had beetroots, onions and “all that kind of stuff that grows under the ground” but was preparing for the winter and to grow sweet potatoes, green peppers, cabbage, onions, chilies, butternut, pumpkins, and watermelon – and additionally had three grape trees (interview, April 2015). He explained he grows the veggies for his family to eat and give away, so farming for him isn’t about making money – although a neighbour indicated that Robert makes packets of vegetables and sells them for a R20 or R30 each.

Robert indicated he enjoys staying at Ithemba, but they face issues with water and electricity. He hoped that they could be sorted out so he could set up a heating system to keep chickens and indicated, “I could sell the eggs. I could sell the chickens. But now there’s nothing. When it’s cold here, it’s cold. And when it’s wet, it’s more colder.” (interview, April 2015). He further indicated that he had issues with a woman squatting on his property,

I get the farm in 2009. We left the farm in 2010 and came back in 2013. I was over at my parents-in-law at Stellenbosch because her mother was sick. When we came back here, she was on the farm with her sister. I came
here and the hokkie was standing here. Now her sister’s out and she’s still here. I’m sitting with other peoples’ problems. She’s a squatter here. She told me straight ‘we are squatting here’ (interview, April 2015).

He explained that he was trying to get her off the property, but “she’s getting interdicts against me, court cases and all that. Terrible, that woman. Tik\textsuperscript{24} – she’s into drugs. For me, it’s only this problem. The tik problem.” (interview, April 2015).

Farming in near retirement

Beyond these accounts, there were those with plots at Ithemba who had worked as carpenters, electricians, and in construction - including like Evan, Gavin, Craig, and Jessica. The desire to eke out a quiet existence, remain active, supplement their pensions, farm out of pleasure or enjoyment while living in the city, to rent out their homes and live for free at Ithemba, or to avoid the cost and chaos associated with urban life – were all prominent reasons why people decided to stay at Ithemba or farm there on a leisurely or income supplementing basis in their old age.

There were also those who were working in the trades or for the government (in short - salaried work) who were nearing retirement and hoping to farm full-time once they started receiving pensions – including Marvin and Michele, Jacob, and Alena’s husband. Those who had not already moved to Ithemba were planning on doing so, and farming full-time when they began receiving pensions. Farming at present played a very supplementary role and was referred to more as a hobby and in some cases, a financial drain. However, Martin and Michele, Jacob, and Alena all hope that they will be able to expand their agricultural production and it will become their main source of income in their retirement.

Jacob, as previously mentioned, works full time for a window frame building company and farms as an additional source of income. He is hoping that farming will become his main source of income in the near future when he retires, but at the moment he has too few animals to sustainably farm part time: he indicated, “I have to work for a living to put food on the table”. Jacob is hoping to retire by the end of this year or the beginning of next and to:

get full hands on deck with the farming … I want to expand. Not just with the pigs and the goats or sheep, but also with the chickens. Because, with egg laying chickens, you can get a lot of money out of eggs. So that is going to be one of the experiences of my life, having egg laying chickens (interview, April 2015)

He elaborated he could earn a lot of money selling eggs to spaza\textsuperscript{25} shops around Electric City and Eersterivier and further hoped to expand his fish breeding into tilapia because they grow quickly and

\textsuperscript{24} Sara methamphetamine

\textsuperscript{25} Informal convenience store, often run out of a home
you can have them all year around. He also explained how at present it is difficult to balance both of these livelihood sources:

the little girl (points across the street to a little girl playing by a fence). She’s the new owner, the proud owner of two rabbits! The reason why I sold them is because I don’t have a lot of time anymore. Because it’s the beginning of winter and usually everybody needs their places closed so that means my hours is getting longer. By the time I’m getting home, it’s dark. You cannot feed the rabbits, the birds and it’s too much for my wife to take care of during the day. So I said ‘alright, I’ll get rid of the rabbits’ so there’s a few less mouths to feed so we are going on (interview, April 2015)

Marvin and Michele share a similar desire for the future. They are both coloured and are in their late fifties. Marvin works as a welder, building buses, and Michele takes in foster children at their home in Kuilsrivier. They have had a plot at Ithemba for ten years and come to the farm on weekends and during the week on occasion but are hoping to retire soon and move to Ithemba to farm full-time. They explained, “If it wasn’t for the electricity, we’d stay here and we would be here every day”. They have an expansive garden with watermelons, mielies, pumpkin and butternut and mentioned things grow very well in the sandy ground here but the neighbours’ goats had broken through the fence recently and eaten almost everything. They currently have peacocks, chickens, ten pigs and they also grow medicinal plants. They were getting ready to plant for the next season.

Marvin’s interest in farming came from his father keeping pigs and also from his mother’s interest in farming. He indicated: “My mother who died used to tell me a lot about farming and I was quite interested and I think why not give it a try? And that’s where all this started” (interview, April 2015). Michele added

I loved animals as a small child. I love animals, you see. I like to play with dogs, cats, you name it (she laughs). That is why I’m interested in this, you see it’s because I love animals. You see, you must have that passion for animals (interview, April 2015)

Martin and Michele told me that they used to have fifty chickens, turkeys and geese but many of their animals have been stolen:

Since I started here ten years ago, I had a lot of animals. But as I said, these people use the drugs man or they keep on stealing stealing stealing. So I decided this year, I want to fix everything so I can stay here permanently man. Come down here and look after my stuff. That’s why I’ve got four of these dogs here to help me look after the place.

When I asked them why they wanted to stay at Ithemba, Michele explained:

We decided for us [farming is] for the future living. You know, life is so expensive, just to start with animals and so on just to give us a better future and for the kids into the future. There’s those that break you down a bit but I still want to go on because I think there’s also a future in farming. This is a big beginning now. We had a lot of big losses in the past. Now, we put our mind here, like the pigs now, and we work here. In the very near future, we will be able to sit down and be here every day. I know there’s money in pig farming.
They hope to sell to butchers and expressed an expanding their production and their knowledge about farming by producing collectively.

Alena’s hopes that farming will be lucrative in the future were more tempered than Martin and Michele, and Jacob. Alena indicated they used to have pigs, cockatiels, ducks, dogs and “any animal you could think of’. Her husband and his cousin also had a contract with an abattoir in Durbanville and at one point, they had 500 New Zealand white rabbits they were selling for export overseas. However, many of the rabbits had died over the last few years and they had had to sell some off many of the animals because of the expenses associated with housing and feeding them, and out of a need for income (interview, April 2015). She told me:

As we’re getting older we don’t want to work anymore and want to live off the money we are making farming. It’s any small farmers’ dream to become a commercial farmer, to make money from farming. But you can’t just keep farming and years have gone by and you have nothing to prove. Some of them – or maybe a lot of the people – are here for the love of it and don’t both about the money. You must love animals to stay here but you can’t keep taking money out of your pockets and not see any coming in (interview, April 2015)

Alena’s comment and a later remark that “there are people here who really want to farm. But they can’t afford to” (interview, April 2015) highlighted many peoples’ desires to farm full time but the economic constraints that made farming a supplementary activity or a hobby and associated with hopes of a better future.

Farming for the ‘business class’ at Ithemba

While those with government jobs or working in trades farmed as a supplementary activity or a source of enjoyment, there was a class of farmers at Ithemba who most powerfully brought into question Ithemba as a site for the landless and disadvantaged. This upper echelon at Ithemba was comprised of relatively well off ‘business men’ for whom farming was the most peripheral, but who had the resources and capital to farm at a market-oriented level. Despite my attempts, I was unable to speak to anyone who fell within this group, largely because they were wealthy enough not to live at Ithemba, spent little time there, and hired workers to tend to their livestock and live on their property. I would however pass by their large multi-story homes and on occasion see their luxury vehicles parked outside their plots or driving through the farm. Furthermore, from time to time, mention was made of these wealthy farmers; for example, Tina mentioned “there’s a guy who’s got more than 400 pigs so he’s got a lot of manure. He lives at the double story farm in the back” (interview, April 2015).

To have the disposable income to be able to farm more for pleasure than for profit indicates a particular relationship with the land at Ithemba reflecting how farming is secondary to more significant sources of income. It speaks to the reality that people are living, working, and farming at Ithemba for
very different reasons, to varying extents and with a wide variety of methods, access to markets, distributional networks, resources, and knowledge – the losses sustained for some are a threat to their continued survival and presence on the land, while for others it is a setback that is more easily overcome and does not pose a threat to their primary source of income. Farming is relied upon as a component of peoples’ incomes in disparate ways varying in terms of how indispensable it is to people’s lives and livelihoods and how much people are willing to give and sacrifice to remain on the land there. I further unpack the disparities within the contributions of farming to peoples’ livelihoods and the socio-economic differences among those living, working, and farming at Ithemba in the next chapter.

Farming as a form of distributive labour

Many farmers who did not live on their farms hired farm workers to protect their plots and take care of their animals or crops. Workers were compensate with rights of residency and in some cases wages or payment in-kind. Worker were among the most marginalized; their livelihood strategies were most dependent on agriculture -not on the basis of production or out of an interest in household production but in terms of exchanging their labour as farm hands for accommodation, wages, and access to food.

Positive Relationships

There were workers with positive relationships with their ‘farm owners’, including paid and familial arrangements to them. Christian, as previously mentioned, worked for his father on their farm and though a worker in a sense, his friend Daniel is twenty-six and is African. He works on his father’s farm, who is a carpenter and the rest of his family lives in Gugulethu, where they keep chickens in their backyard for eggs and meat. At Ithemba however, Daniel keeps goats, pigs, and sheep. He explained he dropped out of school and came to the farm eight years ago. Though he doesn’t get paid to stay on the farm and doesn’t keep the money he makes when he sells off an animal, his father gives him money when he needs it. When I asked Daniel if he enjoyed farming, he responded that it was good for him, that “it keeps me from gangsters … from doing the wrong things like gangsters and so” (interview, April 2014).

Similarly, Hayden is content working at Ithemba and feels fairly compensated for his work there. He learned about farming as part of a program in prison and when he got out, he had trouble finding work because of his criminal record and gang affiliation. He explained to me that being a farmhand was the only work he knew and was how he wanted to be earning a living. Hayden works for R1000 a month in exchange for working and living on the farm. He had been there for 6 months and was responsible for
the care, feeding, and occasional slaughter of his farmers’ livestock. Hayden explained that the farm owner was around frequently to provide him with everything he needed, including food and medication for the animals. He paid him regularly and what Hayden described as fair and a sufficient amount. He also was able to keep whatever was received for the sale of livestock above asking price and the farmer he worked for allowed him to keep his own animals to breed and sell, though he had none at the moment – these were entitlements that the other workers I spoke to explained they were not entitled to, nor were lucky enough to receive. Farming for Hayden was framed as an escape from his past; he outlined he would never be able to disassociate himself from his gang affiliation, but farming enabled him to distance himself from it and start anew following his promise to his mother on her deathbed that he would stop stealing. His boss was looking for a bigger piece of land to graze his cattle in Jacobsdal and Henry explained how he hoped to move with him and continue working and farming. He explained farming was the only thing he wanted to be doing.

