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Hope and Utopianism in Everyday Life in an Aspirational City of Coal

by

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in the

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at the

University of Witwatersrand

Supervised by

Professor Bridget Kenny & Professor Noor Nieftagodien

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.



_____

Nothemba Luckett
24 March 2021
University of the Witwatersrand

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ABSTRACT

The material and social worlds are unfinished, with multiple ontological potentialities existing in the present. This thesis explores the gap of the 'not yet' in shaping everyday life through hopeful cognitive and affective attachments to different futures. I argue that hope matters, and as a force in the world, hopes are both generated within and generative of specific space-times. As such, hopes and manifest and function differently across space-times. I thus specifically explore hopes in the everyday in the town of Lephalale and its surrounds in the Limpopo province of South Africa. The analysis of hope in ordinary people's everyday lives has been largely absent in the field of utopian studies. This research project aims to address this lacuna through an interdisciplinary and grounded, empirical study with a specific focus on the concept of hope in the everyday.

Lephalale developed around a coal mine and coal-fired power station in the 1980s. Recently, with the development of Medupi Power Station and possible future coal developments, it has become a place of interest and attraction. Given that it holds South Africa's largest remaining coal reserves, this locality is of particular significance as a contradictory site of aspiration and destruction. The South African economy relies almost entirely on fossil-based energy. This trajectory continues in the face of a global existential catastrophe: anthropogenic, or human-induced, climate change. For these reasons, this site allows an analysis of hope and possibilities in a contradictory space-time of modernist imaginaries of the future and fossil fuel catastrophe that forecloses habitable futures.

In order to explore hope in the everyday in Lephalale, this thesis brings the work of Ernst Bloch, the philosopher of hope, into conversation with that of Henri Lefebvre, the theorist of social space. Fully cognisant of the ontological messiness of everyday life, but to sharpen the analysis, I introduce two new analytic categories: 'reproductive hope' and 'transformative hope'. I use reproductive hope to analyse practices and discourses of production and consumption, which are aspirational of a 'good life'. Such hopes reproduce the given order, locking people into repetitive cycles of social being that permanently defer the 'good life'. I argue that, while mainly reproductive of the dominant space-time, such hopes can lead to motion, which is meaningful and can open up surpluses from which to transform subjectivities and conditions of life. By way of contrast, I argue that transformative hope shifts the terrain of possibility. Affective and cognitive connections to the present are disrupted or reconfigured so that alternative futures are provoked. As such, these hopes relate more to becoming, generating possibilities for transforming the everyday.

Finally, this thesis engages with *hope as method*. Hope as method is an orientation to knowledge and philosophy that is not only backwards-looking or contemplative of the past. An orientation towards the future pushes knowledge at its limits, exploring and thinking through possibilities and potentialities. This calls for a capacity to understand and read the world as unfolding from a standpoint of openness. Hope as method is necessarily an inter-subjective method that aims to generate contestations and possibilities as part of the broader project of imagining and creating alternative futures.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CBD	Central Business District
CCAWUSA	Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CRAM	Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey
CSAAWU	Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union
CV	Curricula Vitae
DA	Democratic Alliance
DLF	Democratic Left Front
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
ESKOM	Electricity Supply Commission
EWU	Electrical Workers Union
EWN	EyeWitness News
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GMEP	Grootegeluk Medupi Expansion Project
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IPP	Independent Power Producer
IRP	Integrated Resource Plan
ISCOR	Iron and Steel Corporation of South Africa
JDC	Joubo Development Corporation
LDF	Lephalale Development Forum
LIFO	Last In First Out
LRA	Labour Relations Act
LRC	Legal Resources Centre
LUF	Lephalale Unemployment Forum

MAWU	Metal and Allied Workers Union
MCWAP	Mokolo-Crocodile Water Augmentation Project
MEC	Minerals-Energy Complex
MK	uMkhonto we Sizwe
MPSJV	Medupi Power Station Joint Venture (Pty) Ltd
NDP	National Development Plan
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIDS	National Income Dynamics Study
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
PICC	Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission
PLA	Project Labour Agreement
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
ResGen	Resource Generation
SAAF	South African Air Force
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACCAWU	South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANAC	South African Native Affairs Commission
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SAFTU	South African Federation of Trade Unions
SASOL	South African Coal, Oil and Gas Company
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
SRWP	Socialist Revolutionary Workers' Party
SIPs	Strategic Investment Projects
UASA	United Association of South Africa (formerly known as)
UCT	University of Cape Town
WAMUA	Women affected by Mining United in Action
WEJF	Waterberg Environmental Justice Forum
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WWAO	Waterberg Women's Advocacy Organisation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Utopias exist only in carpets. But they [workers] know too that what they have been subjected to in their lives is intolerable. And the naming of the intolerable is itself hope. When something is named intolerable, actions must follow. These actions are subject to all the vicissitudes of life. But the pure hope resides first and mysteriously in the capacity to name the intolerable as such: and this capacity comes from afar – from the past and from the future. This is why politics and courage are inevitable. The time of the torturers is agonizingly but exclusively the present" (Berger, 1984, p. 18).

Throughout history and across spaces, there have been dreams, visions and hopes for a better life or utopian world, expressed through multiple mediums such as folktales, fables, literature, art, philosophy, music, religion and political programmes. According to Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor (1982), the historical presence of utopian thinking is evidence of 'eternal human aspiration' and is part of being human: "Humans are utopian beings. This fundamental condition derives from the inseparable tension between our openness to the world as a whole and our particular situation in limited time and space" (Libanio, 1993, p. 720).[1]

Ruth Levitas (1990) argues that the ontological basis of utopian thinking is that the material world is in process; it is unfinished. This gap of 'not yet' allows for possibilities, as multiple ontological potentialities exist in the present. Similarly, Paolo Freire (1998) and others "reject fatalism as short-sighted, failing to acknowledge our 'unfinishedness' in the world" (van Heertun, 2006, p. 46). For João Biehl and Peter Locke (2017, p. x), 'unfinishedness' is simultaneously the "precondition and product of becoming". Thus, it is not only that the world is in process, but as subjects, we are both constituted and *constitutive* (Weeks, 2011). The gap of 'not yet' is counterposed to the dominance of ideological claims of 'the end of history'[2] and

[1] Taking note of the anti-humanist and post-humanist philosophies in this theoretical moment of the erasure of ontology post-1960s, I argue that there is a place for the subject in philosophy and sociology. This is not the rationalist subject of the enlightenment period, but rather, situated within critical theory, considers the ambiguities, contradictions as well as potentialities of subjects in motion as they relate to social and material worlds not of their choosing.

[2] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama (1992) argued that communism was permanently discredited and that there would be no further major shifts in political economy – with capitalism and liberal democracy as the only future.

'there is no alternative'[3] in a time of neoliberal hegemony, which is increasingly being torn apart in the face of economic, environmental and political crises globally.

Hope and utopian thinking are understood as not just an idea or theory but as a social force, part of political movements and social life (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982; Meny-Gibert, 2007). Utopianism contains an inherent critique of the present through the presentation or aspiration of alternatives. Zygmunt Bauman (1976) argues that utopias 'revitalise' the present and Karl Mannheim (1979) emphasises the dynamism inherent in utopian theory as it simultaneously transcends and acts on an immediate situation. Such theorists emphasise the movement and force of utopianism in shaping the social world.

This research project explores explicitly the gap between the now and the 'not yet' in shaping everyday life through hopeful cognitive and affective attachments to different futures. In this thesis, I argue that hope matters. Hope has causal power, which both affects and is affected by socio-cultural, political and economic relations. As such, hope manifests and functions differently across time and space. I explore the manifestations and functions of hopes in the everyday lives of black working class people in the mining town of Lephalale and its surrounds in the Limpopo province of South Africa. Through participant observation and interviews, I analyse the role of hope in reproducing and transforming everyday life.

1.1 The Problematic Addressed by this Study

To date, the scholarly field of utopian studies has focused primarily on three broad varieties of utopianism: literary utopias, utopian social and political thought, and empirical work; with the latter limited to relatively small, communal experiments (Davis, 2011). Sarah Meny-Gibert (2007, p. 5) argues that utopian literature and abstract theory has not been adequately connected to everyday practice: "few texts on utopianism are particularly grounded in anthropological and local historical data". The anthropological research that has been undertaken has mainly focused on exceptional communities.[4] By contrast, the study of how hope and utopianism permeate ordinary people's everyday lives, what it looks like and how it functions has been

[3] The ideology of 'there is no alternative' (TINA) dates back to Herbet Spencer's (1851) defence of classical liberalism and the free market as the route of social progress. This phrase was later famously taken up by Britain's Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who pushed through policies of privatisation and deregulation, under a neoliberal framework.

[4] See, for instance, Lucy Sargisson (2004).

largely absent. Laurence Davis (2011, p. 139) proposes that there is "a pressing need for interdisciplinary research that successfully combines philosophical and historical analysis of the concept of utopia with an empirical understanding". This research project aims to address the dearth of interdisciplinary work that has been conducted, thereby contributing to the field of utopian studies through a specific focus on the concept of hope in the everyday. This thesis explores possibilities, potentialities, and closures regarding everyday life and social change through the lens of hope. I argue that such grounded empirical work has the potential to make theoretical contributions to the field of utopian studies.

Within the field of utopian studies, I was drawn to Ernst Bloch because of the attention he paid to minutiae of daily life. I was also captivated by his poetic statements on hope and his affective writings – much of which remains a challenge to clarify, interpret and apply. In *The Principle of Hope (Das Prinzip Hoffnung)*, Bloch's *magnum opus*, he articulates the permeations of hope through everyday life and consciousness, expressed in multiple forms (Kellner, 1997). This thesis takes inspiration from Bloch's vast *opus* by focusing on hope in the everyday, rather than abstract blueprints of utopia.

Hope as a *subject of research* is no simple task. Hirokazu Miyazaki (2017, p. 2) asks the question, 'what is hope?'. He outlines that it "remains a lingering and open question… hope is variously categorized as an affective, aesthetic, discursive, ideological, motivational, or temporal orientation, and it may at times embody some or all of these elements at once". Michael Taussig (2002, p. 43) states that hope appears to be "ever-present and ubiquitous, and crucially important – something like the very air people breathe", yet is under-theorised. Even though the Oxford Dictionary of English (2010) defines hope as "a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen", I argue that hope is more than a feeling and can be differentiated from other affective and cognitive categories, such as expectation, desire and optimism (Miyazaki, 2017).

For Mary Zournazi (2002), hope sustains life beyond a desire for things to come – it is energy embedded in everyday life, connected to power relations and imaginaries of how life is 'meant to be'. Without hope, there is a death of human vitality and energy (Zournazi, 2002). Hope can be understood as a lack or crack in the present that generates a future orientation to an object or state of affairs that is perceived or evaluated as being possible and as the fulfilment of the crack or lack in the present. Thus, different to wishing, which one can do in relation to the

impossible, hope "intends the possible" – the object of hope may be vastly improbable but not impossible (Eagleton, 2015, p. 48). As Paul Ricoeur (1974, p. 408) states, hope is a "passion for the possible… Freedom in the light of hope… is nothing else than this creative imagination of the possible".

Hope is often encountered through its opposites, such as fear and despair. Biehl and Locke (2017) argue that human potentiality is shaped as much by fear and resentment as by desire and hope, with violent and harmful potentials at the forefront of global politics today. Miyazaki (2017) highlights that it is during this period of neoliberal hegemony that hope emerged as a concept and subject in social theory. This is seen, for example, in David Harvey's (2000) *Spaces of Hope*; Zournazi (2002) on the philosophy and politics of hopes; Ghassan Hage (2003) on the shrinking of society's ability to distribute hope equally in an age of neoliberalism; and Peter Thompson and Slavoj Zizek's (2013) *The Privatization of Hope*.

In this study, I work with a concept of hope that is embedded in particular space-times: hope is embodied, spatialised and historicised. This situatedness affects what and how futures are envisioned. Throughout the thesis, I think and move between different scales, from macro political economy on global and regional levels to the details and politics of hope in the everyday. Drawing on Raymond Williams (2011), politics is understood as embedded in 'ways of life' and 'structures of feeling'; thus, I work with the everyday as a site in which to understand power dynamics, social relations and subjectivities. The embodied, spatialised, historicised everyday is a pivotal site through which to explore ruptures and possibilities for transformation in a constantly changing and unfinished world.

In order to explore hope in the everyday, this thesis engages with the dialectic of social, spatial and temporal relations. I argue against a linear, pre-determined relation to futurity, showing that multiple temporalities exist in any moment. Post-enlightenment ideas of historical progress typically assert the primacy of time over space, and culture over nature. Space or geography is conceptualised as inert, nature as passive, and historical events unfold on this passive, empty space (Coronil, 1997). Counter to this passive conception of space, I work with the dialectic between social and spatial relations. Social relations are understood as both space-forming and space-contingent (Soja, 1989). Space and time are not viewed as ontologically separate categories, thus necessitating a spatio-temporal analysis of hope. Hope, often regarded as a relation to the futurity, is instead developed in this study as a spatio-temporal dynamic. Given

that hope manifests and functions differently across time and space, this thesis distinguishes between different kinds of hopes and illustrates how these variously affect subjectivities and social relations.

Returning to Bloch (1986), his emancipatory impulse permeates his philosophy of hope; he argues that when one imagines the future, based on what is, what has been and what could be, one engages in creative practice that has the possibility of realising dreams of humanity (Kellner, 1997). Bloch was not only writing about hope but writing from a stance of a hope. Bloch's project was prospective in motion. This begs the question of what a reflexive project of hope entails; I offer one such attempt here. Following the trajectory of Bloch, Levitas's (2013) *Utopia as Method* and Miyazaki's (2004) *The Method of Hope*, hope is understood as both a method as well as the subject of research.

Writing and thinking through *hope as method* is an orientation to knowledge and philosophy that is not only backwards-looking or contemplative of that which has already passed. An orientation or stance towards the future pushes knowledge at its limits, not in terms of prediction in a positivist or pseudo-scientific sense, but in exploring and thinking through possibilities and potentialities as the past penetrates the present and ideas for the future affect the present. What hope as method necessitates is knowledge from the standpoint of openness; it is an exploration of the 'not-yet' and of future possibilities. Hope lies in the interplay between (fore/en)closure and openness (Miyazaki, 2017). It means being 'unscientific' in the positivist sense by not only writing about what has been (analysing past events and experiences), but analysing such with a view to the future. Furthermore, spatialising hope requires a method of research that allows for an exploration of hopes embedded in space-times, thereby moving between the concrete and the abstract.

Hope as method engages with normative issues in sociology and the social sciences more generally, countering the dualism between fact and normativity, or between is and ought, without collapsing the one into the other (Levitas, 2013). Charles Taylor (2007, pp. 171–172) argues that the social imaginary includes:

> "The way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings… It incorporates a sense of the normal expectations that we have of each other; the kind of common understanding which enables us to carry out the collective practices which make up our social life. This incorporates some sense of how we all fit together in carrying out the common practice. This understanding is both factual and 'normative'; that

> is, we have a sense of how things usually go, but this is interwoven with an idea of how they ought to go, of what mis-steps would invalidate the practice."

How people understand and study society is penetrated by implicit assumptions regarding "the real, the possible, the probable, the desirable" (Levitas, 2013, p. 83). Drawing on Biehl and Locke (2017), the work of critique entails looking for and opening up possibilities, rather than making judgements from totalising schemas. In this thesis, I attempt to do the work of hope as method through being open to the 'not yet' and to questions of normativity, by posing questions such as 'where does potentiality lie?'; 'what politics could push beyond the present order of things?'; 'how are new space-times and social relations generated?'; and 'how might we bring an end to the intolerability of a dog's life that so many are forced to endure?' In so doing, I also explore the affordances of hope as method for sociological research through an empirical study in a particular location with a particular history.

1.2 An Exploration of Hope in the Everyday in Lephalale and Surrounds

In order to explore the lines of inquiry of hope as both subject and method, I ground my thinking and research in a spatial location: the town of Lephalale and surrounds, in the Limpopo province of northern South Africa. Lephalale, previously an agricultural space, developed around a coal mine and coal-fired power station in the 1980s. Recently, it has become a source of interest and attraction with the development of Medupi Power Station, and possible future coal developments.

This site enables an analysis of hope and possibilities in a contradictory space-time of 'modernist progress' and 'fossil fuel catastrophe'. It is marked by modernist imaginaries of the future built through coal mega-projects (Matimba and Medupi coal-fired power stations and Grootegeluk coal mine), neoliberal aspirations, and foreclosures of habitable futures through social and environmental destruction. The 'city' unfolds as both a site of utopia and dystopia. As China Miéville (2016a, 2016b) argues, in the utopia of corporations, the poor are dispensable but so too are the already dead. Progress based on empire has defamed cultures and built its dreams and visions of the future on the bones of the dead. However, this is not a uni-directional 'march of progress' but rather a space of contestation as multiple hopes and relations to futurity intersect with each other. This space of contestation is understood as a nexus of capital, nature, and social relations. The power relations at this nexus are indicative of local and global systems of racism, patriarchy and capitalism and thus afford thinking through what it means to hope, or not to, in this space of extractivism, devastation and aspiration.

This locality is of particular significance, as a contradictory site of aspiration and destruction, given that it holds South Africa's largest remaining coal reserves. The South African economy continues to rely almost entirely on fossil-based energy and is one of the most carbon-intensive economies in the world (Ashley et al., 2020). This trajectory continues in the face of an existential catastrophe: that of anthropogenic, or human-induced, climate change. For decades the living biosphere has been over-exploited and subjected to a corporate-industrial food system and fossil-fuel extractivism. The plans for increasing fossil fuel development in Lephalale and its surrounds will radically alter the space of Lephalale and in turn its social relations and relations with nature, as well as further the trajectory of existential catastrophe.

This research project started by investigating the everyday life of Medupi Power Station workers and then expanded to capture the hopes of those negotiating life in the shadows of the power stations in Lephalale. It also began with a focus on organised labour but expanded to include various political collectives, both formal and informal. I conducted fieldwork on and off over a period of two years at several sites in Lephalale and its surrounding areas, including Marapong and its informal settlements, the small town of Steenbokpan and surrounding farms, and the 25 villages under the Ga-Seleka Royal Council. Different sites of the everyday and negotiations therein were focal points for data collection, such as various homes, the Lephalale shopping mall, the power stations, the mine, farms, community meetings, trade union meetings and shebeens and spaza shops in Marapong. Participant observation was conducted at these sites, as well as semi-structured interviews and life history interviews with workers and shop stewards at the power stations, trade union officials, unemployed and under-employed residents living in Marapong, community organisers and activists from environmental, women's, and unemployed community organisations, traditional leaders, and land claimants. As such, this thesis engages with the field of labour sociology and its strand of 'cultural and working life' in order to make sense of the complexities and ambiguities of the subjectivities of workers and community members in relation to political collectives and organisations.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is structured according to the following chapter themes. **Chapter 2: Hope and Utopianism as Ontology**, situates this project in the broader literature on hope and utopia, where I provide some historical framing regarding the contested concept of utopia. Thereafter,

I show how Bloch's work provides a way through some of the objections to utopian thinking. I outline a Blochian defence of the relevance and importance of utopia and hope as concepts in philosophy and social theory, including outlining a processual and depth ontology – to show that we live between the actual and the possible. In response to some of the limitations of Bloch's theory, I propose a framework for analysing hope in the everyday by drawing on critical space theory, in particular the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991b, 2004). The study of everyday life brings together a spatial and temporal analysis and provides a site through which to explore how hope manifests and functions. Finally, I develop the concepts of reproductive hope and transformative hope, which I use to analyse the data from my fieldwork and develop further in subsequent chapters.

Building on the preceding chapter, **Chapter 3: Hope as Method,** continues Bloch's line of critical thinking by discussing the epistemological and methodological implications of a conceptualisation of hope as method. Hope is understood as part of knowledge formation and calls for a temporal reorientation of knowledge (Miyazaki, 2004). Hope as philosophy or as part of knowledge formation calls for a capacity to understand the world as unfolding, and the present as containing tendencies and latencies that have not-yet become (Bloch, 1986; Miyazaki, 2004). Any conception of a closed, settled world is destabilised by the presence of futuristic properties without a pre-determined end (Hudson, 1982). In this chapter, I take on the task of elaborating and concretising Bloch's epistemology and method through my own research and thinking. Through an understanding of hope as an analytic resource, I reflexively chart my own hope through the research process as well as explaining my fieldwork and data analysis processes in detail, drawing on a critical ethnography framework. Finally, I engage with some unresolved methodological and ethical research issues and challenges, including a final reflection on the relational constitution of hope through the research process.

In **Chapter 4: Introducing Lephalale**, I briefly map the space of Lephalale and its positions in the wider Waterberg region. I invite the reader to travel with me into the Waterberg as I paint some first impressions of the area. I draw on Lefebvre's (1991b) regressive-progressive method, starting with present realities, before working backwards in order to understand the genesis of the present moment. Furthermore, I employ Levitas's (2013) architectural method in imagining how the Waterberg might appear 50 years into the future as both a site of utopia and dystopia.

In **Chapter 5: Social-Spatial Contestations in the Making of the Waterberg, Behind the Mountain**, I discuss the historical construction of space, time and socio-political relations in the Waterberg region from the mid nineteenth century to the present by drawing on critical space theory. In particular, I employ Lefebvre's (1991b) spatial triad of *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space* in order to highlight the disjunctures, divergences and contradictions in the co-articulation of social, spatial and temporal relations. I conduct this analysis to provide a spatial and relational understanding for my analysis of hope where I attempt to grasp and locate in space-time, the potentials, possibilities and contradictions of everyday hopes in the present.

Chapter 6: Death and Hauntings in Lephalale starts from the statement "we are dead here" made by a research participant. Through my fieldwork, I encountered numerous references to physiological death and relations to the dead, as well as claims to social death and lack of agency in the debris of extractivism. I pose the question of what these experiences of and relations to death mean in connection to hope, thereby considering the possibility of the destruction or death of hope in everyday life. Through my analysis, I argue that social death is neither a total nor permanent state of being. Absent and dispensable people and ideas can exist in ways that haunt present spaces and disrupt the linearity of time – such that the absences are neither final nor complete. The chapter complicates linear time through 'hauntings', bringing the past into the present in multiple ways. Through this chapter, I argue that there are grounds for the exploration of hope in the social and physical spaces of Lephalale and its surrounds.

Chapter 7: Reproductive Hope explores the abstraction 'reproductive hope' as a concept of hope invested in the current spatial and temporal order. In this chapter, I analyse manifestations of reproductive hope, mainly in relation to practices and discourses of *production* and *consumption* as symbols of a 'good life'. The investment in linearised time and progress means that the 'good life' is continuously deferred rather than systemically critiqued. I employ the concept of reproductive hope and its relation to a structure of reality as an open system but with constraints. In doing so, I am also attentive to the opening up of possibilities and the activation of potentialities. I argue that while mainly reproductive of the status quo, the act of hoping leads to motion. This motion is meaningful and can open up slippages and surpluses from which to transform subjectivities and conditions of life.

This leads me to the subsequent chapter, **Chapter 8: Transformative Hope,** which explores

the abstraction 'transformative hope' in everyday life. In this chapter, I present findings in my data for everyday refusals and hopes with transformative potential: the potential to transform subjectivities, temporal orders and spaces. Such hopes contain refusals and rejections of the given order, extending to structural critiques of both the past and present. I argue that these expressions of hope that are split through and contain multiple-space-times, carrying the losses and injustices of the past, held more transformative possibilities. In this way, I circle back to the theme of haunting in Chapter 6, and find that hope in conversation with hauntings is generative of transformative possibilities – bringing to the fore the non-linearity of time and pointing to imaginings of different spatial and social relations in relation to home, work, land and political collectives.

In the concluding chapter, I return to the theoretical, methodological and political questions raised in this introduction. In so doing, I highlight the contribution of this study to utopian studies through the employment of everyday life, and a spatio-temporal analysis, bringing Bloch into conversation with Lefebvre's critical space theory. Given the destruction of futures through coal extraction and coal energy production, as well as ongoing dislocations from pasts, I argue that the everyday in Lephalale can be a site of significance from which to generate possibilities for breaking the repetitive time of racial capitalism and for constituting new subjectivities and collectives.

1.4 The Significance of Hope in Times of Crisis

It has been particularly jarring, and a somewhat discordant experience, writing about hope and utopianism in the context of multiple crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent manifestations of state and economic violence, as the lives of millions have spiralled into devastation. The year 2020 has, at times, felt extra-ordinarily desolate and desperate as the suffering of so many has become pervasive and ubiquitous. What was previously 'normal' was already a catastrophe – marked by racism, patriarchy and gender-based violence, economic exploitation, environmental catastrophe and political rhetoric based on fear, exclusion and toxic machismo. The course of the pandemic in South Africa has highlighted these catastrophes and the inability of current economic and political systems to provide care and shelter in a time of crisis. Arundhati Roy (2020, p. n.p.), reflecting on this period, writes: "in the midst of this terrible despair, it [the pandemic] offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality".

Some of the pervasive discourse during this period has been in praise of the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of enduring hardship without defeatism. At times I have felt annoyed and angered about the ways in which 'hope' has been deployed in this discourse as an agential 'solution' to the crisis in ways that fail to account for its systemic causes. This has verged on a 'pop-psychology' discourse of maintaining optimism, 'positive thinking' and having faith that 'things will get better'. However, there is no guarantee that things will get better, and denying the realities of the devastation is not a way forward. While this period has provided space for reflection, assessment and reimagining the world in which we want to live and the hope to create it, this period has also given impetus to authoritarianism, violent masculinities, xenophobia and gross accumulation by economic elites. Hope is not optimism. There are no guaranteed outcomes, and moreover, no guaranteed progressive outcomes. As Rebecca Solnit (2016, p. xiv) writes, it is in the uncertainty that hopeful possibilities exist:

> "Hope locates itself in the premises that we don't know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act. When you recognize uncertainty, you recognize that you may be able to influence the outcomes — you alone or you in concert with a few dozen or several million others. Hope is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists."

Despite, and because of, ongoing catastrophes, devastation and glib solutions, I posit the significance of researching, thinking through, writing about and acting from a stance of hope (not optimism) in these times, with an eye to potentialities of becoming more than we currently are, and to the possibilities of social transformation in the uncertainty of the 'not-yet'. I have felt akin to the metaphor of the porcupine that Ursula Le Guin (2016) draws on from the First Nation group, Swampy Cree Nation. The porcupine seeks shelter from onrushing devastation while still being open to possibilities in this period. Le Guin (2016, p. 193) states, "I don't think we're ever going to get to utopia again by going forward". Using the image of the porcupine, she speaks of the porcupine backing into a rock crevice, from where it can watch for oncoming danger and "speculate safely on an inhabitable future" in the face of accelerating social and ecological degradation (Le Guin, 2016, p. 171). From those rocks, the porcupine can plot its own utopias, and importantly, try to avoid the onrushing utopias of those in power that have levelled many landscapes and can destroy all rocks within which to hide. The defensive porcupine gait has a counterpart, a poignant inversion, the figure of Walter Benjamin's angel of history – watching the debris of 'progress' pile up: "The porcupine goes backward, looks forward, to see futures – to avoid some, to plan another. The angel goes forward, looks

backward, in anguish – plunging towards a future it can't see, mourning pasts it can't redeem" (Miéville 2016a, p. 8). In this context, what possibilities are there for hope and imagining alternatives amongst the debris? As Roy argues, hope lies in the intricacies and complex negotiations of everyday life (Ghadiali, 2020).

In a global period of defensive struggles and left defeats, this thesis writes and thinks through hope from the standpoint of openness, fragility, vulnerability and tenderness, without optimism or triumphalism in a contingent and crisis-ridden society: *"Dogmas are engraved; hopes flicker, by contrast, like the flame of a candle"* (Berger, 2016, p. 114).

CHAPTER 2: HOPE AND UTOPIANISM AS ONTOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I frame my project within the broader literature on hope and utopian thought and theories of social and political change through the intersection of space, time and social being. First, I provide some historical framing regarding the contested concept of utopia. Second, I show how Ernst Bloch provides a way from which to navigate some of the objections to utopian thinking. Thereafter, I discuss Bloch's complex ontology and some of the critiques that have been levelled against him. Third, in response to some of the limitations of Bloch's theory, I build a framework for analysing hope in the everyday by drawing on critical space theory. Finally, I develop the concepts of 'reproductive hope' and 'transformative hope', which I use to analyse the data from my fieldwork and are further developed in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Utopian Contestations and the Emergence of Utopian Studies

Thomas More (2016) developed the paradoxical term *utopia* in 1516 from the Greek words *eutopia* (good place) and *outopia* (no place). Utopia is another place and/or another time (past or future) (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982). The roots of utopianism are arguably taken up in the Christian notion of a virtuous life and the soul's final destiny in eschatology. Its more recent intellectual roots lie in the Enlightenment's ideas of progress, perfectibility and optimism – for the first time, Western philosophical and political thought promised the possibility of a good life in the secular here and now. The French and Haitian Revolutions demonstrated that history could be interrupted and that "abstract ideals could be incarnated in society by deliberate human action" (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982, p. 15; James, 2001). Goodwin and Taylor (1982) argue that utopia is not a political fantasy but that utopianism, as a tendency and social force, is a key concept in modern politics.

There is no singular content of utopias across histories. Still, a minimum requirement can be outlined as "anything purporting to be a utopia should have universal scope and offer benefits to all those within this frame of reference" (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982, p. 18). Many utopias emphasise positive freedom: the freedom to fully realise oneself. Liberal negative freedom, as freedom from, is insufficient to realise the good life. Moreover, many utopias stress egalitarianism and community, containing a belief that human beings will transform and become peaceful and co-operative in the absence of poverty, oppression, and exploitation. For

example, utopian socialists, such as Charles Fourier (1971), critique the hollowness of liberal rights in the face of economic inequality. Utopian thinking manifests in different written genres and social practices, such as literature, folk legends, political and philosophical writings, labour struggles and social movements (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982).

There has been, and continues to be, a contentious history of debate regarding the validity and function of the concept of utopia. Meny-Gibert (2007) argues that the contestation has been overly polarised with little appreciation of the ambiguities, tensions and contradictions of utopianism. Historically, utopia has been understood either pejoratively or as laudatory; as unrealisable and hopeless idealism or as a real alternative to strive for; as a destructive and dangerous force or as a productive and creative one (Ricoeur, 1986). There are various critiques of utopia, but according to many critics, it is the defining of an ahistorical abstraction that results in either hopeless impracticalism or dangerous idealism (Davis, 2011).

It is argued, for example by scientific Marxists,[5] that utopia as an impossible ideal is disconnected from the present, has little impact on the social world, and diverts people from engaging with real life (Levitas, 2005). Constructs of the perfect, abstracted from existing reality in a transcendent way, create an irreconcilable clash between realism and utopianism (Davis, 2011). Le Guin (2016) in *A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be*, critiques such utopias as "Euclidean" utopias. Le Guin (2016, p. 176) states, "The rationalist utopia is a power trip. It is a monotheocracy, declared by executive decree, and maintained by willpower; as its premise is progress, not process, it has no habitable present, and speaks only in the future tense." The Euclidean utopia is "nowhere" – it is a purely abstract and static end goal (Davis, 2011).

Political writings from the mid-twentieth century are highly critical of utopianism after the horrors of Nazism, Stalinism and fascism. In *Archaeologies of the Future*, Frederic Jameson (2005) explains that in the wake of the Cold War, the concept of utopia became synonymous with Stalinism and other political programmes that contain a political commitment to closure.

[5] See Marx and Engels' (1947, p. 140) critique of utopian socialists in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: "They [utopian socialists] still dream of experimental realisations of their social Utopias, of founding isolated 'phalansteres', of establishing 'Home Colonies' … and to realize all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois. By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative Socialists depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science."

It is contended that utopian ideals were complicit in the atrocities of the twentieth century on the grounds that utopianism is part of totalitarian thought and politics. The fundamental claim is that "all utopian thought depends on an exclusivist and authoritarian political outlook, antithetical to and destructive of the 'open society', a society marked out by liberty and tolerance" (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982, p. 93). This critique has been vehemently expressed by the likes of Karl Popper (1945a, 1945b), Leszek Kolakowski (1982), Friedrich Hayek (1944) and Jacob Talmon (1961), who "equated utopia with the quest for impossible perfection and then concluded from this premise that it raised the specter of totalitarianism" (Davis, 2011, p. 128). For example, Kolakowski (1982, p. 247) claimed that "the victory of the utopian dreams would lead us to a totalitarian nightmare and the utter downfall of civilization". Of particular concern for many of these theorists is the gap that utopian abstraction opens up between means and ends (Davis, 2011).

Popper (1945a,1945b) presents one of the most well-known attacks on utopianism in *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Popper contends that utopian ideals lead to totalitarianism because humans cannot rationally determine what an ideal society should be or how to realise it, and thus, there can never be complete consensus. Any attempt to realise such an ideal will entail the imposition of a personal vision that necessarily involves the coercion and domination of those who think differently. Popper further critiques the utopian method for its *a priori* conclusions as opposed to utilising the 'correct' epistemological method of empiricism (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982).

Similarly, Talmon (1961) argues against what he terms, 'political messianism', in which a pre-ordained future is determined and known by an enlightened group. This opens up justifications for domination and coercion by the enlightened in the name of this future, again, emphasising the gap between political means and ends. Talmon further contends that the human quality of spontaneous choice and action is destroyed under the quest for perfectionism and rationalist planning. Leonard Schapiro (1972) sums up the key critiques of utopian thought as follows: it is preoccupied with ends and indifferent to means, society is viewed as a totality, dogmatic assumptions are made, it contains a preoccupation with management and rationalist planning, and it neglects human variety and choice.[6]

[6] For further critiques see, for instance, George Kateb's (1963) *Utopia and its Enemies*.

A counter-argument to the above critiques is that the theorists treat diverse range of works alike without regard for their differences and particularities. However, any defence of utopianism needs to be a defence of the very project of theoretically and practically exploring the content of alternatives to the current order of things, and the processes by which to achieve such (Goodwin & Taylor, 1982). I argue that Ernst Bloch (1885-1977), the preeminent philosopher of hope, lays a foundation for exploring such a defence.

Bloch's work, as discussed in detail below, was first translated into English in the 1970s, initially by theologians. Thereafter, in the 1980s, he was recuperated as an aesthetic philosopher (Charles, 2010). Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* was translated in 1986, and a collection of his essays in *The Utopian Function in Art and Literature* appeared two years later.[7] Tom Moylan's (1986, p. 10) influential *Demand the Impossible* was a key text in the aesthetic tradition that aimed to be cognisant of the limitations of the utopian tradition, casting aside "utopia as a blueprint" but preserving utopia "as a dream". Matthew Charles (2010, p. 29) argues that this position is constitutive of "the work that follows Moylan in the field of utopian aesthetics, which has over the last decade become institutionalised as the discipline of 'Utopian Studies'". The latter saw the emergence of centres for Research in Utopian Studies and Ernst Bloch centres, as well as various journals, conferences and forums dedicated to utopian studies in the Anglophone world. Interestingly, this occurred during the collapse of the Soviet Union and a hiatus in significant prospects for social and political change (Charles, 2010). Levitas (2013) connects the rise of this form of utopian studies since the 1970s to the postmodern turn and concomitant concerns with representation and literary genres. Thus, as a scholarly field, utopian studies has been dominated by literary orientations and historical approaches – investigations into utopia as a history of ideas (Levitas, 2013).[8]

Charles (2010, p. 31) argues that the common thread through the emerging field of utopian studies was, drawing on Bloch, the advocacy of "Utopianism without Utopia". By way of illustration, Lucy Sargisson (2007) advocates pluralism; Darko Suvin (1997) a horizon of possible worlds and Jameson (2005, p. 224), a "federalism of utopias". Charles (2010) contends

[7] Cat Moir (2019) argues that some of the misreading of Bloch's work in the Anglophone world stems from the fact that key texts remain untranslated into English still today. Perhaps one of the most significant works for understanding his ontology and epistemology are *Das Materialismusproblem, seine Geschichte und Substanz* (*The Materialism Problem, its History and Substance*), written in 1972. She posits that this work is crucial for a reading of Bloch, which can address some of the misperceptions of Bloch's thought.

[8] See for example, Frank and Fritzie Manuel's (2009) *Utopian Thought in the Western World* and Gregory Claeys's (2011) *Searching for Utopia: The History of an Idea*.

that the reception of Bloch's work in the emerging field of utopian studies, at the particular historical juncture of the late-twentieth century, separated Bloch's work from his political commitments and allowed for the expansion of political and cultural liberalism. Similarly, Levitas (2013, p. 103) shows that "contingency, provisionality and reflexivity [took] centre-stage… signal[ing] a retreat from reading utopias as programmatic proposals for social transformation". As such, political questions of production, consumption and distribution are supplanted in favour of process and representation (Levitas, 2013). Harvey (2000, p. 189) contests theorists who seek to keep the future endlessly open and free of prescription or content. Permanent openness means utopia becomes "a pure signifier of hope destined never to acquire a material referent". Therefore, utopian thought risks functioning only as critique, rather than contributing towards processes of social change and transformation (Levitas, 2013).

2.3 A Blochian Defence of Utopia

In the following section, I discuss Ernst Bloch's ontology – through the concepts of Not-Yet, Not-Yet-Become, Not-Yet-Consciousness[9] – bearing in mind the reception of his work within the emerging utopian studies, which prioritises process and form over content, openness over closure, and consequently downplays the politics of transformation (Levitas, 2013). Thus, while Bloch can be characterised as a philosopher of process, he was also a committed Marxist who aimed to contribute to the realisation of communism. Therefore, my discussion on Bloch aims to bring together his philosophy and politics without considering them as two discrete categories, and concomitantly, without hollowing out studies of hope and utopia of politics.

Bloch's writing in the 'warm stream' of Marxism is a work on and for hope and social transformation. Wayne Hudson (1982, p. 1) describes Bloch as a "political philosopher of the irrational, hermetic Marxist, utopian, encyclopaedist, process philosopher of our immanence in an unfinished world; a densely timed man who cannot be sifted quickly". Bloch, a "Marxist philosopher of hope, utopia and the future" (Rismal, 2017, p. 125), is part of the trajectory of European critical theorists and a contemporary of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. He was in frequent contact with the Frankfurt School members, especially Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, and they shaped each other's thinking, even though he was never formally part of the School. Adorno stated there was "nothing that he had written that did not in some way relate to Bloch's *Spirit of Utopia* published in 1918" (cited in Thompson, 2013, p. n.p.).

[9] I follow Bloch's style of capitalising his key concepts.

He was also a contemporary and close friend of influential left thinkers such as Bertolt Brecht and György Lukács (Thompson, 2013).

Bloch remained an anomaly amongst critical theorists and philosophers of the time (Rismal, 2017). As a Marxist, Bloch's work is concerned with the needs of oppressed and exploited groups, elaborating a Marxist critique of alienation and exploitation (Zipes, 1989). However, his form of Marxism was idiosyncratic, drawing on diverse and unconventional intellectual traditions, including "chiliasm, mysticism, Gnosticism, German Expressionism and Kabbalistic Romanticism", to list a few (Rismal, 2017, p. 126). More traditionally, he also immersed himself in German sociologists, Max Weber and Georg Simmel, with their anti-positivist trajectory and German philosophy, from Georg Hegel to Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, as well as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg (Hudson, 1982).

Bloch's thought cannot be understood selectively or through one or two of his works. He works with a set of concepts that no singular piece of writing adequately captures (Hudson, 1982). Much of Bloch's most significant ideas were developed when he was young, between 1902 and 1918, during which time he wrote his manuscript *On the Category Not-Yet (Uber die Kategorie Noch-Nicht)* (Hudson, 1982). Thereafter, this fundamental idea distinguished him from others, and he continued to develop the concept for the rest of his life (Hudson, 1982). Hudson (1982, p. 6) explains this idea as the ability to possess "an anticipatory consciousness which gave him not-yet-conscious knowledge of future possibilities". In 1918, *Spirit of Utopia* (*Geist der Utopie)* was published, written after the Russian Revolution and outbreak of the First World War. It was Bloch's first attempt to develop a theory of culture, which brought together reflections on the concretisation of desire within the material world, the philosophical renewal of utopianism and cultural criticism against the world of capitalism (Hudson, 1982; Moir, 2017). Shortly thereafter, Bloch reviewed Lukács's (1971) *History and Class Consciousness*, which demonstrated Bloch's intellectual task of attempting a "systematic fusion of his utopian philosophy with Marxism" (Hudson, 1982, p. 8).

Bloch was exiled in the United States during Nazism and returned to East Germany only in 1949 (Thompson, 2013). In 1954 and 1955, the first two volumes of his 1800-page feat, *The Principle of Hope*, were published (Hudson, 1982). This was a period of growing suspicion of Bloch's work. He was seen as developing a humanistic alternative to Soviet socialism, even

though he remained loyal to the Soviet project but not to orthodox Stalinism. After Nikita Khrushchev's exposure of Stalin in 1956,[10] Bloch belatedly came to terms with horrors of Stalinism and called for an end to dogmatism (Hudson, 1982). In 1959, the third volume of *The Principle of Hope* was published in East Berlin. Bloch was increasingly restricted and denounced by German Democratic Republic and Soviet Union supporters, and when the Berlin Wall began to be built in 1961, he applied to West Germany for political asylum. He took up a professorship at the University of Tübingen, where he remained until his death in 1977 (Hudson, 1982; Thompson, 2013). During his last years, he published many of the manuscripts that he had been working on for decades, in some instances for more than 50 years.[11]

Until his death, Bloch remained an ambivalent figure in the critical theory tradition (Moir, 2018a). His explicit consideration of "ontological questions of being, becoming and existence" (Rismal, 2017, p. 126), and his consistent fidelity to hope, and the concept and real possibility of utopia, despite the horrors of the twentieth century, distinguished him from his contemporaries (Moir, 2018a). Bloch's contention regarding utopian thinking's ubiquity is not an *a priori* assumption, but rather an idea that he attempts to demonstrate empirically as a historical reality (Rismal, 2017). Adorno commented that Bloch "restored honour to the concept of utopia" (Thompson, 2013, p. n.p.). Bloch's concept of hope was the "cornerstone of a critical theory" that pursued, in the spirit of the Frankfurt School, the structural transformation of society as a whole (Horkheimer, 1975; Moir, 2018b, p. 19).

[10] Krushchev's speech, *On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences*, criticised the cult surrounding Stalin and exposed the Gulags.

[11] Bloch published the following manuscripts during his time in Tubingen: "revised editions of *Thomas Munzer as Theologian of Revolution* (1962), *Subject-Object* (1962), *Heritage of this Time* (1962), *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Left* (1963), *Through the Desert* (1964) and *Spirit of Utopia* (1964, 1923 edition), and over a dozen paperbacks (mainly selections or reprints), Bloch now published a Marxist study of natural law, *Natural Right and Human Dignity (Naturrecht und menschliche Wurde)* (1961); two introductions to metaphysics, *Fundamental Questions in Philosophy (Philosophische Grundfragen)* (1961), and *Tubingen Introduction to Philosophy (Tubinger Einleitung in die Philosophie)* (1963, 1964); a volume of essays containing his contributions to aesthetics, *Literary Essays (Literarische Aufsiitze)* (1965); a major work on Marxism and Christianity, *Atheism in Christianity (Atheismus im Christentum)* (1968); a volume of philosophical essays, including hitherto unpublished material from his early manuscripts, *Philosophical Essays on Objective Imagination (Philosophische Aufsiitze zur objektiven Phantasie)* (1969); a volume of political essays, *Political Assessments, The Plague Period, Before the Revolution (Politische Messungen, Pestzeit, Vormarz)* (1970); a seminal work on Marxist materialism, including a Marxist history of philosophical concepts of matter, *The Problem of Materialism (Das Materialismusproblem)* (1972); a new Marxist theory of categories, *Experimentum Mundi* (1975); and a volume of selections from his 3000 page unpublished work on the Marxist inheritance of the history of philosophy, *Leipzig Lectures on the History of Philosophy (Leipziger Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der Philosophie),* entitled *Between Worlds in the History of Philosophy (Zwischenwelten in der Philosophiegeschtichte)* (1977)" (Hudson, 1982, p. 18).

In this chapter, and thesis, I do not engage with all of Bloch's writings, given their vastness, but I attempt to engage with some of his significant texts related to my project's focus. While engaging with Bloch's ontology, epistemology and politics, my project focuses particularly on his analyses of utopia and hope. Bloch's (1986, 2000) central project in *The Principle of Hope* and *Spirit of Utopia* is the restoration and defence of the concept of utopia, specifically as a neglected concept within the Marxist tradition. In opposition to the Euclidean utopists, Bloch does not adopt a narrow view of utopia as a conception of a static, perfect society.[12] Rather, in *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch excavates a manifold mass of material containing dreams and wishes for a better life. He examines both what is wished for and the act of wishing, as vital human activities, which lead to an exploration of diverse manifestations of hope (Levitas, 1997). Bloch counters the critiques outlined above by Schapiro (1972) of utopianism as abstract blueprints of society, pre-occupied with rationalist planning and perfectionism and devoid of human variety and spontaneity.

Bloch was influenced by Simmel, who stressed the 'lived moment' and the impossibility of knowing the immediate, especially through abstracted universal categories. The search for more intuitive understandings of experience runs through his work. Like his contemporary Benjamin, Bloch was curious about seemingly incidental everyday events and cultural artefacts. Bloch (2006, p. xix) combines a reverence for the small and the great, for example, in *Traces (Spuren)* he seeks to trace "everyday events and cultural artefacts of the past and present that are the harbingers of a better future."

Bloch's emancipatory impulse permeates his philosophy of hope. He argues that when we imagine the future, based on what is, what has been and what could be, we engage in creative practice that has the possibility of realising dreams of humanity (Kellner, 1997). To do this, Bloch developed his "central operator" of the Not-Yet *(Noch-Nicht)* (Hudson, 1982, p. 19). His ontology of the Not-Yet, which is central to his analysis of the philosophically neglected emotion and principle of hope, is discussed in the next section.

[12] However, his work has contradictory enlightenment tendencies towards perfection as will be discussed more in the section 2.3.2 below.

2.3.1 Ontology of the Not-Yet

Bloch's philosophy is based on the premise that individuals and the world are unfinished. He argues that people live and imagine much of their lives in the future. Everyday life is pervaded by anxieties, wants, desires, longings, fears and hopes regarding the future. Bloch's philosophy of hope is rooted in the concrete reality of lack and experience of longing. This lack gives rise to a utopian impulse through the projection and imagining of what would fulfil the lack (Levitas, 2005). Bloch terms this the Philosophy of the New (*Nuvum*), comprising an ontology of the Not-Yet. Bloch (1986) prioritises ontological processes and movements over closed, static conceptions of being and therefore of utopia as a blueprint. He argues that Marxist philosophy is premised on a theory of change – it is a theory that does not resign itself to mere contemplation or interpretation. It addresses what is becoming and what could become. Thus, the past, present and future are not separated as discrete categories; Marxist philosophy is understood as "that of the future, therefore also of the future in the past… the unbecome future becomes visible in the past, avenged and inherited, mediated and fulfilled past in the future" (Bloch, 1986, p. 9).

Significantly, Bloch's conception of temporality moves beyond modernist conceptions of linear time. Bloch provides a dialectical analysis of the past, illuminating the present and pointing towards a better future. The past contains sufferings and failures of humanity as well as a general repository of possibilities and unrealised hopes, which can yet become (Kellner, 1997). He argues the power of the past lies in a complex relationship with the present and an experience of similarity/dissimilarity; this tension helps create the new (Geoghegan, 1997). Thus, the present moment is "constituted in part by latency and tendency: the unrealized potentialities that are latent in the present, and the signs and foreshadowings that indicate the tendency of the direction and movement of the present into the future" (Kellner, 1997, p. 81).[13] Underlying all Bloch's reconceptualisations is his concept of the Not-Yet (*Noch- Nicht*) (Rismal, 2017).

[13] This conception of time is taken up later in works by the likes of E.P. Thompson (1967), Raymond Williams (1989) and Elizabeth Grosz (2004) who argue that the past is a series of presents, each open to multiple possibilities (Davis, 2011). Grosz, a process philosopher, argues for an open structure whereby time is nonlinear and not countable. The new lies in the potential of the present, "The virtual is the resonance of potential that ladens the present as more than itself, that disrupts the continuity of the present, to open up a nick or crack, the untimely, the unexpected, that welcomes the new, whether a new organism, organ, or function, a new strategy, a new sensation, or a new technological invention" (Grosz, 2004, p. 252). She goes on to describe the relationship between the actual and the potential and the possibilities for transformation: "Living beings are the actualization of only part of the past. Indeed, any actualization leaves part of the virtual unactualized, and in the various processes of divergence and proliferation it also induces new virtualities, new lines of divergence. It is precisely this unactualized potential of the virtual that is the condition of all radical politics, which takes as its aim the transformation of the present" (Grosz, 2004, p. 253).

2.3.1.1 Operator of the Not-Yet

In this section, I discuss Bloch's understandings of Not-Yet and how this connects to possibility, materiality, consciousness and utopia. Throughout his writings, Bloch's central operator is the Not-Yet, understood as a tendency or drive within reality itself (Hudson, 1982; Moir, 2018a). Bloch understands the world as unfinished and in-process and thus cannot be grasped on the basis of appearance alone. He states that, "[e]ven, or precisely, in its there-ness matter is incomplete" (cited in Moir, 2019, p. 163), and "the great workshop of human and world-matter is not yet closed" (cited in Moir, 2019, p. 166).[14] The inner and outer worlds are in a dialectical relationship with each other, both being incomplete: "Of course, nothing would circulate inwardly either if the outward were completely solid. Outside, however, life is just as little finished as in the ego which is working on this outside" (Bloch, 1986, p. 196). The material and subjective worlds, as such, are rather to be grasped on the basis of what they could or might become (Hudson, 1982).

Bloch's Not-Yet operator is understood within his framework of process and depth ontology. The concept of possibility is central to his concepts of hope and utopia. Bloch draws on Aristotle in his conceptualisation of possibility as part of objective reality rather than an epistemological concept (see 2.3.1.2). Bloch advocates for the "recovery of a concept of ontological possibility as fundamental to Marxist philosophy and its practical intention to change the world" (Hudson, 1982, p. 132). Within this framework, Bloch rejects the hierarchy of possibility, actuality and necessity, and prioritises possibility over what is or what has become (Hudson, 1982).

Bloch also makes use of Henri Bergson's concept of 'objective possibility' and Alexius Meinong's theory of 'incompletely determined objects' (Hudson, 1982). Bergson and other process philosophers argued that the concept of possibility was repressed in traditional metaphysics. Bergson developed a category of 'objective possibility', which referred to possibilities that are not actual now but may become so in the future (Hudson, 1982). Bloch arrives at an understanding of possibility rooted in both that which is underway, and that which is starting to become (Hudson, 1982).

[14] Bloch's *Das Materialismusproblem* has been translated into English only very partially (pages 470-478) in Moir's (2019) Appendix.

Bloch (1986) differentiates four types of possibility: formal possibility (*das formal Mogliche*); factual epistemological possibility (*das sachlich-objektiv Mogliche*); possibility according to the object (*das sachhaft-objektgemass Mogliche*); and objective real possibility (*das objektiv-real Mogliche*).[15] Formal possibilities are thought possibilities and not part of the object. Factual epistemological possibilities relate to hypothetical conditions and are therefore categories of judgement regarding partial knowledge of conditions. Possibilities according to the object are given according to the type and properties of the object. Objective real possibilities, which Bloch was most interested in, are possibilities in which the conditions are not yet complete in the object itself, "they are still in a process of ripening, or be it, above all, that new conditions – albeit mediated through those already present – spring up to herald the entry of a new reality" (Hudson, 1982, p. 124). As such, objective real possibilities are "future-laden determinations, *real* material self-anticipations of process matter" (Hudson, 1982, p. 134). Bloch (1986, p. 196, emphasis in original) states that, "[w]hereas *really* possible is everything whose conditions in the sphere of the *object itself* are not yet fully assembled; whether because they are still maturing, or above all because new conditions – though mediated with the existing ones - arise for the entry of a new Real".

Real possibilities change because matter is in process, and as such, things cannot be defined absolutely or finally according to what they are now; as Bloch (1986, p. 237) states, "[t]he Real Possible begins with the seed". What things can become cannot be wholly known or determined in advance. Therefore, "the real possibility of x is not something fixed. It is 'open', 'in suspense', 'still developing'" (Hudson, 1982, p. 134). At times, indicating this process of movement and development, Bloch refers to real possibility as "nothing other than dialectical matter" (Bloch, 1986, p. 206). He describes this undecided, unfinishedness of an object as the *blue* of an object (Hudson, 1982).[16]

Possibility manifests in the movements of both the material and subjectivity or consciousness. Bloch conceptualises a dialectical relationship between the 'inward' and 'outward' and both

[15] See Bloch's (1986, pp. 223–248) discussion on *The Layers of the Category Possibility*.
[16] Bloch (1986) frequently uses the colour blue as a metaphor for venturing beyond. For example, see his section *Daily into the Blue*, in which he argues, "Later we reach out more confidently. Wish ourselves where things are named more clearly. The child wants to be a bus-conductor or a confectioner. Seeks long journeys, far away, cake every day. That seems like real living" (Bloch, 1986, pp. 21–22). And he connects blue to the Not-Yet: "This blue, as a colour of distance, likewise designates in a graphically symbolic way the future-laden aspect, the Not-Yet-Become in reality, to which significant expressions, precisely because they are advancing, ultimately refer" (Bloch, 1986, p. 127).

contain possibilities for the New, for utopia. Bloch (1986, p. 223) states that, "[c]oncrete utopia stands on the horizon of every reality; real possibility surrounds the open dialectical tendencies and latencies to the very last." The possibility of human intervention means that the potential for things to be other than they are is open and developing. Bloch distinguishes between the possibility of actively changing the world through human intervention and the capacity of the world to change in potentiality (Hudson, 1982). The Not-Yet is thus comprised of both the Not-Yet-Become and the Not-Yet-Conscious. The following sections explore how possibilities manifest in both matter and consciousness.

2.3.1.2 Not-Yet-Become

Bloch, and subsequent Blochian scholars, use different terms to refer to his theory of ontology, including 'speculative materialism', 'ontology of the Not-Yet' and 'philosophy of the unfinished world' (Rismal, 2017). Bloch develops a dialectical-materialist ontology. Hudson (1982, p. 46) reads Bloch as positing that:

> "Marxism needed to develop a more differentiated, multi-temporal, multi-spaced dialectics which reflected the heterogeneous contents, disparities, discontinuities and interruptions in the world, instead of forcing them within the rubrics of an idealist materialism, or subjecting them to a panlogical closed totality, and the *a priori* labels and fixed evaluations which followed from it."

Bloch draws on several theorists and intellectual traditions to develop his dialectical-materialist ontology, including Aristotle, the romantic nature philosophy of Schelling,[17] Hegel and Marx (Moir, 2018b). In *The Problem of Materialism* (*Das Materialismusproblem*) (1972), matter is described as a "self-realising impersonal agent of nature" as well as "the self-bearing womb", from which all things arise, including consciousness (Moir, 2018b, pp. 2, 6). In the *Tubingen Introduction to Philosophy* (*Tübinger Einleitung in die Philosophie*) (1963), Bloch states that matter is "not yet finished and complete, but persists in a utopian-open state, i.e. a state in which its self-identity is not yet manifest" (cited in Rismal, 2017, p. 170). For Bloch, therefore, matter is in process and is a dynamic phenomenon, as opposed to something dead or inert (Rismal, 2017).

[17] See Schelling's (1988) *Philosophy of Nature* (*Naturphilosophie*), which drawing on Kant, Fichte, and Spinoza, conceptualises nature as a 'productivity': "Each object has an identity that makes it what it is, but the productivity constantly leads to that identity being overcome" (Bowie, 2003, p. 75). Schelling also establishes parallels between nature and the mind, "Nature is the absolute producing subject, whose predicates are the synthesized objects in the natural world. The spontaneous thinking subject is the condition of the syntheses required to produce objectivity" (Bowie, 2003, p. 75).

Matter is comprised of both potential and actual forms of existence and therefore contains possibilities that are yet to emerge (Rismal, 2017). Bloch specifically draws on and re-functions two aspects of Aristotle's concept of possibility, *dynamei on*, or *what-is-in-possibility* and *kata to dynaton* or *what-is-according-to-possibility* to create an "emergentist concept of matter" as containing the possibility of "everything later external within it" (Moir, 2018b, p. 6, 2019, p. 51). Bloch (1986) describes the former as the real substratum of possibility in a dialectical process – a driving force that generates. The latter can be understood as the limits of matter at a particular moment in the process towards self-realisation (Moir, 2018b, 2019). For Bloch, matter is both these categories of possibility – matter is the play of forces rather than the result thereof (Moir, 2019). Hence, drawing on Schelling's notion of 'productivity', matter is conceptualised as "self creative, active and form-laden, a fermenting womb which produces new contents as it develops" (Hudson, 2019, p. 159). There is no fixed matter, settled and final essence, already finished phenomenon, and no predetermined pattern of development, but matter tends towards the actualisation of the possibilities latent within it. This is in opposition to much of the Marxist tradition, which maintains an idea of ontological stasis rather than a concept of dynamic matter (Hudson, 2019).

For Bloch, the reason matter tends towards the actualisation of possibilities is that matter "is fundamentally not as it should be, or at least not yet as it should be" (Moir, 2018b, p. 7). The process starts with an absence, 'not-yet', an 'active lack', an 'objective not' (Hudson, 2019; Moir, 2018b). This starting point generates a process of emergence and realisation, contained within an original absence (Hudson, 2019; Moir, 2018b). Bloch (1986, p. 306) writes that the 'Not' is the starting point of everything: "The Not with which everything starts up and begins, around which everything Something is still built". The 'Not' is not only an absence but also a driving force "to the There of a Something. The Not is lack of Something and also escape from this lack; thus it is a driving towards what is missing" (Bloch, 1986, p. 306).

Bloch is indebted to Hegel for his conception of dialectical logic, which, like Marx, he locates in the material world itself rather than in ideas as Hegel does. The material world is developed through a dialectical process, which tends towards finality (Moir, 2018b). Working with Aristotle's understanding of 'entelechy' – which Bloch defines as "that which has the purpose within itself as one that can be realised" (cited in Moir, 2019, p. 165) – Bloch posits the idea of an end or telos to the process, even if this telos is yet to be determined (Moir, 2019). Bloch works with the concepts of tendency and latency in the process towards finality: the material

world is comprised of tendencies or drives towards a goal, which is still being developed (Moir, 2018b). Conjointly, latency is understood as the "outstanding essence, the placeholder of the not-yet-realised goal-content of tendency" (Moir, 2018b, p. 10). Thus, the essence of reality is still becoming, reality is an *open* system, which "allows for new contents still to come [and] which takes such new contents as intrinsic to the character of the world" (Hudson, 2019, p. 160). The possibility of utopia is contained within matter, and human beings are the active agents who can realise this potentiality (Moir, 2018b). I now turn to questions of subjectivity in relation to the Not-Yet.

2.3.1.3 Not-Yet-Consciousness

Central to Bloch's (1986) explication of an ontology of the Not-Yet, in relation to human subjectivity, are the concepts 'anticipatory consciousness', 'Not-Yet-Conscious' (which he appears to use interchangeably);[18] and 'not-yet-conscious-knowledge'. Not-Yet-Conscious is the psychological representation of the material Not-Yet-Become (Moylan, 1997). For Bloch, there is "no rigid discontinuity" between humans and nature (Moir, 2018b, p. 7). Instead of a discrete separation, "human life and consciousness are also material: there is no dualism between matter and consciousness or thought" (Hudson, 2019, pp. 161–162). Consciousness is part and parcel of material reality (Rismal, 2017). Both matter and consciousness fundamentally tend towards self-realisation (Moir, 2018b). The lack or absence in material reality, which is the starting point of this drive, is reflected in human subjectivity and manifests in the 'darkness of the lived moment' (Moir, 2018b, p. 8). The moment contains the lack as well as the pre-appearance of utopia – the far is present in the near (Hudson, 1982). Thus, the logic of absence and drive towards fulfilment in human consciousness corresponds to the logic of the material world (Hudson, 2019). The operator Not-Yet is both in material and human worlds, both tending towards self-realisation (Moir, 2018b).

Bloch critiques the dominant depth realism[19] of his time, psychoanalysis, as inadequate in grasping the dynamics of consciousness. Bloch is concerned with psychology, needs, and

[18] See for example, Bloch's (1986, pp. 108-113) discussion on expectant emotions where he argues that the Not-Yet-Conscious is anticipatory: "Both future-orientated intentions, that of expectant emotions and that of expectant ideas, accordingly extend into a Not-Yet-Conscious, that is, into a class of consciousness which is itself to be designated not as filled, but as anticipatory."

[19] A 'depth' rather than 'empirical' realism entails the presupposition that objects have qualities that cannot be experienced or observed. Consequently experience is not a condition for their existence (Benton & Craib, 2001; Sayer, 2000).

drives, but finds fault with psychoanalysis for its preoccupation with the unconscious and neuroses (Kellner, 1997). Further, he critiques psychoanalysis's disconnection from material reality and material drives, such as hunger, which are eclipsed by the libido in psychoanalysis, given its middle-class bias (Bloch, 1986; Rismal, 2017). Bloch (1986, p. 11) states that, "[h]unger, the main drive, must be worked out here, and the way it proceeds to the rejection of deprivation, that is, to the most important expectant emotion: hope". He therefore logically connects the need to resolve hunger and deprivation to hope and therefore, to relations to futurity. For Bloch (1986), the Not-Yet-Conscious is not a repository of past experiences or part of the forgotten or repressed unconsciousness as with Freud's unconscious (Rismal, 2017). Freud's unconscious is only concerned with what has been, which has "sunk down into the cellar" and contains nothing New (Bloch, 1986, p. 64). The Not-Yet-Conscious is tied both to the past and the future, and furthermore, it actively, rather than passively, constitutes futures (Rismal, 2017). It is at the forefront of human consciousness. It is "the psychic representation of the not-yet-become: of the objective real possibilities developing in its time and in its world" (Hudson, 1982, p. 95).

Bloch (1986) argues that consciousness, especially the unconscious, has been misunderstood as purely subjective, as "originating, advancing and terminating in the subject", as advanced by Freud's theory of dreams (Rismal, 2017, p. 162). In contradistinction, Bloch posits that daydreams (as opposed to nocturnal dreams), wishes and desires, not only reflect individual consciousness but also that this venturing forward has wider societal significance (Rismal, 2017). As such, daydreams are not "stepping-stones" to nocturnal dreams and their libido wish-fulfilments, as conceived by Freud. The daydream is "common property" unlike the "private experience" of the nocturnal dream (Bloch, 1986, p. 94). Daydreaming occurs in the conscious realm and maintains a connection to external reality, both in its production and its orientation to the world outside of the subject (Rismal, 2017). Arising from hunger, which moves one forward towards a better life, daydreams come into view and are understandable and communicable wishful images. Some daydreams may be purely escapist, but many do not turn away from reality and rather look to the horizon. Thus, the daydream is not a manifestation of the repressed that has sunk into the unconscious and requires deciphering – as with nocturnal dreams – but is rather a manifestation of venturing beyond from the ground of deprivation. Bloch (1986, p. 99, emphasis in original) writes that the daydream "projects its images into the future… *the content of the day-fantasy is open, fabulously inventive, anticipating, and its*

latency lies ahead." The daydream, therefore, projects forward, affects our actions and in turn, is constitutive of future realities (Rismal, 2017).[20]

Bloch's Not-Yet-Conscious is relatively unconscious but disposed forward, towards something new that is still becoming. It is thus an anticipatory state, not yet fully conscious, but which gives humans Not-Yet-Conscious Knowledge and is constitutive of futures (Hudson, 1982): "The Not-Yet-Conscious is thus solely the preconscious of what is to come, the psychological birthplace of the New" (Bloch, 1986, p. 116). It is directed towards future possibilities; perceives unrealised emancipatory potential in the past, latencies and tendencies in the present and realisable hopes in the future (Hudson, 1982; Kellner, 1997). Thus, human cognition is understood as having an active, constitutive role in the becoming of the world (Hudson, 1982). Humans are able to grasp their lives, and their dreams for better lives, as constitutive of the material unfolding of the world (Moir, 2018b, p. 9).

In order for the Not-Yet-Conscious to be a force in society and constitutive of the material unfolding of the world, it must become conscious and recognise the possibility of realising utopia latent within matter and the human world (Moir, 2018b). This is no automatic process as "people are sworn to this world as it is and have this blocked consciousness vis-á-vis possibility" (Bloch, 1988, p. 4). Bloch (1988) argues that the social world presents itself as fixed and a different world as impossible. However, for Bloch (1988, p. 4), humans can bring themselves towards the knowledge, already present in the darkness, that something different is possible:

> "My thesis about this would be that all humans deep down, whether they admit this or not, know that it [utopia] would be possible or it could be different. Not only could they live without hunger and probably without anxiety, but they could also live as free human beings. At the same time, the social apparatus has hardened itself against people, and thus, whatever appears before their eyes all over the world as attainable possibility, as the evident possibility of fulfilment, presents itself to them as radically impossible."

The becoming conscious of the Not-Yet-Conscious, and thus of Real Possibility, is the space of creativity and productivity that moves towards the New:

> "And what is most clearly demonstrated in the explication of a previously Not-Yet-Conscious is: the Not-Yet-Conscious as a whole is the psychological representation

[20] See Bloch's (1986, pp. 77–113) discussion on the *Fundamental Distinction of Daydreams from Night-Dreams. Concealed and Old Wish-Fulfilment in Night-Dreams, Fabulously Inventive and Anticipatory Wish-Fulfilment in Daylight Fantasies*.

> of the Not-Yet-Become in an age and its world, on the Front of the world. The making conscious of the Not-Yet-Conscious, the forming of the Not-Yet-Become, exists only in this space, a space of concrete anticipation, only here is the volcano of productivity to be found pouring out its fire" (Bloch, 1986, p. 127).

Through becoming conscious of the Not-Yet-Conscious, hope becomes more than an emotion or "merely self-based mental feeling" – hope becomes a "directing act of a cognitive kind" (Bloch, 1986, pp. 144, 12). Imaginative ideas extend existing realities into "future possibilities of being different and better" (Bloch, 1986, p. 144). As such, hope develops a "utopian function" (Bloch, 1986, p. 144).

Bloch argues that hope can be learnt. As a learnt concept, hope is acquired through socialisation processes and is culturally determined (Averill et al., 1990). For Bloch, this learning process enables insight into the immediate, or lived moment, and the pre-appearance of possibilities contained therein (Hudson, 1982). Bloch (1986, p. 9) states that, "[u]topian consciousness wants to look far into the distance, but ultimately only in order to penetrate the darkness so near it of the just lived moment". Bloch argues that hope which grasps or anticipates the unfolding of objective real possibilities and is able to intervene in the process is *docta spes* (educated hope): it "psychologically anticipates a Real-Possible" (Bloch, 1986, p. 144; Hudson, 1982). Other theorists also point to the importance of processes of learning in relation to desire, hope and imagination. William Morris (2013) speaks of the education of desire, which is not a form of moral education but rather an opening up of what has been hardened by the social apparatus. It is to "teach desire to desire, to desire better, to desire more, and above all, to desire in a different way" (Abensour, 1999; Thompson, 1977, p. 790). For Thompson (1977), the education of desire is a process of defamiliarising the familiar; questioning the taken for granted in order to open up possibilities. While for Bloch, *docta spes* is not only about estrangement, but the relationship between the warm and cold streams of Marxism, passion and reason, that makes concrete utopia possible (Levitas, 1997).

2.3.1.4 Utopia as Not-Yet

In this section, I discuss further how both Not-Yet-Become and Not-Yet-Conscious are tending towards utopia and the nature of such. Bloch (1986) rejects closed, static conceptions of being and therefore of utopia as a blueprint or ideal order; instead, he prioritises processes and movements as visions, aspirations, activity and practice towards a better life (Levitas, 1997). Bloch's work turns the reader to look towards concrete practice in the search for utopia, rather

than abstract fantasy: "Utopian, beside the usual, justifiably pejorative sense, possesses the other, in no way necessarily abstract or unworldly sense, much more centrally turned towards the world: of overtaking the natural course of events" (Bloch, 1986, p. 12). This understanding is more analytically useful and relates hope and utopianism to concrete practice as a social force acting on the world.

Bloch conceptualises utopia in the present and future through his operator of the Not-Yet. For Bloch, "reality as such is utopian in the sense of being literally not yet 'there'" (Rismal, 2017, p. 131). Utopia is both present in the immanence of the lived moment, and also Not-Yet.[21] It is Not-Yet in the following ways: utopia has never become actual; it has only become in fragments but has been imagined and anticipated in various ways through Not-Yet-Consciousness. Furthermore, the conditions for utopia are still in the process of being made. Utopia "looks ahead to new contents and developments beyond the limitations of the present world. It has a critical, meta-eschatological function against the foreclosures and premature disenchantments of current conceptions of possibility" (Hudson, 1982, p. 54). Not-Yet is a tendency, which moves towards "the goal of human perfection" (Moir, 2018a, p. 203). Not-Yet is thus constitutive of reality at an ontological level, and as such, Bloch sees it manifest in all human practices (Rismal, 2017).

Bloch develops a dialectical analysis (as opposed to a linear analysis) of the movement towards utopia. Bloch never fully outlines a blueprint of utopia as this would be antithetical to his project. However, he makes a distinction between *abstract* and *concrete* utopia. Concrete utopia is anticipatory, related to anticipatory consciousness, rather than compensatory. Abstract utopia is static and expresses desire and fantasy; concrete utopia is processual and carries (educated) hope and real possibility, grounded in developing tendencies and latencies in the present (Levitas, 1997; Hudson, 1982). Other theorists, such as Davis (2011) and Le Guin (2016), have

[21] Bloch's concept of Not-Yet is complex and at times unclear as he uses the concept in different ways with different implications throughout his work. Hudson (1982, pp. 19–20) outlines Bloch's different uses of the category in the following way:
(i) Not-Yet may refer to something that is not actual now;
(ii) Not-Yet may refer to something that is partially actual now but not fully developed;
(iii) Not-Yet may mean 'not so far';
(iv) Not-Yet may refer to something that is 'still not' – in German *noch nicht* means both 'still not' and 'not yet', indicating that something expected in the past has not materialised;
(v) Not-Yet may mean 'expected in the future';
(vi) The utopian Not-Yet suggests that something is imaginable now, but not yet possible; and
(vii) The eschatological 'now and not yet', which implies that the end is 'present now in a problematic manner, but still to come in its actual realisation'.

similarly made distinctions between transcendent and grounded utopia. The former contains static images of the future, and the latter disrupts the here-and-now, opening up the horizon of possibilities in the past, present and future. Through Bloch's writings, one can grasp hints and features of his conception of concrete utopia. Bloch (1986, pp. 76, 210) imagines a classless society, the "abolish[ment of] all conditions in which man [*sic*] is an oppressed and long-lost being", and the "No-Longer-Alienation of its subjects-objects, hence… freedom". Moreover, it is a world in which, following young Marx, the "naturalisation of man [*sic*], the humanisation of nature" has come about (Bloch, 1986, p. 247), and in which "the lion will lie with the lamb, and all of nature will exist in harmony" (Moir, 2018b, p. 11). This is a relation of harmony between humanity and nature and a relation of "co-productivity" (Rismal, 2017, p. 139). The idea of the naturalisation of humans and humanisation of nature constitutes *Heimat*, which for Bloch means more than its traditional translation as a sense of place of home.

At the end of *The Principle of Hope*, *Heimat* is Bloch's answer to the questions in the opening of the book, "Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What are we waiting for? What awaits us?" (Bloch, 1986, p. 3). Bloch (1986, pp. 1375–1376, emphasis in original) writes at the end of the book:

> "Marx describes as his final concern 'the development of the wealth of human nature'; this *human* wealth as well as that of *nature* as a whole lies solely in the tendency-latency in which the world finds itself - vis-a-vis de tout. This glance therefore confirms that man [*sic*] everywhere is still living in prehistory, indeed all and everything still stands before the creation of the world, of a right world. *True genesis is not at the beginning but at the end,* and it starts to begin only when society and existence become radical, i.e. grasp their roots. But the root of history is the working, creating human being who reshapes and overhauls the given facts. Once he has grasped himself and established what is his, without expropriation and alienation, in real democracy, there arises in the world something which shines into the childhood of all and in which no one has yet been: homeland."

Bloch claims that no one has fully experienced utopia but that everyone has partially experienced or had some awareness of it, and that this is universal. Utopia or *Heimat*[22] is something that "shines into the childhood of all" but where "no one has yet been" (Bloch, 1986, p. 1376). *Heimat* is the anticipated state of reconciliation with conditions of possibility that do not yet exist, but that enable the realisation of the individual who "has grasped himself [*sic*]" (Bloch, 1986, p. 1376; Kaufmann, 1997). Bloch does not presume that a utopian world is

[22] Bloch perhaps uses the concept of *Heimat* as a symbol of utopia given his estrangement from his 'homeland' in exile and with the rise of fascism (Moir, 2019).

guaranteed. He states: “Hope is not confidence… which means, precisely in the totality of teleology: *ens perfectissimum* is not yet *ens realissimum*, and is often its opposite; which, however also means: the great workshop of human and world-matter is not yet closed” (cited in Moir, 2019, p. 166). The possibility of working towards utopia thus remains open.

2.3.2 Unpacking Bloch’s Teleology

In this section, I unpack a number of critiques of Bloch’s philosophy, which is made more difficult because of Bloch’s contradictory tendencies. Some of the key critiques include that Bloch is too inwardly focused and insufficiently grounded in concrete dynamics; he develops an overly progressive narrative of the course of history and connected to this, that Bloch’s work is permeated by notions of enlightenment, perfection and maturity in the historical movement towards utopia; and finally, that Bloch relies heavily on the category of telos. However, I argue that these critiques enable a dialogue with different theoretical frameworks, thereby strengthening the theoretical grounding of this project.

Bloch’s dialectical method enables a study of the contradictions of utopianism in everyday life and offers an alternative to blueprint or Euclidean utopianism. However, Bloch fails at his own method at times by enacting teleological foreclosure, allowing for Stalinist accommodations (Moylan, 1997). He warns against mythical hypostases that reduce the highest good to static accomplishments. However, it can be argued that he falls into the danger of hypostasis by declaring Marxism the future – an inevitable progression toward the communist telos of history (Moylan, 1997). I argue that Bloch’s philosophy and politics contain contradictory impulses and implications. In Bloch’s work, there is a tension between “disruptively utopian” and “teleologically utopian” impulses (Moylan, 1997, p. 113). Moylan (1997, p. 112) explains that there is a “dialogic tension between a historically entrenched orthodox Marxism with its strong belief in the linear progression toward the communist telos of history and an unorthodox understanding of the fragmentary and disruptive play of utopia throughout human existence”. At its best, Bloch’s (1986, p. 1365) philosophy of hope and dialectical method with its tension between openness and closure never rests: “no dreaming may stand still”.

Several theorists have criticised Bloch, for instance, Lukács (1977) argues that Bloch is too inwardly focused and insufficiently grounded in concrete dynamics. Hudson (1982) contends that Bloch shows how human consciousness is permeated by a utopian dimension and

intentionality towards a better life. However, this does not necessarily correlate with objective real possibilities. Bloch's stress on the "meta-eschatological" and "psychologistic… teleology of hopes" often has little grounding in socio-economic conditions and developments (Hudson, 1982, pp. 109, 210). The spirit of utopia is sometimes described as the "secret inwardness" (Walker, 2003). In *The Spirit of Utopia*, Bloch (2000, pp. 31–32) describes the movement of the 'secret teleotropism' in the following way: "We and of the ground – even in the new tableau the thing becomes a mask, a 'concept', the deformed, denaturalized manner of secret teleotropisms; the human interior and the world's shift together." As a secret movement, this movement towards utopia is difficult to analyse, and to chart out causality and the role of human praxis therein (Walker, 2003). Bloch (2000, p. 192, emphasis in original) goes on to state, highlighting the secret movement of the utopian dynamic: "the utopian philosophy [as] a way of thinking that shines further upward, of the soul shrouded in incompletion, mystical careers and an expanding glow from the future, begin[s] to explore the higher-order unconscious, the *fundus intimus, the latency of the primordial secret in itself moving within the Now*, in short the creative unconscious of our spiritual *coronation*." And he further states, "[t]he darkness of the nearness thus perhaps still intensifies the darkness of the secret, which of course would precisely not seem so dark if it were not in the deepest way the darkness of the nearness itself" (Bloch, 2000, p. 202).

While Bloch's philosophy can be seen as a form of materialism – a speculative materialism – as Moir (2018b, 2019) outlines, and thus cannot be dismissed for entirely neglecting the concerns of the material world and the urgencies of the political moments he lived through, Bloch still inserts "the power of utopian telos to pull history forward" (Moylan, 1997, p. 110). As such, the place of political agency and material realities is undermined in his own work. I do not go as far as Walker (2003) to claim that Bloch's work is not political because the utopian spirit is too mystical and secret to have a place for human praxis. For Bloch (1986, p. 249), agency lies in the creative human being: the "hinge in human history is its producer – working man [*sic*]". However, Bloch's lack of grounding and the contradictions within his writings, make his theoretical scaffolding inadequate as is for the purposes of my project.

In addition, I argue that even though Bloch posits that hope is not confidence and utopia is not guaranteed, he develops an overly progressive narrative of the course of history. Terry Eagleton

(2015)[23] critiques Bloch for inserting 'good' into the movement of history and hope into everything. This overly progressive narrative and hope everywhere can be perceived in statements such as: "Hope alone is what we want, and thought serves hope, hope is its only space, its semantic content and its object scattered into every part of the world, hidden in the darkness of the lived moment, promised in the shape of the absolute question" (Bloch, 2000, p. 276). This passage seems to suggest that hope is the sole driving force of humanity and is hidden and immanent everywhere.

A further example is demonstrated when Bloch (1986, pp. 771-777) looks at travel historically. While having a critique of colonialism and being far from the typical Eurocentric philosophers of his time,[24] Bloch attempts to salvage Christopher Columbus's character as primarily that of a dreamer. He describes Columbus as "the boldest traveller and dreamer in one", and the "utopian-religious dreamer". Bloch goes on to state, "[t]he horizon of the earth was immeasurably broadened by the voyages of discovery… Columbus believed more firmly than anyone in the earthly paradise, at the physically and metaphysically highest point of the earth". Despite the atrocities of colonialism, Bloch is able to maintain the dignity of Columbus: "The fact that Eden then later only turned out to be the Antilles, that no white gods but criminals like Cortez and Pizarro then penetrated into the continent beyond, that the earthly paradise as a whole is not a fact but a problem of hope and a latency: this does not rob the intention pursued by Columbus of its strength and dignity".

[23] Eagleton's (2015) critique of Bloch has been somewhat controversial. For example, Jack Zipes (2019, p. 177) responds to the critique as follows: "In contrast to the mud-slinger Terry Eagleton, a professor of English, whose shallow mind reflects a good deal of his shallow knowledge about philosophy, politics, and hope, Bloch steadfastly kept his mind and pen on crucial social and political issues that affected the lives of common people throughout the world and rarely sought to belittle individuals the way Eagleton has done to Bloch in his book, *Hope Without Optimism* (2015). What Eagleton has done in his nasty drivel to discredit Bloch and his philosophy of hope does not serve anyone except Eagleton's ego". While I agree that Eagleton's reading of Bloch is one-sided and fails to engage with the range of Bloch's work, some of the points he raises are still important to grapple with.

[24] Brennan (2017) discusses Bloch's perceptive analysis of travel and tourism as a form of colonialism. He states that, "In Bloch and Gramsci, as in Georg Lukács and Bertolt Brecht and the others with which I opened this essay, we find, in fact, a surprising degree of attention to colonial issues—for example, to the atrocities committed in the colonies themselves, but also to the fantasies embedded in the colonial imagery of popular film, fiction, and political discourse. All of them, to a degree, theorize colonialism (and its later, more financialized variant, imperialism) not merely as a set of economic practices but as a governing structure of mind" (Brennan, 2017, p. 39) and, "in Bloch, unlike Hegel, there is a proleptic critique of a cosmopolitan mobility that makes space itself evanescent, an emporium of exchangeable experiences. Bloch is one of the first to locate the colonialist underbelly of such practices. Writing before 1959, he manages to observe with startling clarity what so many in the 1980s eventually found their way to, without citing him—the colonial adjunct found in the industries of tourism" (Brennan, 2017, p. 45).

For Bloch, hope is an objective dynamic taking place in the world – not only in human history but at an even greater scale, in the cosmos itself (Eagleton, 2015). Bloch (1986, pp. 198, 336, 197–198) states that there is a "good which is working its way through"; "[t]he substance-formations of the world… are full of the tendency of the Not-Yet towards the All" and, "the concrete imagination and the imagery of its mediated anticipations are fermenting in the process of the real itself and are depicted in the concrete forward dream; anticipating elements are a component of reality itself. Thus the will towards utopia is entirely compatible with object-based tendency, in fact is confirmed and at home within it". Thus, at times, in Bloch's writings, it appears that the natural and social worlds are all tending towards utopia, and hope is somehow inherent in material processes themselves (Eagleton, 2015). Eagleton (2015, p. 98) claims that Bloch smuggles "quasi-divine properties" into matter and "posit[s] a creative potential secreted in the very stuff of the cosmos". Matter secures the possibility of the fulfilment of hopes, rather than acting as a limit to hopes and possibilities (Hudson, 1982). Moir (2016, p. 4), while she does not agree with such a reading, states that "a strong reading of Bloch might suggest, that reality in itself has a particular political investment". This movement towards is also finite. While there is no pre-ordained purpose or teleology of matter, there is a purpose that is developing: there is an "emergentist finality" (Hudson, 1982, p. 140). The world is objectively incomplete and is trying to realise itself through a dialectical 'world process', which is not endless and can end in 'everything' or 'nothing' (Hudson, 1982, p. 140).

I argue that there is an elision between hope and possibility in Bloch's work. While the world is open and multiple possibilities exist, this is not the same as a force of hope towards utopia. The lack of clarity regarding his concept of Not-Yet means that, at times, there is a slippage between possibility and utopia. Eagleton (2015, p. 96) contends that an open world is not the same as a world tending towards something positive – openness is not inherently positive: "Bloch is often to be found writing as though motion, dynamism, mutability, transience, instability, productivity, open-endedness, possibility, and the like are unequivocally positive, which is clearly not the case… some of its potential futures might turn out to be thoroughly unpleasant." Furthermore, Levitas (1997) critiques Bloch for concealing evaluative judgements under epistemology and ontology. The differentiating of concrete utopia from abstract utopia relies on evaluative judgements regarding the content and process of utopia, which for Bloch is Marxism, and cannot be inserted into the movement of objective real-possibility.

Related to the above critique, Bloch's work is permeated by notions of enlightenment, perfection and maturity in the historical movement towards utopia. An enlightenment framework underwrites such metaphors. Moylan (1997, p. 112) argues that Bloch's thought is saturated by "linear, teleological" conceptualisations. He draws on "metaphors of *maturity* and *perfection* achieved at the end point of the totality of history" (Moylan, 1997, p. 112, emphasis in original). Similarly, Eagleton (2015, p. 98) comments caustically that Bloch believes that material reality is "pervaded by an inherent purposiveness or tendency to perfection. How he knows this is hard to say." On several occasions, Bloch refers to hope and materiality as tending towards perfection. For instance, in *The Philosophy of Hope*, he states, "the Totum of a hope… puts the whole world into rapport with a total perfection" (Bloch, 1986, p. 1192). And in *The Utopian Function of Art*, Bloch (1988, p. 147) states, "[b]ut at the same time, this humanized nature is one that is more perfect within itself, not in the manner of the sensual appearance of a finished idea, as Hegel taught us, but in the sense that it moves toward an increasing entelechical realization, as Aristotle pointed out".

Correspondingly, Bloch's belief in the "messianic telos of his philosophy" raises difficulties. Zipes (2019, p. 44) writes:

> "Given Bloch's certainty about his philosophical position, and given his firm belief in the messianic telos of his philosophy, he often summarily dismissed categories and concepts that did not agree with his 'line' of thinking or with the general principles of Marxism. The 'right' tendency, according to basic Marxist notions, always had to be there. Bloch was, indeed, pugnacious."

