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Take Back Rondebosch Common: A Case Study on Discontent With the DA and Urban Land Reform in Rondebosch, Cape Town.

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**Take Back Rondebosch Common:
A Case Study on Discontent with the DA and
Urban Land Reform in Rondebosch, Cape Town.**

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for South Africa: Multiculturalism and Human Rights, School for International Training, Cape Town: Spring 2012

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4. Abstract:

In late January of 2012, undercurrents of dissatisfaction with Cape Town's ruling political party, the Democratic Alliance, and their pace of development and service delivery came to a head as aggrieved citizens marched through the southern suburbs of the city to a green known as Rondebosch Common. The citizens had planned on protesting the lack of opportunities for Cape Town's non-white citizens while at the Common in a "Land, Housing and Jobs Summit," but were met with police batons and armored vans that quelled the movement in an astonishing show of force. This paper will investigate the motivations of the attempted protest on Rondebosch Common, arguing that underlying discontent with the DA and their policies of unequal service delivery, particularly as it relates to land, are to be blamed for the citizen's anger so many years after apartheid's end. Further, it will argue that the decision to march on Rondebosch itself makes this particular demonstration different from the many that have occurred in South Africa.

By interviewing members of the various organizations involved in planning the march and community members, reading local newspapers that covered the event, and academically researching the question of urban land reform in South Africa in the years since apartheid, a more holistic view of the movement sometimes called "Occupy Rondebosch Common" emerges, including just why a protest was deemed necessary in the first place and why the decision was made to march on Rondebosch.

Through compiling these separate sources of information into one narrative of the protest, the motivations for the march become more readily apparent, suggesting that the planned summit was in response to the slow pace of the Democratic Alliance's

service delivery in marginalized sections of Cape Town. What sets this particular demonstration apart was its strategy of crossing the invisible line dividing the city between whites and non-whites by holding a protest of Cape Town's disaffected in the leafy southern suburbs. With this decision, and because of the large show of force by the municipal police, "Occupy Rondebosch Common" was thrust into the spotlight and into the consciousness of a city that has ignored certain problems of its population for far too long. By turning the demonstration into a news story, the protesting citizens at Rondebosch accidentally but effectively revitalized the debate in Cape Town over land, housing and jobs.

5. Introduction:

5.1: What is the topic?

In today's South Africa, the question of urban land reform lies at the heart of many issues, among them housing and jobs, in a country so long divided along racial lines. From 1652, when Dutch explorer Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape, to 1994, when the National Party and their state institutionalized segregation known as apartheid collapsed, South Africa was ruled by a minority white population. The policies of the successive colonial and apartheid regimes left South Africa's blacks and so called "coloureds," the vast majority of the population, landless and without adequate housing. Urban land reform efforts aimed at redressing the wrongs of centuries of exploitive rule have been attempted since 1994, but they have been incomplete among all of South Africa's urban citizens, and many in the cities are still left landless. This land crisis for blacks and so called "coloureds" was the central complaint of the Communities for Social Change, an umbrella civil society organization that marched on Rondebosch Common in late January of 2012. Why is it, they asked, that so many of Cape Town's non-white citizens have no land, no home, or no job to call their own, all of these years after apartheid? Thus, the issue of urban land reform is a central and contemporary question addressed by the Communities for Social Change in their march on Rondebosch Common.

5.2: What was studied?

The Communities for Social Change's motivations for marching on Rondebosch Common represent a host of contentious issues facing today's blacks and so called "coloureds" in Cape Town. Urban land reform was the focus of the CSC in its attempted "Land, Housing

and Jobs Summit” on the Common, as it affects most other problem areas for Cape Town’s marginalized populations, including access to housing and jobs. The protest, the author argues, was symptomatic of popular discontent with the service delivery of the Democratic Alliance in black and so called “coloured” parts of the city that have suffered for years under racial inequity. The objectives of this paper are twofold. First, the paper will discuss the motivations for the protest on Rondebosch Common and how these motivations are symptomatic of discontent with the DA. Second, it will explain why a march on Rondebosch itself was a unique and effective strategy of protest. By grasping the rationale behind the march on Rondebosch, a greater and wider understanding of where the city’s government is failing some of its citizens can be reached.

5.3: Structure:

This ISP consists of five sections. The first section will be a literature review, which will explain the usefulness and applicability of academic literature dealing with urban land policy in South Africa in the years following apartheid, as well as of newspaper articles that dealt with the protest. The second section will be a justification of the methodology used and a glossary of major terms and acronyms found throughout the course of the paper, so as to establish a common vocabulary between author and audience. The third section will consist of an introduction and a summary of the author’s argument, with the intent of creating the context necessary for the rest of the paper. The fourth section contains the main argument of this ISP, and will discuss the Communities for Social Change and their motivations for marching on Rondebosch Common. This fourth section will rely on content analysis of newspaper articles and interviews the author conducted to provide critical information. Finally, the fifth section will present

conclusions, primarily centered on why “Occupy Rondebosch Common” was unique, and the trajectory of the movement in the months ahead.

5.4: Sources:

Primary Sources: Interviews with academic Emma Arogundade, activist and community organizer Jared Sacks, craftsperson Shelton Marimo, and Rondebosch community members Elise, Michael, May and Richard. For the purposes of this paper, the author treated newspapers articles on the protest as primary sources, as they provided a foundation of valuable content analysis that illuminated what was being reported on and what wasn't. Newspapers that articles were gathered from included the *People's Post*, *Southern Suburbs Tatler*, *The Cape Times*, *Mahala*, and *The Sunday Argus*.