**Negative Relationships**

Ricardo previously worked on a farm in Stellenbosch harvesting grapes. When he lost his job, he came to Ithemba to look for a place to live and began working for the farmer, whose pigs he tends to and grows cabbage for him to sell. He spoke to me as we huddled around a fire outside of this house, their only source of heat in the absence of electricity. He is paid R400 every two weeks to work at the farm and for his right of residency there. Besides this income, they rely on a monthly disability grant - but explained to me it’s not enough to get them through between payments. The farmer is not often present at Ithemba and consequently, often does not pay them on time or provide the necessary inputs they need to farm; “there’s days when there’s no food or money to buy food – we must just fight our own way” (interview, May 2015).

In between pay cheques, they must borrow money to cover their expenses and to occasionally contribute towards a neighbour’s petrol in exchange for cooked meals made from food waste deliveries. Farming is not of particular interest to Ricardo, but simply offers a means of survive and shelter that they lack access to elsewhere. They want to leave Ithemba as soon as they can because of the struggles they face eking out an existence; “Life at Ithemba is a struggle day to day and everyone must fend for themselves” (interview, 2015), he told me but Ricardo explained that because of his disability, it’s hard to find other work - he also must be at the farm constantly to watch the animals and prevent any theft from occurring.
My conversation with Henry and Claire reflected parallel struggles to Ricardo’s. Henry previously worked in a foundry in Epping. He lost his job after six years and came to Ithemba three years ago with their three young children to work on Claire’s uncle’s farm. Henry found work with another farmer taking care of his pigs and they have lived there for a year. They live in a three room shack constructed from corrugated tin sheets and wood – with an outside sitting area where they light a fire to keep warm and cook their food over. He is compensated in terms of his rights of residency, though he has been promised payment that has yet to materialize on a number of occasions.

The time we moved in they told me, ‘we’re in a financial predicament and as things go on, they’re going to start paying me’ but they going to provide me with food and stuff like that. But the food they provide me is from the waste food. I told them one time, ‘Uncle we can do nothing without money. You can’t even use the toilet without money. I’m asking you for a small fee of R100 a week to work on the farm to at least to provide me with food – I want to eat bread from the shop. I’m a smoker and a drinker.’ He says he must talk to his wife. That payment only came through once (interview, April 2015)

Henry explained in terms of the workers, “some get paid and some don’t get paid. Or some of them get bought wine, just to cover their own. And that’s where the stealing comes in”, but a number of the farmers think they are not obliged to pay their workers because they are providing them with a place to stay (interview, April 2015). Henry however, framed his rights at Ithemba in terms of being a farm worker. He explained a rule at Ithemba, mentioned on several occasions, that farmers are supposed to give two piglets to their workers are not paid - and said that his right was not being fulfilled. He told me:

They can’t put you out. If you don’t steal, they can’t put you out. So if you’re going to argue with him about money and how he’s treating you, you mustn’t go. But some people are going to be dumb enough to pack up their bags and leave because they don’t know their rights. And I’m just looking for the right people to get in contact with because I can’t do this anymore. I’ve got little ones … I enjoy staying on the farm, honestly. I enjoy being with the pigs and cows and stuff like that. But it’s not lekkar26 being treated like this, especially if you have kids. The eldest one is in school now and it’s very difficult now because she’s already complaining about her school shoes being almost too small. Last week, this one didn’t have kimbies27. I asked him for a couple of rand for loose kimbies and he said ‘I don’t have’. So how must I feel? I must go all out of my way for their animals but they don’t want to do anything for my children? The last pig I sold for him, last month was for R3500 – he didn’t even give me a 5. So I decide, if there are people coming to buy pigs again, no there’s nothing for sale. Simple (interview, April 2015)

My conversation with Henry indicated how in some cases workers evoked their rights at Ithemba to lay claim not to land or the right to farm at Ithemba, but the right to earn a decent wage. Furthermore, the significance of workers’ access to land, wage earning opportunities, and food or goods through networks of social reciprocity and exchange is an unexpected way that people have staked a claim in sustaining their access to land at Ithemba. While not framed in terms of farming (workers wanted wages to buy

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26 Pleasing, enjoyable
27 diapers
bread, candles, *mielies* from the store, not land to farm) the importance of land in other ways was significant, though overlooked in the narrative of the Ithemba occupation.

### 4.3. Livelihoods beyond farming

Above, I have outlined the different extents farming has contributed to peoples’ livelihoods from as a source of subsistence/ semi-subsistence, a primary livelihood source, a supplementary source, and as a source of distributive labour. Throughout I have however also made mention of varying ways that these contributions have come together and interact with non-wage or off-wage sources of income and state transfers, as well as how informal niche markets, and informal markets of exchange and distribution tied to the backend of agro-food networks. In practice, the livelihoods of those at Ithemba are far from sustained by agriculture and even less so by subsistence production and household food security; as Andrew put it to me,

> You won’t understand what’s going on here if you only look at farming. If you want to understand farming at Ithemba, you have to understand all of the other things that people do here (April 2015)

Similarly, Henry mentioned,

> There’s a lot of funny business going on at these Ithemba farms. You wouldn’t believe me! There are people doing very strange things on this farm – very very strange things, not what they’re supposed to do. The farm is just a cover up (interview, April 2015)

Agriculture is just one of the many significant strategies people rely on for their social and labour reproduction. All of the other ways that people ‘survive, thrive, and endure’ because of their access to land need to be acknowledged for their important contributions to peoples survival strategies the margins of Cape Town (Du Toit and Neves 2014, 834). I expand on these significant components of peoples’ survival strategies in the remainder of the chapter.

**Non-farm income**

While there are those who farm at Ithemba as a secondary activity to jobs they have off of the farm, I also discovered there were people at Ithemba using their farm plots as platforms for businesses not related to farming. Martin is an older coloured gentleman who has lived on the farm for six years. He used to live in Eersterivier across the road, which is how he found out about Ithemba. Martin has rabbits as well as chickens, which he keeps for breeding and eggs. He also showed me around his greenhouse, where he grows tomatoes, cauliflower, chilies, potatoes, and other vegetables which they are able to sell on occasion at roadside stalls but mostly he grows food for his family to eat and because he gets pleasure from farming. Martin runs a business constructing wooden pallets from his plot, and this makes up his main source of income – although he told me he is passionate about farming and would love to do it for a living but it is not possible. He hires people from Ithemba to work for him, and
was cited by several of the men I spoke to as providing them with occasional work, including Harold and Ali. He explained flooding is a major problem in the winter at Ithemba because there are no storm pipes on the property and their plots are located on a wetland. He had raised his house off of the ground using concrete blocks and wooden slats after his first winter at Ithemba and had recently had a large shipment of sand delivered to his lot to minimize the damage caused by flooding. Martin also indicated that because of the flooding, they must fill up the roads in the winter with rubble but “not everyone is helping you see. They are all using the road but one of us must see to the water” (interview, April 2015).

Andrew keeps a few pigs and was knowledgeable about farming from doing it growing up. He mentioned he kept chickens and pigs, but his plot was filled with broken down cars and discarded engines, and people were constantly coming in and out to have their cars fixed or to do work for him. He explained that he had previously lived in Delft, but Ithemba provided him with a chance to save money by not paying for rent, facilities, or utility fees.

Additionally, Amanda and her husband run a fruit wholesaling company from their plot. Amanda indicated she is from Darling and has lived in Cape Town for thirty years. She received her farm plot at Ithemba from her uncle and has lived at Ithemba for nine years. They currently have three pigs, but they had fifty pigs and three horses the year before. They also grow butternut, pumpkin, tomatoes, watermelons for their family to eat and they sell any extra they have to small shops in the area and at the roadside stall near Old Faure Road down the street from the farm. Amanda’s husband buys produce from commercial farms in bulk and uses his farm as a depot, from which he sells to fruit markets and stalls like those in the Grand Parade in town. She explained to me that they would like to farm full-time one day but “We wouldn’t have food for our pigs and horses. We can’t make a living just from farming but we want to. We don’t have the money to buy animals and their food and medication – it’s a lot of money” (interview, May 2015). Furthermore, allegations were made in numerous conversations that certain plots at Ithemba were being used as a brothel, for money lending, and drug dealing.

**State transfers**

The significant ways that government grants supplement peoples’ livelihoods and provide a stable and consistent cash stream emerged as a cash component of peoples’ livelihoods (if not the most important one). Of all of the people I spoke to at Ithemba, all but Nicholas and Sipho received at least one type of grant from the government - in the form of a childcare, disability or old-age grant. Apart from the handful of people who had formal employment or ran ‘entrepreneurial’ endeavors from their plots, state transfers played a huge role in subsidizing people’s involvement in farming. Government
grants provided, in some cases, the only source of income and in others, a sizable portion of household incomes for farm hands.

Having access to a consistent and dependable source of income made it possible for people to: buy basic inputs to farm for subsistence or to reinvest or expand their production; to access cost-sharing mechanisms like food waste deliveries or transportation or water delivery; to borrow money; to access cost-sharing mechanisms and reciprocal agreements for waste food, animal feed, stock; to pay for transportation to support job-seeking opportunities or to shop, socialize, or work. The widespread access to grants and its significance in supporting basic survival strategies, work-seeking opportunities, social obligations on the rural-urban fringes however must be understood as significant at Ithemba – although not for young and unemployed able-bodied men who largely do not qualify for government grants (as the only exceptions for receiving grants at the farm indicated). Ferguson’s writing on the expansion of social provisions for those traditionally understood as ‘non-productive’ (the elderly, disabled, young children) is useful here for unpacking the growing importance of distributive labour and hybrid livelihoods in the absence of wage labour (2015).

Niche Markets

The Ithemba farmers have sustained their livestock production and to a lesser extent crop cultivation by tapping into informal and highly locally and socially inscribed networks for production and exchange not reached by ‘big retail’ (du Toit and Neves 2014, 845). These ‘black markets’ largely rest on demands for livestock tied to its cultural and ancestral meanings (for sacrifice, ceremony, muti\(^{28}\)) and demands for cheap meat for braai stands or small shops in nearby informal settlements. All those at Ithemba would sell their livestock to people coming to the farm and negotiating a price. Some of the farmers, like Craig and Margaret had regular customers, like people who sold meat in Gugulethu and Khayelitsha who would buy their pigs from them. Others, like Christian, indicated people would come to his gate looking for a cow or a pig to buy or Juliet, who mentioned:

> People come around and they look for chickens and that, especially Muslim people in the area because they kill their own animals and eat it. They come from all over … they see where they can get it the cheapest and things like that. In some cases, the need for livestock was tied to the time of year – for example, Serena indicated that in December, “the Africans come and buy pigs then for the people who go to the bush” (interview, April 2015).

