Unsettling Insurgency: Reflections on Women's Insurgent Practices in South Africa

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ABSTRACT   *This paper builds on work which celebrates insurgent planning practices, and which recognises the possibilities for repression inherent within these. Calling for more attention to the practice of so-called repressive insurgencies, it uses two case studies from Durban, South Africa to unsettle some assumptions arguably embedded in notions of "anti-democratic" or repressive insurgency. The cases tell the stories of marginalised women who participate through insurgency in shaping their city. Their contributions to resolving unmet housing and employment needs represent acts of insurgency against a state which has, in part, retreated from the provision of shelter and employment through its commitment to a neoliberal agenda. These insurgent practices parallel other celebrated insurgent contributions to cities. The women, however, also manage crime and violence in their local areas, using a range of strategies, some of which can be considered insurgent, as they directly challenge the authority and competence of the state. These crime management practices are, however, at times very violent, as the women's insurgent practices involve forms of vigilantism to achieve their purposes. Yet given the marginalised status of the women, and the reality of an absent state, trying to make sense of these practices (from the perspective of planning theory) proves challenging. Labelling them anti-democratic and repressive is arguably inadequate. The paper makes use of this contradiction to unsettle the concept of insurgency and develop further ideas about the difficulties of celebrating or condemning the contributions of the marginalised to diverse and unequal cities.*

Keywords: Gender; insurgency; South Africa; vigilantism; violence

Introduction

The concept of insurgent planning practices has offered planning theorists an exciting lens through which to explore the alternative actions of people operating outside of, or alongside, the "formal" planning framework. Research in this area has focused on the vital contributions that citizens have made to the shaping of their cities. On the whole, both the intellectual task of unearthing insurgent practices, and the practices in and of themselves, are celebrated by theorists as transformative and emancipatory (Sandercock, 1998, pp. 2, 6). However, planning theorists (and others) have also acknowledged the potential for repressive outcomes from insurgent practices (Holston, 1998, p. 54), citing occasional examples. This paper argues that this tendency has received inadequate empirical and analytical

attention from the wider academy in its own right,[1] with the result that the multiplicity and gendered politics of repressive insurgency have been particularly overlooked.

In order to contribute to this debate, the paper draws on the everyday experiences of marginalised African women (and some eyewitness accounts from men) living in the areas of Cato Manor and Warwick Junction in the city of Durban, South Africa. They all live either informally or in precarious conditions, struggling with poverty, unemployment, or informal employment. Their lives are framed by the neoliberal patriarchal democracy of post-apartheid South Africa, where poorer black residents have ironically gained rights (voting and constitutional rights for example) but have also suffered the consequences of rising inequality (Miraftab, 2009, p. 40). The enactment of a neoliberal patriarchal democracy is not a simple story of state retreat from service provision (see Roy, 2009b; Meagher, 2007 for comparison). Post-apartheid, the South African state actually invested quite heavily in, and improved their approaches to, the delivery of particular services, such as housing provision and policing (Bruce, 2007, p. 15), but less attention was paid to areas such as employment creation. Thus, the region of KwaZulu-Natal suffered from an unemployment rate of 43.7% in 2004 despite contributing 16 .5% of national GDP in 2003 (Oosthuizen, 2006, pp. 24, 40). Investment in services does not necessarily result in great amelioration of inequality, and such improvements can sometimes occur alongside other state-directed programmes which work to undermine policy advances. An example is the KwaZulu-Natal Elimination and Prevention of Re-emergence of Slums Bill (2007) which threatens advances in "democratic" housing policy achieved by the national policy "Breaking New Ground" in 2005 (COHRE, 2008, p. 99) The latter's promises to upgrade existing informal housing are directly challenged by slum elimination programmes. Furthermore, the consequences of apartheid's violent methods of suppression and state-driven inequality means that simply increasing police resources cannot solve soaring crime rates, allegations of police corruption, and rising drug-related violence. Durban presents a particular challenge to the changing politics of national policing as a result of wider political violence in the region of KwaZulu-Natal during the dying years of Apartheid, and the legacy of this brutality for residents today. The role of the police in this violence was prominent, and this history shapes the ways in which residents currently relate to the police.

Seen within this wider context, the women involved in the two projects all contribute in different ways to the shaping of their urban spaces, through self-help housing, entrepreneurial practices, collective action, and resistance to particular state interventions (particularly the threat of eviction). Their contribution to the planning and production of their spaces is evidence of a productive insurgent counter-planning against a state which has failed to deliver, or to deliver effectively, on various fronts (Miraftab, 2006; Miraftab & Wills, 2005). Yet their insurgent practices are broader than this, and also encompassed collective efforts to manage and resist very high levels of crime and violence. Though this is arguably an essential component of urban management, in this case, it incorporated practices of vigilantism against suspected criminals. This paper illustrates how vigilantism is a form of insurgency, as residents directly mobilise against the state by challenging its authority to maintain law and order. By focusing attention ultimately on the practice of vigilantism, the paper aims to "unsettle" some of the assumptions implicit in the celebration, on the one hand, of the transformative possibilities of insurgency, and on the other, the denouncement of repressive practices, by exploring the complexities of the less palatable actions of these women in their daily endeavours to manage high levels of crime and injustice.

The paper unsettles ideas of insurgency through four key points illustrated by empirical material. First, anti-democratic or repressive insurgency is often represented in planning

theory literature as dichotomous to transformative practices. This binary logic obscures the complex interconnections between different types of insurgent practice. Transformative and repressive practices can be mutually constitutive, and can also be enacted by one and the same "community". Second, the interconnections between gender, politics and the possibilities of "repressive" insurgency have not been adequately explored. Marginalised women's actions are often assumed to be transformative, simply by virtue of their more oppressed and excluded position; an assumption that needs to be questioned. Third, the rationalities, moralities, rights, and values underpinning repressive practices deserve fuller attention, given the ways in which such practices work to justify the actions of mobilised communities. Finally, this paper adds its voice to a chorus of calls from theorists for an approach to researching insurgency that is both context-driven and informed by empirical analysis.

The overall aim of this paper is thus to unsettle the concept of insurgency and to contribute to debates within planning theory about insurgency. In particular, the acting of multiple insurgent practices (some transformative, some repressive) by poor women presents difficulties for planning theory, which in its more progressive form celebrates the empowerment, participation and transformative possibilities of the oppressed—often women.

Planning, Insurgency and Vigilantism

Sandercock defines insurgency as follows:

> The very word "insurgent" implies something oppositional, a mobilizing against one of the many faces of the state, the market or both. Insurgent planning is insurgent by virtue of challenging existing relations of power in some form. Thus it goes beyond "participation" in a project defined by the state. It operates in some configuration of political power, and must formulate strategies of action. Insurgent planning practices may be stories of resistances, and not always successful ... of resilience ... or of reconstruction (Sandercock, 1999, p. 41).