Secondary Sources: Newspaper articles were also used as secondary sources, as they provided factual information on the protest, in addition to the content analysis described above. Multiple studies on urban land reform in post-apartheid South Africa were found in academic journals and books gathered from the HSRC.

5.5: Limitations of the Study:

This study on the Communities for Social Change's protest on Rondebosch Common had its share of limitations and hindrances throughout the course of its writing. Most critically, finding specific numbers on the service delivery of the Democratic Alliance was very difficult, and the author instead relied on the readily visible evidence of destitute informal settlements that dot the city to show the lack of services rendered for blacks and so called “coloureds” by the DA. Finding more concrete evidence for poor service delivery would have strengthened this paper, and should be grounds for further research. Next, the author intended on interviewing those people who were directly

involved with the march on the Common, so as to hear in their own words why the protest took place and why Rondebosch was decided on as the location. Unfortunately, the author was only able to obtain contact information and arrange an interview with one person involved directly with the planning of the march and who was there himself, Jared Sacks. As a result, the author had to turn to other sources for interviews, and gathered valuable information from Rondebosch community members through a series of guided conversations and informal interviews. In addition, the author struggled with the lack of information presented in many newspaper articles on the protest, particularly their tendency to *not* interview members of the CSC. However, this provided the author with a chance to conduct a content analysis of the multitude of newspaper articles read, and to make conclusions based on what was and what wasn't being reported on. Finally, the short time period available for research – just under a month – limited the depth of study, as there was limited time for interviews, reading and writing.

Section I: Literature Review:

When the Communities for Social Change decided to march on Rondebosch Common to protest the lack of access to land, housing, and jobs for blacks and so called “coloureds,” the motivations for a planned protest were not two-dimensional, and were instead drawn from the context of years of racial inequity, South African government policies, and possibly international movements with similar intent. Thus, to come to an understanding of what specifically the CSC was protesting and where the author presumed their motives came from, the author chose to synthesize literature from a variety of sources together. These included articles on the international “the commons” movement, academic journals and books on the history of urban land policy in South Africa, and newspaper articles that either addressed the facts of the protest in Cape Town or reported on the underlying causes of such an event.

In recent years, there has been an international groundswell movement known as “the commons” movement, with many leftward leaning academics arguing for a revitalization of communal spaces in urban areas. Fedirici (2008) argues that the desire for communal spaces is in direct response to the increased pace of commercialization and privatization over recent decades, where access to nature and the outdoors is becoming more and more limited (2). Instead of eco-tourism reserves or cordoned off greens, Fedirici calls for communal management of common areas (3). Barchiesi (2004) has written that common areas are surrounded by people with common interests, and echoing Fedirici, argues that they must serve the wider community (15). Throughout guided conversations with Rondebosch community members conducted by the author, similar arguments as those of Fedirici and Barchiesi were made time and again by the

respondents, perhaps unknowingly. The preservation of Rondebosch Common as a communal “green” space, they said, was of paramount importance, and none of the respondents shared the CSC’s belief that such a large space should provide the acreage for desperately needed housing. Thus, the author learned that the arguments of “the commons” movement have actually hurt “Take Back the Common,” as the protest did not advocate leaving the Common as an open, “green” area. This partially explains the extremely negative reaction the protest received in the Rondebosch neighborhood itself.

Next, the author researched the history of urban land policy in South Africa, so as to understand the legacies of apartheid on cities and to better grasp what promises of service delivery have been made in the years since 1994 that have not been met. The author posited that this was the basis of the frustration that led to the march on Rondebosch. To establish the context of urban land reform policies, the author first read Ntsebeza (2007). Ntsebeza writes on why South Africa has had to struggle with a unique set of circumstances on its path towards land equity following apartheid, leaving many blacks and so called “coloureds” still landless. For Ntsebeza, South Africa’s history of “extreme settlerist land expropriation” by whites (60), and the “partial” liberation negotiation between the ANC and NP have limited urban land reform (62), as a racially unequal status quo established by colonialists has been cemented by neo-liberal market policies, such as the “willing buyer, willing seller” principle (63). Finally, Ntsebeza posits that there is a contradiction between the ANC government’s stated goal of urban land reform and their economic policies currently in place that protect property rights established during apartheid (108). This book eloquently examines the large structural hurdles South Africa has had to face in the years since 1994 when it comes to urban land

reform, arguing in logical progression how the influence of colonial and apartheid policies still haunt efforts at development.

The author then read Pillay (2006) in order to gain knowledge of specific policies of reform and delivery were put in place by the new regime in 1994 and later. Pillay argues that the direction South Africa has taken towards reform has been circuitous. First, the ambitions of the new government has been unrealistic, with the government elected in 1994 setting a goal of building 1 million homes in a scant 5 years (1). This was neither achieved nor accounted for the thousands of other homes that needed building in the wake of the growth in the number of households in Cape Town and the massive migration to the city, and the housing deficit still looms ominously in South Africa (7). Second, Pillay writes that these lofty goals were paired with the complex tasks of building entirely new institutions to deal with land reform throughout the 1990s, including creating the ministerial post of Land Affairs, writing the goals of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, instituting the application process used to prove urban residents had been evicted during apartheid, and cementing the “willing buyer, willing seller,” scheme (23). This and other sources on urban land reform policies provided the author with the background of many policies that have proven less than successful, and so established a context of failed attempts at reform and service delivery that were the target of the CSC’s march on Rondebosch. A truly effective strategy has yet to be devised at equitably redistributing land seized from blacks and so called “coloureds” during the apartheid era, providing valuable insight into the motivations of the CSC and their summit to protest the lack of access to land, jobs, housing on Rondebosch Common.

