

## INTRODUCTION

# On the Politics of Home

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In early 2010, South African president Jacob Zuma married his fifth wife in a self-consciously traditional ceremony, on his self-consciously traditional homestead (*umuzi*; plural, *imizi*) between the Thukela River and the Nkandla forest in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Before some two thousand guests – and many more, following South African and international media coverage of the ceremony – Zuma celebrated the extension of his *umuzi*, and thereby the expansion of his political power.

In the lead-up to this event, we encountered a popular critique of Zuma's lavish celebration of polygyny in a national context where unemployment rates mean that most men struggle to afford one marriage, and where the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues unabated through multiple concurrent sexual partnerships. At least one historian noted that the land on which Zuma enacted this spectacle of Zulu authenticity came originally to his ancestors as a reward for their assistance to the British during their 1879 invasion of the Zulu kingdom (Guy 2009; Webb and Wright 2001: 359). News coverage of the event decried his plans to 'turn the presidential homestead into a sprawling precinct that will include a police station, helicopter pad, military clinic, visitors' centre, parking lot with parking for at least forty vehicles and at least three smaller houses that will serve as staff quarters' (Rossouw 2009). The renovations erupted into the national spotlight in 2012, when *City Press* revealed that they would cost an estimated R214 million, 95 per cent of which would be borne by taxpayers under the tellingly named 'Prestige Project A', sparking uproar over what has since become known as the Nkandlagate scandal (*City Press* 2012).

But for many South Africans, particularly rural isiZulu-speakers, Zuma's nuptials – and the development of his homestead – inspired respect (Carton 2009). In an age of pervasive crises of governance and gendered social reproduction, Zuma's marriage signified a sense of optimism for the future by gesturing to a past in which power and authority had been *domesticated* – naturalised through domestic space – on the terms of patriarchal homestead heads (*abanumzane*; singular, *umnumzane*). As Africans in the region that is now KwaZulu-Natal have been subjected to a succession of colonial, apartheid and post-colonial regimes, the role of *imizi* as political and economic units has changed radically. But critically, neither the colonial state nor its successors have been able to control *imizi* – and more 'modern' types of homes – completely, or to govern them in a manner that precludes all challenges to state power that they produce. Rather, the exigencies of conquest and governance have demanded that state authorities exert power by working *through* African domestic authorities and institutions, reshaping them toward specific instrumental and ideological ends. Zuma's proud homestead, a space of almost fantastical spectacle and desire for many residents of KwaZulu-Natal, must be understood in this historical context, at the crux of competing ideas and practices of being *ekhaya* – being at home (home: *ikhaya*; homes: *amakhaya*).

Scholars have explored with sensitivity the cross-cultural variability of 'the family' and 'the household', demonstrating that these constructs have been constituted and experienced quite differently across social and historical contexts (Guyer 1981; Marks and Rathbone 1983; Vaughan 1983; Oheneba-Sakyi and Takyi 2006; Burrill, Roberts and Thornberry 2010; Osborn 2011). Anthropologist Leslie Bank has nonetheless recently pointed to an enduring tendency in African studies 'to see the streets and public squares as sites of the making of modernity, and the homes as spaces where traditional roles are entrenched and re-enacted without innovation and change' (2011: 18). One of this volume's editors has recently critiqued this tendency in studies of early African nationalism in South Africa, where scholars have seen women's engagements in domestically oriented nationalist groups as inherently conservative influences (Healy-Clancy 2012).

Building on these arguments, we reject the assumption that the home – as an idea and as a material entity – is static and continuous through history. Certainly the pre-colonial *umuzi* cannot be said to be the same as the rural homestead that emerged under colonial rule, which in turn looked quite different from more contemporary iterations that bear the same name today. But it is simple to demonstrate that the home has changed a great deal through time; what is more important is to show how it has changed in direct relation to broader economic and political transformations in the KwaZulu-Natal region. Charting this relationship through history, we interpret the home both as an *indicator* of these broader transformations as well as an *incubator* of the shifting forms of community and consciousness that propelled them. We argue that political history and domestic history cannot be considered separately: politics in KwaZulu-Natal has always been deeply entangled in the home, as both the source from which it draws its legitimacy as well as the object over which it exerts its power.