Sandercock's definition draws on her original use of the term (Sandercock, 1995), following Holston's work on spaces of insurgent citizenship (see his reprinted 1998 paper and his 1999 book). Holston calls for a new imaginary of the city, one that focuses on alternative sources of "citizenship rights, meanings and practices" in opposition to the assumed legitimacy of the modernist state (1998, p. 39). Although his notion of (absolute) opposition to the state is challenged below, Holston's insistence that planning theorists should look beyond the state in their understanding of city practices is very powerful. Theorising insurgency calls for a broader definition of "planning" as Sandercock clarifies: "insurgent planning practices are instigated by mobilized communities, acting as planners for themselves" (1999, p. 42). The tendency to view planning as a regulatory practice has meant that it is possible to "miss its transformative possibilities, which in turn may be connected to histories of resistance" (2003, p. 40).

Ideas of insurgency draw strongly on notions of resistance, a concept that Routledge defines as "any action, imbued with intent, that attempts to challenge, change, or retain particular circumstances relating to societal relations, processes, and/or institutions" (Routledge, 1997, p. 69). Scott's work has further expanded understandings of the range of methods, actions and deeds which can be defined as "resistance". He distinguishes between "the open, declared forms of resistance ... and the disguised, low-profile, undeclared resistance that constitutes the domain of infrapolitics" (Scott, 1990, p. 198).

Under this latter category he cites a wide range of actions, such as foot-dragging, threats, aggression, gossip, and rumour. Finally, the everyday and ephemeral nature of resistance is emphasised by de Certeau, who argues that it can include "a single look, a movement or a simple spoken word" (de Certeau 1984 cited in Holloway & Hubbard, 2001, p. 218). However, though a breadth of resistive practices may be identified, it is Sandercock's insistence that insurgency is specifically mobilising against the state, the market, or both, which underscores the significance of such practices for planning.

Sandercock's challenge to make the "invisible visible" (Sandercock, 1995) and to embrace the view from below (Sandercock, 2003, p. 43) has been pursued within radical planning. Its focus is two-fold: first, rethinking planning histories in terms of who has been excluded (women, gay people, ethnic minorities, etc.); second, on analysing practices and sites of insurgency, often in terms of its initiation and enactment by the poor. Kenney describes this shift within planning history and theory as one "away from a focus on the institutional responses to urban inequalities towards the collective, street level responses of those subject to ... discrimination" (Kenney, 1998, p. 120). However, the political agendas and status of insurgent groups can vary widely, with Holston (1998) identifying examples that include: "the homeless, networks of migration, neighbourhoods of Queer Nation, constructed peripheries [built by the poor] ... ganglands, fortified migrant labour camps, sweatshops." He cites the squatting of Brasília's periphery as an example of this diversity (Holston, 1998, pp. 44–45, 48). Rethinking insurgency has drawn attention to the varied viewpoints of those inhabiting a particular space: in the context of South Africa, Miraftab and Wills argue that the oppositional insurgent practices of residents involved in anti-eviction campaigns must be taken as seriously as sanctioned actions (2005, p. 212). Finally, planners have used ideas of insurgency to develop theoretical frameworks through which they can understand the future differently. As Sandercock implores: "[if we can] demonstrate its [planning's] multiple and insurgent histories, we may be able to link it to a new set of public issues" (2003, p. 47). In a similar vein, Beauregard writes of the "hopefulness of alternative outcomes" which may be borne from considering insurgent histories (1998, pp. 192–193).

It is evident that certain practices of the urban poor, such as informal house-building and informal employment, are commonly used within broad definitions of insurgency (Holston, 1998; Nesvåg, 2000). Across the world, poorer residents are mobilising against the state (and against the formal market and even fellow citizens in particular cases) in efforts to counter a failure to provide homes and jobs (Miraftab, 2006). Through these practices they are contributing to the planning and making of their cities. However, the same residents are also constantly managing very high levels of crime and everyday violence, using a diverse set of tactics including the employment or membership of vigilante groups. Following Holston's call for engagement with "new territorializations of power and violence and the new paradigms of citizenship in urban peripheries ... throughout the global South" (Holston, 2009, p. 16), and Roy's rhetorical questioning of whether urban violence is "not the face of planning in poor neighbourhoods all over the world?" (2009a, p. 10), this paper not only recognises vigilantism as a constituent part of urban reality, but argues that it should viewed as an insurgent practice.

Harris provides a working definition of vigilantism:

> Vigilantism is a blanket term for activities that occur beyond the parameters of the legal system, purportedly to achieve justice. It covers a wide range of actions and involves an eclectic assortment of perpetrators and victims. Vigilantism can exist as an isolated, spontaneous incident or as an organised, planned action ... (Harris, 2001, p. 6).

Vigilantism is eclectic and ambiguous (Buur & Jensen, 2004; Meagher, 2007) and changes over time and space. It is not a bounded analytical construct, but rather a practice (Buur & Jensen, 2004, p. 148), prone to change and contradiction. Importantly, the way that vigilante practices work, and the arguments by which they are justified, relate closely to the practices of insurgency outlined above. Through vigilantism, citizens and communities mobilise against the state in an explicit challenge to its authority and competence, and in explicit response to its failures (Sandercock, 1999). In particular, vigilantism challenges the role of the police, as well as the courts and judicial system, in the management of crime. Its moral justification is that it purports to achieve particular forms of justice (often for the alleged benefit of poorer residents) and to reduce the incidence of random criminal acts and violence.

Vigilantism, like other insurgent practices, is often understood as occurring in opposition to the state (Sandercock, 1999), in response to perceived failures of the state. Various theorists (Buur & Jensen, 2004; Meagher, 2007; Oomen, 2004) have illustrated how the practice of vigilantism is linked to, and even constitutive of, the state. In complex ways, vigilante activities can often become state-like performances (Buur & Jensen, 2004, p. 144). This oppositional, but also mimicking, characteristic of vigilantism parallels the ways in which insurgent practices are variously situated and embedded within governance structures, and arguably can never be entirely separated from state practices by their very definition: they "empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas" (Holston, 1998, p. 47). Relations with the state are central to understanding vigilantism, and Meagher argues that analyses of vigilantism need to understand its relationships with processes such as state withdrawal and political liberalisation (2007, p. 92), and political processes have been identified as fundamental to insurgent practices more generally (Roy, 2009b).

In complex ways, the blurring of the boundaries between vigilantism and the state maps onto notions of justice and rights that underpin much vigilante activity. Holston (2009) has examined this in relation to the changing discourse of rights within a Brazilian context, while Oomen identifies the ways in which South African vigilante leaders and members of an organised vigilante movement known as Mapogo express their claims for justice in terms of a morality that opposes the morals, values, and rights embodied within the post-1994 neo-liberalist constitutionalist discourse of the post-apartheid state (Oomen, 2004, p. 154). Mapogo members criticise the rights now seemingly available to criminals, arguing that they represent an extension of "European" rights that run counter to their African traditional values. Posel describes this claim as "the burden of rights" (Posel, 2004, p. 233), arguing that it appears to be informing insurgent practices elsewhere, beyond South Africa (see Holston, 2009). The assertion of traditional values is enacted through the formation of "moral communities" through which vigilante practices are justified (Oomen, 2004; Buur & Jensen, 2004), and the significance of such community mobilisation underscores the ways in which vigilantism is a form of insurgent practice. One example of a moral community, drawn upon within this paper, is that formed by women in opposition to practices of sexual violence, performed usually by men. As Posel notes, the re-invigoration of vigilantism in post-apartheid South Africa is linked to the politicisation of gender and sexual violence in this context (2004, p. 235). In other words, the mobilisation of women against the state's perceived failure to manage sexual violence is indicative of wider, gender-based insurgent practices, and the persistence of moral complexity underpinning insurgent practices is recognised by Sandercock (1999, p. 43).

