Beyond an over-reliance on historical categories like “ghetto” and “suburb” - a study of post-Apartheid Cape Town

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Abstract

In the literature on spatial changes in post-Fordist cities, concepts like “ghetto” and “suburb” are commonplace, and they have been applied to numerous contexts. However, this study focuses on the potential limitations of relying too heavily on these historical categories, including continuing to interpret new data to the lens of those categories and/or the ideal types used to describe the quartered post-Fordist city. While, this study acknowledges the utility and relevance of those categories, as well as contextually relevant terms like “former Whites-only” and “former Blacks-only” group areas of the Apartheid-era, the analysis proceeds without relying on those categories, only to reintroduce them later to aid interpretation of the findings. Consequently, this study finds that, while some of Cape Town’s subplaces might resemble the ghetto and suburb ideal types, without an over-reliance on those categories a more nuanced and even paradoxical understanding of neighbourhood change is possible.
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In the literature on spatial changes in post-Fordist cities, concepts like “ghetto” and “suburb” are commonplace, and they have been applied to numerous contexts. However, this study focuses on the potential limitations of relying too heavily on these historical categories, including continuing to interpret new data to the lens of those categories and/or the ideal types used to describe the quartered post-Fordist city. While, this study acknowledges the utility and relevance of those categories, as well as contextually relevant terms like “former Whites-only” and “former Blacks-only” group areas of the Apartheid-era, the analysis proceeds without relying on those categories, only to reintroduce them later to aid interpretation of the findings. Consequently, this study finds that, while some of Cape Town’s subplaces might resemble the ghetto and suburb ideal types, without an over-reliance on those categories a more nuanced and even paradoxical understanding of neighbourhood change is possible.

KEYWORDS:

South Africa, Cape Town, segregation, labour market, inequity, urban, suburbanisation, ghetto, race

INTRODUCTION:

When discussions focus on the changes in so-called global cities since the mid 20th-century, there are two terms that often enter the conversation at some point: ghetto and suburb. At times, these terms are not used consistently and at times only vaguely applied to different contexts. Nevertheless, discussions about urban inequality and/or social change often focus on some kind ghetto, favela, banlieues, or township, as well as a comfortable, relatively well-resourced, residential suburbs that is socioeconomically distinct, but not necessarily affluent (Wilson, 2012, Wilson, 2011, Wilson, 2009, Wacquant, 2008, Marcuse and Van Kempen,

Much of the prominent scholarship has been done by scholars from various disciplines, including sociology, geography, and urban planning, focusing on the urban environment in the United States of America (Wilson, 2012, Wilson, 2011, Wilson, 2009, Wacquant, 2008, Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000b, Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000a, Marcuse, 1997b, Marcuse, 1997a, Marcuse and Van Kempen, 1997). However, the potential relevance or applicability of these terms, or the aforementioned synonyms, has at least been considered in contexts, such as Europe (Kesteloot, 2000), India (Chakravorty, 2000), Brazil (Ribeiro and Telles, 2000), and South Africa (Christopher, 2005, Crankshaw, 2022).

While the legacy of South Africa’s colonial and Apartheid past is still undoubtedly evident in the lives of the people, as well as the built environment of its cities, it was believed to be worthwhile considering how one might view the composition of certain neighbourhoods without pre-emptively placing subplaces in historical categories. The logic behind this study was that only looking at it through those historical lenses (e.g. Blacks-only and Whites-only apartheid-era group areas) could obfuscate otherwise useful findings. The aim of this paper is to look at data from the City of Cape Town, without the lens of the apartheid-era group areas, but later comparing the findings to those categories to better understand whether those categories are in fact internally homogenous and/or whether there might be something to learn by setting them aside.

The findings from a previous study (Solomon, 2023), suggested that Cape Town has been persistently segregated by race, even though there has been limited improvement, to a greater extent that by socioeconomic differences (using occupation as a proxy). Additionally, while there is evidence of these changes coinciding with changes in the racial composition of the employed population, as well as improvements in socioeconomic segregation, racial segregation remains severe even when focusing solely on those employed in the fastest growing occupations.
THE POST-FORDIST CITY:

DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES:

One of the terms used to describe label certain deindustrialising cities, especially since the late 20th-century, is “post-Fordist”. The term “Fordist” was applied to a period (particularly in the early 20th century) of mass production in the manufacturing sector, mass consumption, and, at least in some contexts, better wages for a greater proportion of the population (Crankshaw, 2008, Scott, 2014). This period is also associated with an increase in home and/or car ownership, but in South Africa and elsewhere these gains were limited to the White population (Wilson, 2012, Wilson, 2011, Gobillon et al., 2007, Crankshaw, 2008).

On the other hand “Post-Fordism” is associated with a decline (whether in absolute terms or in proportion) in the economic significance of the manufacturing sector, the expansion and dominance of the various service sectors, as well as increased labour flexibility (Amin, 1994, Elam, 1994, Sassen, 2000, Sassen, 2002).