This Introduction contextualises the contributions that follow by tracing the modern history of *ikhaya*, and of the theoretical frames in which scholars have located it. We first explore how scholars have depicted the relationship between domestic space and political organisation before the late-nineteenth-century mineral revolution. We then consider how they have treated the material destruction and ideological resilience of *imizi* under colonialism, segregation and apartheid, as well as how they have related the emergence of new sorts of households and homes to new modes of authority and power. Finally, we consider the stakes of hope, longing and nostalgia for certain notions of home in the post-apartheid era, looking at how the widening gaps between powerful domestic ideals and grim economic realities have shaped contemporary political struggles.

It bears noting that the literatures on each of these three periods concern different sets of questions and arguments, in part due to the nature of the evidence available to scholars. Since historians of the pre-colonial era must rely more heavily on archaeological sources, they often focus on built space as producing and reproducing norms. Scholarship on the colonial and apartheid eras,

by contrast, draws mainly from archival sources that tend to be weighted towards issues of governance. And since scholars studying the contemporary period have ready access to ethnographic data, they are often predisposed to explore questions of subjectivity. There are no definite boundaries between these domains, however, and the chapters included in this book speak across various bodies of evidence.

**Before the mineral revolution: Domestic space as normative and formative**

Drawing upon archaeological research and an expanding archive of oral histories (Wright 1996), scholars over the past three decades have depicted the homestead as an ancient but flexible institution – remarkably resilient as ‘the basic unit of production’ in south-east Africa prior to the mineral revolution (Marks and Atmore 1980: 10–13). Archaeologists have pointed out that most homesteads south of the Zambezi River have adhered to some version of the ‘Central Cattle Pattern’ from the seventh century onward. The Central Cattle Pattern, as described by anthropologist Adam Kuper and archaeologist Thomas Huffman, is built around a basic logic of spatial oppositions: the centre (male/agnates) of the homestead against the periphery (female/wives); the top (private) against the bottom (public); one side (senior) against the other side (junior) (Kuper 1982; Huffman 1986, 2007; Mack, Maggs and Oswald 1991; Landau 2010: 50). Some early ethnographers tended to reify the structure of the homestead, but it cannot be conceived as ahistorical or uniform. While the Central Cattle Pattern extends deep into the region’s archaeological record, it has not been the only form. Archaeologist Martin Hall has provided evidence that the Central Cattle Pattern only achieved dominance when it became the touchstone of the expanding Zulu kingdom (Hall 1984, [1987] 1990). In the early nineteenth century, that kingdom sought to leverage the spatial logic of the Central Cattle Pattern to organise and rigidify political hierarchies and establish regional patterns of tribute (Kuper 1993).

Kuper has usefully contended that we can understand the socially foundational role of homesteads through the concept of

'house societies' (*sociétés à maison*) developed by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (Kuper 1993). Lévi-Strauss has demonstrated that families in some societies are constituted in relation, first and foremost, to *houses*; indeed, he noticed that the indigenous term for 'family' or 'clan' is often the same term used to identify the house as a physical dwelling. Houses can operate as moral entities within which both material and immaterial (such as names, titles and prerogatives) property is transmitted, and they can reconcile the antagonistic principles of descent and alliance by embodying both (Lévi-Strauss [1984] 1987; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Mueggler 2001). The anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has argued that as people traverse and make use of domestic space in everyday life, they internalise certain understandings of the social order. The house acts like a material textbook that communicates basic moral values and collective representations, all clothed – by dint of their material inscription – in the aura of the natural. Bourdieu's ethnography of the Algerian Kabyle house forms the basis of his 'theory of practice': he contends that the structural organisation of domestic space – which he calls *habitus* – imbues agents with certain assumptions about and dispositions towards the organisation of power and society as they operate within it. The domestic *habitus* also has a reproductive effect: it structures persons *according to the structures by which it was produced* (Bourdieu 1977). Just as structure produces behaviour, so too behaviour produces structure – but only according to the principles of its own production. By pointing to a mutual dialectic between culture and the built environment, Bourdieu explains why people participate in systems that dominate them and how power perpetuates itself. Kuper has similarly contended that the homestead (in the form of the Central Cattle Pattern) both modelled and enabled Zulu state expansion in the first half of the nineteenth century. 'An established, indeed universal, northern Nguni – perhaps pan-Nguni – house system was the basis of all the politics in the region in the nineteenth century. Through the operation of patron-client relationships the house system could provide the framework for a polity of much greater range, without greatly changing its basic nature,' Kuper argued. 'The core principles

remained constant, and if the homestead base could provide the model for an expanding political system, it could, equally, prevent collapse into anarchy as the inevitably unstable grand structure broke up' (1993: 486).