The formation and operationalisation of these moral communities, from within which vigilantism is justified, is a key form of community building through participation, embedded at times in formalised membership structures. Meagher has described the roles

performed by one Nigerian vigilante organisation, the Bakassi Boys, pointing out that though the actions themselves were problematic, they were also illustrative of a positive social impulse, namely a demonstration of popular initiative and a "flourishing of social capital" (Meagher, 2007, p. 96). The social formation of vigilante groups also parallels the organisation of wider community structures, drawing on a range of membership structures. This has led Buur and Jensen (2004, p. 139) to distinguish between vigilantism as an "organisation" and as a "formation", and to compare more formal to more ad hoc forms of association. These patterns of constitution shape power relations within and between vigilante groups as well as between vigilantes, citizens and the state in its various forms.

Vigilante actions, like other insurgent practices, are tied to place, as justifications for violence often centre on the protection of property rights (Meagher, 2007, p. 96) or the promotion of personal safety within a community. The materiality of place, and the politics of this materiality thus lie at the heart of urban insurgency (Roy, 2009a). Urban security and the management thereof through vigilantism is an insurgent strategy with much legitimacy among urban dwellers. People's presence within, and use of, place is controlled through vigilantism, and those criminal elements that are considered "out-of-place" and "evil" by moral communities face "exorcism" from the locale (Buur & Jensen, 2004, p. 147). Further, this imperative to control particular bodies in space is highly reminiscent of the regulatory elements of planning, affecting physicality, sociality, and spatiality (Sandercock, 1998, p. 6) whether formalised, insurgent or otherwise. Finally, Sandercock and Holston both emphasise the significance of, and possibilities for, transformation, future change, and empowerment through insurgent practices (Sandercock, 1998, p. 20; Holston, 1998, p. 39). These mirror the alternative imaginings of justice, the distinctive forms of governance, and the different types of social and political organisation, based on different values, held by moral communities reliant on vigilantism (Oomen, 2004, p. 163).

It can thus be argued that vigilantism, as an urban practice mobilising against the state, should be seen as a form of insurgency. This paper now turns to the wider concept of insurgency and raises some concerns, alongside other theorists, about the ways in which it is framed and used. The argument above, which positions vigilantism as a form of insurgency, informs these wider and more generic concerns.

Unsettling Insurgency

Within studies of resistance, theorists have voiced concerns over the romanticisation of certain (often banal) acts and the subsequent labelling of these as forms of "resistance" (Abu-Lughod, 1990; Creswell, 2000). As Cresswell points out, defining everyday acts, such as watching television, walking, telling jokes, and purchasing westernised consumer items as "resistance" can also render the concept "meaningless and theoretically unhelpful" (2000, p. 259). Similarly, Abu-Lughod cautions against the romanticisation of "the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated" (1990, p. 42).

Paralleling these concerns, there is also an increasing recognition of the fact that acts of resistance can be both liberating and subordinating at the same time (Routledge, 1997, p. 90), a theme echoed within analyses of insurgency. Holston, for example, draws attention to the possible paradoxical outcomes that can result from residents' participation in the planning of their communities, particularly in relation to the treatment of their fellow citizens, and uses the term "anti-democratic" to describe these (1998, pp. 53–54). Such contradictions were similarly evident during the liberation struggle within South Africa: although it was a site of resistance for women, it was also a site for the enactment of

sexism and exclusion (Cock, 1997, p. 315). Vigilantism itself is an obvious, although extreme, example of paradoxical insurgency, as gains are achieved by some residents while others suffer immeasurably. Recognition of these paradoxical and contradictory practices is absolutely central to a meaningful understanding of insurgent planning. Yet they deserve fuller treatment. The declaration of particular practices as inherently anti-democratic can be inadequate and lead to an analytical dead-end.

Four points about insurgency are now addressed, in an effort to contribute to a deeper understanding of the politics of insurgency. First, although planning theorists have emphasised the paradoxical outcomes of insurgent practices, stories of insurgency have tended to present transformative practices in dichotomous opposition to anti-democratic practices (although see Holston, 2009), or have referred to anti-democratic practices only as a cautionary after-thought to stories celebrating insurgency. This has had a range of analytical impacts. By whom and by what means have practices been defined and declared "anti-democratic"? The politics of this question have gone largely unaddressed, with the result that the power implications of such value judgements have been ignored. Furthermore, the dichotomy between insurgency and anti-democratic practices is arguably false (as others have recognised: see Abu-Lughod, 1998). Defining particular practices as anti-democratic runs the risk of oversimplifying both the practices themselves and the citizens or communities enacting them. Practices of insurgency which are transformative can also be repressive, and vice versa; indeed the practices can actually be mutually constitutive. In addition, the actions of citizens and communities cannot always be labelled as "democratic or anti-democratic" because a single person or community may be both at the very same time. Thus a group of residents may practice some acts which are empowering (challenges to the state over housing, for example) but also acts which are repressive (vigilantism, for example). Furthermore, these variable practices can be interpreted as evidence of undemocratic settlement invasions, or legitimate forms of crime management, depending on the perspective of the observer.

Second, references to repressive or anti-democratic insurgent practices would benefit from a fuller engagement with the politics of gender to deepen the relevance of such analyses. Women's innocence and presence as "planning visionaries" (Sandercock, 1998: 6) is often assumed within accounts of insurgency, rather than demonstrated or contested. As Haraway (1988) points out:

> There is a premium on establishing the capacity to see from the peripheries and depths [i.e. the subjugated]. But here there also lies the serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions ... The positionings of the subjugated are not exempt from critical reexamination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation ... The standpoints of the subjugated are not "innocent" positions. (Haraway, 1988, pp. 59–60)

This recognition of the gendered politics of subjection contributes to arguments put forward by Watson (2003) and Wirka (1998), among others, who highlight the problematic roles played by both poor and powerful women in generating alternative planning histories and contributions.

Gender and the politics of gender relations are not static, but always changing and deeply interconnected with multiple other social relations (class, race, sexuality, etc.). This interconnectedness must inform analyses of insurgency. A key example is that the gendered politics of women are forged in relation to male performances of masculinity and vice versa, many of which are fragile, marginalised, and changing. Some marginalised

men may be sexist, but they are still marginalised and an appreciation of masculine vulnerabilities is also essential to understanding gender relations. Similarly, the actions of poorer women are central to ideas of insurgent planning, yet as often as they are overlooked, they are also frequently celebrated in an uncritical manner. Arguably, women's agency is shaped by complex social relations, and marginalised women often suffer greater powerlessness because of poverty and their material living circumstances. However, although they are operating within frameworks of patriarchal relations, these women are not powerless, but express their agency in various, although often constrained, ways (see Watson, 2003). A critical politics of gender underscores an appreciation of the ways in which insurgent practices are multiple and complex, and this paper supports other work which aims to move beyond simplistic gendered conceptualisations of women as weak victims and men as strong perpetrators. Rather, the gendered politics of insurgency are far more complicated, a function of diverse gendered histories, changing discourses of sexuality and rights, and the simultaneous rejection and embracement of traditional patriarchal values for different purposes by both men and women (Oomen, 2004; Robins, 2008).