\(^{28}\) Traditional medicine and healing, sometimes involving animal sacrifices
Christian further indicated that sometimes people come looking for animals needed for rituals or ceremonies associated with illness, weddings, funerals, or the birth of a child – and that this provides opportunities for making greater profits. He explained:

> Chicken, is about R60 or R50 but the black people usually use a chicken when they do their cultural works, neh? And then the chicken is not R50 or R60. Then it’s about R500 or R600. Maybe small girl is sick, they need a chicken, maybe they need a black chicken and they come for that offer. Because I know about that chicken. That’s why – if they come, I know that chicken is not R60. They gunna take it! Maybe they go and come back and pay for it, maybe less, maybe R500 or R450 (interview, April 2015)

Jacob also mentioned this:

> Well in South Africa, you can get for a white chicken R300 and for a black chicken, you can get up to R4000. Because that is going for the muti trade. Yes, so the muti trade they will pay anything for a chicken. You can even ask up to R800 and they will pay for that chicken because they have to accommodate for their ancestors (interview, April 2015)

He was also saving a sheep to be slaughtered to celebrate his fiftieth birthday, his anniversary and the birthdays of his wife, son and grandson in the upcoming month. Sipho and Sara have taken advantage of opportunities for adding value to their meat production. By slaughtering the animals themselves and selling the meat in small packets to people in Eersterivier and Elsies River respectively, they have been able to make more money to re-invest into their farming and expand.

Rick elucidated on the significance of livestock within the Cape Town context:

> Going on the N2, you see cattle going over the road bridges at night going into the informal settlements – they’re being grazed on the road reserve and public land and there’s a whole network of people who are herding them and they obviously serve particular markets for funerals, for customary practices and so on … It’s part of the social landscape and it’s not recognized as such – it’s like ‘we don’t do that, it’s not modern’, it’s not part of the urban space from an official perspective but it permeates it. Livestock are used in different ways. You sell one when you want to pay your school fees, you slaughter one when you have a wedding or a funeral, you transact in them. There’s a whole different trade and social system around them that doesn’t fit into the policy stuff. Certainly in urban agriculture, it’s not even on the landscape, it’s not even on the radar (interview, June 2015)

Furthermore, In terms of crops, markets available have largely been at road-side stalls, train stations, small *spaza* shops in close by neighbourhoods, and between farmers at Ithemba – although crop production was far less extensive than livestock as an income-generating activity. The informal markets for livestock for ceremonies and sacrifice, as well as for small businesses within nearby informal settlements, indicate how the farmers at Ithemba have been able to serve a niche market situated within historical and socio-spatial networks of production and exchange in Cape Town. Because of the informality and unregulated nature of the production at Ithemba, these market opportunities are among the only ones available at Ithemba and have proven vital to sustain their livelihoods, while the farmers have been able to serve demands for cheap animals and meat on the urban peripheries.
Agro-food networks

The independence of smallholders from commercial and agro-food networks and their ability to exert control over their production, distribution, and consumption of food is central to food sovereignty. However as I have extensively discussed, farming is not peoples’ primary source of income at Ithemba, but in most cases plays a supporting role and has been used to sustain broader claims for access to the state. Many of those engaging in agriculture did not do so for production but had built up networks of exchange, reciprocity, and distribution dependent on the back-end of markets and networks tied to corporate food retailers, commercial production, and agro-food networks, for example including: the widespread purchase of cheap food from supermarkets (in some cases supplemented by household production), buying surplus young livestock from commercial farmers for low prices to sell later on, and relying on food waste from King Pie, Shoprite, and Checkers to feed livestock (and people!). For example, Jacob and Christian both indicated that they buy animals from commercial farmers. Jacob explained that they get a lot of young animals at the end of winter from large farmers getting rid of them for low prices, and they resell them by December or early January for more money.

The politics over waste food contracts at Ithemba captured the complexities associated with framing the Ithemba farmers’ struggles in terms of smallholder rights to food production and food sovereignty; it so intimately exposed how agro-food networks and small-scale production were materially intertwined in a way food sovereignty has been unable to reconcile, while encapsulating how differential citizenship and relative rights of land exist within Ithemba. There were a handful of farmers at who had contracts with the country’s biggest supermarket chains – including Shoprite, Woolworths, and Checkers - to deliver their expired or damaged food and merchandise at the farm. Henry’s only source of wages comes from what I have referred to as the back-end of agro-food networks. He was able to earn income because of his access to expired food waste, which he exchanged for goods and cash, complicating his appeals to rights as a farm worker. His boss, beyond having a plot at Ithemba, receives shipping contracts of food waste from Shoprite and uses his plot to keep pigs to dispose of the waste. Henry told me that the last farm owners’ workers were put off the land after the farm ‘owner’ caught them selling the waste products – much of it, he detailed, was still fine to consume. He admitted to me that he also was doing it, and had resorted to it after the farmer promised to pay him in front of witnesses but had not. He elaborated that he doesn’t sell stuff that is ‘very expired’ or ‘could be dangerous’ like fish or milk but that items like sugar, rice and roll-on deodorants are sold or exchanged with people
living on the farms, or who come looking for food from the surrounding townships, as well as people across the street in Electric City.

Henry was not proud of selling the food waste but explained that it is a significant component of how he survived;

most of the people don’t get paid. As I told you, they will do anything for food. Do you know how I got my cell phones inside? Music players inside? By food coming in here – I don’t have money to buy it, my kids want it so ‘I can’t give food for free – I want your phone please’. And if you want food, you’re gunna give it. I don’t really like to do it in that style but I don’t have a choice, I want to see my children happy at the end of the day. I also want to give them what I didn’t have so this is what I must do (interview, April 2015)

Alternatively, he indicated some people exchange their labour by helping out on the farm in return for food waste to feed to their livestock or in some cases, to eat themselves (a farmer was in fact sorting out Henry’s piles of waste food and rubbish bags in exchange for food for his pigs while I was speaking to Henry and Claire). This illustrates the significant ways that reciprocal relationships are socially inscribed and valuable in the absence of formal employment opportunities. These networks exist not simply within the boundaries of the Ithemba farm, but extend to the residents of Electric City, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha and so forth, and have increased access to food in not at all obvious, yet more complex struggles situated in everyday struggles over land, food that complicate claims to food sovereignty and sustainable low-input agriculture and socially inscribed networks of exchange and reciprocity.

Henry indirectly deriving income and Ricardo indirectly deriving access to food from the back-end of agro-food chains and retailers illustrate the complex networks of exchange, distribution, and reciprocity that straddle the formal and informal economy and legal and illegal activity; they encompass a sphere of political influence and hierarchical power within Ithemba that underpin control over and access to sources of food, farming inputs, and income that are of widespread importance at Ithemba and underpin the particular urban opportunities and networks associated with the historical and geographical location of the land.

4.4. Conclusion
This chapter has illustrated how land at Ithemba is tied to hybrid livelihood strategies that link land-based practices and uses to urban networks, and reflect broader conditions of unemployment and homelessness in South Africa. The land occupation at Ithemba has allowed people to farm (in a variety of capacities ranging from for subsistence to pleasure) and develop agriculture-based networks of distribution and exchange drawing on existing commercial farming and agro-food networks - and that sustain household consumption, distribution, and exchange in significant and underestimated ways (ex. receiving supermarket food waste, unsold market produce, or gleaned commercial crops for livestock
feed, buying surplus livestock from commercial producers, purchasing inputs from agro-corporations). People additionally sustain their access to land at Ithemba with non-farm or off-farm income, entrepreneurial activities run from their farm plots, state transfers, or negotiated reciprocal relationships exchanging labour for rights of residency, wages, access to food, and farming inputs.
5. CHAPTER FIVE
Layers of legality, authority, and exclusion at Ithemba

This chapter focuses on the layers of legality, informality and authority mediating the farmers’ relationship with the government and the internal conflicts between the farmers and the IFA. In the first section, I investigate the dialect processes of struggle and containment between the IFA and the ‘messy conjecture’ of government constraints and political wills pulled together in an attempt to reach a settlement. Second, I explore how relative rights to land and hierarchies of belonging and exclusion have been established at Ithemba through class formations established through the insurgent social order at Ithemba and racialized experiences of differentiated citizenship.

5.1. Government-farmer relations
Government interventions and back-and-forth negotiations and contestations between the IFA and the government have on one hand, deepened the farmers’ informal rights to the land and on the other hand, created obstacles for securing and sustaining their livelihood opportunities. The farmers have engaged with numerous government departments since 2008 (see overview of conflict in chapter three), in what was described to me as a bureaucratic nightmare, particularly for the PGWC – the official land owners. Interpreting the farmers’ *de facto* land use and contested informal rights within departments’ varying legislative frameworks and mandates has been difficult – and further complicated by the policy vacuum incapable of addressing the urban complexities of the farmers’ settlement informal land rights on the peripheries. The Ithemba conflict indicates a disconnect between policies, and on-the-ground practices and demands for urban integrated settlement and livelihoods. Conversations with the Ithemba farmers, Juanita van Sitters from the DRDLR, Rick de Satge from Phuhlisani, and Harry and Ronald from the SPP highlighted the government’s heterogeneous responses to the Ithemba occupation. In this section, I first investigate the ongoing negotiations at Ithemba as a source of stagnation and a threat to the viability of the farmers’ livelihoods and occupation. I then explore the disconnect between government interventions, on-the-ground land use, and policy as a productive disjuncture.

5.2. The ‘will to improve’
The Ithemba dispute has been an ongoing challenge complicated by the Ithemba farmers’ attempts to establish occupancy rights on the land, the PGWC’s official ownership of the land, the CCT’s desire to build a TRA on it, and the DRDLR’s attempts to provide the farmers with tenure security and prevent their eviction from the land. Both Juanita van Sitters and Rick de Satge outlined how the Ithemba farmers’ struggles over land have been complicated by the urban nature of their
struggles and the absence of clear policy frameworks that can easily be applied to their situation. Rick outlined that:

*Ithemba basically fell into this complete policy vacuum where it didn’t fit into any policy framework whatsoever. The urban agriculture program of the City of Cape Town didn’t really cut it, the housing stuff didn’t cut it, the land reform stuff didn’t cut it* (interview, June 2015).

More specifically, in terms of urban agriculture policies in South Africa for example, Rick indicated that “the City [of Cape Town] has this urban agriculture policy and they always beat their drum about it but they’ve done next to nothing to actually implement it”. The shortcomings of urban agricultural framework at the national level were elucidated by Ms van Sitters; in response to my inquiry about whether national policies for urban agriculture exist that the farmers could be fit into, she responded:

*No, not really. We’d have to fit it into our other policy frameworks and make it work in that sense. But metros should really have urban agriculture policy frameworks. It’s always the difficulty of marrying our policy framework or legislation with urban situations* (interview, June 2015)

No encompassing urban or peri-urban agriculture exists in South Africa, beyond individual strategies supported by various levels of government and civil society organizations, though an intention to create a strategy that uses ‘agriculture to support residents of informal settlement on the fringes of towns and cities’ is outlined in the DAFF’s 2012/13- 2016/17 Strategic Plan (DAFF 2012, 5).

The limitations posed by the absence of an overarching urban agriculture framework is just one example of the ways that inter-departmental collaboration is needed to reach a settlement at Ithemba and to provide the farmers with the multifaceted support they need. Harry noted that “the DHS needs to engage with other government departments like the DRDLR so they can secure access to additional land or other land they’ve earmarked for housing and work out a process with the community of Ithemba” (June 2015). Juanita also suggested that once the DHS identified appropriate alternative land, the farmers will need the assistance of the CCT and national departments providing them with social development and agricultural support.