The 'core principles' of *imizi* were patriarchal. As historian Jeff Guy has pointed out, the major cleavage in the region's 'pre-capitalist' societies was not that between a chief, extracting the homestead head's surplus, and the homestead head, dependent upon that chief for access to land and cattle (Guy 1987). Homestead heads and chiefs did not seek to accumulate people and cows as a source of wealth, general prestige or strengthened kinship bonds. Rather, the chief and the homestead head shared an interest in 'the continuous acquisition, creation, control, and appropriation of labour power . . . realised by men, through the exchange of cattle for the productive and reproductive capacities of women' (Guy 1987: 22). The fundamental 'class' division at play before capitalism was therefore that between married patriarchs and everyone else. The authority of chiefs and that of homestead heads varied not in kind, but in degree. Guy's 'class' perspective did not imply that women should have revolted, or that they wanted to do so. 'It is difficult to imagine anything but a qualified resistance in a system where a quality so inalienable as reproductive capacity was of such social importance,' Guy emphasised. 'On the other hand, exploitation through the control of reproductive capacity must of necessity be a qualified form of subordination since it leaves a crucial autonomy and integrity with the possessor of fertility' (Guy 1990: 46). Similarly, women's centrality to agricultural production entailed burdens, but also rights to land, to a share of the fruits of that land and to the labour of other women and children. As Guy reveals sharply in Chapter One of this volume, these gendered meanings of homestead production and reproduction – the meanings of life itself – would change radically with colonialism.

With state expansion in the first half of the nineteenth century, most women's burdens weighed heavier as their rights to security diminished. Drawing chiefly on oral traditions, historians John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton have stressed:

though some women of the Zulu aristocracy were able to attain very high status and accumulate considerable political power as heads of *amakhandas* [royal homesteads], in general the emergence of a highly centralized and stratified social order was accompanied by a decline in the already inferior social status of women. This was evidenced in a considerable increase in the degree of their subordination not only to the political authorities but also the heads of their homesteads, whether fathers or husbands. (1989: 70)

They point out that this was accompanied by ‘an increase in the burden placed on women in the sphere of productive labour, as they took over some of the tasks of the young men who were withdrawn from homestead labour to serve the state in the new kind of production unit represented by *amabutho* [regiments]’ (Wright and Hamilton 1989: 71; see also Hamilton 1985; Wright 1981; Berger 1994). Drawing upon oral and archival sources, historian Sean Hanretta has suggested that women also came to dominate the class of diviners in the mid-nineteenth century. But importantly, Hanretta noted:

while it may have been the changes within culturally constructed roles for women that both opened up the potential for becoming diviners and created the tensions which led them to want to become diviners, women’s authority as diviners derived from those very aspects of their gender construction which had restricted their opportunities in the past. That is, female diviners were able to claim authority precisely because they were associated by men with the spiritual world and with physical, bodily liminality. (1998: 412)

Thus ‘women’s power and women’s marginality were structurally linked’: women who attained authority through their connection with powerful male kin, or through their access to the spiritual world, attained such authority within a system in which women supplied vital reproductive and productive labour that patriarchs controlled (Hanretta 1998: 393; see also Ngubane 1981). Against

this interpretation, historians Jennifer Weir and Sifiso Ndlovu have argued that the fact of royal women's mobility suggests that historians need to take women's expressions of agency more seriously and to rethink their assumptions that pre-colonial homesteads were as patriarchal as their successors (Weir 2000, 2006; Ndlovu 2008; see also Qunta 1987 and Walker 1990). In Chapter Two of this volume, Eva Jackson shows the porousness of indigenous and colonial structures of patriarchal political authority through the case of a homestead headed by a paramount chieftainess in colonial Natal.