An overemphasis or reliance on the category of telos sits in a relation of tension with other aspects of his work. His dialectic of social history is emergentist and discontinuous, with leaps, breaks, interruptions and non-contemporaneous as well as contemporaneous contradictions (Hudson, 1982). This fragmentary and non-contemporaneous understanding of social history and social relations is held in an uneasy relationship with a belief in "progression toward the communist telos of history", whereby history is pulled towards an end point of human emancipation (Moylan, 1997, p. 112).[25] Moylan (1997, p. 116) contends that *The Philosophy of Hope*:

> "[S]ettles for a teleological end point located in a militant hypostatization of those items which inspired its forward motion in the first place – reducing them to the limits of Soviet Marxism and the Soviet state. At the point where Bloch's method

[25] Morfino and Thomas (2018, p. 7) argue that this is a "single time, the temporal line of universal history, on which the various epochs are successively arranged", and that this lineage of thought can be traced from *The Communist Manifesto*, to the determinism of the Second International, Stalinist historical materialism, and also in 'Western Marxism', such as *History and Class Consciousness* to *Dialectic of Enlightenment.*

> should be opening up to whatever historical developments may yet occur in the unknown future, he clings tenaciously to the communist achievements of his time and place and thereby denies the future potential of the communist movement and his own method."

I argue, drawing on authors such as Vittorio Morfino and Peter Thomas (2018), that one can also bring Bloch into conversation with Bloch, which can address some of the critiques brought against him. Adorno (1991, p. 213) described the "innermost antinomy" and most unresolved aspect of Bloch's work as the conception of "the end of the world as its ground, that which moves what exists, which, as its *telos*, it already inhabits". Moir (2016) also argues that Bloch's teleology is no straightforward teleology, and *Heimat* refuses linearity as it 'makes the last first'. The concept of *Heimat* does not merely mean home, or homeland, but is associated with a search for origins. The end of the book directs the reader back to the beginning, which opened with questions regarding who we are and where we come from (Moir, 2019).

Bloch (2000) critiques Hegel and Marx's teleology in *The Spirit of Utopia*, arguing that the motor of history for Hegel is 'world reason' and for Marx, the 'forces of production' – both containing a mysticism and telos. Bloch (2000, p. 241) writes on Hegel and Marx:

> "[T]he theory of an all-utilizing world reason, henceforth utilizing precisely the subjects, also influences Marx; and the same man who drove the fetish character out of production, who believed he had analyzed, exorcised every irrationality from history as merely unexamined, uncomprehended and therefore operatively fateful obscurities of the class situation, who had banished every dream, every operative utopia, every telos circulating in religion from history, plays with his 'forces of production,' with the calculus of the 'process of production' the same all too constitutive game, the same pantheism, mythicism, upholds for it the same ultimately utilizing, guiding power which Hegel upheld for the 'Idea'."

Bloch's multi-spatial and multi-temporal dialectic is perhaps best shown through his work in *Heritage of our Times* (originally published as *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, 1935) and *Differentiations in the Concept of Progress* (originally published in *Tubinger Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1963). In *Heritage of Our Times*, Bloch (1991) addresses the problematic of explaining the rise of Nazism within a Marxist framework. In this work, Bloch moves beyond the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production as the driving force of history, which assumes a linear historical development towards communism (Morfino & Thomas, 2018). Instead, he attempts to theorise non-contemporaneous time, not merely as backward hangovers of economic development but rather by disrupting the Marxist contradiction and proposing a "multispatial and multitemporal dialectic able to account for the objective and subjective non-

contemporaneities co-present in German society, of times that 'get in the way', so to speak, of the principal contradiction of capital/labour" (Morfino & Thomas, 2018, p. 10).

This multi-layered dialectic moves beyond a simple contradiction and conceptualises society, not as a homogenous space or single time, but as non-contemporaneous, subjectively and objectively (Morfino, 2018). The 'spectres of history' – the ideologies of past epochs, historical memories, unfulfilled desires and anger, are embedded in materiality: "*The subjectively non-contemporaneous contradiction is accumulated rage, the objectively non-contemporaneous one unfinished past*" (Bloch, 1991, p. 113, emphasis in original). Bloch (1991, p. 106) thus draws attention to Germany as a non-contemporaneous space, with "byways and cracking places", both subjectively and objectively.

Bloch returned to the concept of 'non-contemporaneity' in a presentation titled, *Differentiations in the Concept of Progress*, in a 1955 conference (Morfino, 2018). In this different historical and political conjuncture, he utilised the concept of non-contemporaneity to disrupt the ideology of progress and the orthodox Marxism of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Soviet regimes (Morfino, 2018). In the presentation, he contested the "idolatry of the succession of time in itself" (Morfino, 2018, p. 128). Bloch (1970, p. 114) contends, "Hitler was by no stretch of the imagination the negation bringing socialism to final victory. And in this respect, there is no certain chronological index of progress, by which what happens later in history is somehow or on the whole a progressive plus compared with what has gone before". This "triumphalistic progressology" harmed humanity, the necessary political and theoretical engagement with human catastrophes and violence, and any possible movement towards utopia (Bloch, 1970, p. 114).

In fact, Bloch goes on to critique the Eurocentrism of the concept of progress, which positions Europe as the conclusion of the historical process, in justification of colonial imperialism (Morfino, 2018). Bloch (1970, p. 143) states, "progress is a notion that can be misused and abused for the ends of a colonialist ideology"; and a "unilinear model must be found obsolete if justice is to be done to the considerable amount of non-European material. It is no longer possible to work without curves in the series; without a new and complex time-manifold". Bloch not only conceptualises non-contemporaneity as the relationship between structure and superstructure but also emphasises discontinuities between superstructures rather than

postulating simple stages of development (Morfino, 2018).[26] Bloch refuses to apprehend history through the telos of European civilisation. In contrast, he understands history through the concept of "plurality temporality", and spatially through "multiversum and multi-dimensionality" demanded by the world's "geographical richness" (Bloch, 1970, p. 129; Morfino, 2018, p. 133). He refers to different dimensions of music as an analogy for the conceptualisation of history, and states that only through such a conceptualisation can "a unity" take shape "in non-linear historical time, and with an historical direction that is not fixed and monadic" (Bloch, 1970, p. 141). Morfino (2018) argues that *Differentiations in the Concept of Progress* goes even further than *Heritage of Our Times* in terms of subverting a Eurocentric, linear history with a Hegelian, and in some cases Marxist, resolution. He states, "[i]n this text, Bloch seems to abandon the idea of a fundamental time that measures others, in favour of a temporal *multiversum* that would find a recomposition in the eschatological horizon of communism" (Morfino, 2018, p. 137).

In this section, I briefly highlighted several contradictory tendencies and problematic slippages within Bloch's work. While Bloch offers an alternative to blueprint or Euclidean utopianism and restores the concepts of hope and utopia, he also demonstrates enlightenment tendencies of a progressive and linear march through successive epochs, reaching a final telos (communism for Marx and Bloch). While in other writings, Bloch substantially challenges Eurocentric notions of progress and civilisation, as well as linear time and singular space, I argue that Bloch does still maintain traces of teleological thinking.[27] Furthermore, his philosophy lacks clarity about the role of the social in relation to the 'spirit' of utopia, which over-emphasises the internal, and he conflates the ontological and the normative. Despite his weaknesses, Bloch lays a basis for grounding utopianism and hope in the everyday of concrete practices and for defending the project of theoretically and practically exploring utopian alternatives. In the subsequent section, I engage with critical space theory to build a conceptual framework for my

[26] This is demonstrated in his discussion of art and his critique of 'classical' standards of beauty, for example, he states, "For a long time Egyptian pictorial works of art were considered to be "crude" precursors of Greek creations; one reason for this was the assessment of Egyptian plastic art by analogy with the actually "inelegant" archaic art of Greece. Obviously the classical ideal of beauty provided the prejudiced standard of evaluation" (Bloch, 1970, p. 118).

[27] See, for instance, "Everywhere there is an advance from a primitive commune, through class societies, to the ultimate maturity of socialism" (Bloch, 1986, p. 123); "The really common uniform time of the process of history and, indeed, of the world process, springs and is springing forth universally only as a temporal form of emergent identity: that is, of non-estrangement between men, and of non-alienation between men and Nature" (Bloch, 1986, p. 133); and "Meaning, therefore, is perspective to the extent that it is possible in the world which is to be changed; to the extent that, in the perfectibility of the world — the world's capacity of fulfillment — it possesses the latency of good aims" (Bloch, 1986, p. 139).

project that allows for a more concretised and non-teleological engagement with hope and utopianism in the everyday.

2.4 Hope and Utopianism in Everyday Life

I propose that Bloch's philosophy can be fruitfully grounded through the concept of the 'everyday'. While Bloch is a theorist of the minutiae details of life and seeks to take account of the whole of human experience, as outlined above, his theory still tends towards teleological transcendence and closure. The conceptualisation of hope and utopia as part of the ontological structure of reality can lead to a neglect of variations in its manifestations across time and space. The everyday provides a means through which to concretise and explore the ambiguities and contradictions of hope and utopianism in the lives of the oppressed and exploited without tending towards teleological closure. As Harvey (2014, p. 34) contends, "the politics of everyday life is the crucible where revolutionary energies might develop".

While the categories of grounded or concrete utopia capture the dynamism and possibilities latent in the present that I am interested in exploring, Bloch's focus remains on "superstructural contents" and "philosophical and cultural materials" (Hudson, 1982, pp. 106, 211). For the purposes of this study, I am particularly interested in hope and how hope works through everyday life – what future imaginaries are drawn upon and generated in daily life. Bloch places little emphasis on ordinary hopes in his search for "absolute or total hope" (Hudson, 1982, p. 108). Within the category of hope, I want to explore ordinary hopes, which carry energies, embedded in daily life. Hope as an affective and cognitive category is about everyday praxis, combining the ideational and practical, thereby grounding forward-leaning wishes and desires.

The everyday is a foundational category in cultural studies with its conceptual history in the work of continental thinkers and developed further by British cultural studies (Langbauer, 1992). By illustration, Williams (2011, p. 126) emphasises the importance of grounding class struggle in specific times and places as well as highlighting the importance of 'structures of feelings' – "delicate and least tangible" ways of life that are structured and embedded in communities – for processes of transformation. Correspondingly, French philosophers, Michel de Certeau (1984) and Lefebvre (1991a, p. 132), argue for taking the details of everyday life seriously: "we will discover the immense wealth that the humblest facts of everyday life contain." According to Lefebvre (1987, p. 9), the everyday is the site of possibility because it

is “the most universal and most unique… the most social and the most individuated”. Lefebvre (1987, p. 9, 1991b, p. 13) further contends that the “most extraordinary things”, “the surprising, even the magical” are also the most everyday and that the theory of superhuman people and events is inhuman. A new life is only meaningful at the concrete level of everyday practice, whereby complex social structures interact dialectically with individual events and actors.

Similarly, in the South African context, Njabulo Ndebele (1986) posits the importance of the everyday and the ordinary and consequently for taking seriously, politically and theoretically, everyday dreams, hopes, fears and love. Ndebele (1986) argues for rediscovering the ordinary through attention to detail and explicating the complexity of ordinary people, and the ambiguities and contradictions of everyday life and struggle under conditions of oppression and exploitation. In a similar vein, Michael Gardiner (2000) argues that everyday life is of political significance – it is brimming with contradiction and internal complexity, embedded in wider socio-historical developments, including unequal power relations. The everyday must therefore be understood dialectically, as simultaneously an alienated and potentially liberated state. Everyday life can be problematised to expose its contradictions, reveal the ambiguities of hope and utopianism and tease out hidden potentialities (Cooper, 2005).

2.4.1 Spatialising Hope

In order to better ground the concept of hope, to avoid teleological and transcendental propensities identified in Bloch, and to enrich and develop explorations of the everyday, I propose spatialising hope. Exploring the contingencies and cracks in the present requires a spatio-temporal analysis. Within utopian thought, utopia is typically conceptualised as both a ‘no place’ and a ‘good place’, while hope is conceptualised as a temporal relation. However, I posit that hope, comprehended as a cognitive and affective relation to time, specifically the future but also in tension with the past and present, is necessarily enhanced through the incorporation of hope as a relation to space, with an understanding of the indivisibility of spatio-temporal dynamics.

Timothy Brennan (2017, p. 45) argues that Bloch incorporates a ‘philosophy of space’ into his analysis, explicating “the desires, motives, manias, and prejudices latent in the social uses of the measurement of land”. As discussed above, Bloch is concerned with spatio-temporal

dynamics in the development of his philosophies of hope and world history. This is illustrated in passages on travel, such as the following:

> "Travel *time* is filled in a way in which usually only *space* is filled, and space becomes the medium of change which usually only time is. So a reversal of the usual orders of perception arises, filled time arises in space, which appears mobile, changed. The old adventure stories completely unrolled space in this way, disturbed its mythic rigidity; every journey still lives, itself mutatis mutandis, from the paradox of this changing dream" (Bloch, 1986, p. 371, emphasis in original).

Moving from this point of the interrelatedness of spatio-temporal dynamics, but going beyond Bloch's 'philosophy of space', which refers mainly to spatial utopias and geographical metaphors (Sheppard, 2002), I further develop a framework below incorporating critical space theory for the analysis of hope.

Harvey (2000, p. 182) argues for the incorporation of the "production of space and time… into utopian thought", which he refers to as 'dialectical utopianism'. Harvey (2000) brings together 'spatial form' and 'social process' in an attempt to develop the spatio-temporal dynamic of utopia and to avoid the authoritarianism of (static) spatial form and placeless teleology of social process, thereby bringing together a dynamic of closure and openness. Harvey is useful in emphasising the spatio-temporal dynamics of the everyday and of utopian thought. Furthermore, he moves away from utopian thought steeped in philosophical and cultural materials to a groundedness in political economy (Levitas, 2013). However, for a book that is titled *Spaces of Hope,* there is surprisingly little discussion of hope. Harvey's book can be read as an injunction to utopian thinking, or to reclaim "optimism of the will",[28] as an intellectual project rather than a study of hope in the everyday and the spatio-temporal dynamics thereof.

In order to spatialise hope, I draw on a strand of critical space theory, anchored in the work of Lefebvre, but also engaging with other theorists such as Harvey, Doreen Massey, Edward Soja and Fernando Coronil, as well as theorists critical of capitalist development, particularly within Latin American thought. Within the context of South Africa, this work is mainly undertaken by Gillian Hart. The discussion below introduces some of the key tenets of critical space theory, including the dialectic of space-time, the dialectic of social and spatial relations, the politicisation of space and not only the spatialisation of capitalist relations but also the

[28] See Antonio Gramsci's (1977, p. 188) *Address to the Anarchists* where he adopted the formula, "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will".

production and reproduction of space through capitalist relations – thus, offering an understanding of space that is fundamentally about power.

Lefebvre argues for an 'open Marxism' and became one of the most influential early critics of Stalinist economism and reductionism (Soja, 1989). He challenges a productivist, progressive and teleological understanding of the unfolding of time and space. While post-enlightenment ideas of historical progress typically assert the primacy of time over space, and culture over nature, I posit that hope as a relation to futurity and time, which Bloch emphasised, is deepened through a dialectical relation with material and imagined space. Within Cartesian thought, space, or geography, has historically been understood as inert and nature as passive, with historical events unfolding on this passive, empty space (Coronil, 1997). Coronil (1997) proposes a spatialised conception of time and a temporalised notion of space. Time and space become mediums for each other, rather than dichotomous concepts.

The production of space-time is a multiplicity in which multiple possibilities are immanently present, but not all possibilities are realised. Revolutionary potential exists within space-time multiplicities, but in the main, remains unrealised. Thus, continuing Bloch's way of thinking through the Not-Yet, revolution can be understood as not disconnected from present moments but embedded in the unfolding of everyday life. Lefebvre (1991b) contends that a revolution that does not produce a new space has not realised its full potential as it has failed to change life itself. Merely changing ideological superstructures, political apparatuses or institutions is not the same as changing the substance of life itself. Therefore, the spatialisation of daily life, and hopes embedded therein, assists in countering Bloch's overly inward and super-structural analysis. Lefebvre (1991b, p. 54) argues that for a "social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, [it] must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space". New social relations thus call for new spatial relations and vice versa.

Lefebvre (1991b) theorises in the space between the possible and impossible; between present realities and future possibilities. He undertakes a critical analysis of all spatial politics, and all politics in general: "By seeking to point the way towards a different space, towards the space of a different (social) life and of a different mode of production, this project straddles the breach between science and utopia, reality and ideality, conceived and lived" (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 60). In order to construct a political and theoretical project capable of imagining new possibilities

for spatial and social relations, Lefebvre (1991b) traces the history of the concept of space in Western thought.

In this trajectory of thought, space is viewed as a neutral container: “Space that is innocent, as free of traps and secret places” (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 28). The common (mis)perception of space as an empty area or container is a symptom of the false dichotomies of space in Western thought and culture (Lefebvre, 1991b). This is expressed through binary oppositions, such as the mental (the intelligible, the mathematical, the space of the philosophers) and the lived (the sensory, the material, the social, the practical), and can be traced through Descartes, mathematical theory and into contemporary Western philosophy. Massey (1994) goes further and argues that these dichotomies are highly gendered; for example, passive space represents the feminine while active time represents the masculine. This Western way of thinking has hindered deeper understandings of the world history, and thus any critique of the space-time dichotomy is not to elevate the status of space within the dichotomy but rather to do away with the dualism itself. Further, moving beyond dualisms must necessarily incorporate a gendered analysis of modes of rethinking space-time, as well as the (re)construction of gender in and through relations of space-time (Massey, 1994).

In his endeavour to reject space as passive and to politicise space, Lefebvre (1991b, p. 15) posits that to “speak of ‘producing space’ sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up filling it”. In contrast to the dominant (mis)conception of empty space, Lefebvre proposes the concept of ‘social space’. He argues that space is fundamentally political and that the political character of space is hidden by ideology. Space reflects the social relations of production and the social relations of production reflect space. Massey (1994, p. 2) also argues for a formulation of the “concepts of space and place in terms of social relations”. Place is therefore understood, according to Massey (1994, p. 120), as particular articulations in “particular moments in such intersecting social relations, nets of which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed and renewed.” Social relations and space are mutually constitutive, in dialectical relation with one another. Social relations are both space-forming and space-contingent (Soja, 1989). This is the essence of Lefebvre’s conceptualisation: *(social) space is a (social) product*. Space is, therefore, simultaneously a social product and a shaping force, a medium, of social life (Soja, 1989).

Against binaries and static thought, Lefebvre (1991b) outlines various triads and a trialectic mode of analysis to escape the "straightjacket" of dualisms that pervade Western thought. His spatial triad consists of *representations of space* (conceived space); *representational space* (lived/experienced space); and *spatial practice* (perceived space).[29] The triad is not a mechanical typology, but is fluid and dynamic, with the concepts overlapping with each other in different moments (Merrifield, 2006). Andy Merrifield (2006, p. 109) proposes that Lefebvre only sketches out his spatial categories in a preliminary manner, "leaving us to add our own flesh, our own content, to rewrite it as part of our own chapter or research agenda".

Representations of space (conceived space) refers to the production of 'order' and objectified codes and plans (Lefebvre, 1991b; Merrifield, 2006). This is an abstracted space, removed from embodiment (Merrifield, 2006). This conceptualised space of planners, technocrats, developers, and others, which combines ideology and knowledge. This is the "dominant space in any society", associated with bureaucracy, authoritarianism and repression (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 39). *Representations of space* is perhaps the clearest of Lefebvre's spatial categories.

Representational space (lived/experienced space) is symbolic, generated by the users of space through everyday experiences (Lefebvre, 1991b). Christian Fuchs (2018, p. 9) refers to the subjects of *representational space* as "[i]nhabitants and users who passively experience space". However, I find the use of the term 'passive' to be unhelpful. Lefebvre (1991b, p. 39) writes that *representational space* is "directly lived through its associated images and symbols" by 'users' of space, but that *representational space* is also the space of writers, artists and philosophers who seek to describe and to do more than describe: "This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate". Thus, while Lefebvre uses the term "passive", in the same thought, he speaks of the imagination actively changing and appropriating, indicating the dynamism of *representational space,* as people create meanings and symbols through daily life. Lefebvre also links the production of spatial symbolism to clandestine or underground sides of social life. In my employment of the term, I do not limit the 'activity' of *representational space* to artists, writers or subcultures, as I posit that spatial imaginaries and symbols are also generated by ordinary people in and through everyday life.

[29] Here, I follow Lefebvre's style of italicising his key concepts.

Spatial practice (perceived space) is the "projection onto a (spatial) field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice" (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 8). *Spatial practice* produces and reproduces the cohesion of a space through a spatial "performance" and "competence" (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 33). As such, they "structure lived reality, include routes and networks, patterns and interactions that connect places and people, images with reality, work with leisure" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 110). *Spatial practice,* therefore, revolves around the "thing world" of everyday life (Merrifield, 2006, p. 134). It involves both living directly and conceiving, but such practices are in the "thrall of conceived space" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 135). Though different concepts, one could make similarities with Bourdieu's habitus, whereby practices are ingrained and normalised through daily routines. Despite this normalisation, however, spatial practices have the capacity to "subvert the conceived, to 'detonate' lived space" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 135). Merrifield (2006) argues that Lefebvre does not explain how spatial practices "mediate" between representations of space and spatial representations, such that a simple binary between lived and conceived is not deployed.

In my employment of the concepts, I do not use the concepts of *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space* interchangeably with perceived space, conceived space, and lived/experienced space as I argue that the concepts do not map neatly onto each other. *Representational space* as lived/experienced space, for example, does not necessarily communicate symbolic production of space by users of space. Moreover, I find that the category of perceived space (which implies a visual understanding of space) seems to collapse lived and conceived space into each other in the performance of spatial practices, which does not capture that in certain moments, lived space may come to the fore in the daily navigation of the "thing world". Thus, in my analysis of the production of space, I largely work with the categories of *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space,* while highlighting lived and conceived space at points, for conceptual clarity. Through putting the triad to work, I aim to show the contested dynamism in the production of space and the possibilities therein.

In *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre (2004) develops a further triad of 'time–space–energy'. In this writing, Lefebvre argues for an analysis of how energy is employed and unfolds in time and space. The interaction of space, time and energy produce a rhythm. This was his way of moving away from a conceptualisation of the reified city as 'thing' to incorporate energies, sounds, feelings, and movement (Merrifield, 2006). Lefebvre further contends that historical time is variable, with different rhythms: time can speed up, slow down, move backwards or forwards.

Rhythms can be cyclical or linear, can have different arcs, and can be public (social) or private (physiological and psychological). Rhythms can also be in unity with each other or discordant, which is indicative of suffering or disturbances. Lefebvre (2004, p. 68) refers to discordant rhythms as arrhythmia, whereby there exists a "divergence in time, in space, in the use of energies". Different social groups or classes can also intervene to imprint different rhythms on an era, either through force or less overt methods. While rhythmanalysis does not form a central pivot of my project, it is useful to think through the interaction of energy-space-time and, for example, the sometimes discordant rhythms that are generated as spaces change or different times intersect, or the contradictions between public and private rhythms. As such, localities are dynamic, with different energies unfolding in space-time.

As shown above, Lefebvre crucially shifts the focus from space as a neutral product to the process of the production of space as inherently political: space is produced within "relations of production, which subsume power relations" (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 33). Similarly, Soja (1989, p. 6) argues that "relations of power and discipline are inscribed into apparently innocent spatiality of social life… human geographies become filled with politics and ideology". Critical space theorists focus particularly on the politics of the capitalist production of space.

Capitalist development has shaped space in profound ways and reproduces relations of production through the spatialisation of everyday life (Soja, 1989). Capitalism is able to persist despite its internal contradictions by occupying and producing space; space is organised in such a way that it (re)produces social relations necessary for the reproduction of capital (Lefebvre, 1991b). Soja (1989) argues that through capitalist relations, space is increasingly instrumentalised and mystified. Furthermore, opposing or contradictory processes of development and underdevelopment, of homogenisation and of division occur through space-making – the production of capitalist space entails the "production and reproduction of geographically uneven development via simultaneous tendencies towards homogenization, fragmentation, and hierarchization" (Soja, 1989, p. 50).

Correspondingly, Harvey (2000, p. 177) contends that capitalist inequality is expressed through geographic form in the shape of "accelerating uneven geographical development" and that social cohesion and 'structures of feeling' that ground daily life are undermined and destroyed. Furthermore, the environment is degraded to the extent that large expanses of land become uninhabitable. Massey (1994) contends that in order for the concept of uneven development to

have greater explanatory power than merely describing the unevenness of different social phenomena, it must analyse the basic building blocks of capitalist society. Massey (1994, p. 90) goes on to state:

> "different spatial structures imply distinct forms of geographical differentiation, both in terms of the patterns of social differentiation between areas and in terms of the structures of interregional relations. What this means is that uneven development does not vary only in degree, as some of the arguments about it, and measures of it, would imply; it varies also in its nature."

One aspect of this unevenness relates to land and nature. The global unevenness in relation to land and nature and the preservation of habitable lands is particularly stark in a neo-colonial context such as South Africa, where the capitalist relation to land and nature influences social, economic, and political relations. The capitalist production of space depends on being able to continuously extend its reach to natural resources. Underground and above-ground resources have not diminished in importance despite the financialisation of capital. Thus, in order to understand capitalist space, the triad of 'earth, capital, labour' or 'rent, profits, wages' have to be apprehended in relation to each other rather than focusing only on the binary of capital and labour (Lefebvre, 1991b). In this context, earth and land are understood not only as agriculture, but also as underground resources, territory, and the nation-state (Coronil, 1997). Within the triad of earth, capital and labour, society and nature are not distinct from one another, rather humans transform nature and are transformed by it. Drawing on Marx, Bertell Ollman argues that society and nature are linked by internal relations – a "dialectical constitution of related entities rather than the interaction between separate entities" (cited in Coronil, 1997, p. 26). Land is, therefore, a social relation, not a thing; elements of social formations are constituted through the socialisation of nature. At the centre of the process of capitalist development, particularly in neo-colonial nations, the destruction of nature continues, as does the colonial culture of plundering (Coronil, 1997).

In the discussion thus far, I have introduced concepts that invoke the politicisation of space, and not only the spatialisation of capitalist relations, but also the production and reproduction of space through capitalist relations – thus suggesting that ideas about space are fundamentally about power. However, a reading of authors such as Harvey and Soja (above), suggest more explicitly that, "[i]t is capitalism and its developments which… determine our understanding and our experience of space" (Massey, 1994, p. 147). Massey (1994) argues that Soja (1989) focuses only on one power relation – that of the relations of production in the production and

experience of space. Similarly, Harvey (1991) explores modes of production and class formation in the production and experience of space but fails to explore how other power relations, such as gender and race, structure and shape the experience of space (Massey, 1994). Massey (1994, p. 164) critiques such lines of thinking for their tendencies towards economism or class reductionism, and therefore, as insufficient and inadequate for considering other axes of power: "these economic interpretations come far too close to depriving the cultural (or the non-economic more generally) of any autonomy at all". Power relations, such as those of race, ethnicity and gender are insufficiently considered by these theorists in the dialectic of space-time and social being.

Space, and its production and reproduction, is experienced in different ways by different social groups, "there is a lot more determining how we experience space than what 'capital' gets up to" (Massey, 1994, p. 148). Phenomena such as time-space compression and increased mobility in a globalised world are experienced and practiced differently by different social groups. For example, who moves, who controls movement, and how different people move varies according to different axes of relations of power (Massey, 1994). Massey (1994, p. 150) argues that:

> "This is, in other words, a highly complex social differentiation. There are differences in the degree of movement and communication, but also in the degree of control and of initiation. The ways in which people are placed within 'time-space compression' are highly complicated and extremely varied. But this in turn immediately raises questions of politics."

Beyond capital and class, race and gender are two of the starkest axes of power, enmeshed in the changing nature of space-time relations and the ways in which these are experienced, practiced, and produced. Gender relations vary over space and time; in other words, spatial and temporal relations are gendered. But more than this, spatial and temporal relations are fundamental elements in the varied constitution of gender, while simultaneously gender is a significant component in the production and reproduction of space-times (Massey, 1994; McDowell & Sharp, 1997). For instance, spatial control of women, and their degrees of mobility in the city through symbolic orders and threats of violence, constructs gender in particular ways (Massey, 1994). Massey (1994, p. 186, emphasis in original) states that, "space and place, spaces and places, and our senses of them (and such related things as our degrees of mobility) are gendered through and through… And this gendering of space and place both reflects *and has effects back on* the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live."

In this section, I have shown the significant contributions that critical space theory can make to understandings of space, time, and social being and the politics and contestations in the unfolding of space-time. Drawing on this strand of critical space theory, as outlined above, informs the spatialisation of hope in order to address the limitations of Bloch's philosophy of hope. Firstly, I have emphasised the everyday as a power-laden site of possibility and contestation through which to explore 'ordinary' hopes. Secondly, by highlighting the spatio-temporal dynamics of hope, hope is understood not only as a relation to futurity but also a relation to space, and as such, avoids the pitfalls of placeless teleologies and static utopias. Thirdly, spatialising hope moves away from an over-emphasis on the internal and psychological structurings of hope, and opens the possibility of connecting hope to questions of production, consumption, and distribution, which according to Levitas (2013), are neglected matters within utopian studies. Lastly, I propose that Lefebvre can assist in countering some of the pitfalls of Bloch's category of matter and the objective real possibility as a movement towards utopia. A spatial analysis grounds hope analytically *according-to-possibility* (limits) and *in-possibility* (becoming), and as such, I take a step back from investing matter with an emergentist finality towards 'everything'.

Spatialising hope is more than the analysis of hope *for* a space or of the hopes contained *in* a space, but is an analysis of the trialectic of space-hope-social being, which addresses questions such as how do hopes in the everyday generate alternative space-times? How do particular space-times generate hopes? How do the power relations that produce and reproduce space-time connect to hopes? Drawing on Lefebvre, I argue that one is better able to capture the multi-spatial and multi-temporal dialectic that Bloch at times employs, moving beyond an analysis of a single time or homogenous space.

In sum, I have argued that manifestations of hope in the everyday have to be understood analytically and ontologically through the intersection of space and time – that these two dimensions are inseparable. Thinking through hope in the everyday and drawing on critical space theory, assists in further grounding a theoretical framework of hope that avoids the pitfalls of a teleological or progressive narrative, which undermines the role of social relations between people and with nature. In approaching hope in this way, through a spatio-temporal analysis, I aim to show how hope is dialectically generated by, and in turn generates, particular space-

times. It follows then that the concept of hope cannot be constant or uniform across time and space.

2.4.2 Reproductive and Transformative Hope

In this chapter, I have worked against teleological and abstract utopian thinking, including such tendencies in the work of Bloch, to construct a framework for a spatio-temporal understanding of hope and possibility as part of the ontological structure of everyday life. From this position, I perform one last conceptual move to complete my theoretical framing. In order to analyse hope, and its relation to possibility, in the everyday, I develop two analytic categories: 'reproductive hope' and 'transformative hope'. In making an analytical distinction, I do so with the awareness that everyday life is messy and that ontologically, there are overlaps and indistinct margins.

Reproductive hope remains in the present (white supremacist capitalist patriarchal)[30] space-time, and it has little action connected to venturing forward – such that the venturing forward is unable to realise potentialities in the present that would substantially transform objective conditions. In this sense, reproductive hope does not shift the terrain of possibility, working more within the realm of *according-to-possibility*.[31] Reproductive hope, as a response to hunger, or an experience of lack, is recuperated within the dominant space-time, thereby reproducing the status quo. While there is a process of recuperation, I argue that this is not total or complete – a surplus, or excess, that overflows the conditions of its production remains that cannot be completely reabsorbed, hence, the significance of the 'hope' aspect of reproductive hope.

Reproductive hope may take the *form* of daydreaming, or of abstract utopia in Bloch's terms. Day-dreaming or wishful thinking can partially be understood as an 'opting out' of space-time, with little accompanying action, and as such has little force in the shifting of ontological possibilities in the immediacy. However, I argue that it cannot be dismissed as merely fantastical, escapist or wishful thinking with little relation to concrete space-time as it is constituted through particular space-times and social relations therein. While one dimension

[30] bell hooks (1997, p. 7) uses the phrase in order to develop "some language that would actually remind us continually of the interlocking systems of domination that define our reality… a sort of short cut way of saying all of these things actually are functioning simultaneously".
[31] While the concepts of *according-to-possibility* and *in-possibility* are not ontologically distinct, it is useful to make the analytic distinction, unlike Bloch who folds the concepts in on each other through the category of matter.

may be purely escapist, another dimension is provocative, as it refuses to accept the lack within this life. Therefore, in data collection and analysis, it is important to probe even the most trivial thinking.

While reproductive hope can take the *form* of abstract dreaming in the Blochian sense, it is not limited to that form. The *content* of hopes can also be reproductive in *function*. Hope for the 'good life' in the current historical conjuncture, is often expressed in individualised terms, such as a desire for upward mobility, economic security for oneself and one's family and the ability to acquire objects of consumption. The attachment to the 'good life', yet the impossibility of everyone achieving such in the absence of a transformation of space and social relations, relates to Bloch's epistemological assessments regarding what is and is not possible in the current conditions. The status quo is reproduced partially through a relation to futurity, which is ontologically impossible. This category is to some extent translatable to Berlant's (2011) concept of 'cruel optimism' whereby the attachment to, or movement towards, the impossible 'good life' is still a force in shaping one's life, but this movement does not transform limits.

Thus, in putting the concept of reproductive hope to work in this project, I engage in a spatio-temporal analysis of everyday life, exploring hopes that although variable in form and content, *function* to maintain and reproduce existing space-times and social relations. Despite the reproductive function, I maintain the line of argument that even such hope is significant and that not all surpluses, or excesses, of hope are reabsorbed into existing ideological formations and space-times. As such, I emphasise the dynamic and energetic structure of reality, bringing attention to processes and not only the closed reproduction of what is.

By way of contrast, I argue that transformative hope shifts the terrain of possibility in a dialectic of socially, spatially and temporally structured relations. Through the process of this kind of hoping, affective and cognitive connections to the present are altered or disrupted, and an alternative future provoked. As such, this abstraction relates more to *what-is-in-possibility* (becoming), rather than the limits of what is. Transformative hope is a force in the world, which in pushing against and reaching beyond the existing order of things, generates possibilities for liberating the everyday. Transformative hope can take different *forms,* but its *content* reaches toward a transformation of collective everyday life, of the "mundanely concrete" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 7). Spatialising transformative hope avoids the pitfalls of placeless teleologies towards utopia and allows for a multi-layered dialectic such that the non-contemporaneity of existence

is comprehended through refusals, past losses and damages connected to the specificities of localities.

These categories are put to work and elaborated upon through my analyses in the chapters that follow. While the categories of reproductive hope and transformative hope overlap, at times, with Bloch's categories of abstract utopia and concrete utopia, I argue that by spatialising hope, I undertake different conceptual work. I aim to demonstrate that through employing these two concepts within a spatio-temporal analysis of the everyday, it is possible to push beyond the limitations of Bloch's work, while still maintaining the significance of hope as a force in the world.

2.5 Conclusion

In sum, I have situated my project within the broader literature on hope and utopian thought and argued that Bloch's philosophy of hope counters the primary charges against utopian thinking in a way that restores the significance of hope and utopia in social and political theory and practice. Through a review Bloch's philosophy of hope and theory of ontology, and its limitations, I proposed that critical space theory, most centrally Lefebvre's spatialisation of time and temporalisation of space, can be used to address some of these limitations. In subsequent chapters, I put to work and further develop the categories of reproductive hope and transformative hope in order to explore and analyse ordinary hopes in the everyday in Lephalale and surrounds. In the following chapter, I think through the epistemological and methodological implications of a conceptualisation of 'hope as method' as Bloch's work is not merely one of contemplation on the nature of hope and utopia but is itself an exercise of hope and generative of hopes.

CHAPTER 3: HOPE AS METHOD

3.1 Introduction

"Only thinking directed towards changing the world and informing the desire to change it does not confront the future (the unclosed space for new development in front of us) as embarrassment and the past as spell" (Bloch, 1986, p. 8).

Bloch asks the question of what knowledge is for, and answers: to change the world and educate the desire to change the world. Situated on the edges of the Frankfurt School tradition, the purpose of critical social theory was understood as that of critique and social transformation (Horkheimer, 1975). At the time of the Frankfurt School's first generation, the dominant school of positivism asserted that both natural and social phenomena could be explained or deduced using universally valid laws, thus making prediction of social and natural facts equally possible (Fay, 1975). Theorists of the Frankfurt School disputed the unsurpassable dualisms that positivism erected between empirical analysis and normative theory; facts and values; object and subject; and theory and practice. Instead, reason and emotion, and science and normativity were brought together, in contradistinction to deeply held assumptions regarding the nature of social sciences (Levitas, 2013; Sayer, 2011). More recent scholarship has followed in this trajectory, challenging the dualisms embedded in Western thought, such as subject-object and universal-particular dualisms.[32]

Building on the preceding chapter, which addressed hope and utopia as ontology, this chapter continues Bloch's line of critical thinking by discussing the epistemological and methodological implications of a conceptualisation of 'hope as method'. Bloch's expansive opus on hope is itself an exercise of hope and generative of hopes – it is not merely a philosophical contemplation on the nature of hope. Bloch (1986) argues for a reorientation of knowledge production towards the Not-Yet and an embracing of the prospective momentum of hope through processes of knowledge creation. Furthermore, the ontology of Not-Yet has ethical implications as a "commitment to the future" and a normative injunction to change the future to enable human flourishing (Bloch, 1986, p. 7).

[32] See, for instance, Levitas (2013) and Nussbaum (2003).

In this chapter, I take on the task of elaborating and concretising Bloch's epistemology and method through my own research and thinking. First, I explore and expand the conceptualisation of 'hope as method' by bringing Bloch into dialogue with Levitas (2013) and Miyazaki (2004) – two authors who have engaged with the methodological implications of Bloch's work in great depth. I clarify those aspects of these scholars' works that I use, develop and adapt for my own theoretical and empirical project. Second, in understanding hope as an analytic resource, I reflexively chart my own hope through the research process, showing how it constantly shifted in relation to the social, political and economic relations of which I was also actively constitutive. This reflective exercise brings to the fore my own subjectivity and the constitution of my subjectivity through the research process; I argue that this is not the creation of 'bias' but rather what enabled and informed my research and thinking – which therefore needs to be made visible for reflection and critique. Third, drawing on a critical ethnography framework, I explain in more detail my fieldwork and data analysis processes, addressing issues of access, data collection (interviews, participant observation and archival research) and data analysis, and my own development of 'hope as method' through this process. Fourth, I engage with some unresolved methodological and ethical research issues and challenges, including a final reflection on the relational constitution of hope through the research process.

3.2 Conceptualisation of 'Hope as Method'

In this section, I draw on Bloch's (1986) *The Principle of Hope* as a starting point from which to theorise the conceptualisation of 'hope as method', and I further engage with the work of Levitas's (2013) *Utopia as Method* and Miyazaki's (2004) *The Method of Hope*, as examples of the few authors who have thoroughly considered his method. I do so in order to build a comprehensive framework for my own project by drawing on aspects of all three theorists but shaping them for my own purposes. As such, I discuss and think through the epistemological, methodological and ethical implications of Bloch's ontology of the Not-Yet.

As outlined in the previous chapter, Bloch develops an ontology of the Not-Yet, which crucially invokes the philosophically neglected emotion and principle of hope. This involves not only an investigation into the nature of reality, but epistemologically, he attempts to "bring philosophy to hope, as to a place in the world which is as inhabited as the best civilized land and as unexplored as the Antarctic" (Bloch, 1986, p. 6). Bloch advocates a philosophy (and social

science) that takes the future seriously. He states that "[p]hilosophy will have conscience of tomorrow, commitment to the future, knowledge of hope, or it will have no more knowledge" (Bloch, 1986, p. 7). While philosophy is limited by its retrospective character, Bloch argues for an understanding of hope as part of knowledge formation and calls for a temporal reorientation of knowledge (Miyazaki, 2004).

In *The Principle of Hope*, one of the key theoretical puzzles that Bloch aims to address is "how to overcome the incongruity between the retrospective orientation of philosophy as a contemplative form of knowledge and the prospective orientation of hope" (Miyazaki, 2004, p. 10). Bloch argues that this incongruity has precluded philosophy's ability to penetrate the nature of hope and to understand the world as "full of propensity towards something, tendency towards something, latency of something" (Bloch, 1986, p. 18). Contemplative knowledge can only grasp the world as an entity that has 'become' and not as open and in process, therefore raising the methodological problem of the temporal orientation of knowledge (Miyazaki, 2004). Bloch's work, therefore, represents a substantive break from previous philosophical and moral contemplation on the nature of hope. Miyazaki (2004, pp. 13, 120) argues for a reading of Bloch that is "not so much as a study of various manifestations of hope as an effort to reconstitute philosophy on what he calls the 'principle hope'… Bloch's philosophy is a proposal for hope as a method of knowledge" and this method apprehends "the prospective momentum of the present". Miyazaki (2004) argues that through a prospective epistemology, hope is replicated on another terrain and for Miyazaki, this terrain is the discipline of anthropology.[33]

This epistemological reorientation towards the future was also driven by Bloch's concern to apprehend the 'lived moment'. Bloch was influenced by Simmel and others, who stressed the lived moment and impossibility of knowing the immediate, especially through abstracted universal categories. This was a broader epistemological position taken up within the Frankfurt School to counter positivism, whereby Max Horkheimer (1989a, 1989b) argued that neo-

[33] Miyazaki (2004) eventually retracts his argument to some extent later in the book and states that the incongruity between retrospective knowledge and the prospective orientation of hope is not a problem but in fact generates hope. His argument thus remains unclear. As another scholar states, "At times Miyazaki's narrative becomes mired in opaque statements, such as the assertion that 'hope as a method does not rest on an impulse to pursue analytical synchronicity but on an effort to inherit and replicate that impulse as a spark of hope on another terrain' (p.30), and the comment on 'the homological operation of the performative replication of a prospective momentum in different genres of Fijian self-knowledge' (p.139). There is also a tendency to terminological ambiguity. For example, having made much of Bloch's contrast between the retrospectivity of conventional scholarly analysis and the prospective disposition of hope, Miyazaki later remarks on 'the prospective momentum latent in retrospection' (p.29) and emphasises the importance of retrospectivity in hope, for 'the method of hope … is a performative inheritance of hope', a replication of past hope (p. 128)" (Norton, 2006, p. 247).

positivist science limited itself to the task of classification and categorisation – the accumulation and subsumption of empirical social facts under universal categories – hence, the particular is lost under the universal and concomitantly the object under thought. Instead, Horkheimer (1989c) advocated a process of proceeding deeper and deeper into the particular, into each immediacy, in order to discover universals. In order to allow the object to be known, Adorno (1973) proposes, in conjunction with delving into particularities, the formation of a constellation of concepts which circle around and illuminate the object from different angles.[34] Adorno (1973, p. 163) states, "[c]ognition of the object in its constellation is cognition of the process stored in the object. As a constellation, theoretical thought circles the concept it would like to unseal." Drawing on his contemporaries, but also innovating, Bloch turned to the future and the category of the Not-Yet as a way of better grasping the dynamics of the present lived moment. In order to know the immediate, one needs to focus on the future. Bloch (1986, pp. 9, 12) states that "true action in the present itself occurs solely in the totality of this process which is unclosed both backwards and forwards" and that "the contents of this most immediate nearness still ferment entirely in the darkness of the lived moment as the real world-knot, world-riddle. Utopian consciousness wants to look far into the distance, but ultimately only in order to penetrate the darkness so near it of the just lived moment". Thus, Bloch's epistemological venture into the future and what is becoming is partially driven by a need to comprehend the elusive immediacy in the present, as becoming.

Bloch's (1986) understanding of the self and the world as becoming – a processual and depth ontology – necessitates an epistemology and methodology that can address what is becoming and could become. Bloch's interlocutors, such as Adorno (1973), similarly contend that thought must be kept open as fixed, timeless concepts obstruct access to the ever-changing objects of thought and fail to capture the historical processes of their constitution and relational positionality. Hope as philosophy or knowledge formation calls for the capacity to understand the world as unfolding and the present, as containing tendencies and latencies that have Not-Yet become (Bloch, 1986; Miyazaki, 2004). Bloch argues that "truth is not the reflection of facts but of processes: it is ultimately the indication of the tendency and latency of that which has not yet become and needs its activator" (cited in Zipes, 1989, p. x). Any conception of a closed, settled world is destabilised by the presence of futuristic properties, without a

[34] Here Adorno draws on Benjamin (2003, p. 34) who states that "[i]deas are to objects as constellations are to stars".

predetermined end (Hudson, 1982). Furthermore, indeterminacy is understood as a precondition for the possibility of hope (Miyazaki, 2004), as Bloch (1998, p. 341) states:

> "Hope's methodology… dwells in the region of the not-yet, a place where entrance and, above all, final content are marked by an enduring indeterminacy. In other words, referring directly to disappointability: hope holds *eo ipso* the condition of defeat precariously within itself: it is not confidence. It stands too close to the indeterminacy of the historical process, of the world-process that, indeed, has not yet been defeated, but likewise has not yet won."

Present reality therefore cannot be predetermined or reduced to the 'surface' empirical because potentialities, tendencies and latencies exist as part of the structure of reality. Bloch thereby challenges the dominance of empiricism as a school of thought, as well as teleological idealism and demands a methodology that goes beyond both contemplation and experimentation. An epistemology beyond empiricism (static facts) and idealism (abstract thought) that is able to comprehend a depth ontology[35] calls for creative methods such as imagination, speculation, thought experiments and reflexivity. Frankfurt School theorists assert that the possibility for critical theory lies within its constantly reflective and self-referential thought as counterposed to the objectifying and identitarian thought of positivism (Geuss, 1981). The subject-object division is problematised through ceaseless reflection on the processes of knowledge production and the social conditions which make it possible: "Critical theory is last, but not least, critical of itself and of the social forces that make up its own basis" (Marcuse, 1989, p. 72). Adorno (1973), through his work on negative dialectics, brings to light the contradictions between what liberal capitalism claims to offer and what it actually delivers. Negative dialectics exposes this non-correspondence and "the techniques of power that allow the claimed world to appear not merely as the actual world but the best of all actual worlds" (Povinelli, 2011, p. 191).

Drawing on Bloch and others, Levitas (2013) frames her reflective and speculative approach as a 'speculative sociology'. She argues that bringing utopia and sociology into conversation with each other generates a different way of thinking about what constitutes knowledge and challenges the ideas that utopianism is merely a form of speculation and sociology a form of knowledge. She states that, "[t]his encounter [between utopia and sociology]… seeks to

[35] In earlier works of the Frankfurt School, such as that of Herbert Marcuse's (1989) *Philosophy and Critical Theory*, Marcuse holds onto a 'depth' ontology arguing that society cannot be reduced to what it is today as humans have potentials, which are yet to be realised. This is taken up by later schools of thought, such as critical realism, which adopts a 'depth' rather than 'empirical' realism. This entails the presupposition that objects have qualities that cannot be experienced or observed consequently experience is not a condition for their existence (Benton & Craib, 2001; Sayer, 2000).

legitimize utopian thought not as a new, but as a repressed, already existing, form of knowledge about possible futures" (Levitas, 2013, p. xv). Levitas's speculative sociology also engages with historical work, from the perspective of her utopian method – reading history for the future. Thus it is not the case that a speculative, utopian approach rejects historical inquiry, but rather, attention is paid to the nature and method of such inquiry, with an emphasis on research for the future.

In moving away from utopia as goal to utopia as method, Levitas (2013) operationalises utopia as method as both hermeneutic and constitutive, and highlights its dialogic character. She does this through three methodological avenues that demonstrate a commitment to the future and conceptualisation of subjectivity and the world as becoming: archaeological, constructive or architectural and ontological. The first mode, the archaeological, pieces together fragments of the good society implicit or embedded in institutional policies and practices. The second architectural mode is an exercise in imagining potential alternative futures (Levitas, 2013). The third ontological mode engages with what subjectivities are developed and encouraged by societies and what it means to flourish as humans, both in particular contexts and universally. These modes will be discussed in greater detail below, engaging with their application in this project.

The archaeological mode of inquiry excavates images of the good life, identifying silences and interpolating what is absent but implied and partially reconstructing an implicit whole about the good life such that it can be evaluated (Levitas, 2013). It is a method of critique, making explicit that which is embedded and thereby engaging in normative concerns, as well as paying attention to conditions and how they block or animate utopian expressions. Critique has the ability to disrupt the closure of the present and seemingly taken for granted ways of being in the world, and furthermore, to question presumed impossibilities (Levitas, 2013). For example, Levitas's archaeological method in her own work has taken the form of examination of aspects of political policies and programmes, and their contradictions, silences and assumptions, in relation to the 'neoliberal utopia' of the New right and 'meritocratic utopia' of New Labour in the United Kingdom over the past several decades.

In my own work, I was inspired by Levitas's (2013) archaeological method but adapted it for different purposes in this project: firstly, I engaged in a historical approach in which, with limited data from the historical periods concerned, I analysed social relations to time and space,

excavating and interpolating from the fragments I could find. Secondly, I used it largely in relation to the hermeneutics of everyday life and not in relation to social institutions or political programmes as Levitas did. I engaged with fragments of hope in everyday life, bringing these to the fore and engaging with images of the good life contained therein. In this process, I also drew on Bloch and the Frankfurt School's attention to the particular and minutiae of daily life.

Bloch's (1986) dialectic method in relation to cultural artefacts enables a nuanced approach to ideology critique. Wishful thinking taps into drives for a better life, but is often directed and managed through ideological mechanisms. For example, within capitalist society and rampant consumerism, the promises of consumer culture invest objects with magical properties to improve some aspect of one's life. Wishes for another life permeate capitalist society, albeit in managed forms that reproduce existing society. Bloch rejects the distinction between high and low culture, searching for utopianism in everything from advertising to Ludwig Beethoven. This is similarly later taken up by Williams in *Culture is Ordinary* (Williams & McGuigan, 2014).

Significantly, Bloch (1986) does not denounce ideological manifestations in cultural products as false consciousness but rather searches for emancipatory-utopian elements in all living ideologies. Ideology is 'janus-faced': "it contains errors, mystification, and techniques of manipulation and domination, but it also contains utopian residue or surplus that can be used for social critique and to advance progressive politics" (Kellner, 1997, p. 82). Utopian elements exist alongside distorting ones, which aim to preserve the status quo. Jameson (1979), for example, builds on Bloch, looking at social hopes and fantasies in mass culture as the way in which ideology manages potentially disruptive hopes. Manipulation depends on something genuine, it addresses real desires, fantasies, fears, anxieties or hopes. Ideology critique therefore becomes a critique of everyday life – as Bloch examines daydreams, architecture, clothing, popular culture and further. According to Douglas Kellner (1997, p. 84), Bloch:

> "restores to radical theory a cultural heritage that is often neglected or dismissed as merely ideology. Critique of ideology, Bloch argues, is not merely unmasking (*Entlarvung*), or demystification, but it is also uncovering and discovery: revelations of unrealized dreams, lost possibilities, abortive hopes – that can be resurrected and enlivened and realized in our current situation."

Thus, the archaeological method in this study investigates historical spatio-temporal relations and everyday hopes that bring to the fore contradictions, ambiguities and potentialities. The speculative aspects are further developed in the architectural mode.

The architectural mode is perhaps the most familiar dimension of Levitas's utopia as method, whereby a reconstructed world is imagined, often through utopian fiction. This mode is not very common in the social sciences, or sociology, where critique and interrogation of assumptions are more comfortably within the purview of the field (Levitas, 2013). Levitas (2013, p. 197) argues that "Utopia as architecture is a form of critique, but it negates through the conjuring of alternatives that are also positive proposals".

Levitas's (2013) second architectural mode develops possible alternative scenarios for a better society for the future so that they can be debated and developed. This is done not to create a predetermined, static blueprint, "insisting always on the provisionality, reflexivity and contingency of what we are able to imagine, and in full awareness that utopian speculation is formed always in the double squeeze of what we are able to imagine and what we are able to imagine as possible" (Levitas, 2013, p. 19). This future scenario imagining "maintains a double standpoint between present and future" (Levitas, 2013, p. 218). There is a tension between the two standpoints as the present is reinterpreted from the standpoint of the future, making the present the past of the future. The past of the future forecloses or opens particular futures. The movement between the two standpoints enables a form of speculation, analysis of the present and the possibilities therein, rather than a positivist stance of prediction (Levitas, 2013). Correspondingly, Barbara Adam and Chris Groves (2007, p. 176, emphasis in original) argue that there are different ways of moving between the standpoint of the present and that of the future. They distinguish between 'present futures' and 'future presents', arguing that they are of different standpoints with different ethical and epistemological implications:

> "The present future refers to the standpoint of the present. As such it encapsulates both the factual approaches of science and economics and process-based perspectives on futurity and the lived future. The concept of future presents, in contrast, encompasses the future as both an effecting process and/or as living. Moreover, the *standpoint of the future present positions us with reference to potential impacts of present actions on future generations who have to cope with the consequences of our inventions and interventions.* That is, it relates us to deeds and processes already on the way. Through their different positioning, present futures and future presents offer greatly divergent options not only for knowledge but also for action and ethics."

Bloch's warm stream of vision and cold stream of analysis bring the cognitive and affective into conversation with each other (Levitas, 2013). Bloch (1986) argues that these streams are equally important and thus counters the neglect of vision, speculation and affect in social

sciences and philosophy. The architectural mode takes up Bloch's injunction and writes into 'the blue'. In this project, at particular moments in the presentation of my thoughts, I move into the architectural mode, writing into 'the blue', from the materiality that I encountered, imagining, for example, what might be otherwise, what might be becoming, what futures are foreclosed or opened by the configuration of social, political and economic relations.

Levitas's (2013) third ontological mode of inquiry speaks to the claims made regarding human flourishing upon which proposals for a better world are based. This includes theories regarding unrealised human capacities and potentialities – an understanding of humans as becoming (Levitas, 2013). As Levitas (2013, p. 177) states, "[i]t entails both imagining ourselves otherwise and a judgement about what constitutes human flourishing". Different societal configurations block or enable different aspects of human flourishing – the ways in which capacities are encouraged or blocked and suppressed by social arrangements is analysed. In this study, the ontological conception of human flourishing is returned to throughout the thesis and through the data analysis – imagining how we might be otherwise as human becoming.

Hope as method, as articulated and applied in this project, draws on Bloch (1986), Levitas (2013) and Miyazaki (2004) to centre a normative concern for society. I bring together knowledge and ethics with an understanding that knowledge creation is political – embedded in power relations and reproducing or transforming such. As a method of critique of the existing order, it disrupts the taken for granted present and opens up what could be otherwise, what could be in the future, and thereby estranging one from the present (Abensour, 1999; Moylan, 1986). Further, hope as method brings together the cognitive and affective in its mode of analysis: "knowledge here must be construed more deeply, as something that involves feelings and desires as well as cognitive statements. Utopia is not simply a thought experiment in the conventional sense, for it necessarily operates at the level of affect as well as intellect" (Levitas, 2013, p. 218). Hope as method engages with the future, as a speculative sociology, and it incorporates imagination, rather than prediction, into analysis (Levitas, 2013). Social imaginary is generated from its spatio-temporal context, in a dialectic between actual and potential, and therefore is never finally fixed or settled. As Levitas (2013, pp. 218-9) argues:

> "The imagination of society and ourselves otherwise expands the range of possibilities. Sociology as utopia and utopia as sociology offer multiple, provisional and reflexive accounts of how we might live, suspended between present and future… we know that our hopes for the future are indicative

> projections of what might be, we know too that these are always coloured by the conditions of its generation."

Hope as method therefore entails not only an orientation to the future but also a cognisance of multiple possibilities in an unsettled world. I argue that hope as method requires thinking, analysing and writing in a way that captures human becoming and the unfolding of processes in an open, dynamic world, while simultaneously not valorising openness or claiming that anything is possible in every moment. Hope is constantly moving, as an affective and cognitive relation, it reaches or leaps forward. Attempts to objectify or bring the world to a standstill fail to capture the temporality and contingency of the world in process. Miyazaki (2004, p. 23) writes that "moments of hope can only be apprehended as other moments of hope", and as such, a commitment to the future is forged.

3.3. Hope as an Analytic Resource

In this section, as a reflexive method of knowledge creation, I trace the development of my own hope as an analytic resource during the course of this project. While this is a retrospective task, I attempt to bring forth the prospective momentum of hope and its movement through my research and process of knowledge generation. According to Jameson (1971, pp. 158–159), Bloch's philosophy of hope is "a doctrine of hope and ontological anticipation, [it] is itself an anticipation". Drawing on this line of inquiry, I think through my own anticipatory-consciousness as an analytic resource.

Reflexive research is premised on the understanding that knowledge is generated in specific contexts through social relations and interactions (Abensour, 1999). Reflexive inquiry interrogates the processes of generation and interpretation of empirical data (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). It requires a consideration of how one's own positionality influences the process of knowledge generation (Temple & Young, 2004). This is of particular pertinence for a white, middle-class scholar conducting research with black, oppressed and exploited people in post-apartheid South Africa;[36] particularly at this historical juncture of efforts to decolonise academia. Furthermore, qualitative research, more specifically fieldwork, changes a researcher, "through reflexivity, researchers acknowledge the changes brought about in themselves as a

[36] While I understand race to be a social construct rather than an essential, immutable fact, I employ the categories of 'black' and 'white' throughout the thesis, in recognition of the ongoing material, social, and political effects of racism in South Africa (Vally & Motala, 2018). And thus, I do not use them to categorise people essentially. See Vally and Motala (2018) for further discussion on the use of race categories in social science research.

result of the research process and how these changes have affected the research process. The journey of discovering how researchers shaped and how they were shaped by the research process and output is an iterative and empowering process" (Palaganas et al., 2017, p. 426).

3.3.1 Personal Reflexivity

Erlinda Palaganas et al. (2017, p. 430) outline different forms of reflexivity. Firstly, "personal reflexivity" is reflexivity that analyses how one is "shaping and being shaped" by the research process. Thus, below I reflect on my own aspirations, values, philosophy and social identity in the context of knowledge generation and how I was transformed in the process. As Stuart Hall (1990, p. 18) states, "[t]here's no enunciation without positionality. You have to position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all". Similarly, Michael Burawoy (2009), drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, argues that interrogating where one is positioned and one's relation to the world is not an obstacle to research and theory, but rather, a necessary condition.

From the standpoint of a radical feminist and critical Marxist perspective, I take a position on the side of the oppressed and exploited. While power laden differences in identities, such as race and class, make identification between researcher and participant near impossible (England, 1994), empathy remains an important practice within research relations across similarities and differences. As Liz Bondi (2003, p. 73) writes from a feminist perspective, "[e]mpathy does not expunge differences or inequalities. Rather, empathy enables people to engage in the work of communicating and understanding aspects of their experiences across a multiplicity of differences".

As a political actor, I was drawn to the topic of hope through my own political hopes and visions for a socialist future that emerged through collective struggle and engagement with others, living and dead, thus carrying political visions and hopes across time and space and rearticulating them in my own praxis. Though perhaps a taken-for-granted notion, it was through my participation in, and solidarity with, political struggles in the labour movement at different sites in South Africa, that it became clear to me that despite setbacks, defeats and violence, political actors only keep struggling because they have hope, attached to a vision for a better future. This object of hope (for a better future) was often ill-defined in totality but concretised through specific demands, such as farmworkers' demands for 150 rand per day during the farmworker uprising in 2012/3 or the university workers' demands for insourcing

and a living wage (Luckett & Mzobe, 2016; Wilderman, 2015). In the context of political struggles, hope was generated and shaped through collective organisation and struggle, and sometimes in ways that sat uncomfortably with me, resting on teleological outcomes through slogans such as, 'victory is certain'. While it is easier to 'see' and 'feel' hope during 'big' moments of struggle, the daily grind of life under intolerable working and living conditions is often still imbued with different manifestations of hope. My theoretical premise during my time as a political activist was that big and small moments of struggle were not possible without hope and nor was radical social transformation.

I began thinking about this project with the Marikana mineworkers' strike (2012), the farmworkers' uprising (2012-2013) and the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa's (NUMSA) political break away from the African National Congress (ANC) (2013) at the forefront of my mind, during which time I was a trade union official for The Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU),[37] a primarily farmworkers' union, and an active member of the Democratic Left Front (DLF),[38] which played a significant role in the Marikana massacre solidarity campaigns. In December 2013, at a Special National Congress, NUMSA resolved to build a political alternative and vision for a different future in South Africa. NUMSA's Congress in the context of the Marikana massacre was perceived as a turning point in the political landscape of South Africa – which became known on the left as the 'NUMSA moment'.[39]

My research project initially pivoted around two related foci, NUMSA as an organisation and its socialist project, and Lephalale as a place. For me, after numerous site visits to Lephalale, this pivot shifted away from NUMSA, as NUMSA's political project of building a United Front and Socialist Revolutionary Workers' Party (SRWP) failed to materialise in Lephalale. And more broadly in South Africa, it became evident in the years following the 'NUMSA moment' that NUMSA's break from the ANC would not result in a major break from the politics of the

[37] CSAAWU was one of the few unions to come out in support of the spontaneous, worker-driven farmworkers' uprising.
[38] The DLF was launched in 2011 out of the Conference for the Democratic Left, held in 2008. It was formed as a non-sectarian, non-authoritarian, anti-capitalist front comprised of grassroot community organisations, left trade unions and left political groups, with a focus on local struggles and building solidarity. The DLF eventually ceased to exist with the rise of NUMSA's United Front, which set out a similar vision and task for itself.
[39] NUMSA was established in 1987, mainly in the engineering, motor and manufacturing industries. NUMSA emerged as one of the strongest and most radical affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (Forrest, 2011). Recent work has also analysed the 'NUMSA moment' and its significance for working class politics in South Africa (see, for instance, Ashman and Pons-Vignon (2015) and McKinley (2015)).

Tripartite Alliance.[40] The 'NUMSA moment' was found to be wanting in significantly opening up new possibilities for a collective political project.[41] However, throughout this project there remains a connection to NUMSA – as the majority trade union at Medupi Power Station in Lephalale – and as a socialist project that failed to be realised.

I could not see a way of 'building into the blue' from the foundations of the NUMSA project, thus through my research and political involvement, my hopes and expectations for NUMSA's socialist project were troubled and disappointed. For Bloch (1998, pp. 342-343), disappointment is the engine of hope, even when hopes are realised:

> "[I]s it not the case that a thing, once it has become realized, whatever has been attained by its realization, so that it does not resemble what was previously hoped for, even though its content has passed, wholly undiminished, from the possible into the actual? And yet, a residue remains, in this instance only because of the still undiscovered (with respect to its content) 'true and perfect being.' But even such disappointment over realization's 'minus' finally counts toward the credit of well-founded hope, and advances its existential as well as its essential demands."

Though Bloch refers here to disappointment even in the face of the realisation, or partial realisation, of hopes, my hope was profoundly disappointed in the face of its largely non-realisation and this disappointment became both an engine and scupper within my own work.

I faced, within my own subjectivity as a political actor and researcher, the necessity of separating out hope from expectation and optimism. I moved away from a predetermined political normative ideal or blue-print for the future towards researching the unknown in a locality, Lephalale, that emanated despair and destruction of life as I encountered it. In this way, I encountered the fragility of hope in its relation to despair and disappointment. This standpoint of fragile hope allowed me to investigate possibilities that I otherwise might have overlooked. Furthermore, it encouraged me to interrogate the value and purpose of hope, to consider the appropriateness and political efficacy of a dearth of hope, propelling me down unexpected theoretical avenues, as well as to explore the violent destruction of hope and forms of hope that (appear to) manifest as 'false consciousness'.

[40] The Tripartite Alliance comprises the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). It has formed the governing alliance since the democratic transition.

[41] See critical discussions of the 'NUMSA moment', for example, Martin Jansen (2017); Devan Pillay (2017); and Francesco Pontarelli (2019).

3.3.2 Epistemological Reflexivity

This leads me to Palaganas et al.'s (2017, p. 432) second form of reflexivity: "epistemological reflexivity", which is described as "rethinking assumptions and implications". Palaganas et al. (2017, p. 432) claim that epistemological reflexivity "encourage[s] or push[es] the researchers to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that we have made in the course of the research, and it helps us think about its implications to the research and its findings". My own theoretical and political assumptions were constantly under review during the research process. Throughout the process, I became aware of how my political subjectivity and theoretical framework were challenged in an iterative process as my research project evolved. Hope was continuously disappointed and regenerated. As Miyazaki (2017, p. 20) argues, "hope as a subject of analysis induces its own methodological replication in an analysis of it." In thinking through the movement and replication of hope, my own hope, as an inherited political hope, was carried across time and space but now constituted through different social relations, and so constantly rearticulated. In my research, I paid attention to motion and temporality, reachings and longings, and kept in mind the injunction to generate knowledge that continues the unfulfilled hopes and struggles of the ancestors of the oppressed (Benjamin, 1968). Therefore, this work, in carrying a multitude of hopes from the past, that shaped this research project, is a work of hope in the present that imagines its own realisation in a future moment of theory and practice, that might allow the ancestors to rest. Beyond this project, searchings for openness and possibilities continue. I now turn to the details of my research process.

3.4 Critical Ethnography

For this project, I undertook field research in Lephalale, and surrounds, interacting with participants in their own social settings. As such, I undertook in-depth research into details of everyday life, which allowed for theoretical developments and insights. This is of particular importance given the dearth of research that connects the politics of hope with the practices of ordinary people's lives.

Through the employment of Hart's (2006, 2016) relational method and Burawoy's (2009) extended case method, I outline some key aspects of the approach that I used. Hart (2006, p. 982) argues that critical ethnography and what she refers to as 'relational comparison', do not simply produce knowledge about particular areas, but "offer vantage points for generating new

understandings by illuminating power-laden processes of constitution, connection, and disconnection, along with slippages, openings, and contradictions, and possibilities for alliance within and across different spatial scales". In this study, conceptualising Lephalale as a 'nodal point' of connections, permits one to make broader theoretical and political claims. Particularities are understood as arising through interrelations between "objects, events, places, and identities" (Hart, 2006, p. 996), and in explicating these relations and how they are "constituted in relation to one another through power-laden practices in the multiple, interconnected arenas of everyday life" (Hart, 2006, p. 996), broader claims can be made. Similarly, for Burawoy (2009), reflexive science takes a particular situation as its point of departure but from this point, the extended case method embraces issues of historical change, processes, theory and reflexivity, such that it does not deal only with the descriptive contemporary situation. Hart, drawing on Andrew Sayer (1991), argues that the relational approach rejects the notion that concrete or ethnographic studies deal with the local and particular, while abstract theory concerns the global or general. Correspondingly, Burawoy (2009, p. 75) argues that "there is no way of seeing clearly without a theoretical lens" and that ethnography requires theory and history while through ethnography, theory can be advanced.

This research project utilised ethnographic methods but, drawing on Burawoy and Hart, also embraced an analysis of power relations and history, social processes and theory. Social scientists are part of the world we study but we are often removed from that world by placing ourselves in archives, reading texts or at a distance in laboratories. However, participant observation or ethnographic methods "cast[s] these protections aside and plunge[s us] into the world beyond, which forces us to think more deeply about our relations to that world" (Burawoy, 2009, p. 267).

In addition, an oral history approach was drawn on. Oral history methods enable access to 'hidden histories' and aspects of historical experience and everyday life that are seldom recorded or accessible through official recorded histories and narratives (Thompson, 1988; Thomson, 1998; Vansina, 1985). Published autobiographies are seldom of oppressed and exploited people, and when they are, they usually focus on people in official leadership positions, such as ANC national leaders during the anti-apartheid struggle. Paul Thompson (1988, p. 31) states that "[o]ral history is history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but also from the unknown majority of the people." The potential of life histories and personal narratives "opens a window

to the struggles of ordinary people" (Miles & Crush, 1993, p. 92). In South Africa, oral history has proven indispensable in re-writing colonial and apartheid histories.[42] Social historians, such as those connected with the History Workshop, are committed to researching and writing up the lives and collective struggles of ordinary people through dialogical modes of knowledge production (Lissoni et al., 2010). In more recent years, the History Workshop has pursued a theoretical and research trajectory of inquiry centred around the 'local'. This project works with this line of inquiry, which pays attention to the local as a site of contestation through which place, space and social identity are produced, in relation to broader processes (Nieftagodien, 2010).

By drawing on oral history methods, I do not claim a 'historical realism', rooted in empiricism.[43] Rather, I understand life history interviews to be events in themselves, rather than merely accounts of events and as such, require reflexive attentiveness to their processes of production (Lissoni et al., 2010; Minkley & Rassool, 1998; Rassool, 2010). Life histories, as manifestations of memories recounted through particular dialogical processes, enable the meanings of events to emerge as well as descriptions and narrations of experiences, feelings, emotion, and identity, which more formal documentary sources often lack (Haynes, 2006). Memories can be indicative of hopes, desired outcomes, past expectations and shared narratives. Complementing oral history methods, I also drew on aspects of feminist methodology. Key principles implemented included starting from ordinary people's experiences, avoiding stifling and curbing participants' stories and experiences, encouraging their own voices and taking a position of empathy with participants (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

3.4.1 Data Collection

I conducted fieldwork at several sites in and around Lephalale, including the urban centre of Lephalale, Marapong, and its informal settlements, the informal settlement of MaMojela Park, the small town of Steenbokpan, and its surrounding farms and informal settlement known as Leseding, and the 25 villages under the Ga-Seleka Royal Council. Field research was undertaken between July 2015 and July 2017, with follow-up conversations with key

[42] See for example, Bozzoli with Nkotsoe (1991); La Hause (1990); van Onselen (1996); Field (2012); Nieftagodien and Bonner (2008); Bonner and Nieftagodien (2012); and Moloi (2015).
[43] See for example, Rassool's (2010) critique of social history's lack of theoretical engagement.

participants in 2019. Site visits to Lephalale varied from a few days to two weeks to an extended stay of four months.

3.4.1.1 Access

Access to different aspects of daily life in Lephalale was an ongoing process. Through previous political work on leftist platforms, I knew a feminist community activist, Naledi,[44] in Lephalale, who became a key research informant for the project. We stayed together for a period during the initial stages of my research, and she introduced me to community organisations and key community leaders in Marapong, Ga-Seleka and Steenbokpan. Much of this research was possible because of her. This initial contact led to a process of 'snowballing' whereby I came into contact with other activists and community leaders and their networks and organisations. This positioned me in a particular way in the community. As a white outsider, it enabled access to activists who otherwise might have been suspicious of me. It also aligned me with a particular politics in the community, which had the danger of pigeonholing me. I was aware of the need to counter this by following up on further leads and networks and making sure that I spent time doing research on my own, without assistance.

Access to NUMSA was approached through different channels. At the national level, I informed the head office of my research through a written letter and I met with a National Officer in Johannesburg to discuss the research project. At the local level, I located NUMSA's office in Lephalale, introduced myself and began 'hanging out' at the local office. Through this process, I made contact with shop stewards and organisers and once a degree of trust and comradeship had developed, I was able to spend periods of time living with two shop stewards.

I had initially planned to spend time on the Medupi site, which proved to be more impenetrable than expected. The Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM) denied me access as a researcher even though I tried formal requests for access through Medupi Power Station Project's Communications and Stakeholder Relations Managers. Their email in response to my request stated: "Please note that ESKOM does not allow external persons to conduct research on ESKOM as it has its own employees that are PhD students. It is unfortunate that we could not be of help to you and your studies" (7 April 2016). Subsequently, I tried to access Medupi through NUMSA via the full-time shop stewards. They initially agreed to take me on site but

[44] All names of research participants have been protected through the use of pseudonyms.

then retracted as it became clear to them that they would be held responsible for my actions and could be dismissed for any information I released into the public domain. The situation was too precarious, and I also did not want to put them at risk. Eventually I managed to gain access through a friend of a friend who was an engineer on the site. I gained access through the company he worked for and spent a week interviewing workers at the company and going around the site with him. It was limited access but gave me better insight into the dynamics on site and the process revealed the tight security and surveillance measures at Medupi as well as the different levels of job security based on class position and job description. My contact knew that my access to the site through him was somewhat 'fraudulent', but he was also confident that he would not face repercussions, unlike the full-time shop stewards. Access to Matimba Power Station was less tightly controlled and visitors were allowed on-site. I accessed the site through a former NUMSA shop steward. I could not spend any extended time on-site but spent two days interviewing him and shadowing him.

Other methods employed to access everyday life in Lephalale included 'hanging out' and participating in daily life and in political events and meeting people that way. These sites included local restaurants, the gym, the shopping centre, spaza shops and the Medupi Job Information Centres, and events included workshops, protests and community and trade union meetings.

3.4.1.2 Participants

Participants were selected according to non-probability sampling principles. Purposive sampling, with elements of snowball sampling, was utilised (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In order to tap into dimensions of hope as outlined in the research questions, I engaged with a diverse range of participants. Different generations in and around Lephalale, especially older generations from the farmlands and younger generations in search of work, were interviewed. Men and women were engaged with, as everyday life is gendered and thus hope manifests differently. At the workplace, people in different job categories were interviewed, as it was important to capture different types of experience in relation to work – from the outsourced, casualised worker to the permanent 'skilled' worker. Political activists in trade unions and community organisations were interviewed. Community members from different constituencies, such as sex workers, pastors and local councillors were interviewed. In all, I interviewed 111 different people between July 9, 2015, and June 23, 2017, some more than

once, and conducted follow-up conversations into 2019 (see Appendix A and Appendix B for list of interviews and short biographies of key interlocutors).

3.4.1.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation was undertaken in an attempt to capture detailed, in-depth descriptions and insights. This involved living in and observing different sites and aspects of daily life. Participant observation was undertaken at various different kinds of meetings, including meetings of community organisations, trade unions, the Lephalale Development Forum (LDF) run by the municipality, traditional authorities, ESKOM with community representatives, and of the Lephalale Coal and Power Project public scoping meeting. Participant observation was also undertaken at court hearings of community activists, at protest actions against coal, and at different workshops, for example, a Legal Resources Centre (LRC) workshop with Steenbokpan community. I also assisted activists with media statements in the face of state repression and gave presentations on ESKOM at workshops. Participant observation was undertaken at various sites, including the Medupi and Matimba power stations, Medupi Job Information Centres, the Lephalale shopping mall, restaurants in Lephalale, and shebeens and spaza shops in Marapong.

I kept a research journal to record field notes from each day. Notes were taken not only of direct observations and descriptions but also of impressions, affective responses and interpretations (for example, what I found unexpected, devastating, and hopeful). Thereafter, in the journal I also recorded subsequent reflections on the research – reflections on my own positionality, my 'findings' and follow-up questions and leads. On occasion, photographs were also taken, especially as I walked around Marapong and the more rural sites.

3.4.1.4 Interviews

I conducted life history interviews with ESKOM shop stewards, union official, and community activists and residents. Shop stewards were members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and NUMSA and included dismissed and current shop stewards. Community activists belonged to different organisations, including the Waterberg Women's Advocacy Organisation (WWAO); Lephalale Unemployment Forum (LUF); Waterberg Environmental Justice Forum (WEJF); and the Evergreen Arts Centre. For in-depth life history interviews, I used open-ended questions to explore life narratives (see Appendix C for the life history interview schedule). In

all, I conducted 18 life history interviews; their content varied greatly depending on the stories the participants wanted to tell, but they averaged about two hours each in length.

I conducted 53 semi-structured interviews with different community constituencies, such as Medupi job seekers, Medupi and Matimba workers, sex workers, pensioners, social workers, traditional leaders, local councillors, and families affected by the construction of Medupi on grave sites. Semi-structured interviews were often shorter, with limited time, and with a set of basic questions that were part of a conversation (see Appendix D for an example of a semi-structured interview schedule).

I conducted nine focus group interviews with members from different collectives: the WEJF; two old age groups in Marapong; community activists in Thular Park informal settlement; elders in Marapong with land claims; a family affected by Medupi's construction on gravesites; the Ga-Seleka Royal Council; and Fanpan and Leseding groups of women in Steenbokpan. Focus group interviews enabled conversations between participants who were together for a shared grievance, struggle or organisation.

All life history interviews and most focus groups interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent (see Appendix E). Interviews were transcribed by myself, and where necessary, translated and then transcribed by a professional translator/transcriber, *verbatim* with the permission of the participants.[45] Semi-structured, conversational interviews were sometimes not recorded so as to not break rapport and to allow for everyday life to continue, as these interviews were often conducted during activities, such as during the Medupi site visits and speaking to workers or conducting interviews with job seekers outside the Job Information centres. Almost *verbatim* notes were taken by myself during and after such interviews.

During the course of my research, I worked with two research assistants, who sometimes also acted as translators (six interviews were conducted in Setswana and Sepedi with elders). The research assistants were employed for short periods – both for a few days only – as most of the interviews could be conducted in English and I had established adequate research networks. The research assistants were also interviewed as participants in the project and thus were

[45] Where there is significant incommensurability, both Setswana and English interview transcriptions have been included. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 16) writes, "language carries culture, and culture carries… the entire body of values by which we come to perceive our place in the world".

familiar with the research from different perspectives. The research assistants occupied different positions in the community and therefore enabled access to different networks, and were thus part of the generation of knowledge in different ways. As mentioned earlier, one of the research assistants, Naledi, was a woman activist involved in environmental and feminist movements, and the other, Tshepo, was a male dismissed NUM shop steward who used to work at Medupi – both were unemployed at the time of the research. I spent significantly more time with the Naledi, with whom I had a prior relationship, than with Tshepo. Understanding translators and research assistants, not as neutral transmitters of information, but rather as embedded in community relations and generative of knowledge, means it is important to reflect on their role, as Bogusia Temple and Alys Young (2004, p. 164) argue "[t]he final text in English writes out the terms on which it was produced". Reflecting the role of translator, they go on to state, "[t]he translator always makes her mark on the research, whether this is acknowledged or not, and in effect some kind of 'hybrid' role emerges in that, at the very least, the translator makes assumptions about meaning equivalence that make her an analyst and cultural broker as much as a translator" (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 171).

Translators and research assistants are situated within differentiated communities and are positioned differently in such. Even though the two research assistants/translators on this project were only employed for very limited periods, they also had influence over the project as key informants. Furthermore, I spent time 'hanging out' with them beyond the employment duration and thus came to understand better their positionality and intellectual and political biographies and investments. The first research assistant/translator, Naledi, was deeply invested in feminist and anti-coal political projects and had become alienated from the ANC and institutionalised power in the area. Through her, I connected with the more marginalised in Lephalale and my research interactions in the community were also an opportunity for her to mobilise her political commitments amongst community members and gain more information for such projects – the presence of a researcher can allow for conversations with community members that might be more difficult under other circumstances and can provide political opportunities for local activists. Tshepo was more deeply embedded in institutional power through the ANC and NUM but had also become somewhat alienated from such networks through his process of dismissal at Medupi and the lack of solidarity in the aftermath. His networks were largely with male elders in Marapong and he utilised the research process to mobilise elders around land claims – some of his investments are discussed later in terms of how he translated the interviews. As such, the research assistants/translators shaped the research

process and the generation of knowledge. They were not merely transmitters of information but rather political actors in the research process.

3.4.1.5 Documentary Sources

Interviews were complemented with multiple documentary sources. Articles on Medupi and Lephalale were searched on multiple online media platforms from national and local publications such as, *Mail & Guardian*; *Eye Witness News* (EWN); *Sowetan*; the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC); *The Star*; *Business Report*; *Mogol Pos* (Heartbeat of the Bushveld); and *Northern News*. Online adverts regarding Lephalale were reviewed, from property news, private security companies, to the Lephalale Mall and recreational activities. Online media platforms were examined by searching for key terms, such as Lephalale; Marapong; and Medupi; and within local publications, terms such as, employment; Medupi; development; strikes; protests; and demobbing.

Online press statements were examined from entities such as National government, local government, ESKOM, Hitachi, Grootegeluk mine and trade unions, especially NUMSA. Government documents were consulted from local municipality reports, such as Integrated Development Plans, Annual Reports and newsletters, to Department of Labour reports on Medupi, to Heritage Impact Assessments and Housing Development Agency reports.

Minutes of meetings were consulted in an adhoc fashion depending on what I was given access to. Matimba meeting minutes between management and trade unions were consulted between the years 1995 and 1998. Some of the Lephalale Local Community Forum minutes and documents between 2014 and 2015 were made available to me. Labour and community relations were analysed in these documents.

Several archival databases were consulted: the African Historical Maps collection, housed at the University of Cape Town (UCT) Libraries Digital Collections, for any nineteenth and twentieth century maps of the wider Waterberg region; the NUMSA collection housed at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) Historical Papers for documents related broadly to political visions and programmes as well as documents related to the Waterberg region; the digital Anglo-Boer archives; and the digital archives of the of Witwatersrand Historical Papers,

the *Rand Daily Mail* and SA Media regarding the history of the space of the Waterberg.[46] The archives were approached with an understanding of the partiality of the archive and the archive as not merely a repository of historical sources but as a historical artefact in and of itself. Documentary sources were primarily used to supplement ethnographic research.

3.4.2 Data Management and Analysis

Fieldwork data in the form of field notes, audio recordings and transcriptions were stored, managed and analysed. First, audio recordings were transferred from the digital recording device and then deleted from the device. Second, data was de-identified through the use of interview codes. Third, data was stored and categorised according to participants' organisational affiliations and positions within the locality (e.g. Medupi shop steward; WWAO activist; LUF member etc.). Fourth, data was coded through an inductive approach. Themes emerged from the data such as graves and ancestors; land and evictions; Medupi and development; corruption; the meaning of work; consumption; political organisations and political action; and personal dreams and aspirations. Narratives of particular characters and community organisations were also written up. It is understood that narratives of the past and future are never told in isolation – they are not about a singular atomised self, making her way through the world. Rather, narratives are understood to be constructed in and constitutive of particular social, economic, political and historical contexts and to draw on available social resources to make meaning (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

The analysis entailed an iterative process between a close reading of the data and engagement with theory. After the initial scouring through the data in order to develop themes, the data was coded again in an attempt to capture and analyse how hope was operating in different lives, social relations, spaces and places. Working with Bloch's (1986) dialectical method and aspects of Levitas's (2013) speculative sociology, I sifted through the details of everyday lives in order to identify relations to futurity as indicators of hope. These included expressions of lack, which related to dreams, desires, aspirations, expectations and collective political demands and claims on the future. In analysing these 'forward' motions, I also paid attention to relations to the past and conditions of stasis or 'stuckness'. I delineated the content of such relations to futurity, the objects of attachment and the spaces in which such forward motions were generated (e.g. the

[46] Some of the follow-up archival work was conducted during the Covid-19 lockdown period and was therefore limited to digital archives.

home, mall, workplace, organisational spaces). I was therefore attentive to social relations to time and space in everyday life. I then related my analysis to the two concepts of hope – reproductive hope and transformative hope – that I developed. I noted where possibilities of rupture and transformation were generated and where such possibilities were more limited. In other words, I noted where there were investments in the given order of things and where there were refusals and rejections of such that opened up possibilities for transformations of subjectivities, social relations and the existing space-times.

3.5 Unresolved Methodological and Ethical Research Issues

Ian Parker (2005) argues that the ethics of research needs to be reframed such that each stage of the research process is conceptualised as a 'moral-political act'. Similarly, Burawoy (2009) highlights the power dynamics one is embroiled in when undertaking participant observation research. Burawoy (2009, pp. 56-57) argues that researchers "cannot avoid domination, both dominating and being dominated… As participants in sites invested with hierarchies, competing ideologies, and struggles over resources, we are trapped in networks of power". Furthermore, however we frame the research as for a cause of social justice greater than ourselves, "there is no escaping the elementary divergence between intellectuals, no matter how organic, and the interests of their declared constituency" (Burawoy, 2009, p. 57). Thus we are both subject to power relations and create power relations through our research.

This brings one to another aspect of Palaganas et al.'s (2017, p. 433) typology of reflexivity – that of "critical reflexivity" which entails "unravelling political and social constructions in research". From this critical standpoint, it is the task of the researcher to unravel the power relations that constructed the research process and generated knowledge. This also entails addressing ethical and political issues that arose during the process (Koch & Harrington, 1998; Palaganas et al., 2017).

As a white, middle class outsider, complexities of language, culture, race, class, gender and identity as a researcher affected the relations that I was part of constituting through the research process and through the knowledge generated. My 'outsider' status was only partially addressed through extended time I spent in the area, while my identification as a 'comrade' in struggle enabled activists to speak more openly to me about their political activities in a context permeated by suspicion and mistrust. For the first phase of my research I used public transport

and stayed in Marapong or with shop stewards in the town and villages. This was a more immersive process but became too emotionally exhausting and there were some safety concerns, especially when walking around the informal settlement alone and being followed to where I was staying on at least one occasion. While it allowed me to gain some insights, this approach was not sustainable. Thus during my extended stay, I resided in the urban centre and used private transport. But throughout the research, I experienced constant tension regarding how far to go in attempting to build trust as a political actor and the need to embrace the identity of an 'outsider', for the purposes of research.