Yet, the ability and desires of the government branches to find a solution at Ithemba is further complicated by tensions between the African National Congress (ANC)-led DRDLR, the Democratic Alliance (DA)-led provincial housing department, and a cash-strapped city burdened with more responsibilities and fewer resources. Ronald, referring to the municipal commonage policy, eluded to some of the larger constrains municipalities face in the post-apartheid period:

*The neoliberal framework is putting a lot of pressure on municipalities because what it does is it cuts transfers from national government but gives municipalities more responsibility for giving services. So municipalities are more and more forced to try and generate their own revenue and one way of doing this is using the agricultural land they own*
and renting it out to commercial farmers rather than making it available for people who want to farm it for subsistence, who are on a smaller-scale who won’t be able to afford the big high rents and so on (interview, March 2015)

Juanita van Sitters on the other hand, elucidated the tensions that exist between the DA-run DHS in the Western Cape and the ANC-run DRDLR at the national level. Juanita highlighted repeatedly that the Ithemba farmers were ‘nothing on the departments’ books’. She explained:

They [the legal representatives through the LRMF] were appointed to fight the case against Human Settlements in the court. So in essence, the relationship is between the DHS and the Ithemba people and all we [DRDLR] did was give them someone unbiased and with a legal background to assist them. So it’s a very small role, they’re nothing on our books. They’re basically just a mediation case.

She insisted that the DHS was responsible for negotiation a settlement and providing the farmers with suitable alternative accommodation instead;

The Department of Human Settlements was aware they were on the land so they have given them consent. If you know someone is on the land and you don’t do anything, you develop a set of responsibilities. You have the right to put people off in a particular timeframe and they let them be. Now you cannot just throw people off (interview, June 2015)

The above data indicates how important it is to unpack the state as a monolithic force with varying ‘wills to improve’ within different departments and varying involvements in negotiation with the Ithemba farmers since 2008. These relationships involve contested representations and interpretations both of legislative entitlements and constitutional rights that highlight the disjuncture between existing legal channels- and de facto land rights at Ithemba.

Government frustrations

The government has faced challenges settling the dispute at Ithemba, including: the DRDLR’s difficulties securing suitable alternative land; challenges completing a needs assessment at Ithemba because of contested informal rights to land among the farmers and their mistrust of the third party consultants; and the difficulties of accommodating the farmers’ differentiated desires for agricultural land, housing and urban proximity. Both Juanita van Sitters and Rick de Satge outlined the difficulties they had working with the farmers and determining their land needs to identify other suitable land, based on their current socio-economic conditions and land use. They described the difficulties they faced retaining this information and the stagnation resulting from their lack of co-operation. Juanita indicated:

I think the service provider got stuck with the Ithemba farmers …They don’t really want to work with the people who have to fill out the questionnaires but we need to know how many livestock you have, what is your need! I don’t really know what they think. We need to know where to put you, if where you need to go is viable

The IFA opposed the partial resettlement of the community and demanded that all those settled at Ithemba be accommodated together, despite varying demands and desires. For example some farmers
wanted bigger plots and land better-suited for agriculture, some workers wanted housing close to the city, although the majority of those I spoke to simply want a lease on the land at Farm 996 to retain their current livelihood and social connections - and desired electricity and a better water connection. These differentiated desires and the tension between the IFA’s demands and the desires of rest of the farmers were a source of confusion and have impeded the governments’ ability to find suitable alternative land. Juanita elaborated:

… They asked us to prevent them from being put out so if somebody is asking for something else, I’m really wondering what they approached us. They asked us to stop the eviction and now they’re asking “move us”. It’s a weird situation (interview, June 2015)

Her comments illustrates the difficulties expressed more broadly by various government departments involved in the Ithemba conflict and the feelings of frustration and more broadly the obstacles faced by government departments in terms of properly determining the current settlement and use of the land and the diverse needs stemming from these uses necessary for formulating an appropriate settlement. Frustration however, was not expressed by the government alone.

Farmer frustrations

Some of the farmers indicated that the continued lack of clarity around their tenure situation and access to the land had negative effects on their livelihoods and some of the farmers had left their plots out of frustration with the uncertainty of their situation.

Henry explained how in terms of the future of the land at Ithemba

I’m really clueless at the moment. We just gunna take a step at a time and see where it leads to. Because we don’t wanna stay here for a few months and there for a few months. If we gunna move around like a circus, it’s going to cause confusion at the end of the day. So I’m taking it one step at a time, and maybe God willing, I will get a better job at the end of the day and prosper (interview, April 2015)

Robert also told me “the future here, I really don’t think it’s good unless we get the land” (interview, April 2015). Some of the farmers also indicated that they were frustrated with the governments’ limited communication with the farmers; Margaret and Craig both explained how the government ignored their correspondence and frequently postponed or cancelled meetings with the farmers. Harry also indicated how the farmers questioned the consultants’ intentions and demands for information– framing them as intrusive, repetitive, and cumbersome – and had grown tired of the bureaucratic obstacles that were drawing out the process of gaining access to alternative land or a lease at Farm 996. The drawn out nature of the land occupation has, in some ways brought progress at Ithemba to a standstill. Rick explained:
they [the farmers] really are caught in a Catch-22 situation because in terms of getting support for agriculture … because of their tenure status, they are exempt from state support so it’s like policy and law and people’s realities do not intersect. It’s as simple as that (interview, June 2015)

Rick’s comment indicates the complexities of balancing government interventions at Ithemba with the reality on the ground, and the complexities associated with the spectrum of legality, formality and government intervention at Ithemba. Below I explore however, how their *de facto* land rights and the drawn out settlement process however has sustained and deepened the farmers’ claims.

**5.3. Governmentality and deepening claims to land at Ithemba**

Legal mediation and government negotiations have been slow, however the misalignment of practices, policies, and mandates at Ithemba since 2008 have created spaces for agency and contestation on the land. This assemblage has deepened the farmers’ presence on the land and strategically leveraging access to water, sanitation services, farming support and legal resources. Using these supports, the farmers’ have strategically framed and leveraged their occupation of the land to amplify their claims to it and express broader demands for inclusion.

In terms of water, a city councilor put in three taps along the main road providing the farmers with municipal water when it was just a group of 36 farmers (interview, April 2015). Another person indicated that with the increased number of farmers living at Ithemba, one of the farmers paid for another pipe to be connected to the initial municipal connection. Subsequent illegal hookups have been set up through an organized cost-sharing system and an R560 connection fee is charged to cover the cost of the additional pipe (interview, June 2015). He explained the farmers’ water “comes from a main connection and everyone just cut in on that connection. There’s one pipe and we’ve all just linked in and linked in and linked in. it’s like a domino effect” (interview, June 2015).

This past year, some of the farmers fought to secure a portable flush toilet for each farm plot. Andrew, who was involved in securing access to the toilets, indicated that they are collected by workers from the City of Cape Town every two or three days, emptied and sanitized. He explained how hundreds of people living on the land without sanitation services was a huge health concern and their access to portable flush toilets gave those living at Ithemba more respect and dignity. As indicated earlier, the farmers have also gained assistance from the DRDLR through their mandate to prevent illegal evictions and increase tenure security – and their use of the LRMF to provide the farmers with legal representation and subsequent mediation services. The farmers’ have been supported by the SPP and gained access to agroecological training and opportunities for solidarity building with other tenure insecure smallholders and landless people, under the banner of food sovereignty. While most recently,
the DHS indicated they have hired another service provider to explore an in-situ upgrade mixed sustainable development on Farm 996 to accommodate the farmers.

The material resources and support the farmers have received have deepened their footprint on the land and their informal land rights to continue accessing urban streams of income and infrastructure, as well as existing social ties to community, schools, transportation, shopping and socializing. In my interview with Juanita van Sitters, she stated:

they [the farmers] have a particular access and I think it has a particular benefit to them they don’t want to give up. Although the specific location might not be ideal for them, they want to be in that area (interview, June 2015)

Similarly, Andrew told me:

In the eyes of the government, we are illegal squatters, or they say illegal farmers. The government tells us ‘you are squatting and your animals are squatting with you. There’s nothing here that’s legal, but we’re living! It’s red tape this and red tape that and in the meantime people is growing up and children gets born and people die and animals get born and structures get put up and things just continue going on (interview, April 2015)

Andrew’s comment indicates the deepening of claims to land at Ithemba and how amidst the tensions and contradictions within their occupation, the farmers have been able to sustain their access to land and livelihood strategies on the fringes of the city - while developing ties to schools, churches, shopping, and work in the area; developing social networks and reciprocal relationships supporting survival strategies; and have made transportation, urban streams of income, and housing accessible.

Negotiation, compromise, and sympathy

The Ithemba farmers’ continued informal rights to the land and their development of survival strategies - and networks of distribution and social reciprocity – have also rested on government compromises and empathy towards the farmers’ everyday struggles. These government interventions indicate the gaps that exist between how rules are formed and implemented within dynamic layers of legality on the peripheries – and the human responses stemming from the farmer-governments’ dialectic relationship. The DHS workers who patrol Farm 996 for illegal settlement and construction counter to their 2010 agreement balance their job responsibilities with the personal relationships they have developed with the farmers and their empathy for the widespread unemployment, poverty, homeless, landlessness, and lack of alternatives for most of those living at Ithemba. The DHS employees were described as being empathetic to the everyday struggles the majority of people at Ithemba face in terms of: insufficient access to water and electricity; flooding and cold and damp winter conditions; hunger and food insecurity; crime and theft; limited access to farming inputs and knowledge; basic housing conditions; and limited job opportunities and access to transportation.
Attempts to schedule interviews with the DHS were unsuccessful but farmers explained their relationship with the ‘men who drive the bakkies’. Andrew elaborated:

Before they are government workers from the Department of Housing trying to stop us, they are humans with their own families and their own houses so they also see what’s happening. So they … I’m choosing my words very carefully … they maybe don’t see some things happening and maybe if they were a bit more observant, they would have seen it which allows people to slightly better their life situation (interview, April 2015).

His comment indicates the tensions and animosity between farmers at Ithemba and perceived hierarchies of land ownership, which will be investigated more extensively in the second half of this chapter.

However, he did elaborate that:

One of the perpetual complaints of the people farming at Ithemba has been that the state has failed to control access to the land by outsiders. So they deem themselves to be the rights holder and everyone who comes after is not a right holder or part of the legitimate group and they want to the state to control that process (interview, June 2015)

Alena and Normal also elucidated how the workers are sometimes selective about what rules they enforce and what they see, for example in terms of rubble or sand delivers to cover the roads and peoples plots and lessen flooding in the winter. Alena explained:

There’s one guy that works with the government bakkie that drives around and checks up on us. He’s a very nice guy. I don’t know what others think about him, but he is genuine. He tells his family, ‘the place where I work, when I look at the situation these people are in and I come home, now I see how easy it is for us to put on the lights, tap the water, everything is easy for us here but there are people who are struggling and then we don’t appreciate what we have’. And you know about this rubble story? He says to me “I don’t know why these other bakkies want to stop these people. There’s too much water, we can’t even drive in winter to check on you people because the roads are flooded (interview, April 2015).