### **Colonialisms of the home in Natal and Zululand**

Colonialism in south-east Africa was a colonialism of the home. Europeans trained their technologies of governance specifically on the African home – conceived at once as a domestic space, a family unit and a moral precept – in their efforts to domesticate and control the African population, generating what anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff have called the 'dialectic of domesticity': a moral battle of cosmological proportions, waged over the structure of the home (1992). Anthropologist Karen Tranberg Hansen has most usefully applied the concept of 'domesticity' to point to colonial discourses on gender and family while simultaneously denoting a relationship implying power: to domesticate, as in to control, to tame, to civilise (1992). But the Europeans who engaged in this project of domestic manipulation were not of a single mind. Missionaries, officials and settlers pursued different visions as they sought to transform African homes in the image of their own interests (on these tensions in southern Africa and elsewhere, see McClintock 1995; Burke 1996; Hunt 1999; Stoler 2002; Healy 2011).

From the early nineteenth century, missionaries promoted a form of familial life centred on the nuclear-family home in which wives were to engage in unpaid labour and child-rearing while their husbands worked for wages. This particular construction of domesticity had emerged in seventeenth-century Europe, when the 'public, feudal household' was replaced by the 'private, family home' (Rybczynski 1986). The development of this domestic domain – associated with women, family and childcare – corresponded with

the rise of an industrial capitalist economy that separated work from home, productive from reproductive spaces, waged from unwaged work, male from female labour and public from domestic zones (Carrier 1992, 1994). This transformation in domestic order was underwritten by a novel organisation of economic processes that fundamentally restructured society according to capital's need for labour (Davidoff and Hall 1987). The development of bourgeois family ideology can therefore be understood as an effect of the consolidation of capitalism in Europe. The Comaroffs argue that this process, which entailed new structures of inequality and new forms of surveillance, reflected the making of a total moral order, 'a silent edifice in which family and home served as mechanisms of discipline and social control' (1992: 267). The trope of the savage was built through heavy disapprobation directed towards the apparent amorality of Africans and the prevailing patterns of African domestic life.

The homestead form was therefore the focus of much moralising attention from missionaries. To the missionary eye, the African homestead was a portrait of immorality, filth and disorder, comprising an uncontained mix of persons not properly bounded from one another, lacking private property and enclosed plots of land, and enmeshed in dense kinship networks built on polygynous marriage. Perhaps most striking to the missionaries, African homesteads appeared to lack the appropriate distinctions between public and private and between production and reproduction that governed the gendered division of labour and normative social behaviour characteristic of ideal middle-class British homes of the time. For instance, in the African homesteads that missionaries first encountered, the pre-eminent space of 'public' debate – the cattle byre – was entirely encompassed by the 'domestic' space of the homestead. As this ambivalence suggested a deep-seated moral confusion and social disorder, missionaries sought to transform homesteads into private domains that would also act as public models for family life. This entailed moving men and production into an external public realm, leaving women and reproduction confined to the internal domestic realm (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1992; Hansen 1992; Labode 1993; Robert 2008).

Missionary interventions were not always welcomed by colonial administrators, who feared that the civilising mission would lead to a class of Africans willing and able to challenge European hegemony on its own terms. Faced with the exigencies of exercising minority control on a tight budget and without a substantial coercive apparatus, administrators sought instead to *maintain* 'traditional' forms of domestic social organisation and to insinuate the colonial state into the already existing chieftaincy system (*ubukhosi*) to provide cheap, vicarious authority with a maximum degree of political legitimacy, as Percy Ngonyama demonstrates with an incisive case study in Chapter Three of this volume. Where chiefs did not already exist, they were appointed and installed by the colonial government. In addition to co-opting the chieftaincy, indirect rule worked by bolstering the power of patriarchs in the homestead through the codification of 'customary law'. As early as 1878, Natal administrators adopted the Natal Code of Native Law, which was made legally binding in 1891. The purpose of the Code was to standardise an otherwise diffuse oral tradition of customary law that varied significantly by family and chiefdom. In the process, the Code's drafters took the liberty of enshrining their own stereotypes about Zulu society, to the extent that the end product was less an honest depiction of Zulu customary law than a reflection of colonists' vision for what African society should look like. Building on the fantasy of British administrators and early ethnologists that 'tribal' society was fundamentally monarchical, patriarchal and authoritarian, the Code ossified a previously flexible system of privilege and hierarchy into a rigidly predetermined form, and attempted to cloak it with all the authority of 'tradition'.