From this academic research into failed urban land reform, the author turned to newspaper articles in order to learn of the factual events surrounding the actual march on Rondebosch Common. This was necessary due to the extreme timeliness of the protest, as it occurred at the end of January 2012 and no scholarly information on the march has been compiled as of this writing. Unfortunately, many newspaper articles treated the “Take Back the Common” protest with contempt, labeling the protest “Occupy Rondebosch Common” and the citizens as “occupiers” (Petersen, 2012). Not surprisingly, this has influenced public perception of the march, with many in the Rondebosch neighborhood holding a negative view of the CSC and the movement itself.

Junior Bester (2012) wrote an article for *IoL News* in which he presented an accurate chronology of the march on Rondebosch and police response. This included the events that took place before the actual protest, necessary for understanding the strong show of force by the municipal police towards those gathered on the Common. In an article for the *Southern Suburbs Tatler*, Karen Kotze (2012) writes of the difficulties the CSC faced when applying for a permit for the Rondebosch protest, addressing the restrictive amount of red tape put in place by a cumbersome bureaucracy in South Africa. Like Bester’s article, this piece provides valuable background into the events that took place before the march on Rondebosch. Finally, Charlene Houston (2012) wrote an article for the SACSIS in which she discusses the political undertones of the “Take Back the Common” movement, and the friction between Mario Wanza’s affiliation with the ANC and the DA’s dominant position in Cape Town. Houston effectively draws linkages between the negative responses to the march in the Rondebosch neighborhood to these

conflicting political allegiances, making for a compelling argument echoed by Jared Sacks in his interview with the author.

At this point, the literature researched by the author dealt with the history of “the commons” movement, the history of urban land policy in post-apartheid South Africa, and the chronology of the movement occasionally dubbed “Occupy Rondebosch Common.” The author studied these areas in an attempt to see for himself where the grievances and frustrations of the CSC might lay, making the argument that stalls in urban land reform and the related unequal service delivery of the DA were to blame for the march on Rondebosch. While this was not proven false, what was finally necessary in terms of research was attempting to discover the motivations of the Communities for Social Change for marching on the common, in their own words. This was achieved through interviews primarily, but also through a close examination of literature that surfaced around the time of the protest.

In an article for the *People's Post*, Tammy Petersen (2012) discovered some of the demands of the Communities for Social Change, writing out some of the group's manifesto that was compiled from Mario Wanza sound bites and literature the CSC has published. This was extremely useful in trying to discover the motivations for the protest in the CSC's own words. In addition, a founding member of the CSC and an organizer of the protest, Jared Sacks (2012), wrote an article for the *Cape Times* in which he writes further of his organization's demands and motives. Sacks challenges many falsehoods that he saw filling newspapers in the wake of the protest, including the political affiliation of the CSC and Mario Wanza's role in the movement. This article was critical to the author's understanding of the Communities for Social Change and the

“Take Back the Common” movement, as it was written by an organizer of the protest instead of by a journalist attempting to make sense of the issues. Mr. Sacks also wrote an article for *PoliticsWeb* online (2012), in which he continued to criticize misperceptions of the CSC and their march on Rondebosch, and in which he defends his group’s actions and motives in their march. Together with interviews, these articles provided invaluable information on the CSC’s motivations for marching on Rondebosch Common, in their own words.

The literature studied for this research project followed the author’s argument on where the grievances of the CSC lay, and how these motivated the protest on Rondebosch Common. From centuries of racial inequity under colonialism and apartheid, the new South African regime has attempted to redress the wrongs of the past through urban land reform programs. Access to land is tied to a host of critical other issues, among them access to housing and jobs and service delivery. The central nature of the land issue can be seen in the CSC’s naming of their attempted gathering the “Land, Housing and Jobs Summit.” Due to this, the author researched the history of urban land reform and the international “the commons” movement to gain insight into what might have motivated the Communities for Social Change in their protest. Further research into the motives of the CSC, in their words, corroborated the author’s arguments made about the central nature of urban land reform to the protest. Thus, the literature researched and reviewed was critical to establishing a context for the author’s interview with Jared Sacks, and for coming to closer to understanding the Communities for Social Change’s motivations for marching on Rondebosch.

Section II: Methodology and Glossary:

Methodology:

For the purposes of this research project, the author chose to synthesize various research methodologies together, including undertaking interviews and guided conversations, and conducting qualitative and quantitative research into academic literature and content analysis of newspapers. This was in an effort to form a more well-rounded and holistic image of the march on Rondebosch Common undertaken by the CSC than what is portrayed rather two-dimensionally in print media.

The literature that the author read fell into two categories: academic journals and books on the topic of urban land reform and service delivery in South Africa post-apartheid, and newspaper articles which covered the event. Academic journals and books found through the HSRC and in UCT's library were used to understand what specific government policies regarding land have been instituted but have not proven effective in the years since 1994. This would point to why the Communities for Social Change felt the need to protest the lack of land, housing, and jobs available to non-whites in Cape Town, as it would illuminate where the government of Cape Town under the DA has fallen short in its promises of development. Newspaper articles found in the local Rondebosch library and online were used to provide both factual information regarding the "Occupy Rondebosch Common" movement itself, and primary data in the form of valuable content analysis that examined just what reporters chose to focus on, and what was intentionally left out of the articles. The strength of this qualitative and quantitative research is that it provided much factual information on the protest on Rondebosch and on the issue of urban land reform in post-apartheid South Africa. However, this focus on

secondary sources took some valuable time and focus away from collecting more primary data.