Sara also described how when she build her house at Ithemba three years ago, she had received a notice from the DHS that it was illegally constructed and must be disassembled. She explained that she had ignored the notice with no consequence (interview, April 2015).

The governments’ sympathy was also perceived as originating higher up in the DHS; Andrew for example felt that the government would develop the land for human settlement in the future, but was using other land in the meantime to avoid evicting the farmers for the time being. He explained:

They will build here and they will kick us off but they’re going to have to do it violently because no one is going to go. They’ll have to use force – which I think is the other reason they haven’t done it … But what they’ve done is build around us, they’ve been nice and given us more time. It doesn’t mean they’re not going to build here but they’ll start other projects in the meantime (interview, June 2015)

The above section indicates how productive spaces and material benefits have emerged from the disjuncture within attempts to govern and legal interpretations – and how the back-and-forth processes of legal mediation and negotiation have been used to strategically strengthen the farmers’ de facto claim to land. This type of thinking, drawing on the complexities associated with the ‘will to improve’ moves beyond understanding conflicts in terms of the ‘virtuous peasant’ and ‘vicious state’ (Bernstein, 1990,
see also Li 2003) – and to think of struggles not as linear and monolithic, but as dynamic forces emerging from peoples’ situated realities in ways that are constantly changing and riddled with tensions (Li 2007a, McFarlane 2011).

5.4. Differentiated citizenship and relative rights to land among the Ithemba farmers
To understand how peoples’ rights to land and the validity of their claims have been differentially recognized, I analyze the internal tensions, politics, and power within the Ithemba farmers’ struggles and how their membership to the IFA is mediated by race and class. Much like legal land ownership of Farm 996 has been contested, so too has the governing body at Ithemba - the IFA. Through their occupation of the land and their use of legal and extra-legal channels to assert their informal land rights, the farmers have developed a social order on the land using insurgent claims. The IFA has emerged as a parastatal body attempting to organize land use and negotiate tenure security with the government on behalf of its general members. The IFA’s claims for access to state provisions and access to the city framed in terms of landless and marginalized people gaining access to land, must be examined in relation to hierarchies of power, contested authorities, and exclusionary membership existing at Ithemba. In this section, I probe elite pockets of power at Ithemba and differentiated citizenship resulting in and stemming from classed and racialized dynamics of belonging and entitlements to land. Before I do this, I however want to note that many of the executive farmers at Ithemba, while relatively wealthy among those occupying land faced livelihood and material constraints themselves; therefore I want to highlight how the allegations of personal enrichment and class differentiation below need to be situated within larger socio-political and economic relationships of power. It is not my intention to villainize the committee, nor the SPP. I however think it is important to work out relationships of power at Ithemba to investigate how insurgent demands can end up reproducing relationships of exclusion.

5.5. Contesting a notional community at Ithemba
The representation of Ithemba as a cohesive farming community and the IFA executive as a democratic body mobilizing on behalf of the farmers was contested by accounts of exclusion, disenfranchisement, and contestation that emerged through my fieldwork. A disconnect emerged between the executives’ accounts of life at Ithemba and those who suggested that the executive were an elite coloured group of farmers who exercised a great amount of power and control over the distribution of and access to resources and informal right to the land at Farm 996. Rick de Satge’s observations from his own research at Ithemba elucidated the complex social relations mediating peoples’ general
membership to the IFA and their relative land rights. In terms of the difficulties he met while trying to carry out socio-economic and land use assessments, Rick indicated:

we started to run into a bit of difficulty, primarily because of contestation on the land between groups of people who didn’t collectively regard all the residents on the land as being legitimate, so that made it very difficult to engage with some notional community who were on the land … They [the executive] kept on saying they were going to report back to a larger structure – ‘the community’ was what they described it as. But just who that was was never apparent. We were kept at some arm’s length in that the committee held the gate very tightly. One of the reasons they weren’t keen on the survey staff was because it would have revealed other faces or people who weren’t represented by them but who claimed rights to the land. They were quite concerned to present themselves as the legitimate voice of the rights holders, even though it was clear there were other people who were not represented by them (interview, June 2015)

He elaborated:

It was very clear there were all sorts of forces and clusters of influence in that Ithemba grouping. We never got to be able to map those or to get a clear sense of what those zones of power and influence were … There’s some quite influential, powerful individuals and then there are a whole lot of other people who are much more grounded in the sense that they live on the land or have houses on the land and they’ve been there for years and their livelihoods are much more dependent and they’re much poorer. So it’s a very stratified group of people. And when you’re in the process of trying to find a solution, it’s quite complicated when you’ve got these deep stratifications. You’ve got the interests of the powerful that may trump the poorer or more marginal groups who don’t have so much of a voice (interview, June 2015)

His comments are indicative of elite pockets of power and the gatekeeping of resources and relative rights to land at Ithemba. These discrepancies in power and access to resources indicates that the interests of those whose livelihoods were most tied to farming, housing, and distributive labour on the land were not equally weighted or represented in government negotiations. Further reflecting the stratifications at Ithemba, Henry noted:

There was once upon a time there was three committees here on the farm. So from what I can see, there’s no unity. This committee fighting with this, this committee fighting with that. At the end of the day, it’s fighting itself and the government can see that so we’re going to end up nowhere (interview, April 2015)

Andrew also highlighted the divisions within the farmers and the IFA’s failure to represent the diverse needs and demands of the general membership and those excluded from the IFA:

Do you know how many times we’ve tried to elect a new committee? We’ve done it the right ways – we’ve done it with a commissioner and everything but they absolutely refuse to acknowledge it. I was personally chosen to be on the new committee. But the problem is that even if you acknowledge them, government do not acknowledge them. And because government do not acknowledge them, what is the purpose of having a voice if nobody listens? The ones that must listen [government officials] want them there because they’re doing nothing, they’re just stagnant. And they’re happy with stagnant. But the question is, why would somebody not want a lease? Why would somebody not want electricity? Why would somebody not want sewage and drainage? Why? What could possibly be the reason of not wanting on? Come on. There needs to be something there that’s better for them not to want to take it (interview, April 2015)

Andrew explained after being elected, he had gone to speak to the city councilor:

He just refused to speak to me, absolutely refused. They wouldn’t even acknowledge us, they want nothing to do with us. They only want to do with … a handful of people. I told them “you’re going to end up realizing that the handful of people does not really reflect the wishes of the people (interview, April 2014)
The divisive relationships at Ithemba and the uneven access to resources, land, income generating opportunities and support on the farm have been messy and exclusionary, thereby weakening the farmers’ claims to the land and complicating struggles for tenure security, housing, farming and service delivery on it. These stratifications are elaborated on below.

5.6. Elite pockets of power

The committee at the time of my fieldwork has been in power since 2010 and is comprised of a group of coloured people, many of whom are long-established on the land and are relatively well-resourced with other sources of income, homes, and vehicles. These members of the committee hold the most power at Ithemba in terms of their involvement in the negotiations with the government, their access to support from the SPP, and connections to networks for income generation and resource redistribution.

Those who supported them or benefited from their access to resources were also predominantly coloured and similarly well-resourced. Rick for example, indicated:

There is quite an interesting subset of people who are on the committee. Like we had meetings with the department where the Ithemba people came and several of them were on-site. One guy comes – he’s videoing the meeting on this iPad, he arrives in a car that’s probably worth R500 000 ($44 800 CAD) or more – he’s a businessman (interview, June 2015)

There was furthermore a group of disenfranchised general members whose land rights were not recognized by the committee and whose voices were not included because of personal conflicts with the IFA and limited access to income, resources, and social connections indicating racialized and classed exclusions from the association. Exclusionary social orders developed on the land and indicated how peoples’ relationship to the land and their access to resources was differentially established based on what Mollett and Faria explain as ‘hierarchal and stereotypical discourses and imaginings’ – indicating how their analysis of racialization speaks to broader and intersecting forms of exclusion (2013, 117-118). These experiences of differential citizenship underpinned the executive’s authority and were expressed in terms of conflicts over (1) land and resource allocation (2) exclusion from meetings and government negotiations (3) and the elite capture of resources and farming support.

1) Land allocation

Conflicts over plot allocation at Ithemba indicated exclusionary relationships of land access and ownership, indicating differentiated experiences of inclusion. Plot allocation by the executive was indicated as largely being determined by social relationships on the land that circumvented the farmers’ mandate to provide plots to landless farmers and rules stipulations against allocating land to government workers and business men. Margaret explained how there were many people wanting land at Ithemba:
I’ve got a lot of ID copies of people who want land but the government don’t want us to give. When we sign the lease agreement then we gunna call those people and we gunna give other people a piece of land” (interview, April 2015)

Prior to this agreement however, the committee was accused of allocating plots to relatively wealthy coloured families and not following waiting lists for plots. Alena observed:

Some of the people who is here do have money and they aren’t supposed to let these people come live here … there are people who earn thousands and thousands of rands in a month that are here that are not supposed to have this property. This is for the underprivileged people (interview, April 2015)

Large numbers of those living at Ithemba who are classified as ‘squatters’ are poor and lack alternative sources of shelter or livelihoods – but have not been allocated plots through the IFA and are not recognized as land rights holder. Sipho also detailed how African farmers have also had a difficult time receiving plots of land;

I’m not racist but we’ve got two people here. There are the coloured people and the black people like me. This thing was created by the black people [referring to Ndollo, the first person to start farming at Ithemba an approximate thirty years ago]. Eighty-five percent of the people doing farming here was the black people but they let more coloured people do it. I was giving them [the committee] a tough time for that because I said ‘no, it must be 50/50’. And at the end of the day we discovered that people who were working on that committee was cutting the land specifically for the coloured people. They decided to chase away the black people and then give to the coloured people. Well over the majority of the people here are the coloureds. There’s very few blacks now, I’m telling you (April 2015)

Furthermore, two members on the executive had allegedly sold plots to wealthy businessmen and people allegedly using the land for criminal activities, including prostitution, gang activity, drug dealing, and moneylending in 2008 and 2009. According to Hope, local business people had paid committee members up to R18 000 for a plot at Ithemba (2010). This incident led to a division in the committee itself and the expulsion of these two people from the IFA. However, the sale of the land at Ithemba prompted the governments’ initial involvement in the dispute and created conflicts between those who claimed they had been given informal rights to land through the IFA and those who had paid the two committee members for land. Tina explained how her plot had been sold by these:

My first farm was on that side and I got it from the old committee. And then afterwards, we heard they were sold to the man who has a double storey house. Having heard that, I took it. I forced myself onto this one. I just wired it in and said ‘the old committee has sold themselves out. Whoever it is must get his money from them because we’re not moving. We are going to be here and do the farming because this is government land. It’s not to be sold’ (interview, April 2015)

Sipho explained:

I came together with them to form that committee but I decided “No, this is not right” because some of the people, their land was taken. The reason being that if I am on the committee and I have a relative looking for land - even if there is no land here - I see I can take a plot. And for that reason, I decided ‘no, this is not the right thing. I must do my own things in the right way on my own time (interview, April 2015)
The authority and legitimacy of the IFA – and their role as a parastatal body allocating land to poor, landless farmers has been contested by exclusionary hierarchies of land rights and racialized concerns over plot allocation. Classed and racialized tensions at Ithemba have become intensified between the small number of plots operated by relatively wealthy coloured households and the majority of poor, unemployed and homeless people who have occupied land at Ithemba whose rights to land are not recognized by the IFA. These tensions speak to the layers of legality and legitimacy operating on the peripheries and the ways that differentiated citizenship and access to land has been reproduced within the farmers’ occupation and insurgent social order on the land.