The Code never succeeded in achieving total legal uniformity on the ground despite the best efforts of officials: family law continues to vary somewhat in practice across the province. But it did facilitate the control of Africans by entrenching the authority of male homestead heads over minors and women, and giving patriarchs unprecedented powers to enforce tribute, obedience and respect. If the missionaries sought to transform the African home in the mould of its European counterpart, officials sought to

maintain an ideal-typical version of the African home as an instrument of governance (Mamdani 1996; Myers 2008; Welsh 1971). This approach to governance was premised on an 'accommodation of patriarchs': that is, governance built upon shared indigenous and colonial visions of male domestic authority (Guy 1997).

In contrast to missionaries and administrators, most colonial settlers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were concerned neither with the salvation of Africans nor with the technologies of minority control: their interventions into the African home derived principally from an interest in securing a flow of African labour for their farms and industries. With this in mind, settlers tended to side with missionaries in their efforts to abolish polygyny, which they blamed for keeping African men out of the labour market. But unlike missionaries, settlers lobbied administrators to impose stricter controls on African land ownership and higher taxes on homesteads, all towards the goal of disrupting the economic independence of the African population and inducing African labour onto the market. While colonial administrators resisted this agenda on the basis that it would undermine African peasant agriculture and thus threaten an important source of state revenue, settlers gained the power to pursue coercive proletarianisation after they gained self-government in 1893 (Harries 1987). At the same time, settlers also wanted to maintain the edifices of racial segregation. The balance between these two incompatible goals – that of maintaining segregation and that of maintaining the flow of labour – was found in the establishment of an intricate network of pass laws and influx controls. Africans were confined to rural 'native reserves' and brought temporarily to work for whites on fixed-term contracts, at the end of which they were expelled back to 'native' areas (Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman 1991). This system of rotating labour migration prevented full proletarianisation and the concomitant rise of worker class-consciousness while at the same time allowing European capitalists to pay workers a 'bachelor wage' significantly below the cost of subsistence. This was possible because the costs of workers' social reproduction were subsidised by the unpaid labour of African women and children in a rural domestic domain (Wolpe 1972).

Colonial legal and economic regimes ultimately stripped most Africans of the access to land necessary to expand their *imizi* through marriage and accumulation of cattle. But at the same moment that colonial governance undercut the material base of *imizi*, customary law enshrined the political idea of *imizi* at the core of subjecthood and subjugation. To escape from customary law, Christians (*amakholwa*, ‘believers’) needed to demonstrate first that they had made clean breaks from the homestead; only then could they become *amazemtiti*, those ‘exempted’, with access to new protections for their monogamous marriages and private land ownership and, for a handful of Christian men, access to the franchise. After Natal joined the segregationist Union of South Africa in 1910, the meanings of exemption for Christian Africans – already vague – narrowed further, as Africans experienced deepening land alienation and labour dependency (Healy 2011).

Africans developed new domestic solutions to address the challenges of black life in segregationist South Africa. These included not only new religious communities, as Lauren Jarvis describes vividly in Chapter Four of this volume, but also modern updates on *imizi*, as Mwelela Cele examines through a striking photographic essay in the Epilogue to this volume. Beginning in the interwar years and accelerating during apartheid, *imizi* were increasingly matrifocal, especially in townships. Bank has described East London township homes in the 1950s as spaces of gendered inversion but structural continuity of the homestead form: ‘Urban matriarchs were determined to build the *umzi* [isiXhosa for *umuzi*, homestead] in the city by manipulating the control of property and young dependent women for economic gain. In the matrifocal house model, access to site permits and small business assets were the urban equivalents of controlling cattle, land and fields in the countryside’ (2011: 170). Bank’s study suggested that by the late 1950s these matriarchs ‘had become a significant threat to the apartheid state, which was determined to crush these women, their households and their enterprises. In their place, the state wanted a new township built around the heterosexual patriarchy . . . men were imagined as breadwinners and women as housewives and the township as a version of the suburb, a bulwark against communism and incubator

for the production of well-disciplined, male industrial workers' (2011: 165; see also Elder 2010; Hunter 2010).