The author interviewed a founding member of the CSC and an organizer of the march on Rondebosch Common, Jared Sacks, on a Tuesday night in a Woodstock sports bar. Mr. Sacks is a passionate young man, and the author and him spent the better part of an evening moving from pre-prepared interview questions to a less-formal conversation. The author took notes on concepts and key quotes throughout this interview. Next, the author visited Observatory to interview academic Emma Arogundade, who is familiar with some of the members of the CSC present at the Rondebosch protest. The author asked his interview questions, and again took notes on ideas Mrs. Arogundade expressed, and vital quotes from her responses. Finally, the author visited Rondebosch Common itself on several occasions, and conducted guided conversations with people he met there on the topic of the recent protest. The author again took notes on direct quotes from his respondents. The strength of this methodology is that it provided the author with first hand accounts of the protest and reactions to it, as well as a glimpse into the inner motivations of the CSC that could not be found in newspapers. However, this field study method was limited by the lack of interviewees available to the author, as well as by the ingrained biases of those interviewed. Value statements made by the interviewees had to be critically considered to determine whether or not they should be considered fact.

Glossary:

ANC – African National Congress; CSC – Communities for Social Change; DA – Democratic Alliance; CBD – Central Business District

Section III: Introduction and Argument:

Introduction:

On a sunny Friday afternoon in late January of this year, a small and motley group of Cape Town's citizens marched towards a large public green in the leafy southern suburbs of the city. The group came together under the banner of the Communities for Social Change, an umbrella civil society group whose members represent some of Cape Town's marginalized populations, including the Gugulethu Anti-Eviction campaign, the South African Council of Churches, and the nascent Occupy Cape Town movement. As the march neared its destination, the expansive Rondebosch Common in the center of the titular neighborhood, the citizens were met by a large police force that stood in their way, including officers in riot gear and several Casspir armored vehicles. Soon, the police sprayed blue dye over the passive group, and shouted through loud speakers that the march was an illegal protest and gathering. Within a matter of minutes, every member of the Communities for Social Change (CSC) present at the Common – among them elderly women and university students – was arrested and put in the back of police vans to await charges and processing.

This paper will examine more closely this recent episode in Cape Town's turbulent political history. The movement launched by the Communities for Social Change, alternatively known as "Take Back the Common," "Occupy Rondebosch Common," or the "Land, Housing, and Jobs Summit," attracted significant attention in Cape Town from the local press, and the stymied summit is still fresh on the city's mind at the time of this writing. Images reminiscent of apartheid era crackdowns from the protest, featuring police in riot gear and bloody protestors, were displayed prominently

on the front pages of newspapers like *The Cape Times* and *The Weekend Argus*. Finally, mayor of Cape Town Patricia De Lille came out against the CSC and their self-labeled leader, Mario Wanza, calling the group “agents of destruction,” and quickly attempted to sweep the event under the rug (Bester 2012).

How did such an incident occur in 2012, a full 18 years after the state institutionalized segregation known as apartheid collapsed? This research project sought to delve deeper into the Rondebosch Common protest in an effort to discover the Communities for Social Change’s motives for marching on the green, with the argument being that these underlying causes of the protest were symptomatic of discontent with the Democratic Alliance’s service delivery, here understood to mean access to electricity and water. After all, people do not protest when they are happy. The central research question guiding this study, then, is seemingly straightforward: Why did the CSC protest and march on Rondebosch Common?

To answer this deceptively simple question requires multiple angles of research, including learning who makes up the Communities for Social Change, and who they claim to represent. Further, it is necessary to understand the history of urban land policy and service delivery in post-apartheid South Africa, so as to see what government policies have been instituted, and where these have either succeeded or failed. Land reform, including in the cities, is necessary in the wake of apartheid’s devastation that stripped thousands of blacks and so called “coloureds” from their land and property and that relocated them to undeveloped “homelands” or to townships. To this day, access to adequate land is limited for blacks and so called “coloureds” in spite of reform efforts, and this in turn limits access to housing, jobs, and service delivery – access to electricity

and water. Thus, the study of urban land policy and service delivery is central to understanding what the CSC was protesting in their attempted “Land, Housing and Jobs Summit.” Finally, research needed to be conducted on the events of the protest itself, and what took place before, during and after the march on Rondebosch Common. By synthesizing these three fields of research, the author hoped to better understand the movement and shed light on why the CSC’s grievances are relevant to all South Africans.

Argument:

In order to better understand the motivations of the CSC in their march on Rondebosch Common, research needed to be conducted into the Communities for Social Change itself, urban land policy in the years following apartheid, and into the facts surrounding the protest that January afternoon. This research process took the form of interviews with CSC staff, academics and Rondebosch community members, in addition to content analysis of local newspapers and academic research of journals and books. By examining both what the author presumed to be at the heart of the protest and what the movement said about itself, a more holistic view of the protest emerges, including a better understanding of the motivations for the march. This led to the formation of an argument position for the research. **The “Take Back the Common” protest led by the Communities for Social Change was symptomatic of discontent with the service delivery among some marginalized groups of the Democratic Alliance, Cape Town’s ruling party.** This discontent stems especially from the perception that the DA does not serve Cape Town’s blacks and so called “coloureds” as well as whites, particularly in the area of stalled urban land reform and service delivery that dooms

thousands to being landless and homeless. It was this dissatisfaction that led to the creation of the Communities for Social Change and their march on Rondebosch Common.