What became clear during the research process was the constitution of hope/ desire/ expectation/ possibility through my research interactions, which raised both ethical and political challenges in a grossly unequal, racialised and patriarchal society. Some of this was obvious at the time, but in other situations it only became obvious later when interviews were translated from recordings, as opposed to relying on translations during the course of the interview. This also made evident the linguistic limitations of my research and its fragmentary temporal nature, whereby some ideas and remarks were only understood after the interviews. Instances of the generation of hope and desire through my research interactions can be categorised as, appeals for assistance, political demands, and sexualised desire.

Hope for some amelioration for research participants' living conditions was evident in requests for jobs, for a business partner or money to set up businesses. Some examples of such interactions follow:
I received a phone call from unemployed worker who I met at an anti-coal protest to propose starting a company with me (Field notes, 16 May 2016).

I gave a lift to an unemployed worker from Marapong to town to submit his curriculum vitae at the Medupi Job Information Centre after a Lephalale Unemployment Forum meeting. He had moved to Lephalale in 2013 for a job at Medupi, contracted through Murray and Roberts, but only worked for one year and two months before being told that the job was finished. He had not been able to find work since then. He explained that he has a nine year old child who lives in Polokwane but it is too expensive to go and visit her. He proposed working as a gardener for me for 20 rand per day (Field notes, 1 September 2016).

In other interactions with community members in Marapong, hope for assistance with community projects was also generated. A local pastor stated that he asked God to help the community and then I arrived. He requested that I assist in setting up community projects (Interview, Lebohang, 13 April 2016). Similarly, a pensioners group requested assistance in finding a financial sponsor for their old age care organisation: "You see when they are old people you have to at least make sure that before they go home they have bathed and they had eaten. You see that will be a good thing, isn't it? … If there is somebody who can come and build maybe three rooms" (Interview, Caroline, 24 May 2017).

In the above scenarios, ethical and political issues are raised regarding the ethics of entering into a space as a researcher in the context of vast class and race inequalities such that possibilities and hopes are generated in people's imaginaries that cannot be fulfilled. Despite my ongoing delineation of my powers and capacities, which were mainly limited to being able to listen to people and assist active community organisations with some writing and research, these hopes were still generated and I was left with questions regarding the implications of being part of people's cycles of hopes and disappointments in a country ravaged by deferred and failed dreams.

In other instances, political demands, as opposed to appeals, were made on me to bring publicity to people's plights, in the context of research participants' reading me as connected to institutions and power. For example, Tshepo, during interviews with elderly people who wanted to claim their land back, stated to the participants:

> "What I am saying is because you guys don't have document like Mr. April, let's say tomorrow when we come back from Steenbok Pan, you will come with your claim forms and those ones from the Human Rights Commission and then when she goes back our issue can be on the news. And then after it has been published in the newspapers, then E-TV people, I am saying she must get E-TV people to come with their big camera. So tomorrow when we leave Steenbokpan I will call you so that we can come and meet here again. And then you will come with your documents and she will take pictures of them"[47] (Interview, Tshepo, 17 May 2017).

In another interview, a traditional healer placed demands on me to contact people in positions of power and to come back to Lephalale to work once I had graduated so that I contribute to the area where I did my research. This was framed as an injunction, with the hope that I could

[47] I was only aware of these exact words when the interviews were later translated into English.

improve daily life for people in Lephalale. The following is a conversation between the translator, traditional healer and myself:[48]

Traditional healer:	*[Setswana] When it comes to education uh...because she wants to know what she is going to say to the top guys right? But for them to see this apartheid they must come and work here. Not take the information here and say "Lephalale is like this and that without coming to work here.*
Translator:	*What she is doing is that they are writing a book like history …*
Traditional healer:	*I understand fully but they should not only write books and teach other people there.*
Translator:	*She is still in school right?*
Traditional healer:	*I am not denying that but there are others that she can tell to come to Lephalale, to come and stay here in Lephalale. We have a civil rights commission right? And we have a human rights commission right? She can get there tell them, 'Go to Lephalale to come and stay in Lephalale'. These people come from the top right?*
Translator:	*Uh huh.*
Traditional healer:	*They take their information from us right. They make a living out of that right? But we are still suffering here.*
Translator:	*Uh huh.*
Traditional healer:	*This lady must understand what I want, you understand.*
Translator:	*Uh huh.*
Traditional healer:	*We gave her information right and I don't work with that information…. The ground level is here but most people come from Jo'burg in parliament uh they will come here locally and get advice from us. After they got the advice, they get an input but what about those people? You forget them. [Shift to English] You are in school now right, in university?*
Me:	*Yes.*
Traditional healer:	*When you finish the university uh and which university do you attend?*
Me:	*Wits.*
Traditional healer:	*It's Wits University okay. When you finish school uh tell them that you are coming to work in Lephalale. Don't look for a job in Gauteng or overseas because you got the information here for you to pass your subjects. We give people advices but after that we get nothing. We are still in the apartheid system.*
Me:	*Uh huh.*
Traditional healer:	*I am not fighting with you but I am telling you what you must do, we want you here, you must be our advisor. You must come and work here and not take our input and use it for other people.* (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).

While I could not commit to getting a job in Lephalale, I acknowledged the problem of extractivist forms of research and committed to continuing to work in the area, which I feel

[48] Again, some of this was only translated into English later.

obligated to do beyond the completion of this project. Through the above interactions it is evident that despite my preferred identity as a political activist-researcher, I was positioned (in some interactions) as an outsider with assumed access to resources and connections of power. The role of the research assistant/translator, as discussed earlier, was also significant in the power-laden generation of knowledge and expectations. There were differences between the research assistants/translators in terms of hopes and expectations generated through the research process. Naledi, who I had a substantial relationship with, was better aware of my positionality and we were able to productively work together on the generation of media statements, research information and small acts of resource distribution, such as food for focus groups from my research funds. Tshepo, the research assistant/translator in the above interaction, however, positioned me less as a peer/fellow activist, and more as a resourced outsider. These interactions demonstrate the complexity of how researchers are "complicit in power configurations and [the] need to discuss how we deal with this, how we engage with the realities we generate and study" (Brandt & Josefsson, 2017, p. 31).

Through some of the processes of my fieldwork, hope was also connected to desire, sexuality and gender in my interactions with men in the field. Thus far, I have mainly focused on power as embedded in the researcher who is often seen as having greater access to information, resources, networks or the like. But I argue that power dynamics are always relational, as feminist scholars have particularly highlighted. As researchers, for example, we often find ourselves dependent on others in order to generate meaningful research – these others are often men in positions of power within their communities (Billo & Hiemstra, 2013; Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007; Kaspar & Landolt, 2014). Femke Brandt and Jenny Josefsson (2017) argue that sexualities shape interactions in the field and what knowledge is generated as a consequence and furthermore, that this is an emotionally entangled and complex situation. Heidi Kaspar and Sara Landolt (2014, p. 108) posit that "the invocation and enactment of sexuality is far more common than is reflected in the current body of literature, and that even apparently innocuous sexualisations have considerable effect on the way gender and sexuality are negotiated during the research encounter, and thus on the collection of data". In the South African context, dynamics of sexuality are intertwined with racial dynamics to produce particular arrangements of power (Kaspar & Landolt, 2014). This was the case especially in Lephalale and surrounds where racist hierarchies are deeply entrenched in the make-up of the landscape.

I related my experiences to those of Brandt and Josefsson (2017, p. 29), though different, I shared their experience of "tolerating behaviour we otherwise would not accept, or placing ourselves in situations that were intimidating and potentially harmful" because being in the field shifted the way I interacted and engaged with people. Below I describe three instances that particularly stand out as racialised and sexualised interactions in the field.

First, a full-time, male shop steward at Medupi propositioned a sexual relationship with me while hanging out in a group at a shebeen in Marapong after a NUMSA meeting. Instead of refusing outright, I was evasive and said we should focus on a friendship. In my mind, I did not want to be too boundaried or harsh as this may have affected 'access' in the field. Second, another male trade union official proposed that I find a white wife for him – either myself or a friend of mine. I approached the proposition with curiosity, in an attempt to understand what the desire for a white wife represented, and again was not stern in response but 'laughed it off.' Third, in a context of desire mixed with domination, I was sexually harassed by a Medupi shop steward after interviewing him. In this situation, even though I felt violated, I moved between refusing his advances and thinking that as a researcher exploring hope, I need to be analytic of his desires, and try to distance myself from the immediate and harmful situation. When I got home, I recorded exactly what he had said to me in my field notes, keeping a record of his desire as somehow connected to a form of hope. My own experience affirmed that the enactment of sexualities in the field can be part of the process of data generation but can also lead to ethical and political dilemmas and potentially harmful situations (Brandt & Josefsson, 2017; Ross, 2015).

As a project on hope, and of hope, it is significant to note that hopes were generated, and disappointed, in the process of research. These hopes were not only my own but also those of the research participants' and research assistants', which manifested differently, given the complexities of South Africa's unequal society, and raise political and ethical dilemmas with no simple or easy resolutions. Research that employs fieldwork, especially participant observation, compels us, as researchers, to think through the ethics of our research, the relations constituted and the nature of accountability (Burawoy, 2009). Spending time in the research field and with research participants and assistants, beyond structured activities, can assist one in unravelling and better understanding processes of the generation of hopes and knowledge through power-laden interactions. The lens of 'hope as method' affords an opportunity to engage with these issues from epistemological and ethico-political perspectives.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the epistemological, methodological and ethical implications of a conceptualisation of 'hope as method' for my own research and thinking. I have engaged with hope through personal reflexivity and through epistemological reflexivity, two concepts that continued to shape my analysis of the data in the chapters that follow. In keeping with critical ethnography, I engaged in a reflexive exercise by charting my own hope through the research process and reflecting critically on the relational construction of hope through the research process. I then detailed my data collection methodology by drawing on critical ethnography and the extended case method. I went on to describe in more detail the actual process of data collection – access, participants and data collection methods. Thereafter I described how I sorted and analysed the data and worked with methodological and ethical issues that arose in the course of this research project. With regard to ethical issues, I reflected on how the research process and related interactions were shaped by unequal power relations perceived primarily through raced, classed and gendered subjectivities. Despite this, and while clearly not always possible, throughout the research project, I hoped to contribute to the generation of transformative hopes through its intersubjective interactions, with a view towards a "commitment to the future" (Bloch, 1986, p. 7).

In the data chapters that follow, there are two 'space' chapters and three 'hope' chapters. However, as argued in Chapter 2, space and time are not ontologically distinct and thus, are brought into conversation with each other throughout, with different emphases. I engage in both archaeological and architectural modes at different points, while also thinking through the ontological implications of my analysis. In the next chapter, I introduce the space of Lephalale and the Waterberg and engage in an exercise in architectural thinking.

CHAPTER 4: INTRODUCING LEPHALALE

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce and briefly map the space of Lephalale and the Waterberg. I invite the reader to travel with me into the Waterberg as I paint some first impressions of the area. I employ Lefebvre's (1991b, p. 65) regressive-progressive method, starting with present realities, and subsequently working backwards in order to understand the genesis of the present moment, and then retracing one's steps again: "The production of space, having attained the conceptual and linguistic level, acts retroactively upon the past, disclosing aspects and moments of the hitherto uncomprehended. The past appears in a different light, and hence the process whereby the past becomes the present also takes on another aspect". In starting with present realities, I draw on my own field notes[49] as well as municipal reports and previous research – such as that of Mosa Phadi and Joel Pearson's (2018) research on Lephalale Local Municipality and Sibusiso Molefe's (2018) research on housing development in Lephalale. I also utilise the theoretical framings of critical spatial theory, including Gavin Bridge's (2001) no-place *(ou-topia*)/ good-place (*eu-topia*) dialectic for spaces of resource extraction, and utilise Levitas's (2013) architectural method in imagining how the Waterberg might appear 50 years into the future.

4.2 Mapping Lephalale and Surrounds

Below, I introduce Lephalale and surrounds by mapping key urban nodes, villages, infrastructure projects and landscape markers. I also provide some overview of the demographics of the area and outline key contradictions and points of contestation in the area.

The name Lephalale is derived from the Setswana meaning 'to flow'. The Lephalale Local Municipality is located in the north-western part of Waterberg District Municipality of Limpopo Province, South Africa. Lephalale Municipality borders with four other local municipalities, Blouberg, Modimolle, Mogalakwena and Thabazimbi municipalities. It also forms part of the border between South Africa and Botswana. It is the largest municipality in the Limpopo Province, comprising an area of 14 000 kilometres squared (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008). The main cultural groups in the area are Bapedi (also known as Northern

[49] Field notes are dated if they refer to a specific conversation or event, and are un-dated where they reflect an accumulation of observations over several dates.

Basotho), Batswana and white Afrikaner, though demographics have shifted dramatically due to the recent economic changes, as people stream into the municipality in the hope of finding employment (and) opportunities in the 'new Johannesburg' (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016c).



Figure 1: Map of Lephalale Municipality (adapted from Britannica, 2021; Municipalities of South Africa, 2021)

Driving north from Johannesburg on the N1 highway, taking the Modimolle turnoff after nearly 200 kilometres, and after the small town of Modimolle, one follows the winding R33 road through the hot Limpopo bushveld, surrounded on both sides by expansive farms, private game reserves and spectacular hills and mountains. The area is arid and isolated, with a mountain range on the south-west border. The road takes one through the expansive Waterberg mountain range, passing through another small town, Vaalwater, and thereafter through what seems to be endless bushveld.

Coming up over a hill, looking down onto Lephalale, in the distance, surrounded by bushveld, two massive coal power stations penetrate the landscape. At night, the giant construction of Medupi Power Station, with red and yellow lights and smoke emitting, resembles a spaceship from a science fiction movie. Medupi is the taller and more impressive of the two; Matimba Power Station is older and smaller, but no less technologically impressive for its time.



Figure 2: Medupi Power Station under construction (Lephalale Municipality, 2013b)

Down the hill, and over the Moloko River ('The Surge'), which runs through Lephalale and into the Limpopo River, forming the border with Botswana, is the Lephalale turnoff on the right (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008). The town of Lephalale, comprised of three urban nodes, Ellisras, Onverwacht and Marapong, is located approximately 40 kilometres from the border of Botswana (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016c). In terms of its spatial organisation, Lephalale Municipality extends beyond the town to include 38 sparsely scattered villages, a few informal settlements, and farm areas (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a; Monaledi, 2016). The rural villages cover an area of 600 kilometres squared, approximately 65 kilometres from Lephalale town (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a). Despite the increased urbanisation, approximately 65 per cent of the population still live in rural villages or farms located outside the town (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016c).

Arriving in Lephalale town, the first building on one's left is *Palm Springs*, recently constructed as an 'oasis' of green with a hotel and two restaurants, predominantly for engineers, contractors

and consultants visiting to work on the mega-projects in the Waterberg area. Signs on the roadside advertise construction companies, rental agencies, and game reserves amongst other services and products. Driving into the town and taking the first left down the long main road, now named Nelson Mandela Drive, mostly black men stand, waiting, at corners, hoping to be picked up for piecemeal day jobs. Alongside them, recent development is epitomised in new apartment blocks and housing to accommodate people migrating to the town to work (Field notes).

The town discursively positions itself as the first major post-apartheid new urban centre, and projects an image of itself as the coal mining and petrochemical city of the future (Mgojo, 2016). Medupi Power Station embodied an expectation for Lephalale to become the first post-apartheid city and the potential to become the "future hub of power generation in South Africa" and even Africa (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016c, p. 9; Monama, 2020). Somewhat ironically, Medupi translates from Sepedi as "rain that soaks parched lands, giving economic relief" (ESKOM, 2014b, p. 1). The new spatial developments are influenced by the increased practices of extractivism in the area, making the municipality one of the fastest growing in the country and shifting the demographics of the area (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016c). The construction of Medupi Power Station, and related infrastructure, led to an economic boom in the area. The economy grew rapidly from -6.1 per cent in 2009[50] to 1.0 per cent in 2011, in comparison to metros nationally, which grew from -1.4 per cent to 2.7 per cent (Housing Development Agency, 2013). Of the eight metropolitan municipalities in South Africa, only Ekurhuleni and the City of Johannesburg showed a higher rate of economic growth (Housing Development Agency, 2013). This growth, according to Bay Estates, transformed Lephalale into one of the fastest developing business nodes in Africa (Molefe, 2018).

According to the last Statistics South Africa (2012) census, the municipality had a population of 115 768 people in 2011, which represented a 36 per cent population growth between 2001 and 2011. The population of Lephalale Municipality continued to grow to an estimated 140 240 in 2016, an increase of 21.1 per cent in the five years since 2011. Statistics South Africa's (2018b) Community Survey in 2016 also showed that the Waterberg District experienced the highest population growth between 2011 and 2016 in the Limpopo province, with an increase

[50] In 2009, the Treasury of South Africa stated that for the first time since 1992, the country was in a recession due to the global financial crisis. See, for instance, Svarfar and Ncube (2009).

of 9.8 per cent. This data suggests that the construction of Medupi Power Station, despite nearing completion, continues to be a point of attraction for job seekers.

According to the 2011 census, young people between the ages of 15 and 34 represented the largest proportion of the population within the municipal area at 43 per cent. Women comprise 54 per cent of the population of Limpopo, but Lephalale Municipality has a dominance of men, constituting more than 54 per cent of the population (Statistics South Africa, 2012). The 2016 Community Survey projected a 21.8 per cent increase in the male population compared with a 13.5 per cent increase in the female population since 2011 (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019). According to the municipality, this gender differentiation is explained by the high prevalence of contract workers and professionals coming into the area to seek job opportunities in male dominated sectors, such as mining and construction (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a).

Despite the rapid population increase and urbanisation, which may have led to greater spatial integration, the spatial geography of Lephalale remains divided and fragmented along race and class (as well as historical inter-class) lines, thus perpetuating apartheid spatial planning. According to Phadi and Pearson (2018, p. 12), Lephalale is "visibly patchy; large tracts of land separate the residential areas of Ellisras, Onverwacht and Marapong. The villages are between 40 to 70 kilometres away". These divisions have a long history and are perpetuated through continued uneven and fragmented development (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). Since the construction of Medupi Power Station began in 2007, the expansion of Lephalale has reproduced spatial divides between Ellisras and Onverwacht, two different urban nodes. Ellisras is the oldest business node of the town while much of the new business has developed in Onverwacht, closer to Medupi Power Station and Grootegeluk mine (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). The recently expanded main arterial, Nelson Mandela Drive cuts through the middle of the town, dividing the Ellisras and Onverwacht nodes and providing access to Medupi, Matimba, Exxaro's Grootegeluk coal mine and Marapong.

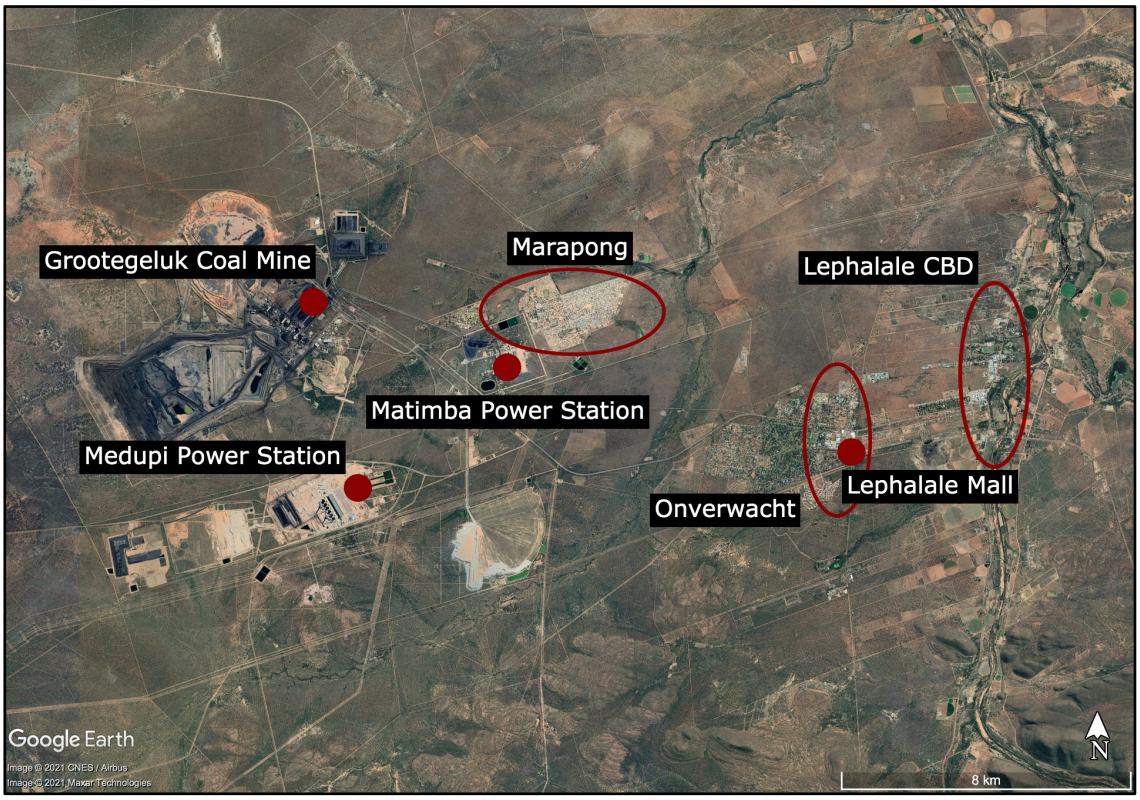

Figure 3: Map of different urban nodes and mega-projects in Lephalale (adapted from Google Earth Pro, 2020)

The recent mega-project developments have led to expansions in retail development, reflecting national trends in increasing finance and retail investments as well as an increasing proliferation of precarity of the work in service and construction sectors. The Lephalale shopping mall, 'our place of pride', was first opened in 2012 and houses national and global chains and brands. A number of businesses moved from the older business district of Ellisras to the new mall in Onverwacht (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). In the previously whites only suburb of Onverwacht are other recreational facilities, such as the Mogol Club, which houses the well-known Mogol Club golf course. On the same side of town, further into the bushveld, is the biggest indoor gym in Africa, Srix Zone Health and Fitness Lephalale, frequented mostly by men, black and white, who work on the mega-projects (Field notes). The gym prides itself in being the biggest in Africa, (re)producing masculinist images of strong men working on large-scale industrial structures in the bushveld. New guesthouses, pubs and bars have also mushroomed in Onverwacht (Field notes).

The existing housing in Lephalale was insufficient to provide for the expansion that has taken place since the construction of Medupi. Alongside insufficient housing, Lephalale has

experienced water shortages, inadequate sewerage system capacities and power shortages (Molefe, 2018). Housing in the areas of Ellisras and Onverwacht has become increasingly expensive, making housing options for lower income earners unaffordable. In 2014, in the initial phases of the boom, Lephalale was the most costly town in the country to rent property (Payprop, 2015). This surge in property and rental prices is partly due to the housing subsidies ESKOM provides for its workers and also due to property speculation (Phadi & Pearson, 2018).

ESKOM's property portfolio in Lephalale comprises 995 houses and 321 flats, which were developed by private contractors (Molefe, 2018). In addition, ESKOM has set up a number of 'contractors' villages', which are single-sex hostels accommodating nearly 7000 workers (Molefe, 2018). It was reported in a speech by former president Jacob Zuma (2015) that ESKOM spent 950 million rand to construct this housing for 6715 workers. The 'villages' are also referred to as 'camps' or 'compounds' by workers (Field notes). The 'villages' for 'unskilled' workers consist of small, shared, container-like structures and are tightly controlled and securitised (Field notes). Visitors, including family members, cannot sleep over and need written permission from ESKOM prior to visitation in order to access the premises (Field notes). In contrast, ESKOM commissioned private developers to construct high-income estates, such as Imbani, Silvercharm and Ledibeng Eco-Estate (Molefe, 2018). The Imbani Villages are five villages that comprise 320 houses. They are described as 'high-income clusters', with a boundary wall around them and one access point, often with a physical barrier or security guards to control access (Molefe, 2018). Ledibeng Eco-Estate is located on the outskirts of Onverwacht on 635 hectares. It was developed by Gauteng-based Cranbrook property management company and ESKOM owns 350 homes for 'skilled' ESKOM workers and contractors and a further 200 are earmarked for ESKOM management (Molefe, 2018). The estate is highly securitised, with access control at the entrance, but with freedom of movement for residents and visitors. Residents of the estate live in shared or single housing, with bird and game viewing from one's doorstep (Field notes). In addition, Exxaro's Lephalale Housing Project has constructed 740 environmentally-friendly homes in Onverwacht and Marapong to accommodate the expansion of Grootegeluk mine. A number of townhouse complexes and private estates and villages have also cropped up in Onverwacht and Ellisras, such as the gated-communities of Mopani Estate and Marula Security Village – both situated in Ellisras (Molefe, 2018).

These housing developments have produced and reproduced spatial exclusion for the majority of Lephalale residents. Housing development has been driven by the private sector and the development of gated communities and estates has produced fragmentation and segregation (Molefe, 2018). There are also re-creations of apartheid-style compounds or hostels, in a different form, through the development of the 'contractors' villages'. The creation of contrasting spaces of surveillance and spaces of luxury through housing developments are produced by, and in turn produce particular social relations, including ongoing race and class divisions and hierarchies.

Travelling from Ellisras and Onverwacht, black, working class men and women stand alongside the main road waiting to catch taxis to where they reside in Marapong, 17 kilometres outside of the main business centres. There is only one main road, Nelson Mandela Drive, lined by bushveld on either side, which leaves the town, extending to the Stockpoort Border Post with Botswana. The road splits left towards Medupi Power Station; at the turnoff to Medupi are stationed buses, taxis, and sometimes police and private security, such as Vetus Schola's armoured vehicles. Traffic begins early in the morning, from 4.30 am, with long lines of cars on the single road leaving the town for the industrial projects of Medupi Power Station, Exxaro coal mine, and Matimba Power Station. Traffic congestion has become a problem for the first time in the area, as the projects have altered the rhythm of life and daily movement of thousands of people (Field notes).

To the left of Nelson Mandela Drive, protruding from the landscape, is Medupi Power Station. Medupi is heralded as "a living monument of the commitment, ability and tenacity of the ANC's objective of creating a better life for all" (Brown, 2015, p. n.p.). The boiler house stands at 130 metres in height, equivalent to Sandton City in Johannesburg, with the chimney commanding a height of 220 metres. Steel, supplied by South African contractors such as Robor Structural Solutions (recently bought by the UK based investment company, Tiso Blackstar Group), has been used in the construction of the power station in greater quantities than for the world's tallest building in Dubai (the Burj) (Brown, 2015; Mawson, 2015). The power station will use 16 million tons of coal per year when it is running at full production, a large portion of which will come from Grootegeluk coal mine (Greyling, 2018). Once completed, Medupi will be the fourth largest coal plant and largest dry-cooled power station in the world. ESKOM boasts that Medupi is the first of its kind, 'a pioneer' (ESKOM, 2014b). According to Brown (2015, p. n.p.), this "mega-project contributed to the creation of the first post-apartheid town".



Figure 4: ESKOM leaves behind a "great legacy" in Marapong (Image by Thembi Luckett, 2016)

On the other side of the main road, Nelson Mandela Drive, and over the railway line, is the older power station, Matimba Power Station (Tsonga word for 'power'). Further down the road is an intersection, left to Exxaro coal mine, and right to Marapong – the previously black housing location for Matimba and the coal mine. Marapong is located about 17 kilometres from Onverwacht and 21 kilometres from Ellisras business district (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2013a). There is only one road in and out of Marapong, which curves around the back of Matimba, instead of running directly from the business nodes of Ellisras and Onverwacht. As such, shopping trips and transport to and from town are more expensive and time-consuming for residents of Marapong, and simultaneously, control and surveillance of the area of Marapong is easier. Phadi and Pearson (2018, p. 12) argue that the "distance that divides Marapong and Onverwacht… stems from a legacy of segregationist town-planning, which ensured that there was a buffer between the black township and the white suburb." The buffer zone is reproduced as the prospect of a new mine being developed in the buffer prevents the possibility of social and urban integration. The municipality states that the mining development in this zone will ensure a "final barrier" to integration (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019, p. 53).

On the way to Marapong, large mounds of coal, waiting to be loaded, can be seen at the back of Matimba Power Station. Exxaro's Grootegeluk coal mine supplies 3 580 tons of coal per hour to Matimba Power Station. From the stockpile coal, coal is transported via terrace conveyors to Matimba's six turbo-generator units. Each of the six boilers stand at 100 metres high, weigh 3 000 tons, and consume 7 680 tons of coal per day. Together, the six boilers generate 4 000 megawatts of electricity (ESKOM, 2018).

Opposite Matimba, on the other side of the road, is another tightly controlled housing 'compound' or 'village' for Medupi workers. Further along, Nelsonskop Primary School and Phegelelo Senior Secondary School are on the left and a small shopping centre is on the right with a Spar as the main feature. A liquor store, Pep, Chinese shop, OK Furniture store, Standard Bank, ABSA, Nedbank and Capitec Bank Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), the recent opening of Ackermans, as well as other small shops make up the shopping complex. The tar road winds past another school, Tlelelo Secondary School, and other sections of Marapong. Children and youth walk along and hang out on the streets. Spaza shops sell avocadoes, tomatoes, sweets, peanuts, cool drinks and airtime, and taverns are found along the road and on the corners (Field notes). Some households have converted parts of their homes into income generation activities, such as spaza shops, hair salons, and rental accommodations (Molefe, 2018). Marapong has expanded to include four extensions. The first Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses[51] were built in the early 2000s and informal shacks, with no water, electricity and sewerage system, increasingly line dirt roads, off the main tar roads. A settlement of tin shacks, on sandy terrain, lie under the shadow and smoke of Matimba Power Station (Field notes).

[51] RDP houses were built as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was a socio-economic policy implemented in 1994 by the government of former President Nelson Mandela. The programme included infrastructure development such as housing, water, sanitation and electricity (Department of Human Settlements, 2020). RDP projects in Marapong in the early years of democracy included the rehabilitation of streets, the provision of mass refuse containers, upgrading stormwater drainage and sewerage treatment (Mayor's Office, 1996).



Figure 5: Spaza shop in Marapong (Image by Thembi Luckett, 2016)

As mentioned, housing needs have increased dramatically in the past ten years, and with few options available for affordable housing, shack settlements and backroom accommodations have proliferated in the area, with a growing small-scale, private rental market in Marapong (Phadi & Pearson, 2018; Molefe, 2018). One casual worker, living in Thular Park informal settlement in Marapong, explained that Exxaro owns the land that they moved onto: "they said we mustn't stay here but we forced them to let us stay here" (Interview, Kabelo, 13 April 2016). In Marapong, there is the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" (Bayat, 1997, p. xii) – on a daily basis, the unemployed and underemployed claim space in order to survive. The Municipal Manager stated that Marapong did not have informal settlements before 2007 but "because of Medupi, within one year the whole area was invaded" (cited in Pearson & Phadi, 2018, p. 17). In a meeting of the Lephalale Development Forum (LDF) Environmental Group, the municipal manager joked, "How cruel should we be?" in relation to an issue of evictions of 'unlawful' settlements (Field notes, 22 February 2017). The income generation activities and strategies to obtain accommodation by residents of Marapong are thus viewed as illegitimate by some government officials (Molefe, 2018).



Figure 6: "No shacks" in Marapong (Image by Agnes Nygren, 2015)

As mentioned, some of the informal settlements have developed on land owned by Exxaro, which Exxaro refused to donate or sell to the municipality but instead made temporarily available. Exxaro agreed to lease the land to the municipality and to provide temporary infrastructure such that when people leave, once Medupi has been completed, the land will still be in their hands (Monama, 2020). This is indicative of the continuing dominance of private landowners in the area as Marapong is encircled by private landowners, particularly Exxaro and ESKOM (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). Within the outer limit of the urban area of Lephalale, only 9.2 per cent belongs to government (not at municipal level), 13.6 per cent to ESKOM, 20.7 per cent to Exxaro and the remaining 56.4 per cent belongs to private individuals (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019).

In 2008, the Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs and the Department of Land Affairs managed to purchase Altoostyd farm from a private landowner in order to build mixed-income housing as a government initiated housing development project to the west of Onverwacht. The plan was to build 5 000 mixed income housing units with a budget of R1.2 billion each year for three years, and thereafter to make provision for rental housing (Monama, 2020). The Municipality states that "[t]he aim of the project is to integrate housing and to provide low to middle income residents with an

opportunity to own or rent homes close to the CBD" (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016b, p. 8). In 2015, the Housing Development Agency requested a feasibility study to determine whether there is a gap for the development of residential and business units in the proposed development, suggesting that an output was proclaimed before a feasibility study had been undertaken. Provincial government took over the project after the Municipality's incapacity and lack of funds to develop the project from the ground up (Monama, 2020). At the time of the research, no houses had been built and the installation of services for the housing development had been halted. The Municipality reported in its most recent 2020/21 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) that that area is "still vacant" though its "layout makes provision for an activity node" (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2020, p. 60).

Despite the economic boom, there are high rates of unemployment and poverty within the townships and villages in Lephalale Municipality. Households dependent upon free basic services ranged from 32.7 per cent for water to 4.0 per cent for sewerage and sanitation, which on average, is just less than the national average of households classified as indigent at 22 per cent of households (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2020; Statistics South Africa, 2018a). The overall unemployment rate was estimated at 22 per cent and at 27 per cent amongst the youth in 2016[52] (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a). In 2011, 58 per cent of households in the municipality earned less than R38 200 per year and in 2012, it was estimated that over 12 per cent of households in the municipality had no recordable income (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019). There has been a recorded growth in the income bracket earning between R3 500 and R12 800 per month, with an annual increase of 17.2 per cent from 2001 to 2011 (Housing Development Agency, 2013). The employment and income statistics suggest that employment is higher in Lephalale, especially amongst the youth, compared with the provincial and national averages of the country, linked to the expansion of coal development in the area (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019). The existing employment, however, is likely to consist of low wages and temporary contracts for the majority.

It was last recorded that less than 40 per cent of households have flush toilets connected to sewerage and 31.4 per cent of households have piped water inside their houses, well below the

[52] These statistics refer to the official unemployment definition, while the expanded definition of unemployment includes those who are not actively seeking employment. Before Covid-19, the national rate of unemployment using the expanded definition was 70.0 per cent for the category 15-24 years, and 46.9 per cent for the category 25-34 years (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

national averages of 61.5 per cent and 46.3 per cent respectively (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a; Statistics South Africa, 2019). Sanitation in the rural areas consists of informal pit toilets or ventilated improved pit toilets (pit toilets with vent pipes installed). The villages lack sufficient water resources to establish a waterborne sanitation system and face difficulties with water supply. About 85 per cent of rural areas obtain their water from boreholes and 15 per cent from wells, with the Municipality owning and operating a network of 138 boreholes to serve the 38 villages (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019). Water is pumped from wells and boreholes to reservoirs owned and operated by the Municipality while many village residents are still forced to carry water from taps (Phadi & Pearson, 2018).

The Mokolo-Crocodile Water Augmentation Project (MCWAP), initiated by the Department of Water Affairs, is an attempt to increase water supply in the region – first to meet the needs of the power stations and second for domestic use. The Municipality intends to hand over partial responsibility for the water systems to the mining companies coming into the area (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). Thus, private companies not only control a large portion of the land in the area, they are also depended upon to provide resources for the provision of basic services in the town (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).

The site of Lephalale is indicative of many of the contradictions of post-apartheid South Africa. Shacks are built under power lines, next to ESKOM, without access to electricity. Rubbish dumps are situated immediately next to 'no dumping' signs and ESKOM slogans about prosperity and growth are found nearby shacks and RDP houses. The mega-industrial projects sit alongside a 'lack of development'. The town is spatially fragmented and segregated, with black, working class people located in the industrial areas, far removed from the urban centres, with a large buffer zone in-between (Molefe, 2018). The recent housing developments, driven by the private sector, have exacerbated this ongoing economic and racial segregation. The spatial production of uneven development, of hierarchies, divisions and contradictions within the municipality is connected to global relations of production and extractivism. The space both reflects and produces such relations.

4.3 Current and Future Fossil Fuel Development

Coal is the main energy source for South Africa's electricity, with coal-fired power stations making up 83 per cent of the generating capacity mix in 2018. South Africa has the fifth largest

recoverable coal reserves in the world (Ratshomo & Nembahe, 2019). This reliance on coal is reflective in South Africa's position as the 12th highest total carbon emitter in the world in 2014, bringing with it concomitant problems of toxic coal-ash, sulphur-dioxide and nitrogen oxides (Maguire, 2017; The World Bank, 2017). In 2005 ESKOM undertook an expansion programme to build new power generation capacity, with ESKOM tasked to build 70 per cent of new generation capacity and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) the remaining 30 per cent (ESKOM, 2014a). ESKOM stated that it needs to increase electricity generation from 40 000 megawatts in 2008 to 80 000 megawatts in 2026 and that at least half of this electricity generation will come from coal fired power stations. Medupi Power Station, in the Waterberg coalfields, is part of this expansion programme. The Lephalale Municipality lies within the Waterberg coalfields, which are estimated to contain 40 to 50 per cent of the remaining coal reserves in South Africa – the largest remaining coal resource (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a). According to Exxaro, it is a resource of 75.7 billion tons, with the mineable coal seams thicker than the Mpumalanga coalfields. The coalfield stretches 40 kilometres from north to south and 88 kilometres from east to west, into Botswana (Mgojo, 2016).

The Municipality claims that it is "[c]onventional wisdom… that the future of SA coal mining depends on the development of this extensive deposit of coal surrounding the town of Lephalale. There is no doubt that Lephalale will soon be the forerunner in the mining sector, and fossil fuel energy production" (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016c, p. 9). The development of Lephalale includes Medupi Power Station, the Moloko water pipeline expansion, and coal mining expansion. As a nodal point of development, it is likely that 'special economic zones' will also be constructed in the Waterberg area (Nyembe, 2018). The development of the Waterberg region has been designated as a priority area in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2012).

The Waterberg development is one of two Strategic Investment Projects (SIPs), run by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC), involving hundreds of billions of rands. The first is a new railway line, to be undertaken by Transnet, the national rail, port and pipeline company, which will transport coal from Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces to Richards Bay Coal Terminal on the Indian Ocean for export. The second is the expansion of the South Durban's port and petrochemical complex (Bond, 2014). The Waterberg SIP is intended to unlock the "northern mineral belt with Waterberg as the catalyst" (Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission, 2012, p. 18). Former President Zuma (cited in

Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission, 2012, p. 3) justified the SIPs in the following way:

> "All South Africans need to work together in a concerted effort to improve service delivery, bolster job creation and expedite economic transformation. In South Africa, joblessness is still unacceptably high even with recent growth in jobs numbers. Global economic prospects remain fragile. In response, the Government of the Republic of South Africa has taken a bold decision. We have chosen a path of counter-cyclical spending driven by catalytic infrastructure investment. We are striking a fine balance between protecting our sovereign integrity while leveraging the multiplier impact of fixed capital formation. Valuable lessons have been learned from our most recent build programmes, such as the 2010 World Cup stadiums, King Shaka International Airport, Medupi Power Station and Gautrain."

The National Planning Commission's (2011, pp. 17–18) Diagnostic Report, however, argued that "South Africa's growth path is highly resource-intensive and hence unsustainable … there are thus already good reasons to seek to build a new development path that is more inclusive, less dependent on the exploitation of non-renewable resources and that uses renewable resources more sustainably and strategically". Yet the Commission's (2012) National Development Plan endorsed the SIPs. According to Patrick Bond (2014, p. n.p.), these projects will increase carbon intensity, by calling for "the construction of a new coal line to unlock coal deposits in the Waterberg, extension of existing coal lines in the central basin," and therefore an expansion of coal exports from Richards Bay, the largest coal export terminal globally.

This trajectory of development is a continuation of South Africa's Minerals-Energy Complex (MEC) (Fine & Rustomjee, 1996). Ben Fine (2012, p. 129) writes that the NDP continues "to rest upon a partnership between the state and private capital in promoting capital intensive development around core mineral and energy activities." What is perceived as greater interventionism by the state is in fact to "sustain this path rather than depart it, not least as symbolised by the renewal of constructing huge coal-fired power stations with massive World Bank aid" (Fine, 2012, p. 129). As part of this trajectory of fossil fuel development, Lephalale Municipality's primary economic activity is coal mining and electricity production, with red meat (mainly cattle and game farming) and tourism also key economic activities in the region (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019).

Exxaro's Grootegeluk coal mine[53] is the largest producer of coal in the area and is currently in the process of upgrading and expanding. Grootegeluk was established in the 1980s and laid the basis for the economic development of the surrounding areas and for the establishment of the town of Lephalale (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2015a). Matimba Power Station was subsequently established in the 1980s and recently the construction of Medupi Power Station began in 2007. Murray and Roberts Construction in partnership with Grinaker LTA are the main companies involved in the construction of the power station under Medupi Power Station Joint Venture (Pty) Ltd (MPSJV) (Tshabangu, 2013). Medupi Power Station is an estimated 140 billion rand public sector investment (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016c). Exxaro's Grootegeluk coal mine undertook a 10 billion rand Grootegeluk Medupi Expansion Project (GMEP) in order to meet the needs of Medupi. It is one of the largest mining expansion projects in Southern Africa (Molefe, 2018). Besides the GMEP, Exxaro also has plans to develop Thabametsi mine and an independent coal-fired power station in Lephalale (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2020; Molefe, 2018). It is claimed that Lephalale's gross domestic product increased by 95 per cent per year as a result of the construction of Medupi (Brown, 2015).

Mining and power generation are likely to remain the primary economic activities in the area (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a). It is estimated that 12.5 billion tons of the 75.7 billion tons of coal in the Waterberg coalfield can be mined by opencast methods.[54] Kusile Power Station in Mpumalanga is probably the last coal fired power station to be built outside the Waterberg coalfield in the near future. According to the Lephalale Municipality, the municipality could have another three coal fired power stations after Medupi, for example the proposed between 600 MW and 1200 MW Thabametsi Independent Power Producer adjacent to Grootegeluk coal mine, and the IPP Waterberg power station, that is expected to be built in the Steenbokpan area, about 50 kilometres outside the urban centre of Lephalale, with environmental studies for the IPP currently being undertaken (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019).[55] It is expected that Matimba Power Station, Medupi Power Station (which is currently

[53] Exxaro (n.d.) outlines its formation and current trajectory as: "In November 2006, Kumba Resources Limited unbundled and Kumba's coal and other assets merged with Eyesizwe Coal to create Exxaro Resources Limited. We have since grown to become one of the largest and foremost black-empowered coal and heavy mineral companies in South Africa, with other business interests around the world in Europe, the United States of America, and Australia".

[54] Open cast mining or open-pit mining is a surface mining technique used to extract minerals, as opposed to underground mining methods that require tunnelling into the ground. It involves large-scale equipment and usually produces large volumes of waste from the removal of materials (Anwar et al., 2013). South Africa is home to some of the largest open cast mines in the world. The Grootegeluk pit has a depth of up to 120 meters (KH Plant, 2020).

[55] At the time of revising this chapter in November 2020, the Thabametsi Project Company, the umbrella company, which won a 2016 bid to build Thabametsi IPP requested an exit from South Africa's Coal Baseload Independent

nearing completion), and another three power stations could collectively consume 80 million tons of coal per year. With an opencast mining resource of 12.5 billion tons, the power stations could continue to run for 156 years. Furthermore, a study indicated that the Waterberg coal is one of the most liquefiable in the world. A coal to liquid process[56] feasibility study was conducted by South African Coal, Oil and Gas Company (SASOL),[57] for the potential Mafutha project, west of Lephalale town, in Steenbokpan (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019). The coal to liquid project has currently been placed on hold but the Municipality still believes that the project could significantly broaden the area's coal mining and petrochemical cluster activities (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019).

The Waterberg region is expected to develop more than eight coal mines, which are in scoping or public participation phases, for example Boikarabelo coal mine in the Steenbokpan area and Sekoko coal mine along the Botswana border (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a, 2019). These new mining companies include Waterberg Coal, SASOL, Resource Generation (Resgen), Temo, Ferrum Crescent Sekoko Resources, Coal of Africa Limited, Botswana Chamber of Mines, South32, Umbono Coal, Amci Group, AngloAmerican and Glencore (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2015b; Mgojo, 2016). Exxaro is also building a new mine, Thabametsi mine, 13 kilometres to the west of Grootegeluk mine, which was expected to supply the proposed Thabametsi IPP (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019; Thomas & von Mayer, 2016). The mine is expected to produce six million tons of coal per annum, with a progressive increase to 16 million tons as Exxaro secures new agreements (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019). Based on projections by Exxaro and Anglo Coal, the Municipality believes that Lephalale will become the "coal gate into Africa", exporting to Botswana, Zambia and beyond as coal production moves increasingly from Witbank to Lephalale (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2019, p. 111).

Power Producer Procurement Programme, following the withdrawal of major investors, such as Japan's Marubeni 8002.T as well as local financiers, such as the Public Investment Corporation and South Africa's private banks. The IPP is unlikely to go ahead unless new investors are found (Toyana, 2020). The Development Bank of Southern Africa stated that it needed to reassess the project in order to decide if it was in line with its policy of a transition to a low carbon economy (Centre for Environmental Rights, 2020).

[56] Coal Liquefaction is a process whereby coal is converted into liquid fuels, such as diesel and gasoline (Donev & Hanania, 2016).

[57] SASOL stands for "Suid-Afrikaanse Steenkool, Olie en Gasmaatskappy" in Afrikaans, which translates as "South African Coal, Oil and Gas Company". SASOL was established in 1950 to produce oil and chemicals from coal, with the original coal-to-liquids complex at Sasolburg. Sasol was privatised and listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 1979 and is now a global company (Collings, n.d.).

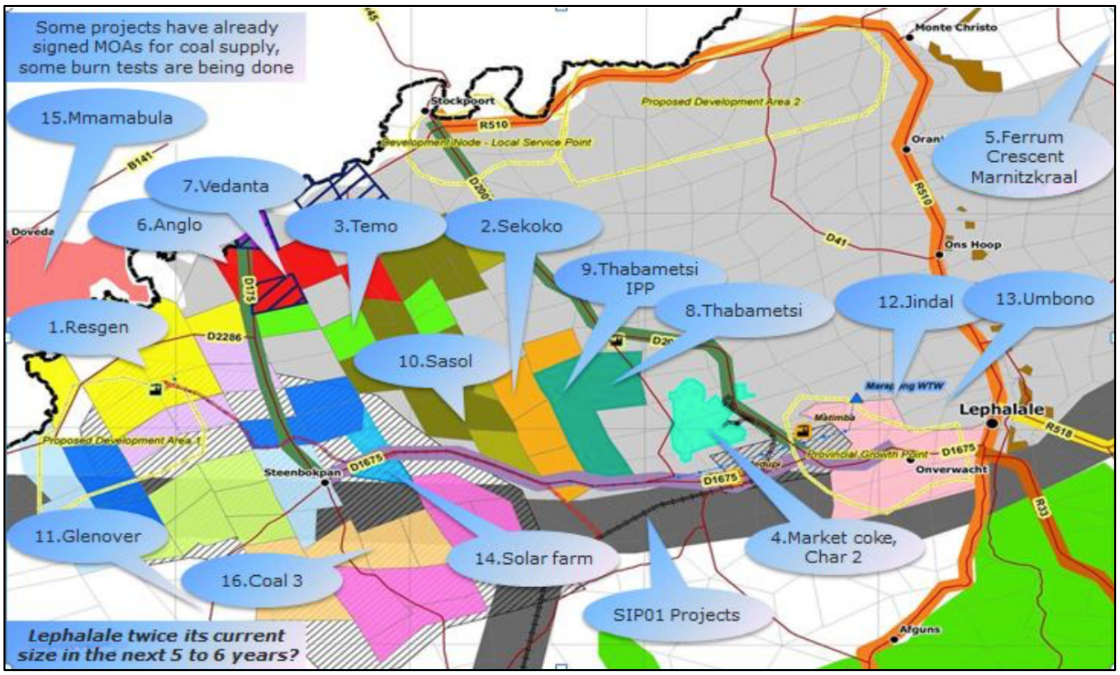

Figure 7: Lephalale Municipality's projections for development (Lephalale Municipality, 2019)

As mentioned above, as part of the PICC project, Transnet has committed to upgrading the existing railway line and the construction of a new heavy-haul railway line, to move volumes of coal of more than 100 mega-tonnes per annum, including to Richards Bay Coal Terminal for export. In 2019, Transnet signed a 10 billion rand deal with Ledjadja Coal to rail export coal to Richards Bay Coal Terminal in a move aimed to unlock the coal potential of the Waterberg and to link it to international circuits of commodity trade and coal power generation (Steyn, 2019). It is estimated that the coal from Waterberg has the potential to be exported for 300 years to come (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a; Mgojo, 2016). In addition to the railway line, the MCWAP is intended to meet the increased water demands of mining and energy activities (Molefe, 2018).

According to Bond (2014, p. n.p.), the development of the Waterberg region is controversial because of "the debatable economics, community displacement and ecological devastation – especially climate-related – associated with the state subsidised projects." William Rafey and Benjamin Sovacool (2011) claim that the decision to construct Medupi Power Station was contested by sixty-five South African civil society organisations. The mega-project has proven to be extremely costly, far surpassing its original budget, with the World Bank receiving high interest on its largest-ever loan (Nyembe, 2018). Bond (2014) further highlights the destructive nature of mega-projects such as Medupi. Medupi will pump 25 to 30 mega-tonnes of carbon

dioxide into the atmosphere annually, which is more than the output of 115 countries. The new coal mines, to provide coal for Medupi and further power stations, will create acid mine drainage and mercury contamination of the air, land and water in impoverished areas of Limpopo. Lephalale is already a water-scarce area, affected by air and water pollution from industrial development. Power generation contributes up to 99 per cent of gaseous emissions in the area, particularly sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide. Industrial waste is released into the rivers and streams, placing increasing stress on water supplies (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2015a).

The actual construction of Medupi Power Station has resulted in widespread labour unrest. In September 2012, for example, there was a wildcat strike and sabotage of equipment arising from a number of frustrations including racism on-site, the serving of rotten food, and the crisis of over-crowding in accommodation for workers (Bond, 2014; NUMSA, 2012a). Furthermore, there has been community unrest regarding employment opportunities, corruption between private companies and government officials, lack of investment in basic services, evictions from land marked for development and the construction of Medupi on burial sites (Ballim, 2017; Interviews). Bond (2014) argues that the main beneficiaries of Medupi will be the world's largest metals and mining corporations. The biggest contracts for Medupi's construction were awarded to Alstom, a French multinational and Hitachi, a Japanese multinational conglomerate – of which ANC's Chancellor House has a 25 per cent stake in its South African subsidiary. The US Securities and Exchange Commission reported that Chancellor House was paid 5 million dollars in "dividends" for two contracts with ESKOM power stations to supply steam generators, indicating the possibility of collusion between the ANC and Hitachi in order to share any profits secured by Hitachi through the power station contracts (Munusamy, 2015). But despite the controversies around this development, this trajectory of development is going ahead and is heralded by government at different levels as well as various mining companies.

Alberto Acosta (2013) argues that transnational companies and government partners tend to highlight the vast quantities of minerals, turned into monetary value, without considering the so-called hidden social and environmental costs. One can see this playing out in the case of Lephalale and Waterberg development where despite environmental warnings, fossil fuel development is continuing.[58] If the so-called hidden costs of the impacts of extraction were

[58] For example, Earthlife Africa and groundWork launched a court application in 2016 to challenge the environmental authorisation issued by the Department of Environment for the Thabametsi IPP. The environmental

calculated, many of the economic benefits would disappear (Acosta, 2013). Furthermore, Acosta (2013, p. 74) argues that mining tends to take precedence over other forms of social and economic activity in countries rooted in extractivist forms of development: "In the end, the plans drawn up in a participatory way and with informed consent by the local community will be torn to shreds. The environmental liabilities will be the most painful and costly inheritance of the extractivist activities, because these liabilities are not usually assumed by the companies exploiting the resources."

The plans for fossil fuel development for the area will radically and permanently alter the space of Lephalale and in turn the social relations and relations with nature. This is not a unidirectional process but a contested process, with different (political, economic, cultural and natural) forces shaping the space-time of Lephalale (Luckett, 2019). The current narratives promulgated by national and municipal government officials and mining companies are dominated by a social relation to nature that transforms it into "separable, extractable categories", dominated by capitalist discourses of "growth and development" (Bridge, 2001, p. 2154).

This discourse constructs Lephalale as a primary commodity space. Bridge (2001) unpacks this kind of narrative through the lens of utopia: through a no-place (*ou-topia*)/ good-place (*eu-topia*) dialectic. He argues that material and discursive spaces of extraction are constructed as 'empty-yet-full'. The social relation to nature is one that fragments and abstracts nature into quantifiable commodities or stock of raw material, disconnected from the varieties of social relations in the space and other claims to the land. Bridge (2001, p. 2163) goes on to posit that, "there is modern hubris in the sense that open spaces hold opportunity for construction, creation, and fashioning in the image of those controlling flows of capital and technology."

In this way, colonial narratives are reproduced whereby particular spaces are actively emptied (rather than being an empty space) in order to be positioned as resource-supply zones. Similar to Lefebvre's (1991b) and Coronil's (1997) critique of conceptions of empty, passive space on which events takes place in Western thought, the space of Lephalale is emptied of existing social relations, including social relations to the land, and through inherently political processes is constructed for the purposes of extractivism. Coronil (1997) argues that land is a social relation – not a thing or commodity – and that social formations are constituted through their

organisations won agreement in 2020 from Thabametsi and the Department to set aside the authorisation until consideration of the environment impact assessment (Centre for Environmental Rights, 2020).

relations to nature. The discourse of empty space (with resources) dissimulates the existing ecological and socio-historical relations, making it possible to 'master' the space and reconstruct the 'no place' as a 'good place' by becoming a productive resource connected to international systems of commerce (Bridge, 2013). Representations of capitalist space become dominant over lived, or experienced space, through the production of the 'empty-yet-full' Lephalale (Luckett, 2019).

4.4 The Future City of Coal?

This line of inquiry brings me to imagining what the 'empty-yet-full' space of Lephalale and the Waterberg might look like in the next several decades. How will the 'coal rush' play out? How will the development of mega-projects change the social and ecological environment? What will happen when contract construction workers are no longer needed for the projects, as is already happening with Medupi? What does this fossil fuel development mean in terms of a "commitment to the future" that Bloch (1986) advocates? Can Levitas's (2013) architectural mode assist in exploring the Not-Yet?[59] The architectural mode produces a tension between the present and future, with the future emergent from the present rather than an empty space (Levitas, 2013). While the architectural mode is employed by Levitas to outline principles and institutional conditions for alternative ways of life, I use this mode both to imagine the trajectory that Lephalale is on and how it might be otherwise. This is not an exercise in prediction or prescription, but an exercise of speculation, that also invites the reader to imagine affectively and cognitively futures in the making as well as futures otherwise (Levitas, 2013).

The Local Economic Development Strategy of Lephalale Municipality's Vision for 2025 includes increasing coal-fired power stations to five, increasing coal production by more than five-fold to at least 100 million tons per year, establishing a petrochemical industry and a doubling of the population (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2013a). In 2013, the president of the Lephalale Chamber of Commerce stated that the economic boom of Lephalale was expected to last for a period of thirty years (Faku, 2013). While statements such as these discursively construct a prosperous future for Lephalale, studies have found that mega-projects seldom produce the prosperity imagined and that there is a need to diversify regional economies (Molefe, 2018; Taylor & Winter, 2013). Even with a boom, there is little mention of what will happen after the 'boom', and mega-projects rarely provide permanent employment

[59] I use 'Not-Yet' here not in the sense of utopia as Not-Yet, but in the sense of future possibilities.

opportunities (Gellert & Lynch, 2003; Nyembe, 2018). In 2010, when construction workers flocked into Lephalale, it was projected that the construction boom would continue from one project to the next during and after the completion of Medupi Power Station (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). However, one can already see that as the construction of Medupi project is nearing completion, the local economy is slowing down with some businesses facing closure (Nyembe, 2018).

Lephalale's future boom is precarious as it is dependent upon a 'coal rush'. International climate change commitments may adversely affect new international investment in coal production (Molefe, 2018). The future mines depend on future power stations in the region to burn low-grade coal, and in turn, the power stations depend on the mines. The mining and power station companies with prospecting rights are largely transnational corporations, which will invest according to the highest rates of return and are likely to be risk averse in the context of changing international climate change policies. According to David Hallowes and Victor Munnik (2018), several of these companies seem to have abandoned their projects in the Waterberg without publicly stating this. Thus one could conclude that no guaranteed boom will take place after Medupi is completed.

So what does this mean for an 'empty-yet-full' Lephalale? It is likely that Lephalale will never become the hub of opportunity that Johannesburg, the city of gold, was at its industrial peak. Exxaro, with its prime position and established infrastructure, will likely expand its mining operations and come to further agreements to supply coal to Medupi and coal-fired IPPs, even though the Thabemesti IPP now hangs in the balance. Maybe one or two other mines will be developed. Much prospecting will take place and some purchasing of farms for future development. These processes will disrupt agricultural production in the area and result in evictions of farmworkers from the land that they may have lived on for decades (see Chapter 5 for more details) – emptying out the land of existing social relations in order to produce a commodity space that may only be partially realised.

Matimba Power Station is set to be decommissioned by 2030 and Medupi is expected to have a life-span of 50 to 60 years (ESKOM, n.d.). At the launch of the Lephalale District Development Model initiative in 2019, President Ramaphosa stated that, "[c]oal is going to continue to play an important role. So, Grootegeluk has more coal. It's going to support it for another 90 years. So, we are going to have this power station for another 100 years. How do

you like that?" (cited in Mamokgere, 2019, p. n.p.). However, Hallowes and Munnik (2018) argue that new coal power stations will be abandoned long before then, due to policies around climate change or because the environmental conditions of increasing droughts and temperatures will make the power stations unworkable, especially in already hot and arid conditions such as Lephalale. Maintenance of old power stations will also become increasingly expensive and wasteful as breakages increase.

A limited boom may therefore take place but at great social, environmental and economic cost. Lephalale looks set to become a ghost town in a few decades, or sooner, with the destruction of the environment and farmlands having a far longer impact on human life. Medupi was allowed to postpone complying with emission limits and the Department of Energy's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) allows for 60 million tons per year more emissions than the sector currently emits for the whole decade of the 2020s (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). Currently emissions from ESKOM result in 2 200 premature deaths per year, with thousands more affected by asthma and bronchitis (Holland, 2017). Greenpeace research indicates that granting ESKOM postponement or exemption from minimum emission standards compliance will result in 3 100 premature deaths annually in Gauteng alone and over time, 16 000 premature deaths as a result of lung cancer, respiratory infections and heart disease amongst other illnesses (Hugo, 2019). With these delays in emission compliance and increasing coal production, health afflictions are bound to increase in Lephalale over the next decades. The growth in coal mines and power stations will also lead to increased water shortages, water pollution and land pollution from coal stockpiles and ash heaps (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018).

I can imagine visiting the Lephalale area in a few decades and seeing dystopian scenes. Most people who came to find work here during the brief boom period have now moved on – continuing cycles of hope, disappointment and despair. Many of the businesses that opened during the boom have now shut; property prices have dropped and much of the middle-income and high-income housing development from the 2010s now stands empty; the once thriving informal economy in Marapong now provides fewer possibilities for piecing together livelihoods.

The burden of healthcare has increased, straining under-resourced health facilities and exacerbating gendered inequalities, as women largely take responsibility for caring for the sick, in an area that was already the leading sub-district in Limpopo province for tuberculosis, with

9.8 per cent of deaths caused by tuberculosis in 2012 (Ramaliba et al., 2017). Residents in the area suffer from sore eyes and sinuses and respiratory infections from the dust and air pollution. Women and children also suffer from increased levels of miscarriages and neonatal mortality rates.

The already dry terrain of the Waterberg has become even dryer with longer periods of drought, making farming increasing difficult. Small-scale farming of vegetables is no longer viable, and a few small-scale farmers still maintain limited livestock in the villages through the use of boreholes. It is largely becoming too dry to sustain livestock and some of the animals have become poisoned through water pollution. The water is running out. It is poor women who bear the brunt of water crises, spending hours fetching water from greater distances than before.

Some of the farms bought up by mining companies have been ripped apart by mining, while others remain empty, perhaps with previously evicted farmworkers slowly reclaiming land that is no longer in use. The tourism industry has been largely decimated by the increase in mineral-energy development, with only pockets of nature still conserved. Matimba Power Station, now decommissioned, stands empty and disused. Due to ESKOM's rising debt, costs and lack of clear regulative guidelines regarding decommissioned power plants, Matimba remains jutting out from the landscape, rusting and crumbling away without being repurposed. Exxaro has expanded its coal mining operations, dominating the coal market in the Waterberg and continuing its control over public services, now adding energy production, including renewable energy, to its power matrix. Transnet's railway line to Richards Bay Coal Terminal cuts through the landscape but the initiative was less profitable than hoped for – coal exports have decreased as global energy systems pivot away from coal.

Over the past 50 years, social relations have been displaced and disrupted through farm evictions, land dispossession in the villages and insecurity, with the majority of residents having little collective determination over the trajectory of development in Lephalale. As with many mining communities, development is marked by a lack of participatory decision-making and even genuine consultation of communities by companies, leaving land and lives ripped apart.

The discursive construction of Lephalale as 'empty-yet-full' produces a dystopian space of extraction, rather than one of wealth and abundance. Speculating on a future, embedded in the present, enables an estrangement from the present and critique of the discourses of extractive

wealth and abundance. Simultaneously, speculating one future opens up possibilities for imagining the multiple futures embedded in the present.

The architectural mode is employed by Levitas (2013) to outline principles and institutional conditions for alternative ways of life. This speculation on a dystopian 'empty-yet-full' future of Lephalale is intended to provoke the reader to imagine with me futures otherwise that may lend themselves to Levitas's *Imaginary Reconstitution of Society*. The future is uncertain and my dystopian imagining does not exclude other contested futures embedded in the history and presence of Lephalale. In Chapter 5 following, I retrace some of the history of the area, and the social-spatial contestations embedded therein, and in doing so, demonstrate how this dystopian future is embedded in a longer history of displacement and extraction, thus countering the narrative that Lephalale was a "paradise for its people until very recently, when the Medupi coal-fired power plant, owned by ESKOM, was built and became operational" (Greyling, 2019, p. n.p.). Thereafter, in the subsequent chapters, I return to the present and future possibilities emergent from such, thereby engaging in exercises of speculative thinking. Through this writing and thinking about future possibilities, I invite the reader to dialogue with this work and to likewise generate future imaginings. As such, by drawing on thinkers such as Levitas and Bloch, I not only provide a historical and present account of the contested space-times of Lephalale, but aim to generate future contestations in dialogue with readers. In the following chapter, I focus on the historical social-spatial contestations in the making of the region.

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL-SPATIAL CONTESTATIONS IN THE MAKING OF THE WATERBERG, BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN (MID-1800s TO PRESENT)

5.1 Introduction

Marapong means "place of bones", named after the bones of a local woman from the area, Salaminah Moloantoa. Her grandson recounted how she went missing in 1957, when she travelled from a farm, situated where Medupi Power Station is now, to visit family near Lephalale for Christmas. She died in the bushveld, where Marapong is now located. Her bones were discovered in 1973 when surveyors began the construction of the Iron and Steel Corporation of South Africa (ISCOR)[60] hostels for the new ISCOR coal mine, Grootegeluk on Kuipersbult farm. That same year her bones were exhumed and were buried by her descendants on the farm she had lived on (Interview, Thabiso, 17 May 2017). Fast forward to 2007, to the construction of Medupi Power Station on Naawontkomen farm, and once again, Salaminah Moloantoa's bones became the site of industrial construction. Others' bones were also built upon, despite contestation from family members, "We went there and told them that that was our place" (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017). Medupi was constructed over their dead nonetheless.

Through these two scenes, two industrial coal mega-projects, Grootegeluk coal mine and Medupi Power Station intersect across different time periods: the first a project of the apartheid state and its industrial nation-building impetus, and the second, a project of the ANC government in a period of neoliberal economic and environmental crises. Both projects come together to produce and reproduce the space of Lephalale and the wider region, with extractivism dominating over other possible social and spatial relations and instituting particular temporal orders from that of apartheid industrial capitalism to neoliberal presentism. However, the space of the Waterberg has a longer history, constructed by different social actors in dialectical relation to natural systems, to produce these scenes of extractivism. These processes of space- and time-making were and are contested, uneven and power-laden. In this chapter, I discuss the historical construction of space, time and socio-political relations in the Waterberg region from the mid nineteenth century to the present by drawing on critical space theory. Faeeza Ballim (2017) has crafted a detailed account of the historical development of

[60] ISCOR was formed in 1928 as South Africa's largest and state-owned steel producer (Freund, 2018).

coal mega-projects in the region, which this chapter draws on. However, in my retelling of the story of the Waterberg (albeit with gaps and limitations), I specifically employ Lefebvre's (1991b) spatial triad of *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space* in order to highlight the disjunctures, divergences and contradictions in the co-articulation of social, spatial and temporal relations in a specific locality, thereby adding a different angle to state-centred arguments about the Minerals-Energy Complex and 'development' in South Africa. While the chapter is not strictly structured according to these spatial categories, they are employed to tease out contestations. Furthermore, in making sense of the historical development of the Waterberg, I heed Lefebvre's (1991b) focus on land to expand the Marxist binary of capital and labour to a triad of land, capital and labour. As such, I argue that the 'farm' and the 'mine' are constituted in relation to each other and that the spatio-temporal dynamics of the Waterberg can only be understood by bringing these two spaces into conversation with each other.

This chapter delineates the spatio-temporal dynamics of the Waterberg, behind the mountain, in the long twentieth century. The chapter is divided into two periods (the mid-1800s to 1940s; and the 1940s to present) – the latter being the main focus of the chapter. The chapter follows several thematic contours over different time periods in its exploration of the constitution of space-time in the Waterberg: (i) the Waterberg as a frontier space of possible riches (sections 5.2.1; 5.3.2); (ii) the expansion of capital through enclosure, tracking the enclosure and securitisation of space through legislation, militarisation, and forced removals (sections 5.2.2; 5.4); (iii) the development of Ellisras as a company town in this context, and its ongoing implications for the present (section 5.5); and (iv) the contestation of space, primarily from the 1980s onwards, through labour, land and housing struggles – a (re)claiming assertion of belonging to the space by black workers and residents in different ways (section 5.6). In order to do this, I draw on previous research as well as archival research and life history interviews to produce a picture of spatial practices, representations of space and representational space in a relational dynamic. For the purposes of this research, I conduct this analysis to provide a spatial and relational context for my analysis of hope where I aim to grasp and locate in space-time, the potentials, possibilities and contradictions of everyday hopes in the present.

5.2 The Waterberg's Early Contested Space Making (Mid-1800s to 1940s)

Ellisras,[61] as Lephalale was formerly known until 2002, is located in the Waterberg region, north of the ancient Waterberg mountain range. The Waterberg is a mountainous massif extending back millions of years in time, with an approximate age of 1 900 to 1 700 million years based on the rock colouration (Eriksson et al., 2000). The red sandstones are some of the oldest in the world (van der Ryst, 2006). The mountains of the Waterberg extend more or less from east to west for approximately 170 kilometres, creating a mountain barrier and large plateau, which divides the space into two sides of the mountain range. The rivers of the plateau, mainly the Motlhabatse, Mokolo, Lephalala and Mogalakwena rivers, drain into the larger Limpopo River. The name Waterberg speaks to the plentiful rainfall and water in the many streams, rivers and wetlands of an earlier time (van der Ryst, 2006; Walker & Bothma, 2005).

The numerous cliff overhangs in the Waterberg's mountainous massif have a long history of providing shelter for early human ancestors, who may have been present in the Waterberg region as early as three million years ago (Hogan et al., 2006). The Waterberg area indicates evidence of human presence up to 2 500 000 years ago (Birkholtz, 2018; van der Ryst, 2006). Hunter-gatherers, including Khoekhoen and San groups, occupied the area over 2 000 years ago. Maria van der Ryst (1998) contends that after an interval period, occupation in the Waterberg began again during the late eleventh century, and that the main period of semi-permanent settlement of the Waterberg plateau by hunter-gatherers corresponded to the movement of agro-pastoralists into the area. In the last 800 years, there was greater movement of African farming communities into the area, who practiced subsistence farming along river valleys and owned cattle (de Klerk, 2003; van der Ryst, 1996, 2006).[62] The environment not only provided material sustenance to support human and animal life but was also made into a social space, a meaningful space, connected to people's identities, as Isabel Hofmeyr (1987, p. 8) writes of the Waterberg, "[p]laces have to be made both imaginatively and materially." Place is integral to social identity and social space and subjectivity are co-produced in relation with each other (Gieseking et al., 2014).

More complex social relations emerged between distinct groups and in relation to the place, as new social and ethnic groups moved into the area (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018; van der Ryst,

[61] I utilise place names according to the time period under discussion.
[62] For greater discussion on the early history of the Waterberg see van der Ryst (1996, 1998, 2006).

2006). In the early 1800s, there were several migrations of small groups of Nguni-speakers from KwaZulu-Natal to the north, some moving into the Waterberg, as well as Basotho and Batswana people during the Mfecane period of migration and displacement (Birkholtz, 2018). The Ga-Seleka community is probably the most established African community in the Waterberg, behind the mountain (Vig, 2018). Its origin is traced back to Mzilikazi's movement north during the Mfecane period. A group split off from Mzilikazi, under the leadership of Mazwe, and settled north of the Limpopo River, and then spread south to settle where Ga-Seleka is today between the 1820s and 1840s. Due to their history and ongoing interaction with settlements in Botswana, the Ga-Seleka community speaks a form of Setswana (Vig, 2018). During this period there was also conflict between Bapedi or Northern Basotho leaders, and Bapedi groups moved in and out of the Waterberg region (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018; Vig, 2018).

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a greater movement of people into the Waterberg area. During this period, in the 1840s, a group of Voortrekkers arrived in the Waterberg, late in comparison to other areas of South Africa (de Klerk, 2003; van der Ryst, 1996). This group, who became known as the "Jerusalem Pioneers", left the Cape and its English rule in search of Jerusalem (Hunter, 2010). When they reached Waterberg they believed that they had arrived in Egypt at the Nile River (Hogan et al., 2006). It is believed that they reached the river, later named the Nylstroom, the "stream of the Nile", and proclaimed, "[s]urely this was far enough north to be the source of the Nile!" (Marais, 1972, p. 1204).

The malaria fevers and tsetse flies in the Waterberg made it one of the last regions in the Transvaal to be colonised (Hofmeyr, 1987). In the Waterberg's mountainous landscape, it was difficult to make a living from cultivation and the low-lying bushveld was plagued. In the 1850s, the adult white population consisted of approximately only 150 people, with the first white settlers most likely traders, missionaries, hunters and travellers (Birkholtz, 2018). During the 1850s and 1860s, white settler populations were strengthened by people retreating from African resistance in the Zoutspansberg area in the northern Transvaal (Hofmeyr, 1987). The Waterberg District was established by the Volksraad [63] in 1866, separated from the Zoutpansberg District, with Nylstroom[64] its first town, and the site of the district government, founded in 1868 (Vig, 2018).

[63] The parliament (or 'People's Council') of the former South African Republic (1857-1902).
[64] Nylstroom was renamed Modimolle in 2002.

The greater movement of people in the second half of the nineteenth century saw increasing conflicts and contestations in the area. This included conflict between Chief Mokopane and the Boers in 1854; violent campaigns by Boer commandos waged against different African communities, particularly the amaNdebele in the north and Bakgatla in the south which scattered these communities on Boer farms; conflict between Bapedi leaders in the 1870s; and the South African war at the turn of the century (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018; Hofmeyr, 1987). Groups fleeing conflict also moved into the area, such as a group of Herero families from Namibia in in an attempt to escape genocide by German colonists in the early twentieth century (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018).

5.2.1 The Waterberg as a *Representational Space* of Exploration for Animal Resources and Minerals

From the mid-1800s, the representational space of the Waterberg was constructed by white settlers as one of adventure and possible riches. The Waterberg was still a space of the unknown and 'wild' in relation to the more urban Transvaal. At the turn of the century, Transvaal authorities attempted to produce representations of Waterberg as a space of order and control, often with little efficacy and with resistance from those residing in the area.

When Voortrekkers started trickling into the region, the northern parts of the country were seen as "alluring and dangerous" (Hofmeyr, 1987, p. 10). The wildlife and later the stories of mineral resources made the Waterberg "a place of legend" and a "mystery region" (Hofmeyr, 1987, p. 10; Marais, 1972, p. 1203). Early white settlers did not initially farm but rather engaged in hunting activities and many hunters came to the area in search of elephants and hippopotamuses, primarily seeking ivory, in the mid-1800s (Birkholtz, 2018; Hofmeyr, 1987). From the 1830s to 1870s, ivory was a major export from the Transvaal and an important commodity in the settler economy (Beinart, 2001; Beinart & Hughes, 2007). For example, in 1855, 90 000 kilograms of ivory were exported from the Transvaal (Carruthers, 1988). This hunting depended upon collaboration with black hunters, as well as black labourers who were often skilled servants or 'auxiliaries'[65] for colonial adventures and hunts. In addition, there were

[65] Paul Vig (2018) explains that 'black auxiliaries' was the phrase given to groups of black men who were used in hunting and in the raiding or controlling of other black populations. It was primarily used for those who were armed with guns, for example 'black shots'.

trade relations between Boer and African polities, articulating a degree of entanglement of race relations (Beinart & Hughes, 2007; Carruthers, 1988; Vig, 2018).

The regional economy during this period was initially shaped around hunting (Hofmeyr, 1987). Hunters' wagons used to come from the Waterberg to Pretoria to trade ivory, skins, and sjamboks of rhinoceros and hippopotamus hides amongst other animal products (Marais, 1972). Settler linkages between the more urban Transvaal and the 'unknown' 'wild' were created through the movement of goods, people and narratives of the place as a frontier, hostile to the authority of government (Legassick, 1972). The Waterberg was constructed as the ideal place for the drama of "manly adventure, of great endeavours and the possibility of princely wealth. Ivory was then what gold and diamonds became afterwards" (Marais, 1972, pp. 1203–1204). Eugene Marais was an author, naturalist and lawyer who moved to the Waterberg as a prospector, first settling in Naboomspruit in the early 1900s (Marais, 2009). Marais (1972, pp. 1203–1205) described how on encountering the area he was "caught by a sense of vastness" and experienced the "wonders of un-peopled veld". It was, "no more than an island of uninhabited bushveld bounded by the Limpopo. But small and cramped as it had become it was all the heart of man could desire. It was uninhabited by White men, and the wild animals were still there, all except the giants of the African wilderness – the elephants" (Marais, 1972, pp. 1203–1204). An imagery, or representational space, was produced of the Waterberg by white settlers who frequented the area and by stories told of adventure, wildlife and unknown in an 'un-peopled' land in relation to the urban, more 'civilised' areas of Transvaal. This masculine imagery of adventure, hunting and violence also generated a relation to nature of separation and domination (Carruthers, 1988; Hofmeyr, 1987).

The *representational space* clashed with the *representations of space* of the Waterberg, as Transvaal authorities attempted to restrict hunting and conserve 'stocks' of wildlife from the 1850s. However, the government authorities did not have sufficient power to impose order and control over this hunting frontier (Beinart & Hughes, 2007). For example, in 1884, one of the representatives for the Waterberg district in the Volksraad contended that the game laws of the 1870s were ineffective and that illegal hunting for hide continued in his district of "turbulent" Waterberg burghers[66] (Minutes of the Volksraad, Article 109, 14 August 1884, cited in Carruthers, 1988). The lived space of the Waterberg was a space of exception – outside of the

[66] Burghers denoted an enfranchised citizen of the former South African Republic.

law due to lack of enforcement and a place that attracted those contravening the law (Vig, 2018). White settlers who stayed in the Waterberg were "hardy people who constantly lived on the edge of survival. Within its brooding vastness the Waterberg had a reputation as a refuge for gun runners, hunters, draft dodgers and makers of strong drink" (Walker, cited in Hunter, 2010, p. 13).

Attempts to control the hunting frontier increased when the Transvaal became a British colony after the South African War of 1899–1902 (Carruthers, 2008). This was both an attempt to prohibit African "poachers" and biltong game hunting by poor whites who continued to trade venison with local black polities and who were considered "too lazy" to farm (Carruthers, 1988). Biltong trading was still prolific in the early 1900s, with 7 000 kilograms of biltong exported along the single railway line from the Nylstroom station in the Waterberg in 1907. Game biltong sale was outlawed in 1907 despite the view by both black and white subsistence hunters in the Waterberg, trying to survive on the frontier, that sustainable game reserved for the white "leisured classes" was wasteful (Carruthers, 1988). As the ivory frontier receded in the 1800s and increasing restrictions were placed on black and white subsistence hunting in the late 1800s and early 1900s; hunting faded as a way of life. Instead, there was increasing investment from government in agriculture in an attempt to modernise agriculture, create productive white farms and citizens, as well as bring order and control to the Waterberg 'chaos' (see section 5.2.2) (Carruthers, 2008; Hofmeyr, 1987).

During the period described above, while animal resources were being hunted, stories and imagery of mineral riches in the Waterberg also spread in the Transvaal, producing a representational space of potential wealth. In 1839, white settlers rediscovered the tin and silver deposits that had previously been part of the Mapungubwe trade route[67] (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). An article titled *Lost Reefs of the Waterberg* describes how long before the discovery of the Johannesburg goldfields in 1886, two prospectors found alluvial gold deposits in Zwagershoek, north of Nylstroom, but died from malaria before they could share the location of the gold. Several prospectors and explorers travelled to the region thereafter, but it was reported that none could find the reef and the "hidden treasure" remained undiscovered (Ror, 1930).

[67] See Schoeman et al. (2015) for a discussion on the Mapungubwe state.

After the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, several companies were established to purchase land in the Waterberg, which was beginning to be surveyed. By the turn of the twentieth century, almost half the land on the Waterberg Plateau had been purchased by companies: Transvaal Consolidated Land Co. (which became Rand Mines); Oceana (Transvaal) Land Co. (which was later absorbed into Goldfields); and the Anglo-French Land Co. (which later took over Oceana) (Wadley, 2019). In the Transvaal more generally, approximately 20 per cent of farms were owned by companies for speculative purposes in 1905 (Beinart 2001). As such, companies and surveyors began to carve up and purchase land, laying the foundations for an abstract space of capital and commodified futures.

Later, in the early twentieth century, in the south-west, iron ore was rediscovered in Thabazimbi in 1919, with ISCOR commencing mining there in the 1930s (Birkholtz, 2018; Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). Platinum was also discovered in the 1920s, from Lydenburg to Rustenburg, which led to a platinum boom involving more than 50 mining companies (Birkholtz, 2018). In March 1920, coal seams were reported from a water-boring operation on the farm Grootegeluk 459LQ, about 25 kilometres west of Ellisras, behind the mountain in the Waterberg (Hancox & Goetz, 2014; Trevor & Du Toit, 1922). A study of the area, through borehole drilling and sample analysis, was conducted by Du Toit and Frommurze, with the results published in the South African Journal of Industries in 1922 (Trevor & Du Toit, 1922).

This was the discovery point for the Waterberg Coalfield, and even though no further drilling was conducted for another twenty years, it was a key moment in the incorporation of the Waterberg into the commodified future and abstract space of central Transvaal. The early white settler *representational space* of wealth and possibilities, which depended upon collaboration with and exploitation of black labour, recurred in the second half of the twentieth century through a continued subjugation and carving up of nature (see section 5.3).

5.2.2 Land, Labour and Juridical Control (mid-1800s to 1940s)

In this section, I trace the same time period with a focus on land enclosure and relations to land and labour. As such, I focus on the dynamic between *spatial practices* and *representations of space*, holding in mind the *representational space* produced of the Waterberg, described above, during the same period. According to Lefebvre (1991b), capitalism is based on "an antagonism between conceived, planned space that is organized as abstract space, and the lived spaces of

everyday life" (Fuchs, 2018, p. 8). It is this antagonism that I attempt to tease out in more detail here in relation to land in the Waterberg.

The Waterberg region was difficult for white farmers to settle in and to establish commercial farming practices. In 1860, legislation was passed by the Volksraad that entitled two farms, one for agricultural and one for pastoral purposes, to burghers, which was regulated through the Deeds Office from 1864 (Carruthers, 1988). This land was often initially taken through Boer commando raid and land grabs, especially later during the South African War, and then legislated through the Deeds Office (Hofmeyr, 1987; Vig, 2018). However, few white farmers lived entirely 'behind the mountain', often only visiting their farms in winter months for cattle grazing and winter hunts (Vig, 2018). The first white farming activities that took place in the mid-1800s were predominantly cattle farming, with agricultural production, which included tobacco, wheat, mealies and potatoes, occurring only later (Birkholtz, 2018; Hunter, 2010). Farming continued to be difficult in the Northern Transvaal, for example, between 1896 and 1897 rinderpest killed hundreds of cattle. Many burghers ended up selling their allotted land to speculators and land companies, for example, the Transvaal Land and Exploration company, who employed *uitlanders*[68] to manage cattle (Hunter, 2010). Land, held by companies for speculative purposes, was often lived on by black tenants who paid companies rent in cash, and lived with little external control by white settlers. William Beinart (2001, p. 54) argues that, "such tenants formed part of larger communities, even sub-chieftaincies, who were relatively free to control their own systems of production". White settlers who engaged in agricultural production depended upon black tenants to make the land productive, with regular trade between African chiefdoms and Boer polities (Beinart, 2001). White settler relationships with black people therefore "involved both interdependence and exploitation", with some level of racial fluidity through trading, military and sexual relations in the region (Beinart, 2001; Legassick, 1980).[69]

The early Transvaal state was relatively weak and unable to exert full control over northern regions. From the perspective of Transvaal authorities in the late 1800s, the Waterberg was considered a troublesome area, lacking in law and order. It was seen as an "administrative

[68] Afrikaans for "foreigner", denoting a British national in the South African Republic (Hunter, 2010).
[69] See Legassick (1972, 1980, 2010) for further discussions on the frontier and its historiography. Legassick argues that the frontier was a space of both racial inclusion and exclusion, through an entanglement of co-operation and conflict, and trading and raiding.

nightmare", given practices such as land speculation and widespread African tenancy on farms (Hofmeyr, 1987, p. 12). The Kruger state (1883-1900) attempted to bring increasing order and control to the area through occupation laws to encourage and protect white settlement, with black 'squatting' as an ongoing concern of the Volksraad (Hofmeyr, 1987; Transvaal Native Affairs Department, 1904). The Kruger state produced representations of space through these occupation laws, which included the Occupation Act, Act No 86 of 1886; the Volksraad Resolution No. 359 of 1891, which prohibited black residency on Government land not intended for 'locations'; and Law 21 of 1895 (commonly known as the Squatters Law), which prohibited residency of more than five black families per farm or divided portion of a farm. The law aimed to encourage "free labour" and the curbing of "squatting, living or congregating of natives… in places other than those appointed by the Government" (Transvaal Native Affairs Department, 1904, p. B13).



Figure 8: Jeppe's map of the Transvaal and surrounding territories (1899). The map illustrates land divided into unsurveyed and surveyed land, with farm boundaries. A representation of space from the perspective of government officials, planners and surveyors.

Despite the production of *representations of space* through laws such as these that attempted to order racialised social relations, from the late 1800s to the 1940s, this spatial conceptualisation stood in stark contrast to *spatial practices* whereby the imposed order from the Volksraad failed to be realised. The Annual Report by the Commissioner for Native Affairs for 1904 stated that during the 1890s, "there [was] no trace of anything having been done" in line with these laws (Transvaal Native Affairs Department, 1904, p. B16). With regard to the Waterberg, letters in 1899, addressed by General Cronje (Superintendent-General of Natives) to the Government, submitted that the removal of black residents from government farms could result in shortages of labour for white farmers: "if the natives are removed they can do nothing whatever to assist the burghers", and urged that the 1891 resolution be repealed on the grounds that "natives

should be allowed to reside on Government farms, more especially in those districts where it was too unhealthy for whites to reside, i.e., Lydenburg, Waterberg, and Zoutpansberg" (cited in Transvaal Native Affairs Department, 1904, p. B17). Furthermore, the law was also not applied to 'squatting' on private land. The Commissioner for Native Affairs stated that, "[d]uring all the years of its administration, and throughout its attempt to cope with the question… there is no evidence to show that the Volksraad Resolutions and Commissions of the late Transvaal Government on the Squatters' Law led to any practical results" (Transvaal Native Affairs Department, 1904, p. B18). Therefore, in spite of the Kruger state's spatial imaginary of law, order and definite racial divisions, dependency on black farm labour and "chaotic conditions" in the northern regions meant that Kruger's vision was not realised. Besides the continuation of black 'squatting', stock theft, poaching and illegal liquor selling and making were occupations of white settlers in the area (Hofmeyr, 1987; Hunter, 2010).