The hierarchy of informal land holding rights on Farm 996 both complicated and raised concerns about how entitlement to suitable alternative accommodation would be determined (and by who) and how differentiated desires for land, agriculture, and housing on the land would addressed. Harry noted “If you have a resettlement, it raises questions of who’s coming and going, who’s in and who’s out – it raises questions about unity among the members of the association” (interview, June 2015).

Sipho for example, told me:

I fear that if they don’t want you, just like me, they’ll scratch off your name as if you are not a member here. But one thing I know is that if I am doing what this land is meant for, there is nobody that can say I’m not a farmer. The government will be very stupid if they take other people to the better farms and leave me alone when I have animals here. It’s totally impossible (interview, April 2015)

Similarly Andrew raised important questions concerning the power of the committee and the parameters and logistics of a potential resettlement. If they were able to get a lease, he noted:

But who then signs the lease? Does the committee sign the lease? Then they have the power. Do they decide who comes in and goes out? If they’re signing it on behalf of the residents, then fine. But if the so-called committee – who the government keeps there – if they sign the lease and they don’t want someone here, they can get an eviction order. That’s the way it works!

While it is unclear whether reaching a settlement at Ithemba will happen in the near future, the above comments illustrate some key considerations that will need to be made moving forward – and illustrate how hierarchies on the land representing the interests of certain groups – while erasing those of others – demand real attention within the negotiation and resettlement process.

(2) Meetings and government negotiations

The committee members I spoke to indicated that meetings were held regularly. Margaret, the current treasurer, explained:

Only the association executives meet. And every three months we have a general meeting for all the farmers. We send pamphlets for all the farmers and we meet them if there’s something to discuss and the meeting is here by me (interview, April 2015)
Others however, indicated that meetings no longer happened and when they did, they were infrequent, unproductive, and not everyone was included. Some people explained they would not hear about them until months later. Tina and Sipho, both African farmers, had previously been on the committee but had left after escalating conflicts with the IFA over the executives’ lack of transparency and their selective inclusion. Sipho told me,

I’ve been about 3 years now without attending a meeting. Because when they call a meeting, the committee, they make a pick and choose – those that they know will give them a tough time, that will fight with them, those that will ask questions they are not prepared to answer, they will say ‘no, you are not invited to the meeting’ and they don’t give you an invitation.

Tina was the treasurer of the IFA in 2008. She explained how she had resigned from the committee after conflicts arose and she grew frustrated with their lack of transparency and accountability. Aunty Tina told me “I don’t go to the meetings, no one tells us where the meetings are” (interview, April 2015). She said that once when the new committee was created in 2010, she had tried to attend a meeting but explained how person who owned the farm where the meeting was held had told me

“‘I don’t want you in my house!’ So I said ‘thank you. I was wondering why the meetings were in your house. It shouldn’t be in your house. It should be on the field for everyone. And I never went again to the meetings. I just go to work and come and do my things and go” (interview, April 2015)

Tina elaborated that

In the olden days, when we were committee members, we used to have every phone number and we would say to the person who was writing the minutes, ‘here’s the airtime. Phone every member of the farm, every member farming, tell them there is a certain meeting at a certain spot. We never had the meetings on our farms, We had a special spots for the meetings. But now on this existing committee, I don’t really know what’s going on … (interview, April 2015)

(3) Elite capture of resource and farming support

Farming support and donations

Some of the farmers indicated farming support and financial resources – for example donations in cash or kind and NGO support - received by the IFA were not shared with the general members at the farm. Margaret for example explained how donations were sometimes made of baby clothes and they would be shared with all of the farmers but Harold and Serena brought this into question in a conversation in which I asked them if they receive any support from any organizations here on the farm. They responded:

H: We don’t know what to say there because most of the time, I heard that the committee did
S: Maybe someone did sponsor and we as farmers here, you just hear afterwards.
H: You just hear after.
S: Maybe you sponsor R3000 towards the children for clothes and all that. And afterwards like a month or two months, then you hear.
H: it’s like rumours or gossiping after “the chairperson or the committee of the farm was given money”. We didn’t know these things. Especially when you got to the meetings, they don’t talk about such things. We just heard, at the end of the day, two months after that … so we don’t know what to say. I believe there are sponsors, but … One of
the chairpersons said to us “we don’t have the farm yet so we’re still fighting for the ground”. After that, the sponsors will come in. That’s what they said. If we have the ground, the sponsors will come. So we can’t say there are sponsors now.

Similarly, the SPP workshops and training support was not widely known about on the farm beyond the committee members. When I asked Robert if the farmers received any support or training, he told me: “there is some training sometimes but that is more for the committee members. And then they tell us what to do. But there’s nothing coming from their side. You stand on your own here at this farm” (interview, April 2015).

Subscription fees

Concerns over personal enrichment were also expressed in terms of the monthly ‘subscription’ fees farmers were supposed to pay for their plots. How payment of these fees was enforced was never made clear to me beyond Margaret explaining that at the beginning of the month, people would come to her plot to pay the fees and she would mark it in a book. However, whether people paid these fees was largely contingent on their relationship with the committee, their social standing at the farm, and how their access to land was negotiated. It is a good example of how people have secured their landholding rights through the IFA. Committee members suggested that the fees were used to cover the costs of their transportation into town for meetings with government officials and the SPP or were being saved to purchase a lease but this allegedly left much of the money unaccounted for. I asked Sipho if he knew what the executive used the subscription fees for and he told me:

That’s one thing that I want to know! It’s impossible for you to continue paying if you don’t have feedback of the money – what is that money doing? I personally decided “no, I won’t pay the subs” because there’s no one here who can claim that he give me a piece of land. Because I ask them, they refuse, I ask them, they refuse so I say ‘no, I must just grab the land as they are doing’ (interview, April 2015)

Sipho’s frustrations, along with those expressed by Harold and Serena, indicate concerns among those marginalized within or excluded from the IFA over access to resources and the gatekeeping of information. These experiences are telling of elite pockets of power on the land and experiences of differentiated citizenship.

Food waste contracts

Access to food waste contracts is a key indicator of socially mediated relationships of power and uneven access to resources at Ithemba. They are controlled by a handful of people because maintaining them requires access to transportation, personal connections to store managers, and a letter proving that the IFA is a non-profit organization. Two of the people I spoke to who had food waste contracts were on the committee (Theo, Margaret’s husband and Craig both had pick-up trucks; Theo picked up excess
food from the Epping fruit market and sold it to other farmers to feed to their livestock. Craig picked up waste from King Pies) and the two others were businessmen with personal or work connections to food waste contracts (Anthony knew a manager at the Checkers in Seapoint, while Henry’s boss owned a trucking company through which he had a contract with Shoprite).

Andrew explained the dynamics of these contracts;

Some of the food we get donations from Shoprite and shops that have expired stuff. There are some contracts we get – unfortunately there’s a bit of politics here. Some of the people want to be in control of the contracts and don’t allow you the paperwork you need to get it. In order to get food at the big shopping chains you need to have a letter showing you are a non-profit organization. Because we are in an urban area here and some of the food gets distributed to the people if it’s still edible, having these contracts is a way of controlling the people here because some of them pay for the waste food. But we don’t all get letters (interview, April 2015).

Alena elaborated on the uneven access to these contracts;

We don’t’ all get letters. Few get letters. Only those who are with them (the committee) really. Okay, I’m also with them from the beginning when I moved in here. But if you don’t do what they want you to do, you don’t get the things that you also want (April 2015)

The above conversations indicate how those with access to food contracts were predominantly wealthy, coloured men, while those with fewer resources and connections had the hardest time gaining access to them, yet were the most marginalized and in need of them. Accounts of exclusion from these relationships came from Sipho and Tina, the two African farmers I spoke to whose relationships with the executive were tenuous because of the challenges they posed to the IFA’s authority as committee members; Ricardo, who struggled or had to borrow money to pay the R100 for a meal from his neighbours’ ‘soup kitchen’; and others whose land rights were not recognized by the IFA like Andrew and Sara, a single-mother who had been allocated land at the back of the plot by another woman who had tried to form a different committee. These observations illustrate the palpable tension between the coloured elite/ IFA and those who framed questioned their authority and legitimacy.

A major tension exists between farmers and farm workers and speaks to processes of class formation that have unfolded through the farmers’ insurgent claims to the land and establishment of social structures and relationships on the land. These often fraught relationships were indicative of how hierarchical rights to land have been established. They also encompassed challenges that the IFA was faced with in terms of protecting the rights of workers, differentiating workers from those classified as ‘squatters at Ithemba’, and determining their relative rights and relationship to the IFA. Jacob, a sub-committee member frequently tasked with solving disputes over plots at Ithemba described to me how the IFA determines whether people are entitled to stay on the land:
In this community, we do have people who do have a disability. Usually we let the people who do have a disability stay – we’ll talk to them and approach them, tell them what’s right, what’s wrong, what we don’t want them to do and all that. Then we have people who actually lost their houses that comes here that also squats. To those people we give an option. We help them, we go back and tell them what to do, point them in all directions so we are not actually doing the job. They have to do it themselves and tell them go and sign up, go and do this, go and do that so in future when government comes in here, you won’t be homeless. Go and foresee you are on a list of housing and all that so we know that if we have to vacate the land, you are also covered. And then we have a lot of young men who also have loose guns on the farm. That’s the guns we are actually trying to control. The loose guns are the ones we usually chase because they like a time bomb. Because you never know what’s going on in their minds. So we always have to say to them ‘you have to get out of here, we don’t want you here’. That’s how we define or try to separate everybody and see how we can help. That’s the way we try to do things (interview, April 2015)

Jacob’s account above is indicative of the relative rights to land at Ithemba and the IFA’s role in determining who is and is not eligible for a plot at Ithemba. Craig elaborated about how the IFA tries to accommodate those on the land who are not farming and who are in need;

If someone don’t want to farm, they must move out. What they’re doing is squatting now. That is not our intention – our intention is to farm but we as the Ithemba Farmers Association can’t push these people out because we are fighting for the land and these people are also fighting for houses. There are those who lost their jobs. They don’t have houses so where must they go now? We can’t chuck them out. We need to work hand in hand. You see, this is why we have a lot of people here now (interview, March 2015)

Both Jacob and Craig’s comments highlight the difficulties the IFA faces mediating disputes over land and reconciling heterogeneous land uses and informal land rights. However, dynamics concerning workers and squatters were frequently framed in terms of concerns over theft and crime – tied to drug addiction and alcoholism at Ithemba. Plots that had been left vacant by farmers who were no longer interested in farming or who had sustained losses – and in many cases had been taken over by people who were not farming. The family members and friends of workers, ‘squatters’ and people visiting the farm looking for work or food, were often perceived as threats. The ways that people spoke about crime at Ithemba evoked racialized fears; those described as being unfamiliar and unwanted were often young men from Gugulgethu, Mfuleni, and Khayelitsha. Jacob refused to hire workers and prefers to do all of his farming himself. He explained:

Most of these guys work from farm to farm and know everyone in the area. So tonight they will make sure they have drinking money and drug money and sell your animals or food for your animals and tomorrow you’ll be sitting with your hands on your head (interview, April 2015)

Harold and Serena also told me,

H: These youngsters are really a problem. If you enter the main road, you see a lot of signs. Most of them are gone – they took it to sell them as scrap to buy drugs. This is also what they’re doing. They take off with the peoples’ roofs at night. They steal your animals – they steal your goats, sheep, pigs. Anything they can steal. Especially this time of the month. It’s month end already. Some are owing people. People on the farms, they know you here but they still rob you. The people that knows you is the people that is robbing you in your sleep. They’re watching, they know when you leave the farm.