Third, complex questions of rights, moralities, and rationalities underpin insurgent practices, and this paper supports work which examines these dynamics (Fenster, 1999; Holston, 2009, Watson, 2003, for example). These issues are central to the justifications underpinning insurgent practices, but they are arguably not singular or universally applicable. For instance, Watson (2003), writing mainly about South Africa, argues forcefully that ideas of rights, values and rationality are deeply contested and points to "deep differences" often overlooked within planning theory (Holston, 2009). Watson does, however, state that particular values are universal and she argues that "murder ... and criminality ... are no more acceptable to ordinary men and women in Africa than they are in any other part of the world" (2003, p. 405). This paper illustrates how even these apparently universal moral frames are unstable and ambiguous, since vigilantism, an insurgent practice, often adopts violent strategies to administer justice. The normalisation of this by ordinary South Africans is a function of unstable relations between citizens and the state (Meagher, 2007), one consequence of the weak institutionalisation of the latter under colonialism, which resulted in an "informalization of politics" and the growth of "patrimonial forms of power" (Watson, 2003, p. 401). The effects of this have been exacerbated by the withdrawal of the state from particular roles as a function of neo-liberalist policies (Meagher, 2007, p. 92), witnessed by a national approach to employment creation which bypasses the very poor and in allegations of corruption and abuse within the South African Policing Services.

Furthermore, when interrogating insurgency, it is important to recognise that a focus on rights should not simply be framed in terms of their alleged universality (or lack thereof). This paper illustrates that when insurgent citizens appeal to rights, this rhetoric is used less to draw attention to inequities created by a deficiency of rights than to highlight the injustices created by a perceived excess of rights. For instance, in South Africa, particular citizens believe that criminals (among others) have gained undeserved rights as a function of the country's changed constitution (see Holston, 2009, p. 23 for a fascinating account of this very issue within Brazil). Rights discourse is employed to justify action in such cases, and to counter a perceived "burden" of rights. Finally, residents draw on particular and local ideas of morality to inform and rationalise their practices. This paper illustrates how they construct "moral communities" (Buur & Jensen, 2004) which function to justify particular, if not all, vigilante practices, and to mobilise participants in their cause.

Fourth, acts of insurgency are often defined through the particularities of time and space (Moore, 1997, p. 89 and Holloway & Hubbard, 2001, p. 220). Therefore, analyses of insurgency must be context-driven, alive to the specificities of everyday lived realities, and shaped by empirical analysis. This means that a critical engagement with insurgent practices must have a very strong appreciation of the local context, an awareness of the politics at varying scales, and a sense of the historical influences at play. For instance, across the global south, insurgency is intimately bound up with informality, as Roy explains: "insurgence often unfolds in a context of informalization where the relationship between legality and illegality, the recognized and the criminalized, the included and the marginalized, is precisely the cause of counter-politics" (Roy, 2009a, p. 9). In a similar vein, Miraftab (2009), writing about South Africa, illustrates the value of examining insurgency through a critique of unequal power relations in the country. Her arguments are extended in this paper, which explores the way in which gendered politics and the politics of place both structure and are structured by such inequalities.

This call for a strong appreciation of the specificities of a particular case has methodological implications. The task of unsettling ideas of insurgency and examining the ambiguities of the concept requires the analyst to move beyond the theoretical and instead to draw extensively on everyday empirical realities. Watson calls for planners to "return to the concrete" (2003, p. 403) as a way of thinking about difference and variability across contexts, and this emphasis on conducting empirical research (p. 396) as well as exploring the situated nature of such research, is vitally important. Similarly, academics working on vigilantism point to the essential need for grounded ethnographic work that is also historical in nature (Buur & Jensen, 2004, p. 143). An historical focus helps to prevent problematic snapshot accounts, and establishes more firmly the nature of change over time, as well as the persistence of place in shaping particular events.

Particular forms of qualitative research, arguably a mixed-methods approach, are able to develop the depth and sensitivity required to understand highly complex and changeable phenomena. Importantly, the perspective of "the everyday" (Buur & Jensen, 2004, p. 141) is central to appreciating the lived experiences and rationalities of phenomena, and also in viewing and unearthing insurgent practices from the bottom up. This paper thus draws on qualitative research using a case studies approach with its primary focus on the everyday experiences of men and women. It is to the practicalities of such methodology that this paper now turns.

Methodology and Case Studies

Two related projects were conducted in South Africa between 2002 and 2007, both examining the gendered experiences of violence and place. The first focused on women, the second on men. The research aimed at unpacking the problematic dualism between domestic and public space, and to complicate the concept that women are victims, and men perpetrators, ideas that underscore much work on gender and violence. A complex and differentiated mix of qualitative methods were used in both projects to examine the spatial, historical, and emotional experiences of violence (Meth, 2003; Meth & McClymont, 2009). The range of methods (focus-groups, interviews, diary writing, photography, drawing, life-history, and evaluation interviews) afforded different spaces of disclosure for the participants, allowing them to explore difficult memories in a manner over which they had relative control. The projects were facilitated by two Zulu-speaking female African research co-ordinators who worked as interpreters and translators. Questions of researcher subjectivities and the ethics and emotions of working on violence are central

to the methodologies of both projects and have been explored in detail elsewhere (Meth & Malaza, 2003; Meth & McClymont, 2009). Suffice to say that both studies were fraught with tensions, but that these served to productively inform the outcomes of both projects and to shift the relations between participants and researchers in useful ways.

The two projects drew on distinct but overlapping cases in their examination of space and place. The project that focused on women concentrated on three different case study locations: an informal settlement (Cato Manor), an inner city market (Warwick Junction), and a more formal township (Kwa Mashu). The idea was to compare and contrast the geographies of violence with the nature of housing and place in each location. The project that focused on men explored in more detail the particularities of informal space, concentrating solely on Cato Manor.

This paper draws on material from the studies of both Cato Manor and Warwick Junction. Both areas are centrally located within the city boundary: Warwick Junction forms part of the core inner city, while Cato Manor lies within 7 km of the city centre. Warwick Junction is a bustling entrepreneurial hub and a key transport node. Informal trading of a wide range of goods and services (food, clothing, muthi,[2] hair dressing, etc.) occurs alongside formal businesses. Some informal traders operate within managed market areas (with services and some shelter), while others are located on the pavements. Cato Manor, by contrast, is largely a residential area, and quite vast in size. It is the site of intensive, state-led regeneration with an emphasis on the provision of small formal housing units and related community and business facilities. Housing is a mix of informal and formal: some sections await redevelopment, while others have experienced invasions by squatters desperate for land. Further characteristics of the two areas will be presented below, through the analysis of women's insurgent practices in both locations.

Stories of Insurgency

This paper focuses on three areas of insurgency: claims to place and housing, insurgent entrepreneurialism, and vigilantism. Though there is not space to examine the roles played by women in broader practices of South African resistance, particularly in relation to the apartheid state and its repressive segregationist policies (Bonnin, 2000, p. 302), it is important to note that women's historical politicisation through opposition to the state shapes their current insurgent practices (see Miraftab, 2009 for a similar argument). Apartheid was explicitly gendered and the spatialities of segregation were defined by gender relations: women's access and rights to cities were highly circumscribed and the generic relegation to homeland regions had a huge impact on poor urban women. Yet despite this political regulation, cities became sites of relative freedom and greater equality for women, spaces where they could challenge patriarchy and the state. Arguably, this still remains the case today.