By 1902, after the South African War ended, white settlement 'behind the mountain' in the Waterberg was still precarious with most white farmers settled within a 50 kilometre radius of Nylstroom (Hofmeyr, 1987). With the passing of the Crown Land Disposal Ordinance of 1903, concerted efforts were made to settle whites on the farms that had been surveyed (Carruthers, 2008; Vig, 2018). In 1904, about a third of the Waterberg was Crown Land, with two-thirds company land, and Government farms were slowly being listed for sale in the government gazette (Hofmeyr, 1987; Vig, 2018). The majority of English-speaking settlers arrived in the Waterberg as part of the land settlement schemes after the war, and some Afrikaners also moved into the Waterberg during this time because the land was cheaper than other areas. The settlement schemes led to 700 white men settling in Transvaal, with 100 to 200 settling in the Waterberg on crown and company land. Experiences of drought, difficult farming conditions and lack of experience amongst white settlers led to many leaving their farms, thwarting Milner's reconstruction plan[70] to bring British order to the Transvaal, including the remote parts of the Waterberg (Hofmeyr, 1987).

According to the 1903 Zoutpansberg Land Tenure Commission (also known as the Occupation Commission) appointed by government, land title and tenure was "bordering on chaos" in the

[70] Alfred Milner was the British High Commissioner for South Africa. After the South African War, he aimed to implement large-scale British settlement in the Transvaal and Free State and to increase agricultural production after the devastation of the war. When he left South Africa in 1905, his policies had largely failed with only a few hundred British immigrants settled in the Transvaal and difficult farming conditions and poor implementation of settlement schemes led to British and Afrikaner disillusionment (Kapp, 2003).

remote and difficult landscape of the Waterberg (cited in Hofmeyr, 1987). The South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) of 1903-1905, which laid the legal groundwork for the 1910 unification, noted that "[o]n many farms throughout the Colony, especially in the Zoutpansberg, Lydenburg, Waterberg, and Middelburg districts, there are large numbers of Natives congregated, forming unauthorised locations on private farms", despite the Squatters' Law No. 21 of 1895 (South African Native Affairs Commission, 1905, p. 23). The Commission discovered that this law was not enforced, especially in the northern regions of the country. The Annual Report by the Commissioner for Native Affairs for 1904 found that the Squatters' Law was "sound in principle, and were the whole territory healthy and were it all under beneficial occupation, it might, and, indeed, it ought to be rigidly enforced. But it is not so, and in my opinion the law cannot be enforced without danger to the interests of the country and without loss of revenue" given that it would likely result in a loss of black labour (South African Native Affairs Commission, 1905, p. B18). The Waterberg was highlighted as a region with "heavy squatting" and where the conditions were "too unhealthy for successful European settlement", and thus, continuing the recommendations from the 1890s, it was recommended that the Law would not be usefully enforced in such a region (South African Native Affairs Commission, 1905, p. B19).

After the unification of South Africa in 1910, the focus of the South African government turned again to securing white settlement in rural areas. Several laws were passed and commissions undertaken regarding the racialised control of land to limit black tenancy and ownership of land outside scheduled areas, including the Native Land Act No. 27 of 1913 and the Beaumont Commission of 1916, which led to the Majority Report of the Eastern Transvaal Natives Land Committee in 1918 and eventually the Native Land and Trust Act No. 18 of 1936. Seleka was the only area scheduled for black settlement entirely in the Waterberg, and the 1918 report recommended a reduction of 28 739 morgen[71] for settlement compared to that recommended by the Beaumont Commission for the Waterberg (Union of South Africa, 1918; Vig, 2018). During this period, there was also greater state investment into agriculture, such as irrigation schemes (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). Both English settlers and Boers received loans to assist with fencing, boreholes, and seeds from the Land Bank (established in 1907) as well as other financing institutions, such as rural trading stores (Beinart, 2001). The North Waterberg Farmers Association also lobbied for improved infrastructure to support farming, such as better

[71] A unit of land equivalent to 0.8 hectares.

roads, the railway line to Vaalwater, postal services, and telephone communications (Hunter, 2010). State investment continued after World War One, with settlement actively encouraged through state subsidies for fencing and irrigation schemes, with the government committed to ensuring food self-sufficiency based on white commercial agriculture (Beinart, 2001).

Marthinus Frederick Loots settled in the region in 1920 and started a transport business between Nylstroom, Potgietersrust and Botswana. In 1927, he bought part of Waterkloof farm on the banks of the Mogol River that later became Ellisras,[72] and built a shop (Hunter, 2010). In 1929, a transport route was opened between Vaalwater and Stockpoort (the border crossing between South Africa and Botswana) and subsequently, a railway and road rest stop was established on the Waterkloof farm. Even with this state investment and carving up of land for white settlement, Hofmeyr (1987, p. 25) argues that, "[p]robably until at least the 1920s much white farming was generally theoretical and most white settlers were transitory. The most permanent and productive farmers were mainly black tenants and peasants", despite their systematic dispossession of land ownership.

The Waterberg, as with Northern areas of the Transvaal, was never made up of white farms in the sense of occupation, but rather in the sense of power, as black tenants continued to occupy extensive areas of 'white land' (Beinart, 2001). The 1936 census showed that approximately 37 per cent of the total black population resided on farms, 45 per cent in reserves, and 17 per cent in towns (Beinart, 2001). White farmers continued to depend on black labour, in the form of tenants and wage labour, and therefore had little incentive to expel them to reserves (Beinart, 2001). The Waterberg farms mostly had tenancy arrangements, with less wage labour and seasonal migration than some other areas. The system that operated in the Waterberg was a 'three month' or '90 day' system whereby tenants gave three months of labour to white farmers in order to occupy a portion of the farm and engage in their own subsistence farming for the remainder of the year (Hofmeyr, 1987). Central Transvaal authorities were preoccupied with an ongoing concern regarding black 'squatters' on farms, who were not cash labourers and were seen as responsible for stock theft and as untapped potential sources of labour (Beinart, 2001).

[72] The previous name for the town, Ellisras, comes from a combination of the surnames of Patric Ellis and Piet Erasmus (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008). Ellis, who was born in Ireland and grew up in Marico, moved to the Waterberg after the South African War and in 1932 bought a portion of the Waterkloof farm for 12 cows and one bull. Erasmus, who was born in Bronkhorstspruit and joined a commando during the South African War, settled on Waterkloof farm in 1928. Together with Loots, they decided on various name combinations that were submitted for a Post Office (Hunter, 2010).

In the 1930s and 1940s, there were continuous debates within white communities regarding how to organise land and labour. The 'three month' system of labour relations was combined with the issue of 'squatters' on white-owned land and the need to ensure productive white agriculture. Some of this contestation was evident in the Native Economic Commission (1930-1932). In a testimony by a farmer in the Northern Transvaal, he defends labour tenancy against cash labour:

> "In my part of the country, that is the Northern Transvaal, we have labour tenants who are on a three months' basis, which I think is the lowest basis in the [South African] Union. But there are others where they are on a nine months' basis… One finds different conditions in different parts of the Union… Now, I have always considered that, if we farmers in the Northern Transvaal, in the Waterberg area and the Zoutpansberg area, had to turn our labour tenants into pure labourers, it would be a very definite hardship on these Natives… he cannot go away from there, he is landless, he cannot go to any of the Native areas because he has nothing there" (Native Economic Commission, 1930-1932, pp. 8955-8956).

Labour tenants were seen as having "something at stake" in the productivity of the land, and if they were to become only cash labourers they would be "bound to degenerate" (Native Economic Commission, 1930-1932, p. 8956). This paternalistic concern for the wellbeing of the 'native' was combined with a concern for the organisation and stability of the agricultural industry through a steady supply of labour, which may have been disrupted if black tenants were displaced from farms.

This view on labour tenancy, however, was contested by others in the Commission who, in the long run, viewed cash labour as an economic advancement for both parties: black workers would receive the cash that they wanted and white farmers would receive more labour. And moreover, labour tenancy was understood by some as a form of squatting:

> "In actuality, you are reverting to squatting… Today, we say we do not want Europeans to allow their land to be run by Natives, to hire it out to squatters, because these Natives are under no control and they deteriorate the land and they are a nuisance to the farmers generally. If they want to go in for squatting, they must go into their own areas. That is the policy which has been adopted in this country and I feel sure that very few people indeed will uphold squatting. Now, you say we must have a system of leasing, which, to my mind, is very much the same as squatting" (Native Economic Commission, 1930-1932, p. 8961).

Despite black tenants on the farms having some degree of autonomy, white farmers exerted power and control over their lives in numerous ways. There is evidence of contestation and

resistance to this exertion of power, though not in an established organisational sense as was the case in other parts of Northern Transvaal, such as in Lydenberg where the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was active and Zoutspansberg where the Communist Party organised in the 1930s (Beinart, 2001). In the Waterberg, some communities moved to more remote areas in the North to escape domination and maintain some level of autonomy (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). There were also reports of migration from Waterberg farms to urban centres where better incomes could be earned. For example, Elias Hendrik Chake from the Transvaal, who provided oral evidence in the Native Economic Commission, stated: "I can speak from my experience; I have seen boys run away from the Waterberg district. I have asked them 'Why do you run?' and the reply has been, 'No, I do not want to stay on these farms they want me to work too many hours, and you do not get any money, but here in the town you do get money. Here you get on very much better" (Native Economic Commission, 1930-1932, p. 743).

Besides the movement of people, either to towns or into more remote areas of the Waterberg, black tenants who stayed on the white-owned farms contested tenancy arrangements through the means available to them. One such means was through letter writing and appeals, for example, to John David Rheinallt Jones who was a Native Representative in the Senate and known to be more sympathetic to the plight of black labourers and land tenants.[73]

In 1937, in evidence provided by black "squatters and labourers" in the Waterberg region, represented by Chief Zacahria Shongoane, George Masemola, and Michael Thlaku, to the Senator, they explained that they worked on white-owned farms for three months for the farmer in order to live on the farm for the rest of the year. During these three months of work, working hours were not specified and they would have to work from the rising of the sun to its setting, resulting in excessively long work hours. If they took Sunday off, they would have to work four months instead of three. Despite these harsh working conditions, they were allowed inadequate ploughing land and cattle to live sufficiently. Cattle were limited to ten, and they were given "bushy land" to plough. They explained that as soon as they cleared the land for their own ploughing, the white farmer would take them off that land and give them new rough land to work on. In this way, white farmers continued to depend on the skills of black farmers for the productivity of the land. Furthermore, because black farmers did not have enough money for fencing and enclosure of their cattle, when their cattle wandered onto neighbouring farms, they

[73] A more detailed analysis of different forms of contestation requires further historical research.

would be impounded and only released if they could pay excessive fines. White farmers also exploited their labour in other ways, such as using their children for labour and depriving them of the ability to attend school. There were complaints of farmers "selling" squatters to work on the mines (Evidence by Waterberg Squatters and Labourers, 1937).

In a farm labour meeting on Tuinplaats farm with the Senator in 1941, there were again reports of labour coercion with complaints of young men compelled to stay on the farms and work, instead of finding waged work in the towns where they could earn more money. There were also instances of women and children being forced to work, indicating attempts to control not only masculine labour but also women's productive labour (McClintock, 1995). The meeting attendees requested that the Senator "speak on our behalf to the Farmers Association. The N.C.[74] tells us that the owner of the farm can treat us as he wishes since he is the owner. We can get no help from the N.C." (Farm Labour Waterberg, 1941).

The above examples of oral testimonies in commissions, letter writings, and objections and requests in farm meetings indicate that the everyday spatial practices of white farmers continued to depend on black labour, in the form of labour tenants, despite the *representations of space* of Transvaal authorities, which aimed to expel black 'squatters' from white land in an attempt to create discrete areas of racial division. And furthermore, the everyday lives of white farmers and black labourers/tenants were contested as black tenants resisted full control over their lives and livelihoods by farmers through oral and written objections, movement to urban areas, and movement further north, in attempts to challenge or bypass white power.

The presence of white settlers in the Waterberg stabilised somewhat during the first half of the twentieth century. Government supported white settlement on farms through state investment in agriculture in an attempt to modernise the agricultural economy, and through increasing juridical control. The extending of juridical control over what was seen as an 'empty', 'chaotic', 'ungoverned' land was a feature of the twentieth century Waterberg. Key laws were passed in attempts to bring the Waterberg under the control of the racialised nation state. This process of the production of bureaucratic *representations of space* through land dispossession and enclosure was also an attempt to produce discrete and hierarchal race and class identities in the hinterland. As shown above, the production of *representations of space* often clashed with the

[74] The notes of the Senator do not translate N.C., but one can reasonably interpret N.C. as 'Native Commissioner' under the Department of Native Affairs.

everyday *spatial practices* of both white settlers and black tenants whose daily lives remained outside of juridical control to some extent. Subsistence hunting, white farmers' dependence on black 'squatters' for agricultural production, and the ability of localised black communities to retain some degree of autonomy in the interstices of the conceived space of the state continued into the early 1900s. In this sense, the performance of *spatial practices* of everyday life in the Waterberg during this period was not in the thrall of the colonial farm, as conceived by central authorities (Merrifield, 2006). Moreover, the space of everyday life involved complex, and often conflictual, negotiations of power, which produced the intersecting, relational spaces of the Waterberg.

5.3 The Coal Boom in the Waterberg (1940s to 1980s)

The narrative of an 'empty space' holding out possibilities of wealth through resources, combined with masculinist fantasies of adventure and exploration in 'untamed' lands, reappears in the mid-twentieth century, indicating a recurrence of a particular way of relating to space (Bridge, 2001; McClintock, 1995). In the 1940s to the 1960s, during the phase of prospecting for coal mining, it was reported that Ellisras has "big dreams" and people "dream of buried treasure which they hope could make this remote Waterberg settlement South Africa's boom town" (Skipper, 1966, p. 4). Later, when the development of the coal industry began in the 1970s, it was claimed "they've struck it rich in Ellisras" and the town is "sitting on a fortune of 'black gold'" (Reid, 1974, p. 15). The "thornbush country" became "the centre of prospecting and discoveries" (Payne, 1978, p. 12). Thus, Ellisras was (again) constructed as a material and symbolic, or representational, space of extraction, as 'empty-yet-full' (Bridge, 2001).

In this section, I think through the continuation and acceleration of social, spatial and temporal relations that were being established in the early twentieth century. I argue that the logics and discourse of the discovery of potential wealth in the nineteenth century Waterberg was recreated and accelerated through practices of mineral extraction and mining development. And as such, I draw parallels between the production of the *representational space* of the Waterberg as that of potential wealth during the earlier colonial period of discovery and hunting, and its reproduction through the development of mining and power generation between the 1940s and 1980s. The development of Ellisras and surrounds, can be understood as a nodal point of interaction between local actors and national and global forces, rather than merely through an imposition of the apartheid state's *representations of space* in the hinterland or as part of the

national MEC's industrial formation (Hart, 2006). As such, I trace how the coal boom in Ellisras was constituted through the dynamics of extraction, 'pioneering', continued land enclosure that produced cheap black labour (section 5.4), and avenues of state power instantiated through parastatals at a local level (section 5.5).

5.3.1 Spatialising the Minerals-Energy Complex (MEC)

As mentioned, in 1920, coal seams were reported from a water-boring operation on the farm Grootegeluk, west of Ellisras. In the 1940s the Department of Mining launched an exploratory programme of the Waterberg's coal basin and in the 1970s and 1980s, the development of ISCOR and ESKOM in Ellisras took place. In order to situate the development of mining in the region in broader national dynamics, I briefly shift the spatial scale of analysis from regional to national levels, before returning to the Waterberg again.

The state developed industries of iron and steel (via ISCOR), railways and harbours, and state provided finances through the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), set up in 1940 (Gentle, 2009). Bill Freund (2018) argues that, driven by the Second World War, in the 1940s, the state saw its role as an investor and stabiliser of the economy, which drove a fresh wave of industrialisation. ISCOR increased its efficiency and scale during the war period, and new parastatal plans were developed at the end of the war (Freund, 2018). A core pillar of this industrial development was the supply of coal needed to generate cheap electrical energy (Fine & Rustomjee, 1996; Freund, 2018). Coal was overwhelmingly the source of power generation in this period, and cheap coal was essential for the strategy of heavy industrial development. By 1948, the institutional foundations for an "industrial developmental state" were in place (Freund, 2018, p. 68). Thus the development of ISCOR and ESKOM in Ellisras was rooted in a period of huge public works investment (Ballim, 2017). Fine (2009, p. 29) understands this public sector development to be part of the development of the MEC through "the formation and promotion of state corporations such as ESKOM, ISCOR and SASOL, and the coordinated expansion of private and state capital around the MEC and MEC-related sectors".

In the post-war period, the apartheid government sought to achieve economic sovereignty and diversification of mineral exports, partially through investing in industry and public works (Ballim, 2017). The MEC sectors drove the economy, enabling the protection, growth and incorporation of Afrikaner capital into the economy (O'Meara, 1983). ISCOR and SASOL

became large employers of Afrikaners and played a key role in developing marketable skills among a section of Afrikaners (Freund, 2018). An accommodation was reached between the economic power of mining corporations and the political power of Afrikaners, resulting in a (sometimes contested) partnership between state and private capital (Fine, 2008). For example, Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation came to recognise the interdependency of mining with the state through ESKOM's supply of cheap electrical power (Freund, 2018). The development of state enterprises of ISCOR and ESKOM therefore show a complex interaction between economic and political interests, and the intersection of capital, class, and nationalism (Freund, 2018; O'Meara, 1983). In the case of the contractual relationship between the Grootegeluk coal mine and the Matimba Power Station in the 1980s, the underlying rationale of the coal contracts was to provide an opportunity for Afrikaner capital to gain a foothold in the economy because both parties were parastatals concerned with protecting the "national interest" (Ballim, 2017, p. 103).

The 1970s saw the development of state policies to promote the MEC core sectors, including energy generation, with the substantial increases in prices of gold and energy, and the increasing demands of the mining industry (Fine & Rustomjee, 1996; Gentle, 2009). Electricity use expanded and power was in increasing demand. The price of oil rose dramatically after 1973, and coal was increasingly sought as an alternative replacement to oil. In 1975, there were coal shortages in South Africa and these pressures resulted in massive government investment in MEC core sectors (Freund, 2018). The output of coal doubled in the 1970s as coal-fired power stations came onto the grid (Marquard, 2006). Power stations were initially constructed at close quarters to the Witwatersrand mines, but later, coal pithead-located power stations using low-grade coal were built which could carry energy over power transmission lines to the mines (Gentle, 2009). Throughout the 1970s, ESKOM undertook a strategy of expansion, building large pithead power stations, using the most recently developed technology to burn low-grade coal, in the coalfields of the Eastern Transvaal and Northern Natal (Gentle, 2009). Freund (2018, p. 176) argues that, "coal reserves, the coal mines and the huge power stations, usually close to coal mines, are as central to modern economic life in South Africa as gold". In the 1980s, conditions became favourable for South Africa to borrow money due to record gold prices. ESKOM exploited this opportunity to fund its expansion. In 1982, ESKOM had become "the biggest borrower of medium-term funds abroad", borrowing close to 2 billion rand in 1982 alone (Padayachee, 1991, p. 96).

It was in this context, in the 1970s and 1980s, that ISCOR's Grootegeluk coal mine and ESKOM's Matimba coal-fired power station were built. However, the specific environmental, political and economic context of the Waterberg shaped the character of this industrial development and in turn, the new industrial development shaped the landscape and social relations of the Waterberg. Therefore, I argue for the centrality of particular local spatial dynamics in the national development of South Africa. Through the spatialisation of the MEC, and a detailed analysis of its development in this region, I demonstrate below the particularities of the Waterberg and the continuities of its colonial social and spatial relations.

5.3.2 'Pioneering', Drilling and Extracting

The discovery of coal, the remains of ancient organisms, combined with the logic of extractivism, set the scene for the coal mega-projects of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that desecrated the bones of Salaminah Moloantoa on the outskirts of Ellisras. Hallowes and Munnik (2018, p. 23) argue that the Waterberg "was a landscape to be incorporated into the mining-driven economy of South Africa, to be created by pushing out from the heartlands of gold, coal and steel in and around Gauteng, already created by colonialism, segregation and apartheid".

In 1941, the Geological Survey Division of the then Department of Mining launched an exploration programme of discovery into the Waterberg area. From 1941 to 1947, the Geological Survey Division attempted to determine the extent of the Waterberg coalfield and the properties of the coal (Rand Daily Mail, 1961). Explorations were conducted through geological mapping, the construction of 143 boreholes, and two prospecting shafts. The results revealed extensive reserves of metallurgical and non-metallurgical coal (Alberts, 1982). Ben Alberts (1982, p. 344), an engineer and the project leader for the establishment of the Grootegeluk Coal Mine, described this phase of exploration as "pioneering work by the Geological Survey". ISCOR, the country's biggest consumer of coking coal, participated in the programme. ISCOR aimed to secure its coking coal supply through the Waterberg coalfields (Ballim, 2017). Ballim (2017, p. 37) describes how ISCOR engineers were "beckoned by the underground riches of the Waterberg coal fields." In this moment, the *representations of space* produced through maps, surveys and prospecting converged with the *representational space* of the Waterberg, that was (re)constructed imaginatively as a space of exploration and adventure

to reproduce earlier images of beckoning riches. This convergence produced a coal boom in the area.

Explorative drilling was completed in 1952, and in 1959 ISCOR began prospecting in the area (Ballim, 2017; Rand Daily Mail, 1961). In 1955, during a period of early apartheid industrial development, the Minister of Mines reserved coal on 29 farms outside Ellisras for the state-owned companies ISCOR and SASOL, adding two more farms in 1961, five more in 1964, and a further 89 in 1965. As a result, ISCOR and SASOL were the only two parties permitted to apply for prospecting rights and mining leases for coal on 125 private white-owned farms in the Waterberg coalfield (Alberts, 1982). While prospecting was still occurring, ISCOR started buying up farms in the area. In 1957, ISCOR obtained property rights to six private white-owned farms where they believed the coalfield was it its best: Grootegeluk, Leeuwdrift, Hieromtrent, Daarby, Enkelbult and Turfvlakte (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008; Rand Daily Mail, 1961). In 1960, ISCOR began drilling on the farm where Grootegeluk coal mine was later built (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008). While the land was relatively cheap for ISCOR to purchase compared to other areas of the Transvaal, farm owners were not always willing to part with their land (Ballim, 2017).

The two dominant modes of accumulation in the area, farming and (future) mining, brought about contestations over land. Joe Meyer, one of the founding engineers of Grootegeluk coal mine, explained that white farmers were resistant to mining development in the area because of disruptions to their ways of life and economic impact on farming and tourism:

> "We weren't welcomed with open arms here at first. I was one of the team who came here with the lawyers to start the new developments here. The Ellisras people didn't necessarily want us here. They didn't want to sell us any land at Ellisras. The plots at Ellisras were very narrow and ran for kilometres from the river so as to have water rights to make farming possible. We were interested in some of these properties to create a township for our staff. They weren't happy to sell these plots to us… they were scared we would disturb their peaceful life" (cited in Ballim, 2017, p. 80).

Similarly, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported in 1974 that "not everyone is throwing his hat in the air at the promised prosperity. 'The open-face mines will scar the landscape and frighten away the game'" (Reid, 1974, p. 15). This was a common opinion expressed by white farmers in the area. Similar to Sasolburg, white farmers feared pollution from the industrial development, loss of tourism, and an influx of black labour into the town (Sparks, 2012). Despite the opposition

of some farmers, ISCOR managed to purchase two farms adjoining the town in 1972 (Reid, 1974). One farm was the expansive farm, Onverwacht, north of Waterkloof, for which ISCOR paid R50 000 to George Wells, the owner (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). ISCOR used the land to build residential housing and another business district.

ISCOR began an intensive drilling programme on these six farms in 1973, and decided to proceed with the development of the Grootegeluk colliery in the same year (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). In 1974, the ISCOR Board of Directors approved the establishment of a mine in the Waterberg coalfield (Alberts, 1982). Work began in December 1974 with the development of the coalfield, and one year later with the quarrying of the mine (Ballim, 2017). Gilliland (1982) explained that during the research and development phase, extensive testing of different kinds was undertaken. The test work conducted by ISCOR's Research and Development Department and the Fuel Research Institute, which began in 1974, was based on "borehole and box-cut samples… Extensive tests were conducted on drill cores and on bulk samples (46 700 t) obtained from a box-cut mining operation" to determine how best to beneficiate the coal (Gilliland, 1982, pp. 356–357). Coking tests were also carried out to determine ratios for the production of acceptable coke (Gilliland, 1982).

This process of exploration, which culminated in the decision to proceed with mining, (re)produced a particular relation to space as quantifiable and extractable, containing buried wealth, as illustrated in the following quote from a *Rand Daily Mail* article on the mine:

> "[S]ince the first excavation in mid-1975 more than 10-million cubic metres of earth has been scooped from the mine's ever-deepening central pit. Four years of excavation have removed the 15m thick layer of shale covering the coal deposit and have exposed the fabulous wealth of the Waterberg seam to Grootegeluk's sophisticated mechanical diggers. The main seam of coking coal is 60m thick and is under-layered by a further 35m of power-station coal. Reserves on the present mining site are estimated to be more than 2000-million tons, making the coal field one of the largest in the country" (Willson, 1980, p. 15).

The coal mine was constructed as an open-cast mine, which involves "ripping up large areas of land to strip out seams of coal 60 meters or more below the surface" (Worthington, 2009, pp. 116–117). The Grootegeluk open-cast mine is highly mechanised with improved extraction methods (Gilliland, 1982). Through such practices of extraction which fragmented and abstracted nature into quantifiable commodities or stocks of raw material, a social relation to nature was produced disconnected from the varieties of social and natural relations in the space. Salaminah Moloantoa's bones, which were unearthed in 1973 when ISCOR was surveying for

housing construction, are a reminder of the multiple strands of natural-social relations in the area that evade commodification.

The coal mine and beneficiation plant were completed on schedule despite financial challenges,[75] with the first train of metallurgical coal loaded and sent off on 23 July 1980, to the Vanderbijlpark Works (Alberts, 1982). The mine was officially opened on 15 April 1981 by the Minister of Industries, Commerce and Tourism. Fittingly, and exercising a logic of extractivism, it was opened by detonating 100 tons of explosives, which blew smoke 1000 metres into the air and dislodged 375 000 tons of coal (Willson, 1981). The mine was in full production by 30 July 1981, with an estimated output of 3 500 000 tons of coal per year at full capacity (Alberts, 1982; Willson, 1981).

After the opening of the mine, drilling and exploration continued. Alberts (1987, p. 382), in his 1987 presidential address at the Annual General Meeting of The South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, stated:

> "Over the past three decades, Sasol and Iscor have carried out extensive exploration and research programmes on the portion of the Waterberg Coalfield reserved by the State for the petrochemical and metallurgical industries. A vast number of coal samples have been taken. By 1985, approximately 930 boreholes had been completed, comprising a total of 106 000 m, and the total cost of exploration had amounted to R45 million (1985 value)."

As previously argued in Chapter 2, the production of spatial relations is inseparable from temporal relations. In analysing Kotze's (1982) presentation on *Project planning and progress control for the Grootegeluk Coal Project*, for example, a different temporal order was introduced in comparison to the 'wild', untamed Waterberg. The article outlines the tight planning, schedules and controls implemented by ISCOR to ensure timeous project completion, instituting a sequencing and control of time characteristic of modern industrial projects. Kotze shows how the different components of the project were broken down, each with target completion dates and monthly progress reports. ISCOR closely monitored the different contractors, with project planners assigned by ISCOR to oversee particular contractors. Kotze (1982, p. 366) explained that:

> "The project planner assigned by Iscor to a particular contract and the contractor's representative examine the site and formally agree on activity progress. The relevant programme is then updated. This updating process, even for large

[75] With poor market conditions, increasing debt and the devaluation of the rand in the 1970s, ISCOR depended upon government bailouts (Freund, 2018).

> networks, takes about two or three days, which includes the examination of the results and critical paths. The monthly site meeting is then held based on the updated programmes, which are not more than two or three days 'out of date'. The monthly progress report is based directly on the updated detailed construction programmes… Iscor keeps a close watch on the estimated durations."

Lefebvre (2004, p. 14, emphasis in original) argues that "[o]bjectively, for there to be *change*, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a **rhythm** on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner." In the Ellisras region, planners and engineers imprinted a tightly controlled and measured linear rhythm on work life in the area. The spatio-temporal practices of drilling and mining constitute a particular modernist and masculinist form of relating to the land, as a passive medium upon which to *explore*, *extract*, and convert into quantifiable commodities or stocks of raw material, disconnected from the varieties of social relations in the space and other claims to the land (Bridge, 2001; Coronil, 1997). Such practices altered the ecosystems and rhythms of the Waterberg and fundamentally changed future possibilities. The bones found in the space behind mountain are a signifier of the fullness of life before such "development".

5.3.3 White, 'Pioneering' Masculinities

The discursive construction of 'pioneering' masculinities, in the form of white, male engineers, experts and technocrats, was produced through the technological achievements of ISCOR and ESKOM in the area. Ballim (2017, p. 43) argues that the "tenacity" of ISCOR engineers was part of a broader institutional culture, and not solely attributable to individuals. At a national scale, Stephen Sparks (2012, p. 7) also refers to the "ingenuity" of SASOL engineers and scientists, attributing this "pioneering" discourse to a broader celebration of "cutting-edge" technology in the making of the 'apartheid modern'. This alludes to dynamics at different scales in the production of subjectivities. Another aspect of this production of subjectivity, that I want to highlight, is the dialectic of spatial and social relations, with the harsh place of the Waterberg generating a 'pioneering' and 'hardy' masculinist stance that ran through earlier colonial hunters and farmers in the 'wild' Waterberg.[76]

The Grootegeluk coal mine was an ambitious project and Ballim (2017, p. 43) argues that the "tenacity" of the engineers played a critical role in its development. The management of the project comprised a group of engineers, each individually responsible for aspects of the plant

[76] See Hunter's (2010) *Pioneers of the Waterberg*.

(Gilliland, 1982). This was a different way of operating for ISCOR, which usually split responsibilities between the project (responsible for "white collar work") and construction engineers (responsible for construction on site) (Gilliland, 1982). For Grootegeluk, this was changed, and a single person was responsible for both components of the project (Gilliland, 1982). More responsibility than usual was thus placed upon a smaller group of engineers.

One such engineer was Ben Alberts, the project leader for the establishment of the Grootegeluk Coal Mine from 1975 until early 1981, and he was subsequently promoted to Divisional General Manager of Mining at ISCOR from 1982 (Wagner, 1987). He embodied an Afrikaner nationalist vigour. He was born in Pretoria, but grew up in Thabazimbi in the Waterberg. He was described in the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy obituary as a "devout Christian", "family man", "lover of nature", "formidable rugby scrum mager" and, ironically, "lover of nature" (Steffen, 2013, p. n.p.).[77] In his presidential speech for the Institute in 1987, Alberts (1987, p. 372) described coal as "one of the most important resources of energy on earth", and South Africa's most important energy source. As one of the pioneers of the development of the Waterberg coalfields in the 1980s, faced with a shortage of funds and numerous challenges, his speech "projected a vision for the future" of coal in South Africa.

Both ISCOR and ESKOM required technological advances in the face of the harsh environmental conditions of the Waterberg. With the development of ISCOR's coal mine, ESKOM extended its interest in the area and decided to build an air-cooled coal power station, Matimba, in close vicinity to the mine. Without ESKOM, to burn the inferior quality coal, the mine would not be viable (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). The construction of the power station began in April 1981, with the first unit completed in 1987 and the power station finally completed in 1991 (ESKOM, 2018). Matimba was part of the 'six-pack' of power stations, which were all built in the Eastern Highveld, with the exception of Matimba (Ballim, 2017). Farmers resisted a sixth power station in the Eastern Transvaal because of air and water pollution concerns, and thus the sixth was built in the perceived isolated Waterberg region (Ballim, 2017).

[77] Today there is even a *Ben Alberts Nature Reserve*, named after him, in the Waterberg. This disjuncture in spatial relations to nature as both 'lover of' and extracting and mining such, continued in the white engineers with whom I spoke, working on Medupi Power Station (Field notes).

Matimba Power Station was a hailed as a milestone power station for its time. It utilised innovative designs in order to function within the hot and dry conditions of the Waterberg, where the conventional wet-cooled power stations would not have worked (Ballim, 2017). This highlights the fallacy of relating to nature as external to society, rather than as internally linked (Coronil, 1997). Humans transform nature and are simultaneously transformed by it; there is a "dialectical constitution of related entities rather than interaction between separate entities" (Coronil, 1997, p. 26). Besides its innovative technology, Matimba was also the largest power station in southern hemisphere at the time (Ballim, 2017; ESKOM, 2018). The *Rand Daily Mail* described the rig used for the construction of Matimba as the "world's largest lifting rig" and further, that the "giant rig is [the] height of power" (Capel, 1983, p. 3). Similarly, in an article titled *Men & Machinery*, with images of men in industrial workplaces, describes the crusher and bridge conveyor for transporting coal at the Grootegeluk colliery as representing a "breakthrough" in electrical operation (Brooks, 1980, p. 9). Grootegeluk and Matimba's size and technological advances were heralded in a masculinist construction of achievement and power.

The dry-cooled technology utilised for Matimba had not been used on this scale before. ESKOM had only an experimental knowledge of dry-cooled systems at the time and the move was therefore risky (Steyn, 2001), and moreover, "[n]owhere in the world was one in existence [with Matimba's generation capacity of 600 MW]" (Ballim, 2017, p. 106). This bold endeavour was described at the time as follows: "[d]eep in the remote bush of the northwestern Transvaal, South Africa is again pushing modern technology to its limits – and maybe beyond… Escom is now striking out deep into uncharted territory in the unexplored field of large-scale dry-cooled power station" (Willson, 1983, p. 10). Matimba was ten times larger than existing dry-cooled stations, making the project high-risk: "Escom is treading boldly into the dark" (Willson, 1983, p. 10). The image of Matimba Power Station rising up from the landscape, shining a light in the dark, evokes the image of the first brick church built in the Waterberg, which could be seen for kilometres around, "shining in the darkness".[78] The discursive constructions of ESKOM's Matimba project hark back to colonial discourses of masculinist adventures and explorations, bringing different forms of 'en-lightenment' to the Waterberg.

[78] A missionary at the Waterberg Mission station described how the first brick church at the station was built in 1894. The church was built on "rising ground" and could be seen by villages 20 to 25 kilometres in the distance. It was described as "our visible centre of unity rising above the mist, with its head glistening in the sunlight. It is a beacon shining in the darkness" (The Christian Express, 1895, p. 95).

I argue that there is a sustained discursive continuity in the construction of the Waterberg, behind the mountain, as a space-time that holds possibilities for wealth for pioneers. This 'empty space' was imbued with projections of future riches, to be discovered by white, male, pioneers, from game hunters to engineers and miners – generating a continuity in spatio-temporal and social relations. There is a continuation of colonial temporality in the risky, 'pioneering' activities of the engineers, with little consideration of risk or unintended consequences. This generates a masculinist relation to a future that can be dominated and controlled. The production of space-time and subjectivity are co-constitutive, and I argue that in the harsh conditions of the Waterberg, particular colonial, masculine and pioneering subjectivities were (re)constituted in the development of "milestone" mega-projects through exploiting "new frontiers" of technology and infrastructure which changed the landscape of Ellisras (Willson, 1983, p. 10).

An extractivist relation to land is one which attempts to master and control space-time, thus while inter-capital competition existed, a primarily colonial relation to space-time was (re)produced. The MEC framework draws a clear line between the MEC and other economic sectors or activities. Similarly, the farm and the mine are often held in opposition as symbols of 'backward' rurality versus urban development – often conceptualised in linear time in which 'the farm' precedes 'the mine'. As I argue in this and in the next section, the production of space-time in the Waterberg region is not linear; its different iterations can be better understood through the inter-penetration of the farm and the mine.

5.4 Capital Expansion and/through Enclosure (1940s to 1980s)

In this section, I argue that while the extractivist industry was making inroads into the Waterberg area, expanding and exploring a new frontier of extraction, processes of enclosure were occurring. The dynamics of the region cannot be fully comprehended without exploring the intensification of enclosure in the Waterberg, behind the mountain. The enclosure of space through the increasing privatisation of land, water and animal resources and the expansion of apparatuses of security for white settlers and the creation of black reserves, positioned black people either as labourers necessary for white-owned farms and industries, or as illegal poachers and insurgent terrorists. This section explores in more detail the apparatuses of law

and force in relation to land in the region, and in turn, how the production of enclosed spaces was also the production of less fluid or entangled race and class identities.

5.4.1 Continuing Forms of Enclosure

The increasing juridical control over what was seen as an 'empty', 'chaotic', 'ungoverned' land was a feature of the twentieth century Waterberg. In section 5.2.2 of this chapter, I tracked increasing interventions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to enclose and privatise land for white settlement, including attempts to control issues of 'squatting' and black labour on farms. Representations of spatial order, control, and racial boundaries were often contrasted by the messiness of social relations, and continued interdependency of lives in the Waterberg. A series of Acts, Ordinances and Laws were passed between the 1940s and 1970s that defined who owned the land and who belonged in the area, and in what capacity. In this section, I outline some of the key laws that were passed that continued processes of bounding space in an attempt to bring the Waterberg under the control of the racialised apartheid nation state.

The Land Acts of the early twentieth century were also followed by a series of hunting laws. Debates regarding hunting laws were primarily focused on land ownership and control of the 'white farm' (Vig, 2018). Through hunting and an increasing concern with wildlife preservation and management, land was racialised: "Game laws provided a way to articulate this as protection, but also as hunting down and eliminating, exiling, and removing the threats Africans posed to animals and farmers" (Vig, 2018, p. 237). Controlling and securing land for the white farmer in relation to the black 'poacher' through the discourse and practice of game preservation became the task of the 1945 Commission of Inquiry into Game Preservation, which resulted in the Game Ordinance No. 23 of 1949. The poor white problem remained a concern for government authorities and granting greater power to white landowners, to protect their right to hunt, was a means of incorporating the white hunter into the nation (Vig, 2018).

The Ordinance withdrew the status of 'occupier' for black residents on farms, while also increasing anti-poaching measures, which included penalties for practices such as poaching, trespassing and keeping dogs. The Ordinance stated that if any person trespassing on any land, in search or pursuit of game, is accompanied by a dog, "any police officer or the owner or occupier of such land… may demand from such person a statement of his full name and place

of abode and may direct him forthwith to quit such land, and if such person fails forthwith to comply with such demand or direction or states a false or incomplete name or address he shall be guilty of an offence" (Game Ordinance No. 23 of 1949, Section 25). Kagiso recounted how in the 1950s, the white-owned farms were not all fenced as they are now, and his father who lived in Ga-Seleka, used to roam to hunt from time to time. But in 1953, he was arrested for several months and his dog was taken away from him (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). Local ways of hunting, such as through snares and traps, were also explicitly prohibited, as was the sale and ownership of guns for black hunters, who were thus more greatly affected by these prohibitions than white farm owners. The commission recommended an increase in "surveillance, tracking, and capture" (Vig, 2018, p. 246). White landowners or lessees were granted powers of surveillance and security due to the cost of expanding police patrols against poaching attempts. The powers of police were extended to include most white men in the rural areas, which involved conferring powers similar to those of the police onto stock inspectors, land inspectors, field officers of the Native Affairs Department, officers of the Transvaal Provincial Administration, and landowners (Vig, 2018). Landowners and apartheid administrators were thus further empowered through their *representations of space*, that attempted to increasingly bring rural Waterberg under greater white and administrative control.

An important aspect of the enclosure of space was also the physical marking of spatial boundaries through fencing. The act of fencing spaces was a way of marking out and protecting private property and producing a configuration of control over labour and economic activities in the Transvaal, which enforced a racialised power. The legal status of wildlife as *res nullius* (ownerless property) meant that the enforcement of private property was pertinent in ensuring the economic benefits of wildlife were accrued to white landowners (Carruthers, 1993). The Game Ordinance of 1949 did not grant landowners ownership of game, but it allowed landowners whose farms were enclosed by "jackal proof fences" to be exempt from hunting restrictions on their land (Vig, 2018). The commission laid the foundations for "fully fencing farms as game farms for economic development" (Vig, 2018, p. 263), which was largely implemented from the 1960s as agricultural farms increasingly converted into more economically lucrative game farms.[79]

[79] For example, 'luxury hunting safaris' in Ellisras started to be advertised in newspapers in the 1970s. See for instance, Cavalier Game Farms (1977) in the *Rand Daily Mail*.

The Fencing Act of 1963 was a further key piece of legislation in the securing of private game farms in Transvaal. Section 12 of the Act, the 'Right of owners to obtain advances from the Land Bank', made provision for landowners who wished to erect a boundary fence to secure an advance. The provision states: "if the cost of the erection or the contribution, as the case may be, exceeds forty rand, be entitled to obtain, subject to the provisions of the Land Bank Act, 1944 (Act 13 of 1944), from the Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa an advance to defray such cost or such contribution, as the case may be" (The Fencing Act of 1963, Section 12). Thus, the government invested in the securing of white control over farms and supported the establishment of game farms when white farmers did not have the immediate capital to do so. In addition, Section 23 and Section 24 of the Act prohibited "climbing or crawling over or through fences without permission" and "willful damaging or removal of fences" (The Fencing Act of 1963, Section 23, 24). Punishments included fines and imprisonment for contraventions. Carruthers (1993)[80] argues that private landowners strictly enforced trespass regulations to prevent black people from hunting. The Fencing Act was another key piece of legislation by which to restrict the movement of black people with the game fence erected as a material barrier to their movement and that of animals. Furthermore, those who did cross this physical barrier were rendered as illegal trespassers or poachers, securing white control over game and land (Vig, 2018).

The Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1967 replaced the Game Ordinance of 1949, indicating a change to a discourse of wider environmental management, and later, environmental management and development (Vig, 2018). Significantly, the Ordinance bureaucratised nature conservation, with punitive measures, placing nature conversation under the purview of the police. The Ordinance defined a "nature conservation officer" as "(a) a nature conservation officer appointed in terms of section 100" or "(b) any member of the South African Police". Section 102 empowered a nature conservation officer to carry out tasks such as enter land or premises at any time to carry out inspections; carry out searches of property; seize evidence in connection with an offence; remove any snare, trap or the like used in unlawful hunting; and destroy any dog used in unlawful hunting. The Ordinance therefore reinforced measures of surveillance and securitisation of a racialised landscape (Vig, 2018). The Ordinance incentivised the conservation of nature and wildlife in Section 10 by prohibiting the hunting of ordinary game unless one owns the land, is related to the landowner and has prior written

[80] Here Carruthers (1993) is referring to the early twentieth century but I argue that the same logic applies into the later twentieth century.

permission, or has a license and prior written permission. Thus, the Ordinance reaffirmed the importance of private property and fencing to secure such property, granting exemption to owners to hunt if their properties were enclosed: "Where an owner has erected a fence on his land, which, in the opinion of the Administrator, is of such a nature that a particular species of game which is on such land cannot escape from the area so fenced, the Administrator may grant written exemption to the owner… from any or all of the provisions of this Ordinance in respect of the hunting in the area so fenced" (Ordinance No. 17 of 1967, Section 15). The apartheid government used the conservation of nature and wildlife to reinforce racialised divisions of power with the Ordinance defining an "occupier" of land as someone "who has the right to exercise general control over such land but… does not include a person who is not a white person". Moreover, Section 104 outlines that owners or occupiers of land were also granted some of the powers of a nature conservation officer except if they are "not a white person". Thereby strengthening white land ownership and a white game economy, dependent on black labour (Vig, 2018; Zulu, 2015).

The control of space secured increasing white economic power in relation to the land. For example, a millionaire business owner from central Transvaal, Van Schalkwyk, bought a farm outside Ellisras in the mid-1960s, and subsequently 15 adjoining farms. He converted the farms to a game farm, erecting "game fences three m high", with plans to build an exclusive safari camp. His achievements led neighbouring farmers to erect game fences, with an interest in "damn good business" (van der Merwe, 1972, p. 8). In the face of a long drought and spread of foot and mouth disease in the 1960s, game farming became a preferred economic activity to cattle farming, which left white farmers in increasing debt (Ballim, 2017; Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). The commercialisation of game hunting took off from the 1960s, with concomitant processes of enclosure and accumulation in the Waterberg.

The increasing enclosure of the Waterberg for game farming meant the loss of homes and employment for many African farmworkers and farm dwellers (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). In 1966, an inspector from the Group Areas Board noted that black families were still 'squatting' on white-owned farms, still with tenancy agreements with the farm owners (Ballim, 2017). However, the control and enclosure of space in the Waterberg increasingly shifted the situation of 'squatters'. Lesedi, who was born in 1945 and grew up on farms around Ellisras, explained that her father was the foreman of a farm and her mother worked as a domestic worker. She attended school until she was a teenager, and then she started to work on the farms too. The

farmer allowed them to have cattle and fields to plough – indicating a labour tenancy arrangement. When the farmer died in the 1960s, they moved to another farm in the area and after a short period were evicted because the farmer decided to convert to game farming and no longer wanted them staying on his farm: "What were we to do? It was painful, but we left. There was nothing we could do" (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017). Thereafter, her family settled in the informal black 'location', Pahama, in the 1970s until they were removed to Ga-Seleka (see section 5.4.3). The removal of 'squatters' from farmlands reproduced the colonial imagination, which required extensive areas of land to be devoid of people in order to create a white hunting experience (Zulu, 2015), and as such, reproduced the colonial *representational space* of the Waterberg of the late 1800s.[81]

At the same time as mineral surveys and explorations were being conducted, the series of Acts, from the Game Protection Ordinance of 1949, to the Trespass Act of 1959, the Fencing Act of 1963 and the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1967, as well as increasing physical enclosure, intensified apparatuses to secure white power and control in the Waterberg. This was done through literal and physical bounding of property, as well as increases in mechanisms of surveillance and control. The enclosure of white space, going hand in hand with the creation of black 'reserves', was central in defining who belonged where in relation to land in South Africa (Vig, 2018). As Zulu (2015, p. 52) asks, drawing on Lefebvre (1991b), and thinking through game farms as a *conceptualised space*: "is what [is] being reflected in the socially engineered private game farming and hunting field legitimations of particular social relations governed by race, language, gender and class?" Through such a probe, Zulu (2015) argues that the production of the *representation of space* of the game farm is an ongoing iteration of the 'colonial present' today. Through briefly tracing the historical development of the private game farm in the Waterberg, which occurred concurrently with the exploration of mining in the area, I argue that farming and mining were not necessarily oppositional forms of capital nor arranged in linear sequential time, but rather are intersecting and co-constitutive of the space-time of the Waterberg. Furthermore, race and class power relations were co-produced with the enclosure and control of space. The enclosure of space for farming and mining was simultaneously a closing off or limiting of futures for black peoples as their lives became increasingly spatio-temporally confined and controlled.

[81] See for example, Waterberg game lodges offering a "wild time relaxing in the bush", which also encouraged international visitors in the *Sunday Tribune* (Rees, 1986).

5.4.2 The Militarisation of the Waterberg

The enclosure and control of space and movement on private farms was connected to the increasing militarisation of space near the South African borders. The area has a long history of commando raids and offensives, led by the Waterberg Commando, which was formed in 1899 (Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). This history intersected with an increasingly militarised state, which passed laws such as the Terrorism Act of 1967 (the same year that the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1967). From the 1960s and then escalating, the state became preoccupied with security issues (Freund, 2018). Neighbouring African countries won liberation, and particularly with the overthrow of the Portuguese government in Mozambique in 1974, followed by Angola, the apartheid government became increasingly concerned about the movement of political activists into neighbouring countries and 'counter insurgency' actions near the borders. This led to the adoption of a 'Total Strategy' in 1978 to achieve stable, racist capitalist rule in South Africa, strengthening both the military and capital (Davies et al., 1984).

The Waterberg borders with Botswana, and so became an area of concern for the apartheid government. The South African Defence Force (SADF) expanded its interest in the area, establishing the then Group 29 in Ellisras, with the Air Force Reporting Post established earlier in 1964 (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008). Before ISCOR arrived, the securitisation of the border region drove some minimal development in the area. Two satellite radar stations of the South African Air Force (SAAF) were established, and at the same time, a drive-in cinema, Olympic size swimming pool and sports field which the SAAF opened to the public. Before that there was only a "monthly 'hop' at the hotel which attracted customers from far and wide" (Reid, 1974, p. 15).

The industrial development in the remote Ellisras and the enclosure of surrounding farms facilitated the securing of border defence by means of maintaining white populations on the farms: "a strip of white populated farms along the banks of the Limpopo River was considered necessary to create a protective barrier against guerrilla attacks from neighbouring countries of Botswana and Zimbabwe" (Ballim, 2017, p. 74). The non-urban white population of Waterberg decreased from 7 286 in 1970 to 5 214 in 1985, and there were ongoing concerns regarding unoccupied farms in the region (Hugo, 1988). In Ellisras, it was reported that only 251 of 654 white-owned farms were occupied by white farmers, indicating an outflow of farmers from the region (Moolman, 1981). This was attributed to the high cost of production, drought, increasing

inflation and interest rates in the 1980s, which made farming, largely cattle farming, increasingly unfeasible, and resulting in a move to game farming (Hugo, 1988).

The 'unoccupied' farms were variously owned by absentee landlords who purchased farms for capital appreciation or to limit tax on their incomes; by farmers who took up jobs in the towns because their farms had become unproductive through over-utilisation; by farmers called up for national service; by game farmers who only visited their farms on occasion; and by non-South African citizens who did not reside in the country (Hugo, 1988; Moolman, 1981). Some of these farms were left under the supervision of black foremen with weekly to occasional visits by the white farm owners. The chairperson of the Ellisras Farmers' Association explained to *The Star* that these 'unoccupied' farms provided a safe haven for "illegal immigrants" and were breeding grounds for "terrorists" (Nel, 1986, p. 3). The Transvaal Agricultural Union and District Agricultural Union called for greater financial assistance and infrastructure investment from the private sector and government to make farms economically viable and for added security measures, such as border patrols and subsidised fencing, in the 1980s (Pretoria Bureau, 1980). In 1984, it was reported that the government planned to invest close to 4 million rand that year and in the following financial year, over 30 million rand, in the border area to improve agricultural conditions and 'stabilise' settlement. At the same time, government encouraged settlement through measures such as requiring landowners to reside on their farms or forfeit future subsidies (Reilly, 1984).

The Civil Defence Unit also assured farmers that they could access food, medical supplies, fuel and ammunition in secret locations in the event of an 'invasion'. Farmers received government loans for radios and security fences, so as to prevent the depopulation by white settlers in the region due to threats of 'invasion' and 'terrorism' (Abendroth, 1978, p. 4). The increasing enclosure through legislation, and support for white occupancy of farms, increased the surveillance of black residents, whether on suspicion of being illegal 'poachers', 'squatters' or 'terrorists'. Vig (2018) explains that during and after the Border War, many former soldiers returned to the farms in the Waterberg and continued to use their military training, operating their own 'anti-poaching' or farm-watch patrols right up to the present day.

Alongside securing the border farms, the town of Ellisras was also securitised through apparatuses such as the National Key Points Act of 1980, passed just before the completion of Matimba Power Station. The designation of Matimba as a National Key Point increased the

militarisation of the area. All ESKOM properties were demarcated as national key points, protected by the Act as sites of 'national strategic importance'. There were concerns from government that the only power station north of Pretoria, and so close to the border, could become a target for "insurgents", with growing fears of sabotage aimed at the country's MEC industries (Freund, 2018). When construction started, there was "9,5km of double, barbed wire-topped security fencing around Matimba's l00ha [hectare] site, with patrol roads on the perimeter and para-military guards at all access points" and further it was reported that, "[t]he plant's sensitivity can also be gauged by the fact that Escom regards Matimba security budget as secret" (Willson, 1983, p. 10). According to a shop steward in 1980s at the power station, "[t]he security [at Matimba] then trained like soldiers" (cited in Ballim, 2017, p. 148). Labour strikes were illegal and were largely prevented through a show of force.

In this highly securitised terrain, there were a few reports of political skirmishes. The ANC reported in their submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that one uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) cadre was killed in 1984 in Ellisras in a skirmish with the South African Police (O'Malley, n.d.). This may correspond with the report in the *Rand Daily Mail* that a man suspected of being an "insurgent" was "shot dead after attempting to hurl a hand-grenade at police while they were tracking a group of [four] armed men near Ellisras" who were all suspected "insurgents". The three surviving "insurgents" escaped over the border and their arms were seized by the police (Rand Daily Mail, 1984, p. 2). The ANC also recorded that a further two people were killed in 1986 near the Botswana border in an anti-tank mine explosion, with no other details were provided (O'Malley, n.d.). This is likely the incident reported in *The Star* 1986, which outlined that a land mine on a farm near Stockpoort border exploded and killed an elderly couple (Nel, 1986).

Besides these few reported incidents, black residents of the border region encountered political activists on occasion and recalled political tension. Andries described a "war" in Ga-Seleka in 1982. While there is little other evidence of such, his recollection may connect with 1984 incident, despite the different date. He stated that, "[i]n Seleka there was a war there. They killed one of the white men… it was 1982. And those army, South African army, white people, they killed three of them… it was a big war there… those white army were driving those caspers" (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016). Anna recalled people moving clandestinely through Ga-Seleka to the Botswana border in the 1980s. She described her encounters with "Makominisi" (communists) when she was growing up as:

> "The communist... those ones that would come carrying school bags. They were soldiers. But they did not wear uniform… Wearing their clothes and carrying school bags. I remember another one who came and slept there and ask for food saying, 'We are going to fight for you guys' talking to my father. And we were afraid of them. We didn't always know what was going on. But they didn't harm us. They came to visit, coming from the bushes and maybe come and ask for food or water and then they go." (Interview, Anna, 22 May 2017)

This movement and activity of political activists is part of the memory of Ga-Seleka as a corridor for political activity. While there were some cases of local recruitment to the MK – for example Anna's brother was a member who she said, "just left" – the stories told produce a *representational space* of Ga-Seleka as a through point of political activity rather than as generative of such, expressed through phrases such as "we didn't know what was going on" and "we were afraid" (Interview, Anna, 22 May 2017).

Ellisras in its current iteration, Lephalale, continues to be a securitised space. The National Key Point Act remains in existence today, even though the Act was designed during apartheid and has come under attack for being outdated and unconstitutional (De Vos, 2012). Private security, such as Vetus Schola, which is known to hire mercenaries, is visibly present around ESKOM properties and surveils public areas such as access roads (Field notes). Private security has also been involved in the violent repression of strikes at Medupi Power Station, with shop stewards being hospitalised as a result of assaults (Interview, Tshepo, 16 May 2017). This section has shown the connections between processes of empowerment of white landowners, authorised to act as law enforcement officers, state militarisation, and the continued securitisation of the Waterberg today through private land and security. These processes constructed black people as targets of violence and criminalised them by positioning them as 'poachers', 'squatters', 'terrorists', and 'insurgents'.



Figure 9: Medupi Power Station: A National Key Point (Image by Thembi Luckett, 2017)

5.4.3 Ga-Seleka and Forced Removals

The parallel to securitisation of the farms and town of Ellisras was the enclosure of 'reserves' or Bantustans. This section will outline processes of forced removals from Ellisras and surrounding areas and the creation of Ga-Seleka in Lebowa Bantustan. The place behind the mountain is imprinted with memories of dispossession, which reveal conflicting relations to the land.

The Bantu Authority Act of 1951, Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, and Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971 laid out regulations for governance in Bantustans, empowering chieftaincies with authority, and effectively depriving black people of citizenship in South Africa. Lebowa became a 'self-governing' territory in 1972. Lebowa was constituted from five pieces of disconnected land so as to exclude economically valuable land for white settlement. It was also fragmented ethnically, comprising Northern Basotho, Bapedi and Northern amaNdebele groups (Davies et al., 1984). Ga-Seleka was incorporated as one of the areas of the Lebowa Bantustan. Lebowa was primarily a labour reservoir with limited economic

activity in the reserve. Subsistence farming continued but was damaged by landlessness, infertile land and reduced livestock (Mokgawa, 2010).

As with all Bantustans, Lebowa was a contested space. For example, in Sekhukhuneland, the chief and the majority of his people opposed the Bantustan system. In the 1980s, the chiefs who supported the Bantustan system became increasingly unpopular and were opposed by residents for enforcing movement restrictions and controls (Mokgawa, 2010). There was also an increase in conflict between Pretoria and Lebowa in the 1970s and 1980s as the apartheid government continued to seize and excise land (I return to this in section 5.6.3 of the chapter) (Mokgawa, 2010).

Lebowa Bantustan and the Waterberg were produced through forced removals, particularly during high apartheid.[82] Apartheid was marked by forced removals and a denial of life in urban centres other than as cheap labour power for the majority of the population (Wolpe, 1972). When ISCOR intensified prospecting and drilling in Ellisras in the 1960s and 1970s, this process of consolidation of white power and dispossession accelerated. African families living on white-owned farms and in an informal 'black location', known as Pahama, in the town, were removed to Lebowa homeland in the 1970s by the Northern Transvaal Administration Board. Black residents connected the arrival of ISCOR to the forced removals, going so far as to say that, "the mine moved them that side" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).[83] In 1978, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that more than 150 black families were 'resettled' at Steilloop because they were illegally occupying a farm at Ellisras (Rand Daily Mail, 1978). One year later, in 1979, it was estimated that 20 000 black residents were forcibly removed in the Northern Transvaal. The *Sunday Express* reported that, "[e]ntire townships housing thousands of people are being methodically destroyed around towns in the Northern Transvaal" (Le May, 1979, p. 20). Removals took place in towns of Ellisras, Nylstroom, Vaalwater, Louis Trichardt and Naboomspruit. Black residents living on white-owned farms and in black townships and locations were affected by the removals and dumped in Lebowa homeland (Le May, 1979). Reflecting on contestation around the forced removals, Kagiso explained that, "you had nothing

[82] During the period from 1960 to late 1970s, the National Party pursued separate development policies with considerable zeal.
[83] Ballim (2017) argues that ISCOR was not the driving force of the removals, but that ISCOR's presence led to increased attention from government officials to ensure urban regulations. However, for local residents the connection was made between ISCOR's arrival and the removals.

to say in apartheid times" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).[84] The *Sunday Express* reported that only reminders of those who once lived in the Ellisras 'location' of Pahama were the overgrown graves, some flattened to make way for a dirt road, and old plastic flowers (Le May, 1979). Another scene of desecrated graves is a reminder of the multiple social and historical relations to the land destroyed by the development of Ellisras.

Steilloop was located within the Lebowa homeland, about 100 kilometres away from Ellisras (Le May, 1979). Steilloop was constructed as a black township to house the families of labourers who stayed in hostels in the town and to avoid the creation "urban Bantu townships" (Lotter (Director of Northern Transvaal Administration Board) cited in Le May 1979) (see section 5.5.1). People were allocated sites on a 99-year lease and had to build their own homes. It was reported that those dumped in Steilloop had no access to local jobs, shops, clinics or telephones and few transport options to reach work in Ellisras (Le May, 1979).

The forced removals fragmented space and social relations for those previously living in Pahama. Local black labourers, who previously stayed with their families in Pahama and worked in Ellisras's business district, had to live in the hostel 20 kilometres from the town or commute over vast distances daily, if they could not be housed in the mine. Johannes worked at the garage in Ellisras, and stayed in the hostel after Pahama was destroyed. He explained that he only earned R12,50 per week, had to pay additional bus fees to get to town, R9 per month for rent at the hostel, and could only see his family every two months after they were relocated to Steilloop. After rent and transport costs, he was only left with R25,65 per month to support himself and his family of five (Le May, 1979). Due to limited space in the hostel and the lack of a black township in close proximity, many had to commute by bus for approximately 75 kilometres or more every day from Lebowa to Ellisras and back (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008). Tumelo, a resident of Ga-Seleka, explained that old men would sometimes cycle over 100 kilometres every day on the dusty roads from the villages to the mine and back. Others would even cycle to Polokwane and build small fires on the side of the roads when they got tired at night (Interview, Tumelo, 13 May 2016). The daily rhythm of life for black labourers forced into Lebowa now included repetitive long commutes on bus and bicycle, extending the hours of day pivoting around waged work. The forced removals therefore not only fragmented

[84] While this was the narrative across interviews, further historical research is required to tease out in more depth the dynamics surrounding these removals.

and racialised space, but also racialised time through the production of different public (social) rhythms of everyday life (Lefebvre, 2004).

The enclosure of the space of the farm ran concurrently with different forms of enclosure: enclosure and securitisation of the nation's border region and the construction of the black 'reserve', Lebowa. Through the enforcement of apartheid land laws, the increasing enclosure and securitisation of white-owned farms, and the arrival of the parastatal, ISCOR, the *representations of space* of earlier colonial periods – that of racially bounded order – came closer to fruition. The making of place through dispossession, social engineering and securitisation continues to live on in black people's memories. This racialised and securitised making of space is reproduced in its current iteration, as private game farms with high fences line the roads, private security forces are visible and hunting shops feature in the shopping mall.

5.5 Ellisras as a Company Town (1950s to 2000s)

Ellisras was initially developed as a transport node, with basic commercial activities, such as bartering, being a common form of exchange (Ballim, 2017). The exploration of a new frontier for mining and energy production in a context of privatised resources, with little national or regional state presence, produced a company town, along similar lines as outlined by Sparks (2012), but with its own particularities as discussed below. In framing Ellisras as a company town, I contend that alongside the production of enclosure was the capitalist force of expansion. While seemingly contradictory movements of enclosure and expansion, both are integral to capitalist development, and took on particularities in the Waterberg context. The process of enclosure, as detailed above, was also a process of privatising and commodifying land and services. In this context, the local parastatal officials of ISCOR and ESKOM occupied considerable administrative and technical power in the 'wild' Waterberg. As white farmers came to exercise powers of enforcement of the law over their properties, so too did the corporations come to wield power over the development and spatial fragmentation of the town. The power of these corporations endures to this day.

5.5.1 Local Governance and Company Services

In 1960, the government declared Ellisras a "township", located on the Waterkloof farm. And in 1965, government confirmed the establishment of the Ellisras District Development Association. This local governance association was constituted by representatives of

government departments and local residents. Ellisras received little national government support for urban development and therefore had to raise its own resources, largely through the assistance of corporate entities (Ballim, 2017). It was only in 1986 that Ellisras acquired full municipal recognition – chiefly due to population growth and ISCOR and ESKOM's development of the town. The development of the mine brought with it the construction of a new urban centre, Onverwacht, between Ellisras and the mine (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). Through ISCOR, Ellisras developed the necessary infrastructure to be declared a town, where before there had been a scarcity of basic services and infrastructure (Ballim, 2017).

The intersection of *representational space* of potential wealth and the *representations of space* through ISCOR's mining and development plans in Ellisras, led to an economic boom in the area, illustrated through property development. Property rates soared, with farms and residential stands doubling in value over night. An estate agent reported in 1974 that after the announcement, residential stands increased from R1 600 to R4 000 from one week to the next (Reid, 1974). Besides private property development, ISCOR took steps to provide financial and technical assistance for the development of infrastructure such as housing, water and electricity, required for the operation of the mine and power station (Ballim, 2017).

As mentioned, the process of ISCOR obtaining land and expanding its own operations did not happen without contestation. A flood line meant that ISCOR could only build its town five kilometres from the original town on the farm Onverwacht that ISCOR managed to purchase. As Ballim (2017, p. 80) states, "[t]his spatial division defied the government's policy of integrated town planning which mandated that new developments in urban areas build on pre-existing urban centres". The gap between the two areas of development remains, as Onverwacht and Ellisras became two different centres of commerce, in competition with each other. The development that Iscor brought was therefore not necessarily welcomed by all of the white elite of Ellisras, who viewed the development as an intrusion and threat to their dominance of space and capital (Ballim, 2017; Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008). On the other hand, the divide between Onverwacht and Marapong, the black township that was developed later, stems from racial segregationist town planning, which ensured a significant distance between the black township and the white suburb (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). Similar to Sasolburg's Zamdela township, which was developed earlier in the 1950s and 1960s, "Verwoed's legendary buffer-strips separating the white town from the township" was (re)created in Ellisras (Sparks, 2012, pp. 196–197).

In the new 'ISCOR town', a township was developed to accommodate white labourers, technicians and professionals, with housing and accompanying facilities. ISCOR needed 500 white workers to run the mine, and in order to accommodate them ISCOR built (Willson, 1981):

> "2100 domestic sites and all appurtenant facilities such as school and business sites... Initially, some 350 houses, single quarters, an apprentice training centre, and full recreational facilities (e.g. club, golf course, etc.) … In addition, there is another township for married employees, with single quarters for 1200 employees, and full supporting facilities (kitchen-dining, store, shop, post office, and medical and sports facilities)" (Buermann, 1982, pp. 354–355).

ISCOR advertised multiple benefits for white employees in the 'ISCOR town', including cheap housing benefits, ranging from 15 to 23 rand per month and use of the ISCOR club which offered "golf, tennis, rugby, cricket, badminton, pistol-shooting, horse-riding, bowls, angling, wrestling, swimming" (ISCOR, 1980, p. 24). ISCOR thus invested in creating spaces for sports and leisure activities for white employees. While Sasolburg, with the particular intervention of the architect Kirchofer, focused on public spaces of green through extensive parks and "green-belts" linking different precincts (Sparks, 2012), Onverwacht's spaces of white leisure were enclosed. The enclosure of leisure continues today with the Mogol Sports Club a members-only club, and the creation of eco-estates for company employees (see Chapter 4).

ISCOR further invested in transport infrastructure in the Waterberg through the coordination of the construction of 20 kilometres of tarred road and a further 40 kilometres of gravel road, a tarred airfield of 1200 metres, and South African Railways built a railway line 113 kilometres long from Thabazimbi, with ISCOR building 26 kilometres of rail marshalling and loading yards (Buermann, 1982). Buermann (1982) explained that "lead times" for such infrastructure development could be reduced by developers undertaking planning, financing, and constructing according to government standards, and after completion, government authorities reimbursing the developers for costs. As such, ISCOR did not depend on government procedures and planning for the development of the town.

Water supply and infrastructure was an ongoing concern in the dry conditions of the Waterberg. Before ISCOR, water supply was largely secured through private measures. Farmers gathered around surface water in the area, primarily the Mokolo River, and to a lesser extent the Lephalala River, and constructed private irrigation systems on farms (Marcatelli, 2017).

However, the river was an unreliable source of irrigation, with drought conditions regularly affecting the river levels, which made crop farming in the region an uphill task (Ballim, 2017).[85]

Water supply to Ellisras town was also unreliable and inconsistent. A businessman, Whelpton, had applied to government for permission to establish a township in Ellisras in 1957, and was able to do so on condition that he met the requirements for the provision of necessary urban amenities, including water supply. Whelpton invested little in constructing a reliable water system, and after a few years and legal battles with Transvaal government, sold his farm to the private company, Joubo Development Corporation (JDC) in the mid-1960s. The company continued to supply water to the town, but many residents complained of the poor service and high prices. The Department of Local Areas recommended that the Peri-Urban Areas Board take control of the water scheme, but the JDC maintained that it owned the water source and pump system, and therefore it remained in the hands of JDC until ISCOR proposed that it could supply the town with a portion of the water and electricity supply intended for the mine. The Peri-Urban Areas Board decided not to take over the supply of water and electricity, and ISCOR, with its greater technical capacity and capital, replaced the smaller, private provision of water (Ballim, 2017).

With the arrival of ISCOR, the Department of Water Affairs constructed a dam, the Hans Strijdom dam, while ISCOR constructed 47 kilometres of steel pipeline and a pumping station, storage and distribution pipelines. Iscor also constructed a water-purification plant and a water-borne sewage disposal system for the townships and the mine (Buermann, 1982). Buermann (1982, p. 34) explained the advantages of ISCOR developing its own water, stating that the water supply system need not be developed or owned by the Department of Water Affairs, indicating the significant role that ISCOR played at a local level in the infrastructure development of the space:

> "Elements such as a major water supply system from a Department of Water Affairs dam, including pumping, chemical treatment, storage, and distribution, need not necessarily be constructed by, or belong to, the Department of Water Affairs. At Grootegeluk, a 47 km steel pipeline of 800 mm/700 mm in diameter, together with a pumping station and storage reservoir, was constructed for the use of the Mine and its housing development, as well as for the provision of water to an existing local township under the jurisdiction of the peri-urban authority."

[85] See for instance, *Fodder Bank Move to Aid Farmers Hit by Drought*, particularly in support of farmers in North-Western and Northern Transvaal who were unable to feed their cattle and sustain their crops (Rand Daily Mail, 1968).

Forced removals from black locations and farms, spurred by the arrival of ISCOR, also created labour shortages, denoting a complex intersection of apartheid segregationist planning and industrial production. Soon after the forced removals, ISCOR constructed a hostel for black, single men. ISCOR required 1 000 black workers on the mine after the construction (Willson, 1981). While there was some influx of workers from ISCOR's site in Thabazimbi and migrant workers from Botswana, most workers were local, with families residing in Lebowa (Ballim, 2017; Interviews). Andries, who grew up on a farm in surrounding areas and started working on the mine when he was 17 in the mid-1980s, explained that when he was at school, "my mind was thinking about the mine… it was a chance to do anything. I wanted to do something" (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016). Thus the mine, in contrast to life on the farm, constructed a *representational space* of possibilities for local black residents too. The new hostel providing single accommodation was offered for a fee of approximately 12 rand per month in the 1980s and was situated outside of the white town and close to the coal mine (ISCOR, 1984b). It was described in the *Sunday Express* as, "a stark square, painted vivid pink, with only one entrance and high overhead lights", indicating features for the surveillance of workers (Le May, 1979, p. 20). Later, ESKOM also built a hostel in the same area for up to 5 000 labourers housed in its hostel at its peak during the construction of Matimba Power Station, with 1 200 workers needed after construction (Willson, 1981).

ESKOM intended to establish a stable and permanent workforce. The forced removals created a concern regarding shortages of labour for the town, industry and farms, as well as expensive transport costs as workers were travelling up to 120 kilometres one way from Lebowa. In 1986, with ESKOM driving the process, ESKOM and ISCOR expressed the need for a black residential township near the mine and power station. ESKOM and ISCOR agreed to jointly fund the development of a township, through which ESKOM aimed to promote labour stabilisation and the creation of a black middle class, in line with the 1979 Riekert Commission (Ballim, 2017). The proposed township was opposed by the Conservative Party Council, the Herstige Nasionale Party representatives (HNP), the local commando and the local farmers' union, who sought to preserve strict racial segregation and argued rather for an improved bus system between Ellisras and Lebowa (Ballim, 2017; Hallowes & Munnik, 2018; Phadi & Pearson, 2018). According to Kandorozu, the first black mayor of Ellisras in 1998, they "did not want another Soweto" in Ellisras (cited in Hallowes & Munnik, 2018, p. 49). The white conservatives of the town were defeated by an alliance between ESKOM, ISCOR, the two local

chambers of commerce, the new town council and two cabinet ministers: FW de Klerk and Chris Heunis (Ballim, 2017; Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). In 1988, ESKOM and ISCOR submitted an application for a formal residential township to the Transvaal Provincial Administration (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2008).

ESKOM owned two farms and as plans for a second power station had not transpired, the township could be developed on this property, directly behind Matimba Power Station. There was some concern that this would pose a security risk, and in response, Colonel Vorster, the Head of Security, instructed that the African township must be placed at least two kilometres away from the power station and that security guards should be placed "to provide an air of intimidation" and should not be housed in the township themselves (Ballim, 2017, p. 115). With this in place, ESKOM's development of family housing in the township for black workers could take place, and according to Hallowes and Munnik (2018), the township was established just as Matimba was completed in 1991. Thus, while the labour needs of ESKOM and ISCOR changed the spatial relations of the town, the black township was established at a significant distance from the white suburbs and close to the pollution of the mine and power station.

5.5.2 A Company Town into the Present

The executives of the Grootegeluk mine and Matimba Power Station played a significant role in municipal functions historically, and to the present day (Phadi & Pearson, 2018).[86] A former manager of the town planning division for many years stated, "the mine manager is [the equivalent of] the municipal manager, the resident engineer is [the equivalent of] the head of the infrastructure department... so they actually did what the municipality did, except if I was a mine manager, because it's a private town, it belongs to me – I can make my own rules" (cited in Phadi & Pearson, 2018, p. 2). Correspondingly, a current local councillor and previous worker at the mine stated that he had witnessed, "the development of the whole area… First here was the mine. The town was owned by ISCOR" (Interview, Moeletsi, 12 April 2016).

The National Government established a *stadsraad* (municipal council) in order to coordinate development due to the growth of the older Ellisras business district and the new suburb of Onverwacht in 1986. The decision was resisted by the mine's executive and despite the formal

[86] By illustration, the *Rand Daily Mail* published in 1983 that the Local Areas Committee of Ellisras increased from seven to eight members to include an ESKOM representative, approved by Transvaal Board for the Development of Peri-Urban Areas (Rand Daily Mail, 1983).

and structural changes, the mine continued to be involved in the administration of aspects of service delivery. For example, officials from ISCOR became councillors in the municipal council. After the first democratic local elections held on the 1st of November 1995 in Ellisras, an Ellisras–Marapong transitional council was constituted, given that there was no outright winner (Mayor's Office, 1995). A power sharing agreement was reached between the ANC and the CP until 2000. In December 2000, Ellisras, Onverwacht, Marapong and 38 villages were combined to fall under Lephalale Local Municipality (Mayor's Office, 1999; Phadi & Pearson, 2018).

During this period of transition in the mid-1990s, the municipality created a forum, the Lephalale Development Forum (LDF), in partnership with ISCOR and ESKOM, to assist with capacity in the development of the town. This Forum was revived with the plans for the construction of Medupi Power Station and the development and growth associated with the project. During this period, ISCOR was privatised and listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange as Kumba Resources Limited in 2001 and in 2006, split into Kumba Iron Ore and Exxaro Limited, with Exxaro taking over Grootegeluk coal mine (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). Kagiso reflected that the privatisation of ISCOR did not change how the mine operated: "Exxaro works the same as ISCOR. They just changed the name", and moreover, that Matimba and Exxaro function in a similar way: "Matimba is like Exxaro… the companies here are all under Exxaro" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). During this period of political and economic transitions, the mine's dominance in municipal operations and control over basic resources, especially with regard to water provision and land ownership, continues into the present (Phadi & Pearson 2018).

Land ownership is an ongoing issue making it difficult for the municipality to address issues such as the current rise in housing needs, as described in Chapter 4. Three long-time residents of Marapong stated: "[t]here are lots of squatters here. The problem is a lack of land… there is little planning regarding housing" (Interview, Moeletsi, 12 April 2016); "[t]he challenge here is housing because the land belongs to ESKOM and Exxaro" (Interview, Mpho, 13 April 2016); and "[t]he local government does not have land… there is no place even if the municipality wants to build some houses, they can't because they don't have land" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). Marapong continues to be encircled by private landowners, particularly Exxaro (Phadi & Pearson, 2018).

Water is another point of company control. When the Hans Strijdom dam was established in 1986, the municipality made an agreement to buy purified water from ISCOR, which the municipality would then resell to Ellisras and Onverwacht. The 2010 *Bulk Potable Water Supply Agreement* between the Municipality and Exxaro reflects a continuation of the logic of the old agreement, stating that the Municipality is the "Water Services Authority" and Exxaro is the "Water Services Provider".[87] There is therefore a continued heavy reliance on companies for basic infrastructure in the area (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2015a). The reliance on the private sector for basic water infrastructure recurred in the MCWAP. Phase One was initiated in 2011 and completed in 2015. A 2.1 billion rand water pipeline of 60 kilometres was constructed from Mokolo Dam to supply water to the power stations and Lephalale (Marcatelli, 2017). Phase Two of the project, initiated in 2015, aims to expand the flow of the Mokolo River by abstracting and transporting water from the Crocodile River to Lephalale (Marcatelli, 2017).

The Lephalale Municipality has already started negotiating with Resource Generation (Resgen), and its operating company Ledjadja Coal, which intends to develop Boikarabelo mine about 60 kilometres west of Lephalale. The Human Resources Municipal Manager stated, "[t]he plan we have now is to turn that water over to other mining companies who must come in – not a total take over – but take over our purification plants, put right human resources and pay them. At expense they then get our purified water" (cited in Phadi & Pearson, 2018, p. 31). Private companies therefore not only control a large portion of the land in the area, they are also still depended upon to provide resources for the provision of basic services in the town.

Ballim (2017, p. 79) argues that, "ISCOR's assumption of the role [of providing water and electricity supply] cemented the dependence of the town's administration on their infrastructure for municipal service provision." Similarly, Phadi and Pearson (2018, p. 31) contend:

> "While it was once Exxaro and ESKOM who were the main actors in assisting the municipality, as the town expands and plays host to various new enterprises, the municipality has found new avenues for spreading the responsibility for basic service delivery… New opportunities, however, are unlikely to break the municipality's overwhelming dependence on private entities to fulfil its basic mandate."

ESKOM and Exxaro's ownership of vast swathes of land and provision of basic services have ensured the municipality's ongoing dependence on private entities and private control over the

[87] See 'Agreement made and entered into by and between Exxaro Coal (PTY) LTD and Lephalale Municipality' (2010).

space of Lephalale, and surrounds, often to the detriment of more democratic control to meet the needs of people in the area. As Kagiso stated, "the law is still of those people who first built the mine… the structure that is here right now is the structure provide by Exxaro… If you come here and you want to operate you need to talk to Exxaro. Whatever it is, even if you want to dig the coal or dig the oil or whatever, you have to because it is the one that is managing things now" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).

The making of the Waterberg, behind the mountain, continues to be produced through contested processes and multiple actors. During the coal boom, I have shown how space was produced through the convergence of *representational space* of possible wealth, the development of racialised and enclosed *representations of space* of the town and rural areas, and *spatial practices* of exploring, drilling, and extracting natural resources. I have argued that the rural and urban cannot be separated in this place and that the dual and contradictory dynamics of the enclosure of rural spaces and the expansion of capital, worked together to produce the Waterberg. In the following section, I take a brief look at everyday life and resistance in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly from the 1980s, for which I have richer interview narratives.

5.6 Everyday Life and Contestations (1980s to 2000s)

In this section, I employ Lefebvre's concept of everyday spatial practices to capture how space was produced and experienced through daily life. I do not attempt to capture a full exposé of lived experiences, but rather focus on a few significant points where the imposition of *representations of space* by dominant white groups were contested. In particular, I focus on two axes of contention, land and labour. This section relies on mostly on life history interviews, drawn from the experiences of black subsistence farmers and labourers. I do not claim that the production of lived space is only the purview of black, oppressed people, but rather, that in a context of gross inequalities, the axes of contestation are often drawn along gendered, raced and classed lines, with *representations of space* produced from racialised and masculinist positions of power. I therefore deliberately explore contestations against these dominant representations in order to construct a richer story of the co-constitution of spatial and social relations in the region. Lefebvre (1991b) argues that spatial contradictions are an expression of socio-political conflicts – conflicts are produced in space and through such become contradictions of space. It is this dialectic that I intend to elaborate on below.

5.6.1 Snippets of Everyday Life

While not the focus of this section, I elaborate on a few snippets of everyday life to give some sense of life as the space behind the mountain changed in the second half of the twentieth century. There is a way in which daily life, despite its harshness, was described outside of its brutality by residents. The space behind the mountain was also produced by the ordinary *spatial practices* of daily life.

Daily life in rural spaces was not only marred by experiences of dispossession. Dineo grew up on a farm in Steenbokpan in the 1980s with her grandfather, while her father worked on the mine. Her grandfather was a farmworker who still had a small patch of land to farm on. She explained that as a child:

> "For me… the farms it was a beautiful experience, I still remember those days because back then we used to have a small garden at the back of our house. It had watermelons, it had mealies, and it had every vegetable or food that you can think of. So my grandfather used to plough... we call it subsistence farming. And we never went to bed hungry. We had, my grandfather had few cattle. We used to go in the morning so that you can make tea. And then they used to go to the bush to hunt for rabbits" (Interview, Dineo, 15 May 2017).

In the village, the rural space of Ga-Seleka was traversed and owned by local residents, in the sense of familiarity and belonging. Boitumelo described how as children, also growing up in the 1980s, they were able to explore the mountains and rivers:

> "I was loving my home and loving the nature, going to the bushes and enjoying the nature. There was a lot of things we could live on… we used to swim there, we used to enjoy nature. Christmas was beautiful there, I remember there was an old lady who [would] just go around the villages, wearing like a street kid and children followed her… We experienced a lot of things. And to grow up in a village makes you understand the whole manhood" (Interview, Boitumelo, 8 April 2017).

This quote hints at the ways in which the land was the playground and learning space for children growing up; there were cultural practices in the village that brought children joy; autonomous *spatial practices* connected to a sense of personhood could still occur in the villages and in pockets on the farms. Here space was used, not in the sense of planning and fragmenting, but as part of visceral rhythms, activating different senses and social relations (Lefebvre, 1991b).

Tumelo recounted his experience of growing up in Ga-Seleka in the 1970s and 1980s, as growing up in a "very, very poor community… it was very tough" but "I can say they were good people because we used to share whatever we had among ourselves" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Thus he also indicated an experience of communality and recognition. Similarly, he described traversing space and distance in the area. He explained how he walked barefoot for more than 10 kilometres from his village to the next in order to attend school. He did not have money for lunch and drank water in an attempt to fill up his stomach; only when he got home again after school did he eat. His school was a mud house and during the rainy season, it would fall and they had to move to study under a tree, "[w]e would sit on the floor and share textbooks" (Interview, Tumelo, 13 May 2016).

School also involved child labour, as children would attend school until midday and thereafter a white farmer would pick them up to work. The money was paid to the school for textbooks and other resources. Despite the lack of resources, as for many other research participants, school was a space of enjoyment. It was a space to learn and to be recognised, in a context of little information and education: "Actually school was good, school was good… I think the teachers, some of the teachers were very patient with the learners, they were pushing us hard to make sure we understand everything that we were taught… I enjoyed it a lot… the information I was getting there because it was very difficult to get any information here at home". Tumelo recounted that his favourite books were "tales about the lions and jackals and all those… I enjoyed reading a lot" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Similarly, Botshelo, who attended school later in the 1980s and 1990s, described school in a village near Steilloop as "nice, nice-nice [laughter]. And it was interesting… I went to school because I wanted to know a lot". School for Botshelo was a space that generated possibilities from which she could imagine futures different to the racialised *representations of space* of the Waterberg. After school, she imagined working in travel and tourism because, "I like to know many things, that's why I like to travel to many places so that I can learn more about what is happening in other parts or other countries" (Interview, Botshelo, 18 May 2016).

The soccer field was also painted as a space of enjoyment. Tumelo stated, "actually all I was interested in was soccer… it was all soccer. Because we would carry a plastic ball with us to school and then during lunch breaks we will play soccer… We just drank water and played soccer in the break to keep busy" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Boitumelo explained his pride in being called "Chicha", who was a professional soccer player. He was a very skilled

player when he was at school and grew up dreaming of becoming a professional player (Interview, Boitumelo, 8 April 2017). The soccer field was therefore a space through which different identities and possibilities could be imagined and generated. These are just a few snippets of everyday life behind the mountain that indicate spatial practices not completely dominated by abstract space.

Research participants consistently produced *a representational space* of the Waterberg, behind the mountain, as lacking in historical, political contestation and conflict. For example, Tumelo described his farmworker parents as being "brainwashed by the farmers because they were told to stop talking about all these politics and the like… during that time it was very hard, they knew nothing about politics". Politics was limited to a 1994 moment and voting for Mandela, "I think they only started talking about politics with a little knowledge after '94 and they would only talk about Mandela. When we go to vote we would check who Mandela is and we would put a cross next to him, and that's what they knew" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Similarly, Andries explained the politics of the area as "we fell under the ANC. All of us. That is what we knew" (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016). This lack of contestation was echoed by many research participants who stated that, for instance, that during apartheid, "in this area no, there was nothing like protests" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).