S: We can’t even all go to church. One of us must stay here to look after the place.

H: So we have to swap. Because we are too much afraid of leaving the farm because the people around see someone entering your place, but they’re not going to talk (interview, April 2015)
Harold and Serena elaborate, evoking both racialized notions of crime and justice;

S: They’re encouraging the people to farm because there’s a lot of people who don’t farm, they just squat. In African communities, they can’t do that. They can’t squat on farms.
H: The committee has to start with these people who are not farming. Start with these people – I think they know who the people are. They can say “it’s this one, this one, this one”. They have to make a plan for these people because it’s their kids bringing in these youngsters.
S: They must put *bundu* on here also. Like the African culture – if you steal, if you don’t belong here, they beat you. So if they bring that here, I will think it will be much safer. Because they steal a pig now, tomorrow they still walking free. You the loser. If you go to the committee, they don’t know who it is, they don’t care. If you got a problem, you want to evict someone from your place, you go to the committee, they can’t help you. You see, that person in and out with their drug friends at 3 and 4 o’clock at night, you want to sleep, they up and down like ghosts. You can’t evict them by yourself. You go to the committee, they don’t help you either

These accusations reflected broader class stratifications at Ithemba tied to how farmers treat their workers. Andrew explained to me that his tenuous relationship with the IFA stemmed from being vocal about how many of the farm workers were treated at Ithemba. He explained how:

Some of the farmers who come here don’t really understand what farming’s about. They get ground, they think it’s going to be wonderful. But then the challenges start - the workers are left to handle all the challenges but the farmer reaps all the benefits. But they need to live, they need to eat, they need to survive. So what happens? They sell a pig (interview, April 2015)

Alena also expressed her sympathies for the workers and elaborated that the farmers,

ey expect a lot out of that farm worker and then they start stealing. And everyone starts finger pointing at the one doing wrong but they aren’t asking, why are they doing the wrong? How can they survive? Maybe now they’re on drugs? Maybe on wine or whatever? Or maybe they aren’t getting anything and they start stealing from the farmer and go selling his stuff to survive (interview, April 2015)

Cynthia, a worker herself explained to me how important fair worker compensation is at the farm, and highlighted some of the implicit rules and expectations framing farmer-worker relationships:

If I work for somebody and he pays me my monthly pay, then I don’t need to steal. It’s no problem because I get what I need - I’ve got food in my house so I don’t need to steal. If you don’t pay your worker, at least set an agreement with them. Listen, I don’t have money to pay you – like me and my boss he said ‘if you work for me, I’ll give you one small piglet from every pig that delivers’. And to me it was fine, knowing that he doesn’t have money and he’s going to give me something that’s going to give me money at the end of the day. You know? But most of the farmers they don’t do that. So at the end of the day, we sit with a problem where they steal (interview, April 2015)

Uneven experiences of access to land and membership at Ithemba are indicated above as existing along lines of class and race – and outline how rights to land at Ithemba are tied to relationships of property ownership and relative wealth within the insurgent social order established at Ithemba.

5.7. **Race and resentment**

Discussions about the farmers’ struggles to gain a lease and access to service delivery at Ithemba on numerous occasions were explained in terms of resentment towards African access to state resources under the ANC and declining material conditions and access to state resources for poor coloured people.
As discussed in the previous chapter, peoples’ experiences of losing their access to waged labour and being unable to afford housing or access government housing - were invoked as the basis of peoples’ occupation of land at Ithemba. In this section, I investigate how African exclusion at Ithemba and racialized conflicts can be better understood in relation to broader experiences of class and race formations in post-apartheid South Africa. This excerpt from a focus group with one of the only white farmers at Ithemba highlighted these racial tensions. The conversation, revolving around the farmers’ inability to secure services or electricity without a lease at one point went as follows:

A: We are not acknowledged as farmers here. In the eyes of the government, we are illegal squatters, or they say illegal farmers. They say you are squatting and they say your animals are squatting with you … you go to the black squatter camps, the people have power. Why don’t we have power?
J: But that’s unfair because you drive along the highway and you see all those shacks there in Langa and Gugulethu. It’s people that’s not originally from Cape Town … Because I mean, they have electricity there, they are illegally occupying there … so then what is the big issue with them there and you guys here? What is the difference?
A: I don’t want to sound bad but … I think it’s the whole thing going back to when we became a non-racial society. The previously disadvantaged people are now being advantaged. Unfortunately, I’m not racist but unfortunately, it’s predominantly black people who get electricity … I had no advantage of the previous generation. My forefathers didn’t have farms, we had nothing … but now I’m being disadvantaged because of BEE because they’re trying to make everything equal but by doing that, they are pushing back other people (focus group, April 2015)

The above conversation indicates how the support received by African people under the ANC’s government in terms of housing, land, and service delivery, is framed as occurring at the expense of poor and working class coloured and white people in contemporary South Africa, who as Adhikari points out consider themselves to now be at the bottom of the pecking order (2005). While in some cases the historical exclusion of Africans under apartheid was recognized, Africans were repeatedly framed as rapacious or deceitful, receiving more than their fair share since the new government came into power. Alena, a coloured woman on the farm, explained:

And look how the Africans are fighting because they are living already in houses that side but they want also for their families also a house there. But they are already in a house and they fight more for their families. We can’t do that!

Serena explained how the meals on wheels program occasionally comes to the farm to provide meals for the children:

It’s for the children here. But then you get the guys who sit on the road and wait for a job bakkie. The Africans down the road there, they know exactly the time for meals and wheels. They come and sit here and finish that buckets of food. But the time the children go, there’s nothing (interview April 2015)

Perceptions that Africans were taking more than their fair share or framing them as ‘not being from here’ reflected the continued currency of prejudiced associations of belonging and criminality tied to Cape Town’s historical social and spatial development, detailed in chapter two.
These ideas were also salient in mobilizing resistance against the construction of a TRA on Farm 996 in 2010, which would have relocated 300 (largely African) families in need of emergency housing from Khayelitsha to the land the farmers had occupied. Mr Satge elucidated the racialize and political tensions between the slated building of the TRA on Farm 996 and the surrounding, predominantly coloured community;

The TRA was met with intense resistance, not just from Ithemba but also from people in the surrounding communities. I think they even tried to put up some initial buildings there and they were physically torn down by people. So people physically went on the war path saying ‘we don’t want TRAs’. TRAs have a very bad reputation because they’re assumed to bring crime and unsettled populations. And then there’s a whole racial dynamic as well because often residents of the TRA are black and the areas the TRAs are put next to are coloured and that creates huge tensions. And there may be political differences that create tensions as well so it’s a huge hornet’s nest.

Hope outlines in his 2010 report how the farmers’ mobilized resistance to the TRA and built solidarity with the resident association of Electric City - a former coloured residential area under the Group Areas Act and home to a number of the farmers with land at Ithemba. They circulated a petition, published a letter of objection, wrote a memorandum of demands, and coordinated a media campaign leading up to their march to parliament, with the support of the SPP. However tensions developed between the SPP and the farmers over the IFA’s insistence on using racialized rhetoric associating the resettlement of poor African families into the area with increased crime and declining house prices in the community. Hope writes:

IFA members continually stressed that the natural way to gain the support of Electric City residents was to explain to them that the TRA would bring a shanty town to the area and an increase of violence, theft, drug abuse, murder and rape. To SPP staff this line of argumentation was seen as being “anti-poor,” stereotypical and misguided

Andrew further elucidated how these fears were expressed:

The community around us doesn’t want the TRA. They’re worried it’ll devalue they’re houses. I think they’re okay with us because a lot of people who farm here stay across the road, they’re from the community. A lot of the farm owners actually stay there … I would think that maybe Electric City would want to have a problem [with the farmers], but looking at the options, they realize they actually have something better. They might end up getting something worse.

The same fear of African encroachment was expressed in relation the Khayelitsha land invasion explored in the first chapter. Margaret framed the land occupation as a racialized threat to the Ithemba farmers’ land access and livelihoods:

We now so scared that they come in here. If they don’t get in there, they could come here … They said we are racist – we not racist, they racist because they don’t want to work, they just want to take what they want. That’s not right. They say they the people that had bad times with the white government and the apartheid regime. It wasn’t just the black people – it was the coloured people also. But now, if they talk, they just talk about themselves. They just want electricity, they want land, they want everything. But we get nothing. See, that’s not right … Those black people must just stay there in Khayelitsha and don’t come here. Because when that people come here to make trouble here, then I will pack up and I will go back to my house (interview, April 2015)
The above comments viscerally embody racialized hierarchies and notions of belonging, entitlements and access to the state in the post-apartheid period. The evocative terms in which they are expressed at Ithemba speak to broader classed and racialized experiences tied to the loss of employment and conditions of homelessness and landlessness in contemporary South Africa.

5.8. Conclusion

The dynamic nature of these articulations are telling of rapid processes of class formation and differentiated citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa, both in terms of race and class (Von Holdt et al 2011). Racialized resentments at Ithemba associated African presence with a degradation of the built and social environment and in terms of being out of place and undesirable. Perceived African entitlements in the post-apartheid period have been met with intense resentment from poor coloured people, who feel African entitlements come at the expense of the material and political inclusion of poor coloured people. This type of exclusionary thinking is indicative of how, according to Goldberg, race “prompts the exclusion of others by making it thinkable to deny or ignore their respective claims” (1993, 81). The framing of Africans as receiving more than their ‘fair share’ illustrate how racialization is both articulated and reified through ‘environmental imaginaries, , resource allocations, and political economies’ and how ‘race articulates with environmental formations to constitute subjects [and] determine their social and geographical place’ in ways that are contingent on time and place (Sundberg 2008, 569).