There has been some debate over the decades about how to best explain the changes in the occupational distributions of post-Fordist cities, with terms like “polarisation” (Sassen, 2002, Sassen, 2000) and “professionalisation” (Hamnett, 2021, Hamnett, 1994) commonplace in this literature. Regardless of one’s position in this debate, there is consensus that the dominant change that has been evident in these cities is the expansion of employment in non-manual occupations that require high levels of skills, education, and/or credentials, and which earn high incomes; hereafter these will be referred to as “highly skilled high-income” (HSHI) occupations (Sassen, 2002, Sassen, 2000, Hamnett, 2021, Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw, 2009, Chiu and Lui, 2004, Baum, 1997, Hamnett, 1994).

Where there is disagreement is regarding the corresponding changes that have been found at the other end of the occupational/socioeconomic continuum, as well as any other possible related changes. According to Sassen (2002, 2000), the growth in HSHI employment is accompanied by growth in low-skill low-income service-oriented (LSLI) employment, particularly of the type that could be deemed to enhance the lifestyles of a growing population of high-income earners by providing personal services (including, laundromats, hospitality). When combined with the (absolute or proportional) decline in so-called blue-collar
employment, described as middle-income earners, the occupational and income distributions are deemed to be increasingly polarised because of the growth at the top and bottom of those distributions. This theory was also applied to a number of cities in different parts of the world, including Sydney, Hong Kong and South Africa (Chiu and Lui, 2004, Baum, 1997, Lemanski, 2007).

A number of scholars critiqued this theory for reasons that included the limited applicability of the theory, the role that welfare systems could play in shaping occupational and/or income distributions, the depiction of those service-oriented occupations as unskilled and as low-income earners, as well as the exclusion of the unemployed. Each of these points are worth addressing separately, albeit briefly.

Firstly, one of the reasons that the potential universal applicability of the polarisation theory was question, was that the cities discussed in the development of the theory already had large migrant populations, with limited skill and/or education. Consequently, there was a ready supply of workers that was potentially a catalyst for that growth in low-income employment. Thus, the same pattern was not necessarily evident in cities without a large unskilled population (Hamnett, 1994), or it could be argued, at least in the case of South African cities, that this theorised growth in low-income employment did not take place despite the presence of a large unskilled populations (Lombard and Crankshaw, 2017, Crankshaw and Borel-Saladin, 2014, Crankshaw, 2012, Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw, 2009). Secondly, it was argued that in cities with a strong welfare system, those who had access to other means of financial support (other than employment), could opt out of taken on low-income employment, because they had access to the means to cover their living expenses.

Third, categorising the aforementioned service-oriented occupations as both unskilled and low-income is problematic. Although the occupations in question (which include clerical, retail, and other service occupations) do not necessarily require post-secondary qualifications, they do require certain levels of literacy, numeracy, interpersonal, and interpersonal communication skills that do not fit the “unskilled” label (International Labour Office, 2012). Consequently, as with the blue-collar occupations where employment has declined, these should rather be described as semi-skilled, at the very least. Additionally, numerous studies on South African cities have shown that the incomes earned in these semi-skilled non-manual
or white-collar occupations are comparable to, if not better than, those earned in semi-skilled blue-collar or manual occupations. Even the data presented in the studies on Hong Kong and Sydney support this interpretation, despite the claims of the authors (Chiu and Lui, 2004, Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw, 2009, Baum, 1997).

Last, the polarisation theory does not account for the impact of or on unemployment in these post-Fordist cities. Numerous studies mentioned here have demonstrated that while there might be evidence of professionalisation (sometimes referred to as an upgrading of the occupational structure), many do not have the requisite skills and therefore are not able to find employment. Unfortunately, numerous studies have shown that an increase in the numbers of unemployed people can accompany the growth of employment in HSHI occupations (Lombard and Crankshaw, 2017, Crankshaw, 2012, Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw, 2009, Hamnett, 2021, Hamnett, 1996, Hamnett, 1994).

How might these occupational and sectoral changes be distributed across the geography of a city?

**The Quartered City:**

One of the ways that the post-Fordist city has been discussed is using a taxonomy of ideal types of different sections or quarters of the city (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000b, Marcuse, 1997b, Marcuse, 1997a, Marcuse and Van Kempen, 1997, Solomon, 2023). There are numerous quarters, only some of which might be deemed relevant or applicable to particular cities, but all are a sort of mental image, a heuristic device aimed at understanding an aspect of social reality and which is commonly associated with the work of Max Weber (Scott, 2014, Solomon, 2023).

As stated in the introduction, the concepts of suburb and ghetto (or terms that have comparable meanings in other contexts) are ubiquitous in urban studies and related literature. The urban USA was significantly shaped by the movement of households and business (so, people and jobs) from the neighbourhoods inner-city to the newly built, predominantly residential, suburbs on the periphery of the city. This process of “suburbanisation” mostly included White families, with other excluded from the trend through various formal and informal means, and often the remaining blue-collar, as well as newer semi-skilled middle-income non-
manual (i.e. white-collar) employment opportunities (Kasarda, 1989, Wilson, 2012, Wilson, 2011, Solomon, 2023). Regarding the means used to exclude ethnic minorities from the suburbanisation trend, the various theories include that it was a consequence of racial income differences, racial prejudice, housing market discrimination, as well as different tastes in housing or access to information (Dawkins, 2004, Solomon, 2023).