Despite this being an accepted narrative of the space of the Waterberg, there were political contestations that shaped the space behind the mountain. There are several possible ways to interpret this proclaimed flattening of contradictions, as narrated by some research participants, which will be further elaborated on through the discussions below (and taken up again as a thread of inquiry in Chapter 6). Possible interpretations include the spatial fragmentation of experiences between the rural spaces of Ga-Seleka and the farms, and the urban space of Ellisras, where there was greater contestation, despite the spatial practices connecting the two; limited, sporadic and spatially contained contestations that did not result in sustained collective struggles in the area; the Waterberg is consistently compared with Johannesburg, where the latter is viewed as a site of protest and struggle and so, by comparison, contestations in the Waterberg seem marginal; and life histories are told from the perspective of the present from where past contestations may be experienced to have failed, with devastating continuities between past and present which may therefore have the effect of subduing past contestations. While I posit the above points as possible explanations, I now turn to teasing out some of the social-spatial contestations and contradictions that did emerge in this study.

Some of this contestation and struggle was through individual enactments of resistance and subversion. For example, Tshepo, who was born in the 1970s, told me the story of someone from his parents' generation who worked on a farm outside Ellisras and one day decided to leave. When he left, "he stole two tractors from them [farmer], a small one and one big one with their trailers and ploughs". According to the story, "when he left the farmer he just said, 'I am going to look for my own place now'". The white farmer, accompanied by a lawyer from Pretoria, took him to a magistrate. At the courthouse, he came with a spear and skin and put it on the magistrate's table. So the story goes, the magistrate was scared of *muthi* and dismissed the case. The tractors are still running today, and "his kids call it their heritage": a claiming of what was due to them from the farmer (Interview, Tshepo, 17 May 2017).

Other contestations are likely to have been covert and unstated (Scott, 1985). Tumelo explained that even though he did not know much about his grandfather because his mother did not talk about him, he knew that his grandfather was a farmworker, like his parents, and was known for being lazy. He stated that, "one thing I remember and even now she would tell you that my father was very lazy [laughter]. Even the farmers they worked for knew that he was a very lazy man, he was a good man because he wasn't fighting with people, but he was a very lazy man" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). As I listened to him, I wondered to myself if this was a form of resistance rather than an attribute of laziness. Perhaps the enactment of a temporal order (working at one's own pace) contra to that of the farmer's was an act of covert defiance, even if not articulated in those terms. As Lefebvre (1991b, p. 349) argues, social space contains potentialities for different spaces, which often start from the body's resistance: "a body which by putting up resistance inaugurates the project of a different space". It is important to wonder about everyday life and the potentialities of space-time beneath stated and proclaimed acts. I now turn to look at more explicit and collective contestations over labour and land in the making of the Waterberg.

5.6.2 Labour Contestations

Independent, black trade unions fundamentally changed the space of Ellisras from the mid-1980s. Some of the key points of contestation included company housing, retrenchments and racism in the companies and town – these experiences of contestation had not necessarily been part of life in the rural villages and farms. With the construction and operation of Grootegeluk

and Matimba, for the first time behind the mountain, large concentrations of black workers were brought together.

Before the 1980s, Ballim (2017) describes the labour dynamics of Ellisras as similar to those detailed in Sparks's (2012) study of Sasolburg as "industrial paternalism", with companies catering for workers' housing and food needs and with a degree of consensus between managers and labourers, despite these being fundamentally hierarchical and racist. Sparks (2012) traces how this dynamic started shifting in the 1970s with the changing of black politics nationally and with the rise of black consumer capitalism. In the Waterberg, this dynamic of paternalistic relation first developed on the farms and only shifted later, in the 1980s and 1990s. This is demonstrated by research participants who often described life on the farms as "good" despite the deep inequalities of power (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016; Interview, Caroline, 24 May 2017).

Research participants explained that they could farm on the land and were given food supplies such as milk by the farmers. Andries recounted that once a month the farmer would take them into town to buy clothes for the children, adding that, "the white people were good" (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016). Salphy was born on a farm in 1968 in Steenbokpan and explained that, "life was good because luckily, we had a very kind white man [farmer]. He was taking us to school; looking after us when we were sick, although we were not using his dishes and teaspoons to eat" (Interview, Salphy, 18 May 2017). However, this "being looked after" was accompanied by large-scale land and capital dispossession, as well as the implementation of severe hierarchies and forms of control. Anna, who during apartheid was a domestic worker and lived on a farm where Medupi Power Station is now, stated, "you work the whole day and there is no knock off. Even on Sunday they will call you to come and do something for them. You call them 'Baas' in the olden days and you could not tell them anything. They were the one commanding everything. And you had no say. It was very hard" (Interview, Anna, 22 May 2017). White farm owners controlled the time and movements of those dwelling on farms.

Echoing the farms to some extent, in the companies, previous workers anecdotally expressed that they were looked after. Thabiso worked as a construction worker for Matimba in the 1980s and stayed at Matimba Hostel. He explained, "at that time we lived well together… life was better than right now… It was better than now because there was cooperation [between] the construction workers and managers… There were no unions." The hostels "weren't bad"

because workers would receive food and accommodation (Interview, Thabiso, 17 May 2017). Similarly, Kagiso stated that ISCOR workers were "satisfied" in the 1980s because they were provided with food and accommodation – the only point of contention was that they could not see their families (Interview, Kagiso, 17 May 2017). ISCOR workers also received benefits such as free medical treatment and a contributory pension scheme.[88] Thus, while from the 1970s black labour politics was emboldening in the main urban centres of the country, the Waterberg to some extent remained isolated from these shifts.

However, the stories and developments are not neatly linear and there is one record of a strike in 1970s, before the time of these research participants. Ballim (2017) explains that in 1971, workers who were brought by ISCOR from Thabazimbi went on strike for higher wages. This put pressure on ISCOR to improve conditions. By 1972, improvements had been made to hostel living conditions, which a labour inspector praised as a way of preventing further strike action, in conjunction with greater security measures, such as stronger access controls (Ballim, 2017; Hallowes & Munnik, 2018). ISCOR thereby combined concessions with greater repression and force. There is little evidence of widespread strikes during the 1970s and early 1980s.

At Matimba Power Station, Kefentse, a long-standing shop steward explained that in early 1980s, trade unions were "sponsored by management", such as the Electrical Workers Union (EWU). When he started working at Matimba in 1985, there were no independent trade unions. He was elected as a shop steward to the Liaison Committee, but he argued that management controlled this committee. During one of the training sessions, which included workers and instructors from Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging, he met a Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) official from Germiston. After the training, he got a lift with the MAWU instructor to Modimolle and while driving, they had a conversation about joining MAWU: "He said to me, 'Do you mind if I can ask you to join a trade union?' and I said, 'In fact I am not interested in EWU, if I can get a union that can serve my interests, I will be happy.' And he stopped the car and went to the boot and took out an application form. We sat under a tree and we filled in the application form and that's how I joined in 1985" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017). In this moment of traveling between places, the *spatial practices* of the car changed from that of transporting people and things to that of worker organising and opening up political possibilities.

[88] See, for instance, advertisements for Grootegeluk "Chief Cook (black)" and "Male Nursing Assistants (black)" (ISCOR, 1984a, 1984b).

Kefentse explained that there was not much trade union activity in 1985 and 1986. He was the only member of MAWU and was largely operating underground. However, when MAWU merged with other unions to form NUMSA in 1987, union officials were deployed to recruit in Ellisras. In this early period of union establishment, there were not many strikes or protests. One protest occurred in 1987, which was led by traffic officers. The details of the grievances are unclear, but Kefentse remembered soldiers coming into town as a result. NUMSA heard about the strike and used it as an entry point for recruitment and the establishment of a branch. Kefentse started recruiting and organising the NUMSA local through arranging local general meetings and shop steward councils. He also represented workers in disciplinary cases and with grievances at Matimba Power Station (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017).

Around the same time that NUMSA was being built, the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA) was organising in the town and NUM in ISCOR, thus establishing a Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) presence in the town. Kagiso, who worked at Grootegeluk, explained that, "COSATU changed things in the area. They changed a lot because people started to understand their rights. And they started to enjoy discussing other things with the employer via the unions" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). This suggests a shift to practices of bargaining, negotiating, and workers' asserting their rights.

Strikes and protests increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The spatial fragmentation between the farms and mine is evident through Andries's narrative, who, when speaking about growing up on a farm outside of the urban space of Ellisras, communicated that the 'ANC was all we knew'. However, when he moved to Ellisras, he worked on the mine for 23 years and became a NUM member. He recounted a three-month strike in 1989/1990 as the longest strike on the mine. He stated that, "everyone was on strike, union and non-union members, only the white people were working" (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016). The strike was around wage increases and workers wanted to "punish the mine" – a shift from a position of co-operation, described in the early 1980s. He explained that the strike was violent and difficult. Workers were "chased with rubber bullets and tear gas" by police and private security. Andries described how he had hoped for a better salary but soon became worried about losing his job. Eventually they won a salary increase and returned to work. There was one more strike in 1993 against apartheid before elections, but since then, there have not been significant strikes at the mine (Interview, Andries, 12 April 2016, 19 May 2016).

The first significant campaign undertaken by NUMSA at Matimba Power Station was with regard to ESKOM restructuring. Kefentse explained that, "in 1992 when we went and embarked on an industrial action, the first industrial action that took place, in 1992 the 29th of June. The Save ESKOM Campaign". The campaign was established to oppose the proposed reduction of staff from 66 000 to 30 000 nationally during a period of restructuring under ESKOM CEO, Ian McCry and chairperson, John Maree. In order to defend workers, the independent African unions, NUMSA and NUM, built a campaign in opposition. A strike action at ESKOM's Megawatt Park in Johannesburg was organised by workers across the Transvaal region. Eleven buses went from Ellisras, which workers paid for from their own pockets. Kefentse contended that the campaign was "how we saved ESKOM". An 'Unfolding Vision Agreement' was established, which included consultation processes, the establishment of workplace forums and the Central National Forum to engage ESKOM and build more democratic processes inside the parastatal. Kefentse stated that, "that's when ESKOM turned over and started to listen [to workers]", thereby marking a company shift to processes of consultation (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017). Through such resistance to unilateral restructuring, workers were able to build greater democracy in the workplace and increase their bargaining power.

Since NUMSA's launch in the area, the union fought against racism in the company and the town. With the establishment of forums and regular consultation meetings at Matimba Power Station, trade unions pushed for a number of reforms within the parastatal. These included issues such as housing, racial segregation, and affirmative action with regard to recruitment and training (Ballim, 2017). After 1994, trade unions argued that processes of transformation were taking place too slowly. Trade unions became increasingly frustrated with management, for instance, in the Joint Forum Meeting in 1996, NUM and management had a heated argument. The minutes record:

> "NUM stated that they do not see any change in attitude of management… NUM described that there should be a give and take relationship between management and trade unions, but however management just 'takes' without 'giving'. Management wants NUM to 'give' through support without giving in return any influence, decisions and changes. NUM is not prepared to 'give'. Although they really want to help management, NUM has reached a situation where they are losing trust" (Matimba Power Station, 1996b).

In this discussion, NUM warned that management could not stop NUM from striking in the plant, and management responded that they will "call for military involvement [if NUM proceeded]" (Matimba Power Station, 1996b).

In March 1997, conflict between the trade unions and management reached a head at Matimba and NUMSA and other trade union members embarked on a protest action. The tipping point was the continued racial segregation of toilet facilities in the plant. Kefentse explained that there were still toilets for whites and blacks, with toilets for whites locked for the majority of the workers, forcing black women to share toilets with men. He recounted how three trade unions, NUMSA, NUM and Solidarity, and non-union members, went to submit their memorandum, which they expected to be received by a representative from Matimba's Head Office. However, management refused to receive the memorandum and locked the gates of the power station. Workers were locked out for the rest of the week. There was contestation amongst workers and unionists regarding how to respond to the lock out, with some workers wanting to take more radical action and block the gate, while others wanted to follow a more legal course of action. Kefentse elaborated that, "we [NUMSA] said, 'No that's not legal in terms of the law. We are not allowed to block the gate'… and we didn't want to get our guys arrested or disciplined unnecessarily". NUMSA called on its members to return to work and were allowed back after a few days of lockout (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017).

The incident led to the intervention of the Executive Director of Generation, who visited Matimba and drew up a report of recommendations, with the aim of restoring the relationship between workers and management (Ballim, 2017). The recommended interventions were regularly discussed in the Joint Forum meetings over the subsequent months. This led to implementation of changes in racial segregation, for example, with regard to tearooms, toilets and change rooms. "Common Principles for Tea Rooms" were drawn up, which included "no differentiation on race, sex, religion or patterson level"[89] (Matimba Power Station, 1997b). Distinctions and lines of exclusion started to be drawn along employment lines rather than race lines, such as "Tea rooms will be allocated to ESKOM staff only", thereby excluding outsourced and casual workers (Matimba Power Station, 1997a). Such spatial hierarchies continue into the present with a canteen for "overall" workers and a separate one for "non-overall" workers on the basis that overalls make the seats "dirty" (Field notes, 8 February 2017). As Lefebvre (1991b, p. 281) notes, with each shift in power, a particular way of "partitioning space" is introduced with its own classificatory systems and discourses about the spaces and the people who occupy them.

[89] Patterson level refers to a hierarchical job grading system used largely in South Africa, which takes into consideration factors such as number of responsibilities and training (Diamond, 2019).

NUMSA continued to take up campaigns at the power station in the late 1990s and 2000s, shifting from struggles against racism to struggles against neoliberal practices. For example, the union campaigned to end labour brokers and insource workers at Matimba. However, this practice continues (despite the recent changes in legislation) and Kefentse stated that the "campaign has now vanished… it is dying a natural death and there's no follow-ups now" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017).

The above accounts of strikes, campaigns and bargaining, mark the significance of the independent black trade unions in altering the practices of the companies in Ellisras. However, the opening up of possibilities was also constrained and limited. The contestations never reached points of sustained mass action and were often limited to sporadic actions within the bounds of the workplace, followed by periods of workplace bargaining and consultations. Furthermore, *representations of space* were re-constituted in different forms, such as between "dirty" and "non-dirty" workers, and directly employed and contract workers. In this way, the possibilities for radically transforming social-spatial relations remained unrealised, and research participants could still produce a narrative of the space as lacking in contestation.

5.6.3 Land and Housing Struggles

In this final section, I provide a condensed account of how from the 1980s and into the post-apartheid era, ordinary black people opposed the imposition of apartheid's racialised representations of space and its effects on their lived experiences of housing, land and a sense of belonging. Even post-apartheid, black people had to struggle to remove these restrictions and claim spaces to live in – the claiming of place and belonging is also a claim to different futures.

The social engineering of space through forced removals and the building of hostels or 'labour camps' close to Matimba Power Station and Grootegeluk coal mine were sources of struggle and contestation in the Waterberg area – revealing antagonisms between *representations of space* and *spatial practices* of everyday life (Fuchs, 2018). The hostels were racially segregated: there was a "coloured camp", and "black people are staying [at] *Grinaker* Hostel" during the period of the construction of Matimba, while Onverwacht housing was for white workers (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).

Kefentse described the Matimba compounds as cramped and on top of each other, with 20 workers sleeping in one room: “when we started we were eight in a room. One bed and the other one on top and there were two, four, six, eight. And then there was another one on the other side of the entrance… You get eight staying this side and eight staying on the other side and the four staying in front. So 20 in a room of one entrance, that’s how we were staying all together” (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017).

Kagiso explained that workers were also dissatisfied with the ISCOR single-sex hostel conditions: “We were not satisfied… nobody was allowed in and women were not allowed inside. It was only men… People were not satisfied because the men that were working at the mine, they were staying at the hostel, but their children and their women were not allowed in” (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). Workers had to travel to the villages to visit their families or to “get a woman” and were only allowed time off at month end or every fortnight to visit their families, which Kagiso argues was one of the reasons that workers initially formed black trade unions at ISCOR so that they could organise time to visit their families, opposing the fragmentation of space and time (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). A worker on the mine recalled a strike action in 1981 against the hostel conditions, demanding accommodation for families and married couples (Ballim, 2017). However, this did not transpire until after 1994, and much later in comparison to places like Sasolburg where SASOL extended home ownership schemes to black employees in 1974 (Sparks, 2012).

After 1994, housing dynamics started to shift, as a result of union pressure, changes in management style during the period of democratic transition and neoliberal shifts towards private home ownership. It was agreed that black workers should move into the previously white-only housing of Onverwacht and out of the single-sex hostels (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017). Ballim (2017) argues that this was not only a process of racial desegregation but also of neoliberalisation as ESKOM encouraged workers to transition towards market-related rentals and home ownership, rather than the company provided housing, which began to be phased out from 1998.

The hostel, which once housed 5 000 labourers during construction, was falling into disrepair in the mid-1990s as only a small portion of the hostel remained occupied (Ballim, 2017). The alternatives to hostel accommodation were “single quarters” and “married quarters”, which were previously occupied by white, skilled workers. Kefentse explained that after the

construction of Matimba, "people [were] moving out and going back to their different areas and now we have empty houses and people were vandalising those houses" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017). Accommodation in single quarters was more expensive, but the unions, especially NUM and NUMSA, pushed for the closure of the hostel, given its connection to apartheid conditions and social relations (Ballim, 2017).

From 1997, internal discussions were held and research was undertaken by ESKOM to assist workers in accessing the local housing market for home ownership as well as "phased-in market-related rental" (Matimba Power Station 1997a, 1997d). ESKOM also offered loans to workers for the construction of their own houses on ESKOM land (Ballim, 2017). Kefentse described the process of racial desegregation and movement of black workers into single quarters as conflictual. While ESKOM management supported the process, many in the white town did not. He stated that, "[w]e moved out of the compound and we went to Onverwacht, but the first people that stayed there, you can imagine what will happen to them" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017). Even after 1994, there were boards in the town with "*Volkstaad*" written on them. Kefentse recounted how one night black workers at Matimba engaged in subversive action: "It was after the election of 1994 and we went there in the evening, in the night and during the night and we went and removed those boards… because during the day we would be beaten or arrested" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017). The temporality of the night provided a means through which to make claims on the space of the racialised town.

When it was agreed that black workers should start to move into Onverwacht, white ESKOM workers objected. Kefentse recalled a dialogue between white workers and management as follows:

> "'No these people can't stay here' and Tom [ESKOM manager] said, 'Why?' and they [white workers] said, 'No, they make noise.' And Tom said, 'But the municipality has bi-laws, if they make noise you call the police and the police will come. Remember, this is not your property where you are staying.' Because remember we were staying free in ESKOM houses" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017).

Unions objected to workers who were moving from Marapong to Onverwacht being positioned as "trouble makers" (Matimba Power Station, 1996a). Thus, after 1994, racial and spatial divisions became discursively coded through metonyms such as "noisy" and "trouble makers"

that threatened the 'civility' of the white suburb of Onverwacht.[90] Despite management supporting racial integration, white workers threw stones and petrol bombed black workers' homes.

On a separate occasion, soon after 1994 (the exact date is unclear), a protest march was organised in the town against continuing racism. NUM, NUMSA and South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), under the banner of COSATU, and with the ANC, organised a march through the town to the police station – asserting a claim to the town. A memorandum was submitted to the police station demanding an end to racist harassment. Kefentse explained:

> "And that is how things started to change because for the first time in the history of the town they [white people] have never seen such a march… It was a big march. Remember back then we were more than 3 000 in ESKOM and then the mine had a lot of people, all of us including the community, then there was just a new township called Marapong… We marched to the police station. And that's when things started to change" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017).

For Kefentse, the march indicated a turning point in Ellisras – it can be seen as a moment when black people made a claim to belong to the town: the "town is also ours!" However, race-related crime was noted as a "nightmare for our community", more than five years after this event, in Kalotua Kandorozu's *Mayoral Report of 1999/2000* (Mayor's Office, 1999).

Ongoing discussions between ESKOM management and unions occurred regarding the nature of housing and rules thereof. Women were banned from Matimba hostels and as shifts to single quarters were made, the issue of "unauthorised people sleeping" in single quarters continued to be a source of contention. The Code of Conduct shifted from "No ladies/gents are allowed in bedrooms and no relatives are allowed to stay with you at your bedroom" to "No visitors/relatives are allowed to stay overnight", thereby allowing limited visitation rights. Trade unions continued to contest this despite the language of management shifting. Clive le Roux, a manager at Matimba, stated in a meeting that, "the idea was not to dictate to adults but to prevent single quarter rooms from becoming family units… 'policing and raids' was not the goal but addressing issues when they arose". This statement was made after a police raid had taken place a few months earlier where residents were arrested and furniture removed, with the permission of ESKOM (Ballim, 2017; Matimba Power Station 1997c). NUM, with NUMSA's

[90] See Sparks's (2012) discussion of the making of race and class in Sasolburg through discursive mechanisms of "respectability".

backing, objected to the raid. NUM stated that, “we live in a new South Africa with rights” (Matimba Power Station, 1998).

Living arrangements, with limited visitation rights, continue to be a source of contention, even today. A full-time shop steward at Medupi Power Station explained that at ESKOM’s ‘hostels’, no alcohol is allowed, no over-night visitors, and that workers are searched at the entrances: “workers feel constricted. There is no freedom. Workers go to Marapong to drink and then have accidents on the road on the way back” (Interview, Kopano, 21 June 2016). The contestation demonstrates an ongoing antagonism between company-imposed (both private and parastatal) *representations of space* and the *spatial practices* of everyday life of black workers. Furthermore, the contestation over visitation rights is also a contestation over time, with night-time, constructed as leisure time, racialised and limited for black workers.

Home ownership was also a slow and controversial process, with unions arguing that ESKOM-owned housing was unaffordable for workers. A study undertaken by ESKOM found that the costs for renting and purchasing houses on the market were high for ESKOM workers. As such, it was recommended that workers purchase empty stands in Marapong and Onverwacht from ESKOM and finance the construction of their own houses at a cheaper rate. In addition, ESKOM provided housing loans to some workers (Ballim, 2017; Matimba Power Station, 1997c). In 2002, given the high cost of rentals and that most workers wanted to move out of ESKOM’s single quarters, the trade unions pushed for a pay-out that could be used to purchase the empty stands. A sum of 30 000 rand was agreed to, for which more than 85 per cent of workers applied (Ballim, 2017).

This process of transition to free market housing happened at the same time as black workers and job-seekers started making claims to Marapong by building shacks there. Kagiso explained that, “the shacks started getting built here after 1994… the formation of this place was because of the shacks” (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). Mpho first moved to Ellisras in 1987 and became a “shebeen queen” (Interview, Mpho, 13 April 2016). She recounted that even though it was much quieter in the 1980s and 1990s than now, she was still very busy selling liquor. She managed to stay in Matimba hostel for a few years when the construction of Matimba was coming to an end, even though it was illegal for women and people not working at ESKOM (Interview, Mpho, 13 April 2016). One can therefore conceptualise Mpho as a ‘space invader’ (Benya, 2016; Puwar, 2004). Asanda Benya (2016), drawing on Nirmal Purwar (2004), argues

that women's presence in certain spaces marks a 'disturbance' as women's bodies are not "naturally fit" for the space. The hostel, conceived as a masculine space, was disrupted by women like Mpho's *spatial practices* which subverted official *representations of the space*. However, the occupants of the hostel depended on the presence of women's bodies for their leisure-time, in the relational messiness of everyday life.

Later, when the hostel was demolished, some workers moved out and built shacks in Marapong, including Mpho. Others came because they were evicted from the farms or from villages in order to be closer to the town. Mpho proudly recounted that she was part of a committee formed to build RDP houses in Marapong, and in 2001, she was the first person to acquire a key. One can imagine the significance of the key as symbolising a claim to the town post-1994, particularly for a black woman. Mpho continued to play a role in the ANC ward committee through which 1 300 houses were built in Marapong Extension Four before 2007 (Interview, Mpho, 13 April 2016).

A few years after black residents had started claiming space in Marapong, the Steenbokpan Community Forum started organising and joined forces with the ANC. Salphy explained that the Forum was organised in order to "take Steenbokpan out of the hands of the white people only". In the early 2000s, again during the temporality of night-time, the Forum undertook actions to claim space:

> "During the night, we set up a pin… for people to come and put up their shacks in Leseding [informal settlement]… we were running in the bush at night to do the job [of erecting shacks]… it was better than before because people were locked into the farms. They were not allowed to get into the farm without getting permission from the landowner. If you want to visit one of your own, you must go to get permission from the landowner to see your mother. That was the mood that pushed us to have this space [Leseding]… Leseding means light. We take people from the dark to the light" (Interview, Salphy, 18 May 2017).

This moment of en-lightenment stands in contrast to previous moments of 'lighting up' highlighted in this chapter through the Christian church and Matimba Power Station.

The struggle for decent housing conditions and claims to space can be seen as a struggle to turn Ellisras into a home for black workers and residents. These spatial relations shifted not only as a result of the national political transition and increasing pressure from independent trade unions, but also through the actions of women community organisers and the everyday, ongoing, encroachment by actors such as "shebeen queens" and unemployed workers. Through

their enactment of *spatial practices* such as protest, occupation and encroachment that subverted the dominant scripts of the 'town', 'hostel' and 'farm', new *representational spaces* were constituted ('our' town/land) that held out possibilities for different social relations. What I have described here is merely scratching the surface of the many and diverse ways in which space has been claimed and transformed historically through everyday *spatial practices*.

While contestation occurred in the town, in the rural villages of Ga-Seleka, there were also struggles over the constitution of a home and belonging, with struggles across these spatial fragments not necessarily informing each other. Sometimes this struggle for a home manifested as a struggle "to stay". Life in Ga-Seleka was described as "tough" and a "struggle" because many families were removed from farms, and therefore the little subsistence and income they had enjoyed was taken away (Interview, Anna, 22 May 2017). Andries explained, "Our parents struggled to stay in Ga-Seleka. They didn't go into exile. They didn't runaway" (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016). The struggle to stay can be seen as a claim to the land, which marks out a place of home and belonging, in the face of harsh conditions and removals.

Threats of removals and the lines of enclosure of Ga-Seleka were ongoing sites of contestation during apartheid. In 1973, the Lebowa Land Commission was informed that more than 200 000 hectares would have to be vacated for white people and for the resettlement of Gazankulu and South Ndebele homelands (Rand Daily Mail, 1973). It was estimated that in Seleka-Shongwane, 18 400 families would be affected if Ga-Seleka was to be declared a white area. Residents of Ga-Seleka protested against the ongoing removals, stating "we cannot go on living an unsettled life" (cited in Kgame, 1973, p. 3).

The Lebowa Legislative Assembly rejected national government's proposals, instead demanding more land for Lebowa. Chiefs argued that they would not order their people to move and that they would be attacked if they supported the removals (Kgame, 1973). Chief Z. T. Seleka told the Lebowa Legislative Assembly, "I am not prepared to tell my people they must move. It must be very clear that we belong to Botswana. We were only cut off by a man-made boundary. If it happens that we must be forcefully moved we will pack bag and baggage and go back to our country – Botswana" (cited in Kgame, 1973, p. 3). The Lebowa Legislative Assembly made clear that they could not resist the apartheid government on their own and called for a national conference of homeland leaders to oppose mass removals and the endless relocating of black people, arguing that black unity was needed more than ever. Collins Ramusi,

the Lebowa Minister of Interior, stated: “We are aware that in some instances land is being taken from one ethnic group and given to the other. This is like throwing a bone to two dogs. We are not going to fight because of that. The world must have realised by now that the Blacks, not only in this country but throughout the world, are closing their ranks” (cited in Kgame, 1973, p. 3).

While Ga-Seleka was not declared a white area and forced removals did not occur, some of the community did not feel ‘at home’ in the Lebowa homeland. An aggrieved group, who had campaigned since 1974, argued that they were Setswana-speaking and Lebowa was predominantly Sepedi-speaking, which caused difficulties for Batswana children in school. A group was arrested in 1976 for holding a meeting, which the Seleka Chief refused to address. They were charged and found guilty, with a three year suspended sentence handed down (Mahlaba, 1977). The sentence did not halt the campaign and in 1978, the group claimed that 14 000 members of the tribe wished to secede from Lebowa. They threatened to boycott the Lebowa elections and rejected the Seleka Chief’s position in the Lebowa Legislative Assembly (Tsuai, 1978). The aggrieved group continued to have a conflictual relationship with the Chief, who refused for years to call a meeting to hear their grievances (Laurence, 1983). One of their leaders, Masenya, was arrested again in 1982 and sentenced to prison under the Riotous Assemblies Act for addressing a meeting under a Marula tree. He was however, acquitted on appeal. Subsequently, Masenya was banished from his home and ordered to remove his belongings by the Seleka Chief (Laurence, 1983). In 1987, nine members of Ga-Seleka, residing on Beauty farm, lost a court application against the Chief, arguing that they were not lawfully incorporated into Lebowa. In their application, they stated that, “[w]e are Tswanas and are being forced into a Pedi homeland… the chief has no mandate to represent us in the Lebowa Government”. They argued that they had been incorporated without their consent. However, the court ruled that consent was not constitutionally required and that the area had been legally incorporated into Lebowa in 1972 (Judgement in the Supreme Court of South Africa (Transvaal Provincial Division), 1987; Mkhwanazi, 1987).

The aggrieved residents of Ga-Seleka never managed to obtain independence from Lebowa or incorporation into Botswana, but continued to “resent their official incorporation into a Northern Sotho homeland” (Ballim, 2017, p. 87). Beinart (2012) argues that homelands often put together communities, which did not necessarily identify with each other, into multi-ethnic, multilingual homelands. The Lebowa homeland is an example of this, and Ga-Seleka’s

incorporation was an ongoing point of contention, with aggrieved residents rejecting the apartheid state's lines of enclosure. Still today, some residents state that they are planning to move to Botswana to make a home (Field notes).

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, by employing Lefebvre's spatial triad of *representations of space*, *representational space*, and *spatial practices*, I have shown how the development of the Waterberg, behind the mountain, was neither linear nor without contradiction and contestation. Through this retelling of the history of the space, I have highlighted when the points of the triad converged to produce a coal boom, and when they diverged, revealing the contradictions of social-spatial relations. Working with this framework allows for a dynamic piecing together of histories. Furthermore, by focusing on the triad of *land*, *capital*, and *labour*, I have traced how the development of the area was constituted relationally through the spaces of the 'farm' and the 'mine'. This tracing reveals a longer history of relating to land through colonial and masculinist imaginaries of 'adventure' and 'wealth', that was and is reproduced through the more recent practices of mineral extraction and game farming. Local contestations regarding land and the workplace have a long history, but these intensified from the late 1980s and into the 1990s. Daniel, a NUMSA local official, reminded me that, "[i]t was a racist past. There used to be two entrances and exits for shops. The cashiers used to drop change in our hands so they didn't have to touch us. Things are better now than they used to be" (Interview, Daniel, 13 May 2016). However, a narrative of lack of historical contestation and change is also told, showing the containment of struggles and the limits of transformation of social-spatial relations into the present, revealed through the ongoing private ownership, control and securitisation of space, and company services. In the following chapter, I return to this thread of 'flattening' contradictions in the contemporary period, under the shadow of Medupi Power Station. I explore ongoing dislocations and displacements, and the hauntings of the dislocated, including Salaminah Moloantoa, under this shadow.

CHAPTER 6: HAUNTINGS IN LEPHALALE: DISLOCATION, DEATH AND UNREALISED POSSIBILITIES

"Too much invisibility can mean you stop existing. Even the wind wants to be visible. To be invisible is like living your own death all the time. Who wants to be always dead. To be visible is to live with your life, your mortality. It is to be alive, to see and be seen" (Okri, 1995, p. 107).

6.1 Introduction

A chapter on hauntings may seem puzzling in a project that sets out to explore manifestations and functions of hope. In my fieldwork, despite focussing on hope and relations to the future, I frequently encountered themes around death and the past. I felt compelled to try to make some sense of these themes and further, that if I did not do so, my project would not do justice to everyday life and its different aspects of hope. I encountered many discussions regarding physiological death and relations to the dead, as well as claims to social death and a lack of agency. In this chapter, I therefore pose the questions: What does the construction of a dispensable people, who are slowly being killed, mean in relation to hope? What does social death or lack of agency mean in relation to hope? Through such questioning, hope is not taken for granted but the possibility of a lack or death of hope is seriously considered. These lines of inquiry led me to explore the idea of hauntings, for I argue that social death is not total, it is not a permanent state of being; instead absences and dispensable people find ways of haunting the present. Absent people and ideas can exist in ways that haunt the present and disrupt the linearity of time – such that the absences are neither final nor complete. Bloch (1991, p. 97) argues that not all people are present in the same space-time: "Not all people exist in the same Now"; this encourages a rethinking of the present and relations to the past and future.

In this chapter, I do two things. Firstly, drawing on Rob Nixon's (2011) theory of slow violence and Hylton White's (2010) theorisations on dislocation, I discuss how some people are made dispensable, absent or invisible through continued mechanisms and institutions of a racialised state and racialised capitalist power, and how this connects to displacement and dislocation. Dispensable people can be temporally and spatially displaced and dislocated and, dialectically, processes of displacement and dislocation create groups of people who are dispensable. I connect the construction of groups of dispensable people to theorisations of social death and haunting, drawing on the likes of Orlando Patterson (1982) and Avery Gordon (2011). The making of Lephalale, and the wider Waterberg area, historically and contemporaneously, has

displaced groups of both the living and the dead, and disrupted their relations to each other and to the spaces around them. I have tracked some of this in Chapter 5 through the enclosing and racialising of space, which continued through the expansion of a company town and in Lephalale's current iteration as an 'aspiring city of coal'.

The name Marapong, *Place of Bones*, is a symbol of how the dead or invisible haunt the present. As discussed previously, Salaminah Moloantoa's bones were found in 1973 in Marapong when ISCOR was preparing housing construction for labourers on the coal mine. Her remains were reburied on the land of what later became ESKOM's Medupi Power Station. There is significance in the repetition of history as some 40 years later Medupi was built on the relocated graves, including hers. According to a local traditional healer, Kagiso, "Medupi knew there were graves but they continued" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). The dead and connections to the dead become dislocated as the development of industrial mega-projects in the area has taken place not only through the displacement of people from their homes, but also through the displacement of people's bones and burial sites. Private and state capital has not only destroyed people's presents, through dispossession and social and environmental destruction, but also people's pasts – understood as not discrete from the present and future.

Secondly, my research takes me to the idea of haunting. This chapter connects temporal and spatial displacement with experiences of death and haunting. Drawing on Jacques Derrida (1994), haunting can be comprehended as an incompletion of the past and therefore as a lack of closure and self-sufficiency of any present moment as the past continues to intervene. This is both an objective and subjective lack of closure. The material world is in process and the possibilities in the present, due to a lack of foreclosure, are experienced subjectively. This gap of Not-Yet entails a movement towards horizons of possibility and the hopes therein. Thus, while temporal and spatial displacement involves an active destruction of hope and an experience of lack of agency amongst the displaced, as ways of life are violently altered, I argue that this is not a complete destruction of hope which may manifest in different forms of haunting. I outline three different forms of haunting that I encountered in my fieldwork: the haunting of a lost dream of the 1994 transition; the haunting of the physically dead who have been dislocated; and lastly, the haunting of the socially dead. I argue that these three forms of haunting interrupt and disturb a smooth, progressive, linear narrative into the future, and the abstract space of racialised, capitalist development in Lephalale.

6.2 Displacement, Dislocation and Death

In this section, I explore the experiences and processes of displacement and dislocation, and their connections to different forms of death in Lephalale. Displacement, spatially and temporally, is possible through the construction of groups of people as dispensable – dialectically, the act of displacement constructs people as dispensable. I argue that dispensability is related to both material and social death. Firstly, if one is deemed dispensable, material or physiological death is more immanent in one's experience of daily life and signals that one is not being treated as fully human, with little or no power to effect change. I draw on Nixon (2011) and White (2010) in thinking through the relationship between displacement, dislocation and social death and the processes and relations of slow violence through which the constructions of dispensability take place. Secondly, social death, as a concept, developed from Patterson's (1982) *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, is used to describe a form of alienation of people from their rights and ability to self-determine, specifically black slaves who were treated as other than human and exploited for their labour.

The concept of social death has been used in diverse ways but typically refers to "the way people may be regarded as if they are something other than human or no longer a person. Being perceived as such manifests itself in not being – either directly or indirectly – treated as a person and being denied the rights of a person" (Borgstrom, 2017, p. 4). Conceptual affinities have been made with Giorgio Agamben's (1998) *bare life* – in which life is exposed to death; Erving Goffman's (1961) *non-person*, indicating a social exclusion, which can bring one closer to physiological death; and Biehl's (2013) *ex-human* to describe those who have fallen through the cracks of social protection and community, have been abandoned and have no future other than death (Kralova, 2015). While Agamben's (1998) use of the concept focuses on people excluded from the *polis*, but included in their exclusion and sovereign power to decide such, Patterson (1982) employs the concept of social death in relation to the master-slave dialectic and the substitutability of slavery for death (Ziarek, 2012). Ewa Ziarek (2012) argues that sovereign power captures bare life in order to exclude it, while the relationship of slavery includes socially dead beings in order to generate profit. Social death, as a consequence of processes of domination, by which people are socially negated or made non-people yet are still depended upon to some extent, constrains agency and what is possible in the present, and more so, closes down the future. Drawing on Gordon (2011), what I find particularly useful is her

emphasis on the relationality of social death. Gordon (2011) argues, social death is rarely completely realised – it is not a singular, total condition, but rather a relation of power.

6.2.1 Displacement and Dislocation

White (2010) argues that throughout the twentieth century in South Africa, life was socio-spatially dislocated – labour, life and death were split between work and home, and the urban and rural. The Waterberg region has a long history of spatial displacement through enclosing and racialising space, leading to forced removals, evictions, and imposed divisions between life in spaces of rural home, and work and hostel life, especially since the advent of the apartheid government and the development of industrial mega-projects. In thinking through the concepts of displacement and dislocation, I want to broaden their conceptualisation by also thinking through the concepts temporally. As such, drawing on Lefebvre (1991b, 2004), I try to think space and time together in everyday life. I argue that spatial and temporal displacement and dislocation of groups of people, living and dead, is a form of relations of domination.

Post-1994, forms of displacement have continued in the shape of racial capitalist development in Lephalale. Capitalist development involves a process of *slow violence* against the poor, which Nixon (2011, p. 2) defines as "a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all… a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales". Slow violence entails not only questions of spatial displacement – displacement from places of home and belonging – but also questions of temporal displacement – disconnects and breaks in the interdependence of pasts, presents and futures. The severance of the living from the dead is a form of temporal displacement (Nixon, 2011). John Berger (2007, pp. 4–5) also writes that capitalism imposes a system of separation of time and a shortening of horizons of time, such that the physiologically dead are no longer connected with a sense of our present and our future, where we will join the dead:

> "The living reduce the dead to those who have lived; yet the dead already include the living in their own great collective… Until the dehumanization of society by capitalism, all the living awaited the experience of the dead. It was their ultimate future. By themselves the living were incomplete. Thus living and dead were interdependent. Always. Only a uniquely modern form of egoism has broken this interdependence. With disastrous results for the living, who now think of the dead as the eliminated".

Berger, here, highlights the consequences of the disconnection between the living and dead, as a form of temporal dislocation, with devastating and alienating consequences. I argue that this severing between the living and dead, is part of the *presentism* of capitalism and that this *presentism* not only dislocates people but also plays out as a form of slow violence.

The experience of dislocation of the living and dead, in space and time, is evident in communities in the Waterberg. During the course of my fieldwork, I attended a public meeting of communities affected by extractivist industries in Limpopo province held in Lephalale, during which people spoke about such dislocations and disconnections. The chairperson of a community organisation from an informal settlement in Steenbokpan described the defilement of the dead and their dislocation from the living in the following way:

> "[The mines] turn our lives upside down… Boikarabelo Mine... where about 15 people were exhumed without the permission of the families. They took them from farms and were put in [the] informal settlement in Marapong. Lephalale Municipality took out a vehicle that took 15 [dead] people without the permission of their families. When their families got there they found graves without bodies" (Fieldnotes, 14 May 2016).

He continued to speak of further instances of defilement of the dead:

> "Those people moved [from a farm in Steenbokpan] because they were being evicted, leaving their parents from 1909 who were buried in those farms. My brother stays in another farm whereby in that farm, the white farmer took a caterpillar and destroyed the graves and levelled the ground there. Another one I was working on, where I was fencing, and when I was digging the holes I said to him [the farmer], 'The place where I am digging there are graves' and he said, 'Okay start that side and end here' while he was organising for a caterpillar to come and destroy those graves" (Fieldnotes, 14 May 2016).

The chairperson of the community organisation spoke further to describe how the rhythms and practices of daily life are being destroyed by the development of mines:

> "We grew up ploughing and we have our own market-place in Steenbokpan. We used to plough peanuts and maize until we grew up to be men with families. These mines came to contaminate our water and our trees and land. So we are not going to benefit from the land that used to feed us and these mines don't take us as the local people to work there. They take people from other places and come and work with them in our land. And then pollution kills the local people, what do you think will happen to us if that mine operates for 30 years. Our water cannot even be used by our animals even our drinking water are affected… They kill us with pollution" (Fieldnotes, 14 May 2016).

The above statements and experiences reveal two forms of dislocation: firstly, a spatio-temporal dislocation between the living and the dead, through the defilement of the dead and the forced

spatial separation between the living and the dead, which is also a temporal dislocation with one's future as an ancestor (White, 2010). Nixon (2011, p. 162) writes that, in such instances, the past is often drowned out and "place-based connections to the dead, the dead as living presences who move among past, present, and future, animating time with connective meaning" are lost. Secondly, the above statement refers to a dislocation of people's ways of living and sustaining life, through the destruction of the land and environment, a process of slow violence and death. It shows how people's lives, with their rhythms and ebbs and flows, their means of subsistence living on the land, are destroyed by forces of racial capital. Places of home are transformed into zones for extraction, resulting in the creation of a 'nowhere' in time and space for people who become displaced and disconnected (Berger, 2007). While these processes of dislocation relate to two different notions of death, I contend that they are deeply intertwined. White (2010, p. 500) shows how the "complex dynamics of kinship, violence, and labor migration" of South African racial capitalism have produced various forms of "*dis*-connection", including alienation from the dead. The processes of dislocation described above, which involve defilement of ancestors and dislocation from the dead and the destruction of livelihoods, are also importantly forms of dis-connections with futures.

6.2.2 The Creation of Dispensable Populations

The spatio-temporal dislocations, and dis-connections to life and death, discussed above, are experienced by, and simultaneously create, dispensable populations. Black, rural women have often been made particularly dispensable through colonial and racist dispossession of land, patriarchal property rights and masculinist conceptions of work and modernity, while they are still largely responsible for sustaining life through the reproduction of the household and childcare (Nixon, 2011). South Africa has a long history of this, under colonial times and then under apartheid, through the creation of 'surplus people' – largely women, children and the elderly - who were deemed not to be useful or productive for the labour market and national development, and were consequently removed and barred from urban spaces and spaces of development. As is widely documented, 'surplus people' were removed to remote rural areas and 'dumped' in demarcated, overcrowded areas with limited options for livelihoods[91] – however, these 'surplus people' were still depended upon for the workings of racial capitalism. As I discussed in Chapter 5, thousands of black people living in informal black 'locations' and on white-owned farms in the Waterberg area were forcibly removed and dumped in the Lebowa

[91] See, for example, Beinart (2012); Beinart and Bundy (1980); and Platzky and Walker (1985).

Bantustan, including the Ga-Seleka villages, outside Lephalale. This spatial dislocation occurred not only through the creation of reserves, but also through the creation and fencing of white-owned farms, white border regions, to 'protect' the nation state and through the development of migrant labour systems for the industrial projects in Ellisras. Nixon (2011, p. 151) argues that such processes of physical violence are also processes of "imaginative violence whereby certain communities were designated indispensable to the nation and others designated expendable and driven—literally trucked—out of sight".

The creation of dispensable people has continued in Lephalale's current iteration as a zone of extractivist development. At the same public meeting of communities affected by mining in Limpopo, a community activist born in Steenbokpan and who grew up in Marapong, spoke about the difficulties of raising children in the context of mining and its consequent pollution. Women often carry the burden of environmental destruction and health problems as a result of extractivist forms of development:

> "So we have a lot of problems and I am one of the people who had a child and my child is three years old... and I was surprised when he was three months old and started to struggle to breathe and they told me my child has an allergic lung disease and that was the first time I heard of such an illness. And when I asked the doctor what cause[d] that illness he said, 'No these sort of diseases are caused by pollution whereby we are breathing unclean air.' Our elders have lived for up to a 100 years and now imagine if a child grows up with such illnesses - what will they be after 10 years? We saw people who are living with asthma and those people are struggling and that is another problem. Even though people say that such development brings economic transformation... before that people will be struggling. And we are not going to enjoy that transformation because our generation and the coming generations are going to die because of air pollution… once a woman carries a baby in about six months they have a miscarriage… We suffer as Marapong people and in the morning when you wake up all you can smell is that pollution. And when you have sinuses you don't have a good smelling sense because this place is damaged. We have an issue of informal settlements... Marapong used to be a very beautiful township but now Marapong has turned into a squatter camp… They want to develop power stations and mines without thinking about our development as a people… So these people take our resources and we are left with nothing. So it doesn't help us because the only thing we get is illnesses and our people live shorter" (Fieldnotes, 14 May 2016).

Women are responsible for social reproduction – including childcare, caring for the sick and elderly, and preparing meals – in a context in which homes become increasingly unsafe, and air and water increasingly unhealthy such that the burden of social reproduction increases. Jacklyn Cock and Khayaat Fakier (2018, p. 12), drawing on Nixon, contend that in South Africa, millions of poor black people are exposed to slow violence by living on "the most

damaged land, in the most polluted neighborhoods often adjoining working or abandoned mines, coal-fired power stations, steel mills, incinerators and waste sites, without adequate services of refuse removal, water, electricity and sanitation". From her research on the polluted Vaal region, Cock argues that the violence of toxic pollution is borne by women who care for the sick and dying, and whose work to obtain clean water and grow crops on damaged land is made increasingly arduous (Cock, 2007; Fakier & Cock, 2018). Similarly, in a recent ActionAid (2018) social audit of women in communities affected by mining in South Africa, the majority (73 per cent) of women surveyed recounted no benefit at all from mining.

At the same time as dealing with the slow violence of toxic pollution and the destruction of livelihoods, women face various other forms of violence - from physical to sexual, such as rape, murder, abuse, harassment and intimidation in mining communities. The ActionAid (2018) social audit reported that 85 per cent of women felt that violence increased after mining industries entered their communities – they connected this to the influx of men in search of employment and increasingly unsettled and fragmented communities with growing levels of migrant workers, and drug and alcohol abuse. One participant from the ActionAid study described her experience of violence as, "[v]iolence will be always be violence, it always degrades women. Women are having fear in participating in most events that involves men. Being violent is another thing because most women are traumatised by abuse physically and emotionally and so on" (ActionAid, 2018, p. 69). Similarly, Katy Jenkins (2014) argues that increased violence against women, including sexual violence, tends to accompany large-scale mining activities. This is for several reasons including structural shifts to a cash-economy in regions previously dependent upon subsistence agriculture whereby men have greater access to cash; higher levels of alcohol consumption; an influx of male, transient workers; the macho culture of extractivist industries; and the role of international companies, the state, and security forces in fuelling cultures of intimidation and violence.[92]

Experiences of violence are present amongst women in Lephalale. Lesego, a young woman activist, described her own and other women's experiences of rape in Marapong and the stigma attached to it: "A lot of women get raped but they don't talk about that. They don't go to the police because if you tell someone that I'm raped, every person who saw you will say, that one, she's raped. Even me, I didn't tell anyone. I tell only my boyfriend and my mum" (Interview,

[92] See, for example, ActionAid (2008); Earthworks and Oxfam America (2004); Perks (2011); and Scheyvens and Lagisa (1998).

Lesego, 17 February 2017). Sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse also occur in the workplace and when women attempt to access employment in the context of the erosion of other forms of livelihood (ActionAid, 2018).

Women often engage in sex work as an occupation or as a form of transaction. Lesego and another woman activist, Naledi, living in Marapong, recounted their own and others' experiences of transactional sex in the area in the following ways:

> "Many women at Marapong, they use sex to have money. At Marapong there is a lot of job[s] for mines but for women, it's not like that. If you want the job, you are a women, you want the job, you have to use sex to do that… your own body, using it like toilet paper… if you want job, it's the councillor, HR [Human Resources Manager] but many things, the one who uses women too much in sex, it's the councillors. ANC councillors because ANC is the leader, leading party, so they use that word, 'we are leading here', and say 'when you come with this [sex], I will give you the job'… Many women told me about that but if she told me today, tomorrow when I ask her too much, she say, 'No no no'. They are scared that I am going to tell that councillor" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017);

and,

> "I moved to Lephalale… I heard people talking about Medupi Power Station that there is an opportunity of jobs. That's when I moved to Lephalale… [But] I never had a job here… You know because that's when everything started, knowing what's happening in life. I can't apply for a job and a person say to me, 'you need to sleep with me before I can hire you'. That triggers me back to how my grandparents used to tell me the stories of the apartheid, what happened… they [councillors] wanted me to have an opportunity of the job, if I sleep with them then I can work and I said, 'No'. It was a councillor, an ANC councillor. Now he's a councillor but then he was not a councillor. He was just a politician. He was connected. And he would tell you that, 'you can't work if you don't go through me'" (Interview, Naledi, 6 April 2017).[93]

Through the above experiences, I have argued that women often carry the burden of increases in ill-health and pollution in the context of extractivist development, while at the same time, women experience multiple forms of violence and are particularly vulnerable and disposable in the wake of masculinist constructions of work and networks of power. However, the disposability also doubles as a relation of dependence as women are relied upon to care for the sick, elderly and young. This experience of disposability is even more so the case for women who are outside of the law, such as sex workers.

[93] Sexual exploitation in exchange for jobs in mining communities has been noted in other studies, see for instance Atim et al. (2020).

Marapong has a rapidly growing sex industry alongside masculinist mining and power station development (Luckett, 2019). Sex work, while also conducted by men, is mainly conducted by women in Lephalale. Similar to other mining communities, sex work takes place in multiple forms, including sex with someone in a position of power as a means to employment; sex with a 'boyfriend' who is employed in order to be financially supported; and sex as work. Janet Wojcicki (2002) argues that there are multiple forms of sex-for-money exchanges in Gauteng and sub-Saharan Africa more generally. Such exchanges encompass a level of ambiguity as lines between having multiple boyfriends for financial support and frequenting taverns for transactional sex is not always clear. Such forms of sex for money often receive less social stigma than 'commercial sex work' (Wojcicki, 2002). Maria, a self-identified sex worker stated that, "most women do sex work here [Marapong], some are just undercover. I'm not scared to say I'm a prostitute" (Interview, Maria, 22 February 2017), thereby indicating various expressions of sex work with different levels of stigma attached.

Despite the claim to being above the covers or not ashamed of one's work, it was a very fragile and tense process to gain 'access' to sex workers, given the precarity of their lives. Through working with a community activist who was friendly with sex workers, after a few missteps, I was granted access by their leader to conduct interviews. It was a sweltering afternoon in February when I went over to their shacks. Work was slow that afternoon and most were relaxing, and recovering, trying to get some shade from the sun. They did not want to talk in front of each other, or to be recorded, so one at a time, we chatted in my car, often in rushed sentences or with long pauses, communicating tension and hesitation.

The four women sex workers who I interviewed described various forms of abuse by men and the difficulties that they endured in order to provide for their children. Sex work was seen as the most viable option to ensure the social reproduction of their families. The burden of social reproduction rests on many single women who are unable to access employment in the male-dominated mega-projects. Three sex workers explained how they came to and remained in this work: Eunice was born in 1972 in Louis Trichardt, now Makhado, in Limpopo. She painfully recounted that her boyfriend, when she was 17 years old, did not tell her that he was married and when she tried to leave him, he was violent with her:

> "I became a sex worker because my boyfriend burnt me with paraffin when I tried to leave him. He poured paraffin on me… I realised that I don't have a nice life. I must just go to be a prostitute. No man will marry me. I can't work because I can't pick up heavy things because I was burnt... I came here [Lephalale] for work. I have

> a daughter to feed. At home I can't get money to eat" (Interview, Eunice, 22 February 2017).

She moved to Marapong from rural Limpopo in 2010 to work as a sex worker. Due to Eunice's severe burns, sex work has become the most viable means of looking after herself and her daughter (Interview, Eunice, 22 February 2017).

Maria, who was born in Pretoria, narrated that she came from a poor home, her parents died when she was young and there was no one at home to help her. She moved to Lephalale in 2016 to try to provide for her children after failing to be paid as a community health care worker:

> "There is no job. That's why I became a sex worker. I was a community health care worker under the Department of Health but they never paid us… I don't trust men so I don't want to depend on a man. They can abuse you … At least I have something because of this job. Every cent goes home. For my children and for societies to bury my family… I'm tired of this job but if I don't do this work I can't eat" (Interview, Maria, 22 February 2017).

Bonolo was born in 1993 in Pretoria, she explained that her mother died when she was 13 years old and her grandmother looked after her. There was no money in the house, so she moved to Lephalale last year "to hustle" and to work as a sex worker because "they told me that there is money here":

> "The money is too little, sometimes 50 or 70 rand per customer, but we just do it because we need money. I told myself I'm doing this job even if it's hard. I'll force myself to do it because I have two kids at home and their father doesn't help… A man can get a job easily. For a woman, it is hard. They [the mine and power stations] take only men if there is a job" (Interview, Bonolo, 22 February 2017).

Their words echoed those of sex workers interviewed in Cape Town, who explained that, "I have small children and I needed the money"; "I don't have anyone to support me and I have two children. I come from a single parent home and my mother can't support me and she relies on me. I couldn't find other work"; and "I don't have any other income and I have three small children to look after" (Gould & Fick, 2008, p. 34). As with other studies on (different forms of) sex work in South Africa,[94] sex work is often the most viable option for women breadwinners to meet the financial needs of themselves and their dependents. Moreover, sex work can also be a means through which to claim a form of independence as opposed to relying on boyfriends or husbands (Mahapa, 2014). Lephalale, as a *representational space* of potential

[94] See Gould and Fick (2008); Wojcicki (2002); Wojcicki and Malala (2001).

wealth (*they told me there is money here*) recurs and is reproduced in the lives of sex workers as they navigate everyday spaces that enables them to independently provide for their children.

The sex workers who I interviewed lived in Marapong's Extension Three, which is comprised of many shacks under the shadow of Matimba Power Station. They stayed in shacks, without sanitation, water or electricity, next to a tavern, and paid between 300 and 400 rand per month in rent to the tavern owner. Clients would either come directly to their shacks or to the tavern. None of the research participants described the shacks as a space of home – they had all become migrant workers with their spaces of home and children elsewhere, from Pretoria to rural Limpopo, communicating another ongoing form of spatial dislocation.



Figure 10: Marapong Extension Three under the smoke of Matimba Power Station (Image by Agnes Nygren, 2015)

Besides living conditions of dis-connection and deprivation, their social relations included experiences of abuse and violence. Clients were described as "different" – some were "ok" but others were "*tsotsis*" (Interview, Eunice, 22 February 2017). Eunice and Bonolo stated, "they [clients] treat us like dogs. They beat us" and, similarly, "sometimes clients take back their money. They threaten to kill you so they can get their money back" (Interview, Eunice, 22 February 2017; Interview, Bonolo, 22 February 2017). Sex work requires constant negotiation

in the face of violence or the threat of violence (Gould & Fick, 2008). As with sex workers' experiences of police in other parts of South Africa (Gould & Fick, 2008),[95] in Marapong, research participants contended that, "the police don't help. They just say if you're a prostitute, you get beaten" and, "the police of Lephalale are not working. They come after three hours but a person [client] can have a gun. You can open a docket but nothing happens" (Interview, Eunice, 22 February 2017; Interview, Maria, 22 February 2017). Sex workers thus remain outside the legal protections of other workers, and representatives of the state fail to protect their basic human rights, often inflicting greater harm, – they fall into the crevices.

Sex workers are a stark example of the intersection of space, gender and the construction of dispensability. I previously tracked how the production of space in Lephalale and surrounds was part of constituting a 'pioneering', racialised masculinity amongst white hunters, farmers and later engineers and miners. Through the current, and prospective, mega-projects, masculine subjectivities continue to be produced as dominant while dispensable subjectivities are created in the dust and debris. Sex workers are one such group, alongside the elderly, sick and unemployed.

The creation of dispensability, or groups who live close to death, often occurs through the development of 'zones' for capitalist extraction and accumulation. Nixon (2011, p. 161) writes:

> "Extensive areas which were once rural places are being turned into zones. The details of the process vary… The initial dismembering, however, always comes from elsewhere and from corporate interests pursuing their appetite for ever more accumulation, which means seizing natural resources… regardless of to whom the land or water belong… People in such zones lose all sense of residence."

The Waterberg, historically a rural area, is being recreated as a zone of extraction through state investments in coal-fired energy production and private capital investments in coal extraction, with plans for Independent Power Producers in the future (see Chapter 4). According to Nixon (2011, p. 162), the creation of a zone of extraction creates "surplus people, barely visible beside the seductive image of… achieved modernity". This is similar to Bridge's (2001, p. 2155) conceptualisation of primary commodity spaces that are constructed discursively as "depopulated space[s]", lacking in social complexity, yet bountiful with resources, indicating a process of "erasure and reimagination, such that these spaces are simultaneously emptied and

[95] Gould and Fick (2008) reported that from a random survey of street-based sex workers in Cape Town, 47 per cent had been threatened with violence by police officers, 12 per cent had been raped by police officers, and 28 per cent had been sexually exploited by police officers who asked for sex in exchange for release from custody.

full". This process produces surplus people who can be displaced, have the ecosystems they depend on destroyed, and who can live in the shadow and smog of power stations. Nixon (2011) argues that this slow violence is literally driven inward into bodies of surplus people as cells are somatized and remain largely untreated. In the above I have also argued that violence is additionally turned inwards through social relations in 'zones' of development, as the logic of dispensability is recreated through intricate, gendered relations, highlighting Lefebvre's dialectic of social and spatial relations.

While the modern nation-state is reproduced through imagined, bounded communities; it is also produced and reproduced through 'unimagined communities' and the work of rendering particular sections of the population, internal to marked boundaries of the nation-state, invisible (Nixon, 2011). Nixon (2011, p. 150) defines 'unimagined communities' as those whose "vigorously unimagined condition becomes indispensable to maintaining a highly selective discourse of national development". Narratives of national development are partial narratives that depend on hiding some people and environmental systems from view, which disrupt or are inconvenient to the trajectory constructed for national 'advancement'. Displacement from time and space also involves discursive or imaginative displacement from the developing nation-state. The production of invisible communities who haunt the visible nation has been part of maintenance of discourse of national development, which has intensified in the time of neoliberal globalisation (Nixon, 2011).

This process of rendering people dispensable through physical and imaginative violence has been enacted through the different iterations of the Waterberg: through the creation of 'reserves', the fencing of white-owned farms, the consolidation of white border regions to protect the nation state, and the construction of mega installations of development, such as Matimba Power Station, while simultaneously dislocating black subsistence farmers and workers. This process did not end with the dawn of formal democracy but has continued through the post-apartheid development of the nation-state with the dislocation of people for mega-projects. Through the construction of Medupi Power Station, government discourse has attempted to (re)generate the image of great feats of engineering and modernity, but the constant technical failures, soaring debt and corruption scandals have overshadowed the project, with Medupi coming to represent more a failed project of modernity. The neoliberalisation of the project through hundreds of private contractors and with little accountability and oversight, has generated even greater dispensability as more workers are cast aside after three months or so of

contract work, to find ways of surviving in dusty Marapong, waiting, perhaps for years, until the next contract job is (temporarily) 'secured' (Field notes).

Despite the construction of surplus or dispensable people, who experience multiple forms of dislocation and dis-connection, claims against absence/dispensability/invisibility are still made. The sex workers I interviewed expressed various instantiations of, 'we are not just prostitutes' (as *they* see us), 'we are providing a service to the community'; 'we prevent abuse within households' because 'men come here with stress. I hold them nicely and then he can go home' (Interviews, 22 February 2017). The women activists, Naledi and Lesego, both refused to let their bodies be used as 'toilet paper' as a means to obtain employment. These women's assertions of value and dignity serve as reminders/remainders/disruptions to the narratives of progress cultivated by the discourse of masculinist mega-projects. Furthermore, social death as a relational concept, rooted in some form of dependency, means surplus or dispensable people cannot be completely invisibilised by racialised and gendered forces of capital or the state. In the next section, I turn to the notion of haunting, and the different ways in which hauntings interrupt and disrupt the linear narrative of modernity and abstract space of capital.

6.3 Hauntings

"The time is out of joint" (Hamlet, cited in Derrida, 1994, p. xxi)

I argue that there is a way whereby that which is absent or dispensable to racial capitalist development haunts the present space-time. In this section, I discuss three forms of haunting that I drew out from my research: the haunting of a lost dream of the 1994 transition; the haunting of the physically dead who have been dislocated; and lastly, the haunting of the socially dead whose presence disrupts the narrative of progress.

Hauntology emerges from Derrida's (1994) *Spectres of Marx*, a reference to the well-known line in *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: "[a] spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism" (Marx & Engels, 1947, p. 110). In his play with spectres, Derrida articulates a disjunction of temporalities through supplanting the priority of being and presence, with absences and ghosts – neither present nor absent, dead nor alive. Memories or ghosts can be understood as returns, repetitions and hauntings – the ghost as a figure of an Other belonging to a different temporality (Davis, 2005).

Haunting alters the experience of being in linear time – it alters the way in which time is commonly separated and sequenced into the past, the present and the future, thus the living present is not self-sufficient (Davis, 2005). This is similar to Bloch's understanding of a dialectical, rather than linear, conception of time, whereby the past contains sufferings and failures of humanity as well as unrealised hopes and potentials, which can yet become. For Gordon (2011), spectres or ghosts (or unrealised pasts) appear when the contradictions they represent can no longer be contained. The figure of the ghost is an ethical injunction, in a similar way to Levinas's 'Other' to whom we have a responsibility (Davis, 2005). Derrida (1994, p. xviii, emphasis in original) writes of the responsibility to ghosts:

> "If I am getting ready to speak at length about ghosts, inheritance, and generations, generations of ghosts, which is to say about certain *others* who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us, it is in the name of *justice*. Of justice where it is not yet, not yet *there*, where it is no longer, let us understand where it is no longer *present*, and where it will never be."

And he writes of "some *responsibility*, beyond all living present, within that, which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead" (Derrida, 1994, p. xviii, emphasis in original). People (and ideas), who are meant to be invisible and absent, interfere with the present as a reminder of past injustices. This interference interrupts a seamless transition or march into the future, as promulgated by discourses of development and progress that dissimulate contradictions (Gordon, 2011).

As that which is not fully present haunts the here and now, the injustices of the past haunt the present and the future that might have been - that is, the (still) Not-Yet haunts the present - disrupting the self-sufficiency of the present-time of national and capitalist development. Those, living and dead, in the debris of Lephalale, haunt the present-time as constant reminders of the contradictions internal to the project of national development through extractivist mega-projects of capitalist modernity.

6.3.1 The Haunting of 1994

The political idea of 1994 – as a transformatory moment – and people's expectations and hopes therein, haunt the present as a constant reference point through which to grasp the lack within the present – the Not-Yet of the present. Bloch's Not-Yet can refer to something that is both 'still not' and 'not yet', indicating that something expected in the past has not materialised

(Hudson, 1982). This plays out in Lephalale through people's imaginings of a '*still* Not-Yet' future.

As mentioned, Lesedi was born in 1945 on a farm, which is now the site of Medupi Power Station. After a life of dislocation between white-owned farms, Ga-Seleka, and Marapong, reflecting on her current conditions, she stated, "I don't see any change [since 1994] … it's even worse now" and "I can stay in the farms because life will be better than this" (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017). The 'this' that she referred to is her life of poverty, hunger, and instability. She explained that "there is hunger in house" and in Marapong there is conflict, crime, unemployment, and her children do not have stable work. In her opinion, on the farms there was a sense of home, where she could plough and have enough to eat for her household (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017). Hence, for her, the idea of 1994 as a space-time of 'home' in which one's needs are met, remains 'Not-Yet' as her socio-economic situation continues to deteriorate.

Botshelo was born almost 40 years later in 1982 in Segole village, near Steilloop. Her grandparents raised her after her mother died and her father remained absent during her childhood. She moved to Lephalale in 2010 to look for a job. Her aunt was already staying in Lephalale and was her connection to the place. She had a brief period of employment as a cleaner at the Independent Electoral Commission's offices but the contract cleaning company changed and she lost her job. At the time of the interview, she stayed with one of her children (the other was being looked after by her grandmother) in a rented shack in Marapong (Interview, Botshelo, 18 May 2016).

Botshelo stated that South Africa changed for the better after democracy. According to her, South Africa "was good" then because people were provided with RDP houses, social grants and children could go to school. This was a period of state investment in public goods and basic necessities for life, which the majority of people were deprived of under apartheid conditions. But when she moved to Lephalale, she explained that she started to see things differently due to the ways in which people were treated in Lephalale. She stated that, "in Lephalale it is like we are still stuck in like before freedom" (Interview, Botshelo, 18 May 2016). She explained that in Lephalale there is corruption and money is stolen from ordinary people. She does not see houses or facilities in Marapong being built or people getting jobs. Botshelo did not speak about the same connection to the land as Lesedi, and rather emphasised the lack of urban

development in Marapong. While Lephalale did benefit from socio-economic policies post-1994, by the time Botshelo first arrived in 2010, her experience of the space-time was, and is, a 'stuckness'. This was echoed by Samuel, a worker at Medupi, who arrived in Lephalale in 2013, and described Marapong as "a forgotten city" (Interview, Samuel, 26 April 2017). Lephalale is 'still Not-Yet' 1994.

Similarly, Kagiso, a local traditional healer, expressed that conditions have not changed since 1994 and moreover that apartheid still continues in Lephalale:

> "Yes the apartheid here in Lephalale can't end because we are far away from the government. It's a free country but we don't have freedom. We are still in the apartheid system… The claiming of farms…The white people they don't want to go and talk to our forefathers or do what we want… it has not changed here in Lephalale, nothing has changed until now" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).

Kagiso asserted that the ownership of land and the ways in which decisions are made have not transformed since apartheid. White people still own the land and the Grootegeluk coal mine still determines how development takes place in Lephalale. Kagiso's "we are still" communicates a continuation of a past in relation to an idea of a present that should or could be different but in experience is not. 'Still' relates to a 'Not-Yet' become – a futurity that has Not-Yet arrived for the 'us here'. While perhaps freedom has arrived for others in South Africa, behind the mountain, in the Waterberg, a different, apartheid time, continues to be lived out in people's everyday experiences.

Marcuse (1964) writes in *One-Dimensional Man* that 'historical alternatives' haunt the present because they "represent other possibilities, other better presents and futures" that could have been (Gordon, 2011, p. 5). This alternative is sometimes related to through nostalgia, regret, or through a critical urgency to act (Gordon, 2011). The possibilities of the 1994 transition haunt the present of Lephalale through nostalgia of a past thought of as better, as regret that the moment of 1994 has passed or been lost, as a claim on the present that it is not as it should be and an urgency to realise the Not-Yet of 1994. Possibilities for different presents and futures remain unrealised and the present is related to and experienced through these unrealised possibilities. I return to this idea of nostalgia and the past, as a relation to hope, in Chapter 8 on transformative hope.

What might this Not-Yet look like for those living behind the mountain? NUMSA shop stewards who I interviewed articulated some hints regarding the shapes of their Not-Yets as follows:

> "What I find most difficult is that I still don't have complete freedom and I still struggle with everything in my life. And others presume it's laziness but it's not laziness… the biggest goal I want is to see an equal society. My biggest dream is to see a socialist state. You know if we can have a socialist state, then I can go and see my ancestors. Then my job will be done but I still have got a long way to do that." (Interview, Thabo, 3 May 2017);

> "The working class must be liberated. Like now they want to introduce this thing of a minimum wage of 3 500 rand which is peanuts, where another person budgets 10 000 rand for a dog but a person that goes to work for 31 days must budget 3 500 rand for six people. South Africa is unfair, the ruling party itself is not fair. If you are poor, you become worse and when you are rich you are going to be richer. That's why we want to see South Africa equal" (Interview, Modise, 23 May 2017);

and,

> "Do you know what is the meaning of this [NUMSA] emblem?… socialism is where we want to go. And then we said, on the emblem, the star will shine upon Africa. The star will shine upon Africa when we have reached socialism… We didn't want to have people that we currently have, like the poorest of the poor and the rich become richer and what-what. In socialism everything belongs to everyone" (Interview, Kefentse, 8 February 2017).

Through these quotes and conversations that I had, one can discern some basic tenets of their Not-Yets: a society in which no person is treated worse than a rich (white) person's dog; no one has to struggle to meet their basic economic needs; a society grounded in economic and social equality in which land and resources are collectively belonged; and a society with collective self-determination in which everyone can participate. Such a society may allow for a future in which one can die peacefully and join one's ancestors after contributing towards an equal society. For many research participants, the spectre of 1994 haunts the present as unfulfilled desires remain, and unfinished or unfulfilled pasts constitute contemporary space-times (Bloch, 1991). For Bloch, this unfulfillment, or missed past, provides the possibility of "rethinking futural possibilities beyond the present, made to break into the present in order to inaugurate a possible alternative future spotted in the past" (Schultz, 2014, pp. 178–179).

6.3.2 The Haunting of the Physiologically Dead

The emptying out of a place, the dislocation of people, and the creation of people without a future, through forms of violence, is also the creation of a people without a past. The dead were and are dislocated in the making of the space of Ellisras, and then Lephalale, as public and

private capital destroyed and continues to destroy ancestral grounds, and thus living people's relations to the dead. As argued above, capitalist development displaces the temporal connection between the living and the dead (Berger, 2007; Nixon, 2011). White (2010, p. 507) states that, "[t]he dead have dwelt with the living for a long time in this part of the globe, but precisely insofar as ties among living and dead are ancient here, they are just as much a part of the social universe as other kinds of relationships are – and therefore just as historical." For many, relating to the dead enables the past and present to co-exist; the past is placed in a non-linear relationship with the present and the future (Savage, 1995).

The family of Salaminah Moloantoa, whose bones were found when an ISCOR hostel was built, and who was reburied on the site which later became Medupi Power Station, struggled for years to access her gravesite. According to her grandson, "she was buried there but you were never able to access her grave… But after a long fight… because when they [ESKOM] started the project [Medupi] they did as they like until we fought them and took them head on" (Interview, Thabiso, 17 May 2017). Eventually, after several years, her family was able to gain access to her gravesite again. Contestation around grave desecrations and grave relocations is common in mining areas historically and into the present (Skosana, 2019a, 2019b).[96]

Salaminah's grave was not the only one on which Medupi was constructed. A group of families laid grievances with Medupi that the construction was built on their family members' graves. Community members argued that this was not due to a lack of knowledge on the part of Medupi: "Medupi knew there were graves but they continued" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). Lesedi stated, "we went there and told them [ESKOM] that that was our place" (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017). But Medupi was constructed upon their dead nonetheless. Since 2007, not only Salaminah's family, but also several other families repeatedly raised their concerns with ESKOM regarding the construction of Medupi on burial grounds. After pressure, an independent assessment was conducted in 2015 and reported finding 20 heritage sites, including five preserved gravesites, seven disturbed burial sites, three unconfirmed graves, and four settlements or buildings (Silidi et al., 2015). Community members reported frustration that ESKOM failed to deal with their concerns. Family members suspected that the ESKOM manager and local municipality officials worked together to cover up evidence of human bones

[96] See the development of Prestwich Place in Green Point, Cape Town, in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup for an example of other forms of development on gravesites in the context of displacement and dispossession (Jonker, 2005).

discovered on the site during the preparation phases of the construction of Medupi. Some believe that bones were secretly moved and buried at Marapong Cemetery (Silidi et al., 2015).

The mother of a boy, Jankie, whose grave was on the site, complained that "no proper rites had been followed" for her son's reburial at Marapong cemetery. She reported that she, "experience[ed] persistent stress disorders considering the indecent exhumation" (Silidi et al., 2015, p. 58). She stated, "I feel a lot of pain, I am hurt by the way things were done. You can see for yourself where I live is not live beautiful because my people are gone and I am left alone" (cited in eNCA, 2015, p. n.p.). Another member of Jankie's family reported that he was forced to exhume Jankie's remains and that this has led to "deep psychological trauma" and "cast a bad spell and affected his social and family life" (Silidi et al., 2015, p. 58). Jankie's family placed a lot of blame on a white ESKOM Manager for forcing them to do things under pressure and for disrespecting their ancestors.

Several infant burials were marked on the site. Three-day-old Johannes Tibanyane was one such infant. His father stated that he had to fight ESKOM to address what they had done to his son:

> "I had to fight because I don't know what they have done to my son, they dug up where he was buried. I don't know where he is, there is dug-up sand everywhere… it's been dug up… We had buried him according to traditional customs and we all were cleansed. Now as we speak my wife has many problems, she is always complaining about pains on her waist ever since this story happened in 2007 when they started construction" (cited in eNCA, 2015, p. n.p.).

Jankie and Johannes's families therefore both expressed a haunting manifest as psychological trauma, physical pain and material hardship due to the dislocation of their dead children. Similarly, Dineo Skosana (2019a, 2019b) in her study of grave relocations for coal mining in Mpumalanga found that families whose ancestral graves were desecrated suffered from psychological trauma as well as spiritual instability, which left them vulnerable to physical harm and economic hardship.

The independent assessment also concluded that graves of three uMkontho we Sizwe soldiers killed by security forces in the 1980s were found underneath a Marula tree on the site. Three Zimbabweans, who were killed by security forces, were also buried close to the foot of Medupi. They were reportedly on their way to the mines in Thabazimbi and were confused for anti-government guerrilla fighters. The graves of three Batswana men from Botswana, who lived on

the farm, were also found west of the plant. Radithini is said to be the ghost of Medupi. He earned the name after there were sightings of the ghost striking a tin and making metallic sounds. The ghost is thought to belong to a Shangani man, who had an isolated grave west of the power plant (Silidi et al., 2015).

Families reported that the inability to access the graves left them disconnected and dislocated in their space-time. For example, Jankie's mother explained that her relationships to her ancestors, to the place where she spoke with them, to nature, and to herself have been severed, "[b]ack then there was a mountain we would go to and once we spoke to the ancestors we would not struggle to get rain, but now that things are all mixed up – we don't know what to do" (cited in eNCA, 2015, p. n.p.). The disregard for and denigration of people's ancestors is felt deeply in the way that events in and around the mega-projects are understood. For instance, the accidents and strikes that occurred at Medupi Power Station were seen as a result of the restlessness of ancestors on the site. An example being when there was a work accident and a man fell to his death in 2016 (Pretorius, 2016). The dead and the past thus find a way of interrupting the present and countering the idea of modernity as progress. Kagiso stated, "when people talk about Medupi they will tell you everything is wrong… ancestors are more dangerous than a work accident… they are messing with ancestral places, and do you know what kind of trouble that caused?… Because in our culture we go and visit our graves and we talk to our ancestors" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). Many problems in Marapong were understood to be as a result of the restlessness of ancestors. Another elder reported that, "[c]hildren are sick and many deaths are happening because of upset spirits – some of whom were traditional healers themselves… Some of them had the power of rain, and if these ladies could visit the graves and perform the ritual they could make it rain now" (cited in eNCA, 2014, p. n.p.).

This is not the first time that ancestors have caused distress or disruption in the town. When ISCOR was prospecting for coal mines at various sites, it was believed that angry spirits disrupted construction. Water flooded out of holes that workers dug because spirits were disturbed (Ballim, 2017). Workers believed that the bones exhumed at the site of Grootegeluk coal mine required proper burial and cleansing ceremonies in order to lay the spirits to rest and enable the successful construction of the mine (Ballim, 2017). Similarly, White (2010, p. 501) writes, reflecting on relations in postcolonial Zululand, that ancestors, who are understood as being powers for good, also have the potential to cause harm: "The dead were as mercurial and

needful as they were powerful… Anyone who felt these demands [to be respected] too burdensome would soon discover how costly it was to ignore them, for the dead inflicted terrible sickness on people who had slighted them. It was perilous not to meet their wishes".

After nine years of contestation, in May 2016, ESKOM eventually held a cleansing ceremony at Medupi Power Station. The Kgoro Shrine Memorial site was built with a commemorative plaque, the graves were moved and can be accessed by families and five heritage sites, including old settlements, have also been preserved. The ceremony was conducted at the break of dawn to assist ancestors in finding their new resting place (The World Bank, 2016). The local traditional healer described the ceremony: "We did what our ancestors need… The bones that were taken out from there, we talk with them saying, 'We are taking you from here and we are putting you where people are staying then we will visit you'… they [the ancestors] are sleeping in peace" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). Skosana (2019a) similarly highlights the importance of the dead being communicated with during processes of relocation to assure them that they are being moved to a place of rest. In Marapong, it is believed that this will help to prevent future strikes, accidents, and injuries onsite and therefore assist in securing the future. White (2010, p. 508) argues that the relation to ancestors, and the past, is a relation to futurity – the relation is a way to "secure [one's family's] ongoing reproduction and expansion".

Despite the ceremony conducted at Medupi Power Station, the ceremony and gravesites continue to be sources of contention and distress. Two elderly women living in Marapong described how the process has divided the community and created conflict between different groups of claimants. ESKOM was held partially responsible for creating divisions through differential treatment: some claimants received tombstones for their families' graves, and others not; some were part of the ceremony and others not. However, there were also tensions generated internally through processes of exclusion:

> "We went there and told them [ESKOM] that that was our place. And then when they responded the clever ones started going to meetings and left us behind. After Medupi recognised us those people came… I think we went there 2009. They [ESKOM] came and had a meeting with us. They were looking for people who stayed in the farms and we even talked about those graves. I was the one who told them about those graves. They asked us, 'How can they help us?' And when we go to the meeting that is when other people came with their clever plans and then things got mixed up there… They are just using their cleverness, I don't know how to put it, you see when you are not educated you are in the back and the clever ones go forward. Just because they are members of certain organisations… They are just after the money… And those people when they talk about their graves, they just

> point on the ground. Because there are no graves there. We don't know those people and we have never seen them before. They didn't even stay there… When we talk they say, 'Hey, hey you must not talk like that' you see… They perform the ceremony last year… and gave them [the clever ones] 15 000 rand… They [ESKOM] are saying nothing to us. We get nothing… My heart is sore, you know my heart is so heartbroken… [being excluded from the ceremony] was very much painful" (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017).

In Lesedi's narration the 'clever ones', who were younger, more educated, and organisationally connected were able to negotiate a better deal with ESKOM, sending her to the 'back'. It is not clear if the 'clever ones' falsely claimed connection to the graves, but Lesedi's assertion of historical belonging to the place by previously staying on the land, and being able to identify the graves (*they can't point to their graves*) is part of her struggle to secure a future in the face of land and spiritual dispossession. In Skosana's (2019a) account of grave relocations, she calls attention to both divisions created by the mining company and internal tensions among families affected. Generational tensions also arose with younger family members demanding greater compensation, and families who were able to obtain more compensation were more educated and aware of their legal rights than others. In addition, instances of people falsely claiming graves for financial gain arose. Grave relocations reveal the complexities and contestations regarding who has rights, and the means – whether 'cleverness', money or political connections, to secure historical claims to the land and ancestors. Complex mediations occur in the struggle to secure and safeguard a future, through claims on the past.

The history of the area keeps repeating itself as more coal mines come into the Waterberg to develop sites of extraction. The local traditional healer expressed his concern that every farm has graves that people cannot make a claim to:

> "People do mining here but every farm has graves… As long you [white farmers and companies] have got money, I have got nothing to say because I have no money. You will be able to pay lawyers and all that. And you show me papers that you are registered and I am not registered in that farm but I was born here, my father and my grandfathers are born here" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).

Thus people, who claim belonging to the land over generations, have little legal or economic power to prevent further spatial and temporal dislocation.

The history and contemporary 'development' of Marapong entailed forced and violent disconnections between the living and the dead. The past and present development of mega-projects dislocated people, physically and metaphysically, in time and space. In this way, the

march of progress not only destroyed people's presents but also their living pasts (Luckett, 2019). Within African cosmology, this separation or disconnection between living and ancestral worlds impacts the life of communities and feelings of wholeness and disalienation (Motsemme, 2018). The living dead disrupt linear time, as different times exist alongside each other. An incompletion of the past designates a responsibility of the present and future for past lives. Derrida (1994, p. xviii, emphasis in original) contends, "[w]ithout this *non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present*, without that which secretly unhinges it, without this responsibility and this respect for justice concerning those who *are not there*, of those who are no longer or who are not yet *present and living*, what sense would there be to ask the question "where?" "where tomorrow?" "whither?"".

The idea of fidelity to ancestors means there is a sense of responsibility and accountability towards one's ancestors (Gordon, 2018). In this, there is a juxtaposition of times as one is accountable to the past, which is etched into the present, and the future still matters when one is dead and inhabits the space of the ancestors: "The cultural space in which the dead dwelt was at once a space of the past and of the future… It was in their personal futures that they would come to dwell in culture as ancestral spirits themselves" (White, 2010, p. 511). Therefore there is a consideration of one's ancestors and descendants and connectivity invested in a different time that clashes with modernity's time – which exists in a limited or empty present, with little consideration of pasts and futures.

6.3.3 The Haunting of the Socially Dead

The socially dead, the invisible, the dispensable, interrupt the smooth discourse of national and capitalist development, showing up the contradictions and illusions therein – haunting the present by their lack of complete absence. Kagiso described the past, under the apartheid system, as an experience of social death and that this continues into the present. According to him, Lephalale is one of the roots, or hearts, of apartheid. During apartheid, he experienced a condition of being unable to speak or act as a black person in Lephalale and still experiences this condition in the present: "*If you talk about apartheid you are talking about people who know what death feels like. We don't live here in Lephalale, we are dead people… In Afrikaans they call it 'Dom Kaffir' or stupid, we are nothing here in Lephalale*" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017). A former shop steward at Medupi, Tshepo, elaborated on this experience of being unable to act and affect futures: "people [company representatives] come from wherever they

come from and just do whatever they think is right without communicating with the community that is why he [Kagiso] is saying they are nothing" (Interview, Tshepo, 5 May 2017). Tshepo emphasised the lack of communication from private and state companies and the municipality as an indication of the disregard for ordinary people: "they [the companies] don't communicate with the community and that is what they use to oppress us because we are not educated… people find out late when they are already starting with something… the management and the municipality are destroying this community. There is no communication" (Interview, Tshepo, 5 May 2017).

The Ga-Seleka villages surrounding Lephalale have been hit by droughts. Dry, dusty lands exist where once villagers used to plant vegetables, and thin cattle that villagers struggle to feed and provide water for roam the bush. The Ga-Seleka Royal Council (who oversee 25 villages) stated that the mega-projects are a disaster. They have seen no benefits from the mines and power stations nearby. Again, they complained that the companies do not recognise the Chief and do not come to Ga-Seleka to consult the community. The companies "just do their own thing and lie" to the Council (Interview, Ga-Seleka Royal Council, 4 May 2017). While in other parts of South Africa, mining companies often work through the chiefs and royal councils, this does not seem to be the case with the Ga-Seleka Council. For instance, in Gavin Capps and Sonwabile Mnwana's (2015) analysis of the Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela traditional authority area, they show how the property rights of the tribal-trust land required platinum mining corporations to incorporate chiefs as junior partners in the mining operations, which resulted in processes of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) accumulation as well as the dispossession of land of rural communities and practices of corruption at the "mine-chief nexus".[97] The Ga-Seleka Council, however, is not in a position of power as mines are not (yet) being built on their land and the villages are rather sources of labour for the companies. Nonetheless, there are signs of increasing contestation and conflict amongst Council members with the arrival of more companies and the future possibility of a cut in mineral revenues.[98]

[97] See also Capps and Malindi (2017); and Mnwana and Capps (2015).