Adhikari highlights racialization as temporally and geographically dynamic by elucidating the profound changes coloured identity has undergone since 1994; he notes that “with the racial hierarchy that had regulated social relations in white-ruled South Africa having broken down in important respects, intergroup relations have become more complex and expressions of social identity more fluid (175). Adhikari elaborates that coloured identity was largely formed in response to white racism under apartheid (2005) and represented what Western describes as an identity of ‘in-betweenness’ wherein coloured people share an affinity with whiteness and a distancing from Africanness (1981, 19). He suggests that ‘continued and deep-seated antipathy towards Africans’ have been expressed since 1994, reflecting a ‘coloured racial hostility towards Africans [that] is essentially defensive in nature and arises from their position of weakness and feelings of vulnerability’ (2005, 181).Perceptions of coloured people being victimized within the new political and economic order are widely held among working class and marginalized coloured people who feel that they have not benefited from the post-apartheid dispensation and have seen their ‘relative privilege in the past’ disappear (Adhikari 2005). He suggests;
Although the skilled and well-educated coloured middle classes have profited from the extension of civil liberties and many have been able to take advantage of opportunities that have become available to formerly disadvantaged people through affirmative action and black economic empowerment initiatives, the coloured working classes have become victims of jobless economic growth (2005, 179).

Adhikari indicates there has been a material basis to coloured peoples’ feelings of marginality and disenfranchisement, by suggesting large numbers of poor Africans have gained access to service delivery and housing since the mid-1990s, while improved living standards have been achieved by very few poor coloured South Africans. While his analysis provides little engagement with the disparity between the mass numbers of Africans who continue to experience disproportionately high unemployment and impoverishment today – and a small emerging middle-class and black elite – his analysis picks up on accounts of ‘falling into hard times’ that emerged at Ithemba among a large number of coloured households who have experienced the loss of steady waged labour and have become unable to afford housing and service delivery in the post-apartheid period.

This analysis of differentiated citizenship at Ithemba has outlined the layers of legitimacy, authority, and exclusion between both the farmers and the government, as well as within the farmers’ insurgent claims to land and the social order they have established on the land. By analyzing the disjunctures between policy and practice, and the reproduction of broader processes of exclusion and differentiation in South Africa at Ithemba, I have both highlighted productive gaps for deepening their insurgent claims on the land and the forces (both through legal and extra-legal channels) that threaten to pull their informal rights to land apart.
6. CHAPTER SIX
Conclusion - Reflecting on the politics of claims-making and citizenship at Ithemba

6.1. Politics of claims-making

I have argued in this thesis that survival strategies and broader demands for inclusion on Cape Town’s urban margins have been sustained by accessing land and indicate how the peripheries are significant sites insurgent claims-making reflecting desires for access to the city and integrated human settlements in post-apartheid South Africa. Using research on the Ithemba Farmers’ land occupation near Electric City, Cape Town, I investigated how the farmers’ de facto land rights have sustained hybrid land and urban-based strategies amidst high levels of unemployment and homelessness— and have been used by marginalized populations to leverage demands for a ‘rightful share’ in the city and in the state (Ferguson 2015). Though not without its own tensions and hierarchies of inclusion, the Ithemba farmers’ occupation indicates insurgent demands and practices supporting integrated human settlement and equitable access to the city and access to the state contesting legacies of apartheid social and spatial exclusion.

By examining the politics of claims-making on the urban peripheries, I engage with the possibilities created by invented and invited spaces of citizenship for securing access to land and service delivery, housing, and continued access to urban infrastructure, streams of income, and existing ties to the city. I have also traced the dialectic processes of struggle, containment, and compromise between the government, the IFA, and the larger farming community, and in doing so, have examined how broader relationships of exclusion and differentiated citizenship in South Africa have been reproduced through struggles for land, livelihoods, and inclusion in state provisions and urban access at Ithemba.

In terms of livelihood strategies, I have investigated how urban opportunities and land-based practices have been combined in heterogeneous, and often unexpected yet vital ways that have connected the farmers to ‘informal’ markets, agro-food retailers, commercial farmers, government resources, media, NGO support and opportunities for solidarity-building. Accounts of land’s multifold uses at Ithemba – for farming, housing, food security, income-generation, and access to urban resources and social networks – engage with the immense social and political changes that have occurred in the post-apartheid period and reveal how accessing land on the peripheries has become increasingly important amidst unemployment, growing income disparities, precarious employment, and with access to the city becoming increasingly class-based.
6.2. Rethinking the peripheries

Recent scholarship has provided new epistemologies for understanding life on the peripheries by contesting homogenizing and static accounts of informality, precarity, and desolation and challenging geographically and organizationally delineated notions of the core and periphery. This work has investigated the peripheries as spaces of contestation and agency (Holston and Caldiera 2011) and recognized them as dynamic spaces in which the core and periphery, formal and informal economy, rural and urban interstitial places, and legal and extra-legal state channels constitute, sustain, and support one another. Dhuphelia-Mesthrie (2014), Holston (2009), Monson (2015), Roy (2011) and McFarlane (2012) for example, provide dynamic, textured, and situated accounts of life on the urban margins contesting urban exclusion and exploring the creation of new urban spaces. I have attempted, in this work, to contribute to this scholarship through its extensive analysis of the Ithemba farmers’ land occupation – and the complexities and nuances of their everyday struggles, livelihood strategies, and social networks.

The Ithemba farmers’ everyday lives and the struggles for land, livelihoods and urban space stemming from them, are highly localized and have been shaped by Cape Town’s history of spatial and social exclusion – and contestations of it (as explored in chapter two). While the socio-spatial complexities of the Ithemba occupation deserve close attention, the way that their experiences indicate the use of land as a basis of broader claims for livelihoods, urban inclusion, and access to the state are not an anomaly. The work of others on land occupations and invasions, including for example Hart’s writing on Bredell (2002, 2013) , Huchzermeier on Grootboom, Alexandra and Bredell (2003), and Monson’s work on Mshongo (2015) indicate the potential of land within counter-hegemonic struggles. Specifically in Cape Town, lesser documented cases of land occupation sustaining farming as well as housing and access to urban streams of income and infrastructure have occurred and have involved varying attempts to avoid or attract state attention and negotiate tenure security have been made in Penhill, Jacobsdal, Mfuleni, Tamboerskloof, and Philippi. Thus, these urban land struggles in spite of their varied specificities, illustrate the multifold ways land supports access to everyday basic resources and sustains livelihood strategies and demands for new urban citizenship

6.3. The land question and access to the city

This work has also attempted to engage with the land question in relation to the current context of urbanization and integrated struggles and demands on the urban margins that illustrate the overlooked multifold meanings and uses of land in urban areas. While agricultural subsistence (and the range of
survival strategies and networks of distribution and exchange associated with it) were central to the livelihoods of the most marginalized at Ithemba, the farmers’ heterogeneous uses of land and livelihoods illustrate the ‘fundamentally non-agrarian nature of South African society today’ and highlight the need for the land question to engage with the urban context of livelihoods, social networks, and aspirations in South Africa (Walker 2015, 249).

The experiences of the Ithemba farmers also highlight how struggles for land are not simply about housing or farming, but are intertwined with and constitute broader political contestations and demands for access to the city and access to the state – including for work, electricity, water, transportation, schools, health care, formal and informal markets, social networks, urban claims to land. Recognizing these demands. They reflect the everyday lives and struggles of those on the urban margins – indicate the need to look past land reform as a panacea for equality, historical redress, and poverty reduction in South Africa (Walker 2008) – and examine alternative struggles for state provisions, integrated settlements, and equitable inclusion in post-apartheid cities. Hart and Sitas indicate that the ‘socio-spatial interconnections’ between the land question and demands for livelihoods, service delivery, health care, education, infrastructure and transportation are ‘central to challenge research, policy and social action’ (2004, 32). The land question therefore needs to be reframed to recognize the importance integrated human settlements and access to the city to better align the lived realities, practices, and desires of the urban poor with policies in South Africa.

7. **Contesting historical legacies through integrated human settlements**

Throughout this thesis, I have examined how exclusionary spatial and social apartheid policies in Cape Town have been contested and challenged through new forms of claims-making and demands for a ‘rightful share’. As explored in chapter two, ‘state-led marginalization of black urban development’ restricted black South Africans from accessing the city under apartheid, and contemporary spatial patterns for work, settlement, and housing have been deeply impacted by the erasure of neighbourhoods that occurred under the Group Areas Act and the rapid social and economic changes that have occurred since 1994 (Hendler 2015). The state’s settlement policies however have largely resulted in coloured and African people being located far away from work opportunities, public facilities, and peoples’ existing connections for shopping and social networks (2015, 92). In chapters three and four, I focused on how the Ithemba farmers’ insurgent claims and everyday practices have culminated in desires for access to the city (urban infrastructure, transportation, and work opportunities), access to the state (in terms of cash transfers, service delivery, sanitation services, housing and tenure security), and hybrid
livelihoods (comprised of land-based practices and urban-based streams of income). Both the Ithemba farmers’ demands on the state and their strategic evasion of the law reflect desires for the social and spatial integration of housing, employment, and opportunities for food production reflecting demands from below for equitable integrated human settlements. As such, the farmers’ occupation have highlighted the disjuncture between policies and the aspirations, livelihoods, and opportunities of the urban poor. The misalignment of government policies and on-the-ground practices has created a productive space for examining how state policies better align with everyday practices reflecting land’s life-sustaining uses and broader need for equitable mixed settlement on the urban peripheries. The possibilities emerging from the farmers’ de facto land access and insurgent livelihoods, according to Rick de Satge indicate that a settlement at Ithemba:

must recognize the status quo on the land, you have to do an in-situ upgrade and you need to recognize people’s tenure rights and see if you can align that upgrade with the City’s urban agriculture program. Consider Ithemba as a possible zone for recognizing de facto what is on the ground (interview, June 2015)

Similarly, Juanita indicated:

If they could stay where they are or not be moved too far, that would be the best case scenario. That would be easiest for the farmers, that would bypass all other issues of blockages – it would ultimately by-pass everything and people wouldn’t be disrupted too much. If the Department of Human Settlements can give them a legitimate contract and if the City of Cape Town takes responsibility to provide services, it would ultimately be a good situation for them (interview, June 2015)

The farmers’ struggles raises questions about what the state’s role in supporting extra-legal land claims and demands for livelihoods, access to the city, and access to the state can be and how - or even if - it can contest the legacies of racialized exclusion experienced under colonialism and apartheid. The disjuncture between policy and practice within the Ithemba occupation – and what it means for the farmers’ future holds both potential and threatens to destroy the urban space and insurgent lives and livelihood strategies of those at the farm. According to Mr de Satge the Ithemba occupation is,

a very eloquent example of how the informal works and it actually meets people’s needs, and as soon as you try to regularize it and formalize it, you’re actually maybe going to end up destroying. That’s what I’m afraid might happen – the whole thing might be dismantled (interview, June 2015)

Whether the Ithemba farmers’ use of a spectrum of invented and invited spaces will continue to be sustained by their insurgent practices and whether a settlement reflecting the diverse and uneven needs at Ithemba will be reached remains to be seen – yet for the time being, the Ithemba farmers’ de facto rights to land, their hybrid livelihood strategies, and negotiated access to the state legal channels and material benefits illustrate the possibilities of claims-making for the urban poor on the peripheries on Cape Town.
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