Those who remained in the inner-city were living in what some have referred to as the classic ghetto (Marcuse, 2001, Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000b, Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000a, Marcuse, 1997a) – an involuntary spatial concentration of a group of people (e.g. defined by ethnicity, race or religion) regarded as subordinate, or supposedly inferior, group created and/or enforced by dominant groups in a society (Solomon, 2023). Nevertheless, those living in the so-called classic ghetto (particularly between the late 19th-century and 1970) might have been racially segregated, but those residents were nevertheless still connected to the formal employment networks of the city, even if they were not earning much (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000b, Wilson, 2012, Kasarda, 1989). However, this was not to last, because macroeconomic changes, as well as the aforementioned suburbanisation of employment that might have suited residents of the classic ghetto, resulted in many ghettos facing de facto abandonment by those in control of their cities, resulting in high levels of unemployment, as well as weakened internal cohesion, deterioration of cultural life and lives dominated by despair (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000b, Wilson, 2012, Solomon, 2023).

**CAPE TOWN’S DIVISIONS:**

Segregation in South Africa is often associated with the Apartheid-era, but racial segregation preceded the laws of that regime by decades. Some earlier examples include designating certain parts of the present-day city solely for the use of White residents as early as the 1880s, as well as forcibly removing Black Africans to a peripheral compound at present-day Ndabeni under the guise of containing the spread of the bubonic plague (Bickford-Smith, 2001, Field, 2001). Eventually these practices would evolve and be legislate during the Apartheid period.

In studies by Graham (2007) and Crankshaw (2012), they identified the 2001 Census subplaces that corresponded with the Apartheid-era group areas and Figure 1 shows the
consequences of the legislated segregation of that period. The Apartheid-era forced removals meant that the majority of the city’s population (i.e. the Black Africana and Coloured populations) would find themselves mostly relegated to an area that came to be known as the “Cape Flats”. This was after generations had lived in well-established communities in more central locations, including Sea Point, Claremont, as well as the infamous District Six on the edge of the city centre (Swanson, 2001, Paulse, 2001, Bickford-Smith, 2001, Turok, 2001).

In addition to having communities destroyed and being forcibly moved from more central, and often more aesthetically pleasing, neighbourhoods, the residents of the Cape Flats would find themselves living quite a distance from much of the city’s economic hubs and employment opportunities. After all, throughout much of the 20th-century, the most significant economic hubs corresponded with or were in close proximity to Whites-only sections of the city, which meant that the residents on the Cape Flats faced additional spatial obstacles when trying to find employment, as well as facing lengthy and costly commutes between their places of employment and the poorly-service dormitory neighbourhoods on the city’s periphery (Rospabe and Selod, 2006, Sinclair-Smith and Turok, 2012, Turok, 2001).

Even after the official end of Apartheid, there was little change to the city’s economic geography. Additionally, many new developments, such as the various business improvement districts did little to shift these spatial inequalities (Rospabe and Selod, 2006, Sinclair-Smith and Turok, 2012, Turok, 2001, Didier et al., 2013, Didier et al., 2012, Peyroux, 2006). But, to what extent had the racial geography of the city shifted?

Previous studies focused on Cape Town (Crankshaw, 2012, Graham, 2007) incorporating empirical work on segregation either focused on using segregation measures like the dissimilarity index (Parry and van Eeden, 2015, Turok et al., 2021, Solomon, 2023, Solomon, 2019) or the shifting composition of Apartheid-era Whites-only neighbourhoods (Crankshaw, 2012, Graham, 2007).
Nonetheless, this study will include the other Apartheid-era group areas, as well as those not yet developed and/or not designated for a certain group before the official end of Apartheid (Graham, 2007, Crankshaw, 2012). Figure 1 also includes a number of that could assist with orientating oneself regarding the geography of the City of Cape Town. Additionally, while subsequent maps will not include all of these landmarks, the Cape Town International Airport will be shaded in black or dark grey in all maps to aid with comparison between maps.
METHODS:

DATA SELECTION:

In terms of data access and/or selection, arguably the biggest methodological limitation to studying segregation in South African cities is the limited amount of suitable data. Although Statistics South Africa (sometimes referred to as “Stats SA”), the government agency that operates as the national statistics service, conducts various surveys, only the census has publicly accessible data with the requisite low-level geographical (i.e. at a subplace or neighbourhood level) detail suitable for these types of analyses.

In this type of work, the smaller the areal unit, the greater the detail, which contributes to greater accuracy of the analysis. However, the smallest areal unit for which Stats SA would provide detailed data was the “subplace”, which is defined as the “second (lowest) level of place names” (Statistics South Africa, 2010). Unfortunately, due to confidentiality concerns, data for the lowest level of place names used for census purposes, known as “enumerator areas” (Statistics South Africa, 2023, Statistics South Africa, 2010), is generally not available.