Section IV: Findings:

Urban Land Policy:

The legacy of apartheid still looms throughout South Africa, from programs designed to counteract its crippling effects on blacks and so called “coloureds” to the spatial lay-outs of major cities that are still demarcated largely in terms of race. Apartheid separated urban areas in South Africa between people of different racial groupings, with anyone who wasn’t white relocated forcibly to the periphery of the cities. Cape Town is no exception to this turbulent history, and the Cape Flats’ former townships remain the home of much of the city’s poverty and its black and so-called “coloured” residents.

The socio-economic differences between the Central Business District of Cape Town, built for the elite white minority of the colonial and apartheid eras, and the sprawling Cape Flats, built for blacks and so-called “coloureds,” cannot be overstated. There exists an enormous disparity of wealth and services between the affluent downtown and surrounding white suburbs and the more distant former townships of Mitchell’s Plain, Langa and others (K. Arogundade, 14-2-2012). It is the inequity of basic services like water and electricity between the CBD and the Flats, born out of the racial policies of the apartheid era, that is to be blamed for some of Cape Town’s current ills and anger. The crippling poverty of many areas in the Flats is evidence enough of the slow pace of service delivery hampered by a lack of funding, with shacks filling hectares outside the city center. Complicating matters is that local municipality government is responsible for amending this inequity through development and service delivery,

straining already stretched local governments like Cape Town's. It is this potent frustration that spawned the creation of the Communities for Social Change and their march on Rondebosch Common.

Making an educated guess on what created a movement and actually researching the realities on the ground are different matters, however. In order to understand the CSC's emphasis on land, housing and jobs evidenced in the title of their attempted summit, it is necessary to research the history of urban land policy and related service delivery in the years following apartheid in order to see what policies have succeeded and which have failed. This will provide the necessary background information for coming to an understanding of the Communities for Social Change's frustrations.

Urban land policy, to a large degree, is a study of population movements and trends into and out of a city and how government services should react to these fluctuations in numbers. Under the new South African constitution, the local municipality government is responsible for development and service delivery, and so the number of people in a metropolitan area affects what policies the city undertakes (Pillay, 14). In the case of Cape Town, and also for the rest of South Africa, the most important fact or figure with regards to population is the growth of the number of households in the years since 1994 (Ravayi, 10). With the collapse of apartheid restrictions on movement into the cities for blacks and so-called "coloureds," the population of urban areas in South Africa exploded post-1994. Furthermore, enormous semi-autonomous tracts of land created for blacks in the hinterlands of the country during apartheid and known as "homelands," dissolved with the end of apartheid, and this too fueled migration into the cities that continues today (Ravayi, 15).

With this growth in migration to the cities by many blacks and so-called “coloureds” came a subsequent rise in the number of households in metropolitan areas. The number of households is a more significant number than a simple population estimate when it comes to questions of land policy and service delivery for a local government, as it is a household which is hooked up to an electrical grid or a water main, or that receives a government grant to be used for home construction – not an individual (Pillay, 8). Between 1996 and 2001, the number of households in Cape Town grew at a rate of almost 18% annually, an exponential growth rate when compared with previous decades (Pillay, 6). This explosive growth has created a markedly increased number of households in urban areas that require electricity, water, or even a paved floor. Unfortunately and surprisingly, no comprehensive urbanization policy exists for South African municipalities, though under the new South African constitution, it is the local government that is responsible for all development and service delivery in their area (Pillay, 14). This lack of foresight has caused many local governments, including the Cape Town municipality, to stitch together plans of their own to accommodate contemporary massive urban migration (Pillay, 14).

Because of this lack of a comprehensive urbanization plan, urban land policy in Cape Town has been formulated as more of a reaction to an increased number of households and services demanded than as a pro-active set of policies. Rather than have the systems in place to deal with the services demanded by an increased number of households, the local municipality government in the city has been forced to adapt and re-write policies in the face of ever-shifting realities on the ground (Ntsebenza, 61). Due to the piecemeal nature of this policy formation, thousands of blacks and so-called

“coloureds” have fallen through the cracks in the city, and are still without basic services or even a home in the city’s sprawling Cape Flats (Ntsebenza, 61).

Compounding this problem of piecemeal policy implementation is the lack of funding available to the municipal government of Cape Town. Because the local government, rather than the national government, is responsible for all development and service delivery, it is the Cape Town municipality which must gather the funds to finance the massive amount of work needed to give thousands of blacks and so called “coloureds” better living conditions. To accommodate this need for funding, the Cape Town municipality and others throughout South Africa attempted to use market principles throughout the 1990s to generate tax revenue necessary for building (Pillay, 16). This would take the form of fees on the heavily subsidized services rendered, principally water and electricity. However, Cape Town’s government soon discovered that the thousands of households that had received some service delivery were simply not paying their fees, and this pattern was seen in municipalities throughout the country (Pillay, 16).

Not only were households not paying the fees designed to finance further programs of service delivery, but also thousands were actively protesting that they should have to pay any fees on services rendered (Ravayi, 20). As a result, the ANC national government announced at an election rally in 2000 that services would now be free (Pillay, 17). This public relations move has had profound consequences for municipality governments, including Cape Town’s, as they have found themselves with less and less funding for their basic functions, including the constitutionally mandated policies of service delivery and development. With less funding has come fewer

services, frustrating those who live in destitution or poverty in informal settlements and former townships on the periphery of Cape Town and who expect the municipal government to provide some relief. For many, the relief has not come and the grinding poverty continues.