Women in Cato Manor were highly active in the anti-pass[3] movement and demonstrated considerable resistance to forced removal. Their actions in the 1950s and 1960s were described by the resident ANC Women's League (ANCWL) as "heroic, their violent actions justified" (Edwards, 1996, p. 102 cited in Beall *et al.*, 2004, p. 320). This history of insurgency has framed current relations between citizens and the post-apartheid state in complex ways. The majority of women support the ruling ANC, but are angry about its failure to deliver on its election promises. Their memories of fighting for freedom are still fresh, and they express a growing resentment about the policies and interventions of the constitutionalist neoliberal democracy, particularly the failure to provide employment and changes to criminal legislation.

Claims to Place: Insurgency and Housing

Both Cato Manor and Warwick Junction have histories of insurgent claims to place and are the sites of on-going conflicts over access to housing. Cato Manor was settled in the early 1900s, the land leased out to African residents by Indian landowners. The area expanded rapidly, housing around 45,000–50,000 people by 1950 (Maharaj & Makhathini, 2004, pp. 28, 30). In 1959, a violent period of unrest broke out as residents were threatened with eviction by the government. The unplanned squatter settlement was perceived to be "a hotbed of crime" and the authorities were desperate to eradicate it (Walker, 1991, p. 230). Women "formed a large percentage of the 'illegal' population who were threatened with removals" (Walker, 1991, p. 231). Between 1958 and 1963, as the policies of grand apartheid were implemented, evictions from Cato Manor of both African and Indian residents occurred (Maharaj & Makhathini, 2004, p. 31). The area was effectively cleared of almost all its residents, remaining "empty" right up until the late 1980s.

From this time onwards, the rising urbanisation of the area by Africans was tolerated, while the apartheid state struggled with crises and talks of political negotiation grew. The authorities controlling Cato Manor increasingly ignored the illegal occupation of land through invasions. Although Beall *et al.* (2004) caution that little is known about the gender dynamics underpinning this process in this particular case, they acknowledge that "the widely held perception is that women settlers were in the majority and were proactive in occupying land, building shacks and extending settlement" (2004, p. 320). Large scale invasions occurred in July 1993 and 1995 (Maharaj & Makhathini, 2004, p. 34), a time of great political and spatial flux, and it was during this period that the majority of the fifteen female project participants in this study arrived in Cato Manor. Their movement formed a particular strategy, designed either to escape escalating violence in other parts of Durban, or to access the possibility of new housing and employment in the area. Their actions ran counter to the formal emphasis of National Housing Policy (Watson, 2003) and to the plans of the local state, which, along with the recently formed Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) (CMDA, 2009) had begun to plan intensive development in the area, allocating land for formal housing development. Despite this, the actions of squatters rapidly changed the urban fabric of Cato Manor and revealed a certain strength of purpose amongst particular urban citizens. Attempts by the state to control and evict squatters were of variable success and women played a central role in resisting state demolitions as this eye-witness account from Nhlahla (a male resident of Cato Manor) illustrates:

> The police … for two years … [came] … to destroy our houses. We were always rebuild[ing] houses after the police [were] gone because we didn't have [a] place to sleep. The women who were with us were upset about that. They form a group of women only and told us they want to solve that problem because [they] were tired. The women were combining in that mass action in the road; it was like a toyi toyi[4] of the women only. The municipal police were come again as usual to destroy the houses [that] were built. The women were standing [in] a line in the road while the police come. They talk first with the police and those police didn't listen [to] them, then the women made a plan to remove their underwear clothes and they were naked and face the municipal police with their bums and were opening the bums. The police were end there to come and destroy the houses. They [felt] embarrassed and fear[ful] to face the bums of the women, other bums were big. The men were staying at home [during that] … incident because of the women who were done that.

> They were helping us to come out with the good solution about the police (Nhlahla,[5] Diary, Cato Manor).

The women within this story of nudity resemble Sandercock's "planning visionaries" (1998, p. 6), employing subversive strategies to counter the regulations of planning (and see Rangan & Gilmartin (2002) for a similar account of the politics of nudity and the use of transgression as a form of opposition). Nevertheless, their insurgency is tempered by their poor living conditions (see Figure 1) and their simultaneous desperation for state intervention. The men and women of Cato Manor felt abandoned by the state (in terms of service and infrastructure provision), pointing to a contradictory and multiple set of relations with the state viewed both as a strong regulator and as a failing provider.

In Warwick Junction, historical attempts to resist state policy, particularly over claims to place, were relatively effective. During apartheid, the racial categorisation of the area was a constant site of contest: despite being declared as white[6] in 1963, it retained a mixed character (Maharaj, 1999, p. 252). In the 1970s, many Indian residents were forcibly relocated to outlying townships, promoting urban blight. Following this, much of the resistance to removals occurred in the post 1976 period (following an uprising in Soweto) and a resident's association was formed to ensure that the area's "grey" (mixed race) character remained (Maharaj, 1999, p. 256). A gendered analysis of this history is, however, largely absent, and Maylam comments that in the early 1900s, Indian customs in Durban "kept most women in the household and out of public life" (1996, p. 114), although they were engaged in welfare and charity work.

In more recent years, however, Warwick Junction has witnessed a dramatic rise in informal traders, and an accompanying escalation of claims to place, centring on the right to live informally in the area. Project participants explained that, to maintain their income, they were forced to break the law and sleep at their trading site in the market area. Although illustrative of insurgency, this practice was highly inadequate for women,

Figure 1. Housing and living conditions within Cato Manor. *Source:* Siboniso Ngubane (2006).

particularly those with children, to the point that it raises doubts about a more optimistic celebration of counter planning. Insecurity and loss of privacy were two key concerns:

> We've got plastics that serve as shelter, we do everything here, when you need to take a bath you have to do it under this plastic so that nobody sees you … At night my neighbours smoke and drink and make noise. This place is not safe. It doesn't feel like home, but because I have no alternative, I have gotten used to it. (Warwick Junction Interview)

Other female traders slept illegally in nearby buildings, squatting on a nightly basis. Some even slept in the underground garages of formal high rise blocks with their children. In doing so, they were resisting the expectations of the local authorities that, as traders, they would return nightly to their "homes" in adjacent townships. They were also subverting the notion of residence-free zones, or zones of discreet formal housing within the city centre, and thus actively shaping the spaces of the inner city. While optimism could be gleaned from their efforts to re-imagine the city in different ways (Holston, 1998; Sandercock, 1998), as explained above, their lived realities were far from ideal.

Insurgent Entrepreneurialism

The project participants from Cato Manor relied extensively on informal employment to earn their livelihoods, actively shaping their local urban economies. Many of the women had chosen to live without men, and this resistance to patriarchal norms had both negative and positive financial implications for them. Selling was popular with more than half of the women who grew, collected, or purchased goods for sale, namely vegetables, scrap metals, candles, ironing board covers, second-hand clothes, food, cigarettes, and underwear. The authorities have largely turned a blind eye to informal hawkers, but traders do suffer from police raids on their property. Some of the women had set up informal sewing and gardening associations to support their entrepreneurial efforts but many of these suffered from a lack of capital. This "survivalist" precariousness is both gendered and fairly typical (Rogerson, 1996).