Indeed, by the Second World War, domestic tensions would reach a point of political crisis. The influx controls that were designed to keep Africans under the control of rural indirect rule could not prevent the emergence of an African population living in informal settlements on the outskirts of the cities, drawn by whites' insatiable appetite for cheap labour. These 'slums' ballooned as the economic boom of the Second World War brought an enormous influx of Africans to urban areas, stimulating urban planners to embark upon mammoth projects of slum clearance. Like the missionaries before them, the architects of public housing invoked the moral constructs of hearth and home in their attempts to reorder the African social milieu. Drawing on evolutionary social-scientific theories common at the time, planners determined that the simple nuclear family located in a detached single-family home would facilitate the development of docile, wage-dependent domesticity. Towards this end, houses were allocated according to strict codes that dictated – and surveilled – what types of people and what forms of families would be allowed to inhabit the new townships, as Jason Hickel examines in Chapter Five of this volume. The apartheid city reflects best the capitalist desire for cheap and accessible labour and the state's will to control the African population. The geographer Jennifer Robinson, the apartheid city's most incisive observer, has critically analysed the layout and orientation of African townships in industrial or mining areas, noting that they are frequently structured around a single focal point, from which wide roads radiate out in a manner that allows for easy policing – a perfect panopticon on the model of the Benthamite prison (1996). A number of labourers' barracks were designed along the lines of this model, too – sometimes so that every 'cell' could be monitored by the administrator from a single central location. Robinson has shown that the native administration departments invested significantly in producing housing that would not only enable policing but also facilitate control from within by encouraging 'self-regulation' among the African population that would produce 'peaceful' and 'orderly' residents. Bank has thus

described ‘the township model as a form of *middling modernism*, a version of modernist planning focused principally on reconfiguring the home and domestic life, as opposed to other versions of modernism which concentrated more on public spaces and the integrity of the city centre’ (2011: 23; for this term, see Rabinow 1996).

But if the African home was the focus of white attempts at everyday governance and overrule, it also served as a crucial site of African resistance. Indeed, as the social order and moral cosmology of the Zulu homestead had provided the blueprint for the elaboration of the Zulu kingdom and the age-grade regiments under Shaka – making possible the organisation of the massive military might which Zulus exercised against European incursions in the nineteenth century – the kingdom’s resilience had proven to be a crippling obstacle to the colonial labour supply. Europeans were forced to rely on indentured workers shipped in from South Asia. In the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879, Europeans sought to dismantle the Zulu kingdom and its age-regiment system in part in order to free up a local supply of labour. But even after the fall of the Zulu kingdom, Natal’s settlers were never able to destroy the rural homestead completely. The homestead – and its structure of labour, land tenure and subsistence activities – continued to allow Africans to resist proletarianisation in the face of repeated attempts by colonists to force them onto the labour market.

Of course, this resistance was made possible in part by the system of customary law and administrators’ plan to use homesteads as bastions of indirect rule, a point that illustrates some of Natal’s ongoing ‘ambiguities of dependence’ (Marks 1986). These ambiguities are evident throughout the history of the Europeans’ interventions in the home. Attempts to control rural Africans first through the chieftaincy system and then through patriarchal homesteads in ethnically divided ‘homelands’ produced resistance movements that organised along ethnic lines and called for the protection of the homestead. Efforts by missionaries to ‘civilise’ Africans by resocialising them in the mould of the bourgeois individual set the stage for nationalist resistance to colonialism. The ventures of township planners to secure docility among urban

Africans by restructuring their domestic environments according to the model of the European family home generated an egalitarian culture that welcomed nationalists and trade unionists in a manner that rural Africans generally would not: while intended to function as instruments of control, the townships became hotbeds of radical resistance that gave rise to the United Democratic Front and nourished the Congress of South African Trade Unions, rendering South African homes ultimately ungovernable. In all of these instances, new forms of power and domination engendered new and extremely effective forms of resistance.