Democratic Alliance:

The Democratic Alliance is Cape Town's current political party in power, and they have had to contend with the dual challenges of a lack of funding for service delivery and the explosive emigration to Cape Town that has swollen the number of households in the Cape Flats and in other areas on the periphery of the city. As a result of these challenges, the DA has been stretched thin in its attempts at service delivery in the form of electricity and water, with sprawling slums like Joe Slovo testifying to the incredible unaddressed need of many of the city's residents. These traditionally disadvantaged areas are evidence enough of the slow pace of service delivery, and stand in stark contrast to the affluent Central Business District and surrounding white suburbs where the DA draws much of its support and where life is comfortable for white residents. The Democratic Alliance has not delivered the amount of service expected by many disadvantaged blacks and so-called "coloureds," who see the DA resting comfortably on its base of white, wealthy support and ignoring the realities of life for those living outside the CBD. This, along with the party's membership of mostly white people, has left many black and so-called "coloured" citizens to believe that the party only serves white residents of the city and ignores everyone else.

Emma Arogundade, an academic interviewed by the author, spoke on the negative perceptions of the DA in the non-white parts of Cape Town. Rumors circulate

throughout the Cape Flats and informal settlements at a speed that cannot be contained, with Mrs. Arogundade mentioning the popular rumor that the Premier of the Western Cape and de facto DA leader Helen Zille plans on evicting all of the Xhosa people from the large former township of Khayelitsha (E. Arogundade, 18-4-2012). While there is no evidence that such an eviction as this actually planned, it is telling that the rumor is so widely believed to be true – quite obviously, the Democratic Alliance and its leadership are not trusted by many blacks in the city. Furthermore, Zille has the unfortunate propensity for making alienating comments, including a recent episode where she referred to emigrants to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape as “refugees” (E. Arogundade, 18-4-2012). This insulting comment is only the latest justification for the many blacks and so-called “coloureds” who view the DA as the party for whites, by whites.

The lack of a comprehensive service delivery program for South Africa’s stretched municipal governments, the shortage of funding to pay for such initiatives, and the perception that the Democratic Alliance is a party of white people and for white people all comes together to form a recipe for frustration for the majority of Cape Town’s residents – the blacks and so called “coloureds” throughout the city. A full 18 years after apartheid collapsed, many of these people see the inadequacies of the Democratic Alliance’s service delivery every day in the squalor of informal shack settlements that ring the city. For many in Cape Town, the “Mother City” is one that does not care for her children. The author posited that it is these frustrations that spawned the creation of the Communities for Social Change, the umbrella membership civil society group representing Cape Town’s disadvantaged that marched on Rondebosch

Common in a planned “Land, Housing and Jobs Summit.” For the CSC, the harsh realities of inequity between the affluent, comfortable and white suburbs and the poverty of the Cape Flats must have been unacceptable, and the decision was to “Occupy Rondebosch Common” came about undeniably in the face of such radical division.

Communities for Social Change:

With the historical context for the march on Rondebosch Common established, the author turned towards the Communities for Social Change itself, to hear what the organization had to say about itself in light of a local press that treated the march as an occupation and an invasion of the Rondebosch neighborhood. The author read an excellent newspaper article in the *Cape Times* by a CSC founder and a “Take Back the Common” organizer, Jared Sacks, and set out to contact the activist for an interview over the events that led up to the march and its aftermath.

In a content analysis of the numerous newspaper articles that covered the march on Rondebosch Common, the author discovered that several significant pieces of information have been left out of the popular press. By not seeking to answer where the group came from, most newspapers treated the Communities for Social Change as an established political body that had existed for years, and gave little time to answering the questions of how the group started or where the CSC draws its members. There is little information surrounding these basic facts of the organization that marched on Rondebosch, with the papers reducing the CSC and its members into inflammatory labels such as “occupiers,” and generally treating the movement with contempt (Kotze, 2012). The interview with Jared Sacks, then, was partially designed to provide answers to questions that had been left out by the popular press. The first questions Mr. Sacks

answered dealt with the creation and membership of the Communities for Social Change and how they became involved in the “Take Back the Common” movement.

Mr. Sacks began by describing how the Communities for Social Change and the citizens who marched on Rondebosch could be split into two distinct groups: there were those who were aligned with the African National Congress through their affiliation with Mario Wanza, a former party member, and those that were not. Wanza represented an organization known as Proudly Manenberg, a civil society group based out of the former township sharing the same name, and the one-time ANC member has been acting as a community organizer over the past several years. This half of the group was made up of Manenberg community members and activists, mostly black and so-called “coloured” older women who were allied with Wanza (Sacks, 17-4-2012).

The other half of the group that marched on Rondebosch was of an entirely different background than those members from Manenberg, Mitchell’s Plain or Athlone. Mr. Sacks explained that this other side of the group was made up of mostly young, privileged and educated white males with liberal beliefs and tendencies – Mr. Sacks fits into this group. In October of 2011, some of these young men organized an “Occupy Cape Town” movement that was designed in solidarity with the American “Occupy Wall Street” protests occurring around the same time (Sacks, 17-4-2012). Another community organizer named Richard October happened to be familiar with members of both Proudly Manenberg and the “Occupy Cape Town” protest both, and put the two groups in contact with one another. Wanza’s affiliates and the white university students involved in “Occupy Cape Town” came together through Richard October, and set about forming the plans for a march somewhere in the city to protest the lack of access to land,

housing and jobs for many black and so-called “coloured” residents of Cape Town (Sacks, 17-4-2012).