One of the challenges when working with subplaces is that they can differ quite significantly, both in terms of population, as well as in the amount of area they cover. In terms of surface area, the shapefiles provided by Statistics South Africa indicate that the smallest subplace was 0.0065 square kilometres or approximately 6,500 square metres, whereas the largest single subplace was 497 square kilometres. In terms of the size of the working-age population, there were a few subplaces that had a WAP of zero, mostly because they were industrial areas or nature reserves, whereas the largest WAP for a single subplace was 50,616 people, but they lived in an area of just 3.4 square kilometres (Solomon, 2023).

NEIGHBOURHOOD CATEGORIES:

Due to the existing studies on Apartheid-era group areas (Graham, 2007, Crankshaw, 2012) it was possible to identify which 2011 subplaces coincided with those identified using the GIS shapefiles from the previous census. However, because the borders of some subplaces have shifted as the city has changed, it was not possible, in certain instances, to match them exactly. Consequently, when looking at the 2011 subplaces, there are four historically based
categories that are used in this study, based on the aforementioned studies.

i. “FWO” (i.e. Formerly Whites-only) subplaces are those where the 2011 boundaries match the 2001 subplaces that were identified as corresponding with *Apartheid*-era Whites-only group areas.

ii. “FBCIO” (i.e. Formerly Black African, Coloured, or Indian/Asian only) subplaces are those where the 2011 boundaries match the 2001 subplaces that were identified as corresponding with *Apartheid*-era group areas for these so-called population group.

iii. “N/A” (Not Applicable) subplaces are those that were not yet developed and/or not designated for a certain group before the official end of *Apartheid*, so there is no applicable label related to that period.

iv. “Combination” subplaces are those 2011 subplace that include part of both FWO and FBCIO neighbourhoods.

While these are the categories based on *Apartheid*-era group areas, a set of categories were developed based on the composition of the city, as well as the composition of the subplaces.

i. “MB” (i.e. Majority-Black) subplaces are those where the majority (i.e. at least one person more than 50%) of the WAP are Black.

ii. "MW" (i.e. Majority-White) subplaces are those where the majority of the WAP are White.

iii. “MHI” (i.e. Majority High Income) subplaces are those where the majority of the employed population are in highly skilled high-income (HSHI) occupations.

iv. “MMI” (i.e. Majority Middle Income) subplaces are those where the majority of the employed are in semi-skilled middle-income occupations. Most had more residents in SSMI-NM employment than in SSMI-M, with some having more an outright majority in the former group alone.

v. “MLI” (i.e. Majority Low Income) subplaces are those where the majority of the employed are in Elementary or low-skilled low-income (LSLI) occupations.

vi. "MX" (i.e. Mixed) subplaces are those where neither low-skilled low-income, semi-skilled middle-income, nor highly skilled high-income comprised a clear majority of the employed persons.

vii. “HUO” (i.e. High Unemployment, Official definition) subplaces are those where the unemployment rate was higher than the unemployment rate for the entire city of Cape Town according to the census data. Since South Africa’s
unemployment rate is often among the highest in the world, it was decided that any cut off for HUO subplaces had to be based on the context. The official definition of unemployment excluded discouraged work-seekers among the rest of those categorised as “not economically active”.

That said, it will become evident that a single subplace could have multiple descriptors. For example, a single subplace could be majority-Black (MB), majority middle income (MMI), and also have a high unemployment rate (HUO). However, looking at too many descriptors at once could make the discussion unnecessarily complex, so this will be avoided as far as possible.

**FINDINGS:**

**DEMOGRAPHICS AND LABOUR MARKET:**

There is a general consensus that Cape Town, like other globally connected cities, has undergone a degree of deindustrialisation, resulting in the changes in the sectoral composition of the labour market, as well as the occupational distribution of the employed population. That said, there is perhaps less consensus on whether those changes should be interpreted as evidence of social polarisation (Lemanski, 2007) or professionalisation (Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw, 2009), with at least one study offering limited support for the professionalisation debate but adding that the trend had arguably shifted toward expanded semi-skilled white collar job growth after 2001 (Solomon, 2019).

Since the official end of the *Apartheid* period, Cape Town’s demographics have changed significantly, in part due to the removal of the influx controls that previously prevented the urbanisation of Black Africans (Seekings, 2011). Consequently, whereas Coloureds previously comprised the majority of Cape Town’s population, they were just 41% of the WAP in 2011, with Black Africans and Whites following with 39% and 18%. Additionally, the labour market had also grown to approximately 1.3 million employed persons (Solomon, 2019). Figure 2 shows the demographics based on the census counts from 1980 to 2011, with the 2022 estimate based on the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys of 2022.
Although the job market expanded, the WAP grew significantly faster in the initial period following the 1994 elections. Consequently, the city has a history of high, but racially unequal unemployment rates. In Figure 3, the differences between the unemployment rates for the Black African, Coloured, and White populations can be seen with a difference reminiscent of the Apartheid-era racial hierarchy, with the highest unemployment experienced by Black Africans and the lowest by Whites. While one might be forgiven for wondering whether this was merely a product of differences in educational attainment, these racial differences were also evident when looking at unemployment rates for those with the same level of education (Solomon, 2019).
Figure 4: Unemployment rate for the working-age population by race, 1980-2011