**Home making, state making, and post-apartheid politics of nostalgia**

The home is thus not only a locus of social relations and productive forces; it is also a crucial site in the history of statecraft. Given these contestations, the home often becomes the focal point of historical memory and political discourse, the pivot point in the politics of identity, belonging and nostalgia. In anthropological literature, the famous case of Algerian Kabyle houses (which, like Zulu homesteads, are structured according to spatial oppositions) illustrates this point well. Mid-century ethnographers – notably Bourdieu – regarded the ‘traditional’ structure of the Kabyle house as a unitary construct and the repository of authentic culture. But recent work by Paul Silverstein has cast doubt on the accuracy of this representation. Silverstein found that Bourdieu conducted most of his research in urban communities that had been forcibly relocated by the state; when his informants described traditional houses, they were most likely projecting an idealised vision of cultural authenticity that served to root their sense of oppositional identity. Bourdieu’s ethnography aligned with the Berber Cultural Movement, aiding what Silverstein calls ‘structural nostalgia’: nostalgia for a domestic structure that embodies an ‘authentic past’ and anchors a presumably timeless cultural identity (Silverstein 2009).

In South Africa, nostalgia for the home comes in two forms. Like the South African landscape itself, it is divided between interconnected rural and urban domains. On the one hand, a ‘structural

nostalgia' for the 'traditional' homestead operates in certain political circles. The Inkatha Freedom Party has exemplified this trend most clearly in KwaZulu-Natal (Waetjen 2004). The 'pre-colonial' home and family forms the very centre of Inkatha's politics, which attempt to reassert the prerogatives of patriarchal power and the primacy of the chiefship in rural areas, all centred on an ideal model of the noble polygynous homestead. As Mark Hunter demonstrates in Chapter Eight of this volume, President Zuma articulates with these longings for a primordial domestic structure by drawing on the semiotic resources of the homestead. But – as Hunter points out – domestic nostalgia has also developed around the township house of the 1960s (2010). Beset with the frustrations of post-industrial decline – rising unemployment, a housing crisis and declining marriage rates – urban South Africans evince a deep nostalgia for an imagined era of greater moral stability and a clearer order of gendered relations – a scene set in urban townships in the 1950s and 1960s, when the people rode high on their 'expectations of modernity' (Ferguson 1999). The township – designed by officials to be a cynical tool of urban control, the counterpart to the rural patriarchal homestead – has become the touchstone of popular longings to realise unfulfilled promises of the anti-apartheid struggle (Dlamini 2009). Invocations of an idealised past serve as a means of establishing a point of critique in the present.

But South Africans today invoke idealised domestic pasts not only to press demands upon the democratic state; debates around domestic arrangements also comprise volatile grounds for disagreements between genders and generations within families, as Judith Singleton and Emily Margaretten explore in Chapters Six and Seven of this collection. Singleton argues that ten to fifteen years after the ending of apartheid, free houses built by the African National Congress (ANC) government have contributed to gender and generational tensions, sexual violence and perhaps the spread of HIV/AIDS, while Margaretten explores how debates around and longings for home and kinship shape the strategies of Durban's homeless youth.

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If it can be said that colonialism in South Africa was a colonialism of the home, then it can equally be said that politics in South Africa are a politics of the home. Perhaps no region illustrates the dynamism of South Africa's domestic transformations more dramatically than present-day KwaZulu-Natal, a place that has been an extreme instantiation of the political, economic and social transformations that have shaped colonial Africa and much of the global south. Experiments with colonial governance through traditional authorities, pioneered in Natal in the mid-nineteenth century, manipulated kinship and patriarchy in rural homesteads in order to facilitate minority control. The region's massive migrant labour system worked by articulating domestic reproduction in the rural homestead with capitalist production in industrial areas – epitomising the violence of colonial exploitation. Some of the world's most extensive exercises in urban social engineering through forced relocations sought to remake African homes in the mould of European domesticity – drawing upon missionary precedents as well as new global models of 'slum clearance', and shaping new expectations of modernity. And post-industrial decline and an entrenched housing crisis have radically transformed family forms, leading to dramatically reduced marriage rates and new modalities of kinship – creating a crisis of social reproduction emblematic of the limited promises of global development. The following chapters reveal that, throughout the modern history of this region, the constitution of the domestic domain – be it the rural homestead, the Christian home, the township house or the urban shack – has been crucial to organising activities in the political realm.

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