This was all background information that could not be found in any local newspapers that reported on the events surrounding the march on Rondebosch. Not a single newspaper addressed who makes up the Communities for Social Change in their reporting of the protest, and by not answering the question of where the group came from, the local press treated the CSC as a homogenous political force that had existed for years. The press also treated the movement with contempt, labeling the march “Occupy Rondebosch Common” and the protesting citizens as invaders of the suburbs. It became clear through the author’s interview with Mr. Sacks, though, that the CSC is a young movement less than a year old, and is made up of a wide spectrum of people, from the older, so-called “coloured” women of Mitchell’s Plain to the white University of Cape Town student. Just why the popular press chose to leave out these facts from their reporting is still a mystery – was it in an effort to delegitimize the CSC or simply lazy journalism?

Rondebosch:

Another question that was not answered by the press in its coverage of the “Take Back the Common” movement was why the neighborhood of Rondebosch was chosen as the site of the protest. This central question needed to be answered if a greater understanding of why the CSC marched on Rondebosch was to be achieved, yet it could not be found in either academic works or in analysis of press coverage around the protest. As a result, the author chose to ask Mr. Sacks, academic Emma Arogundade, and Rondebosch community members why they all thought that the protest was held in the

Rondebosch neighborhood in an effort to help answer the central question of this research paper.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Rondebosch community members did not have a positive reaction to the “Take Back the Common” march that occurred in their neighborhood only a few months before. Rondebosch is a wealthy, white suburb on the southern side of the city – an insulated enclave only a few kilometers from the poverty of the Cape Flats and an area that traditionally votes for the Democratic Alliance. Because of newspaper coverage that labeled the protesters “occupiers” and press statements by Cape Town mayor Patricia De Lille and Western Cape Premier Helen Zille damning Mario Wanza and the CSC, the perception in Rondebosch of the protest was extremely negative.

Due to the lack of information about the march or its intent in newspaper articles, and the labeling of the movement “Occupy Rondebosch Common” by the press, many Rondebosch community members the author spoke to believe that the CSC was attempting to build physical shacks on Rondebosch Common in protest, a perception Mr. Sacks flatly denied. “Can you imagine 10,000 shacks here? They’d fill it up,” one Rondebosch respondent named Michael told the author. Other community members referenced, perhaps accidentally, the arguments of the international “the commons” movement that argues for the preservation of green space. An elderly woman named May replied, “This space, as nature in the heart of the city, that’s vital.” Her friend Elise echoed the sentiment, saying, “For me, it’s [Rondebosch Common] a historic site. It should remain just that – there’s not enough green areas as is.”

These responses, though incredibly valuable, did not answer the question of why Rondebosch was chosen as the site for the protest. In order to answer this query, the author also asked Jared Sacks and Emma Arogundade why the protest was held in the leafy southern suburbs of Cape Town. Mr. Sacks began by describing how the area was historically a black and so-called “coloured” area before apartheid-era evictions, and the decision to march on Rondebosch was a symbolic “return home” for many of the Proudly Manenberg affiliated members of the march. Further, Mr. Sacks described Rondebosch as “the center of whiteness” in Cape Town, and a neighborhood long insulated from the harsh realities of life on the Cape Flats (Sacks, 17-4-2012). Protests have taken place for years in the former townships, Mr. Sacks explained, to the point where another march on the lack of access to land, housing and jobs would have been irrelevant. Academic Emma Arogundade echoed this sentiment, saying protests in the Flats are considered “background noise” (E. Arogundade, 18-4-2012). Thus, the decision to march on Rondebosch was one of “scare tactics” in the words of Mr. Sacks, who wanted to “hit a nerve” in Rondebosch and Cape Town by bringing a protest of blacks, so-called “coloureds” and whites into the protected suburbs.

The insights of Mr. Sacks and Mrs. Arogundade were incredibly important in discovering the motivations for the CSC’s march on Rondebosch Common. The “Take Back the Common” movement crossed the invisible line separating many of South Africa’s cities between whites and non-whites, between the comfort and security of the suburbs and the violence and poverty of the former townships. In the author’s interviews with Rondebosch community members, it became clear this decision caused a degree of unease and anger among the white residents of the suburb, while blacks and

so-called “coloureds” tended to support the actions of the CSC. Shelton Marimo, a black craftsperson who sells his wares across the corner from the Common, told the author, “Look around man. The people here live in mansions, we live in shacks. This land [Rondebosch Common] is idle...we deserve it.”

Thus, the decision made by the CSC to march on Rondebosch was a unique tactic that brought the plight of those living in the former townships of Cape Town directly into the consciousness of those living in the suburbs or central business district. Apartheid’s demarcating of cities along racial lines had the effect of allowing the white elite to ignore the problems of the black and so-called “coloured” population living on the Cape Flats. Even with the end of formal apartheid in 1994, these divisions are still prominent, with much of the white minority remaining in the insulating bubbles of the CBD or the southern suburbs, numb to the crushing poverty surrounding them. By marching on Rondebosch Common, through a neighborhood of mansions and university students, the Communities for Social Change made it impossible for their march and their cause to be ignored. The problems of the Flats, particularly the lack of access to basic services and to land, housing and jobs, was suddenly and effectively thrust into the face of a city accustomed to ignoring its problems.