[98] For example, in the matter between the Seleka Royal Family (1st Plaintiff) and Acting Chief Phetogo David Seleka (4th Defendant) in the High Court of South Africa, the conduct of the Acting Chief led to a petition for his removal in May 2014. The grievances against him included that, "[o]n 14 March 2014 he introduced his friends at the Department of Mineral Resources, Limpopo, with a view to secure mineral rights professing to be members of plaintiff". A witness stated that "the dispute against the Fourth Defendant was over mining issues. This was discussed in community hall. While on the way home, the Fourth Defendant threatened him with assault. He attempted to hit him with a fist and he also hurled a stone at him". The judgement handed down in February 2018 removed the Acting Chief from his position (Seleka Royal Family, Seleka SA Motlhasedi Royal Council v The Premier of Limpopo Province, House of Traditional Leaders (Limpopo Province), Members of the Executive

The Council described how the mega-projects have led to an increase in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and asthma rates in the area. According to them, many people are dying because of these illnesses. There are increased levels of both air and land pollution. The Council described how the grass does not grow as it used to, the rivers have dried up and there is no water in Ga-Seleka – they connected this to the mega-projects. A member of the Council stated that the villagers are going to die of hunger if they cannot farm here. Alongside the destruction of one's source of life, farming, and the negative health consequences, there is also a sense that with the projects came violence: "since the project came it created a lot of problems in the community … our children don't have work and people kill each other" (Interview, Ga-Seleka Royal Council, 4 May 2017). Thus the experience of social death, of having little agency over one's past, present, and future, brings one closer to physiological death and the fear thereof.

The reproduction of a sense of lack of agency, as experienced under the apartheid state, continues into the era of the post-apartheid 'developmental' state. As outlined in the discussion on the making of Ellisras as a company town, this is made explicit in the words of Kagiso, who stated that all the companies and development in the area used to fall under the control of ISCOR mine and now fall under the control of its privatised version, Exxaro mine. In the relational dynamic between Exxaro and ordinary residents, Exxaro's control is perceived as beyond people's influence, "the law is still of those people who built the first mine". Coal is the "foundation" of the area. The centring of power and ownership in the hands of a coal mine means that, "[apartheid] law has not changed, it has not changed here in Lephalale, nothing has changed until now" (Interview, Kagiso, 5 May 2017).

As discussed in Chapter 5, the levels of repression and the extent of racism and militarisation of the area prevented large-scale activism against the apartheid regime, as was seen in some other parts of the country. People were isolated from mass organisations and the mass actions that took place "far away, in Johannesburg". Fear is part of the history and the making of the area: "It was tough, when you Toyi-toyi you go to jail or they torture you. People were very afraid to do anything… We got scared… we were always scared" (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017). This fear is expressed in the present through statements such as, 'we are dead here'. Bloch (1986) argues that the future contains that which is hoped for and that which is feared –

Council of Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs (Limpopo Province), and Acting Chief Phetogo David Seleka, 2018).

fear is a more definitive state of anxiety. Fear and hope work against each other; fear confines one, while hope broadens and expands one outwardly into the world (Bloch, 1986).

However, I argue that in the current period, the fear, that was part of the making of the area, has a lesser stranglehold over the present. There is more movement against fear and towards hope in relation to future imaginings. Despite, and alongside, fear, protest actions and strikes occur more often than during apartheid. Today, when the law (of the corporations) is challenged through overt actions, such as community protests, the state and private security are still actively involved in silencing such protests and in attempting to generate fear. Lesego recounted how the protest that she participated in in October 2016 was violently repressed by police forces (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017).

The Lephalale Unemployment Forum (LUF) organised a protest to Lephalale Local Municipality to highlight issues regarding lack of employment opportunities, corruption and the environmental impacts of Medupi Power Station. Despite repeated notifications to the Municipality regarding the protest, the Municipality failed to respond. The Forum decided to proceed with the march, which was violently stopped at 6 am (Right2Protest Project, n.d.). Lesego explained:

> "We come and walk, when we are at Spar [in Marapong], the police came. They say, 'no, you are not going anywhere'. We say, 'why? We have application form for that march, it is legal so why do you want to stop us?' And before the march, the rumours said the list of our leaders is there at the police, the mayor took it at the police [and said]… 'You have to stop those people before the end of the day'… They [the police] came with the rubber bullet and start shooting, while we are sitting down. People run away… We are so many, more than a hundred. [The police] start shooting… I say, no, this person going to shoot me, then I run away… Yoh, that day, it was painful but nothing, the community do nothing. They are sitting down, [the police] start shooting… The station commander said, 'all these people are suspects'. What have we done? He say to me, 'public violence'. What kind of public violence are we doing?" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017).

Some of the community leaders were arrested, including Lesego. She described her night under arrest as, "I was crying the whole night [in a cell] because we didn't do anything. What kind of public violence are they talking about? What have we done? Nothing" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017). The following day, Forum members went to the police station to find out what had happened to their comrades and a further five were arrested at the police station. They were all charged with public violence (Right2Protest Project, n.d.). Lesego explained that the arrests and police violence created fear amongst community members, especially women: "After the

march, the women got scared and disappear. [They] left me [in the organisation]" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017). Fear is actively created to maintain law and order that preserves the power of local ANC political authorities and the private and state corporations. Expressions of agency are repressed; people are shot at, imprisoned, and silenced. This is not only an attempt to generate fear, but to control people and limit future imaginaries so that the needs of dispensable groups of people do not return to haunt or disrupt the present.

However, what this story and other forms of claim making made above illustrate, is that those who are constructed as dispensable continue to disrupt and to 'haunt' the present. I argue that this means that social death and fear are not an absolute condition. Animation and contestation to expand horizons into the future; to re-connect; to locate oneself; to claim a belonging – despite the imposed dislocations and dis-connections – continues.

6.4 Conclusion: Hauntings and Hope

In this chapter, I have argued that ancestors, ghosts, and unrealised pasts haunt the present. As do surplus sections of the population – the unemployed, sex workers, rural women – who are deemed dispensable to (yet are still depended on to some extent) the needs of national and capitalist development. Dispensable people are displaced in time and space, abused, shot at, beaten, and imprisoned, often with little negative consequences for the preservation of power. However, the presence and contestation of those in the debris in the Waterberg function to interrupt the smooth progress of development. Their presence haunts – it is a refusal to be completely absent or disposable, and as such, signals possibilities for hope.

Kagiso's claim that, 'we are dead people' in Lephalale, appears to be an assertion of a lack of agency to affect change or to participate in the constitution of space-time. However, I have argued that the declaration of death expresses a more complicated relation to being in this space-time – one that is not devoid of agency. The very claim to being dead entails a form of agency, as the statement could not be made if one were in fact physically, socially, politically or spiritually dead. As such, it can be read as an active rejection of the current conditions – an assertion that things are not as they should or could be. This is evident in Kagiso's everyday actions, which involved actively intervening to change the conditions in Marapong by providing advice on a range of issues from land claims to ancestors. This activity is also shown in the other examples in the chapter, as people contested ESKOM's desecration of the dead,

made claims of belonging, organised marches and assessed police actions as brutal and unjust. I also wonder whether the fact that Kagiso's claim was made to a researcher and a white middle class woman, as a haunting of the present, could be understood as an injunction to do something. The injunction is made in relation to someone who is complicit in the benefits of apartheid laws. The statement, as a haunting, is perhaps a challenge to do something that might restore life.

The constitution of social being through the space-time of Lephalale is thus not simply one of social and physical death. The contradictions of racial capitalist modernity – uneven development, repression, lack of democracy, environmental and social destruction – in relation to the unrealised hopes of 1994, surface claims on the present and future. Social death as a state of social being is not a once-off condition but a relation of power (Gordon, 2011) and therefore such claims can be interpreted as demands for different power relations and different conditions of being. Despite the destruction of hope through the often violent exercise of control by the state, patriarchy, and capital, claims are still made on the past, present, and future through a haunting – a refusal to be absent – that point towards a different future imaginary. People still hope for a future in which protest is not violently repressed, re-connections with ancestors are possible, and a future of belonging to and living off the land is not destroyed. In this chapter, through posing questions around different forms of death, in conditions of dislocation and dis-connection, I have shown that, firstly, the stasis of social death does not hold as people navigate and contest their conditions, suggesting that there are grounds for the exploration of hope in Lephalale and surrounds. Secondly, my analysis demonstrates that the exploration of relations to the past is not antithetical, but rather integral, to an exploration of hope and horizons of possibility.

CHAPTER 7: REPRODUCTIVE HOPE: SEARCHING FOR THE 'GOOD LIFE' IN LEPHALALE

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, I argued that from a place of dispensability and haunting, there persists a refusal to disappear and to accept the world as closed and without possibility. In this chapter, I explore possibilities through the concept of 'reproductive hope' and how it manifests and functions in relation to particular presents and futures in everyday life in Lephalale and surrounds. I focus on excavating fragments of hope in everyday life. The analysis of fragments of hope points towards differences in *content*, *form* and *function*. Not all hopes are the same. Some types of hope may *function* to push people's imaginaries and actions beyond present structures, while others help people to survive the present moment, but reproduce the present space-time. The purpose of this chapter is to show the production of hope, especially what I term, 'reproductive hope', through particular space-times, and the force of such hopes in shaping everyday life and structures of reality. Reproductive hope remains within the limits of the dominant space-time and is unable to substantially transform such limits. As a response to hunger, or an experience of lack, reproductive hope is recuperated within the dominant space-time, but I argue that this never total or complete. Hope as method, as outlined in Chapter 3, emphasised the unfolding of potentialities, not only in the analysis of the past but to grasp movements that go beyond the present, thereby investigating process and potentiality. In this chapter, I analyse manifestations of reproductive hope, mainly in relation to practices and discourses of *production* and *consumption*. But in doing so, I also look for the opening up of possibilities and the activation of potentialities. I aim to employ the concept of reproductive hope and its relation to the structure of reality as an open system, but with limits. While largely reproductive of the status quo, reproductive hope can also open up spaces from which to transform subjectivity and conditions of life.

I first discuss hope in the time of neoliberalism and argue that the dominant form of hope in this era is reproductive hope. Second, I analyse research participants' everyday hopes in Lephalale through interviews and fieldwork, focussing on (i) Medupi Power Station and hopes related to work and production; and (ii) the Lephalale Mall and hopes related to consumption, as two main sites which are generative of hope in Lephalale. In order to analyse hopes in relation to production and consumption, I draw on theorists such as Bridget Kenny (2018) and Franco Barchiesi (2011), and draw parallels with Lauren Berlant's (2011) concept of cruel optimism

and reproductive hope. Through this analysis, I demonstrate how hopes, though different in content and form, function to reproduce attachments to the given order. I also show how hope is more than emotion; it is a driving force, shaping desire, agency and the contours of people's lives; and further, that within these hopes, some more than others, there is often an embedded critique of the status quo and a surplus that is generative. A central intention of this chapter is to foreground some of these complexities, rather than simply to dismiss reproductive hope as a form of 'false consciousness'.

7.2 Hope in the Time of Neoliberalism: Reproductive Hope, Possibilities and Potentialities

An understanding of the world in process is not only about possibilities at the macro-level of international and national political, social and economic change, but also an understanding of lives as in process in relation to conditions of their time-spaces. There is an incompleteness in nature-society and in individual lives as people interact with forces beyond themselves. How one relates to this process of unfolding also shifts the possibilities contained therein. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a dialectical relation between objective and subjective forces in the ways in which the unfolding of possibilities occurs, affecting the direction and nature thereof. There is no predetermined trajectory in this dialectic. The refusal of the finishedness of one's life and therefore, the refusal of a form of stasis, can manifest differently. Manifestations may, for example, take the form of actively participating within the current limits in ways that reproduce such, or in ways that change conditions, moving towards another horizon of social being and other space-times. In this chapter, I consider how the refusal of finishedness can manifest in a participation in this space-time *according-to-possibility* in a way that reproduces it, even though the activity of imagining opens up possibilities.

In the current historical period of globally intensified commodification and marketisation, the privatisation and shrinking of hope in relation to the social imaginary has become widespread: "hope has lost its utopian dynamic shaping social, collective and historical agency, becoming, instead, individualized, apolitical – precisely privatized" (McManus, 2015, p. 18). In 1964, Bloch and Adorno in conversation with each other, point to the "terrible banalization" of utopia and the "shrinking" of consciousness such that possibilities beyond the immediate space-time are limited in imagination (Bloch & Adorno, 1988, p. 3). Hage (2003) argues that societies are involved in the distribution of hope and that neoliberal regimes have shrunk the capacity to

distribute hope. Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) also notes that the distribution of hope, harm, life and death, not only occurs unevenly across different kinds of societies or nation-states but also unevenly across social difference within particular societies. However, I argue, it is not only the 'quantity' of distribution that matters but also the content, form and function of the hope that is distributed and circulated in societies. The function of hope is produced through its attachment to particular social, spatial and economic arrangements – reproducing or transforming these; and activating (or not) particular existing potentialities.

Tängh Wrangel (2017) contends that currently, the dominant kind of hope manifesting is 'neoliberal hope', and further that 'neoliberal hope' is not a kind of false hope as such, in contrast with a more 'genuine' or left-wing hope. Rather, it relates to neoliberal forms of life, in which the subject is the individual, the entrepreneur, struggling to succeed despite the odds. Neoliberal hope also interpellates the subject of the consumer. Wishes for another life permeate through capitalist societies, as the consumer becomes the predominant actor. The promises of consumer culture invest objects with magical properties to attain happiness (Bloch, 1986). Peter Thompson (2011, p. n.p.) explains that:

> "The dark satanic mills of the 19th century have moved to China to be replaced by the bright satanic malls of consumer delight and our collective hopes for the future have been privatised and bundled up into little gobbets of pleasure sold to us as freedom on the never never… the constant desire to search for utopia has been transformed into a vicarious and consumerist attitude in which hope and utopia are to be found in the coffee shops where we can dream about unearned fame and lottery wins."

Tobin Siebers (1994) illustrates that the objectification of desire and human happiness takes place not only onto objects of consumption but also onto the body. In other words, the body becomes a site onto which to objectify one's experiences of lack, through performances of diet, exercise and ornament. Similarly, David Morris (1994, p. 152) states that "utopia in the postmodern era has largely fixed its new location in the solitary, private, individual body", reflecting "a belief that the only valid remaining space of perfection lies... in our own individual flesh: a paradise of curves and muscle". This further demonstrates processes of the privatisation and individualisation of hopes.

Levitas (2013, p. 105) argues that if the desire for a better way of being is projected onto the individual body rather than the body politic, it is a manifestation of the "retreat from hope, at least social hope, to desire." Correspondingly, Ronald Aronson (2016, p. n.p.) posits that social

hope is being threatened, "[u]nder attack has been the kind of hope that is social, the motivation behind movements to make the world freer, more equal, more democratic, and more livable". While there is a retreat from social hope, humanity has not lost its capacity to hunger for more, expressed through a proliferation of personal hopes and desires (Aronson, 2016; McManus, 2015). As such, hope in the time of neoliberalism overlaps with desire – often with little distinction. Neoliberal hope is often expressed in individual terms: as hope for oneself and the future of one's family and children. Sometimes this hope is extended beyond the family to one's community (Sigler, 2015). Berlant (2011) provides examples of this individualised attachment to the 'good life' as fantasies of upward mobility, job security and intimacy. Thus, the authors above all analyse the current historical period as encompassing a retreat from social hope, or from expansive hope. I argue that this kind of hope, while varying in specific *content* and *form*, *functions* as reproductive hope. While largely reproducing the conditions of possibility, even in the least hopeful political moment, forms of potentiality and possibility exist in what appears to be a closed system (McManus, 2015).

In this chapter, I analytically separate and abstract the categories of reproductive and transformative hope, but the concrete reality of life is far messier, and there is no necessary discrete and mutually exclusive separation of the two categories. Similarly, Levitas (2013) argues against the treatment of utopia and ideology as mutually exclusive binaries. For Karl Mannheim (1979), both ideology and utopia are disconnected from reality. The former sustains the status quo, and the latter transforms it. However, Mannheim complicates this neat separation, arguing that ontologically, they are intertwined (Levitas, 2013). A neat binary is a line of thinking within utopian studies, which attempts to delineate good and bad utopianism, or reality from falsehood.

Bloch, however, sought to recover the utopian elements or surplus embedded within ideology, rather than to dismiss all ideology as false consciousness, through his method of critical hermeneutics (Kellner, 1997). For instance, Bloch (1986, pp. 154–155) argues that "the blossoms of art, science, philosophy, always denote something more than the false consciousness which each society, bound to its position, had of itself and used for its own embellishment." Thus, while I am not pegging my categories of hope on a distinction between real and false, I am making an evaluative and analytic separation regarding hope that reproduces limits and that which is transformative. However, along the lines of Bloch, I take the position

that reproductive hope must be taken seriously theoretically and politically and cannot be dismissed as merely 'false consciousness' or ideology.

From this stance, I attempt to explore carefully some of the ways in which people navigate experiences of lack in their daily lives and how the hunger for more manifests. This hunger, as fundamental to social being, indicates a deficiency or negation in the present and can move one toward a negation of a negation. The hunger highlights possibilities, understood as part of the structure of reality, for shifting social being towards less alienation and suffering. There is a movement between the two categories of hope, and one may lead to the other, indicating an open system between reproductive and transformative hope. This raises the theoretical and political problematic: under which conditions does reproductive hope shift people towards transformative hope, and conversely, when does reproductive hope create closed, repetitive cycles of social being locked in the same space-time? I explore what potentialities are activated (or not) in particular space-times through reproductive hope, and the relationship of such to shifting possibilities of social and spatial relations. In particular, I look at social relations to production and consumption in order to explore the objectification of desire in ways that reproduce the status quo of social being. The process of analysing fragments of people's lives, while refusing the label of false consciousness, still involves a process of *critique* – a critical stance towards society and the deprivation and lacks therein.

7.3 The 'Good Life' in Lephalale

Images of the good life pervade Lephalale through the construction of a modernist and consumerist space-time. The modernist industrial projects and growing retail sector cultivate a *representational space* of dreams and images of a future of expanding production, consumption and wealth accumulation. In a reversal of the historical movement of people away from the Waterberg to Gauteng, people migrate to the aspiring city, with hopes for themselves and their families. Through images of Lephalale, a future of abundance and possibilities is expressed.

Over the past years, many people have moved to Lephalale, with the construction of Medupi Power Station and related development from 2007. People left their homes in different, largely rural, areas or villages of Limpopo, or stopped their search for jobs in Gauteng to try for a life in Lephalale. Some even came from neighbouring countries or further afield. The affective connection of those who have recently moved to (or moved back to) Lephalale is different from

many longer-term residents who have stayed and experienced imposed spatial and temporal dislocation with the advancement of development. In contrast, people arrive in Lephalale with the hope of a better life, by 'finding' a job, much like the City of Gold once enticed people. People also come to set up businesses, from property development, to catering, to spaza shops, hoping to tap into the increased development and circulation of capital. Lesese, the manager of Hitachi Small Business Hub established in 2010, stated that, "the Lephalale area has massive potential for economic development. There are huge acres of land for agricultural production, manufacturing, tourism and infrastructural development" (cited in Naidoo, 2010, p. n.p.). Therefore, Lephalale is represented as an attractive site for property and business investments and opportunities. Failing that, others, mainly women, hope to secure a relation of proximity with capital, in order to build a future life.

People are brought together, living alongside each other, not for any collective purpose, but for the individualised hope for a job, or capital, or intimate connection to capital as a means to a better life. In the modernist and abundant Lephalale, images of production, wealth and pleasure abound. It is a place where one can succeed and 'make it'. Dreams for oneself often reproduce neoliberal ideas of the American dream, of ascending the social and economic ladder through activities of perseverance, hard work and self-improvement.

I spent time with different residents of Lephalale, who described their dreams for their lives. Stephen, a full-time NUMSA shop steward at Medupi Power Station, sat with me in the parking lot of Medupi during a lunch break and explained his dreams for himself, often in terms of a response to his experiences of hardship growing up. Stephen was born in 1961 and grew up in Ga-Seleka with both parents who earned very little – they earned "just to live". His parents worked as farmworkers, and as one of nine children in the family, life was economically grim. This experience motivated him to achieve a different kind of life: "That's why at the beginning I told myself I am going to make it after matric and I just want to become a lawyer, but due to finance problems I couldn't" (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017). Recently in 2012, with the development of Lephalale, Stephen moved back to the area after mainly moving between Pretoria and Polokwane since school days. At the time of the conversation, Stephen was trying to improve his qualifications and believed that he could climb up the social and economic ladder as much as anyone else despite the challenges that he may confront:

> "I am going to take the construction management, supervisor [course] actually at Mokoro Academy… To say if you are at Wits [University] why can't I be there?

> That's my question always when I see someone at the top there I ask myself, 'How did that person climb there?' If you used the steps, why can't I use the steps? If you used a pencil, or pen or books, why should I fail to do that? That's the question that I ask myself always… I am okay, but I still want to go far if life is still with me" (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017).

Embedded in Stephen's dreams and aspirations is a vertical relation to space and linear relation to time: moving up and forward. This reproduces the American dream that anyone can achieve anything through hard work and purposefulness, regardless of varying structural limitations.

After work, Modise, another NUMSA shop steward at Medupi Power Station, met with me at the Lephalale Mall and described his dreams of self-improvement. He was born in 1991 and grew up in Giyani, Limpopo with his mother, who worked as a 'kitchen girl' and earned very little money. Sometimes he would go to sleep with an empty stomach and, during his childhood, he dreamt of becoming a successful lawyer, but his family had no money to send him to university. After completing school, he moved to Johannesburg to look for work. After several years in and out of employment, he started working at Medupi in January 2017. At the time of the interview, he aimed to complete his health and safety course before the age of 32 so that he could move into a management position on construction sites. Limpopo is his home – it is where he was born and where he wants to die, but Modise strives to establish the space of his own home, through a "better job" and "better income" in order to build a family (Interview, Modise, 23 May 2017).

Outside the Medupi Job Information Centre in Lephalale, constructed as a space of possibility, I met with mostly men and a few women in passing who had come to the centre to submit their Curricula Vitae (CV) or to wait in the hope of picking up some piece work. As such, the space produces and is produced by spatial practices "in the thrall of conceived space" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 135). The specific building of the centre, and its attached activities, are conditioned by an abstract space that denies people's embodied particularities and reduces and homogenises people according to the object of the CV (Merrifield, 2006). Thato explained that he came to submit his CV because when he was employed, he dreamt and thought about, "having a place with my family and to have a better life and pursue my career but I didn't manage" (Interview, Thato, 20 February 2017). Despite being unemployed, he continued to hope: "I want to see myself progress in life. Having what I dream about. I dream about my family, having a business, being able to do things" (Interview, Thato, 20 February 2017). Dimpho expressed her hope for a "bright future" in which she will get a job and her children "will get whatever they want".

And further, she explained that, “I will be able to take care of my parents and pay for my parents’ medical fees if they are sick” (Interview, Dimpho, 20 February 2017). A better job and better future for one’s family and children, often articulated through the importance of education, were common themes amongst Lephalale residents. For example, for Lesego, education was seen as the means towards a different kind of life from her own life: “I want them [future children] to enjoy life, not live like the way I'm living and I want them to go to school, enjoy life, going out and education. Education is the key. I’m going to tell them, ‘Go to school, if you want things to go well’” (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017).

Sitting in his family home in Ga-Seleka, outside of Lephalale, a dismissed NUMSA full-time shop steward at Medupi worried about the future of his family after months of unemployment. Tumelo placed particular weight on the future of his children when he explained his dreams, “I want my family and my kids to enjoy life like other kids”. Education was the primary source of concern for him, “most importantly, I am worried about their education”. Despite being a former shop steward and committed to workers, the most far-reaching dream for his children was for them to “climb up the corporate ladder… to be independent if possible because during this time that is the only way” (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Thus, his dreams for his children were objectified into this space-time; he imagined and projected forward and vertically for his children within the current structural limitations of this capitalist moment.

Stephen described his dreams for his children in particularly gendered ways. For his son, he hoped he would become a “judge president”, to be in “the panel of justice” so that he can imprint his mark in the future of the country. He wanted his son to be important and “write books, and he must participate in the world of the constitution. Yes, he must have a word there, or his signature must be there.” More than only having a good education, he dreamt of his son shaping and being recorded in history. However, he spoke differently about his one daughter. When asked what he would like for his daughter, he responded, “A woman, no” because there is little point in having dreams for women: “A woman you will dream big about them, but they will disappoint you. Once she starts engaging with men, she starts thinking otherwise. But my dream for her is to have an education and the rest she would see herself” (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017). Hope is thus distributed to his children differently along gendered lines, with his boy receiving a greater weighting of parental hope and investment in his future.

The above snippets from the lives of different residents of Lephalale, and surrounds, communicate a content of the imagined 'good life' that reproduces the status quo. In these instances, and for the majority of people I spoke with in Lephalale, across age and gender, the good life meant achieving individual success, having educated and successful children, owning a house, a car and looking good among other markers of the neoliberal dream. Despite being reproductive in content, the hopes and dreams expressed above are indicative of an experience of hunger and lack in the present. While this is not articulated as an explicit critique, it indicates a form of negation and an implicit critique of the experience of deprivation under current conditions as well as a search and yearning for belonging in post-apartheid South Africa. Even though this imagining beyond reproduces the limits of the current space-time, the activity of imagining beyond is significant in itself. Without horizons of possibility, one is locked in a form of stasis. Drawing on Bloch (1986), how one imagines futures is part of the active constitution of futures. The activity of imagining beyond has the potential to move from dissatisfaction with the conditions of one's life to function as transforming and challenging the current order of things (this will be further discussed in Chapter 8 on Transformative Hope).

7.4 Reproductive Hope through the Attachment to a Job: *"I dream about work… I want a job… how can I get work…"*

In the context of mega-projects, one way in which reproductive hope plays out is through attachment to future waged work. As I have tracked in Chapter 5, Waterberg, behind the mountain, has been produced as a space of modernity and coal production in the last 50 years. The *representational space* and *spaces of representation* of the town reinforce each other through their plans and symbols of a 'productive future', as opposed to projecting desire only onto objects and activities of consumption as is typical of contexts of heightened neoliberalism and financialisation. Lephalale's power stations and mine, with promises of production and waged work, symbolise a better future in people's imaginaries. In this section, I explore different attachments to waged work, despite the disconnections to employment. Barchiesi (2011, p. 8) argues that with economic liberalisation in a post-apartheid state, "[i]magined connections between waged employment, emancipation, and social advancement were no longer obvious". However, the attachment to waged work in Lephalale, in people's imaginaries, shows an enduring significance of its role in framing people's lives and connections to space and futurity.



Figure 11: Workers entering Medupi Power Station (Image by Thembi Luckett, 2017)

A fragment of hope for a job:

On the 21st of February 2017, the community of Marapong was called to a public meeting with the ANC Mayor of Lephalale, Jack Moloko Maeko, on an emptied piece of land, directly behind Matimba Power Station and opposite Marapong graveyard. The meeting was held to address issues concerning the lack of housing and jobs for the Marapong community. The mayor announced that land had been designated for low-cost housing, in the shadow of Matimba Power Station. The local municipality claimed it would build 514 affordable rental units on the designated land.

Earlier in the month, on the 9th of February, people who were living on the land were moved to approximately 300 shacks in Onverwacht. Residents claimed that there was no water and sanitation in the new location and that it was far to walk to Nelson Mandela Drive to catch public transport. Security guards were now stationed to watch over the emptied land to ensure that new homes were not erected on the land. The evictions were reminiscent of the apartheid removals of 'black locations' in the area.

The meeting of the 21st of February brought together hundreds of people from Marapong who gathered on the empty land to hear what the mayor had to say regarding jobs and housing. ANC councillors were present in ANC regalia, as were other community members, publicly pledging their ANC allegiance – perhaps in the hope that this would increase their chances of getting jobs and houses in the competition for the 'good life'.

The mayor promised to 'hand out' jobs to a 'lucky' few gathered there. People dropped their South African ID books into a bucket – one had to possess this small, green book in order to participate in the lucky draw for a future, thus already excluding a section of the population.

The mayor dipped his hand into the buckets several times to select 15 ID books. Those selected were promised to be employed as soon as the following day on the municipal housing project. It was unclear what the content of the work would be, but likely to be manual labour, under a short-term contract, with low pay. But, for those chosen 15, this represented the possibility of some kind of future. Those who were not 'lucky' enough to be picked out of the bucket, chaotically scrambled to regain possession of their green books – a necessary means to any chance of a 'good life'.

Through this process, of a random selection of a 'lucky' few, the mayoral office, represented by the person of the mayor, consolidated its centre of power, creating dependence on it for employment. The arbitrary assignment of jobs was a process of disempowering ordinary people as their attainment of a job depended upon the arbitrary process enacted by one person, the mayor. The situation of hundreds of people gathered to hear the mayor indicated desperation for some kind of a job, for some income, and the possibilities that might be opened up through such, even if just the security of knowing where one's minimal income would come from for the next six months. In this scenario of wretchedness, competition and division are cultivated between community members such that only 15 of hundreds can access this little bit of a future. (Field notes, 21 February 2017).

This fragment of everyday life in Marapong reveals the constitution of a particular kind of hope within the space-time of Medupi Power Station and related development. This space-time is dominated by capital and local politicians, who position themselves as conduits in the distribution of capital. This scene brings to the fore the desperation of many people in Marapong for not necessarily the good life, but for any kind of life at all. Hope is replaced by 'luck', which

is arbitrary, but perhaps experienced as fairer than the other processes of patronage and corruption regularly referred to in Lephalale. But for the activists I spoke with after the event, this was just another instance of the mayor asserting his power in the area (Field notes, 21 February 2017). Desperation and the scramble for waged work were reproduced in this Kafkaesque moment. Through an exercise in power, the mayor selected 15 people of the over 200 present, partially determining their future trajectories. The rest of the unemployed in Marapong returned to their shacks, still holding onto the reproductive hope of future waged work.

Through the attachment to a job, as symbolic of a future, some ontological potentialities in the present are activated and others not. For example, the social-spatial practices of 'waiting' for a job, hustling for a job, undertaking formal education and training for a job or a better job, activate particular agential powers. Through attachment to waged work and concomitant practices, the abstract space of capital is produced and reproduced in the hope of some kind of future, better than the present. In the following sections, I explore further the attachment to waged work as the primary means of securing a future and the activation, and non-activation, of potentialities in the present through this hopeful attachment.

7.4.1 Unemployment as Hunger: A Negation of Self

"I think about somebody who can just rescue me from my situation [of unemployment]. Somebody who can just give me a job. My wife and child are suffering. I'm just failing… my wife is looking to me. I fear she will leave me alone" (Interview, Thato, 20 February 2017).

Hunger (physical and beyond) is a driving force for people to 'find' and 'secure' waged work. This hunger is rooted in a life containing some form of deprivation – or of negation of self. Lives are spatio-temporally punctuated by periods of employment and unemployment; periods of more or less hunger; more or less possible futures. The experience of lack becomes a driving force for a better life, objectified onto 'a job'. As discussed in Chapter 2, for Bloch (1986), hunger is the driving force of hope. Thus, the origins of any longing, desire or hope are rooted in experiences of lack, an experience of something missing or amiss. This lack is experienced in relation to its imagined fulfilment and therefore shifts one beyond the present space-time; in this sense, we are always *becoming* (Levitas, 2013; Sayer, 2011). We navigate the world,

making judgments and undertaking actions, in our drives to meet or resolve our experiences of lack (Sayer, 2011).

Lesego experienced physical hunger from a young age, in particular when the breadwinner of her family, her father, died. More than physical hunger was the ongoing experience of her mother struggling to make ends meet, and the anxiety contained therein. She recounted her experiences of growing up as:

> "We are poor. Because sometimes we struggle to eat, wait for the end of the month, somebody to come, maybe [for] my uncle to come and give us the money. Sometimes my mum go[es] up and down, selling something… since my father passed away, things are not going well. For now, I'm going up and down for volunteers, but I am looking for a job. So there is no job. I start volunteer[ing]… if you are poor sometimes, you think, 'what about my family let me go and work, and support my family'. So that's what I'm busy with. I don't have a time to see to my education and what else" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017).

Her experience of hunger, and that of her family's, became a driving force for her to take what action she could to support her family. She learnt that a job represents a negation of a negation; in her imaginary, it represents a possible solution to hunger and to poverty.

Experiences of unemployment are common among residents of Lephalale, who strive to move out of this state of lack.[99] The consequences of unemployment and of losing employment are significant beyond the individual's sense of self and personal deprivation, also affecting their family and wider social relations. Tshepo worked at Medupi from 2008 and served as a NUM official in the area from 2002 when he worked at Exxaro mine. In December 2008 and in January and February the following year, there were problems with the catering at Medupi and workers fell ill. For a period this issue was resolved, but in 2010 workers started to get sick again. When he tried to assist workers in getting them to the hospital, he was charged with misconduct and later dismissed. Tshepo was subsequently blacklisted, which meant he was unable to secure employment at any ESKOM site or at other mega-projects in Lephalale. He has been unemployed since then, surviving on piece jobs. He described the devastating consequences for his life since the loss of employment, as also a loss of self and social relations:

> "We are struggling, I am still unemployed since that time, and I just get piece jobs sometimes… It affected me because my wife divorced me, and she is going out with some other guys that are working at Medupi but now she is married to another

[99] As discussed in Chapter 4, despite widespread unemployment, employment figures suggest that employment is however higher in Lephalale, especially amongst the youth, compared with the provincial and national averages of the country (Lephalale Local Municipality, 2016a).

> guy in Seleka. I have been destroyed now because of that. It affected my life… My children stay with my wife. I am single now" (Interview, Tshepo,16 May 2017).

Similarly, Boitumelo grew up in Ga-Seleka and worked at Medupi from 2009 under a sub-contract that was held by Murray and Roberts. He was part of NUM and an organisation called the Lephalale Local Forum, which aimed to bring together workers and community members. In 2012, he was a leader in an unprotected strike because workers were demobbed[100] without clarity as to why: "ESKOM was doing things and the way those contractors did things, they were playing with our people, and it was not like we can just stand there and watch… they told us it is the end of the job, but there are still people coming with buses and who don't live around here, we can't allow that, and so we started our strike" (Interview, Boitumelo, 8 April 2017). He was arrested, charged with public violence (the charges were dropped years later), dismissed and also blacklisted. He described the difficulties of being a man and being unable to provide for one's wife and children. A 'loss' of work, represented more than a financial loss – it was also a loss of ability to care for familial relations and created marital insecurity:

> "Since then, I never worked. I just live on this money that I get when I sell things that I get from Jo'burg. I sell some t-shirts and some things… What they [my family] need now is to have a job. Everything is not going well, and it's her [my wife's] birthday on the 16th, and we are not talking anymore… her message was 'Delete every photo that you have, not your kids but me and you'. And I was going to say something very important, and I just went 'Uh...uh'. But I just told myself 'Let me push and the money that I have I will give her for the kids to go to school.' But I can see she doesn't understand. She just wants me to be there for the kids and be a good husband. And like every man to go to work and come back and I understand but also I am just thinking that she doesn't want to give me a chance" (Interview, Boitumelo, 8 April 2017).

The above quote highlights how Boitumelo's sense of specifically gendered personhood, and his familial relations, were destabilised and disrupted through his loss of employment.

Another Medupi shop steward, Thabo, who was employed at Medupi at the time of the interview, described his period of unemployment in Pretoria as 'doing nothing'. He also experienced being a burden to familial relations in this period of 'doing nothing'. I quote in length how he described his day, and sense of self, during his period of unemployment:

> "You know the first thing I had to deal with was the depression I had within myself. Because you know, every day I would wake up and *do nothing,* and I will see school

[100] The Project Labour Agreement (PLA), which governs labour relations and employment conditions on-site at Medupi, refers to processes of 'demobilisation', or retrenchment, and 'mobilisation', or recruitment. The use of the term could be said to "'sanitise' or disguise the retrenchment process" (Tshabangu, 2013, p. 16). In such cases, whole sections of the workforce are retrenched and new sets of employees are often hired to do the same or similar work.

> kids passing the flat I was staying in. So it raised a lot of stress and depression because I thought 'That's where I need to be.' And my brother could not afford to take me there, he was working at Coal Brook mine, so it was a bit stressful for me to see people carrying school bags and going to school. And I have to wake up and go, either I go to the park, or I go to search for a job… I went to the park just to sit there because *there was nothing I could do* at the house, so just to go and refresh. And I normally went to that park in the afternoon, around 3 to 4 [pm]. In the morning, I went to try and search for a job at a restaurant or something. So after six months, I went to Mpumalanga in the villages… *There was nothing much I could do*, what I could do was to help with the household… I went there… Just for me to refresh you see and another reason I went there was because I realised that life in Pretoria was expensive and my brother won't be able to do things he was used to doing. So I thought maybe I should offload the weight on his shoulders and go there" (Interview, Thabo, 3 May 2017).

Itumeleng, a young, queer artist and performer, who grew up on the farms surrounding Lephalale and now stays in Marapong, also recounted his experience of unemployment as a period of being at home and 'doing nothing', during which he was unable to care for his sick mother and often ended up drinking with friends as a way of dealing with the conditions of his life:

> "So I ended up going to school in 2009. From 2005, 6, 7, 8, [I was] just *at home doing nothing* and hustling around... I used to attend there at Mogolo for a computer course. And sometimes I would just be in the house with my mom. I just went out with friends, and we drank the whole day, and we don't sleep. And sometimes we took two to three days without sleeping, just drinking. It was just a messed up life that I was living back then… I was trying [to get a job]... I remember I used to work at Milky Lane. And it got closed, and I went back to *sitting at home doing nothing* and trying to apply for bursaries, scholarships and jobs, so it was really difficult, and my mother was sick. I was taking care of my mother. She was in and out of the hospital. My grandmother and grandfather tried to take her to some healers there in Venda. Life was just difficult. For me, it was the most horrible time of my life. And in 2008 that's when I lost my mother, in October. So it was difficult because even before she passed away, she was sick and trying to get a job and trying to support us. It was just tough for me, but I just told myself that one day it will be fine" (Interview, Itumeleng, 15 May 2017).

Kenny (2018, p. 188) illustrates in her work how retail workers viewed unemployment as "sitting at home… there is nothing that you can do when you are at home." A retail worker explained that she would rather endure poor working conditions than have no job, "I will do anything rather than sitting at home". A dismissed retail worker further expounded that unemployment meant being confined to the limits of the house, "I wake up and clean and then after cleaning I sleep. There is nothing else I can do… I am looking for a job". Alongside 'sitting at home and doing nothing' is an experience of an inability to actualise social relations. White

(2013, p. 141) analyses the interpenetration of money and social relations, arguing that, "[i]n this historical era, all our relations are framed in one or another way by the circulation of capital through human interactions, in forms like money… or work… or debt."[101] Economic activities become "conditioning stuff" of relationships and social relations become "subject to" capital, or the lack thereof, thus "enabled and disabled by its expansion and its retreat" (White, 2013, p. 141). Intimate social relations, therefore, come to depend on impersonal relations – "ones that link our actions to global society through the circulation of money… our ties depend in a paradoxical way on what they are not" (White, 2013, p. 145). Familial and intimate social relations which appear to have very little to do with political economy, are in fact mediated by the circulation of capital for the realisation of intimacy and care.

In a similar vein, in the context of capital mediating social relations, Kenny (2018, p. 186) probes the meaning of the common metaphor of 'sitting at home'. Through this 'sitting at home', one is unable to activate and constitute social relations of care. Drawing on, but diverging from, John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (2001), she unpacks the meaning of personhood and stasis – that which scuppers the movement of the self towards becoming. The Comaroffs analysed wage labour as breaking down social personhood, while Kenny argues that in post-apartheid South Africa, wage labour is a way of constituting the self through activating social relations: "'Work' directly effects (brings about) the ongoing becoming of persons; in southern Africa, personhood is itself public and political, creative, generative, and constitutive of social relations" (Kenny, 2018, p. 186). The lack of a job means that one's ability to develop the ongoing becoming of one's personhood as a social being is hampered – "[p]ersonhood is about activating social relationships to bring through others" (Kenny, 2018, p. 186). With the scuppering of the movement of self towards becoming, in a state of stasis, there is a disconnection from others; one's ability to be part of and build social relations becomes limited. Thabo described being a burden to his family, and Boitumelo and Tshepo expressed the breakdown of their marital relations in their stasis of unemployment. Furthermore, there is also a lack of forward movement towards a better life. Thabo described being unable to develop himself because he could not do anything, and Lesego spoke about how her future life and family has been put on hold because she is unemployed. Waged work thus comes to signify this forward movement towards building a better life.

[101] White (2013) refers to Hart (2005), Peebles (2011), Dubbeld (2013), Muehlebach (2012), Graeber (2011), and James (2012) for this analysis.

Residents of Lephalale, outside the Job Information Centre, conveyed what a job would mean to them through words such as, a job would mean "satisfaction" and being able to "support children… If I get a job, I can plan a future for myself and my kids" (Interview, Dimpho, 20 February 2017). And further, with a job, "I will be happy. I can supply my child and myself… the thing that I want I can buy myself. I can buy a car and cattle. I am a family man, thinking about how to build my family" (Interview, Khosi, 20 February 2017). A job would mean "relief" (Interview, Thato, 20 February 2017), and "I would feel good. I will be able to make things I need my life" (Interview, Enoch, 18 February 2017). Thabo also explained that with a job, he is now "relieved", but not "satisfied"; he can look after his mother and his children but is still striving for a better job so that he can give his children "good care" (Interview, Thabo, 3 May 2017). Similarly, for Ruth, an unemployed woman living in Marapong, a job was perceived as a way of securing her children's future, especially their education, and maybe even being able to actualise her son's dream of becoming a pilot (Interview, Ruth, 3 May 2017).

Kenny (2018, p. 186) argues that a job becomes a means by which to "activate one's desires – for material possessions, maybe for a more rewarding job in the future, but, most importantly, for a good life for their children". Earning money means one is doing "something" and through this, is able to provide for oneself and one's families. As such, earning money means one can build a life in the future. A job activates a forward movement "toward something to come" (Kenny, 2018, p. 187). The 'something to come' enables one to establish and maintain relations of belonging – to one's family, community and society.

Berlant (2011) refers to the film *Rosetta* (Dardenne & Dardenne, 1999) about a seventeen-year-old-girl, who lives with her alcoholic mother in a caravan park. Rosetta is desperate to escape her situation and lead a normal life, through securing and maintaining a job. Berlant (2011, p. 163) argues that for Rosetta, having a job, any job, confirms her value or place in society, "she wants to earn her value the way "normal" people do", "to be hired by a stranger who runs a workplace confirms her legitimate place in the world". The job opens up a possibility for Rosetta to engage in forward thinking, in future imaginings, "[w]ithout membership in that army of laborers, she has had no room even for a little cramped fantasy about spaces of the good life or good times ahead". The job enables, not grand fantasies, but to imagine the possibility of a 'normal' life, in which she can rest without constant anxiety: "The ongoing prospect of low-waged and uninteresting labor is for Rosetta nearly utopian; it makes possible imagining living the *proper* life that capitalism offers as a route to the *good* life" (Berlant, 2011,

pp. 163–164, emphasis in original).

The hunger for a job is often in response to the lack of economic security growing up, the poverty and hardship of everyday life and the experience of, and meaning attached to, 'doing nothing', despite the many activities that one undertakes each day. The hunger for a job is also a response to the lack of ability to actualise relations of care, especially familial relations. Without waged work, one experiences being unable to care for one's partners, children and parents, and sometimes this consequently breaks down such relations, such that 'a job' becomes a way of actualising the potentiality of relations and sustaining this actualisation into the future. The dependency on others during periods of unemployment can reinforce feelings and relations of lack and inadequacy. The actualisation of relations of care with others is also about the actualisation of oneself and affirmation of one's personhood as a mother, father, partner, sibling, and as a useful participant of society. The job allows one to imagine a 'normal' life, or even a 'good life', and therefore to be part of social relations and community in society. Berlant (2011, p. 164) argues that this route to the good life is, in fact, a rut or an impasse because wage labour is increasingly precarious, insecure, low paid and out of reach for many. Nonetheless, the 'rut' – a stuckness in space and time – is the place from which many in Lephalale are able to imagine the project of building a life.

7.4.2 The Double-Edged Attachment to Waged Work under Conditions of Impossibility

From a Marxist standpoint, in the current context, not only of Lephalale, but of South Africa and globally, there is a structural impossibility of work for all, let alone any notion of decent work under capitalist conditions. Capitalism creates an industrial reserve army or surplus population through processes of capitalist accumulation. Marx (1967) refers first to a floating surplus population, or those who are cyclically unemployed – sometimes incorporated and sometimes expelled from industries, and second, to a stagnant surplus who are largely permanently unemployed because of the rhythms of capital and their 'unsuitability' for capitalist employment. The greater the reserve army of labour relative to employment, the greater the competition for employment and the lower the wages. Furthermore, the greater the reserve army and its section of permanently unemployed, the greater the levels of poverty (Fine & Saad-Filho, 2004). Therefore, "unemployment is not some accident of capitalism, or the

result of inappropriate behaviour, but a cornerstone of the apparatus of its perpetuation, since it helps to control wages" (Duménil & Lévy, 2008, p. 111).

After 1975, economic growth declined globally, ushering in a period of neoliberalism, with its concomitant practices of privatisation of social provisions and the expulsion of millions into structural unemployment (Lazarus & Varma, 2008). André Gorz (1999, p. 57) argues that the realities of a post-Fordist labour market mean that wage labour can no longer be the fundamental signifier of worth and belonging: "There is not and never will be 'enough work' (enough paid, steady, full-time employment) for everyone any longer, but society (or, rather, capital) which no longer needs everyone's labour, and is coming to need it less and less". Furthermore, Barchiesi (2008) points out that the condition of stable, secure waged employment has never been the reality for colonised societies and therefore is not a historical norm that has been disrupted in the wake of conservative macro-economic policies since the 1970s. And moreover, in South Africa, "the idea of full, stable employment is a foreign one, and that in fact it would not be historically the norm to see wage labour as a form of social upliftment. Rather wage labour is synonymous with forced migration, oppression and abuse" (Moiloa, 2012a, p. 71).

However, despite Barchiesi's (2008) argument and South Africa's complicated history of the relation between wage labour, racial oppression and exploitation, wage labour is "still very much a part of the imagined normative roles of productive citizens… unemployment is still referred to as a 'crisis'" (Moiloa, 2012a, p. 73). South Africa has one of the highest levels of unemployment in the world. Even though the apartheid system ended over 25 years ago, there has been a rise in the economy's level of unemployment since 1994. South Africa's economy is characterised by gross inequality, high unemployment and high levels of discouraged work-seekers. When the 'discouraged' unemployed are included, unemployment rates were estimated at 42.6 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 (Statistics South Africa, 2020).[102]

South African capital adapted to more progressive labour legislation and relative loss of political power since the end of apartheid through several mechanisms such as moving production offshore, moving primary listings abroad, practices of capital flight, limited investment in the economy and shedding of jobs amongst other mechanisms (Mohamed, 2009).

[102] This situation has deteriorated even further under conditions of Covid-19. See National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (CRAM) (Spaull & et al., 2020a, 2020b).

South African capital's most significant response to shifting power relations with workers, particularly black workers, has been to increase levels of unemployment. Unemployment in South Africa was already at high levels in the 1970s when trade unions started organising and mobilising more forcefully; this level increased significantly by the time of the transition in the 1990s (Mohamed, 2009). Sampie Terreblanche (2002) explains that 19 per cent of the labour force fell outside of the formal sector in 1970 and that this increased to 49 per cent in 1995. As is well-documented, the post-apartheid government adopted neo-liberal economic policies, entrenching dependency of the economy on the minerals and energy complex, without investing in employment creation and value-added industries (Mohamed, 2009). The nature of racial capitalism in South Africa is therefore characterised by structural unemployment, growing inequality, and jobless growth, with working class, black women disproportionately shouldering multiple crises. Given these conditions, the ways in which people navigate the hope for employment in everyday life is explored below.

8.4.2.1 Migration towards Hope

It is in this context that people move to (or move back to) Lephalale in the hope of finding a job. The space of Lephalale generates this movement towards it, and simultaneously, the movement of people produce the space of Lephalale in particular ways, such as through *spatial practices* of 'encroachment' in Marapong (see Chapter 4). New arrivals and people born in Lephalale undertake many social-spatial practices in order to achieve or find 'a job' as a space from which to move forward with life. Not only do people move hundreds of kilometres to Lephalale in the search for a job but the desperation for such means that jobs are increasingly commodified – turned into something, a scarce resource, that can be bought and sold. For example, jobs are sold by human resource managers, shop stewards, local councillors or people with positions of relative power in companies and politically.

I repeatedly asked people I encountered in Lephalale and surrounds how and why they came to be in Lephalale. Over and over again, across genders and ages, people responded similarly, 'I came to Lephalale to look for a job'. Botshelo stated that her aunt told her to come here: "Come to Lephalale and look for a job… lots of people here come to look for jobs, especially after this Medupi project" (Interview, Botshelo, 18 May 2016). However, she "didn't find anything". Similarly, Thabo first had a family relation, his brother, in Lephalale. He followed his brother: "In the beginning, my brother moved from that side [Pretoria] to this side [Lephalale]. So you

know I had to follow him because you know... besides that I was looking for a job, I had to visit them" (Interview, Thabo, 3 May 2017). Lesego stated that, "I moved here to come looking for a job because I see the power stations, the mines, what what" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017). She never 'found' a job; her boyfriend had a job for a while, but they were both unemployed at the time of the interview.

It was common for people to recount stories of having first moved to Gauteng to look for a job and either after an extended period of unemployment or after being retrenched or dismissed, then moving to Lephalale. For example, Johannes first moved to Gauteng from Mokopane to look for a job: "I moved to Gauteng to look for a job and which I finally found, and I worked for some company for 16 years". He was retrenched from his job as a shop assistant for EH Logistics and subsequently left Gauteng to move back home to Mokopane and then to Lephalale in 2012 to look for a job, "I moved to Lephalale to come and look for a job… I moved here because there are lots of jobs. There is a power station, a mine. The reason is I was looking for a job" (Interview, Johannes, 25 April 2017). Tumelo moved from Ga-Seleka to Johannesburg after school to look for a job. After an extended period of unemployment from 2008 to 2011, he decided to move again without his family: "it was painful because I would try, I would walk all over the place trying to find a job or people that might find something for me. But unfortunately, things didn't work well for me. That's why I took a decision and sat down with my wife and decided maybe let me go to Medupi and find out what I can get from there" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016).

The 150-year-old migrant labour system that shaped the past of South Africa's racialised economy and the lives of millions of black people is still felt today. The transition to democracy has had very little impact on the movement of people for jobs, with destructive consequences on aspects of life such as straining family life, fracturing communities, impoverishing rural communities of productive capacities and burdening rural women with the load of caring for the sick, when men return ill from the mines (Delius, 2017). The impoverishment of life in rural communities is epitomised in Johannes's words that "in a village, there is no life there" (Interview, Johannes, 25 April 2017). In this context, Lephalale became a site to move towards, a space that held possibilities for a life. Most of the people I spoke with, who moved to Lephalale for a job, were geographically separated from their spouse or children or both. The community social worker in Marapong also spoke to the fracturing of the Lephalale community as men moved into the area temporarily, often on contracts, or looking for employment, and

left children fatherless in the community when their contracts came to an end (Interview, Bokang, 14 April 2016). This is becoming the case increasingly as the construction of Medupi Power Station, and with it, thousands of jobs come to an end. In 2019, research participants still described Lephalale as a place where people move to, and therefore, the physical structure of Medupi, and its associated meanings, despite nearing completion, was still generative of hopes and possible futures (Interview, Naledi, 15 May 2019; Interview, Boitumelo, 15 May 2019).

7.4.2.2 Gatekeeping and Distributing Hope

Not only do people move far from their homes and separate from loved ones in the hope of finding employment but this hope (represented in the form of waged work) is also managed and distributed through relations of power. In this section, I discuss social relations of power and their implications for the distribution of hope. This plays out through discursive and spatial constructions of inclusion and exclusion as well as through political patronage relations and relations of sexual exploitation. I highlight the double-edged nature of hopeful attachments to waged work in an affective landscape through which hope intersects with fears and anxieties about the future.

The circulation of hope is evident through the prevalence of job scams in Lephalale, despite regular warnings against such. For instance, in October 2015, ESKOM released a press statement warning people not to fall victim to recruitment scams. A scam was reported in February 2016 whereby people received text messages that jobs could be secured at Murray and Roberts, one of the contractors at Medupi, but it required the payment of 1500 rand each for a medical test (Kruger, 2016). When the money was transferred into a bank account, people received text messages with the time and date of the medical tests, but on arrival on-site, their names were not on the lists of applicants. Similarly, a Medupi worker, Samuel, stated that:

> "Someone saw an opportunity in how desperate people are and then the person started advertising false posts, like going to Marapong township and saying, 'Company X is hiring people, give me your CVs'. And then they will get a message saying that they need to go for medical tests... and he will tell them they need to pay 1 500 rand upfront and from there he disappears" (Interview, Samuel, 26 April 2017).

Residents of Marapong recounted similar experiences and stories of job scams. A Democratic Alliance (DA) councillor in Marapong narrated a story of people who were bussed from KwaZulu-Natal and left with nothing. The job scammers took money from each person with the promise that they would receive a job in Lephalale, but the passengers were offloaded before

they reached Lephalale and left on the side of the road. The councillor further explained that people were also told to deposit money into private bank accounts in order to get a job and then never heard back (Interview, Moeletsi, 12 April 2016). Job scams were still being reported in 2019 (Mabula, 2019).

As described earlier in this chapter, jobs are also distributed through local government powers and patronage networks. Botshelo, an unemployed resident of Marapong and community organiser, stated, "the ANC, the mayor is the one that has got the power now. And that ANC have got, he has got his own people who are following him. He uses those people who are his followers in terms of jobs but the ones that are opposing him miss out, so he doesn't use them, and they don't get jobs, and they don't get anything" (Interview, Botshelo, 18 May 2016). At a Lephalale Unemployment Forum (LUF) meeting, the unfair practices in recruitment processes were raised. It was argued that the mayor had "captured" ESKOM and that the ANC controlled the recruitment processes such that some individuals are blocked, and others are employed through political intervention (Field notes, 7 February 2017). The distribution of hope, in the form of waged work, also manifests in gendered ways. The previous chapter highlighted how women's bodies are exploited by some people in positions of power to determine who can and cannot get employment. Some women have remained unemployed because of their refusal to be sexually exploited by councillors or human resource managers.

The point here is not a moralistic argument about corruption, but rather a conceptualisation of the politics of capitalist democracies as involving "patronage-dependent accumulation" (Beresford, 2015, p. 229) patterns and further, that these patterns are not only constitutive of class formation, as argued by Alexander Beresford (2015) and Karl von Holdt (2019), but are also involved in the constitution and distribution of hope. Gatekeeper politics, and patronage struggles, in a context of extreme inequalities, is part of the production of the everyday political economy (Beresford, 2015). A politics of inclusion and exclusion (re)produces configurations of power that influence social and spatial dynamics such as flows of capital, who has access to what (workplace and home) spaces, and under what conditions. As noted above, these configurations of power are deeply patriarchal and are constituted not only at the macro-level (for example, through the allocation of tenders in the construction of Medupi Power Station), but significantly through everyday practices at the local level. The significance of this everyday political economy increases in the context of the construction of development projects in which there is a sudden escalation in the circulation of capital, and people can embed themselves in

the ways in which capital, and hope, is distributed. The social-spatial practices undertaken in order to have a better chance of attaining waged work affirm the power of capital, local political positions of power and masculine power in determining the distribution of access to particular spaces and some kind of future.

While corruption and sexual exploitation may be ways in which limited jobs are distributed, employing discursive and spatial constructions of 'deserving' is another way in which individuals and groups try to influence the distribution of jobs, and therefore of hope. Through such constructions, dynamics of 'us' versus 'them' emerge; the deserving 'us' and the undeserving 'them'; insiders and outsiders. The boundaries of who is in and who is out are often spatial boundaries and may shift according to context and group. For example, those who are deserving may be only those born in Lephalale, or Limpopo, or South Africa. This is not unique to Lephalale but rather is a widespread feature of South Africa in general. While not particular to Lephalale, this dynamic is perhaps heightened in the context of an island of industrial development, surrounded by rural lands.

Xenophobia has been present since the start of the recent mega-projects. Instances include when contract workers engaged in unprotected strike action at Medupi in 2011, and some workers demanded that "Korean and Chinese nationals be fired as they were stealing jobs from locals" (Matlala, 2011, p. n.p.). In 2013, there was a conflict between local shop owners and incidents of violence occurred against migrant-run shops in Lephalale (Crush & Ramachandran, 2014). And in 2015, it was reported that workers on an unprotected strike at Medupi made demands against the employment of foreign nationals. Workers' demands included that each worker be paid a 10 000 rand bonus for the completion of Unit One; that 'foreigners' be removed from the site and be replaced with South Africans; that locals be given first preference in recruitment processes; that unskilled and semi-skilled workers be equipped with skills; and that workers receive proper accommodation (Ka'Nkosi, 2015). Here, 'local' was defined as Lephalale and its surrounding villages, behind the mountain. This was the most frequent definition of 'local', rather than along provincial and national borders. Residents used proof of residence documents as 'proof' of their membership in the 'local community'. The mountain thus continues to be used as a place-making boundary in the construction of belonging in Lephalale (see Chapter 5).

Two residents of Marapong, Tshepo and Thabiso, in conversation with each other, described the pressures to obtain a job to secure their masculine identity and in that context, constructed lines of who should and who should not get a job:

> "That [getting a job] is a pressure that every man here is facing because that is painful. Plus or minus we have eight languages now, whereas we were supposed to have three. We are supposed to have three languages here. The three languages that we have here is the Setswana people, Sepedi people and Afrikaans people… The people that we know have been staying here for a long time… We have Chinese people, and we have Zimbabweans and many others… there is no one from the *correct people* who are called beneficiaries here who are benefiting from that [development] but people who are coming from far benefits";

and further,

> "The people who come from outside are the ones that are working here… That is the problem, but if when a company comes to operate at my farm, if I can benefit from that as a beneficiary, then there is no problem, any language, any people can come and work, but I am not benefitting. That is the cause of Lephalale's problems. We don't benefit anything from Medupi" (Interview, Tshepo and Thabiso, 17 May 2017).

In this conversation, interestingly, (previous) white settlers are incorporated into those who belong to the space of Lephalale, more than other African groups. Moreover, the latter quote draws a boundary around 'my farm', again communicating long-term residents' attachment to the farm as a site of (disrupted) belonging (see Chapter 6). Despite the perception that "no one from the *correct people*… are benefiting", the picture of employment statistics offers a different perspective. By way of illustration, at the end of March 2013, Medupi had a total labour force of 16 800 employed on the site. 95 per cent of the labour force were South African. 71.5 per cent of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers came from the Limpopo province, and 43 per cent of the total workforce were Lephalale residents. An additional approximate 1 800 workers were employed in supporting services, such as cleaning and catering. Of these workers, 98 per cent were residents of the Lephalale area (ESKOM, 2021). Thus, the *representational space* generated by local residents of the projects being 'taken over' by non-locals is different to the *lived space* of migrants, many of whom live in shacks in the less formalised parts of Marapong, such as Thular Park, and have only ever had the odd short-term contract work at Medupi.

In Lephalale, the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are also gendered. Within the mega-industrial projects, the ideal-type of worker remains the man, whether 'unskilled' or 'skilled'. Botshelo described the difficulties of being a woman in Lephalale and how men undermine their capacities to secure their position as the rightful candidates for jobs: "we as women, we

said that it was difficult finding a job… This thing of 50/50, men say, 'You can't do this because you are a women'". Whereas she believed that, "we as women, we can start doing things that men think women can't do" (Interview, Botshelo, 18 May 2016). According to Nqobile Tshabangu (2013), as of 2011, only 16 per cent of all workers on-site at Medupi were women, and at management level, only 12 per cent were women. A cleaner at Medupi, Masego, explained the gendered dynamics on-site in a male-dominated space. She no longer ate in the collective dining hall because the *spatial practices* adopted by men in the male-dominated eating place included verbal harassment and unwanted attention. She explained:

> "It's very challenging [being a woman on-site]. Especially working in a men's world… Going to the kitchen… wherever you go, there's always men everywhere. Just imagine getting into a hall full of men. Everywhere. This one is calling you. That one says some bully thing. They were bullying some of them… So it was very challenging. We [women] are no longer eating there. They go and bring food for us here [in the company kitchen]. It's better" (Interview, Masego, 25 April 2017).

Thus, the practices on-site produced spatialised boundaries, with zones that were uninhabitable or hostile for women, which in turn shaped the constitution of gender on-site.

Itumeleng also pointed to the unequal gender relations in Lephalale, which in his opinion, were exacerbated by the mega-projects. Men have secured their power as job occupants and breadwinners, thereby creating gendered relations of economic dependency, making women vulnerable to abuse and control by men (see Chapter 6):

> "I think currently the women, actually since the project started, especially because most of the women here are uneducated and they feel that they have to rely on somebody who is working in Medupi or Exxaro or somewhere to make sure that they provide for them. So it's very difficult because mostly the men are the ones making money. So I think the women here are disempowered. And men end up making sure that they hold them hostage and they say, 'You know I am the one giving you money for food and everything.' So it's difficult for women here" (Interview, Itumeleng, 15 May 2017).

The objectification of hope onto 'the job' as the means by which to achieve the 'good life', under conditions of the structural impossibilities of jobs for all, leads to the utilisation of various strategies through which limited jobs are distributed, such as discursive and spatial constructions of deserving insiders and undeserving outsiders, or capable men and incapable women. In such situations, the dominance of capital is reproduced, and already existing relations of power are further reified. The social imaginary generated of the future is one of competition that reproduces the existing order of things, and therefore, in such scenarios, the system appears more closed than open.

The purpose of discussing different forms of exclusion in relation to reproductive hope is to point to the double-edged nature of a hopeful attachment to waged work, which does not shift *what-is-according-to-possibility*. The 'job' stands in for one way in which hope circulates, and in a context of insecurity and fear (of not getting a job, of not being able to provide for oneself and one's family, of not having a future), it can play a narrowing and privatising function. Reproductive hope overlaps with fear and anxiety about futures, such that self-preservation, rather than self-expansion, comes to the fore (Bloch, 1986; Weeks, 2011). Frédéric Lordon (2014) argues that within the neoliberal era of precarity and insecurity, fearful affects become more pronounced. Hope does not stand on its own but is generated and circulated within an affective landscape, structured through and structuring social and spatial relations, such that reproductive hope for a job and future for oneself and one's family can overlap with fear and a spatialised politics of exclusion and chauvinism.

My argument is not that a hopeful attachment to waged work necessarily leads to a reactionary politics, but to highlight the double-edged nature of the attachment. Further, I contend that in these scenarios, a more closed than open system is generated that limits and does not shift horizons of possibility. However, closure is never complete, and generative surpluses, which in Bloch's terms, remain in 'darkness', exist in the cracks with more inclusive social imaginaries. This is perhaps expressed beneath the words of Thabiso: "if I can benefit from that as a beneficiary, then there is no problem, any language, any people can come and work" (Interview, Thabiso, 17 May 2017). Here a social imaginary of the future is generated in which spatial belonging in Lephalale is opened up and more inclusive. Generative surpluses are also perhaps evident in the collective politics of the likes of the Lephalale Unemployment Forum (as detailed in the following section), which while it does not make demands for jobs for all, does make demands for more jobs and for fair and transparent recruitment processes, thereby envisioning a future space-time in which there could be no patronage, no sexual exploitation, no exploitation of desperation, and a more equal society.

7.4.2.3 'Waiting' and 'Looking'

Privatised and individualised hope that reproduces the limits of possibility does not always manifest in ways that are harmful towards others through exclusionary practices and discourses. As discussed, Berlant (2011, p. 227) outlines the idea of cruel optimism as potentially harmful

to the self: “optimistic attachment is cruel when the object/scene of desire is itself an obstacle to fulfilling the very wants that bring people to it.” Berlant (2011, p. 180) situates the dynamic of cruel optimism in the neoliberal order in which the ‘scavenging life’ of the present shrinks the possibilities of imagining beyond the present and instead confines actions to day-to-day survival under conditions of economic and social insecurity.

In Lephalale, the hope (and frustrated hope) for a job, which is thought to make possible the project of building a life, is constantly referred to. This (frustrated) hope was expressed by unemployed residents staying in Thular Park shack settlement in Marapong: *“We have a belief maybe we’ll get a job. But it’s just a belief… Maybe one day we can get a better life”* (Interview, Kabelo, 13 April 2016) and, *“we’re really frustrated. We’ve been expecting a lot of things. We moved too far… People say maybe there is a good life around Lephalale”* (Interview, Philip, 13 April 2016).



Figure 12: Thular Park informal settlement (Image by Agnes Nygren, 2015)

As discussed above, the migration away from the Waterberg has reversed in recent times, with people moving from afar to Lephalale, constructed as a *representational space* of new possibilities. The move to Lephalale is experienced as risky and insecure, and those who do not get jobs immediately, or sometimes ever, activate the potential 'to wait', in time and space. Waiting is a common everyday experience of many living in informal settlements in South Africa, either in relation to service delivery from the state or employment from companies (Mujere, 2020). This section focuses on waiting in relation to employment. Waiting can come at "social and personal costs" but can also be generative of action (Mujere, 2020; Schwartz, 1975; Stasik et al., 2020).

The 'waiting' for employment occurs alongside the practice of 'looking'. The language of 'waiting' for a job and 'looking' for a job, positions a job as an object or rare commodity that can be attained or found if one looks hard and long enough, regenerating the image of finding wealth in the Waterberg frontier through a tenacious stance. In Lephalale Municipality, there are five Medupi Job Information Centres (Lephalale Local Municipality; Marapong; Seleka Traditional Authority; Shongoane Traditional Authority; Mokuruanyane Traditional Authority; and Thabo Mbeki) where people can submit their CVs in the hope of receiving a phone call for a job interview or job offer. The Information Centres are not only used by ESKOM but also by the dozens of private companies, such as Murray and Roberts, Kaefer, Actom and Alstom, who operate as contractors at Medupi Power Station. The Information Centre in Lephalale town was the busiest, and located next to the main drag of the town and alongside one of ESKOM's housing 'camps'. Continuing the securitisation of the space of Lephalale, private security, Vetus Schola, was always visibly present outside the housing enclosure and Job Information Centre (Field notes).

On numerous occasions, I 'hung out' outside the Lephalale Job Information Centre and the much quieter Marapong Job Information Centre. Many people came each day to submit their CVs and make enquiries at the centre, mostly from Lephalale and surrounds. Across the road from the Lephalale Centre, people waited on the corner under a large tree, sheltering from the baking Lephalale sun, hoping to be picked up for piece jobs (Field notes). On one such occasion, sitting outside the centre, Enoch, a young man from Lephalale, chatted with me and explained, "I come here every day looking for a job". He continued, "I dream about work… I want a job… [I think about] how can I get work" (Interview, Enoch, 18 February 2017). The 'looking for a

job' is accompanied by sitting, waiting, dreaming, thinking… A typical day for another young man waiting outside the centre involved:

> "Every time I wake up, I stress about a job… I go outside looking for people to supply information about a job. I sit here [Job Information Centre], hoping someone will pick me up for a piece job so I can buy something to eat… I walked seven kilometres on foot just to hand in a CV at Exxaro… For now, I'm here [Lephalale]. Maybe I'll move somewhere else if I can't get a job. I don't know where" (Interview, Thato, 20 February 2017).

For Thato, waiting for a job is therefore also accompanied by anxiety regarding the future and the activities of asking people for tips or information about the possibilities of jobs, walking to different companies, sitting and hoping to be picked up for piecework, making plans to get food for the day and thinking about a future beyond the search in Lephalale. As such, he is making constant evaluations regarding his 'waiting' and simultaneously hustling on the side during this waiting period. At some point he may decide to stop waiting, or rather, he may decide to stop waiting in Lephalale and, as Gregor Dobler (2020, p. 9) frames, "leave a particular queue and join a different one". Dobler argues that there comes a point in which the experience of waiting changes from an experience of expectation or anticipation to an experience of not having. While this point has not arrived yet for Thato, Enoch, and other young men interviewed, there is a sense that waiting is not a passive spatio-temporal practice, and that decisions regarding future trajectories are constantly evaluated. Lephalale is therefore constituted as a hopeful, but insecure and uncertain space, while simultaneously producing a neoliberal temporality of precarity and interruption.

Fewer women than men hung out outside the Medupi Job Information Centres, as piecework was usually undertaken by men who performed manual labour. However, women also undertook the daily search for a job. For example, Botshelo described her typical day as "maybe I can just wake up and go to the information centre so that I can have my name registered in those books of job seeker". On an average day, she submitted her name at the Medupi Information Centre at the Marapong library. Once she completed that, she stated that there is "nothing else I can do. I just have to go on with a normal day and cook and clean… nothing, there is nothing you can do [for enjoyment] because there are no parks, nothing" (Interview, Botshelo, 18 May 2016). She, therefore, perceived the main 'productive' activity of the day as her actions taken towards obtaining waged work. The rest of the day involved 'just' the activities of reproduction to sustain life, such as cooking and cleaning. Botshelo is also a community organiser with the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) and the

Waterberg Women's Advocacy Organisation (WWAO), but even these activities were framed under the state of 'waiting'. Her experience of time in the present was shaped by her imagination of what her future should be and thereby diminished the importance of her daily life-sustaining activities in the present (Stasik et al., 2020).

Lesego moved from her home in Kroemhoek in Limpopo to Lephalale in 2013 in search of work. Since she arrived, she has not had a job. At the time of the interview, she stayed with her boyfriend in Marapong who had a job initially but was not working anymore. Even though she was politically active with the LUF and attended meetings and organised in her community, she experienced much of her time as 'waiting' and 'wishing' for a job for herself or her boyfriend. She stated that, "every day I wish my boyfriend [would] get a job, or me. Things will then maybe go well. Because even if we stay together, when I think, if my boyfriend's working, it's better then, we have money for food for end of the month" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017). She explained that when they are both not working, they end up fighting about household chores but are also able to comfort each other. On a typical day, she recounted: "We cry together. Telling oursel[ves], eish, you see it's difficult for now, but we'll do, like, every time complaining about us, and when we stay together, not working, we are always fighting, 'Why you don't cook?', 'Eish, I'm tired, you can cook also'" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017). Reflecting on her daily thinking, she pointed out:

> "I don't want to think about the past. I want to always think about the present, or maybe sometimes I say 'eish, why don't I get a job so I'll have my own house with my own family?' That is why I don't want to think to have the kids right now because I'm suffering, me myself, what about if I have kids? So I said, 'no, let me wait for a kid'. I will see when I got a job, or my boyfriend got a job" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017).

Thus, 'waiting' for a job is not only about the practice of 'looking' for a job, but it is also a 'waiting' for a future while simultaneously finding ways of navigating the present and its everyday practices of cooking, cleaning and sharing moments of intimacy with those close to one. The future of a family and a house is put on hold but is still held, ever-present, in one's imaginary while waiting. The project of building a life can only be planned for and actualised when the 'waiting' for a job comes to an end. As Lesego's actions on their own are insufficient in being able to realise employment, this leads to a waiting state of "planning what cannot be planned" (Dobler, 2020, p. 9). This state of being unable to plan one's life shapes everyday experiences, and for Lesego, a hopeful attachment endures through which everyday life is sustained and relations of care regenerated.

The LUF is a non-partisan organisational space of collective and active waiting – turning waiting into a shared experience around which social action and solidarities can be built (Dobler, 2020). The LUF met up to three times a week at 9 am in an open patch of land in front of the Marapong library and the Marapong Job Information Centre. The meetings had a regular rhythm, with up to 100 attendees sitting on the stand and the committee leading from the floor. Meetings would open with a song or prayer, followed by a prepared agenda, with issues noted from the floor, and the meeting would close again with a prayer or song. The committee would report back on meetings held with ESKOM, Exxaro and the municipality, and provide information about upcoming meetings and hiring processes. Issues from the floor were sometimes very personalised ('I was called for a job but when I arrived at the Job Information Centre, they said they did not call me'), and sometimes more general relating to hiring processes, corruption, and retrenchments (Field notes).



Figure 13: Lephalale Unemployment Forum meeting in Marapong (Image by Thembi Luckett, 2017)

Joseph Mujere (2020) explains that unemployment forums are common in mining communities in South Africa and are often embedded in labour recruitment processes. In the case of the Ikemeleng Unemployment Forum in Rustenburg, Mujere (2020, p. 13) details how the forum has "appropriate[d] bureaucratic practices of the state such as the establishment of job-seekers databases or waiting lists to manage the process of waiting for employment", which both recreates and alters regimes of waiting. While the LUF is less embedded in recruitment

processes in Lephalale given its more recent formation, it has taken actions to intervene in the 'state of waiting' and to shift some of the collective experiences of 'stuckness' in relation to imagined futures.

I observed various practices and interventions undertaken by the LUF. As mentioned previously, on several occasions, the LUF saw it as their role to ensure fair recruitment processes by stopping political intervention (Field notes). The mayor was a recurring point of contention and a figure against which to mobilise regarding his political intervention in 'waiting'. In a meeting between Medupi officials and LUF representatives, the LUF highlighted the role of the Community Liaison Officer (CLO), arguing that the CLO was not performing their functions in terms of sharing recruitment information. The LUF advocated that it should be part of recruitment monitoring, thereby attempting to insert the organisation into a position whereby it can affect 'waiting lists' (Field notes, 15 February 2017). Similarly, on another occasion, the LUF leadership reported at a community meeting that Matimba had agreed to inform the LUF of job openings, thereby creating dual processes of job information sharing and setting up the possibility of the LUF appropriating bureaucratic recruitment practices of the Job Information Centres (Field notes, 21 February 2017).

In another meeting of the LUF, attended by approximately 100 to 150 people, 90 per cent of whom were men, the issue of 'looking' for a job was raised as more than an activity that one just naturally does but also an activity that one can learn how to do, for example *how* and *where* to look (Field notes, 7 February 2017). The leaders of the LUF outlined the programme of action for 2017, which included 'looking' for jobs. One of the leaders stated, "we must come with a workshop on how to look for a job. People look for a job all day without transport and food" (Field notes, 7 February 2017). This indicates that there is an understanding that people can look for a job with varying levels of success and can learn how to do this more successfully, even with limited resources at hand. In Lefebvre's (1991b) terms, one can develop specific competencies and a level of performance for such *spatial practices*, structured around the 'thing' of the job, for example knowing which places to go to, mastering interchanges at potential places of work, and knowing how to objectify oneself onto the CV. Such competencies maintain the dominance of *representations of space*, which keeps one invested in the system, without altering it. However, hidden in this, is the claim that looking for a job is an activity that people should receive some form of compensation for undertaking, whether in the form of food, transport or money for communication. A closed, reproductive system opens up when a future

is imagined in which everyone is compensated for their daily activities, whether or not employed in wage work, thereby opening up the possibility of transforming the collective experience of waiting into something that can meet collective needs in the present.

The above conversations and practices demonstrate that the possible years of 'waiting' for a job involve a wide range of varying activities that are framed under 'waiting'. The 'waiting' is accompanied by sustaining life, piecemeal work, ways of surviving, thinking, dreaming, learning how to look, intervening in waiting regimes, and deferring futures – such as future families – to the time of 'the job'. Within this imaginary, 'the job' becomes the 'Not-Yet': the imagined better future, yet to be realised. Through this relationship to the present and future, particular potentialities are activated while others remain unrealised. The potentialities of participating in a capitalist system are activated through social-spatial practices such as objectifying oneself onto a CV, submitting one's CV's, waiting for job interviews, learning how to look better, improving or upgrading one's 'skills', and standing on roadside corners waiting for piecework. The activation and development of these capacities do not shift the terrain of the objectively possible and therefore reproduce the conditions of limit.

The time of 'the job' exists within the space-time of industrial development, and activities that elevate the job as the solution to one's future, therefore, reproduce the structural condition of the impossibility of jobs for all, in a context of increasing unemployment and casualisation of work. While the 'waiting' for a job reveals a more complex relation to the present and future than the idea of 'doing nothing' as research participants described, the space of waiting in Lephalale does not necessarily open up radical potentialities as it perhaps does in other parts of South Africa where unemployment is more accepted, for example in the wake of declining industries and factory closures. Molemo Moiloa (2012a, p. 71), through her exploration of youth politics in Khutsong, highlights the spaces in political imaginary that unemployed youth create and occupy. While the older generation may believe that any job is better than no job, youth make the choice of unemployment over a 'bad' job, which she argues "signals a definite change in conceptions of what people are willing to do and how social and political change has meant people imagine different possibilities". Inaction becomes a form of politics – "refusing to work any work, choosing rather to be inactive than to be involved in work that does not suffice" (Moiloa, 2012a, p. 209).

Lephalale, in contrast, is still flooded with the hope of waged labour as the central pillar of the

project of building a life as the spatial imaginary of Lephalale is constructed through declarations of future industries and jobs. Few 'refusals' to work occurred and the space of 'waiting' is often not one of refusal but rather one of hoping for the job as the antidote to a life of lack and hunger. It is unclear if the time of 'the job' will ever arrive for many people in Lephalale and therefore the attachment to such an object, as the means to fulfil a future, may, in fact, become an obstacle to achieving the good life or the (constantly) deferred future. This is suggestive of Hage's (2002) understanding of the logic of substitution, in which hope (the Not-Yet of the job) comes to stand in for the future. Hage (2002, p. 151) relates this to joy: "Instead of living an ethic of joy, we live and ethic of hope, and that becomes an ethic of deferring joy". This stance, which entails suffering under capitalist conditions, is described by Wrangel (2017) as a form of waiting – a constant deferral of the future. In this sense, hope can constitute a 'stuckness' in relation to time and space (Potamianou, 1997), as social life mainly becomes repetitive actions for economic and emotional survival to ward off defeat in the neoliberal order (Berlant, 2011). However, throughout this section, I have also tried to articulate fragments of hopeful attachments which may open up possibilities, suggesting a constant slippage and surplus in a (not completely) closed cycle of waiting and deferring. Through this line of inquiry, I have drawn on theorists such as Mujere (2020), Stasik, Hansch and Mains (2020) who investigate shifting contestations and the productive or generative aspects of temporalities of waiting in Africa, in contrast to Javier Auyero (2011, 2012) who emphasises the state's domination over subjects through imposed, bureaucratic forms of waiting.

The surplus or generative aspects of waiting for employment in Lephalale may include social action and solidarities developed through collective experiences of waiting. New social relations can be forged under conditions of enforced waiting, which can lead to collective political practices that change the ways in which people wait (Stasik et al., 2020). The 'active waiting' of the Lephalale Unemployment Forum, seeks to intervene in the nature of waiting and the regime of waiting, while also making claims for needs in the present, such as compensation for looking for waged work, hinting in the direction of a claim to an income for all activities, whether employed or not. Forms of intimacy and relations of care can also be nourished through shared 'waitings' in uncertain and precarious presents, with power-laden social and spatial relations structuring the temporal and energetic rhythms of everyday life in Lephalale.

7.4.3 The Time of 'the Job'

For limited periods of time, 'the job' is attained for some people in Lephalale. However, despite the hope attached to the time of the job, the concrete experience of a job, in many cases, still does not allow for the realisation of the good life. The future is *still* Not-Yet, and the good life is once again deferred, this time to the 'better job' or the 'secure job'. Most people with whom I spoke, experienced waged work in Lephalale as characterised by poor pay, insecurity, abusive treatment and short-term contracts. By illustration, two residents of Thular Park shack settlement stated, "if we get a job, it's only for a few months. It's not something solid… we are surviving by piece jobs… sometimes we gamble. We try to survive like this" (Interview, Kabelo, 13 April 2016); and, "those who work hard get nothing" (Interview, Sibusiso, 13 April 2016).

Khosi and Thato, waiting at the Medupi Information Centre for 'the job', described previous jobs (as a driver and a construction worker) as abusive, poorly paid and insecure: "I didn't feel well because it was little money. If you talk too much, they [management] say you must go home. There is no safety. It was apartheid abuse. On the 9th of July 2016, they just said the work is finished" (Interview, Khosi, 20 February 2017); and, "working conditions and pay were bad. It was 750 rand per week, and I was doing multi-tasks. I was doing many things. The boss treated me badly. When I was having lunch, he used to take a toy gun and shoot us. He just wanted us to work and not to have a nice life" (Interview, Thato, 20 February 2017). Without Thato stating so, the image conjured through his words, and Khosi's reference to apartheid, indicate racialised labour regimes, signalling the continuation of the racialised spatial production of Lephalale. In addition, a neoliberal temporality is (re)produced through insecurity, casualisation and temporary employment.

Workers' experiences at Medupi Power Station were no better, and in most cases, the level of insecurity was heightened given the nature of the work. At its peak, Medpui had approximately 18 000 construction workers on-site, with an additional 2 000 support service workers (Mogol Pos, 2018).[103] The majority of workers on-site were employed as unskilled and semi-skilled

[103] All sources found estimate a number of around 18 000 workers, except Tshabangu (2013, p. 30), who states: "As of 2011 its total workforce was 31 390 employees. About 84% of the company's employees were South African-based black employees, while 16% of all employees were women. Approximately 50% of all levels designated as management in the domestic market are black, and of that 12% are women. Of the 31 390 employees 25 640 were local employees of which 1 195 of that were TES employees and 5 750 were foreign employees (expert)."

workers – for example, in 2013, 10 011 out of 17 086 (59 per cent) were unskilled and semi-skilled workers (Glen Steyn and Associates, 2013). Workers on-site were employed through contractors and subcontractors – in the civil engineering sector alone, there were about 166 contractors employing 7 500 workers in 2010 (Department of Labour, 2010).

The nature of employment through contractors and subcontractors and the temporariness of construction work mean that work at Medupi is characterised by insecurity – "[l]ocal employees at both Medupi and Kusile are typically insecure, temporary workers" (Tshabangu, 2013, p. 79). Strikes, a form of hope that collective action can effect change, have occurred regularly over the issue of 'demobilisation'. According to a worker at Kusile, governed by the same Project Labour Agreement (PLA), "the employers are trying to mask the term "retrenchment" as defined in the Labour Relations Act section 189 because this means paying retrenchment entitlements and benefits" (Tshabangu, 2013, p. 108). Even though the PLA adopted the principle of Last In First Out (LIFO), as in the LRA Section 189, workers complained that they were retrenched despite contractors retaining newly recruited employees and that the new recruits were often employed as casuals (Tshabangu, 2013). Other issues with working conditions at Medupi have included poverty wages and wage disparities across contractors as well as lack of skills development – leaving general workers no better off when they are 'demobilised': "most of them came in as general workers and even now they are still marketing as general workers" (Interview, Samuel, 26 April 2017) stated a worker at Medupi. The use of labour brokers by contractors who do not pay workers on time, as well as poor accommodation conditions, akin to compound conditions of apartheid, were also problems faced by workers (NUMSA, 2012b).

In conversations with workers at Medupi, they raised the issues described above. Johannes and Elias were employed by a contractor at Medupi when I interviewed them. Johannes, an office assistant, was employed to move furniture, undertake "general housekeeping" and "buying things" that the office needed. He was employed in 2013 but was on a contract until the "completion of the project". His wage after deductions was roughly 6 000 rand per month in 2017, which in his opinion was "too little for the work that we are doing" (Interview, Johannes, 25 April 2017). Elias was employed to do site maintenance, such as fixing pipes and motors, and also earned around 7 000 rand per month, before deductions. He described the pay he received as insufficient, "there is no money, it's too little" and his job as insecure, "it's not permanent; just a contract". His wages were unable to be a means to achieve a 'good life' and

a ‘good job’: “I have many things I can do like going to school and getting certificates and having a good job” (Interview, Elias, 25 April 2017). For Johannes, he wanted a better job so that he could have “a different life to the one now”, which involved moving out of Marapong to the suburbs and educating his children (Interview, Johannes, 25 April 2017). Elias and Johannes were thus still investing in the future time of a ‘good job’.

After moving from Polokwane, Stephen described how he got his job at Medupi in 2013, as a semi-skilled electrician for the contractor, Actom. He asserted that he was underpaid for his qualification:

> “It was tough because due to my qualifications they were saying ‘we don’t need people with qualifications here; we work with semi-skilled people and you are an artisan, so we cannot afford you’. And so I sympathised with them, and I begged them to take me because I don’t have a job and after two days I got a call, and they said ‘We take you as long as you agree you are going to be a semi-skilled.’ And I agreed… What I am getting [wages] is not what I am supposed to be getting if I was working in another company. Other companies will give me more” (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017).

Despite the poor pay, Stephen decided to stay in the job because it was difficult to find work if one left Medupi. He was also dissatisfied with the contractors on-site in general. He felt that despite site regulations, the contractors still took advantage of workers and workers were treated inconsistently:

> “Here we have the PLA and Site Service Agreement that regulates every company within Medupi but how they approach things is not the same… the challenge that we have is the different companies that treat people like... sometimes like slaves you know… ESKOM [does] things accordingly, but that side we have different companies, and they do things differently. And even though we have a PLA and we have Site Service Agreement that regulates Medupi, but some of the companies want to bypass, they don’t want to follow the Site Service Agreement” (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017).