Table 1: Absolute number of people employed in Major Occupation Groups in Cape Town, 1980-2022²
(Solomon, 2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Category</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Legislators, senior official and managers</td>
<td>33,169</td>
<td>65,402</td>
<td>145,654</td>
<td>238,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Professionals</td>
<td>53,651</td>
<td>84,621</td>
<td>104,291</td>
<td>176,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Technical and associate professionals</td>
<td>41,377</td>
<td>99,068</td>
<td>133,351</td>
<td>187,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Clerks</td>
<td>80,937</td>
<td>132,284</td>
<td>186,950</td>
<td>189,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Service workers, shop and market sales workers</td>
<td>68,443</td>
<td>108,437</td>
<td>218,390</td>
<td>217,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers</td>
<td>8,808</td>
<td>7,590</td>
<td>10,002</td>
<td>3,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Craft and related trades workers</td>
<td>42,718</td>
<td>110,781</td>
<td>151,627</td>
<td>131,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Plant and machine operators and assemblers</td>
<td>151,136</td>
<td>74,057</td>
<td>64,170</td>
<td>102,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Elementary Occupation (incl. domestic workers)</td>
<td>116,297</td>
<td>188,975</td>
<td>277,782</td>
<td>265,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Occupation unspecified</td>
<td>17,916</td>
<td>68,290</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² HSHI = highly-skilled high income occupations; SSMI-NM = semi-skilled middle income occupations; SSMI-M = semi-skilled middle income occupations; LSI = low-skill, low income occupations
The job market not only grew, it also shifted to be dominated by highly-skilled and semi-skilled white-collar (i.e. non-manual) occupations. Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw (2009) show the dominant trend between 1980 and 2001 was the absolute growth among highly skilled, high-income (HSHI) occupations, whereas the data in table 1 shows that the growth in semi-skilled, non-manual employment accelerated in the subsequent decade. Table 1, using data from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), shows that the trend identified by Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw (2009) is once again evident, thus confirming that the questions raised regarding the occupational and geographical changes corresponding with deindustrialisation is still relevant.
Furthermore, Crankshaw (2012) showed that previously disadvantaged groups, like Coloureds and Black Africans, have made employment gains among both SSMI-NM and HSHI occupations, even though they were still under-represented among the HSHI occupations, when compared to the racial on the working-age population.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD ANALYSIS WITHOUT HISTORICAL CATEGORIES OR IDEAL TYPES:**

As previously stated, the focus of work on Cape Town’s changing racial and/or socioeconomic geography has usually taken a deductive approach, by focusing on categories such as the *Apartheid*-era racial group areas, then determining the ways those parts of the city might have changed. This study posits that this approach, while valid and relevant, has its limitations and might even obfuscate certain findings. Nevertheless, it is a good place to start, which is the reason that Figure 1 was presented first.

However, what findings might be produced if an inductive approach was taken. As a starting point, the racial composition of the city’s subplaces neighbourhoods were calculated and were categorised as “majority-Black” or “majority-White”. For the sake of simplicity, Figure 7 (as well as some other findings) is presented using the inclusive term “Blacks” as a collective term for Black Africans, Coloureds, and Indians/Asians. Additionally, the maps only show the
subplaces that have a significant residential footprint. Consequently, nature reserves, industrial parks, and rural areas with limited residences are not included in the maps, although all subplaces were included in the later calculations. Possibly the least surprising finding is that most of the majority-White subplaces correspond with Apartheid-era Whites-only group areas. That said, not all of those previously Whites-only areas were still majority-White neighbourhoods in 2011. For example, numerous subplaces around Kuils River, Goodwood, and Bellville in the Northern Suburbs fit this description. Numerous subplaces around some of the University of Cape Town’s campuses, including Observatory, Rosebank, and Mowbray, as well as the city’s Central Business District (CBD) had undergone similar changes by 2011.

According to the World Bank (2023), South Africa’s unemployment rate in 2011 was 21.4%, whereas Cape Town’s was a bit higher at 24% (see Figure 4). The only other countries whose unemployment rates were higher were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Djibouti, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Eswatini.

That said, the highest levels of unemployment in Cape Town in 2011 were on the so-called “Cape Flats”, the part of the city that were mostly group areas for Black Africans and Coloureds during the Apartheid period. Many of those neighbourhoods had unemployment rates above the rate for the city as a whole, with some of them dealing with unemployment rates in excess of 50%. On the other hand, many of the neighbourhoods that correspond with Apartheid-era Whites-only neighbourhoods had single-digit unemployment rates, with a number of them at 10-20%. Considering that the data, presented in Figure 7, shows that all the neighbourhoods on the Cape Flats were still majority-Black neighbourhoods, as well as the racial differences in unemployment rates (see Figure 4), these findings are not all that surprising.
Consequently, in subsequent analysis, those subplaces with above average unemployment rates (i.e. higher than the city as a whole), will be identified at high unemployment (HUO) subplaces, based on the official employment, and this is one of the categories that will be used.