The “Take Back the Common” protest led by the Communities for Social Change was symptomatic of discontent with the service delivery of the Democratic Alliance for some marginalized groups. The DA is plagued by a shortage of funding to provide basic services like electricity and water to many of the citizens of Cape Town, and is further hindered by the popular perception that it is a political party staffed by white people and with only the interests of whites in mind. Frustration over the lack of access to land,

housing and jobs in the Cape Flats led to the creation of the Communities for Social Change, an umbrella group that welcomed both members from the Flats and white children of privilege who saw faults in the system. By marching into the leafy southern suburb of Rondebosch, the CSC broke through the invisible line separating the white areas of the city and everywhere else. In a protest that attracted the attention of much of the city, the CSC let its frustrations with the status quo be heard.

Section V: Conclusions and Further Study:

Conclusions:

The inspiration for this Independent Study Project came from the compelling images of the protest on Rondebosch Common that were splashed across front pages of some of Cape Town's largest and most well-respected newspapers a few short days after we all arrived in the "Mother City." Members of the Communities for Social Change were seen battered and bruised by municipal police forces in riot gear in these front-page stories, in pictures showing startling similarities to those from the apartheid era. As a newcomer to South Africa, I was left to wonder what had happened to elicit such a strong show of force from the police, and where the anger to protest was coming from. With these seemingly simple questions in mind, I set about to understand the motivations of the Communities For Social Change for marching on the Common.

What I soon discovered as a researcher was that the questions I posed were not so easily answered. I could not simply research the Communities for Social Change as if the group existed in a vacuum, and decided to research the context in which the march on Rondebosch took place. I looked at urban land policy in Cape Town in order to understand the years of frustration over service delivery that led to such a protest. Further, numerous newspaper articles were read to gain knowledge into the facts surrounding the march itself, and I later developed this into a content analysis that addressed what was being reported on and what was intentionally left out. Finally, I interviewed a pivotal member of the CSC and an organizer of the protest, Jared Sacks, to hear what the organization had to say about itself. By compiling these sources of

information together, I hoped to be able to better understand the context for the march, and thus what motivated it.

From this multi-faceted research, I arrived at the argument that the CSC's march on Rondebosch Common was symptomatic of discontent with the Democratic Alliance and their pace of service delivery in marginalized areas of Cape Town. I learned through research into urban land policy that whatever government might be in power in Cape Town would face the problem of a lack of funding for development and service delivery projects, be it an ANC or DA government. Compounding the problem is that the entire onus of service delivery is placed on the local government, straining an already stretched municipality like Cape Town's. The DA, however, faces the unique problem of being perceived as a political party of whites and for whites who have little regard for the problems of the Cape Flats. This popular perception only increases the extreme frustration felt by the thousands of disadvantaged people living in the Flats, as they see their elected government failing them. Finally, the decision to march on Rondebosch was decided on as a deliberate tactic to bring the protest into the traditionally insulated white suburbs. In this way, the protest couldn't be ignored – and it wasn't.

By approaching this Independent Study Project from multiple angles, I came to a far greater understanding of why the CSC marched on Rondebosch Common. There is no singular reason behind these motivations. Rather, the decision to march on the Common came from the context of a service delivery system that is hurt by its lack of funding, a party that is hampered by its perception as being racist, and by the desire to bring the issues of land, housing, and jobs to the fore of a city that ignores some of her children. As of this writing, the debates sparked by the CSC's march on Rondebosch

have not calmed down, and the issues presented seem to still be in the public's mind. Riding on this momentum, Mr. Sacks told me that more events are planned, including the possible "occupation" of some golf courses in the city and a demonstration in District 6. Hopefully Cape Town's white elite, long accustomed to being able to ignore the issues of black and so-called "coloured" residents of the city, will soon wake up to the realities of a city divided.

Recommendations for Further Study:

A greater amount of information could be gathered with regards to numbers surrounding the service delivery of the Democratic Alliance in Cape Town, though these statistics are difficult to find. Further, interviews with Democratic Alliance members would provide valuable insight into how the party views itself and its programs of development in marginalized areas of the city. Finally, follow up interviews conducted a few months from now with members of the CSC would illuminate the long-term impact of the "Take Back the Common" protest, both for the organization and for the city of Cape Town.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview with Jared Sacks:

- 1) Could you give me a little bit of background information on yourself? Where were you born? Where'd you go to school? Where do you stay?
- 2) What do you do for work?
- 3) Could you explain to me, in your own words, what the communities for social change is?
- 4) Who does it represent?
- 5) What is the CSC's mission? Intent? Goals?
- 6) Why was the decision made to hold a march and attempted summit? Was there one galvanizing event?
- 7) What are your grievances with the DA? Your personal complaints on what you see the party doing?
- 8) Does the DA effectively represent the citizens of Cape Town? Who is included? Excluded?
- 9) Why was the summit held at Rondebosch Common? Why not somewhere closer to the base of your support, like in Mitchell's Plain?

Interview with Emma Arogundade:

- 1) Could you give me a little bit of background information on yourself? Are you from Cape Town? Where do you work?

- 2) If it's not too personal a question, what are your political leanings? Are you a member of a party?
- 3) Do you think that the DA represents Cape Town's citizens well? Who is included? Who is excluded?
- 4) What was your reaction to reading about or seeing the news that the CSC's march on Rondebosch Common was met with mass arrests and a large display of force?
- 5) Why do you think the protest was held? Why were so many people disgruntled in the wake of the march?
- 6) Where do you see the movement going from here?

Interviews/Guided Conversations with Rondebosch community members:

- 1) Do you remember the "Occupy Rondebosch Common" protest that took place a few months ago here? How did you feel about it?
- 2) Why do you think the Communities for Social Change chose to march on Rondebosch?