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Making Freedom: Apartheid, Squatter Politics, And The Struggle For Home



Synopsis

In *Making Freedom* Anne-Maria Makhulu explores practices of squatting and illegal settlement on the outskirts of Cape Town during and immediately following the end of apartheid. Apartheid's paradoxical policies of prohibiting migrant Africans who worked in Cape Town from living permanently within the city led some black families to seek safe haven on the city's perimeters. Beginning in the 1970s families set up makeshift tents and shacks and built whole communities, defying the state through what Makhulu calls a "politics of presence." In the simple act of building homes, squatters, who Makhulu characterizes as urban militants, actively engaged in a politics of "the right to the city" that became vital in the broader struggles for liberation. Despite apartheid's end in 1994, Cape Town's settlements have expanded, as new forms of dispossession associated with South African neoliberalism perpetuate relations of spatial exclusion, poverty, and racism. As Makhulu demonstrates, the efforts of black Capetonians to establish claims to a place in the city not only decisively reshaped Cape Town's geography but changed the course of history.

Book Information

File Size: 2045 KB

Print Length: 256 pages

Publisher: Duke University Press Books (September 30, 2015)

Publication Date: September 30, 2015

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B016Q2CVH0

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #613,638 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store)

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