A similar approach to the racial majority question was used to categorise the subplaces according to socioeconomic differences, using occupation as a proxy. Because this study has, as its basis, drawn on literature focused on the professionalisation and polarisation theories of occupational change in global cities, the focus was on the aforementioned occupational categories. These include highly skilled high-income (HSHI), semi-skilled middle-income (SSMI), low-skilled low-income (LSLI), with some differentiation between manual and non-manual SSMI occupations because of the centrality of deindustrialisation and loss of blue-collar employment in the professionalisation theory (Hamnett, 2021, Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw, 2009, Hamnett, 1994). Additionally, this study engages with the idea that HSHI occupations can be regarded as comparable with the so-called middle class (Crankshaw,
The “majority high income” (MHI) subplaces are those, regardless of history and/or location, where more than half of the employed population are in HSHI occupations. These subplaces almost completely overlaps with FWO subplaces, with a few minor exceptions. This is visually evident, in Figure 9, but will also be confirmed later when presenting additional data.

The next category is “majority middle income” (MMI) subplaces, where more than half of the employed are in semi-skilled middle-income occupations. Although the majority consisted of those in both manual and non-manual occupations, a distinction is made between those with a greater number in manual occupations, which are “MMI (M)” subplaces, and those where there are more in non-manual occupations, where those are labelled as “MMI (NM)” subplaces.
There were only seven “majority low income” (MLI) subplaces, accounting for approximately 0.6% of the WAP. Nevertheless, those subplaces will also be addressed shortly. The last category was home to approximately 33.6% of the city’s WAP in 2011 and these are labelled as “mixed” (MX) subplaces, because no single skill-income category accounted for the majority of the employed in those subplaces.

These subplaces are spread across the city and comprised a diversity of socioeconomic and racial profiles that were worthy of further attention.

As stated, this inductive approach was not used with the intention of completely ignoring or excluding the historical categories, but rather for the analysis to be done independent of those categories. So, then, the focus shifts to better understanding who lives in these different inductively defined subplaces, as well as how they relate to the Apartheid-era group areas.
THE CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NEO-APARTHEID CITY:

SUBPLACES DEFINED BY MAJORITY POPULATION GROUP:

In this analysis of the composition of Apartheid-era neighbourhoods and the different categories of subplaces based on the 2011 data, the comparison was done with the sum of work-age people living in those subplaces and not the number of subplaces. The main reason for this was the considerable differences in the population sizes of different subplaces, from as little as zero (numerous examples, including industrial parks and nature reserves) to over 50,000.

Having already looked at the geography of different types of subplaces, presents the first comparison, by looking at the residential locations of the WAP according to the Apartheid-era group areas and how those subplaces categorised using the inductive approach. In each table there are totals of the percentages for the columns and rows, with the grand total showing the absolute number rather than the 100% value that would otherwise have been there.

Of the approximately 2.6 million working-age people living in Cape Town in 2011, 82% of them lived in majority Black subplaces, whereas the remainder lived in majority White subplaces. When looking at it through the lens of Apartheid-era groups areas, 52% lived in Apartheid-era Black African, Coloured, and Indian/Asian group areas or FBCIO, which refers to “Former Black African Coloured, and Indian/Asian only”. A further 24% lived in FWO (i.e. former Whites-only) subplaces, and 2% in subplaces that, based on the 2011 subplace boundaries, were a mix of FBCIO and FWO neighbourhoods. One such example is the subplace known as Pelikan Park that, in 2011, consisted of neighbourhoods identified as Apartheid-era White and Indian/Asian group areas, as well as an area that was only developed after the end of the Apartheid period (Graham, 2007).

That last type of subplace is what is labelled as “N/A” (also referred to as post-Apartheid neighbourhoods) alongside the Apartheid-era group areas, because that framework was “not applicable” to those areas since they were only developed after the Group Areas Act was repealed (Graham, 2007). In 2011, those were home to 22% of the WAP.

One additional point worth raising here is what this says about the changes in FWO subplaces. According to these findings one-third of those living in FWO subplaces were living
in majority-Black subplaces – after all, a total 24% of the WAP were living in FWO subplaces, but 8% were living in majority-Black subplaces. This is not too surprising because, when comparing Figure 1 with Figure 7, it is clear that numerous FWO subplaces, were not even majority-White subplaces anymore.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total WAP (n = 2,604,114)</th>
<th>mix</th>
<th>FBCIO</th>
<th>FWO</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Black (2011)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority White (2011)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Distribution of each race by apartheid-era group area, 2011

In terms of the distribution of the various so-called population groups, there are some noteworthy observations. Firstly, 95% of both the Coloured and Black African WAP lived in majority-Black neighbourhoods at the time, although in terms of the historical categories they were distributed quite differently. For example, less than half of the Black African population (46%) were living in FBCIO neighbourhoods, with just 13% living in FWO subplaces, with 40% of them resident in so-called post-Apartheid neighbourhoods. This is the highest proportion of any of these groups living in those post-Apartheid neighbourhoods. However, it is worth noting that a of the post-Apartheid subplaces (Figure 1) that were majority-Black in 2011 (Figure 7) are adjacent to FBCIO subplaces and therefore could be seen as an expansion of those FBCIO subplaces.