Cato Manor has a long history of informal entrepreneurialism among women, particularly involving illegal beer brewing, a practice defined as insurgent by its position in opposition to the state. It provided a sole source of income for many women in the mid twentieth century, and the June 1959 closure of illegal beer brewing stills in Cato Manor by the authorities "infuriated local beer-brewers and shebeen (drinking establishment) queens [whereby on] the 17th June 1959, a large group of these women stormed the nearest municipal beerhall, chased out its customers and destroyed the beer" (Walker, 1991, p. 231). This action sparked further protests by women across Durban, spilling out into rural areas over the following months.

Warwick Junction also has a politicised past, but given its central location in the inner city, entrepreneurialism has played a more defining role in the shaping of urban space, compared with Cato Manor. The area flourished in the early 1900s (Maharaj, 1999, p. 250) and was an important business and residential district, containing both Indian and white residents (Maharaj, 1999, p. 252) with African traders able to enter on five-day passes (La Hausse, 1984 cited in Nesvåg, 2000, p. 36). Two of the most important items of trade were muthi (traditional African medicines) and beer. As in Cato Manor, brewing of the latter was dominated by African women in the early 1900s (Nesvåg, 2000, p. 37). However, both commodities fell subject to severe restrictions by the government and from the 1940s to the 1970s very few traders remained in this area – although Nesvåg notes that a few

female African traders (and a few Indians trading outside of their shops) formed a desperate group who "braved the law" (2000, pp. 37–39), evidencing female resistance to racially defined trading laws. By the early 1980s, attitudes towards trading softened (although raids and restrictions continued on occasion) and the numbers of traders grew dramatically. By 1990, 900 traders were identified in the area (Nesvåg, 2000, p. 45).

Clashes between mainly African traders and the local government continued into the post-apartheid era: in 1995, unregulated street trading was highlighted by the Durban Metro Council as "undesirable" (Maharaj, 1999, p. 263). Since the fall of apartheid, Warwick Junction has become a fully entrenched transport and economic hub of Durban's inner city. Estimates reveal that around 300,000 commuters use the area on a daily basis and that around 5,000 informal traders work in the greater Warwick Junction and Grey Street area (Khosa, 2003). The majority of these traders are African women seeking economic independence (Khosa, 2003 after Naidoo, 1993). The area has been the focus of much local government planning and renewal (Khosa, 2003), yet despite this, female traders suffer from inadequate facilities and strained relations with the local authorities.

Trading at Warwick Junction is a significant instance of gendered insurgency. Nesvåg (2000) argues that, in view of the anti-street trading ideology still prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa, this practice can be viewed as a critical form of resistance:

> By seizing or conquering the streets of Durban, street traders boldly defied and undermined the grand apartheid urban project, and through this important symbolic occupation ... [set] an important precedent for later mass non-compliance. (Nesvåg, 2000: 34l)

All thirteen of the women interviewed at Warwick Junction were muthi traders. The majority arrived in the mid 1990s, and the fact that their coming coincides with the fall of apartheid may indicate that they were capitalising upon the change in government, presuming new trading freedoms and new rights to reside in urban areas. In an effort to organise against their economic vulnerability most of the women are members of the Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU), a vocal and active organisation formed in 1993 (Lund *et al.*, 2000) that concentrates on skills development as well as liaison work with city authorities. During 1996, SEWU formed a powerful voice of resistance when the Durban Metropolitan Council introduced new street trading by-laws, forcefully resisting these (along with other organisations). In September 1996, Madlamini Khumalo (branch leader of SEWU) issued a memorandum to the City Police condemning a particular raid in the area (Nesvåg, 2000, p. 47). SEWU also secured the provision of market stall facilities (toilets, wash stands, and overhead cover), influencing the planning of inner city space. As this illustrates, in Warwick Junction, organised forms of gendered insurgent practice have proved essential to the success of entrepreneurialism. Informal trading continues to be a defining feature of this location, and the markets are a substantial draw for customers from the wider region.[7]

Vigilantism as Insurgent Crime Management

Levels of crime, violence, rape and murder in South Africa are disturbingly high and research illustrates that it is a very real problem for most South Africans (Jewkes *et al.*, 2006). Crime is particularly acute in areas of informality, and plays out in complex gendered ways: women and children are highly vulnerable to rape, and young men to murder, although neither exclusively. Crime statistics for the two areas under study are highly problematic for two reasons. First, allegations of the misreporting of crime

by police in South Africa are widespread. Second, area-specific analysis is not possible, because Cato Manor and Warwick Junction fall into two and three different areas respectively for the collection of crime statistics (Cato Manor and Mayville; Durban Central, Umbilo and Berea) (SAPS, 2009, personal communication) Despite these reservations, the statistics suggest that between 2001 and 2008 these areas saw a substantial increase in drug-related crimes and assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, while rates for murder and rape show unclear trends (South African Policing Services, 2009).

In both Cato Manor and Warwick Junction, women relied on a variety of practices to deal with high crime and violence rates, including reporting incidents to their local committees, involving the police and NGO representatives, self-defence, employing witch-doctors and vigilantism. These strategies intersect in ambiguous ways, and in different combinations, at varying times. Inevitably the boundaries between formal or legal and informal or illegal strategies were regularly blurred, with insurgent practices often evolving alongside more regular interventions. Within Warwick Junction, the presence of an active non-government organisation (NGO) (SEWU) offered a more conventional method for counter-managing crime. The women's allegiance to SEWU structured their strategies, as traders explained: "we report to our leaders" and "our leaders are there for us, they seek to ensure that we are treated well" (Warwick Junction, Focus Group 2). The women also made use of other formal structures to manage crime including community policing forums, such as Warwick Junction's Traders Against Crime (TAC): Yes in case one scream[s] they come … they run after a criminal until they catch him" (Warwick Junction, Focus Group 2). These organisations work in partnership with the police and are examples of a growing reliance by government on partnerships with community and civilian organisations to secure governance.

Although the business-related NGOs and forums cited above operate within the formal framework of the state, local committees are also often formed within residential areas with the sanction of local governance structures and the police. Goodenough and Forster (2004) describe the formation of "peace committees" in Cato Manor, initiated by residents to fight crime and co-operating closely with the police. Resident committees at the scale of the neighbourhood also served as spaces of crime management, yet the practice of reporting to a local-area committee could sometimes extend to organised vigilantism. In some cases, the committee conducted mock court-hearings and, at times, meted out punishment *before* escorting suspected criminals to the police. Several women spoke of using this strategy, and of the variable tolerance of the police towards such violent practices, but they also distinguished neighbourhood action from the formation of more ad hoc vigilante groups (Buur & Jensen, 2004), which several women had witnessed, and in which some had participated.