Stephen pointed out that job insecurity at Medupi is deliberately and consciously produced by companies through the process of ‘demobbing’:

> “I think every company demobs… Now they demob and then hire again after two weeks. So you won’t know what is the problem because when you challenge that, they say the job is done. And after two months they get other people… All the companies that’s a norm at Medupi site… We challenge it, but we don’t get the answer... They give you duck and dive with answers” (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017).

Job insecurity is therefore built into the nature of contract work at Medupi, and often abused by contractors on-site. Shared experiences of job insecurity have generated collective actions by

workers to improve the PLA and at different moments, collective action against the demobbing of workers on-site.

Furthermore, there was a shared experience of insecurity amongst workers on-site regarding what would happen once the construction of Medupi was completed. At the time of the research, the workforce had already been significantly decreased from its peak of approximately 18 000 workers. Contract workers were expected to sit at 8 539 by the end of January 2019, and when the power station is completed, Medupi will only need 400 internal employees and 600 contract workers (Kruger, 2018). Stephen expressed that he did not know what would happen once Medupi was completed and that he was "worried" because "I work and get money every month, so just imagine now Medupi is finished, and we don't have a source of income… It would be bad" (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017).

The insecurity of waged work produces a common experience of 'neoliberal temporality' and fragility in the making of futures. Hope in waged work, is once again deferred to the 'good job', where a better life will be possible. The job, despite or perhaps because of its insecurities, generates movement towards an imaginary of the decent job. The experience of lack and harm through employment relations generates a hopeful drive for a 'better job' or 'good job'. Kenny (2018) beautifully demonstrates how precarious retail workers return (again and again) to work as a site of activation, of social relations and personhood. The experiences and perceptions of unemployment as 'inactivity' and the precarious nature of work, moving between employment and unemployment, leads to a reinvestment in the site of work and the labour relation, rather than an opting-out of work as a route towards futures: "In these precarious retail workers, we see not so much the arresting of futures as the doubling down of energy of devotion to them, and the enduring appeal of the route to get there" (Kenny, 2018, p. 203). Thinking with Kenny, but about hope from the space of Lephalale, I have argued that the precarious nature of work in and around Medupi Power Station also leads to a reinvestment in 'the job' as a site of hope for future possibilities. The forward-leaning structure of reproductive hope produces a linear, progressive investment in the sites of 'waiting for a job', to a 'temporary job', to a 'better job'. While this could be understood as another process of substitution and deferral of futures, generative surpluses emerge through these collective experiences of lack, such that each site is one of activation and possibility. For precarious workers at Medupi, the temporary job activates a future imaginary of better working conditions from which to build a life. Even though this is

not a radical rupture of the status quo, it can still open up possibilities of workplace contestation and imagining what decent work or unalienated labour could look like.

Beyond insecurity and poor working conditions, waged work was often experienced as lacking in meaning and fulfilment. Barchiesi (2011, pp. 22, 24–25) argues that for the post-apartheid "intellectual mainstream, waged work became nonetheless coterminous with hope and fulfilment", despite workers' actual "disappointment at unfulfilled expectations of work with dignity". Thabo experienced his work as lacking in meaning and fulfilment. When he moved to Lephalale from Mpumalanga in 2010, his first job was in construction at Exxaro mine where a new plant was being built. He was employed as a general worker. Subsequently, friends secured him a job at Medupi, also as a general worker. He learnt on the job, working with mechanical fitters for four years, between 2010 and 2014, during which time he advanced from being a general worker to a semi-skilled worker. He stated, "I could familiarise with the reading of the tapes, I could analyse materials, I could grind. You know I could do almost the same thing that an artisan is doing" (Interview, Thabo, 3 May 2017). In 2016, he passed a test to qualify as an artisan after his years of experience on the job. At the time of the research, Thabo worked as an artisan, and specifically as a mechanical fitter, connecting pipes, pumps and ensuring that water circulates. He described the work as challenging and physically demanding. He stated that, "at first I enjoyed it, but now my passion is beyond that, I don't want construction anymore". He described himself as seeing something and "wanting to do it" and then realising that actually "no, but this is not what I want to do". Thabo expressed his desire and his search for a job that gives him a sense of belonging and meaning as, "I don't know how I can explain this, there are things I see I can do and after doing that I realise, 'This is not where I belong' and I go on and do another thing, and I realise, 'This is not where I belong' and move elsewhere" (Interview, Thabo, 3 May 2017).

Thabo's story indicates an ongoing searching and investment in waged work as a site of fulfilment and belonging despite his cycles of disappointment. For him, waged work is not only about the attainment of money and economic security, which enable one to engage in the project of life building, but is also imagined as an end in itself. Similarly, Kenny (2018, p. 144) highlights how casual workers and contract merchandisers experienced their situation as "just working", rather than being a "worker" through which one could be part of constituting the social relations in the workplace (I return to the contested labour relation as a site of hope in Chapter 8). The search for work that is meaningful is also the search for belonging and for

giving expression to the self as constantly becoming. While Medupi workers' stories confirm Barchiesi's (2011) argument that waged work remains a site of disappointment and unfulfilled expectations, the ongoing attachment to work is also indicative, as Kenny (2018) argues, of the workplace as a site of meaningful possibilities, even though workers are caught up in repetitive cycles of hopes and disappointments.

By exception, a few residents of Marapong communicated finding some meaning through employment. This was often expressed as some affirmation of their social being: doing something that they were good at, enjoyed, were recognised for, and that developed their capacities. For example, Botshelo stated that, as an administrator, "I just felt like I am someone" (Interview, Botshelo,18 May 2016). Lesego described a similar feeling of a sense of purpose when she worked as a cashier for three years at a garage near where she grew up in a village close to Polokwane. She handled petrol and grocery purchases and took pleasure in her ability to work fast, to use a computer and to know her job well. In this sense, she was able to master the *spatial practices* of the shop in a way that was not only in the clutches of conceived space but also opened up the energy of lived space. She stated:

> "I'm too fast when working as a cashier. I'm working with petrol, groceries. I use three computers, but I will make sure that if the queue is more than 20 people, I make sure after ten minutes I have to finish these people. My boss is really enjoying me, he says, 'you know your job, you know your job, you are too fast'. I'm too fast. I enjoy [it] really. I enjoy my work, tick tick tick. I enjoy that. I feel I don't know how to explain it. I'm enjoying my work, yeah, every time, and I exercise. I'm going up and down, doing this and this and this" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017).

Samuel also expressed that his job was a source of pride, attached to the idea of being part of the construction of the mega-project Medupi Power Station. Medupi Power Station, for Samuel, generated the possibility of being part of the creation of something tangible and concrete, which would benefit the whole country. The scale of the project added to his pride in being able to participate in such, as perhaps a once in a lifetime opportunity:

> "I am always at work because I don't regret ever joining this project… When I come to work, I learn something new every day… I wanted to create something. I wanted to see something starting from the ground up. And I have seen Medupi… I am not sure if I will ever get a project like this in life, so for me, it's a privilege to be here, it's like a blessing. Every day when I wake up, every day when I look at that [Medupi] I just, because other people will retire in engineering not having seen anything like this. So I had a privilege to see it and to work with people who are actually designing some of the stuff which is happening here" (Interview, Samuel, 26 April 2017).

The concrete structure of Medupi Power Station generated an imaginary of useful and meaningful work, albeit within a modernist imaginary of the centrality of fossil fuel production. While neoliberal capitalism places emphasis on an individualised notion of work satisfaction and self-realisation through work (Lordon, 2014), Samuel's experience edges towards Marx's understanding of practical or self-activity. Under capitalist production, practical activity is not only subordinated to capital, but the activity under capitalist production is also reduced to labour – labour as the negative mode of self-activity, which reduces activity to something that can be measured quantitatively through the number of hours engaged in and the number of products or value produced (Marx & Engels, 2000). Furthermore, thought and projection is separated from activity through the division of labour, thereby denying the expression of self-activity (Holloway, 2005a). Practical activity, the combination of mental and physical powers, constitutes the external world and simultaneously forms and transforms the self (Balibar, 2007). The self-activity alluded to here, paralleling Simone Weil's (1958) understanding of dignified work, unites thought and action; it is a creative and/or useful and unalienated activity. While Samuel's experience is by no means an example of unalienated labour, his work combined mental and physical powers such that there was a process whereby his thoughts were made material in object and transformed the world and himself, developing his capacities in the process.

The job that is secure, well-paid and meaningful remains elusive to the vast majority of people in Lephalale, and thus the enduring hopeful attachment to such as the basis for building a future keeps one stuck in the reproduction of the neoliberal order, in cycles of deferment of futures or the substitution of futures with hope (Berlant, 2011; Hage, 2002; Potamianou, 1997). However, I argue that the hopeful attachment to waged work, and consequent experiences of lack, also generates movement and surpluses that may open up possibilities beyond repetitive cycles, such as the claim for better working conditions and search for meaningful and dignified work, challenging the form and substance of labour under capitalism, venturing towards conditions that enable unalienated activity. I therefore want to argue that the cycles of deferment or substitution, are not *merely* a *stuckness* in time and space, but that each site or moment in this cycle of stuckness (waiting for a job/looking for a job/a temporary job/a (somewhat) meaningful job) is also a site activation, of lived space and possibility (however limited). I return again to Bloch's words on disappointment as the engine of hope, even in the face of partial fulfilment. I quote him again in the light of this exploration of hopeful attachments to waged work:

> "[I]s it not the case that a thing, once it has become realized, whatever has been

> attained by its realization, so that it does not resemble what was previously hoped for, even though its content has passed, wholly undiminished, from the possible into the actual? And yet, a residue remains, in this instance only because of the still undiscovered (with respect to its content) 'true and perfect being.' But even such disappointment over realization's 'minus' finally counts toward the credit of well-founded hope, and advances its existential as well as its essential demands" (Bloch, 1998, pp. 342–343).

While not advocating for an idea of 'true and perfect being', Bloch's words are useful in their emphasis of the importance of the 'residue' in the face of disappointed hopes that can be generative of what I term, 'transformative hope'.

7.5 Reproductive Hope through Attachments to Money, Consumption and Ownership

The space-time of Lephalale, as discussed earlier, is characterised by images of 'modernity' and abundance, with a booming economy. Similar to the boom around the construction of Matimba Power Station, Medupi Power Station created a surge in property prices and investments. IGrow Wealth Investments (2015, p. n.p.) stated that Lephalale might become "the new mining capital of the world" and "one of the fastest-expanding nodes in the country". The place is represented as a "property investment paradise". In 2013, it was reported that new property worth 2 billion was constructed in Lephalale in the preceding three-and-a-half years (Faku, 2013), and in 2015 it was reported to have the highest rental returns in South Africa, with increasing demands to accommodate a growing population (IGrow Wealth Investments, 2015). In this section, I explore spaces, images and practices of consumption and the possibilities that are opened up and closed off through the imaginary of citizenship and belonging through consumption. I also explore the production of spaces of dreaming and argue that the generation of daydreams and desire cannot be dismissed as merely privatised escapism or self-seeking improvement, as contained therein is collective searching and yearning to be able to live with dignity.

7.5.1 Consumption, Freedom and Belonging

Abundance is constructed through spaces, images and practices of consumption. The 170 million rand Lephalale Mall, "our place of pride", boasts making over 80 leading retailers, accessible to the Lephalale community: a place to "find your style", "embrace a new look", "bank with ease", "grab a bite" and have a "modern shopping experience"; it is "more than a shopping centre; it is the pride of the community" (Lephalale Mall, 2017, p. n.p.). The mall,

like the power stations, is a *representational space* of hope and a 'modern future' in the spatial imaginary of Lephalale. Lephalale is also home to a range of leisure activities, including Srix Zone Health and Fitness (2021, p. n.p.) – the biggest indoor gym in South Africa, boasting a "fun-filled fitness and health experience". The Mogol Club offers a variety of sports activities from horse-riding to golf to cricket and social "bushveld braais" – "the pulse of Lephalale" (Mogol Club, n.d., p. n.p.). Beyond the borders of the town, activities such as game viewing, game hunting and auctions, hiking trails, and angling are on offer (S. A. Traveller, 2014). According to the property retailer RE/MAX (2021, p. n.p.) , Lephalale is "teeming with undiscovered adventures and treasures", (re)conjuring up the pioneering, masculine subjectivity of the hunter and the mining engineer.

The space-time of Lephalale is one in which 'modern' citizens can be produced. Retail spaces offer possibilities of consuming and owning, as well as new service sector jobs; recreational and gym spaces offer possibilities of 'self-improvement' and the construction of attractive self-aesthetics. These spaces also offer possibilities of 'escape' into another space-time where one can forget structural limits and impossibilities and perhaps occupy a different relationship to the present and future. Objects of consumption become symbols of hope, holders of dreams, and signifiers of a 'better' life or the 'good life'. The ability to obtain such objects and occupy spaces of leisure affirms one's identity – a gendered, raced and classed identity – as a member of 'modern' society as well as one's citizenship in a social order, increasingly structured around consumption.

Citizenship and consumption have traditionally been separated from each other and sometimes regarded as oppositional, with consumption understood as expressions of selfhood or self-interest and citizenship understood as connected to the public domain concerned with issues of the public good, rights, duties and participation (Soper, 2007). However, in contemporary times, Berlant (2011) argues that in much theory, citizenship is defined as a combination of legal and commercial activity and acts of participation and consumption. Henry Giroux (2011) goes further and posits that citizenship in the current neoliberal order is reduced to the act of consumption; in this process, citizenship becomes about "forgetting, not learning" (Bauman, 1998, p. 82). Similarly, Lordon (2014) posits that the figure of the consumer, which rose out of the wage-earner, has almost completely replaced it in a post-Fordist society. This chapter, however, has highlighted the continued and enduring centrality of the figure of the wage-earner in people's social imaginary in the context of Lephalale. While I do not adopt the position of

the likes of Lordon (2014), drawing on their theorisations assists in making sense of the mall in Lephalale, with its accompanying *spatial practices* and production of social relations, as a symbolically loaded space and signifier of Lephalale becoming a 'modern city'.

Anthropologists have long argued that things, and human relations to such, are meaningful: "meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories… human actors encode things with significance" (Appadurai, 1986, p. 5). Berlant (2011, p. 42, emphasis in original) focuses on the relationships between things and desire and contends that desire becomes embedded in things. However, the thing never fulfils desire, the acquisition of the thing, is "merely, disappointingly, a brief episode, often with a *thing* as memento of the memory and not the actualization of desire." Consumption, therefore, holds the promise of satisfaction but denies the actualisation of such because "all objects are rest stops amid the process of remaining unsatisfied that counts for being alive under capitalism" (Berlant, 2011, p. 42). However, when one falls through the cracks and is unable to participate in activities of consumption, relations of social belonging are also severed (Berlant, 2011).

During colonialism and apartheid, the majority of the population was denied the ability to participate in the market beyond strict limitations, and thus in the post-apartheid context of South Africa, access to the market, to objects of consumption, was a way of constructing a "post-racial future" (Kenny, 2018, p. 8; Mbembe, 2008; Nuttall, 2008). South Africa's post-apartheid neoliberal discourse presented the market as a means through which to "articulate freedom, democracy, and flexibility as opposed to apartheid state repression and rigidity" (Hart, 2008, p. 689). Market access and consumption, therefore, became more than what it was through symbolising the construction of a new nation and citizenship. Retail spaces, as both abstract spaces of commerce and lived spaces, came to signify the "modern" and produced a sense of "national belonging in consumption" (Kenny, 2018, p. 144).

This claim to citizenship through participation in the market is epitomised in the words of Tshepo, who explained that for him, the post-1994 South Africa means that, "some lives changed even though it is not 100 per cent change" (Interview, Tshepo, 17 May 2017). For him, this change is objectified in acts of consumption and ownership. For example, he stated that during apartheid, as a black person, "you had no right to buy a car. You did not have a right to watch TV. You did not have a right of buying a watch from a shop and wear it". That one can do these things post-1994 means that "our lives at least after 1994 changed". More than the

access to things in the market, one can also become an owner of capital and businesses: "You have a right to open a company. Young [black] people have companies, and they are working here in Lephalale" (Interview, Tshepo, 17 May 2017). The possibility of participation in acts of consumption and ownership for black people symbolises, for Tshepo, a post-apartheid South Africa in which black people can belong. Tshepo's words recall Deborah Posel's (2010) argument that in South Africa, the making of a racial order was partially constituted through the politics of consumption and aspirations. The ability (or not) to consume in the post-apartheid space overlaps with contested notions of freedom and belonging.

This rural area of Limpopo has been fundamentally changed through the processes of expanding industrialisation, urbanisation and commercialisation, such that people now find themselves in a context in which 'everything has become about money'. Alongside 'the right' to consume and own, sits the unrealised dreams for such. Before a theatre rehearsal in a yard in Marapong, Itumeleng spoke of his desire to possess, to look good and to be famous, constructing an idea of citizenship through his dreams:

> "So it's difficult, so in terms of finances I am not good, it's not good for me now because I feel like I could do more, I should have a car, I should have renovate[d] the house. I should do this and that for myself. And I should always look wow. I know where I am going because you have to start somewhere. And then you have to work hard to achieve your goals. It is just a difficult phase that is passing… And then I also want people to remember who is Itumeleng one day. Like we had somebody called Itumeleng, and he did this and that, I want to be in the history books. I know I am too ambitious" (Interview, Itumeleng, 15 May 2017).

On numerous occasions, I also sat with different groups of elders in Marapong who explained to me how different life was on the farms before 1994 compared to life in Marapong now: "you know… Marapong needs money" (Interview, Caroline, 24 May 2017). And another stated, "at the farms our life was alright, and here it is not okay… here everything is money" (Interview, Lesedi, 22 May 2017). They found themselves struggling in this context of not being able to belong and participate in a social order constructed around consumption. This echoes Kenny's (2018, p. 189) research in which a casual packer living in Daveyton township in Gauteng stated, "[b]ut the life here [in the township] is not easy because we depend on money. Everything is money, money. If you don't have money, you can't live here". Thus, while the imaginary of citizenship through consumption opens up possibilities, it also closes off futures in the changing space of Lephalale – as Posel (2010, p. 173) writes, "relationships to commodities may be both alienating and self-expressive".

7.5.2 Spaces of Forgetting and Dreaming

In a context of '*everything has become about money*', the structure of Lephalale shopping mall, 'our place of pride', stands out as an exemplification of this. The mall is a joint venture of Moolman Group (emerging out of a Polokwane-based family business) and Uniqon property developers and management. In 2012, five years after the construction of Medupi Power Station began, the mall opened and a second phase was completed in 2015, such that the mall is now approximately 39 000 m^2. It is home to over 80 shops, including anchor retailers such as Checkers, Woolworths, Pick n Pay and Game, and shops across sectors of finance, fashion, communications and homeware, among others (Lephalale Mall, 2017). Several businesses moved from the older business district of Ellisras to the new mall in the Onverwacht area (Phadi & Pearson, 2018). Evocative of images of freedom, and perhaps ironically, the mall is situated on the corner of Nelson Mandela Drive and Chris Hani Avenue. The mall is the only shopping space in Lephalale with high fences, marking out its boundaries, and as with the development of the area in the twentieth century, enclosure and accumulation go hand in hand. The shiny, cream tiles and modern recessed ceiling lights, alongside a 'bush aesthetic', invite residents to a 'utopia of modernity', behind the Waterberg mountains (Field notes).

The mall has created a new space of consumerism, with its social relations of exchange, as well as a variety of other social activities. A rigging supervisor at Medupi, comparing Johannesburg to Lephalale, stated that, "there's big improvement [in Lephalale] since 2014. There is a big mall and more shops" (Interview, Lawrence, 26 April 2017). The mall has become representative of Lephalale as a 'modern' city, as it becomes more like Johannesburg. Clive Chipkin (1993) refers to the skyscraper Johannesburg in the 1930s to 1950s as the 'Manhattan of Africa'. Johannesburg brought together the worlds of industrial production and of consumption, tied to the global market (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008). This modernist vision of a city lives on in Lephalale as images of the 'new Johannesburg' are invoked (Luckett, 2019).

I spent many hours in the mall during my fieldwork. The mall is not only a space of abstract commerce but also that of everyday *spatial practices*: people stood in queues for bank ATMs, walked in and out of the fashion shops, and sat with friends on benches in the concourses. Workers, still in their overalls, ate in fast-food outlets after knocking off from work, youth hung out on the benches, accessing global information flows through their mobile phones with the

mall's free Wi-Fi, white farmers and game hunters browsed the outdoor gear and equipment shops, and people ensured the social reproduction of their households through grocery shopping (Field notes). These daily activities are accompanied by different threads of thought: maybe planning the week's meals, dreaming about the next dress to purchase, worrying about how to get to the month's end with little finances in the bank, or day-dreaming after a long day at work while eating fish and chips.

The mall was occupied by different gender, race and class groups. However, distinctions were still produced in terms of who used specific shops or food outlets – the restaurants were largely for middle-class people – professionals, engineers, consultants from Medupi; while fast-food joints were often occupied by workers in overalls, indicating more technical or manual occupations. Distinctions are marked by spatial divisions as the restaurants and fast-food outlets are situated opposite each other, with an indoor playground in the concourse, separating them. Most social groups who occupied the mall were racially homogenous. Now and then I spotted what I presumed to be a mixed-race couple eating out, but it was so rare that it immediately drew mine and others' attention. I would meet one-on-one with different Medupi workers at the mall for interviews, often over a cup of coffee in one of the quieter, more middle class, restaurants. On one such occasion, a young black woman who attended our table interpreted this not as a casual social interaction (perhaps because of the mixed-race dynamic) but as a job opportunity and asked if she could also be interviewed for a job (Field notes, 22 May 2017). She was a reminder of the conditions of low-wage workers in the service sector and that "consumption can be an arena of freedom only if we repress the reality of the low-wage worker required to facilitate the circulation of these commodities (to say nothing of the low-wage labour making many of the products)" (Iqani & Kenny, 2015, p. 103). The mall thus (re)produces racialised, gendered and classed subjectivities and distinctions but is also experienced as a *representational space* of possibility – perhaps one could attain a better job and a better life through interactions in this space of consumption, possibilities and dreams?

This site of modernity and of possibility enables forgetting and dreaming (Luckett, 2019). Bloch (1986) and, similarly, Benjamin (1999) both give careful consideration of the commodity form and commodity culture and the excavation of the utopian elements therein, and are therefore not only interested in the project of the negation thereof (Gilloch, 1996). Benjamin (1999) brings together spatial contradictions, ambiguities and nuances – working against one-dimensional negations or affirmations of modernity and urban life. Day-dreaming or wishful

thinking can be partially understood as an 'opting out' of space-time, with little accompanying action, and as such, with little force in the shifting of ontological possibilities in the immediacy. However, this form of hope cannot be dismissed as 'merely' fantastical, escapist or wishful thinking with no relation to concrete space-time as it is constituted through particular space-times and in turn is part of the constitution of subjectivity and social and spatial relations.

Lesego and Naledi both recounted how they loved shopping at the mall even though they did not have enough money for it, as unemployed women. Naledi explained how she took pleasure in visiting the mall from Marapong, which was a different social space, with different spatial practices, to that of the shopping centre in Marapong. In this instance, the mall contains the possibility of relating to multiple, fashionable items of clothing in ways that the PEP store in Marapong does not. Naledi explained that even if she does not have enough money to buy the clothes she wants to, she can still try them on, and in doing so is able to "change the mood, forget all the troubles" (Interview, Naledi, 6 April 2017). She elaborated that this is her time to be alone and in a world different from the one of everyday hardship and economic insecurity. Similarly, on another occasion, Lesego wanted to go clothing shopping with me at the mall, not to buy anything but to 'try out' symbolically-laden items of clothing (Field notes, 24 February 2017). This forgetting and dreaming is echoed in Benjamin's (1999, p. 7) words in which displays and the arcades are a "phantasmagoria which a person enters in order to be distracted". Those excluded from acts of consumption can still get lost in the displays of commodities and the imaginings provoked by such.

However, such imaginings and dreaming can also create painful, unmet desires as the lack of fulfilment of a particular gendered identity can produce shame (Luckett, 2019). Lesego spoke about the difficulties of not being able to afford clothes and hairstyling:

> "A woman is a woman, [she] always wants to do her hair, nails, wearing nice. Sometimes if I don't have clothes, I say, eish, this is difficult for me… to be a woman is nice if you have money to do your hair, to be nice all the time but if you say eish, just look at me, I want to go out, it's difficult and it's painful. Some women sometimes don't want to go out, don't want to go to town. It's not like that. You don't have something to wear, to be nice, to be a person lookable. I want to be lookable, so if you're not lookable, it's difficult for a woman to go out, to be with other women" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017).

Lesego's experiences of desire and shame regarding becoming 'lookable' resonate with the theorisation of women's everyday experiences of themselves as both subject and object; as subjects and simultaneously as 'things' for the consumption of the male gaze (Young, 2005).

A distance is created between women's subjectivity and their own physicality such that they experience their bodies as inadequate and in need of shaping according to the standards of the 'fashion-beauty complex'.

Benjamin (1999, p. 877) writes of Paris as a city of mirrors:

> "A profusion of windowpanes and mirrors in cafes, so as to make the inside brighter and to give all the tiny nooks and crannies, into which Parisian taverns separate, a pleasing amplitude. Women here look at themselves more than elsewhere, and from this comes the distinctive beauty of the Parisienne. Before any man catches sight of her, she has already seen herself ten times reflected."

The making of the 'new Johannesburg' includes the construction of a gendered gaze attached to commodities of personal aesthetics in ways that many women who have migrated from rural Limpopo villages did not experience or enact previously. For Lesego, the need to become 'lookable' was connected to 'going to town', and as such, was a component of the performance required of the social space of the mall. Furthermore, in the context of the construction of a Eurocentric modern space, notions of 'beauty', as Toni Morrison (2000) argues, dominate women's lives but affect black women in particularly profound ways because those notions depend on middle class, Western expectations of beauty (Gordon & Gordon, 2005).

Lesego explained further that she felt that it is different for a man, "if you want to go somewhere, take the shoes and go. For a man, it's not difficult… it's not fair" because women are judged for what they wear despite their "situation" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017). Thus, for women, desire and identity are objectified onto aesthetic things in ways different for men. Consumption for men is often more attached to material possessions than to bodily aesthetics. For example, Stephen made a point of describing how working in Lephalale enabled him to buy a Mercedes Benz C180 Compressor and that this created a sense of competition with his male manager (Interview, Stephen, 6 May 2017). Nelson Mandela Drive, the main drag of Lephalale, has become notorious for road accidents and speeding motor vehicles since the construction of Medupi Power Station. Modise explained that he did not visit Marapong anymore because "this road is dangerous as well, people are dying" (Interview, Modise, 23 May 2017). Material possessions such as motor vehicles have become linked to social status and one's sense of masculine identity in Lephalale. For women, the objects of consumption used to enhance one's appearance enable one to embody the 'good' woman or the 'presentable' woman. In this context, the consumption of things related to appearance enables women to feel a sense of pride and dignity as they make their way through this space-time of modernity. Bloch

(1986) emphasises the social element of day-dreaming, even of the seemingly most narcissistic fantasies and desires. I argue that the hopeful attachment to consumption contains a dreaming, searching and yearning to be able to live with dignity and be included in social spaces, given the experiences of lack in Marapong.

The physical structures of the power stations and the mall illustrate a coming together of extractivist industrial capitalism and consumer capitalism in Lephalale. The gendered, raced and classed space-times are not one-dimensional — either all barbaric or the "height" of civilisation; the barbarism integrally runs through the forms of modernity. The Lephalale Mall allows one to dream and find some reprieve from everyday troubles but does not remove the harshness of everyday life and (re)produces imagined social identities that most often cannot be fulfilled. Fantasies of a different life run alongside the debris of this life. Contradictions are brought to the fore whereby the site of modernity, the city, is both beautiful and bestial; a source of hope and despair (Gilloch, 1996; Luckett, 2019).

The mall is not the only social space of pleasure, escape and dreaming. Lesego smiled and laughed as she conjured up an image of herself dancing. In 2009, she won a Motorola flat screen in Mamelodi for a dance competition. She recounted how they danced all week and then at the end of the week, she heard her name being announced: "They say number one is Lesego! I say, 'wow!'" She expressed that, "when I'm dancing everything for me is wow" (Interview, 16 February 2017). Dancing takes her out of her current space-time, out of her projected anxieties about the future and inability to build a future without waged work. She explained that dancing is her time to be happy. If there is music, Lesego will start to dance, whether in her shack or not; all her friends know this. This is not only about changing her subjective relation to the future by not thinking about the past and future, but also about changing her relationship to the present and expanding the possibilities of joy therein. The Lesego who dances is also the woman who loses herself in eating meat and talking; she recounted that the first thing she does when she comes home is to check if there is meat on the stove in her shack: "I love meat too much, if I come home then I see meat, I say, 'Ahhh today I'm going to eat it'", she explained while laughing. She expressed that, "I like to eat and dance and talk. Talk too much, eat too much, dance too much" (Interview, Lesego, 16 February 2017). Thus, without shifting her material conditions and possibilities, Lesego seems to be unbounded by the limitations of her space-time when she dances, eats, laughs and talks. Bloch (1986, p. 24) states that, "[w]hen someone dreams, they never remain rooted to the spot". Lesego's body becomes a source of

energies, rhythms and drives that erupt out of their containment – her *spatial practices* "subvert the conceived", and ignite lived space (Lefebvre, 1991b; Merrifield, 2006, p. 135). This is a very different practice to that which requires one to be 'lookable' (Grosz, 1989). Lesego's 'losing herself' and unboundedness has a quality of day-dreaming, without being overtly articulated as such, whereby excesses and desires are uncensored: "in daydreams there is no censorship" (Bloch, 1986, p. 90). The space of the daydream for Lesego is a visceral, erupting one, revealing a surplus of desire, beyond acceptability (Weeks, 2011).

The shebeen is also a social space of pleasure, escape and dreaming. A Marapong social worker described how people use shebeens for entertainment in the absence of any recreational facilities (Interview, Bokang, 14 April 2016). The taverns, or carwashes as they are sometimes referred to, are simultaneously spaces of 'forgetting' and spaces of 'hoping'. Young women frequent the taverns, with much of the older generation lamenting this and the rise in teenage pregnancy (Field notes). One evening I went to a tavern in Marapong with NUMSA officials and shop stewards after spending the day in the office with them (Field notes, 13 May 2016). Women and girls frequented taverns as a site of possibility in the hope of finding a boyfriend or engaging in forms of transactional sex (as discussed in Chapter 6). One NUMSA official explained that when Medupi was just starting construction, men used to wear their work overalls to the tavern, or used to steal their neighbour's overalls if they did not have any, to show the women at the tavern that they were employed – hoping to secure an intimate relation through their proximity to capital. Another shop steward stated that, "if a woman gets a man here, you have to follow them to the toilet" (Field notes, 13 May 2016). Men, with jobs, are therefore represented as scarce resources that one has to guard closely as a woman. That night another one of the NUMSA shop stewards asked if I would be open to having a relationship with him, investing in me some hopes of a better future. Berlant (2012, pp. 6–7) expresses desire as a "state of attachment to something or someone, and the cloud of possibility that is generated by the gap between an object's specificity and the needs and promises projected onto it". The tavern is thus constructed not only as a space of 'forgetting' and relaxing, but also a social space that generates desire from which to imagine possibilities of a future life and future relations, sometimes securing this through displays of proximity to capital.

Dreaming, yearning and escaping are manifest in the insecure lives of people in Lephalale. Different spaces and attachment to 'things' generate daydreams and desire, whether it be trying on clothes one cannot afford in order to 'change mood' or hanging out in a shebeen and

imagining romantic attachments and future possibilities. This form of dreaming often has little accompanying actions to shift the objective limits of one's life, as one gets stuck in loops of everyday survival, with moments of escape and imagining beyond. In this sense, I frame such under the concept of reproductive hope as the conditions of possibility remain largely unaltered.

However, as Bloch argues (1986), this abstract utopia of the daydream is still important; the act of dreaming and imagining possibilities is significant, revealing a hunger beyond what the present offers. Similarly, Amira Mittermaier (2011), writing from the context of Egypt, also defends the role of dreaming as opening up spaces of possibility because imagination is understood as a vital component of political and ethical life. Spaces and *spatial practices* of consumption can reveal, for example, a social imagination that hungers for dignity, belonging, and recognition beyond a privatised and hopeful attachment to 'things'. Furthermore, the act of daydreaming can generate uncontained surpluses of lived space, erupting beyond acceptability, such that leaps and disruptions of a linear time and abstract space become more possible.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored how the refusal of finishedness, a hunger, can manifest in people's participation in the dominant space-time in ways that reproduce it, even though the activity of imagining also opens up possibilities. Hunger, or lack, which is not articulated as an explicit critique of the existing order (even though an embedded critique exists within the articulation of lack) imagines its fulfilment through attachment to practices and objects of *production* and *consumption*. I have focussed on two space-times: that of Medupi Power Station and Lephalale Mall, and research participants' imaginaries and futures generated through these spaces. This analysis highlights the enduring attachment to waged labour – against the backdrop of Medupi Power Station – as the means to achieving the good life, as well as the generation of imaginaries of modernity through the Lephalale Mall.

The purpose of this analysis has not been to produce a moralistic argument about consumption or to dismiss attachment to things and waged labour. While there is a pessimistic reading of much of the above, following in the footsteps of the Frankfurt School, I have attempted to explicate the Janus-faced nature of reproductive hope. The *function* of this kind of hope is reproductive of the given order. I have argued that reproductive hope can create closed, repetitive cycles of social being locked in the same space-time, but that it also generates

uncontained surpluses and possibilities of lived space. The analysis of hopeful attachments to waged labour detailed the constant deferment of futures, which maintains a linearity of time and notion of progress. However, any notion of progress is interrupted by the insecurities of the neoliberal order, such as the oscillation between periods of employment and unemployment, but is not disrupted by the politics of reproductive hope. At the more closed point of the spectrum, as hope overlaps with its opposite, fear, there is evidence of a spatial politics of exclusion and chauvinism generated through an attachment to waged work. However, at the more open end of the spectrum, hope invested in waged labour can also counter stasis and enable subjectivities' constantly becoming and affirm relations of intimacy. Generative surpluses through (sometimes implied) collective imaginaries are also evident in instances such as the search for meaningful and dignified work, the demand for fair and transparent recruitment processes beyond patronage and sexual exploitation, and the claim for an income beyond the confines of an employment contract. The hopeful attachment to consumption, primarily produced through the space of the mall, is also a complicated relation as the imaginary of active citizenship through consumption opens up as well as closes off possibilities. The ability (or not) to consume in post-apartheid society overlaps with contested notions of freedom, dignity and belonging. Further, I have argued that the activity of daydreaming, as a form of hope, cannot be dismissed as 'merely' fantastical, escapist or compensatory with no relation to concrete space-time. The act of daydreaming can generate uncontained surpluses, erupting beyond acceptability, such that leaps and disruptions of a linear, reproducing order become more possible.

Through this chapter, I have attempted to elucidate the nature of hope as more than emotion. It is both an affective and cognitive force that drives and shapes the contours of people's everyday lives. Hope matters. Furthermore, people's hopes are not constant across space and time. The space-time of Lephalale, in its current iteration, generates particular kinds of hope attached to the futurity of modernity. While this chapter has largely emphasised the *reproductive* function of hope, albeit with slippages and surpluses, the subsequent chapter explores the possibilities of hope functioning to *transform* subjectivity and conditions of life.

CHAPTER 8: TRANSFORMATIVE HOPE: GESTURES INTO THE BLUE

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I turn to investigate fragments of hope, which reach beyond the current order of things: the order of 'white supremacist capitalist patriarchal' space-time (hooks, 1997). Through the process of this kind of hoping, affective and cognitive connections to the present are altered or disrupted and an alternative future provoked (Weeks, 2011). In Chapter 2, I conceptualised this type of hope as 'transformative hope' – a force in the world, which in pushing against and reaching beyond the present order, opens up possibilities for transforming the systemic order of things. Different times exist within any present moment, while the previous chapter focussed on repetitive cycles of capitalist modern time, albeit with slippages, in this chapter, I look at the possibilities of realising other space-times through the ruptures and contradictions of capitalist space-time. As such, I invite the reader to imagine with me futures other than the dystopian one that I pointed to in Chapter 4, embedded in the everyday life of Lephalale.

The transformation of society simultaneously involves transforming the self and others. Subjectivity is understood as constitutive of new social relations and new politics, and through this process, is continuously being constituted, becoming something different (Jameson, 1996; McGranahan, 2016a; Weeks, 2011). This is a hope that not only moves outwards to the social and political, pointing towards an alternative world, but is also a hope of becoming more than ourselves in any present moment, and as such, relates to *what-is-in-possibility* (becoming), rather than the limits of what is (Vidal & Schröter, 2013). Hope that relates to possibilities through praxis and the transformation of everyday life is a shift from abstract utopia and its wishful or compensatory thinking (Bloch, 1986; Lefebvre, 1991b). In the previous chapter, I argued that the acts of hoping, dreaming and wishing develop cognitive and affective capacities. I combed the data, looking for the productivity of imagination and dreaming, rather than dismissing such as trivial, escapist or unproductive. I argue that reproductive and transformative hopes are both to be found in an open system that is the messiness of everyday life. The one does not exclude the other, and the one does not necessarily lead to the other in a stagist manner: reproductive hope does not necessarily develop into transformative hope, and one does not need to first develop the capacity for reproductive hope before shifting to transformative hope. There are leaps and bounds in the human capacity for hoping, as well as blockages and limitations. In

this chapter, I pose the questions of how new subjectivities are constituted, how new social relations are constituted in space-time, and how in the process new space-times are imagined and generated – and the role of hope in this.

I originally set out to look for the 'thing' that makes the impossible possible - a romantic quest for the hope that drives collective vision, resistance and solidarity. Perhaps I was searching for Bloch's (1986) teleological time or Marx's eschatological time, that Cedric Robinson (2001) critiques. As with much of this project, as the researcher, I was transformed through the process of doing the research and writing. Unsurprisingly, I never did find that 'silver bullet', which was meant to click my project into place. And what I discuss in this chapter under the category transformative hope is a lot more fractured and fragile than I had imagined. What I had imagined might be a bold hope, striving forth despite the odds, was not what I found. On the contrary, it is a hope split through, shattered, containing multiple-space-times; a hope that carries with it the loss and injustices of the past that I argue holds the most transformational possibilities. In this way, I circled back to the theme of haunting in Chapter 6, and found that hope in conversation with hauntings was most generative of alternative futures. It was not the hope of linear progress in which subject-citizens march forth into the future of a modern democratic nation-state, or the linear and stagist politics of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) that generated transformative possibilities. Instead, in thinking through the relation between the two modes of hoping, I suggest that transformative hope may hinge on: (i) a refusal, not only as a rejection of the everyday conditions of one's own life, but a refusal that extends to a structural critique of both the past and present, folding a multiplicity of space-times into a refusal; (ii) a connection to collectives – an experience of political communities (whether actual or imagined); and (iii) processes of learning and reflection. I elaborate on these axes of transformative hope through my discussion of everyday lives in Lephalale below.

8.2 A Note on Refusal, Resistance and Hope

Chapter 6's discussion on hauntings illustrated how despite the destruction and denial of hope, claims are still made on the present and future through a haunting; through a refusal of absence. Chapter 7 showed how reproductive hope is also grounded in a rejection of or dissatisfaction with the conditions of one's own life, while simultaneously affirming and investing in an imagined future of a better life within the present space-time. Transformative hope can relate to both a rejection and a refusal, but I argue that this stance extends to a structural critique of

the present, thus venturing towards alternative horizons: “the attachments that organize the present also organizes pasts and futures” (McGranahan, 2016a, p. 335).

As quoted in Chapter 2, Bloch (1986, p. 11) posits that, “[h]unger, the main drive, must be worked out here, and the way it proceeds to the rejection of deprivation, that is, to the most important expectant emotion: hope”. Bloch does not theorise this ‘No’, which I argue is an essential component of transformative hope.

I want to develop this ‘No’ as more than the forms of resistance that are perhaps more commonly focussed on in sociological discourse. Rejection or non-acceptance of something can result in resistance, which is commonly understood as including ‘active opposition’ (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). This can take the form of a ‘No’ of rage, such as discussed by John Holloway (2005a, 2005b). Holloway’s (2005a, 2005b) starting point of resistance is that of negativity: the scream of ‘No’; a scream of rage, refusal and hope at the same time. Rage is provoked by a situation in which humanity is negated, and hope generated because the scream is a negation of a negation. Resistance can also include subtle, less explicitly confrontational, “low-profile techniques” of everyday resistance, thereby indicating a variation in the “visibility” of different modes of resistance (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Scott, 1985).

Less studied and theorised is the practice of refusal (McGranahan, 2016a). While similar to resistance, refusal is not the equivalence of such (McGranahan, 2016b). Refusal may overlap with resistance, particularly covert forms of resistance, but refusal is underpinned by different logics of recognition and grammars of action. Carole McGranahan (2016b, p. 319) theorises refusals as illuminating of “limits and possibilities” within everyday social and political relations. Refusal marks a limit; a refusal to continue with things the way they are, while simultaneously being generative of alternative possibilities (McGranahan, 2016b). Refusal has a different logic to active opposition – it can rather be understood as an “abstention, a disinvestment from rules of engagement” (Bhungalia, 2019, p. 4), and an “affirmative investment in another possibility” (Weiss, 2016, p. 352).

This is akin to Bartleby’s non-participation or non-operativeness. The story of Bartleby is an interesting tale of a scrivener who decides not to write (Melville, 2009). His refusal is not an overtly antagonistic ‘No’, but rather a non-activation of his potential to ‘reasonably’ participate in work and assumed social relations. Bartleby’s consistent refrain when activities are requested

of him is that he would "prefer not to". This is extended beyond work requests to, "[a]t present I would prefer not to be a little reasonable" (Melville, 2009, p. 27) – indicating estrangement from the assumed rationality of 'the way things are'. Bartleby's decision to cease writing (and subsequently to cease performing most activities of everyday life) eventually results in his incarceration and death. Despite his death, Agamben points to Bartleby as a hopeful figure of pure potentiality (Balskus, 2010). Bartleby preserves his potentiality by removing himself from societal expectations and powers at play – thus refusing to activate his potentiality and participate in the system's everyday functioning (Balskus, 2010). Bartleby refuses to be an "operative part of the state's machinery" (De la Durantaye, 2009, p. 18). Similarly, Erica Weiss's (2016, p. 351) investigation of Israeli citizens who refuse military service demonstrates the "radical potential of refusal as abstention" rather than the public opposition, which continues to recognise the state project.

Returning again to Aristotle's conception of possibility, Agamben (1999, p. 45) draws on Aristotle who maintains that any potential is capable of not existing in actuality, and that "what is potential can both be and not be, for the same is potential both to be and not to be" . Thus, "it is not necessary for everything potential to be actual" (Aristotle, 2005, p. 6). Potential can either be actual or not; potential may or may not be realised and all that has been actualised, equally may not have been actualised, placing indeterminacy and contingency at the centre of analysis of natural and social life. Agamben goes beyond classical definitions of potentiality as the ability to be or not be and ascribes to potentiality "the most significant truth of our existence and the only basis for a coming politics not rife with destruction" (Balskus, 2010, p. 178). Therefore, through the potentialisation of society, Agamben attempts to show not only what one can make possible but also what one can make impossible through non-activation and non-participation. In this way, Agamben brings another angle to the discussion on potentiality and possibility that Bloch (1986) focuses on.

While Agamben relates non-operativeness, as a refusal to participate, mainly in relation to the operations of state machinery, refusals manifest in different spaces of everyday life and work to cut social relations, while simultaneously opening up possibilities of reconfigurations of social and political relations (McGranahan, 2016a). Refusal denies recognition of a presumed authority (in contrast to actively recognising and opposing an authority), which can open up alternative political orders, publics and possibilities (Bhungalia, 2019). Of course, refusals can lead to public opposition and acts of resistance and as such the categories overlap, but I maintain

the significance of paying attention to everyday refusals in trying to understand the dynamics of transformative hope.

McGranahan (2016a, p. 338) connects refusal to hope by contending that, "[r]efusal is hope that things will be different. Even more, it is the insistence that they will be. This generative aspect of refusal might lie in its wilfulness. Being wilful signifies the possibility of deviation, of struggle within and between subjects, and of a refusal to be aspirational in the right way". In the following, I attempt to explicate different refusals in everyday life and how the refusals are embedded in hopes for radically different spaces and futures.

8.3 Thinking Through Hope and Collectives in Lephalale and Surrounds

In this chapter, I intended to explore collective organisations and actions, and while I still maintain that the actualisation of transformative hope is possible only through inter-subjective processes, the organised collectives that (could/should) generate hope did not become the focus of this chapter. The four stories that I look at here all involve relationships with collectives, but not the structured collectives that one imagines constitute organised politics. Perhaps that is an indication of the current conjuncture and the crisis of collective, emancipatory politics.

8.3.1 A Crisis-ridden Terrain

It is nothing new to suggest that South Africa is in a period of deep and multiple crises – economic crisis, social crisis, environmental crisis and political crisis – connected to the current global conjuncture. These crises are interlinked and produce a material and affective landscape of catastrophe and pessimism. I will not discuss in detail the nature of these crises as they have been widely debated,[104] but I will briefly outline some points of relevance to the analysis of collective politics in Lephalale and surrounds.

Post-1994 South Africa ushered in a series of economic policies and practices associated with the neoliberal order, such as financialisation, privatisation, trade liberalisation and the restructuring of production (Ashman, 2015). The effects on the labour market have been devastating, manifesting in features such as increasing casualisation and outsourcing, job-less growth, declining wages, increasing unemployment and inequality – with consequences for the

[104] For example, on South Africa's economic crisis see Ashman, Fine and Newman (2011), Bond (1999, 2013), Marais (2020), and Mohammed (2013); on the climate crisis see Satgar (2018); on the crisis of social reproduction see Bezuidenhout and Fakier (2006), and Fakier and Cock (2009); and on the political crisis see Hart (2013).

labour movement, which trade unions have largely been unable or unwilling to address (Webster & Buhlungu, 2004). South Africa's once militant trade unions are no longer what they were. Kenny (2020, p. 120) argues that the trade union movement is fragmented and that "[u]nions have lost political appeal for many, including many young workers, influence and power. They represent a declining population of wage workers in an economy hit by restructuring and retrenchments and as the so-called 'informal sector' has grown". Issues have bedevilled the trade union movement, such as the inability to represent the 'new working poor', poor service, the increasing gap between union officials and ordinary workers, increasing co-operation with and adoption of management practices to mention a few (Kenny, 2020; Luckett & Munshi, 2017; Satgar & Southall, 2015; Webster & Buhlungu, 2004). As collective accountability and internal democracy have eroded, there have been increasing corruption scandals, often involving union investment funds, and growing careerism, as union officials transition into government and business positions (Gentle, 2015; Kenny, 2020).

The trade union movement, and its intersection with Alliance[105] politics, has produced ongoing points of contention that have contributed towards its weakening internal democracy. As Hart (2002) notes, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy[106] changed the relations within the Alliance, taking power away from COSATU and blocking its promises of redistributive social change. The 'NUMSA moment' and the left split from COSATU, which led to the formation of the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) in 2017, held out some possibility for the renewal of the trade union movement (Kenny, 2020; Luckett & Munshi, 2017). SAFTU was three years in the making and as Webster (2017) points out, despite its formation in the aftermath of Marikana, SAFTU was largely driven by a top-down process, not on-the-ground worker militancy (Luckett & Munshi, 2017). SAFTU emerged from political battles within COSATU over its alliance with the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP), and internal union battles against corruption and the erosion of democracy (Luckett & Munshi, 2017). More than three years on, there is little indication that SAFTU has managed to renew the trade union movement, as it struggles with its own limitations and the changing nature of work.

Shifting focus to the terrain of social reproduction and social movements, Karl von Holdt and

[105] See, for example, Beresford (2009) for a discussion on the Alliance politics.
[106] The 'Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy' marked a turning point towards neoliberal economic policy (Department of Finance, 1996).

Prishani Naidoo (2018, p. 1) argue that, while the "intensity of contention and popular mobilization has led some to consider South Africa the 'protest capital of the world'",[107] with significant political turning points such as the Marikana massacre, "none of these events has produced a decisive rupture with the dominant politics of the Congress Alliance led by the African National Congress". The 'new social movements', which emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, have largely declined or collapsed as organised forces, although many of the constituent organisations and activists still continue to be involved in sites of struggle. Of the four different sets of popular mobilisations that von Holdt and Naidoo (2018) outline, the most relevant to the Lephalale are the 'localised community protests'. These are delineated as isolated protests, which increased nationally from about 2005 (Alexander, 2012), and are usually directed against local municipalities, over 'service delivery' issues of housing, water, electricity, corruption and unemployment. Such protests commonly take the form of marches, with memoranda for local municipalities, sometimes escalating to the burning of properties and battles with police (von Holdt, 2014). Significantly, these protests do not mark a break from the ANC but are positioned within the "ANC constellation" of organisations and practices (von Holdt & Naidoo, 2018). In this sense, neither the sites of production nor those of reproduction, while containing multiple possibilities, have been able to launch sustained resistance to the political and economic order and to actualise an alternative political project.

8.3.2 The Collective Politics of an Aspiring City of Coal?

With this national context in mind, I attempt to explain why the focus of this chapter is not on political organisations of one kind or another, which I had imagined would be the site of transformative hope. The political terrain of Lephalale is dominated by the ANC, as has been highlighted in previous chapters, often centring around the figure of the mayor who is seen as controlling resources, job opportunities and networks of patronage. As Andries remarked, this time in the context of being an emerging black business owner in Marapong, "in public I'm ANC, and in private I'm DA" (Interview, Andries, 19 May 2016), in order to ensure that he would not be disadvantaged in relation to business opportunities. Medupi Power Station as a work-site is a pivotal feature around and through which capital flows and political networks are established.

NUMSA and NUM have a strong presence in the making of Lephalale, as discussed in Chapter

[107] See Alexander (2010, 2012) for further analysis on South Africa as the 'protest capital of the world'.

5, and continue to shape the politics of the space, with NUMSA being the majority union at Medupi Power Station. However, despite NUMSA breaking from its political alliance with the ANC, undertaking the building of a Socialist Revolutionary Workers' Party (SRWP), and advancing socialist politics (at least in name), very little to none of this was evident during my fieldwork in Lephalale. Union activities were limited to the shop floor and economistic politics, and even with such, there were accusations of NUMSA officials' complicity with the management of Medupi Power Station (Field notes).

In the years that I frequented Lephalale and maintained contact with activists, I did not observe political education activities nor attempts to build a United Front nor alliances with community members. Local NUMSA leaders remarked that it was too difficult to undertake such political projects as a United Front in Lephalale because it would be viewed as a threat to the ANC. Despite NUMSA's progressive policies around energy and a just transition to socially renewable energy, these policies also did not feature at the coalface in the political life of the union in Lephalale. Again, there were no attempts to create alliances with environmental organisations in the area. There was also little energy amongst workers in the build-up to the launch of SAFTU in 2017 – it was something removed from the locality. NUMSA, however, still maintained a better reputation amongst workers than other unions in the area, such as NUM, which were seen to be failing the workers (Field notes).[108]

Given the above observations, I could not see an avenue in NUMSA as an organisation through which to explore transformative hope and politics. However, what is evident in the narratives that I explore later in this chapter is that the transformative hopes embedded in everyday life of two of the protagonists, the NUMSA shop stewards, were shaped through their relations with NUMSA and collective actions in and around Medupi Power Station. These actions were in response to some of the issues mentioned above regarding the changing nature of work, such as contract work and retrenchments. But figures such as these two shop stewards became marginal within structured organisations because they were cast out of the workplace as a consequence of their politics; furthermore, in the absence of a social movement unionism or a United Front, they were no longer accommodated within labour organisations.

Marapong as a site, and its relation to Medupi Power Station and the urban centre of Lephalale,

[108] These were observations that I made during the course of my research, and of course, there may have been activities taking place that I was not aware of, but this was my overall 'feel' of the politics of NUMSA in the area.

did generate protest actions. The group with whom I interacted most was the community organisation, Lephalale Unemployment Forum, which was comprised of disgruntled ANC, Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and DA members. The organisation was not aligned to any particular party. It embodied the 'localised community protests' described above – mainly engaging in issues of unemployment and corruption surrounding Medupi Power Station, using a repertoire of protest actions, submissions of memoranda and meetings with Medupi and the local municipality. Predominantly, the organisation generated 'reproductive hopes' for wage labour and a 'fairer' system, as discussed in Chapter 7.

In Marapong, activists have also built environmental and feminist organisations, particularly the Waterberg Environmental Justice Forum (WEJF) and the Waterberg Women's Advocacy Organisation (WWAO), emerging through engagement with national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), such as Earthlife Africa and WoMin. These organisations were both small, with a core of about five members, and maybe up to 20 attending meetings or workshops. WEJF and WWAO were still struggling to develop their politics and make a mark with a broader constituency who were largely mobilised around issues of waged work, or the lack thereof. One member of WEJF complained that they were tired of just filling up Earthlife Africa's workshops and wanted to be able to host their own workshops and programmes in Marapong (Field notes, 3 May 2017). This suggests that these organisations will have to find ways of tackling the pervasive issues affecting community organisations in South Africa regarding their relationship to national NGOs, control over resources and funding and how to build localised democratic and collective processes in this context. WEJF and WWAO were still to ground themselves in Lephalale but may yet hold possibilities for transformative politics. Below, I briefly look at some of the hopes and visions embedded in their politics.

Boitumelo and his comrade established the environmental organisation, WEJF, in 2012 for Lephalale and the broader Waterberg area. He explained that they were moved to do so, with other youth in Lephalale, because they "saw bad conditions in other mining areas and thought this is what is going to happen here", which threatened his idea and experience of home (Interview, Boitumelo, 8 April 2017). Boitumelo worried that different ways of living to "city life" were being forgotten and experiences lost as natural spaces were destroyed or changed. He articulated the destruction from coal industrial development as, "now I do something [for coal companies] to the environment and my father loses his cows and all the domestic animals that he had. And now we don't do farming anymore" (Interview, Boitumelo, 8 April 2017).

This points to Nixon's (2011) understanding of slow violence as a violence that occurs gradually, across time and space in ways that are not typically understood as violence, as discussed in Chapter 6.

WEJF criticised the form of development happening in the area, contending that, "if you [companies] are busy killing us, you better not come" (Interview, 12 April 2016). Boitumelo explained further:

> "You go to the agricultural project in the villages, there are no young people there, it's only old people because they [young people] are saying, 'We are going to the project of Medupi, there is a lot of money there.' Yes, there is a lot of money, but you need to think. So we must bring back agriculture and make sure that we go and understand how to do farming… The power stations don't give us life, the thing that gave us life is this thing that they [the coal power stations] are destroying." (Interview, Boitumelo, 12 April 2016)

WEJF's vision for communities in the Waterberg area is for renewable energy and to build youth activism: "we want to see young people coming out and not be afraid. Young people keep quiet here, but we need young people to come out. We want to motivate young people. As young people, we must know that we have the power to challenge government" (Interview, 12 April 2016). WEJF is working against the closure of possible futures and relations to nature, whereby children will "never experience a river flowing… because there is no water, because we might be left with a desert in our province", as a consequence of environmental destruction, and concomitant social destruction, from the coal industry (Interview, Boitumelo, 8 April 2017).

WWAO was officially launched in 2017 but has had a longer presence in the area, led by Naledi, who hoped to play a transformative role in the lives of women in the Waterberg. When she was unable to find employment in Lephalale, which did not involve practices of sexual exploitation, she decided that she needed to understand what was going on in Lephalale: "I started to do research of what's happening in Lephalale… I started to talk to people while we were in meetings and because other people wouldn't ask questions, they would just attend meetings and listen and go… That's where I started to ask questions, 'Why do you say things is like that? Can you explain?'" (Interview, Naledi, 6 April 2017). This led to a development of politics individually and collectively. In a context in which women experience the greatest burden of extractivist industries, WWAO envisions "other alternatives… we don't need mines to get jobs" (Interview, Naledi, 6 April 2017). Naledi further explained that communities must make their

own decisions about their future, and the women of Waterberg must be independent of the municipality, the government and mines. Women can "produce for ourselves" and use renewable energy sources that do not damage the environment and dry up and pollute the water (Interview, Naledi, 6 April 2017). Beyond the structured organisation, there were also networks of conviviality and care amongst the women involved, who shared companionship, sitting together and discussing issues facing Lephalale. They criticised men for holding onto power and information, whereas, "when women learn something, [we] share it with the community" (Interview, Bontle & Naledi, 15 April 2016), thus generating relations of "togetherness needed to endure the precarious present" (Ong & Rovisco, 2019, p. 151).

While these possibilities exist, in the absence of overtly transformative and grounded collective political projects, in what follows, I trace a few select lives of people in Lephalale and surrounds and their relation to collectives, in order to explicate and understand the modes of hope embedded within these stories, as well as delineate fragments of collective politics that point towards utopian possibilities. Through these narratives and fragments, I bring to the fore both refusals of the order of things and affirmations of alternatives, pointing towards horizons of possibility. The 'no' and the 'hunger for', or hope for, work in a dialectical relationship, each influencing and emboldening the other. Through these stories, I highlight a reconfiguration of space-times through relations to land and nature; wage labour; and gender relations. Drawing on Bloch (1986) and Levitas (2013), a philosophy of hope not only interprets or contemplates the world around us, but also goes beyond to articulate future imaginings implied in the reconfiguration of relations.

8.4 Making the Blues: Dikeledi's Hope for Freedom

When I first encountered Dikeledi, I knew that she had a story to tell. She carried an anger and rawness with her, which was uncontained. In 2016, I visited her home in Marapong Extension Four. I remember getting lost in the many unmarked dirt roads in Marapong, trying to find her house. She was waiting for me next to a low fence and a modest brick house. I spent the afternoon and evening with her. She first wanted to tell me about what happened to the Lephalale Local Community Forum – she was angry and gave me documents to photocopy so that I would have a record of events. She was struggling to look after her baby and focus on the interview, so she asked me to come back after 5 pm when her eldest daughter would be home to help out. She asked me to bring food for supper. I returned later with food and listened to her

life story as she told it that evening to me. Her story was one of the first that I wrote up and it is one that still sits with me at night.

Dikeledi was born in 1976, and grew up in Ramadiba village, near Mokopane in Limpopo, in a poor family of eight children. Her family lived in a mudhouse without water or electricity. Her mother was a farmworker for a tomato farm and her father worked in a flourmill. She grew up in a religious home, and her parents were not politically active. She came to realise later in life that her mother was afraid of politics and of politically active people, including carrying a fear for her daughter getting killed. Only as an adult did she start to speak with her mother about politics (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016).

While Dikeledi did not have a politically tumultuous childhood, her childhood was by no means peaceful. She described how her father abused her mother: "It was a time when a man was having too much power. Our father used to beat our mother in front of us" and, "there was no peace between the parents" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She explained that her father was only ever happy when he was drunk. She ran away many times at night with her mother during her childhood. Sometimes they would sleep next door and sometimes jump over the river to reach her uncle's home. On occasions, they ended up staying away from home for as long as a few months and sometimes she did not go to school for months because she stayed with her mother away from her father, in a different village. Her mother eventually ran away permanently during the night and her parents divorced. From a young age, her life story is one of constantly being on the move, of becoming, which can be understood as a manifestation of hope – of refusing what is and exploring different spaces and different relations – in the hope of finding a life worth living and expanding horizons of *what-is-in-possibility* .

Dikeledi's mother started a new life in Steilloop village in 1991, and Dikeledi moved to live with other family relations – her father's sister – who were more financially secure. In this new home, she experienced different forms of abuse. She was forced to do domestic labour as a child, and to look after her aunt's first-born baby instead of going to school. She recounted her life there as a "very tough life" because she was treated harshly (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She then moved again, this time to her mother's aunt in Giyani, where she was sexually harassed by a boyfriend of a relation, who used to enter forcefully when she was bathing. She informed her aunt that, "this man is going to end up raping me" but in response her aunt

physically abused her and accused her of lying. She was also made to fetch wood and water and to look after the baby in the house.

School became a place away from different abusive homes; a place where teachers helped her, and she received some recognition and compassion. Dikeledi explained that teachers asked her what was happening where she was living: "teachers helped me because I was wise. I used to go to school without anything, without eating… Teachers started coming with food" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She described how she loved school because she was intelligent. Her favourite book at school was about conflict between Basotho chief families, whose children killed themselves over a cliff because they did not feel free: "it touched me strongly" because of their struggle to be free (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). School was therefore a space in which she could do master social-spatial practices and feel recognised. She was 'seen' in ways in which she was not at home. Here are glimpses of how life could and should be in her imaginary – a space constituted through social relations of care, recognition and the exploration of ideas.

Eventually Dikeledi ran away from her aunt in Giyani with nothing, without even clothes. She left after being beaten in the night because she was accused of having an abortion. A boy she knew assisted her with 10 rand to get a taxi – she needed to get one to Polokwane and from there to Mokopane. In her description of the event, she takes one back to that young girl, looking to the future, "I don't know how I'm going, but I'm going" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). Dikeledi described how she was very patient and kept thinking, "maybe things will change", but after her continued active opposition of abuse, in an attempt to shift and reconstitute failed social relations, her next option was to remove herself from the situation, activating the power of non-participation and disinvestment in a given social arrangement and simultaneously investing in other possibilities. She never saw those relatives again – she is still angry. Near Polokwane, she found a relative, her mother's sister, to go to and stayed there for a few months before she had enough money to go home. The family helped her to get to her mother, even though they were a poor family who survived on a child disability grant. Dikeledi left for her mother, who was by that time based in Lephalale, then Ellisras, and working as "a maid in the kitchen" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She explained that this was how she got to know Lephalale in 1995. In a context of constant instability, her mother represented a space of hope for security and comfort. Thus, mothers' hope *for* children is not unidirectional as hope *in* mothers also provides a source of endurance in an insecure and precarious lifeworld.

Dikeledi's first job in Lephalale was in a bottle store. She explained, "I was just working. I was having no choice. I was living without choice… It was tough, you were having nothing. You must at least get something" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She needed an income to assist her mother and her mother's children. Her mother became sick because of her ancestors and was informed that she needed to become a traditional healer. Dikeledi took over where she was working as a domestic worker: "I became the breadwinner at home on behalf of my mother". Dikeledi dreamt about working in the new supermarket in Lephalale, "The one I was happy to work, it was 1998, the new supermarket was being opened, Bosveld supermarket… I dreamt about getting a job at Bosveld supermarket. I've seen that place when I was sleeping" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). Her dream was a specific, material imagining and she recounted in detail how she got the job. She explained that when she woke up, she heard that there was a supermarket, which had just opened. She went there and found many people in front of her in a long queue, hoping to get a job. She sat down, waiting, and eventually saw the manager arrive in a blue bakkie. The manager called her, "You, at the back, please enter. You have been hired… I was a cashier. I was doing everything. I just like the job because it was a supermarket… [the conditions] were a little better" (Interview, 31 August 2016). Dikeledi's imagining of the new supermarket as a space of hope, where she could be included in the development of the area and where conditions were better than working in private households, is repeated in present day imaginings of Lephalale in which the mall has come to symbolise the making of a city and a space of possibilities.

While working at the supermarket, she realised that she was pregnant and had to leave her job. By that time, she was married to an older man who worked at Grootegeluk mine in Lephalale. She explained that, similar to the relationship of her parents, there was a lack of happiness in the relationship and it was abusive. She outlined the spatial practices required of her in a patriarchal home: "I was that girl from the villages who was taught that a woman must always follow what the man says. I was just being patient… He was working but you were just like a maid. Your duty was on the bed or to clean and wash his clothes" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). When he was not on shift, he would disappear for weekends without a word. Dikeledi lived with her husband for ten years, and in that time, she explained that, "I started picturing my mother's life… this is not good" – her life echoed the abuse that her mother experienced (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August, 2016). Through a process of reflection, Dikeledi was able to distance herself from the stereotypical girl from the village – "that girl" – who

reminded her of her mother's pain. On the basis of her past experiences and reflections, she decided to break from "that girl". She stated, "I was angry and wanted to change my life" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She demarcated a limit and refused to participate in a relation that resembled her parents' one, and through this limit, embodied a hope for a different future, in which she would not be abused, dependent on men, or reproduce given gender relations. Her imagining of a different future and a different space of home generated a new becoming, a transforming subjectivity that held out the possibility of constituting alternative, equal gender relations.

Dikeledi decided to undertake further education and training as a route towards independence and as a way of exiting from her given social relations. Her husband agreed to support her to go back to school but, in the end, he never did. She therefore asked her mother, without her husband's knowledge, to support her financially to undertake further education and training as a security personnel. Her husband was surprised, but she stated, "I didn't care. I was angry. I wanted to change my life" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). After training, Dikeledi struggled to find employment in Lephalale and moved to Tembisa to try there. She did not find employment there either and returned to Lephalale when her husband pleaded on the basis that he would be different if she came back home. He thus still offered her some fragment of hope under conditions in which she could not secure economic independence. However, she left him again shortly after returning when he had another affair. She explained, "It took two months for him to change to his old ways… I told him, one day I will leave you, but he didn't believe me… Always when he found a new girlfriend, he treat me like paper" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016) – like toilet paper, something that could be used and thrown away easily.

In 2005, Dikeledi was able to leave her husband when she found a job. She explained that, "I said to him [her husband], 'I've been waiting for this moment, it's been a long time. Now I'm leaving'. And I left" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016) – cutting the social relation (McGranahan, 2016a). She started working for a security company in Lephalale. She declared that this was the moment when "I started to change my life" because even though her treatment at the company was poor, her wages were higher than with previous jobs, which meant that she could take care of herself and her children independently. This job and break away from her husband marked her independence and the possibility of a different future. Thus, there was a movement between reproductive hope and transformative hope: her job became both the hope

for a better life within the current system and the means whereby she could reconstitute the gender relations in her lifeworld.

The security company's contract ended with ESKOM and in 2008, she obtained her first job at Medupi Power Station as a general worker for Roshcon and later as a traffic controller. Dikeledi noted that there were some added benefits to work on-site, such as the provision of transport to and from work, but described the work as tough and dangerous, with lots of dust to clean after drilling. There were very few women on-site and as a woman: "You had to work like a man. If you are a woman, you have to have balls to work on site" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). The space of the power station, while different to the mine, has similarities in terms of the construction of masculine bodies as the historical, social and cultural norm of the site, with women's bodies marking a disruption (Benya, 2016; Puwar, 2004). As noted in Chapter 7, previously, women on site felt that they were constantly stared at and harassed and Dikeledi, despite being a small, slender woman, recounted having to make her body and bodily practices more masculine – "you have to have balls" and be "tough" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She explained that as a woman, you must learn not to worry about the dust, dangers or heavy lifting. These were the requirements of the space of the power station through which women continued to be 'othered' in the masculinist spatial imaginary of Lephalale.

In the course of her workplace experiences, Dikeledi realised that she had a "political thing" in her. Even though she grew up in a politically quiet environment, where no protests occurred in her village, there were political reverberations in her life that took root inside of her: "This political thing, I realised it's something I've learnt or something that touches me" (31 August, Dikeledi, 2016). Her first political memory was from when she was young and Mandela was released – she did not sleep the night before. There were soldiers and hippos[109] in her area and she was caught up in a mixture of feelings of fear, hope and excitement for the future.

Dikeledi recalled the songs that were sung during the period in which Mandela was released – songs about Mandela, songs of freedom and black power. She particularly remembered songs by Blondie Makhene, an artist from Soweto, as "always being in my head" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). Makhene's well-known struggle songs included *Amaqabane Too Many People*; *Woza Woza ANC*; and *Mandela Uthhayihlome* (Kioko, 2019). Dikeledi smiled as she

[109] A hippo is a South African armoured personnel carriers (Picard, 1993).

spoke about *Mandela Uthhayihlome* as a song that had stuck with her. Even though she had never travelled to Soweto or participated in the protests and strikes in and around Johannesburg, these struggles were carried to her, across space-time, through the rhythms and lyrics of music. Makhene, who became famous with a group called *African Youth Band* and with *Amaqabane*, described how his songs were intended to "inspire the oppressed to fight against the system that oppressed them" and he believed that, "people need to understand that our music is there to root us into our consciousness. They bring us to where we want to be even before we get there" (cited in Miya, 2010, p. n.p.). He explained that sangomas sing ancestral songs before communicating with ancestors, and similarly, struggle songs carried people to where they yearned to be before they arrived there. Makhene speaks to how music becomes deeply rooted in one's being and consciousness, in an anticipatory manner, in ways that are both cognitive and affective (Miya, 2010). For Bloch (1986, 2000), music was not simply compensatory but generative of rebellion and transformation (Levitas, 2013). Music speaks to the subject that "is still fermenting… has not yet come" (Bloch, 1986, p. 1070). This draws parallels with Robin Kelley's (2019) reflections on the blues. He argues that the blues stretches time, generating spaces of imagination and possibility. The blues carries both the burden and relentlessness of harsh realities and a force of "movement, of hope", an idea of what the future could be (Woods, 1998, p. 19). The sensuality, rhythms, and lyrics of such music genres generate possibilities of imagining everyday life as transformed. Dikeledi explained that she carried these political songs within her, and "That [political] thing, I lived with it in me" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). Songs took root inside of her as a 'political thing', which have reverberated throughout her life, and connected to a political imaginary of how things could be otherwise.

Dikeledi carried this "political thing" with her into the workplace, and stated, "I realised when I started work. I can't tolerate someone who is punishing or treating someone badly in front of my eyes. I always ask, 'what is it that you are doing?'" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). Songs of freedom, future space-times and social relations, moved her to struggle against abusive relations in the workplace. She became a shop steward for the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) at the security company, and subsequently for NUM and NUMSA at Medupi Power Station. She explained that workers chose her to represent them at the security company because they saw that she was not afraid to ask their employer questions, particularly on payday when they did not receive their wages or the correct amount thereof. She again referred to that "political thing" inside of her when she became a shop steward: "because of that spirit you have, you continue helping people, you continue fighting… Shop stewards are

not getting paid. You are just helping people from your heart. Sometimes you use your own pocket to help… you volunteer from your heart" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). This spirit or "political thing" inside her is indicative of both her refusal and resistance of the given set of social relations in the workplace and her hope for the constitution of alternative labour relations, which Kenny (2018) argues is key site of contestation in the making of subjectivity.

The first strike that she participated in at Medupi was in 2008, and it raised her expectations for a better future. The strike was joined by political leaders, notably ANC leaders, including the current mayor, which in her eyes added importance to the event. Dikeledi stated, "political leaders were part of us, promising us big things". This was mainly in relation to the minimum wages on-site, but according to her, things did not get better after the strike: "There were big promises but nothing" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). After the strike, she was elected as a shop steward for NUM because workers saw that she was not afraid during the strike. Her team was promised that after their training as traffic control officers under Roshcon was completed, they would be employed directly by ESKOM However, there were no jobs for the trainees after completion of their training – Dikeledi connected this to their participation in the strike. The event of the strike was a learning space for her. Even though she learnt political strategy from NUM, she expressed disappointment in the trade union. She stated that, "NUM is playing politics, they don't care that much about workers. They just put promises and go away… they don't come down to workers [when there is a strike]. They go straight to management, discuss the issues there. They left you like that" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). Dikeledi felt that leaders compromised workers and changed positions without going back to workers first. She therefore rejected the way that the union did not take mandates from the workers whom they claimed to represent. She explained, "COSATU… there is nothing there… it's pushing political positions to parliament or whatever ministry, they're not pushing workers' issues. They are pushing themselves into positions" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). There is a Sepedi saying that came up during my fieldwork: "an eagle flies high but still has to come to the ground to eat", meaning that no matter your position, you still have to be rooted, you are still of ordinary people. Dikeledi's experience echoes Webster and Buhlungu's (2004) analysis of the internal crisis of representation in trade unions, growing individualism and a culture of self-enrichment.

Dikeledi's experience of trade unions mirrored how she felt about the ANC after the strike. She stated that ANC officials used people to disrupt work at Medupi. The now mayor, Jack Moloko

Maeko, addressed the crowds when there were disruptions so that people would think that he has power and a mass base. In this manner, she believed that he used workers at Medupi to demonstrate that he could influence disruptions if he wanted to – and this assisted his ascent into the mayoral office. She claimed that before he became mayor, he made promises to the people, but this changed when he took office. The strikes at Medupi Power Station were thus part of intra-elite struggles over the control of resources and patronage networks (von Holdt & Naidoo, 2018). However, this does not mean that workers were passive victims of these intra-elite struggles as workers created and used the space to better their working conditions (von Holdt & Naidoo, 2018). Dikeledi rejected this hollowing out of collective movements such that they became spaces for the personal accumulation of power and continued to push workers' issues.

With the little money that the traffic controllers were paid out, Dikeledi went to the Midrand for rigging training and then returned to Medupi for work, this time in the engineering sector, which was better paid. She joined NUMSA in 2012. She explained that she took a long time to join because by that time she was sick and tired of politics after cycles of hope and disappointment. She first met Irvin Jim, the General Secretary of NUMSA, on-site in 2010 when there was another strike regarding food, which was making workers sick (see Chapter 7). She enjoyed Jim's "straight talk" and came to trust the NUMSA co-ordinator of the sector because he was open and willing to listen. NUMSA officials eventually persuaded her to join the union and she became a shop steward again. Even though she spoke better of NUMSA, and believed the union was different to COSATU unions, she still ended up feeling disappointed and let down. Reflecting on the 2013 strike over issues of standardisation amongst the different contractors on-site, Dikeledi stated that NUMSA did not do enough to protect workers, especially worker leaders. She explained, "my problem is NUMSA failed to protect leaders. Even if I get a job right now, I won't manage to play games with my kids' lives… It's painful". Employers identified strong leaders, "like they are the enemy", and the union was unable to defend her and others. She emphasised that shop stewards are the "foot soldiers" of the struggle and that "there is no union without shop stewards" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). Shop stewards are the ones who can build collective power but the union failed to protect them, and she was dismissed after the unprotected strike.

In 2013, Dikeledi was part of establishing the Lephalale Local Community Forum, which existed until 2015. The Forum was comprised of representatives from the villages, Marapong

and workers at Medupi Power Station, and held collective meetings with ESKOM leadership, Lephalale Municipality, SANCO and chiefs regarding issues such as local employment, unfair dismissals at Medupi, and skills development. She explained that the ANC mayor sabotaged the Forum and that the meetings that were scheduled to take place in 2015, never happened. The mayor undermined the collective process and made agreements with ESKOM without the involvement of the Forum. The Forum wrote letters to the mayor and the Premier of Limpopo, but never received any responses as to why the collective meetings ended or to the issues that they had raised. As a result of this experience, she left the ANC. She later joined the EFF, which she explained was not because she wanted to be part of politics but because she still wanted to find a way to push for workers' issues. She remarked that she did not know much about NUMSA's socialist project or the SRWP that they were trying to build. At the time of the research, she was also part of the Lephalale Unemployment Forum as another avenue from which to push issues. The mayor informed her in 2016 that she would never get a job on one of the projects again because she was an EFF member (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). In 2018, my Google alert for 'Lephalale' led me to a media article about a group from the LUF who had camped overnight outside Luthuli House, demanding the dismissal of the mayor because of corruption and the threats to their safety that they had received from the mayor and local councillors. Dikeledi was part of the group – she was still fighting.

The political spaces, events and processes that Dikeledi participated in provided ways for her to reflect and deepen her hopes. She stopped placing as much hope in trade unions and political parties, which she came to view as having different interests to workers and community members. As such, she undertook a process of grounding her hope in the conditions in which she found herself and made assessments of possibilities for change. However, this did not lead to despair and disillusionment, but constituted a hope, not based on formal structures or organisations, but on herself and the local collectives around her: ordinary workers, shop stewards and community activists.

At the time of the interview, she was still blacklisted at Medupi and could not find work elsewhere. Even though unemployed and struggling to take care of her children, she explained that, "I straight talk", "I can't compromise. I don't know how to compromise" and "that's why I'm suffering" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). The "political thing" inside of Dikeledi therefore also compelled her to an ethic and politics of truth-telling. Connecting back to music, Clyde Woods (1998) theorises a blues epistemology based in the blues as making truths visible

– the blues was originally named the "reals". Kelley (2019) argues that the blues calls out the truth of the system. As such, Dikeledi's becoming is connected to her ongoing systemic critique of the unlivable. She signalled that she would do the same again because she cannot be or do otherwise, despite sitting with the consequences for herself and her children. Her past experiences are embedded in her hopeful movements towards alternative horizons and social relations – ones which involve refusals of patriarchy, corruption, the abuse of workers and the instrumentalisation of worker and community organisations.

When Dikeledi reflected on her future, she expressed concern about her family, "I worry about my life. My kids. My kids are suffering… I have kids to take care of. They [the companies and the mayor] are punishing my kids" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). The urgent needs of the immediate moment sometimes overwhelmed her such that the expanse of space-time contracted. At times, in that overwhelm, she looked for an external 'saviour' as a solution to her daily troubles, such as a "Samaritan" to provide funds or stock for her to start up a small business. This 'declaration of dependence', as James Ferguson (2013) terms it, is perhaps not so much an embarrassing pursuit of dependency, but rather an act of claim-making on actors who may have a greater capacity to provide. In this way she is positioning herself within a network of social relations, rather than a social void. Ferguson (2013, p. 233) argues that, "[i]ncreasingly, then, those suffering from what I call *asocial* inequality actually seek out *social* inequality. A great deal of poor people's labour, in fact, goes into trying to turn asocial inequality into the social kind". This claim-making is a way of dealing pragmatically with her world at the barricades of survival.

Hopes are not mutually exclusive. Within Dikeledi's striving for independence, there was also a hope for greater sociality, even if expressed in forms of dependency. Moreover, I observed a constant movement in her cognitive and affective imaginings. Dikeledi stated, "I want my children to be better than me so they can provide for themselves and their kids. To live a better life", but even when her children had nothing to eat, she still imagined herself as affecting relations beyond her family. She explained, "I just want to push workers' issues… I want people to get jobs" and, "I can't help myself without community. I must be part of the community so that we can be able to push issues. Not only for me, for others. We are all suffering". When she spoke about her vision for the social relations of her community, she said, "I enjoy seeing everyone being able to provide for themselves, for their families. Being happy. Not living under

oppression under our black leaders. It's painful to see what is happening under our own leaders" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016).

Through her story, Dikeledi communicated a series of refusals and an affective and cognitive attachment to a future in which women are not abused in the home, workers are not mistreated in the workplace in terms of conditions and social relations, and communities are not oppressed or used by politicians. She envisioned a future in which everyone has enough materially to be independent, to look after themselves and their families: a transformation of everyday life. In her movement between the past, present and future, and back again, Dikeledi was constantly part of constituting collectives. She did not separate herself out as an individual; her becoming was always in relation to others. She felt tied to those who struggled against apartheid, to her mother who was abused, to her fellow workers who were mistreated, to communities who were trampled upon, and to her children who still needed to realise their futures. Multiple voices and space-times co-existed with her. Dikeledi's sense of self and freedom, in the present and future, was intertwined with that of those who came before her and those around her. She stated, "It's just what I feel. Even if I tell myself I'm not going to do that [fight for people], at the end, I'll stand up" (Interview, Dikeledi, 31 August 2016). She faced the future, through a connection to past injustices, with a "political thing" beating inside of her, generating the blue of the Not-Yet by opening up possibilities for alternative, liveable futures (Bloch, 1986; Kelley, 2019).

We stopped the interview that evening when her baby kept crying, drawing attention to immediate needs. Even though I write Dikeledi's story under the category of hope, I remember feeling devastated and gripped by questions regarding the ethics of research after the interview. But perhaps that is the point: hope that is potentially transformative carries with it deep despair and memories of past injustices that force one to doubt and question. There is certainly no victor's narrative of progress in her story. She continues to haunt me in her refusal to be silenced and in her injunction to generate liveable futures: a reminder that a future of freedom is "still Not-Yet".

8.5 Tumelo's Hope for the Constitution of Social Relations of Equality and Dignity in the Workplace: *"I had to say No. I don't have to compromise"*

I first encountered Tumelo in May 2016 at a meeting of unfairly dismissed Medupi workers with their lawyer at the NUMSA local office in Lephalale. Tumelo stayed in the office

afterwards to chat with the local official. The three of us remained for hours together in the office – I mostly listened and asked questions, scribbling in my journal. Tumelo was a full-time NUMSA shop steward at Medupi, who was dismissed after a strike action and then blacklisted at ESKOM projects. That day he told me that he refused to sign the peace agreement after the strike and as a consequence management informed him that he would not get employment again on-site. I wanted to know more about this refusal. What drove him to give up his job and income for an ethic or politics? What was this politics? What collective was he generating through his refusal? As discussed in the previous chapter, wage labour, or the absence thereof, takes on a central, often directive, role in many people's everyday lives in Lephalale. Tumelo's story shows an ambivalent attachment to work – unlike some stories in the previous chapter, for him, work was not perceived as the solution to an imagined future. He demonstrated a refusal to participate in given social relations at the workplace and to accept working conditions that he experienced as harmful or intolerable to himself and his workmates. This refusal was combined with a hope for alternative social relations generated through a political community of workers.

I met Tumelo again a month later in June 2016. We had arranged to meet in Lephalale and go together for a weekend to where he lived in Ga-Seleka. Tumelo lived in Kopanong village, meaning 'Coming Together', and his mother and sister stayed in the neighbouring village, 'Friendship', both of which fell under Ga-Seleka. Once you turned off the main tar road, the road to the village was dusty and potholed. He explained that Exxaro has promised to finance the development of a new road privately, not through the municipality (Field notes, 18 June 2016). When we met another time in 2019, the road had been completed and he reflected that there was political interference in the process, it took longer than it should have, it was constructed poorly and that "Exxaro did not do us a favour. It was not a favour. Exxaro should do that and more" (Interview, Tumelo, 29 June 2019).

The village was quiet and everyone knew each other and the animals – families have had the same stand for generations. Tumelo had 14 cows and a few goats and chickens. He explained that he used to drink milk from the goats and cows, but now it is so dry that he leaves the little milk produced for the calves. Under drought conditions, it is difficult to look after the cows, but he explained that as a black farmer you do not get a good price for your cows because the white farmers are still racist and control the market. We walked around the village as he explained to me that there used to be a field to plant vegetables, but over the past years it has been too dry to sustain the field. There were still some fruit trees, such as orange, mango and

papaya trees. The village had one streetlight and a cleared patch of ground to play sport, mostly soccer. There was no piped water into the homes or sewerage system, only long drops.[110] A few residents had managed to dig boreholes to obtain water, but water was a problem for everyone. We visited the one small shop in the village to buy avocadoes for breakfast for one rand each. Tumelo explained that most of the shops were owned by Zimbabweans or Pakistanis in the villages, but that they were accepted as part of the community. On the way back from the shop, Tumelo pointed out the bell that was rung if there was to be a community meeting the next morning. Throughout the weekend, we visited people or people stopped by if they saw Tumelo sitting outside. He described the village as very poor but people knew each other, were more generous with each other than rich people, and people felt safe in the village (Field notes, 18 – 20 June 2016).



Figure 14: Kopanong village in Ga-Seleka (Image by Thembi Luckett, 2016)

Tumelo was born in Ga-Seleka in 1970, into a family of six children. His parents came from Botswana "with nothing". He explained that it is possible that his ancestors were not from Botswana but were Southern Basotho because:

[110] The prevalence of pit latrines in rural areas are an example of the enduring spatialised and racialised nature of poverty in South Africa.

> "It was the time when they were moving free over the country and they moved from the Bloemfontein side until they reached Botswana, and they decided to call themselves Tswanas because that is a Tswana-speaking area because they wanted to be accepted by the communities around those areas, and even now when you go to Bloemfontein side… you will be treated with respect because my family are sort of royalties" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016).

This can be read as an example of a greater spatial and ethnic fluidity before the institutionalisation of determined racial identities and national borders (see Chapter 5).

His parents worked as farmworkers on different farms in the area and his mother used to recount the hardships of being a farmworker:

> "She used to say, for an example, if you are off sick and maybe the farmer will come to you and visit you and if they found you sitting outside and not sleeping, he will tell you, 'It means you are fine because you are not sleeping. So tomorrow I need you back at work'. And they would just rest only on Christmas day and all the other holidays they were required to work" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016).