In contrast to this the majority of both the Coloured WAP and White WAP were resident in the Apartheid-era subplaces associated with their identity. More specifically, 76% of Coloureds were living in FBCIO subplaces, with 83% of Whites living in FWO subplaces. Additional calculations found that 60% of Whites lived in subplaces that were at least two-thirds White, and 49% in subplaces that were at least three-quarters White.
Table 3: Distribution of the Black African, Coloured, and Indian/Asian WAP using combination SP categories, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>combination</th>
<th>FBCIO</th>
<th>FWO</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black African WAP (n = 1,024,863)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Black (2011)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority White (2011)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coloured WAP (n = 1,078,452)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Black (2011)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority White (2011)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White WAP (n = 462,441)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Black (2011)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority White (2011)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has already been pointed out that the most significant employment growth 1980 has been among the highly skilled high-income occupations, but those occupations also accounted for 40% of the employed populations by 2022. This is in contrast to the 27% for semi-skilled middle-income non-manual occupations, 15% for semi-skilled middle-income manual occupations, and 18% for low-skilled low-income occupations (refer to table 1).

While some literature has focused on Cape Town’s FWO subplaces and determined what percentage of those subplaces were in middle-class or HSHI occupations, others have discussed those occupations in conjunction with FWO subplaces as something that was taken for granted (Crankshaw, 2012, Graham, 2007, Lemanski, 2007, Turok, 2001).

However, as seen in table 4, just 49% of those in HSHI employment lived in FWO subplaces, with another 3% in combination subplaces. Considering how the FBCIO subplaces are discussed in the literature it is arguably most surprising that more than one-in-three (or 35%) of those in HSHI employment lived in FBCIO subplaces.

In fact, when focusing only on Blacks employed in HSHI occupations, 59% lived in FBCIO subplaces in 2011, with a further 12% in post-Apartheid subplaces. On the other hand only 26% of Blacks in HSHI employment lived in FWO subplaces and half of those lived in FWO subplaces that had become majority-Black subplaces.
### Table 4: Distribution of the HSHI employed, by Apartheid-era group area and majority race subplace, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Group</th>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>FBCIO</th>
<th>FWO</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Black (2011)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority White (2011)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Distribution of the Black HSHI employed, by Apartheid-era group area and majority race subplace, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Group</th>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>FBCIO</th>
<th>FWO</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Black (2011)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority White (2011)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SUBPLACES DEFINED BY SOCIOECONOMIC CRITERIA:

As previously stated, additionally categories were created based on the socioeconomic characteristics of Cape Town’s subplaces, using the level of unemployment, as well as the majority occupations as proxies.

Table 2 already showed the distribution of the WAP (n = 2,604,114) in terms of the historical Apartheid-era and contemporary majority race categories; however, Table 6 uses the socioeconomic categories in place of the majority race categories. In 2011, more than half of the WAP (52%) lived in subplaces with an unemployment rate in excess of Cape Town’s 23.9% unemployment rate at the moment; additionally, they were spread across all subplaces in all historical or Apartheid-era categories.

As previously stated, multiple descriptors could apply to subplaces, so in addition to living in HUO subplaces, 33% of the WAP lived in what is being referred to as MMI subplaces, where the majority of the employed were in semi-skilled middle-income occupations, with another 16% in MX subplaces, where there were no clear majority occupations. This table also confirms that, as indicated in Figures 10 and 11, these MMI and MX subplaces were spread across large parts of the city’s residential areas, including FBCIO and FWO subplaces.

---

3 A category comprised of Black African, Coloured and Indian/Asian working-age people.
In order to simplify the discussion going forward, as well as the fact that the MLI subplaces account for just 0.6% of the WAP, that category will be merged with the MX categories.

When focusing on the Black WAP (n = 2,141,544), 62% were living in high unemployment (HUO) subplaces (table 7). Furthermore, 61% were living in majority SSMI subplaces and 35% were living in mixed subplaces (MX). However, in order to understand the potential significance of these findings, including any paradoxical findings, it is worth remembering the geographical distribution of the majority SSMI subplaces (Figure 10) and the mixed subplaces (Figure 11). Not only do these subplaces not fit neatly into the kind of binaries that are used in the literature on Cape Town (e.g. ghetto, township or FBCIO subplace, compared to suburbs or FWO subplaces). Furthermore, while it is not surprising that 61% of the Black WAP still lived in FBCIO subplaces in 2011, it is noteworthy that double the percentage of the Black WAP lived in post-Apartheid (24%) subplaces (i.e. the N/A category) compared to the proportion in the FWO subplaces (12%).