The involvement of women in vigilante membership is not unusual. Oomen (2004) found that 68% of the supporters of the Mapogo vigilante organisation in a different part of South Africa were women. However, the participation of women, historically and currently, in actual acts of vigilante violence is less reported and, seemingly, less common. Vigilante practices are, however, gendered in complex ways, beyond membership and perpetration. Mapogo strongly advances the traditional authority of men as one of its key values, with the support of its female members (Oomen, 2004), while other vigilante practices have arisen precisely in response to sexual violence against women and children. Indeed Posel argues that there is a rising politicisation of sexual violence, particularly through changes in legal sanctions because of democratisation. She describes a "moral

panic about the moral frailty and sexual menace of manhood" as male sexuality increasingly becomes the focus of critical attention (Posel, 2004, p. 235).

Supporting Posel's "burden of rights" argument, female traders emphasised the rights gained by alleged criminals through changes to sentencing legislation in particular, and the broader implementation of human rights in general:

> I think in the olden days killing a person was not easy because people knew that if you do it you are going to be given a death sentence. Now that the death sentence is not applicable anymore, killers know that if they kill someone they will spend a couple of days in prison and thereafter move on with their lives. Killers are also allowed bail in this country so they are freed and given the chance to kill all witnesses and win the case at the end. ... the punishment that killers and rapists get for their deeds is not enough to change their attitudes (Nonkululeko, Diary, Warwick Junction).

> Sometimes I am forced to believe that the law of the country that is considerate of human rights weakens [the] police officers. The services that are given to prisoners are more than what we get so they keep committing crime because they know that there is no punishment, in prison they eat anything they want (Zodwa, Diary, Warwick Junction).

Through the formation of a moral community the majority of women felt that vigilante practices were justified and were a way of teaching criminals appropriate moral codes and "correcting immoral ... behaviour" (Buur & Jensen, 2004, p. 147). They described the ad hoc formation of vigilante groups as "using the strategy of telling neighbours", which would then lead to the formation of a group for the explicit purpose of searching out, capturing, and punishing a suspected criminal. Amanda from Warwick Junction explained that "thugs do get a good lesson that crime does not pay at all" (Diary), deeming vigilante formations effective: "I've seen it myself, it works." The women explained that certain types of criminal were the objects of their attention, namely rapists, burglars, and repeat offenders (Cato Manor Focus Group 2).

> In November 2001 a thief was caught. He was severely beaten by the residents ... When he recovered he stole again. He broke into a house and was caught. People were so angry that they tried to take out his eyes by knives saying it is the eyes that see the things that he desires to steal (Zandile, Diary, Cato Manor).

These moral communities are particularly entrenched by the perceived failings of the state to administer justice and manage crime, a claim echoed nationally (Harris, 2001; Oomen, 2004). Vigilantism has strengthened in a context where the effectiveness of the state has been substantially eroded, often in relation to budgetary constraints through national policy. The police were specifically identified, by all project participants, as failing in their duties, and the gap thus created was increasingly filled by informal and privatised policing practices, now very common across South Africa (Hornberger, 2004; Buur & Jensen, 2004). These include the hire of security firms by wealthy citizens (Badboyz, 2009), a privatisation of crime prevention and fighting that has deep consequences for the moral landscape in which vigilantism unfolds.

Following their lack of faith in the police and the criminal justice system, the women preferred that suspects were punished prior to reporting them to the police: "Yes, it's the best way because they [the criminals] are not jailed anymore." When asked if they were personally involved in the violent beating of a suspected child rapist, they explained: "Yes,

we were beating up someone who has raped my neighbour's child" (Cato Manor Focus Group 2). Their assessment of vigilante responses were largely positive, one woman even described herself as happy because the criminals who were suspected of breaking into her house were "severely beaten" before being handed over to the police (Thandekile, Diary, Cato Manor). In the case of a boyfriend beating his girlfriend, a neighbour broke into an adjacent mjondolo (shack) to rescue the woman and then was helped by locals to exact punishment: "The problem was solved by other boys who decided to beat him up" (Bongekile, Diary, Cato Manor). An additional benefit of such vigilante action is the retrieval of stolen goods:

> I therefore think that communities work better than the police because even if someone has stolen somewhere, in case they catch him they call a meeting and bring [him], fearing that he may be killed, he tell them where the stolen goods are. They fetch those goods with him wherever he may have sold them and then give him to the police (Cato Manor Focus Group 2).

The tragedy of this strategy is self-evidently the prospect of the misidentification of criminals. Thandekile explained how her brother was wrongly targeted by a vigilante group in search of stolen goods:

> They went to his place ... [they] decided to beat him up. When he tried to get the reason why they were doing that to him or explain his case they never listened to him. On the night of the burglary he was at Umlazi [a different township]. The problem was that he was a friend to one of the criminals ... They hang him in a tree and beat him severely ... They beat him until they were satisfied ... He was admitted for a week in hospital (Thandekile, Diary, Cato Manor).

Violent vigilantism points more widely to the cracks in a moral community, and to the unequal gendered consequences of such actions for marginalised men.

The power of vigilante formations extends to controlling claims over place. Lihle described the treatment of a suspected child rapist following his release on bail: "The community decided that it was unsafe to stay with such a person and thus destroyed his shack" (Lihle, Diary, Cato Manor). The regulation of space through eviction parallels regulatory practices of planning more commonly associated with the state (Sandercock, 1998, p. 6), forming a kind of parody of official action (Holston, 1998, p. 47). However, it also echoes Buur and Jensen's (2004) notion of "exorcism", in which criminals are deemed out-of-place and hence require removal. Exorcism is more likely with suspected acts of sexual violence, particularly those involving children as victims, following the growing politicisation of sexuality (Posel, 2004) and in these cases it is often achieved through murder. Suspects have also been killed for abducting young girls for purposes of prostitution:

> Unfortunately, for him, the community saw him. They called on everyone in the area to catch the thug. He was caught and beaten ... He asked for mercy, but nothing of the sort could be obtained from the angry community ... He was crying so loud that you could hear the echo from the dongas around. He cried until he died. They used all sorts of weapons. For instance he was stoned until he died. Having satisfied themselves that he was dead, they stamped him with a huge stone on his face. (Phiwe, Diary, Cato Manor)

Similarly, Nonkululeko told a painful story that unsettles insurgency, questioning the legitimacy of the moral community formed in response to a brutal gang rape and murder:

> I witnessed what I'm talking about. I saw someone being killed brutally … They raped her … and stabbed her to death. They were eight and they all took turns during the rape. It is said that what goes around comes around … These boys were caught before her funeral. They were brutally killed. The committee took them to the sports ground. Everyone did what s/he thought they deserved. Some beat them whilst others stoned them. Some people were using bush knives to cut wherever they like in their bodies. They all died. This created another picture in my heart. I understand they were wrong by killing her. I cannot say what was done to them was even worse or it was not supposed to happen because if they were reported to the police they would be out here harassing more people. However, at that very area, crime still exists. They never learnt from what happened to their friends. (Nonkululeko, Diary, Warwick Junction).

