

BOOK REVIEW

Anne-Maria Makhulu. *Making Freedom: Apartheid, Squatter Politics, and the Struggle for Home*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015. xxiii + 256 pp. Illustrations. Index. \$26.95 Paper. 978-0-8223-5966-1.

Anne-Maria Makhulu's *Making Freedom: Apartheid, Squatter Politics, and the Struggle for Home* examines the manifestation of apartheid in Cape Town and its effects on Black South Africans who migrated to the city to seek employment. The book illuminates the oppression of Black South Africans and their resistance to the punitive housing policies that restricted them from working and owning houses in the city. The study focuses on the struggles of Black South Africans to make a home and restore their belonging in the city's domestic space (8). The author argues that the apartheid regime's quest to control population influx in Cape Town led to the enforcement of strict housing and migration laws.

Makhulu narrates the migration of Black South Africans to Cape Town to seek better jobs and improve their living conditions, with an emphasis on how their ambitions were thwarted by apartheid laws (7). The study centers on Crossroads, an informal settlement arising from the resistance of Black South Africans to rules that barred them from accessing and owning houses in the city. The author further explores the rise of squatter settlements on the outskirts of Cape Town to make a case for the Black South Africans who flocked to Crossroads and claimed to belong (4).

The first chapter, "Migration," delineates the personal narratives of immigrants from rural areas who came to the city. In the 1970s, many women relocated to the cities to reunite with their husbands. During this period, Black South Africans began defying apartheid laws to make a home and establish Black domesticity in the squatter settlements. Whereas the informal settlements offered a permanent settlement for the Black dwellers, the inhabitants ran into problems with authorities who wished to control the influx. Just like Crossroads, which defied apartheid housing and influx control policies, squatter settlements also rose in other cities. Women joined protest politics; the informal settlements housed those without papers, income, and secure titles, and the squatters found freedom from the city's authoritarian laws (60).

In the next chapter, “Counterinsurgency,” Makhulu probes the State’s efforts to control the unregulated urbanization that resulted as many South Africans settled on the city’s outskirts. The authorities tried to turn those with houses against those without, but the defiant squatters continued to build their homes and resisted eviction and deportation. Squatters cemented their presence by building schools, churches, and homes, forming civil organizations and institutions of local governance (63). They built hybrid structures and amalgamated the rural-urban, old-new, and customary-modern ways of life to bridge the distance between the city and the reserves (68). This complicated apartheid’s neoliberal ideology as the rural cultural and political conservatism mixed with the city’s modernity. This hybridization reintroduced headmen, who reconstructed urban patriarchy, monitored access to the squatter settlement, and settled disputes. The abolition of the Group Areas Act (27) forced the State to declare Crossroads an emergency camp and provide social amenities. This provided the squatters with a home, regardless of apartheid influx control policies.

Chapter Three, “Transitions,” shifts to the decade leading up to South Africa’s first democratic election. The author reveals the futility of the State’s efforts to cool the rising anti-apartheid tensions and suppress the liberation struggles. By the 1990s, apartheid had become unsustainable. Five years earlier, pass laws were abolished, and many immigrants continued to move into the cities. In one decade, there was a 59 percent increase in the Black population in Cape Town (96), which led to a massive demand for housing and resulted in the establishment of Lower Cape Town. Makhulu explains that squatter settlements became the battlegrounds for South Africa’s revolutionary and counterrevolutionary wars. The growing strength of the liberation movements and organizations created a climate of ungovernability, and squatters used home-building strategies and community organizations to fight oppressive laws in the city.

In the final chapter, “Reckoning,” Makhulu concludes that the transition period did not bring much change, but there was a historical continuity of “radical class differences” (129). New Black bourgeoisie distanced themselves from those they had struggled with in the liberation movement, hence the rise of a socioeconomic and political gap (130). As the State focused on growth and global competitiveness, the “urban poor” remained without formal employment, but they continued to make new demands on the State.

In conclusion, this book is a thoughtful and critical case study on the impact of apartheid in South Africa’s major cities. The book’s strengths lie in the personal testimonies of Makhulu’s respondents, who narrate their struggle to gain freedom and cement their domestic space of belonging. The author’s decision to allow the squatters to tell their own stories gives them agency, which adds to the authenticity of the study. Moreover, the author’s decision to unpack the squatters by their sex, gender, generation, class, and marital status helps give a voice to every sector often presented in homogeneity. The photographs add to the graphic effect of the study and connect the

reader to the squatter settlements in South Africa. However, providing the dates of the photos would have added more helpful context.

Overall, this book can significantly assist students and scholars in researching the historiography and anthropology of South Africa's oppressive housing and city influx policies. It is an exciting study that strikes a clear connection between the struggle for freedom and making a home in a country that disowned a section of its citizens and pushed them to the periphery.

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