---

Table 6: Distribution of the working-age population across historical (Apartheid-era) subplace categories and contemporary data-based subplace categories, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total WAP (n = 2,604,114)</th>
<th>combination</th>
<th>FBCIO</th>
<th>FWO</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHI</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHI &amp; HUO</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMI</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMI &amp; HUO</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLI</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLI &amp; HUO</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX &amp; HUO</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 “MHI” = majority of the employed are in HSHI occupations, “MMI (NM)” = majority of the employed are in semi-skilled middle-income occupations, with more in non-manual occupations, fewer in manual occupations; “MMI (M)” = majority of the employed are in semi-skilled middle-income occupations, with more in manual occupations, fewer in non-manual occupations; “MLI” = majority of the employed are in low-skilled low-income occupations; “MX” = subplaces where no occupational skills-income category is the majority; “HUO” = (official) unemployment rate is higher than the rate for the city.
The previous observation about the distribution of the Black WAP in post-*Apartheid* and FWO subplaces, is particularly pertinent when the focus shifts to Blacks in HSHI employment, especially considering the existing arguments about racial desegregation in FWO subplaces. But it is worth focusing on all those in HSHI employment.

Of those in HSHI occupations ($n = 382,754$) in 2011, the data showed that 45% were White (Figure 5), so the fact that the data indicate that 49% percent of those in HSHI employment were resident in FWO subplaces is not at all surprising, if not perhaps somewhat underwhelming (Table 8). After all, consider the arguments in urban studies literature about the movement of the upwardly mobile among previously disadvantaged groups and/or ethnic minorities in other contexts (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000b, Marcuse, 1997a, Crankshaw, 2012). Arguably the most surprising finding is the percentage of the HSHI employed living, not only in FBCIO subplaces, but in MMI and MX subplaces, including the HUO ones. However, this makes more sense when considering the distribution of the Blacks in HSHI employment ($n = 216,031$).

Considering the aforementioned literature about movement of the upwardly mobile among ethnic minority and/or previously disadvantaged groups, it is noteworthy that just 26% of Blacks in HSHI employment were living in FWO subplaces, with a further 12% in post-*Apartheid* neighbourhoods. In contrast to those findings, as well as the prominent arguments in the literature discussed here, a clear majority (59%) of Blacks in HSHI employment continued to live in FBCIO subplaces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black WAP ($n = 2,141,544$)</th>
<th>combination</th>
<th>FBCIO</th>
<th>FWO</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHI</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHI &amp; HUO</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMI</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMI &amp; HUO</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX &amp; HUO</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7: Distribution of the Black working-age population across historical (Apartheid-era) subplace categories and contemporary data-based subplace categories, 2011*
While these findings clearly do not disprove the prominent spatial arguments in the widely-cited literature discussed here (e.g. Crankshaw, 2012, Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000b, Wilson, 2012, Wilson, 2011), they do raise additional questions about the characteristics of the post-Fordist spatial order in South African, if not other Global South cities.

**CONCLUSION:**

The findings in this study point to some of the ways that the *Apartheid* legacy is still imprinted on the City of Cape Town. While Black Africans and Coloureds have made strides to gain greater representation among semi-skilled middle-income non-manual occupations and, to a lesser extent, highly skilled high-income occupations, they are still under-represented in the latter. Additionally, the differences in unemployment rates for these groups is reminiscent of the *Apartheid*-era racial hierarchy. However, these are not new findings. What this study emphasises instead is a shift in the way neighbourhood compositions are studied, as well as the types of findings that could result due to even minor shifts in approach.
Clearly the historically based terms like former Whites-only or former Blacks-only subplaces, as well as the ideal types of the so-called quartered city, shed important light on the types of differences that might be evident in the post-Fordist city, as well as the processes that contributed to shaping them. However, this study shows that there is potential for moving beyond an over-reliance on those categories by incorporating an inductive approach to study neighbourhood change, without only interpreting the data through the lens of historical categories and/or ideal types. The findings confirm that nearly all middle-class Whites still lived in what were Apartheid-era Whites-only neighbourhoods and which remain majority-White. It also confirms that the highest levels of unemployment are among Black Africans and Coloureds in what were Apartheid-era group areas for assigned to those populations.

However, there are hundreds of diverse subplaces that are located, both geographically and socioeconomically, between these extremes. For example, it is noteworthy that more than one-third of those employed in HSHI occupations still lived in FBCIO subplaces in 2011. This comprised the majority of Blacks (i.e. Black Africans, Coloureds, and Indians/Asians) in those occupations. Additionally, some of those lived in neighbourhoods where unemployment was rife. These paradoxical findings raise additional questions about the circumstances and/or motivations behind these people and their households have not moved to more affluent suburbs, as urban studies literature tends to suggest.

Furthermore, while many on the Cape Flats struggle with unemployment and impoverishment in ways that are reminiscent of the outcast or excluded ghetto in the literature, many are employed and thus continue to remain connected to formal employment networks. This too raises additional questions regarding the factors that might result in the unemployed, those in semi-skilled middle-income employment, and highly skilled high-income earners living in relatively close proximity to one another, as well as the factors that might have shaped life, educational, and career trajectories. While the census data used in this study might not be able to answer these questions, it could be argued that the approaches I this study and others like them could point additional questions that need to be asked in this unequal, segregated, and somewhat paradoxical city.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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