Nonkululeko identifies the futility of vigilantism in her story, yet much research points to the success of vigilante practices for reducing crime for particular periods of time (Meagher, 2007; Oomen, 2004). As a form of insurgency, however, it rests quite regularly on the use of unpalatable violence. In various cases, however, references to the killing of suspects are made quite casually, pointing to a situated set of values about murder that regard it as justified in some cases, rather than a crime necessitating universal condemnation (see Watson, 2003, p. 405 for comparison). In part, these moral justifications rest on a set of beliefs about the humanity of the criminal, who, as the "embodiment of evil" becomes "subhuman"—a description given by a government minister (Buur & Jensen, 2004, p. 147). In both projects, men and women repeatedly compared criminals to animals, and dogs in particular, to describe their inhumanity and to dehumanize them, underscoring their lack of rights. Following this, several of the women criticised the absence of the death penalty: "The government must toughen the sentence against rapists. My only wish is the return of the death sentence. I think that could reduce the rate of rape and related abuse against women and children. Castration could also be a viable option" (Siphiwe, Diary, Cato Manor). This view was supported by another woman who argued that "if the death sentence was in place such people would be dead and the number of criminals would drop" (Nobuhle, Diary, Cato Manor). This support for the death penalty represents a clear challenge to the views currently entrenched in South Africa's democratic constitution which is founded on principles of justice and human rights.

Unsettling Insurgency: Concluding Comments

This paper has aimed to open up discussions about insurgency by illustrating the complex and variable ways in which insurgent practices are performed, and by critically exploring the gendered politics underpinning these. These conclusions draw out a number of key themes from the paper, but also aim to highlight the relevance of these arguments for planning theory more broadly.

Building on work which recognises that insurgency can be transformative yet also repressive (Holston, 1998; Sandercock, 1998), the paper has focused on practical aspects of this contradiction in relation to gendered politics. The emphasis on multiple forms of insurgency, responding to the management of housing, work, and crime, has illustrated that insurgency is shot through with ambiguities which cross simple dichotomies. Assumed oppositional relations with the state, assumed patterns of power (marginalised

versus dominating), and the very binary notion of citizens as transformative or repressive, are revealed to be inadequate for analysing insurgency. Furthermore, through a critical examination of gendered vigilantism, the acute suffering caused by repressive insurgency is brought to light, raising questions about the moral and ethical frameworks informing insurgency, while also recognising that for many members of vigilante groups, this so-called repression is liberating and largely rational.

The empirical evidence here points to the influence on insurgency of multiple and changing relations between the state and its citizens. These can be contradictory, or oppositional at times (witnessed through resistance to housing demolitions) but also mutually constitutive, evidenced by vigilante practices which often go unchallenged by the police and have a history, at a national level, of garnering state support (Meagher, 2007; Oomen, 2004). The state is not a monolithic dominating force, but rather a complex network of complementary and contradictory power relations, which play out in different ways at different scales. Furthermore, the insurgent practices of informal house building and protection, and informal entrepreneurialism and vigilantism, work to parody and perform state-like functions through their material provision of infrastructure and services. Acts of vigilantism can work to regulate space and manage the gendered politics of place, by evicting unwanted criminal citizens and protecting private property interests. In these respects, they differ very little from the more developmental and regulatory elements of formal planning.

This recognition of the regulatory characteristics of insurgency is significant for planning theory more broadly. Vigilantism can perform a key role in shaping place, and social relations within place. Thus, although it can be defined as repressive, it cannot be written off as an insurgent aberration within more official, formal planning structures. Instead, it is a practice that must be accounted for. This paper calls then on planning researchers to engage more fully in the empirical investigation of insurgency, focusing where possible on the paradoxical nature of insurgent practices.

Both case studies revealed that practices of insurgency can and do point towards alternative futures (following Sandercock's 1998 celebration of this characteristic), such as the desire for productive employment witnessed through entrepreneurial practices. However, these alternative future visions also include the death sentence and a future where constitutional rights are curbed for particular citizens (often male), because of their actions as suspected criminals. This raises crucial and difficult questions about the values that underpin these insurgent-inspired alternative futures, and illustrates that some of these values may not be universal or tied to the principles of democracy as conceptualised in the west (Holston, 2009).

This fact raises complex but pertinent issues for planning theorists. Do we only celebrate insurgency if it embodies (particular) democratic values, and on what basis can we discriminate between transformative versus repressive practices? Is this even a useful question? Watson's (2003) work is very helpful here, as she calls for recognition of deep differences between different cultures and citizens, with serious implications for theorising participation in planning. Deep differences are not, as Watson explains, unique to South Africa, or indeed even to Africa. Holston supports this, explaining that divergent claims to democracy are not simply "aberrations" which can be dismissed (Holston, 2009, p. 13) by theorists in the global north. Within South Africa, an appreciation of the resurgence of traditional African values, for example, must be acknowledged by planners if their work is to have relevance to the diverse citizenry. By extension, at a global level, differences can be identified in all cities.

However, respecting difference may also entail problematic consequences. For instance, appreciation of traditional African values may have problematic gendered implications. Women's equality gains can be reversed through claims to tradition (Robins, 2008), and feminist planners must think through the potential antagonisms between gender equality and respect for, and of, cultural difference. A more complex gender analysis is required; one that demonstrates, rather than simply assumes, women's roles as "planning visionaries". Similarly the treatment of men deserves substantial unpacking if we are to understand their roles in insurgency.

By calling for analyses of insurgency that are "situated" (Watson, 2003), this paper aims to contribute to wider claims within planning regarding the politics of methodology. It argues that the political and gendered context of insurgent practices, as well as the political and practical outcomes it seeks in particular cases, are fundamental to the capacity of planners to make sense of insurgency. Planners need to ground themselves fully in the politics of insurgency and the concrete practices of it. This can only be achieved on a case-by-case basis, using empirical evidence and analysing this evidence through a political lens. In the case of women in Cato Manor and Warwick Junction, their practices are a function of complex political realities: the retreat of the state following neoliberal principles and subsequent delivery failures; the under-funding and illegitimacy of the police (related in part to their history of apartheid brutality); the cultural conflicts over ideas of citizenship and rights; the rise of gendered politics through the partial advancement of gender equality (Bonthuys & Albertyn, 2007); and the politics of a national economic strategy which has largely bypassed the poor. Only within this messy framework can insurgency be evaluated.

Finally, planning theory would benefit further from exploring the interconnections and spaces between transformative and repressive insurgencies, given their inextricable links. These interconnections embody the everyday, in all its ambiguities. The paradoxical nature of insurgency is a process in need of critical examination. Analyses must avoid narrow binary accounts of good and bad, instead exploring the interconnections between multiple insurgent practices and their mutually constituting nature at the heart of urban politics. Further work on moralities, values, rationalities and rights is therefore required in order to appreciate the situated nature of paradoxical insurgencies.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. See, however, Holston's 2009 paper on gang violence in Brazil, which he uses to critically rethink ideas of democracy and a discourse of rights. Holston's case is extreme (although globally prevalent), as the practices are described as "exceptionally brutal" (2009, p. 15) and also tied to criminal and drug elements. The example thus does not necessarily blur the binaries of emancipatory/repressive insurgency as easily as those considered in this paper.
2. Muthi is traditional medicine administered by healers and witchdoctors.

3. Passes were documents required by all black South Africans permitting entry into "white urban areas" during the apartheid era.
4. "Toyi toyi" is a form of protest dance-march popularised during the anti-apartheid struggles.
5. Note, all participants' names are pseudonyms.
6. Meaning to be inhabited by white residents only, thus excluding Indian and African residents.
7. Subsequent to the collection of data for this paper, the area of Warwick Junction and the informal traders in particular, have come under sustained threat of removal because of municipal plans to demolish the "market" and to invest in a central mall (Skinner, 2009).

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