Looking back, Tumelo noted that his parents were not political, and were under the control of the white farmers during his childhood. Only later in life did he come to realise the significance of events such as the 1976 Soweto students' uprising.

Tumelo recalled with joy traversing the mountainous space to herd cattle and hunt with dogs as a young boy. In Chapter 5, I described Tumelo's love for school, despite its poor conditions, as one of the few places where he could gain information and knowledge about the world around him. This search to read the world continued throughout his life – each time we met thereafter, I would always collect political and information booklets and magazines, such as *Amandla! Magazine* or *Right2Know* booklets, to bring to him. He recounted one particular incident at school when he stood up to his teacher, as perhaps the first time he defied an authority figure. He explained that they were reading *Animal Farm*, and the teacher interpreted the book incorrectly and he publicly corrected her. His teacher was initially angered by him, but over time she nurtured him. He stated that, "she trained me to not be afraid of raising issues" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). This was something that he carried with him into various workplace spaces.

In the early 1990s, after he completed his schooling, Tumelo left his village in Ga-Seleka and moved to Johannesburg in the hope of finding waged labour. What followed next was a series of ambivalent attachments to work, refusals of given social relations in the workplaces resulting in him quitting or being dismissed, as well as connections to collectives of workers – sometimes

he severed these connections and sometimes he maintained them to the detriment of his individual livelihood. I track some of these instances below in an attempt to tease out the nature of Tumelo's refusals, the hopes connected to such, and the collectives that he was part of constituting as he navigated his way through different workplaces.

His first job was at a property company in Johannesburg where he had to check receipts after people paid their rent. The conditions were "horrible" and he was only paid 20 rand per day. His employer offered him accommodation as part of his payment but he refused this assumed relation and 'benefit' because he decided that it was important to maintain his independence from his boss. He explained that, "it just came to me naturally [to refuse the accommodation] because I could see, I could just see people who were offered accommodation by their employers, they were being harassed, and at any given time when he needs you. He can even wake you up to come and do something for him. And so I decided against taking that offer" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). This observation that the employer's ownership of space was concomitantly a form of control over time and a relation of harassment repeated what his mother experienced as a farmworker – a condition of subjection by a presumed authority that Tumelo observed, reflected on, and refused. He stayed in the job for more than a year and then decided to leave because whenever he discussed his working conditions with his employer, "he would just take it as a joke… there was no progress" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Thus, in his first job, Tumelo struggled to shift the working conditions and when he could not, his refusal manifested as an exit from that workplace, investing in the possibility of alternative social relations in another workplace.

Tumelo subsequently moved to Bryanston and worked for approximately a year at a petrol station. He described the conditions as better because at least he would go home every day with something in his pocket from tips. The workers, including Tumelo, had frequent arguments with the employer. He explained a case in point when there was a funeral at home, the employer denied him family leave but Tumelo went home anyway. He refused the imposed and assumed authority in the employment relationship and affirmed his own needs (to be with his family) and capacities (to express care and support) beyond wage labour relation. When he returned to work after the funeral, he was dismissed (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016).

In 1998, Tumelo was employed at a different petrol station in Randburg where he worked until 2002, when the business was sold to another owner, who was disrespectful and treated workers

poorly. The social relation was a site of contestation and he expressed feeling alone in his confrontations with the owner. He stated that, "it was only me who could talk to him about how he could treat us, and the rest of the guys will keep quiet" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). This was the first time that he spoke about working with trade unions. His previous experiences of poor treatment in the workplace led him to contact SATAWU. There was no union at the petrol station and he attempted to organise with the assistance of SATAWU officials but explained that workers were too afraid to join and pointed him out to the employer as the one trying to recruit. Tumelo's experience of feeling alone and betrayed by workers signals an imagined worker collective that he felt should be there but was absent. He was unable to constitute this collective, and his disappointment suggests a hope that failed to bring about transformation in the workplace.

Tumelo recounted that he was consequently targeted by the owner. He recalled one instance:

> "Even when there is no mistake he [the owner] will pick up a mistake. In the morning he would come and just pass in front of me without greeting and then I will keep quiet. And then later he would call me to his office and say, 'Why didn't you greet me this morning?' And I would say to him, 'I don't remember signing a contract that I must start by greeting you first and then you will greet me… And he said, 'No, I am the boss.' And I said, 'You are the boss but you can't force me to greet you'" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016).

Thus, again Tumelo refused the notion that the control over space and capital by the owner of the petrol station translated into dictating the terms of the social relation. He continued to explain that this reached a culmination point:

> "Tensions developed on a daily basis until I saw I can't handle this anymore… One day he called me in his office for a disciplinary hearing, and it was only me and him. And then out of anger I told him, 'just wait there I am coming'. I went to the dressing room, took off the garage uniform and put on my clothes. And then came back and threw the garage uniform at him and said, 'Just stay with your uniform and find somebody who can work for you, not me'" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016).

Tumelo withdrew himself from a situation in which he was unable to constitute a worker collective and in which he was consistently targeted. He refused to participate in a disciplinary hearing that he believed would be flawed and biased and, as such, he refused to activate his 'rights' under a system that upheld unequal social relations. In a Bartleby-like move, Tumelo withdrew from the operation of employment relations at this workplace and decided that he would rather not have the little money that he received, even though life was tough without the money. He stated that, "even though life was tough for me, I had to say No. I don't have to

compromise on some of the issues… There are still people that believe that half of bread is better than nothing. It doesn't matter if the bread has been to the ground and is full of dust, they'll pick it up and eat" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Tumelo therefore critiqued the present configuration of social relations by generating a political imaginary in which no one would have to eat crumbs from the ground.

After a long period of unemployment, Tumelo was subsequently employed at an engineering company, New Concept Mining, near Soweto, during which time he had his first experience as a shop steward. It was technical work whereby he tested bolts to ensure that there were no leaks when inserted into valves. He explained that "there was smoke from welding all over and you could feel that this is very risky… most of the people who were working there were coughing non-stop" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). NUMSA was already present in the company and he recounted that he became a shop steward after challenging the Human Resources Manager for under-paying workers by a few rand each time. Some workers accepted being underpaid because it was such small amounts, but Tumelo queried his payment because he asserted that, "this is my money", regardless of how little the amount owed to him was. When he managed to win back his wages, his fellow workers persuaded him to stand for a shop steward position. Tumelo took up a grievance in the workplace when one of the foremen insulted workers. Workers came to him and said, "'this guy [the foreman] insulted us' and then I said, 'Guys are you going to leave it like this?' and they said, 'But what can we do?', and then I said, 'No, we are going to open a grievance against this guy [the foreman]'" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). In this moment, I argue that Tumelo was trying to reconstitute social relations at the workplace such that the worker collective had greater power to potentially generate more equal relations. Tumelo doggedly pursued the grievance for months by consistently raising the issue with the Production Manager of his department who kept postponing the grievance hearing. Eventually he escalated the matter to the General Manager and opened up a grievance case against the Production Manager as well. He recounted that they were both given final written warnings even though they were white, and vividly portrayed an image of the large foreman reduced to tears during the hearing in a shift in the racial dynamics of the relation. Despite this victory, Tumelo was still dissatisfied because he had read up on company policy and believed that the foreman should have been dismissed for his offence. Collectively, workers decided to refer the matter to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

This was the first time that Tumelo was to attend a hearing at the CCMA and because NUMSA did not provide training, he educated himself on the company's policies and on labour legislation: "I was just making sure that every document that was talking about labour issues I would grab it and read it and file it safely". He explained that while they were waiting for the date for the case, "the unfortunate part is I got a job". Tumelo expressed regret at not being able to handle the matter at the CCMA and disappointment that workers let the case go after he left because "they were afraid to make follow-ups" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). He likened their response to that of his parents under the control of farmers, drawing on this past in his striving for alternative social relations. Again, Tumelo showed an ambivalent relationship to the worker collective that he was part of constituting, but I argue that his disappointment is also a reflection of his hope for worker collectives that do not rely on any particular individual and have the power to change the workplace and social relations therein, thus pushing against the tide of the individualisation of trade union politics. Furthermore, the workers with whom he was involved continued to contact him for assistance after he left – perhaps an indication that they too became more intolerant of abuse and hopeful of the future through their inter-subjective interactions.

Tumelo absconded from work at New Concept Mining for 31 days and explained that he then returned to the company to "test" them and give them a "tough time", even though he knew he would not get, and did not want to get, his job back, he laughed (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). He argued with management that he had been sick and a traditional doctor had helped him, but the HR department responded that they did not accept medical certificates from traditional doctors. Tumelo played with the company in an attempt to aggravate them and probe their discriminatory policies regarding traditional versus western medicine. It has been difficult to try to unpack the dynamics and social relations contested, refused and opened up through this return to the company, which for Tumelo was just to "test" and provoke them, he explained while laughing – inviting me to share his critique of workplace logics. Lisa Bhungalia (2019, p. 2), in her analysis of humour and transgression as a mode of refusal in Palestine, argues that "[t]o laugh or smile in the face of power is not necessarily an expression of opposition; it is a refusal to recognize the authoritative figure itself." Tumelo's playfulness and humour presents a different grammar to that of conventional practices of workplace resistance and as such, destabilised the logic and rationality of the colonial workplace through a disinvestment in such. He demonstrated a cognitive and affective relation to the present space-time as one of estrangement, such that the taken for granted and closure of the present is disrupted and the

possibility of different political orders is asserted (Abensour, 1999; Bhungalia, 2019; Levitas, 2013).

After yet another period of unemployment, which Tumelo described as, “painful because I would try, I would walk all over the place trying to find a job” (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016), he decided to leave Johannesburg to look for a job in Lephalale – reversing the historical direction of migrant labour – Lephalale was now discursively and materially constituted as a space of possibilities, the ‘new Johannesburg’(see Chapter 7). In December 2012, he started work for a subcontractor of Actom at Medupi Power Station. He travelled from his village, two hours each way, every day. The daily routine was exhausting – catching the bus at 4 am and returning home after 8 pm. After the initial induction period with the company, workers spent time idling and the senior supervisor made them do tasks that they were not employed to do, such as removing weeds and cleaning toilets. In another instance of refusal, Tumelo refused to undertake tasks that were not part of his job description, he told the supervisor that, “I am not here to be played, I can’t take this”. He was threatened with dismissal and as a result approached the site manager, recalling that, “I was very angry and I was using very harsh words, and I said, ‘Get a leash and tie that dog of yours and tell it when to bark and when to stop. Because I am not going to allow it to bark at me like it pleases’” (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). In the context of South Africa, where black people were dehumanised under apartheid and often treated as worse than white-owned dogs, Tumelo reversed the relation, referring to his white supervisor as a dog, again subverting assumed logics and practices.

Tumelo was subsequently sent to Medupi site to work. On-site, he could see that things were not right: “This is a project from hell. It started with issues and it will end with issues” (Interview, Tumelo, 13 May 2016). Once more, Tumelo began to constitute a collective by focusing on union activities. When he arrived, there was only one main union, UASA, which he described as a “joke”. He knew NUMSA from Johannesburg and brought NUMSA forms to the company, recruiting workers who also did not trust UASA, until NUMSA became the majority union at the company and in 2013, he was elected as a shop steward. Tumelo was frequently denied time off for shop steward activities but he quickly studied the Project Labour Agreement, learnt what his rights were on-site, and subsequently did not request time off, but rather informed the company of his trade union responsibilities, and as such, claimed and asserted his responsibility to the worker collective that he represented.

In 2013, there was a strike at Medupi over travel allowances because there was a discrepancy between the allowances that blue-collar workers received in comparison to the higher amount that supervisors and managers received. Tumelo explained that there was inequality at every level on site, from transport allowances to food and accommodation. It was the first strike that he had participated in and he experienced the strike as "chaotic" during a period of volatility at Medupi. NUMSA was more actively involved than the other unions and he focused on "learning more in terms of strikes and how to handle strikes… it was just a learning stage" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). He reflected on the lack of organisation during the strike and, similar to Dikeledi, noticed how worker leaders were targeted by management after periods of mobilisation.

After the strike, Tumelo was elected as a plant shop steward and in 2014 was elected as a full-time shop steward for Medupi. Again he approached his position as an opportunity to learn and to grow, not in terms of career, but in terms of "struggle". He described his role as a full-time shop steward as one in which he was constantly learning and thinking on his feet. It was an activity that made him proud because it provided an avenue for him to attempt to transform workplace relations to something different from the cycles of exploitation that he had experienced, and his parents had experienced before him. He stated that, "I have been exploited for a long time, so I didn't want the same to happen to the employees… Sometimes workers would interpret this as 'He wants to be seen as a hero', of which that was not the case, it was just to say that we need to be treated equally here" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). He would become so absorbed with his work on site that he would forget to eat and only realise when he got home that he was hungry. The everyday rhythm of a shop steward was different to the monotonous, determined time of wage labour.

On the 25th of March 2015, there was another strike on-site. Tumelo explained that it was not organised by any union and the full-time shop stewards were taken by surprise. The shop stewards played a monitoring and mediating role, asking workers to not vandalise or destroy any property to prevent workers receiving harsh penalties. A memorandum was submitted with demands pertaining to the abolishment of hostels, an increase in the living out and travel allowances, completion bonuses, skills development and opposition to the employment of 'foreigners' on-site. After the memorandum submission, contractors sent workers smses, which threatened disciplinary action against workers participating in industrial action and the site was reopened after the Easter weekend on the 9th of April without any of the workers' demands

being met. Workers were frustrated by this and, in response, took over and blocked the space of the T-junction to Medupi, giving employers an ultimatum to respond to their demands. Thereafter, the situation escalated, an agreement could not be reached, and ESKOM decided to close down the accommodation for Medupi workers, obtaining a court order against those who refused to leave. From then, contractors recruited workers back on-site through the imposition of a peace agreement – companies went as far as the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal to meet with workers individually to sign the peace agreement. Workers were informed that they would be dismissed if they did not sign. Between May and August, disciplinary hearings were held and over one thousand workers were dismissed. Tumelo refused to sign the peace agreement and was dismissed in August that year (Interview, Tumelo, 13 May 2016, 20 June 2016).

Tumelo was informed by management that he would never get a job on-site again because he was "too loyal" to the "wrong people" – his constituency. He explained to me that he refused to sign the peace agreement and refused the corruption and co-option between managers and shop stewards because, "I need to be able to sleep at night. I can't run away from my constituency or be corrupt" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). This mode of refusal, more active than Bartleby's non-activation through withdrawal, indicates a deeply hopeful attachment to possibilities through worker collectives. After years of a somewhat ambivalent connection to worker collectives, Tumelo refused to betray the workers that he represented and in so doing, imagined worker politics as that which could bring into being something radically different from relations of domination and corruption. Even though this battle had already been lost, workers had signed peace agreements or had been dismissed, Tumelo's refusal persisted because of the possibilities that he imagined could be actualised, although maybe not today, through collective becoming. In the process of constituting his own subjectivity through reflection, praxis, and connections to collectives in the workplace, he simultaneously contributed to the possibility of the reconstitution of social relations in the workplace.

When I last met with Tumelo in 2019, he was still unemployed, blacklisted, and waiting for his dismissal case to appear in the Labour Court. Tumelo explained that he hoped to be a shop steward again one day: "wherever I go I am still prepared to do the same thing… I take myself as being a unionist for life". He expressed wanting to "fight", "defend people", "make things better" (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016, 29 June 2019). The everyday rhythm of a shop steward was different to that of the monotonous time of work with set hours of sleep and waking, mealtimes, work and private life (Lefebvre, 2004). The energy utilised as a shop

steward disrupted this repetitive time, and held out the possibility of different rhythms of life, as each day brought unexpected challenges, erratic mealtimes, a lack of clear distinction between the work day and private life as energies were invested into fighting for people across hours, and the dynamic and temporality of the fight generated new energies and possibilities. The energy of being a shop steward even interrupted Tumelo's dreams as he expressed that he still dreamt all the time about the Industrial Relations Manager at Medupi – in his dreams they fought and argued about his dismissal and conditions on-site. When he walks in town, workers still approach him, asking for advice – if he can assist, he does, otherwise he refers workers to the full-time shop stewards (Interview, Tumelo, 20 June 2016). Thus, even after his dismissal, the rhythm of being a shop steward has left traces in his and others' everyday lives. Despite the crisis and stagnation of the trade union movement, through Tumelo's story, "the enduring power and meaning of collective worker identity to ordinary South African workers" (Kenny, 2020, p. 121) is evident. The collective political subjectivity of 'workers' and 'trade unionists' persists as a hopeful resource through which to transform everyday life (Kenny, 2018, 2020).

NUMSA, the collective that Tumelo was part of constituting, remains contradictory and fragmented, and is simultaneously the Not-Yet worker collective of his political imaginary. He explained that since his dismissal he was not able to be part of the organisational space of the union because they did not accommodate retrenched and dismissed workers, that NUMSA had not built a United Front in the area, that Medupi shop stewards were too arrogant and did not build enough solidarity with workers outside of Medupi project, there was too much vying for political positions in the union, and that the senior officials sold out with the Medupi project. That NUMSA disappointed him in these ways indicates an enduring hope in worker collectives. In the village, Tumelo is still part of constituting collectives. In 2019, he was part of establishing a community committee to negotiate with a mining company. This time, he was busy reading up on the Mining Charter – perhaps preparing himself for the next battles. In his daily life, he explained that he sits with whoever is around: "we talk about things to improve our lives and the community. We sit and talk… I talk to people who are older than me because they have been there and they can explain some of the things that happened before I was there… I get strength from going to the people" (Interview, Tumelo, 29 June 2019). As with Dikeledi, his hope for a different future is embedded in a relationship to the past, and the oppression that people like his parents suffered.

Tumelo occupied and shaped different space-times in the course of his life, from his village to the City of Gold, to the City of Coal with its 'project from hell', and back to his village. Waged work determined much of this movement and while capitalist relations are organising pillars of social life (Lordon, 2014), Tumelo's relation to wage labour demonstrated an ambivalent attachment. In different moments, he distanced or estranged himself from the dominance of capital, to relate to work as more than merely a source of income or a means to an end, affirming his personhood beyond what an income can provide. Tumelo consistently strove for not only better working conditions in terms of wages and benefits – a manifestation of reproductive hope within the bounds of wage labour – but more significantly, through struggles over sets of relations, pushing towards horizons of qualitatively different social relations in the workplace (Kenny, 2018). At different moments, he moved towards a hope or claim on the future, and at other moments, his political activity manifested through a refusal to participate in accepted working conditions and presumed social relations between workers and employers or managers, refusing to allow capital to fully organise or dominate everyday life, and thus shifting *spatial practices* away from the logic of conceived space. The workplace became a space through which to struggle for lived space; the energies of fights and struggles generated hopes and claims for social relations of reciprocity counter to the logics of capital and domination. In Tumelo's political imaginary, workplace relations were not fixed or destined to repetitive cycles of exploitation, but rather, possibilities existed for relations in process – relations and subjectivities still becoming, which affirmed a different space-time, a Not-Yet in process.

Again, as with Dikeledi, there is no victor's narrative of progress in his story, as Tumelo remains unemployed and Medupi remains 'a project from hell'. Tumelo's story is not one of continuity and linear temporality, but one of ruptures, refusals and contestations. I argue that transformative hope is a political force, which through claims on the past, present and future, transform subjectivities in motion. Tumelo's hope, generated through inter-subjective processes in the workplace, contained possibilities for the constitution of alternative social relations and political communities that could shift the established 'order of things' of the present space-time. Despite the losses in his story, these possibilities were not erased and remain imprinted in spaces, subjectivities and collectives.

8.6 "Not all people exist in the same Now": The Refusal of Extractivist Space-Time and Nostalgia for a Home

> "*Not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, through the fact that they can be seen today. But they are thereby not yet living at the same time with the others. They rather carry an earlier element with them; this interferes*" (Bloch, 1991, p. 97).

Bloch (1991) analyses "non-contemporaneous" time, as discussed in Chapter 2. The pieces of the past in the present are not just economic 'hangovers', but also ideas, historical memories and unfulfilled desires. In contrast to Marx, who understands these remnants as 'backwards', Bloch recognises "non-contemporaneous" survivals as recalcitrant to capital's rule. Capital's development erodes and destroys previous economic and social structures and relations. Bloch argues that this gives rise to a misery and nostalgia for 'better' days amongst sections of the population, such as peasants (Schultz, 2014, p. 139). I argue that the intersection of different times and spaces can be generative and productive of alternative futures and possibilities. The connection to the past is not necessarily a conservative or reactionary connection and can also connect to the hopes and struggles of oppressed African ancestors (Winters, 2016). Authors such as W. E. B. Du Bois (2016) and Morrison (2004) draw attention to the importance of remembering and mourning losses from the past (Winters, 2016). Again, I return to the idea of haunting, and past and future ancestors, through this meditation on the hope for a home.

Amongst an older generation behind the mountain in the Waterberg, there exists nostalgia for the past that manifests as a longing for 'home'. This section is based on discussions I had with two different groups of elders. The first group I met through Tshepo, who was assisting them with their land claims, which were all linked to burial sites.[111] We met in a meeting room of the Marapong library - they all resided in Marapong after being evicted from living on farms in the Lephalale area. They were mostly born in the 1940s, with a few in the 1950s and 1960s, and came to Marapong between 1994 and the early 2000s after being evicted from the last farm that

[111] None of the land claims had been successful yet. For example Phefo explained that he was kicked off Diamant Four farm, where his grandparents and parents are buried, when it changed ownership in 1994. In 1999, he submitted a claim for the farm but all he knew was that it was still in process. Isaac submitted a claim for the farm Veldepees Pan, which he was chased off in 1972 and where his siblings are buried: "My sister's grave, I can't point now because they have a plough field" (Interview, Isaac, 17 May 2017). He was not allowed to visit the graves, and was still waiting for a response to his land claim. Others were still trying to gather all the documentation to submit a land claim. For example, Amos was in the process of collecting his siblings' birth certificates, ID documents, and the certificates of those who had died, so that he could submit a claim.

they lived on. While they expressed that life on the farms during apartheid was better than their lives now, in Marapong, I argue that they were not longing for the reconstruction of the apartheid past, but rather for aspects of that past, in opposition to a capitalist present and in the hope of a different future. The second group I visited with Naledi in Steenbokpan on Fanpan farm to discuss their struggle against the development of Boikarabelo mine in the area. Below, I argue that their space-time clashes with that of the development of the mine in the non-contemporaneous Waterberg. In this section, I bring the past into conversation with the present, such that it disrupts the linearity of progress, and the haunting search for a home over many generations is foregrounded. And furthermore, drawing on Lefebvre (1991b), I highlight the importance of land in the triad of land-capital-labour in the making of capitalist space, and in the particular context of Lephalale and its history of dispossession, the significance of land in the constitution of subjectivity and hopes.

Nostalgia for the past in South Africa, and more widely, has become a source of social inquiry in recent times. In South Africa specifically, there is the question of how to make sense of nostalgia for the past, not amongst oppressors but rather amongst oppressed people, for example in the work of Jacob Dlamini's (2009) *Native Nostalgia*. As Eric Worby and Shireen Ally (2013, p. 458) succinctly state: "Dlamini asked the politically incorrect question: could it be that life for blacks under apartheid – at least at sometimes, in some townships, under some conditions – was not quite as bad as critical histories of apartheid tell us they were? Is it possible that an oppressive regime could be remembered fondly by those it so ruthlessly repressed?".

Marcel Paret (2018) argues that Dlamini's (2009) recollections reflected a widespread reality in South Africa in pointing to various research studies that supported the notion that some black residents carry nostalgia for aspects of life under apartheid (Moiloa, 2012b; Reed, 2016). According to the 2008 Afrobarometer, nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of black residents stated that life was currently worse than it was under apartheid (Paret, 2018). The 2015 survey reported that 14 per cent of black residents considered the apartheid government better than the post-apartheid government, and 10 per cent of black residents endorsed a return to apartheid (Paret, 2018). This suggests the relevance of the affect of nostalgia in trying to understand dynamics in South Africa, and counter-intuitively, in making sense of forward movements and future projections, and therefore, its relevance for making sense of hope. This corresponds with the suggestion that postcolonial hope and utopianism is always in a dynamic relation with memory, relating both to the future and the past (Ashcroft, 2012; Winters, 2016).

The word nostalgia comes from *nos* or *nostos*, meaning return home, and *algia*, meaning longing, grief, suffering (Boym, 2007; Paret, 2018). Svetlana Boym (2007, p. n.p.) defines nostalgia as a "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed." Nostalgia expresses a loss or displacement in time and space, but it can also be an expression of a loss of a presence that was always absent (Boym, 2007; Worby & Ally, 2013). Boym (2007), writing from the United States as a Jewish immigrant from the former Soviet Union, argues that towards the end of the twentieth century, optimistic beliefs came to be replaced by nostalgia and that this was not an individual malady (such as melancholia), but rather an indication of the historical time we are in; it is a "historical emotion". Kathleen Stewart (1988) understands nostalgia in the time of late capitalism as a way of giving hope direction, often in the context of destruction of ways of living as capital moves from place to place, extracting what it needs and leaving rubble behind. Nostalgia disrupts the modern idea of time as a march of progress. However, Boym argues that this is not an anti-modern sentiment, but rather emerges as part of modernity and is able to provide a critique of the existing order (Paret, 2018).[112] Writing within the black radical tradition about the contemporary moment, Joseph Winters (2016, p. 21) argues that the past has fragments and remainders that are not integrated into a triumphant present, and as such the past is able to "disrupt, unsettle, and rework our sense of and relationship to the present".

The disruption of the idea of progress does not mean that nostalgia is only backward-looking, but rather that different times and spaces are brought to sit alongside each other. Boym (2007) argues that nostalgia can be both retrospective and prospective; the longing can belong to the past or to the future (Piot, 2010; Worby & Ally, 2013). And further, she contends that nostalgia can be both restorative and reflexive, denoting an emphasis on either 'rebuilding' a lost home or on affective and cognitive relations to loss and remembrance (Boym, 2007). In other words, the needs of the present can construct imaginings of the past which have implications for the making of futures. The recuperation of aspects of the past can be part of future-making. In this sense, nostalgia can move away from a 'stuckness'; an attachment to a lost object that leads to paralysis and melancholia (Worby & Ally, 2013). Longing and critical thinking are not necessarily opposed to each other, and thus affective longing can co-exist with critical reflection and judgement regarding the kind of society one hopes for (Boym, 2007).

[112] See, for instance, Jameson (1969) and Turner (1987).

As such, nostalgia contains a utopic dimension, which moves out of a bounded time and space, venturing beyond to the imagined. Jill Bradbury (2012, p. 342) investigates the potential of nostalgia to be generative:

> "for the present and for our imaginative reach toward new possible horizons. Perhaps nostalgia is not only a longing for the way things were but also a longing for futures that never came, or for horizons of possibilities that seem to have been foreclosed by the unfolding of events. Perhaps nostalgia is the desire not to be who we once were, but to be, once again, our potential future selves."

As such, the object of nostalgia can be a time or space, as well as a self that is yet to become, as subjectivity is constantly made and remade (Bradbury, 2012; Crites, 1986).

Nostalgia indicates dissatisfaction and discontentment with the present space-time. In relation to the idea of home, in Lephalale and surrounds, there is a disappointment that, even in a democratic South Africa, many still feel home-less, despite expectations to belong to one's land. Nostalgia indicates unease and a sense that "time and space [are] out of joint" (Dlamini, 2009, p. 4). The material conditions of the democratic South Africa, and in Lephalale, in a global economy, are those of widening economic inequality, continued racial segregation, increasing economic and social insecurity, environmental destruction and fracturing communities (Paret, 2018; Reed, 2016). In this context, the possibilities of being 'at home' become increasingly difficult and the subjectivity one imagined for oneself as being 'at home' – as having a sense of belonging, as feeling safe and recognised in a community, as having a certain level of needs met that allow for human flourishing – become elusive. The time of space-time of the imagined 1994 remains Not-Yet (see Chapter 6).

Through the stories of the elders in Marapong, there is a collective rejection of this life, this life of so-called democracy in Marapong. They depicted apartheid as better than the present, at least in their imaginaries. Their pasts continue to haunt them as state and private capital eroded that life, their ways of relating to the land, as well as their relation to their ancestors, and their selves as becoming ancestors. They communicated a sense that, at least on the farms, even during apartheid, there was no hunger and there was not complete alienation from one's land. Isaac, born in 1946 on a farm between Ellisras and Ga-Seleka, and chased away in 1994, stated that:

> "Everything here [in Marapong] is money… life here is not as good as it was where I grew up. Because where I grew up, I had a good life not struggling and I did everything I wanted to do. But here I am struggling a lot and I am not working I am just getting the grant… the municipality's control is harder than there on the farm

because the municipality is not helping us with anything" (Interview, Isaac, 17 May 2017).

Amos was born in 1968 in the Shongwane area on a farm that has approximately 30 family members' graves. They were forced to leave the farm in 1977 after his father had a disagreement with the farmer and the family moved to a farm, Altoostyd farm, where they were chased away in 1996 when the farm was sold to a new owner.[113] Eventually, they landed up in Marapong, and struggled to find a place of security to live in, forced to move from one house to the next. Despite his experience of farm evictions, he described life in Marapong as follows:

> "Nna ke bona okare mo Marapong mo ha goa loka. Ko ke tswang ko diplasing, ne ke phela monate ke sena ntho e ntshwenyang … Ke ne ke phela ke lokolohile, le he ke tswile ke ile kae ka itsi ke bolokehile, ha ke boa key a ko kae."
>
> "I think Marapong is not okay because where I am from on the farm I had a good life without any problems… I was always free even if I was to go somewhere I would come back knowing where I am going to" (Interview, Amos, 17 May 2017).

Thus, indicating a sense of belonging and being able to return to his place and land when he chose to.

Thabiso was born in Steenbokpan on a farm in 1963. Their family of nine was chased off the farm after his father had a work accident, and moved to another farm where Medupi is now. He worked for Matimba in the 1980s during its period of construction and later, after 1994, under a labour broker as an electrical worker at Matimba. At the time of the interview he was unemployed. He explained that: "I want to go back to the farm, I can plant trees, vegetables and fruits. This place [Marapong] is not nice for us. Life here is expensive… this life is not normal… We used to milk cows and plant fields... that is what makes us fight (Interview, Thabiso, 17 May 2017). And further that:

> "Sedimo sa batho ba bantsho goneyanong jaana, ko ba robetseng teng, ra sokola ka baka la sedimo sa bo rena, go ya ka mokgwa o ba re nyakang teng, ka tlholego e re tlholegileng ka yona … Sedimo sa bo rena se eme ka dinao."
>
> "The African ancestors wherever they are laying... we are struggling because of our ancestors because we are not living the same life we used to… our ancestors are angry" (Interview, Thabiso, 17 May 2017).

Tshepo added that Thabiso should not be unemployed and without a place where he feels at home because "in a correct way he is the owner of the farm that Medupi is operating in"

[113] This farm is now the site for planned mixed-income housing through a government initiated housing development project (see Chapter 4). It is unclear what will happen to his family's gravesites on the farm.

(Interview, Tshepo, 17 May 2017). Drawing on Lefebvre (2004, p. 16), one can ascertain a "discordance of rhythms" between everyday life in Marapong and life on the farms, which produces a suffering and nostalgia.

Their stories indicated a sense of belonging to the land on the farms, even though this belonging was insecure and they could be kicked off the land at any time, given the entrenched power of white farmers. The image and hope for a home amongst the dispossessed in Lephalale pushes, in particular ways, against the colonial order of things that reimagines social relations to the land, and thus holds possibilities for transforming everyday life. The production of Lephalale as a town was made possible through the making of home-lessness by the eviction of black, working class people from their land – for white farmlands and industrial development. Elders living in Marapong, recalled stories of dispossession of their land, often as a series of evictions from one farm to the next throughout their lifetimes, which eventually led them to live in RDP houses in Marapong. Ironically, many of the stories recounted evictions around the 1994 democratic transition period, a period that was meant to usher in a better and different life for the majority of the people in South Africa. People's stories of evictions repeatedly express that they were "chased away with nothing". Tshepo stated that, "I mean when you work for thirty years you become old… And they [white farmers] chase you away and you came out of there and have to start a new life" (Interview, Tshepo, 17 May 2017). One research participant reflected that, "they [the white farmers] treat us like we are not human" (Interview, Jacob, 17 May 2017). Thus, the making of the urban space of Lephalale, often in the name of a modernist conception of the future, relied on a delineation between "human" and "non-human", such that some could be discarded as debris when their labour power was no longer deemed necessary (Luckett, 2019).

For this group of elders, the loss of their homes was also the loss of their ways of life, identities and their connection to their land and ancestors. Nkosi (2018, p. 178) reflects on dispossession as a violent process that made "Africans what they were not." Following this line of thinking, I argue that the nostalgia for life on the farms is not longing for an actual space-time, but rather a longing for a home and be-longing, glimpses of which were experienced through relations to the land, which have become severed over decades of colonialism, apartheid and post-apartheid 'development' and 'democracy'.

In this sense, the elders in Marapong, with whom I spoke, never had a place of home, even though there was a connection to the land. As Bradbury (2012, p. 343, emphasis in original) states:

> "In apartheid South Africa as in other societies in conflict, this 'absence' was felt not only by those away from home, most poignantly exiled against their will, but even by those who remained at home but did not *feel* at home and yearned for a future South Africa in which to be 'at home.'… In particular, the longing for home, for the past, can be interpreted as about more than physical place and pivotally entails a *longing for be-longing*, for insertion into networks of people."

An imagined community of belonging is conjured through the tropes that life on the farms was more peaceful, that people in Marapong are violent and disruptive, and that life is no longer "normal".

The insecurity on the farms still provided a sense of greater belonging in comparison with the commodification of life in Marapong. The elders in Marapong communicated a refusal to be "aspirational in the right way" (McGranahan, 2016a, p. 338) – by this, I mean to invest in commodified futures in Lephalale, and rather invested in a "return" to the land, thus revealing the potential for memory to be constitutive of subjectivity and to reconfigure social and political relations (Schultz, 2014). Nostalgia, connected to a form of remembering, is also built on forgetting. Worby and Ally (2013, p. 458) understand forgetting as "co-constitutive of memory. Against conceptual oppositions that pit remembering against forgetting, or alternatively, that seek to remedy the fallibility of memory by seeking access to the "truth" of history… nostalgia is probably more usefully understood as a practice of coincident temporalities. Nostalgia, in this sense, denotes a specific way of enfolding the past into the present, and indeed the future." The Marapong elders demonstrated the potential, highlighted by Bloch (1986), for humans to reconfigure the relationship between past, present, and future; to alter temporal configurations as an activity of future-making (Schultz, 2014).

The Marapong library where we were meeting closed, and we moved outside to sit on a low wall, under a tree, next to the library. The sun was setting behind the shacks, as the conversation shifted to an anxiety about "where will we die" and a longing to return to our land, to rest, to die so that we may become 'who we are'. The elders expressed unease regarding where their children will lay them to rest. Tshepo explained that they will not rest in peace in Marapong. One research participant stated, "I don't want to be buried here [Marapong]… we don't get buried where there are no family members… I am going to be buried on the farm and even my

children… that is our will" (Interview, 17 May 2017). Tshepo interpreted that their children must know, "I am going back to the farm, so when I am dead, bury me there. I want to rest there" and further that, "they want to go back to their normal life because now it's like they are no more themselves… the land is part of their lives so they want to be buried on the farm" (Interview, 17 May 2017). Thus, for these elders, the relationship to land is integral to their sense of personhood. Amongst them, there is a searching to return to their land, a place of rest and peace, where they can finally die and become part of the ancestors (Luckett, 2019). The land, as the home of the ancestors, is not only an active force that makes life possible but also one that makes dying possible:

> "Ra go rwala mo ka lori ra fitlha ra go tsentsha ko ntlong ya gago wa robala mmamotlha le ka boshiu. Matsatsi a mabedi a a dira gore moya o wa gago pelo e ya gago e lokologe. E re ke dumetse go tla mo e leng gagesho. Mme badimo ba be ba re ngwana rena, ka gore o lwele, e tla keeng, ba go tseya wa tlhokafala."
>
> "And we take you there [to your farm] and you only sleep there today and tomorrow, and those two days then make your heart to relax and say, 'I agreed to come to where I belong'. And then your ancestors decide that because you have fought for their land, then you should join them in the after-life and you pass away" (Interview, 17 May 2017).

The above encounter with the elders' conversations around land, death and belonging echo Nkosi's (2018) tracing of the history and presence of land dispossession as far more than an economic or material loss. Land is integrally about death and the future. His conversation with a farmworker in Gauteng mirrors the above conversation: "We wonder what will happen to us if we were to die. We ask ourselves, 'Where will we die?' (*Sizofelaphi Na*?)... I wonder, how will my body be returned home? There is no rest here!"" (Nkosi, 2018, p. 152). Nkosi argues that this anxiety regarding where one will die is not merely about the finality of the material body but is also an insecurity about the future in which belonging to the land has been severed: dispossession "left many homeless and grave-less" (Nkosi, 2018, p. 148). Building on this, the nostalgia for the farms, and hope to reclaim the land and return, is hope for dying, and living, with a place to call home. This indicates a different relationship to the land, beyond that of private property or economic production, but rather a relationship of collective belonging to the land:

> "'Where will we die' raises epistemological, ontological, eschatological and ethical questions. Since it pushes us to a different understanding of relating to the land, at the same time pushes us to a way of being that is one with the land and a form of being that is committed to being part of the land. For a true humanity or humanness, as Krog (2015) argues, is one whereby we belong to the land" (Nkosi, 2018, p. 179).

Through nostalgic reconfigurations of social and spatial aspects of the past, the elders with whom I sat imagined a future of belonging and 'home'.

The Marapong elders' experiences of the past and search for a home reverberate through the present and echo experiences similar to those of the community on Fanpan farm in Steenbokpan, who, at the time of the research, were defending their home and the land that they live and die on in the face of evictions for coal mining development. According to the local town planner, "with projects such as Exxaro's Thabametsi mine, the Vedanta independent power plant, Boikarabelo mine, Sekoko mine, Sasol as well as Anglo coal's proposed mine - all in a 20 km radius from Steenbokpan – this small Bushveld town [Steenbokpan] might in the next two to five years grow to be even bigger than Lephalale" (cited in Cilliers, 2013, p. n.p.).

The Fanpan community is a group of 39 people from seven different families situated on a farm in Steenbokpan, west of Lephalale. The community has been opposing the development of Boikarabelo mine on the land where they have their homes, though they do not own this land. Fanpan farm is a hot and dusty area, surrounded by bushveld. I met with eight women and two elderly men, with Naledi, who was assisting them in their struggle. We sat in a circle, sheltered from the hot summer sun, under a tree. Despite patriarchal gendered relations, in this conversation, the women led.

Bongi, the oldest woman on Fanpan farm was born there in 1948. She stated that, "we are the first people here, they [white farmers] found us here even before those two houses", which were taken down by the owner of the farm (Interview, Bongi, 14 February 2017). Her mother was born on this land before her. I asked the research participants to map the community of Fanpan. They explained that there were older houses but that they were taken down by the current owner of the farm and seven new houses were built in 2000. There was a small vegetable patch and some hens around the houses. A fireplace was used for cooking and there was a small solar generator, used to charge their phones. A gate led to grazing land, and another gate to their graveyard, where they estimated more than one hundred graves reside – it was first established approximately in the 1940s. The graves are for their family members as well as people from other farms who came to bury their families here because the white farmers that they worked for did not want them to be buried on their farms during apartheid (Interview, 14 February 2017).

The water situation is dire in this dusty land. Water was only delivered once a week, which was often not enough to last the week. Bongi explained that their previous water tank was removed in an attempt to evict them, but another local councillor installed a new one. There was no piped sanitation and they had to use pit toilets. Promises were made by mining development companies to provide services, such as a school, but this never materialised, and their children wake up at 4 am daily to travel to Marapong or Leseding, which only has a primary school, to attend school. A donkey cart was used for the transportation of goods, with public transport being expensive and infrequent. The men living on Fanpan farm were farmworkers for the previous farm owner but, at the time of the research, no one had a job – they stated that the mine had brought people from 'outside' to start working there. The families survived on state grants, and the little small-scale farming that they undertook (Luckett, 2019).

In 2012, the land was leased to Resgen, a coal producer, for a railway line to transport coal to Richards Bay Coal Terminal port for coal exports. The railway line was to be built by contractor, Protech Khuthele, on the condition that the company provided services to the community. According to the Fanpan community, they were promised a school, sanitation, water, and electricity. The community still lacked all these services. The company tried to force them to sign papers agreeing to their eviction, which they refused to do. Their refusal drew a line in the sand, marking out their home and disavowing the authority of private companies.[114] Nora asserted that they have nowhere else to go and this was their home: "We were born here. Our parents were buried here" (Interview, Nora, 14 February 2017). The local cemetery was a point of contention and pain, again highlighting the significance of land in relations to ancestors. In 2015, Resgen fenced off the gravesite, which the Fanpan community agreed to because they believed that it would protect the gravesite from livestock. However, it later became a way of restricting their access to, and control over the gravesite. They have to contact a guard in order to access the gravesite, which is locked, and they have to get approval from Resgen for the burial of family members. Resgen informed them that only five more family members would be allowed to be buried at the gravesite due to space constraints.

[114] This refusal continues into the present. For instance, Leseding (including Fanpan) community members disrupted an 'engagement' meeting with Boikarabelo Mine in August 2019 for several reasons including the company's lack of direct community consultation, which it claimed it had undertaken previously, and the company's failure to respond to concerns (Mining and Environmental Justice Community Network of South Africa, 2019)

The Fanpan community was in the process of experiencing their home being unmade – they were being made home-less and grave-less by mining development – but they continued to invest in a future in which they would have a home and a place to die. A different space-time intersected with that of mining capital and the commodification of land. The 'height' of modernity stands alongside the 'old' and the 'debris'. These "non-contemporaneous" survivals are recalcitrant and resistant to capital's rule. Extractivist development, integrally tied to the making of Lephalale continues to dislocate people in time and space, uprooting them from their homes and their dead.

The community of Fanpan's refusal to move opens up the possibility of a different future to the dystopian one imagined in Chapter 4. Within the fragments of everyday life, are the unfolding possibilities of the blue of the Not-Yet. The research participants on Fanpan farm named their future imagining as "*Sifikile*: We have arrived." In this imagining they collectively described their idea of home thus: there would be no coal mine or coal power station; electricity would come from renewable energy sources, thereby changing relations to nature. There would be collective livelihood projects, such as collective farming, feeding projects and women's projects. The farm would be community-owned, without white people or bosses, generating new sets of social relations. *Sifikile* would have houses, with electricity and water, and roads connecting the houses. The community would have facilities, such as a shopping mall, school, clinic, police station, playground, graveyard, and church. There might still be tensions, for example, regarding whether to have a tavern or not, and who should manage facilities: the municipality, or community, and traditional leaders? Some though that "putting a municipality becomes chaos so it is better to have a chief". Eventually it was agreed that some of the facilities should be run by the municipality, such as the shopping mall and school, and some by the community, such as livelihood projects. There would be trees, grass and flowers in *Sifikile* – spaces of natural life, beauty, recreation and relaxation (Interview, 14 February 2017). As they collectively discussed and debated, they envisioned the possibility of alternative spaces, social relations and futures.

8.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced articulations of 'transformative hope' – a force in the world, which in pushing against and reaching beyond the present space-time, opens up possibilities for

transforming the systemic order of things, and collectively becoming more than ourselves in any present moment (Vidal & Schröter, 2013).

I have argued for the significance of a 'No' in transformative hope and explicated different forms of 'No' (refusals, acts of resistance, and nostalgias) in everyday life, and how these extend to a structural critique of the given order. The 'No' is embedded in, and generative of, hopes for radically different futures and spaces – opening up *what-is-in-possibility*. Counter to linear narratives of progress, I have shown how multiple space-times sit alongside each other. Inter-generational oppressions fold into the present and future imaginaries; that which has been lost or severed from the past reconfigures relations to the future; and music carries a multiplicity of times and spaces with it.

The narratives that I have sketched centre different pillars of life (with overlaps and different emphases) as sites of contestation – spaces of home, work, collective organising, and dying – through which to transform of everyday life (Lefebvre, 1991b). Through relations to imagined and actual collectives – oppressed parents, worker collectives, collectives formed around land dispossession, and future collectives of becoming ancestors – possibilities of transforming different sets of relations are opened up. In the chapter, I have highlighted the refusals of given sets of gender relations, such as to be treated like 'toilet paper' as a woman, and simultaneously a hope for a transformed site of social reproduction and the gendered practices contained therein. I foregrounded the workplace as a site of contestation not only over working conditions, but more significantly, over sets of relations (Kenny, 2018). The workplace narratives contained refusals of assumed control and domination over space, time, and practices, in the hope of actively co-constituting relations of equality, counter to the logic of the colonial and capitalist workplace. And finally, the tracing of future imaginings of relations to land, that enable ways of living and dying, holds out the possibility of constituting a place of home and belonging, in the context of a history of dispossession in the Waterberg. These different stories, centring different pillars of life, speak to the possibilities of imagining and constituting futures… gesturing into the blue.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

In this conclusion, I want to return to Bloch's (1986) warm and cold streams of Marxism – of vision and passion, as well as analysis, – in order to pull together some key threads that run through the thesis. Here, I return to the theoretical, methodological and political-ethical questions raised at the start of this project and highlight the contributions of this study.

9.1 Theoretical Contributions

First, theoretically, I set out to engage with Bloch's (1986) conceptualisation of knowledge production as a political, ethical and imaginative process towards the Not-Yet. However, in my account of Bloch's work, I drew attention to the pitfalls of over-stretching ontological possibilities towards utopia. By operationalising Bloch's philosophical concepts through critical space theory, and by undertaking field research on the everyday, I was able to explore the affordances of hope, both as concept and method for sociological research, through an empirical study in a particular location with a particular history. I could then demonstrate how hope – as an affective and cognitive relation to the future – remains an important and relevant concept for social theory and research.

Working with Lefebvre (1987, 1991b, 1991a, 2004), the thesis argues for bringing relations to space, time, and sociality into conversation and as axes of analysis. By bringing Lefebvre into conversation with Bloch, an argument for a spatio-temporal analysis was made in relation to hope (typically understood as a relation to futurity). From this basis, in order to better analyse my data and as a theoretical contribution, I developed two analytic concepts – reproductive hope and transformative hope – while maintaining that the concepts overlap ontologically in the messiness of everyday life.

I used reproductive hope to capture how research participants' hopes were involved in the reproduction of the given order in Lephalale – particularly centred around the spaces of the Lephalale Mall and the coal mega-projects. In this sense, reproductive hope plays a role in constituting closed, repetitive cycles of social being – locked in a continued space-time with a permanent and linear deferment of the 'good life'. However, I argued that even these kinds of hope can be important, as they generate energetic movements towards horizons and uncontained surpluses or possibilities of lived space.

Through the concept of transformative hope, I aimed to capture the multi-temporal and multi-spatial aspects of horizons of possibility. In the particular post/neo-colonial context of past and ongoing suffering of Lephalale and its surrounds, the past folds into the present and future. Future imaginings are informed by past, inter-generational sufferings, as well as by what was lost or missed in the past – those '*still Not-Yets*' which continue to haunt the present. As such, the movement towards future horizons is not one of linear forward movements of progress but rather one of ruptures, losses and inter-generational folds of time.

An important dimension of the way in which I have developed and used transformative hope is to include the 'No' as a constitutive moment of transformative hope. As quoted at the start of the thesis, Berger (1984, p. 18) writes, "the naming of the intolerable is itself hope". While Bloch theorises the 'lack' in daily life as generative of forward motion, I argue that the movement from lack can go in many directions. As I showed with reproductive hope, various experiences of lack can keep one invested in a limited forward motion – such as from waiting and looking for a job, to a temporary job, to a search for a meaningful job – a movement that does not necessarily alter the conditions of limit. However, experiences of lack do not lead only to forward motion, they can result in a refusal or rejection of a set of social relations or of the domination of lived space, that disrupts the given space-time and changes the direction of becoming – *what-is-in-possibility*.

I have argued that this is a becoming that radically transforms the self and social relations; it is a becoming that, in Lefebvre's (1991b) terms, transforms everyday life. Given the destruction of futures through coal extraction and coal energy production, as well as ongoing dislocations from pasts, the everyday in Lephalale can be a site of significance. In Chapter 8, I focussed on different 'sites of life' in Lephalale, and transformative hopes therein that speak to the constitution of a transformed everyday. These sites included contestations over sets of social relations in the workplace (Kenny, 2018), often in ways that refused the exploitation and oppression of farmworker parents; sites of social reproduction and the refusal to reproduce the oppression suffered by mothers in the home; and social relations to the land that enable living and dying in peace, without the violence of fences and the dislocations created by coal mega-projects. Living beyond the present moment, both in terms of what is drawn from the past and what is longed for in the future, generates possibilities for breaking the repetitive time of racial capitalism and for constituting new subjectivities and collectives.

While an argument for a spatio-temporal analysis was made particularly in relation to hope, in Chapter 6, I also demonstrated how dispossession and displacement as forms of ongoing colonial violence play out in time and space, particularly in relation to lifeworlds centred around relations to land and the ancestors associated with it. Analyses of dislocation, as a form of colonial violence, have usually focused on spatial relations, but I have argued for a spatio-temporal understanding of such. Working with authors such as Nkosi (2018), Skosana (2019a, 2019b), and White (2010), I have drawn attention to the significance of the violence of dislocation from pasts and futures. Nkosi and Skosana argue that dispossession is not only material, as theorised by economistic Marxists, but also carries spiritual significance. Through the analysis in Chapter 6, I have shown an explicitly temporal dimension to this deracination, arguing that spatial dislocation involves both a severance of relations to the past and with the land where ancestors are buried, as well as a severance of relations to the future, of becoming an ancestor through spatially and socially specific burial sites. Ongoing forms of colonial violence can therefore be understood as dislocations in both time and space. The transformation of the everyday in Lephalale necessarily entails a transformation of this continuing violence of dislocation in time and space.

9.2 Methodological Contributions

Methodologically, a key challenge I set for myself in this project was to explore the affordance of hope as method. Hope as method engages with the future, as speculative sociology, and it incorporates imagination, rather than prediction, into the analysis. Ontologically this entails working with a processual, depth ontology that understands both the natural and social worlds as becoming. As Sayer (2011, p. 110) posits, "[w]e should… think in terms of human becoming rather than human being as a given state, where becoming is contingent, path-dependent and open-ended rather than towards any particular goal". Clearly, empiricist epistemologies and methodologies based on surface ontologies, that assume the power of prediction, are inadequate for grasping these potentialities and possibilities. Throughout the thesis, I attempted to apprehend energetic movement of becomings, and highlighted where I noticed blockages and limits, as well as the implications thereof for possible futures. Furthermore, hope as method is necessarily an inter-subjective method that aims to generate future contestations – in dialogue with the reader.

For the fieldwork for this project, I selected a particularly dystopian location as a nodal point that condenses in time and space the dispossession of land and the extractive, exploitative, and patriarchal form of racial capitalism that has forged modern South Africa. In this place, I used critical ethnographic methods to engage with research participants' everyday lives. Informed by oral history and feminist research principles, I collected and analysed participants' stories, feelings and imaginaries, which included their memories and sufferings from the past, as well as their desires and hopes for different lives in the future. Throughout the data collection and analysis for this project, I attempted to capture and work with the affective and imaginary dimensions of research participants' hopes to highlight not only what has been and what is (the actual), but to include what is in process and becoming (the possible).

I used a hermeneutic or archaeological method to analyse fragmentary expressions of hope for better futures expressed in everyday life, as well as a constitutive or architectural method, which engages in the delineation of possible futures, without prediction or prescription (Levitas, 2013). Employing critical space theory enabled me to better investigate spatio-temporal relations in everyday lives in ways that revealed the contradictions, ambiguities and potentialities in the histories and presence of the region – albeit through limited and fragmentary data. My adaptation of the archaeological method allowed me to analyse the fragments of hope in the everyday that was captured in the data by lifting out images of the good or better life contained therein. This was not done uncritically, and particularly in Chapter 7, I engaged methodologically in a critique of everyday life. I also employed a constitutive or architectural method to imagine both dystopian futures as well as possibilities for the transformation of the everyday in Lephalale.

Through my use and adaptation of these methods, I expanded the 'normal' range of social inquiry to incorporate imagination, as well as affective and cognitive relations (beyond psychological reductionism) to futurity – futures that were not realised, that were lost or missed, as well as those that may yet come into being. I posit that these methodological lines of inquiry are particularly important in a period of global catastrophe, which I have explored here through this site of coal production and industrial development.

In summary, this study has demonstrated that a spatio-temporal analysis that grounds hope in the everyday moves away from static spatial forms and placeless teleologies of social processes (Harvey, 2000). Instead, I have argued for an analysis of ordinary hopes rooted in specific

localities with specific histories. I have endeavoured to show how hope, as a force in the world, is both generated within and generative of specific space-time relations and manifests and functions differently across space-times. Furthermore, hope as philosophy and as a dimension of knowledge formation calls for a capacity to understand and analyse the world as unfolding.

9.3 Political and Ethical Questions

Finally, I turn to sum up the politico-ethical dimensions of the study. Bloch's ontology of the Not-Yet has ethical implications as a "commitment to the future" and a normative injunction to change that future to enable human flourishing (Bloch, 1986, p. 7). Through employing 'hope as method', this project was intended to be both analytic and generative of hope. Indeed, the process of the research did generate hope through the discussion of hopes, dreams and desires with research participants.

In Chapter 3, I pointed to the dangers of being implicated in the constitution of both hopes and disappointments through the research process. The research process generated hopes that were not only my own but also those of the research participants and research assistants. Research that employs fieldwork, especially participant observation, compels us, as researchers, to think through the ethics of our research, the relations constituted, and the nature of accountability (Burawoy, 2009). The complexities of South Africa's grossly unequal society raised political and ethical dilemmas for me as a researcher to which there are no simple or easy resolutions, and which speak to multiple societal divisions, including that between academia and much of everyday life. This continues to unsettle me, as it should.

This project *on* and *of* hope is necessarily a reflexive project in which my own subjectivity is threaded through the analysis and constitution of hope. The project compelled me to articulate my normative concerns (which are usually embedded in the research process without being acknowledged). Further, I have argued that, rather than being a bias, this can be a resource to draw upon. This is not an argument for normative or epistemological relativity but rather an argument for reversing the expulsion of normative concerns from research and for making them visible, so that they can be assessed, reviewed, and reworked as part of larger conversations (Levitas, 2013). As such, making the normative explicit in processes of knowledge generation expands the frame of inquiry in sociological research. Furthermore, the project intends to provoke reflexivity, imagination and hope in the reader in a necessarily dialogic mode of

knowledge generation. As Jameson (2005, p. 56) highlights, it is imperative to keep imagining radical alternatives: "to imagine a daily life utterly different from this one". This project aims to make a small contribution to the wider project of imagining and generating alternative futures.

Finally, I ask the political question, 'why does this matter?'; 'what is its political significance?' Throughout the thesis, I have contended that hope matters. Hope is constituted by and is constitutive of social and spatio-temporal relations. The content and form of our hopes function to shape our presents and futures in various different ways. In other words, futures are at stake. But this study has demonstrated that it is from and within the details of everyday life that any political project that contests and imagines futures must emerge. The everyday is a site of possibilities – of ruptures, contradictions, limits, and transformations; it is from the dynamism and contingency of the everyday that transformative practices emerge, and not from teleological or prescriptive political projects.

Levitas's (2013) architectural mode takes up Bloch's (2000, p. 248) injunction to 'build into the blue and build ourselves into the blue': "to find the right thing for whose sake it is worthy to live, to be organized, to have time: that is why we go, why we cut new, metaphysically constitutive paths, summon what is not there, build into the blue all around the edge of the world, and build ourselves into the blue". In this project, at particular moments in the presentation of my thoughts, I have moved into writing and thinking into 'the blue' from the materiality that I encountered, imagining what might be otherwise.

Perhaps 'writing into the blue' and 'building ourselves into the blue' would involve a sense that we could be 'at home' in the world? At the end of *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch (1986, p. 3) concluded his treatise with a reflection on the concept *Heimat* in response to his initial questions, "Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What are we waiting for? What awaits us?". Many of the stories told in this project speak to the loss of homes as well as bringing forth imagined homes. The image of 'home' at first glance may not seem to be a transformative image, and ideas of 'home' and 'homeland' have been employed in oppressive ways in South Africa and globally. However, in the concept of *Heimat*, Bloch (1986, p. 313) captures the idea of moving towards a society that the young Marx once described as the "naturalization of [hu]man and humanization of nature". This is in contradiction to the violence of private property, which constructs land as something to be owned and controlled through

law and force (Nkosi, 2018). I have argued that 'home' is more than either one's place of origin (in the context of dislocation, dispossession and industrialisation) or an idealised past. The image represents the creation of a world where human beings are at home in ways that they commonly, but mistakenly, imagine themselves to have been in the past (Moir, 2018a). Through the stories I have traced, it is evident that in this site of violent dislocation, this longing for being at home in the world and with each other is deeply connected to relations to the land. In Chapter 8, I argued that this connection to the land is not about *representations of space*, but rather about the *lived space* of belonging, having a place to come home to ("*even if I was to go somewhere, I would come back knowing where I am going to*") and anticipating a future in which one becomes an ancestor. Ndebele (2015, p. 40) writes of belonging to the land as "a way to be owned by *umhlaba* [the land] without owning it".

The hope for home, as transformative hope, combines a recognition that 'home' never was, but that something was lost, with claims on the present and future for its ongoing constitution. In this way, in opposition to a triumphalist narrative of progress, transformative hope for home encompasses refusals, past losses and damages, nostalgia and the non-contemporaneity of existence. The cries of ancestors and the future of becoming an ancestor connect to the hauntings of the present, and connect future hopes to injustices of the past. Injustices, memory and loss become powerful tools in constituting futures (Du Bois, 2016; Winters, 2016). The struggle to claim and reclaim a sense of belonging and a home, with a recognition of the ghosts and injustices of the past, generates re-imaginings of relations to the land, each other, and ourselves. The hope to 'return' to a life that never was, is one of reconnection with self, others, the land and ancestors; for hope resides where the ancestors reside (Motsemme, 2018).

I return to, and end with Salaminah's bones, which have haunted Lephalale and Marapong (a *place of bones*), and indeed the writing of this thesis, as a continuing reminder of the ongoing destruction of natural-social relations, that fall outside abstract representations of space, through the everyday and slow violence of dislocation and extractivism. Her bones were up-earthed during the construction of ISCOR's coal mine and then again, almost 40 years later, with the construction of ESKOM's Medupi Power Station. Perhaps we can imagine a place where she can finally rest as an ancestor on her terms: weaving together pasts, presents, and futures into the blue, from grounds torn by specific violences and injustices, as an ongoing collective project of hope…

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Interviews

1. Thular Park community activists, focus group interview, Thular Park, 9 July 2015
2. Naledi, WWAO activist, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 9 July 2015
   - life history interview, Lephalale, 6 April 2017
   - follow-up phone interview, 15 May 2019
3. Bontle, community activist, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 12 April 2016
   - Bontle with Naledi, Marapong, 15 April 2016
4. Andries, former Grootegeluk worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 12 April 2016
   - life history interview, Marapong, 19 May 2016
   - follow-up interview, Marapong, 29 August 2016
5. WEJF, focus group interview, Marapong, 12 April 2016
6. Moeletsi, DA councillor and former Grootegeluk worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 12 April 2016
7. Kabelo, former Medupi casual worker, semi-structured interview, Thular Park, 13 April 2016
8. Phillip, former Medupi casual worker, semi-structured interview, Thular Park, 13 April 2016
9. Sibusiso, former Medupi casual worker, semi-structured interview, Thular Park, 13 April 2016
10. Mpho, ANC councillor, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 13 April 2016
11. Pule, young poet, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 13 April 2016
12. Lebohang, priest, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 13 April 2016
13. Khumo, HIV/AIDS Care Group facilitator, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 14 April 2016
14. Old-age care group, focus group interview, Marapong, 14 April 2016
15. Bokang, social worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 14 April 2016
16. Pula, community project organiser, semi-structured interview, MaMojela Park, 15 April 2016
17. Rachel, environmental activist, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 12 May 2016
18. Daniel, NUMSA local official, and Tumelo, dismissed Medupi NUMSA shop steward, semi-structured interview, Lephalale, 13 May 2016

- Daniel, follow-up interview, Lephalale, 31 August, 2016

19. Mike, Medupi engineer, semi-structured interview, Lephalale, 15 May 2016
20. Botshelo, WWAO and SANCO activist, life history interview, Marapong, 18 May 2016
21. Tumelo, dismissed Medupi NUMSA shop steward, life history interview, Ga-Seleka, 20 June 2016
    - follow-up interview, Lephalale, 10 February 2017
    - follow-up interview, Johannesburg, 29 June 2019
22. Kopano, Medupi NUMSA shop steward, life history interview, Lephalale, 21 June 2016
23. WWAO Leseding, focus group interview, Leseding, 29 August 2016 (translated by Naledi)
24. Mogotsi, Medupi NUMSA shop steward, semi-structured interview, 30 August 2016
25. Dikeledi, dismissed Medupi NUMSA shop steward, life history interview, Marapong, 31 August 2016
26. Sello, Medupi worker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 2 September 2016
27. Patrick, Medupi general worker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 2 September 2016
28. John, Medupi construction worker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 2 September 2016
29. Themba, NUMSA National official, semi-structured interview, Cape Town, 14 December 2016
30. Kefentse, Matimba NUMSA shop steward, semi-structured interview, Matimba Power Station, 8 February 2017
31. Fanpan community, focus group interview, Steenbokpan, 14 February 2017 (translated by Naledi)
32. Lesego, LUF/community activist, life history interview, Lephalale, 16 February 2017
33. Enoch, job-seeker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Job Information Centre, 18 February 2017
34. Thato, job-seeker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Job Information Centre, 20 February 2017
35. Dimpho, job-seeker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Job Information Centre, 20 February 2017
36. Khosi, job-seeker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Job Information Centre, 20 February 2017
37. Maria, sex-worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 22 February 2017

38. Eunice, sex-worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 22 February 2017
39. Bonolo, sex-worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 22 February 2017
40. Sophie, sex-worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 22 February 2017
41. Boitumelo, WEJF/LUF activist, life history interview, Marapong, 8 April 2017
    - follow-up phone interview, 15 May 2019
42. Tshepiso, Medupi cleaner, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 25 April 2017
43. Masego, Medupi cleaner, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 25 April 2017
44. Johannes, Medupi office assistant, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 25 April 2017
45. Elias, Medupi maintenance worker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 25 April 2017
46. Taryn, Medupi quality control inspector, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 25 April 2017
47. Neo, Medupi surveyor, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 25 April 2017
48. Samuel, Medupi project coordinator, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 26 April 2017
49. Oteng, Medupi construction supervisor, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 26 April 2017
50. Karabo, Medupi chemical worker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 26 April 2017
51. Lawrence, Medupi rigging supervisor, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 26 April 2017
52. Lazarus, Medupi general worker, semi-structured interview, Medupi Power Station, 26 April 2017
53. Ruth, WWAO activist, life history interview, Marapong, 3 May 2017
54. Thabo, Medupi NUMSA shop steward, life history interview, Lephalale, 3 May 2017
55. Ga-Seleka Royal Council, focus group interview, Ga-Seleka, 4 May 2017 (translated by Naledi)
56. Kagiso, traditional healer and former ISCOR worker, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 5 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
57. Stephen, Medupi NUMSA shop steward, life history interview, Medupi Power Station, 6 May 2017

58. Itumeleng, WEJF activist/ Evergreen Arts Centre, life history interview, Marapong, 15 May 2017
59. Dineo, LUF member, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 15 May 2017
60. Tshepo, dismissed Medupi NUM shop steward, life history interview, Marapong, 16 May 2017
61. Molefi, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
62. Thabiso, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
63. Phefo, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
64. Isaac, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
65. William, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
66. Amos, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
67. Jacob, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
68. Thebe, land claimant, semi-structured interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
69. Land claimants with Kagiso, focus group interview, Marapong, 17 May 2017 (translated by Tshepo)
70. Salphy, community organiser, semi-structured interview, Steenbokpan, 18 May 2017
71. Lesedi and Anna, family affected by burial relocations at Medupi, focus group interview, Marapong, 22 May 2017
72. Lucky, Medupi NUMSA shop steward, life history interview, Lephalale, 22 May 2017
73. Modise, Medupi NUMSA shop steward, life history interview, Lephalale, 23 May 2017
74. Old-age care group, focus group interview, Marapong, 24 May 2017
75. Keletso, WWAO activist, life history interview, Marapong, 27 May 2017
76. Lorato, WWAO activist, life history interview, Marapong, 27 May 2017
77. Thandiwe, NUMSA National Office Bearer, life history interview, Johannesburg, 8 June 2017

78. Julie, former NUMSA National Official, semi-structured interview, Johannesburg, 23 June 2017

Appendix B: Short Biographies of Key Interlocutors

Andries

Andries was born in Lephalale in 1968 as one of ten children in the family. He grew up on a farm 7 kilometres outside of the town. His parents were from Shongwane, and both worked as farmworkers initially. His father left for Johannesburg to work in a factory, and his mother stayed on the farm. He also worked on the farm, which became a game reserve, when he was at school and was paid between 60 cents and 1 rand per day. He wanted to work on ISCOR's mine from school days and left when he was 17, in the mid-1980s, for the mine, where he continued to work for 23 years in various positions. He became a NUM member and was involved in a strike in 1990. he was unemployed as a supervisor by the time he left in the mid-2000s because he did not get a promotion and was suffering from pollution. Thereafter he worked at BHP Billiton as a supervisor for four years. At the time of the research, he lived in Marapong with his youngest daughter and had set up various companies in Marapong and Lephalale, including a brick company. He also owned 25 cows, 30 sheep and 50 goats on his brother's farm outside of Lephalale and was a leader in the Community Policing Forum in Marapong.

Boitumelo

Boitumelo was born in 1982 in Botshabelo village in Ga-Seleka. He was one of six children to his parents who were born in different villages in Ga-Seleka. His mother used to sew with a small machine. While his father worked at ISCOR's mine in the 1980s and then at Matimba Power Station in the 1990s as a "kitchen boy". Boitumelo started his schooling in Marapong and stayed in Matimba's housing, but frequently spent time growing up in the village, exploring mountains and rivers. He dreamed of becoming a soccer player during his youth. In Grade Ten (then Standard Eight), he dropped out of school because his family was struggling and decided he needed to try to support them. He worked for Exxaro as a general worker after completing a technical course at College. In 2009, he shifted to work at Medupi Power Station under a sub-contract held by Murray and Roberts. He was part of NUM and an organisation called the Lephalale Local Forum. In 2012, he was one of the leaders in organising an unprotected strike at Medupi to oppose the issue of 'demobbing'. He was charged with public violence and dismissed. In 2014, the charges were eventually dropped. Since then, he has been blacklisted from projects in Lephalale and has not had any stable employment, leading to a break down in

his marital relationship. He lives on money that he gest when he sells things from Johannesburg. He was part of forming the Waterberg Environmental Justice Forum in 2012 and later the Lephalale Unemployment Forum. In 2016, he was again arrested and charged with public violence during a protest organised by the Lephalale Unemployment Forum. At the time of research, Boitumelo lived with his brother in Marapong and his father was an *Induna* in the village but had lost many animals due to drought conditions. He worried that different ways of living to "city life" were being forgotten and experiences lost as natural spaces were destroyed or changed.

Botshelo

Botshelo was born in 1982 in Segole village, near Steilloop. Her grandparents raised her after her mother died in 1985, and her father remained absent during her childhood as her parents were unmarried. Her grandfather was a businessman who owned two taxis. Her grandfather had more than 40 cows when she was growing up, but many have died since he died. She attended school in the village and loved it. She wanted to learn and played netball, sang, and painted. She volunteered for an HIV/AIDS project while attending school to assist with education and awareness. After school, she wished to train in travel and tourism management to see the world and learn more but did not have the finances to do so. Botshelo first moved to Lephalale, where her aunt was already staying, in 2010 to look for a job. After not finding anything, she moved to Thabazimbi and worked as a cashier at Shoprite and then as an administrator for a funeral parlour after completing a computer course. She moved back to Lephalale in 2014 to look for a job after spending time in the village to care for her second child. She had a brief period of employment as a cleaner at the Independent Electoral Commission's offices, but when the contract cleaning company changed, she lost her job. She worked for six weeks as a fieldworker for Statistics South Africa in 2016. At the time of the research, Botshelo was still unemployed and spoke about the difficulties of getting employment in Lephalale. She was also an organiser for SANCO and a member of WWAO. She stayed with one of her children (the other was being looked after by her grandmother) in a rented shack in Marapong, paying 350 rand per month, while her boyfriend worked at a mine in Thabazimbi. She hoped to be an administrator so that she could "hear the computer talking".

Dikeledi

Dikeledi was born in 1976 and grew up in Ramadiba village, near Mokopane in Limpopo, in a poor family of eight children. Her mother was a farmworker for a tomato farm, and her father worked in a flour mill. After a tumultuous childhood, during which school was one of the few sanctuaries for her, she moved to Ellisras in 1995, where her mother worked as a domestic worker. Her first employment was in a bottle store and later at Bosveld supermarket, which had just opened up. She married a mineworker at Grootegeluk and lived with him for ten years, during which she experienced abuse in the relationship. She undertook security training after losing her job at the supermarket when she became pregnant. In 2005, she left her husband and started to work for a security company that had a contract with ESKOM in Lephalale. Thereafter she obtained her first job at Medupi Power Station as a general worker, then a traffic controller, and later as a rigger in the engineering sector. She was elected as a shopsteward for SATAWU at the security company and for NUM and NUMSA at Medupi. She was part of a couple of unprotected strikes at Medupi and, in 2013, was dismissed and blacklisted for her participation. At the time of research, she was still unemployed and was trying to set up a small business in Marapong to make a living to look after her two children. She was also still actively involved in community organisations, such as the Lephalale Unemployment Forum.

Kagiso

Kagiso was born in Vaalwater, about 90 kilometres south of Lephalale, in 1952. He was the last born in his family, and his parents worked as farmworkers. His father was arrested when he was very young for hunting with a dog. He went to school in the area, and after schooling, Kagiso moved to Lephalale and worked on ISCOR's mine in the 1980s. Later in life, he became a traditional healer and was part of the task team, which handled the relocation of burial sites and the establishment of a cultural house at Medupi Power Station. At the time of the research, he lived in Marapong and was still campaigning for Medupi to address the dissatisfaction experienced by some of the claimants regarding the burials, for Medupi to build an agricultural school for youth in the area, and for the children of the affected families to be employed at the power station. He was also assisting people in Marapong with land claims and to get access to their graves on white-owned farms. Kagiso lived in Marapong for many decades and had observed how the space of Lephalale had changed over the decades.

Kefentse

Kefentse was born in 1952 in Mokopane. In 1979 he came to Lephalale to work at ISCOR's mine. He only stayed for 13 months because the money was too little to support his family in Mokopane. After working at the Rand Water Board, he returned to Lephalale in 1985 to work for ESKOM at Matimba Power Station. He was employed as a clerk in the department of 'township maintenance'. In the same year, he joined MAWU and, in 1987, he was part of establishing NUMSA in Lephalale by recruiting members and setting up local shopsteward councils. He served as a NUMSA shopsteward from 1987 until 2012 at Matimba Power Station. He was part of various campaigns and processes that sought to shift conditions at ESKOM in general and Matimba specifically, such as the racist policies within the workplace, planned retrenchments, and later, an end to outsourcing. Despite stepping down as a shopsteward in 2012, he continued to assist workers and NUMSA ("now I am a minister without a portfolio"). At the time of the research, he resided in Onverwacht and still worked as a clerk, but was looking forward to retirement at the end of the year so that he could return to his place in Mokopane to rest.

Lesedi

Lesedi was born in 1945 on Naawontkome Farm, which is now the site of Medupi Power Station. Her grandfather was born and worked on the farm. Her father worked as a foreman and her mother as a domestic worker on the same farm. The farmer allowed them to have cattle and some fields to plough. She dropped out of school as a teenager and worked on another farm in the area as a domestic worker. When the farm owner died in 1965, they moved to another farm in the area, closer to Thabazimbi. After being forced to leave again, her family settled in Pahama in 1972, and were then removed to Ga-Seleka a few years later. She worked on and off on different farms and now lives on her pension grant in Marapong. She struggled to look after more than ten of her sisters' children with grant money after her sisters died. She has three family graves where Medupi is built and was one of the first to lodge a complaint with ESKOM. At the time of the research, she felt disappointed and heartbroken by how ESKOM handled the situation and still hoped that ESKOM would give her land and a place to stay as compensation and provide a school for children in the area. She hoped to return to the farm so that she could plough and have enough to eat for her household.

Lesego

Lesego was born in 1987 in Kroemhoek in Limpopo. She grew up in a village and was the only child raised by her mother and father. Her parents were born in the area, and her father worked on a potato farm until he died while she was still at school. After her father died, they struggled to have enough money each month to eat and would be assisted by a relative, or her mother would try to sell things. During school holidays, she worked on different farms for about R10 per day. After school, her first job was as a cashier for a garage near where she grew up. She left the garage after her boss changed, and her conditions of work worsened. In 2013, she moved to Lephalale in search of work. Since she arrived, she has not had a job. Lesego experienced sexual violence in Marapong and refused to be sexually exploited in order to obtain a job. Lesego was particularly concerned about the plight of women in Marapong and regularly met with sex workers to try to support them. She was also part of the leadership of the Lephalale Unemployment Forum. During a protest in 2016, she was arrested and charged with public violence as one of the Lephalale Unemployment Forum leaders. At the time of the research, she lived in a shack with her boyfriend in Marapong, and both were unemployed. She wished to have an office, to work full-time for the community, and to be able to start a family of her own.

Naledi

Naledi was born in Pretoria in 1974. Her family was based in Pretoria and had a home in Modimolle, about 150 kilometres from Lephalale. She was the only child and was raised by her grandmother and grandfather after her parents got divorced. Her father did not contribute to raising her and started another family. Her mother's mother was from Botswana, and her mother's father from Malawi, and both her grandparents on her father's side were from Polokwane. Her grandfather worked fixing water pipes, and her grandmother stayed at home, running a small business selling snacks and beer. Her mother worked in a car factory in Pretoria. She had small jobs while at school, such as working on Cullinan Diamond Mine in the kitchen and laundromat. She married at the age of 17 to an older man and suffered abuse in the marriage. She had various short-term jobs in Pretoria, such as working as a cashier at Spar and Dischem. But after her grandmother died, she moved to Polokwane to live with her husband. In Polokwane, she looked after her children and tied to start a small business selling food. After 15 years of marriage, she divorced her husband and moved to Modimolle and then to Lephalale in 2010 to look for a job. She has never had employment in Lephalale and refused to be sexually

exploited in order to obtain such. After her experiences, she became active in the community – first as a representative on the community forum for Boikarabelo coal mine. And thereafter, in various organisations such as WAMUA, WoMin, and WWAO, campaigning for gender and environmental justice. At the time of the research, she lived in a shack in the informal settlement of Thular Park in Marapong. She survived by doing some small-scale agricultural work – planting spinach, carrots, and sweet potatoes.

Thabiso

Thabiso was born in 1963 on a farm outside of Ellisras. He is the grandson of Salaminah, whose bones Marapong is named after. Their family of nine was chased off the farm after his father had a work accident whereby a machine fell on him, and he had to go to the hospital. They subsequently moved to a farm where Medupi Power Station is now situated. He attended school in Marapong but had to leave in 1977 due to financial constraints. In 1980, he started to work on the construction of Matimba Power Station, under Siemens Construction, and stayed at a hostel in Marapong. After working for eight years in construction, he was unemployed for a few years and went back to the farm. He then worked as a contract electrical worker at Matimba and returned to Marapong. When the construction of Medupi Power Station began, he started a long fight with ESKOM regarding his grandmother's burial site, which he now has access to again. At the time of the research, he was unemployed and had lodged a land claim for the land upon which Medupi is built. He hoped to return to the land to farm as his father did and for his children to be compensated by means of employment at Medupi.

Thabo

Thabo was born in 1988 in Vaalwater as one of four children. His parents came from Mokopane, and he was raised by his mother and step-father. His mother worked as a street vendor and his step-father as a truck driver. He grew up under challenging conditions, and sometimes his siblings had to drop out of school for periods because they could not afford the fees. His first employment was as a casual shelf packer in a supermarket when he was about 15. After he realised that he was not able to save up money to study further, he moved to Pretoria to look for a better job. He spent months searching for a job in Pretoria but was unable to find anything. He then moved to a village in Mpumalanga to stay with his aunt to recover. After a few months of recovering, he moved to Lephalale to stay with his brother in 2010. That year he was employed as a general worker in the construction of Exxaro's new plant. When his friends

moved to Medupi Power Station, they found a job for him there. He learnt on the job, working with mechanical fitters for four years, between 2010 and 2014, during which time he advanced from being a general worker to a semi-skilled worker. In 2016, he completed and passed a test to qualify as an artisan (mechanical fitter). Thabo was elected as a NUMSA shopsteward in 2015 after challenging management regarding their bonus calculations. He was also an EFF supporter because he believed that the land should be shared by all and that there should be free education. At the time of the research, he lived in a shack in Marapong and supported his two children and his mother. He hoped to find a better job to care for his children and one day to become a councillor or district official so that he could contribute towards making South Africa an equal society.

Tshepo

Tshepo was born in 1971 in a village near Mokopane as the third born of nine children. They moved to Steilloop, where he grew up and attended school. He left school in Grade 11 because his parents could not afford to keep him in. At the time of the interview, Tshepo was planning to write his matric exam later that month to further his education. His first job was in road construction near Kempton Park. It was very tough work, and he was only paid R35 per day to assist his brothers and sisters back home. Thereafter, he held several jobs as a security guard, in construction and in hardware between Kempton Park and Mokopane. After being frustrated by working conditions, he moved again to Lephalale to work at a shop. In 2002, he found a job in construction at Exxaro's mine, where he initiated a Grootegeluk Construction Workers Forum for workers under different contractors to come together. NUM backed the Forum, and he was elected as a shopsteward. His wife and children moved in with him from Mokopane when they managed to get an RDP house in Marapong Extension 2. In 2008, he felt targeted by the management of the construction companies. He left to work at Medupi Power Station, where he became a NUM shopsteward again after assisting with a food crisis. He came into conflict with NUM leadership when he refused to change his mandate from workers to a percentage increase from a rand increase. In 2010, workers started to get sick again, and when he tried to assist workers in getting them to the hospital, he was charged with misconduct and later dismissed. While being part of organising a march of Medupi workers, he was beaten up by Vetus Schola security guards and had to go to the hospital. He opened up a criminal case, which was never investigated. Since then, he has been blacklisted from the projects and has survived on piece jobs. His wife left him, which he attributes to his loss of employment. He continues to

organise in Marapong, assisting with land claims and ensuring that companies do not take advantage of communities through ‘consultation’ meetings.

Tumelo

Tumelo was born in Ga-Seleka in 1970 into a family of six children. His parents came from Botswana with nothing. It is possible that his ancestors were not from Botswana but were Southern Basotho as he has family in the Free State. Tumelo grew up in the village of Kopanong under very poor conditions. His grandfather and his parents were all farmworkers in the area. Tumelo also worked on farms while attending school. At lunchtime, farmers would send trucks to pick up the school children, and the money for their labour was paid to the school for textbooks. Tumelo loved traversing the mountainous space to herd cattle and hunt with dogs as a young boy. He moved from Ga-Seleka to Johannesburg after school to look for a job. He moved between several jobs in Johannesburg, including working at a property company, garages, engineering, and courier companies. During this period, he joined SATAWU and NUMSA and became a shopsteward for NUMSA. After an extended period of unemployment from 2008 to 2011, he decided to move back to Lephalale without his family, who remained in Johannesburg. In 2012, he was employed by Actom at Medupi Power Station and was elected as a NUMSA shopsteward in 2013. In 2014, he was elected as a full-time shopsteward. After the strike of 2015, he was dismissed for refusing to sign the peace agreement. At the time of the research, he was blacklisted and still waiting for his dismissal case to appear in the Labour Court. He was unemployed and looking after his family’s stand and livestock in the village.

Appendix C: Life History Interview Schedule

Date:

Research participant's name:

Research participant's age:

Research participant's gender:

Research participant's home language:

1. **Early Childhood and Family Background**

When and where were you born?

How many children were in the family?

Who raised you?

Where was your family originally from?

What did your grandparents and parents do for a living?

Describe the house you grew up in?

What were your family's economic circumstances?

Describe the community/area you grew up in? What was it like growing up there?

What religious or cultural organisations were your family part of?

What were your parents' and grandparents political beliefs? What political organisations were they involved in?

What stories did you hear growing up?

2. **Youth and School Years**

What were your schooling years like?

What were your hobbies/interests?

What books did you read?

What music did you listen to?

What games and sports did you play?

What did you enjoy the most and least at school?

Did you work during your school years?

Were you politically active at school?

What were your plans/aspirations for when you finished school? – In relation to education/work/other.

3. Post-School and Working Years

Did you study after school?

What was your first paid job? – Describe what you did in your job and the working conditions.

And subsequent jobs?

What is your current job?

How do you feel about it? – salary, hours of work, health at safety work, treatment at work, possibility of fulfilment through work?

What job did you hope for?

Have you moved around for work?

[If applicable] Why did you stop working? What is life like after work?

4. Current Living Conditions

When and why did you move to Lephalale?

What is like living in Lephalale? – housing, electricity, sanitation, water, food, people in household, number of dependents, division of labour in the home?

How would you describe a typical day? – household, work, leisure and other activities?

How is your health? Do you worry about it?

What do you find pleasurable in your life?

What do you find painful or difficult in your life?

How do you overcome your difficulties or prevent them from getting worse?

5. Relationships and Family

Describe your friendships and relationships in your youth?

How did you meet your partner?

How would you describe your relationship?

How many children do you have? How is your relationship with them?

What relationships are most significant to you?

6. Political and Cultural Life

Were/are you part of any political/worker/community organisations? Describe them.

Why did you join them?

What is the purpose of the organisation(s)?

What informs your political thinking?

Have you participated in any political/protest actions? What were you hoping to achieve? What was the outcome?
Are you part of any religious or cultural organisations? Describe them. What is their impact on your life?

7. Overview

How would you say South Africa, and the areas where you have lived, have changed since you were young?
What did you hope/expect for post-apartheid South Africa?
What did you hope for moving to Lephalale? And now?
What do you hope and dream for your children?
What do you hope for Lephalale? What would you like to see changed?
How do you think things can change?

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule (Example)

Job Centre Interview Schedule:

Date:
Name:
Gender:
Age:
Home language:
Place of birth:
Place of residence:
Number of dependents:

1. **Education/employment**

Highest level of education/qualifications of parents:
Parents' main occupations:
Highest level of education/qualifications:
Did you want to study further?
What was your ideal job when growing up?
Previous occupation(s):
How did you feel about previous jobs? – salary, hours of work, health at safety work, treatment at work, possibility of fulfilment through work:
Why did you stop working there?
What job(s) are you applying for?
How long have you been looking for a job?
How do you feel about the job hiring process?
What would getting a job mean to you?

2. **Life in Lephalale**

When did you move to Lephalale?
Why did you move to Lephalale?
What is it like living in Lephalale? - housing, electricity, sanitation, water, food, people in household, number of dependents, division of labour in the home:

How has it changed here over the years?

What does development mean to you?

How would you describe a typical day? - household, work, leisure and other activities:

3. **Imaginary**

What do you think or day-dream about on a typical day?

Do you think or day-dream about different things when you are on the job?

Are you part of any political/cultural/religious organisations? What is their impact on your life?

What are your biggest fears/anxieties?

What future do you hope for? For yourself/family/community/country?

Appendix E: Consent Form

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CONSENT FORM

Thank you for considering participation in this research project.

This research aims to explore hope and utopianism in daily life in Lephalale.

You will be audio and/or video recorded, with your permission. If you consent to being visually recorded, anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

The interview material will be used for my Doctoral thesis and possibly wider publication.

The following conditions will be met:

- Your real name will not be used.
- The information we discuss will be confidential, except in various publications where you will remain anonymous as far as possible.
- Your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any point during the interview.

Please tick the activities you consent to participating in:

☐ One-on-one interview

☐ Focus group interview

☐ Participant-observation

Please tick if you consent to being:

☐ Audio-recorded

☐ Visually-recorded

I agree to and understand the above conditions.

_____	_____
Participant's name	Participant's signature
Date:	
_____	_____
Researcher's name	Researcher's signature
Date:	