

The classroom as an assemblage of places

A visual ethnographic project

to understand how a group of
multilingual students experience

Stellenbosch as a 'place'.

“we could use this moment as an opportunity for critical self-reflection, for exercising humility, for unlearning what we thought we knew” (Luckett 2019: 38).

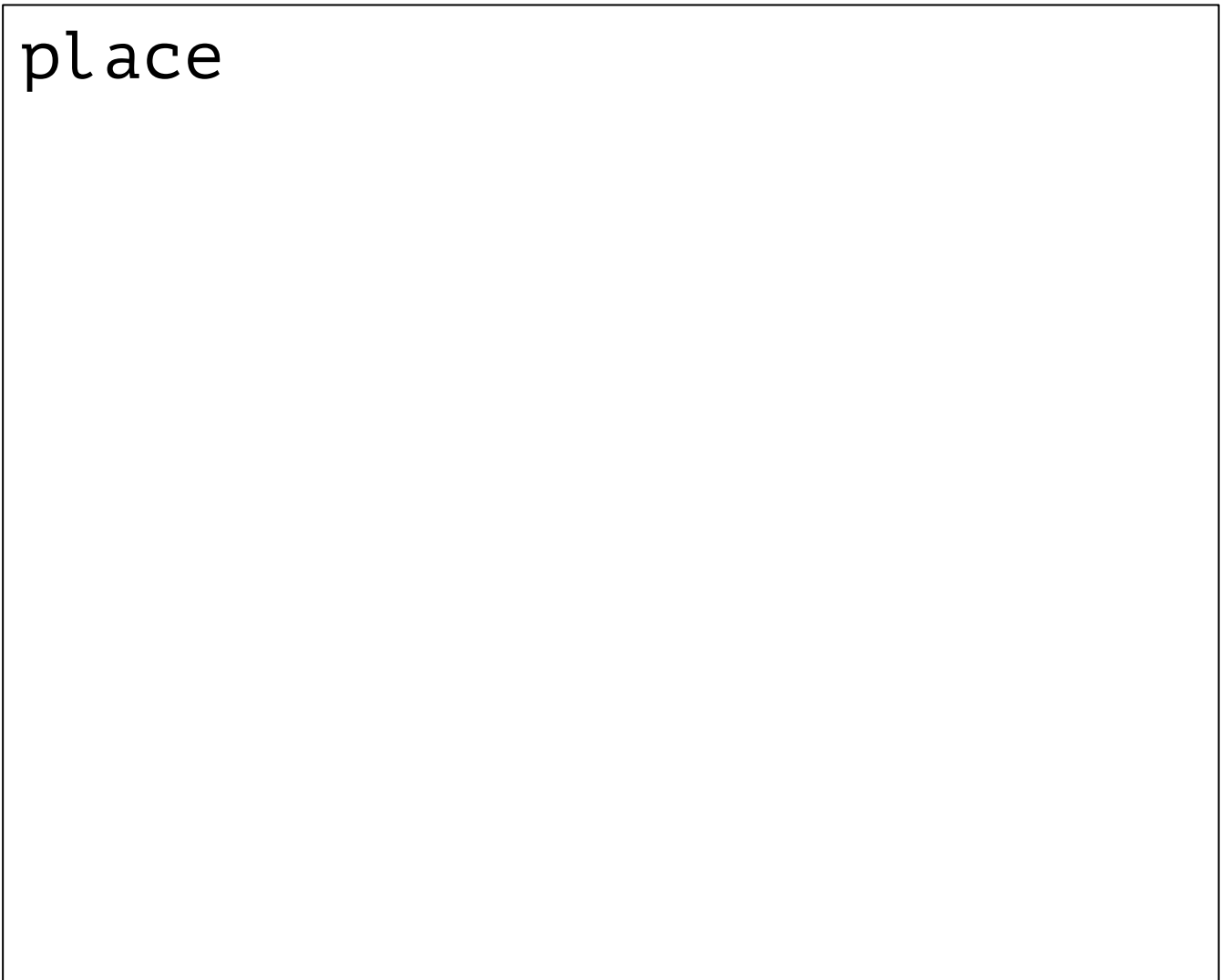
Ethnography as empirical research

Immersing yourself in a cultural context and observing without imposing.

Ethnography as empirical research

If you want to know what people think, you can't *just* ask them.

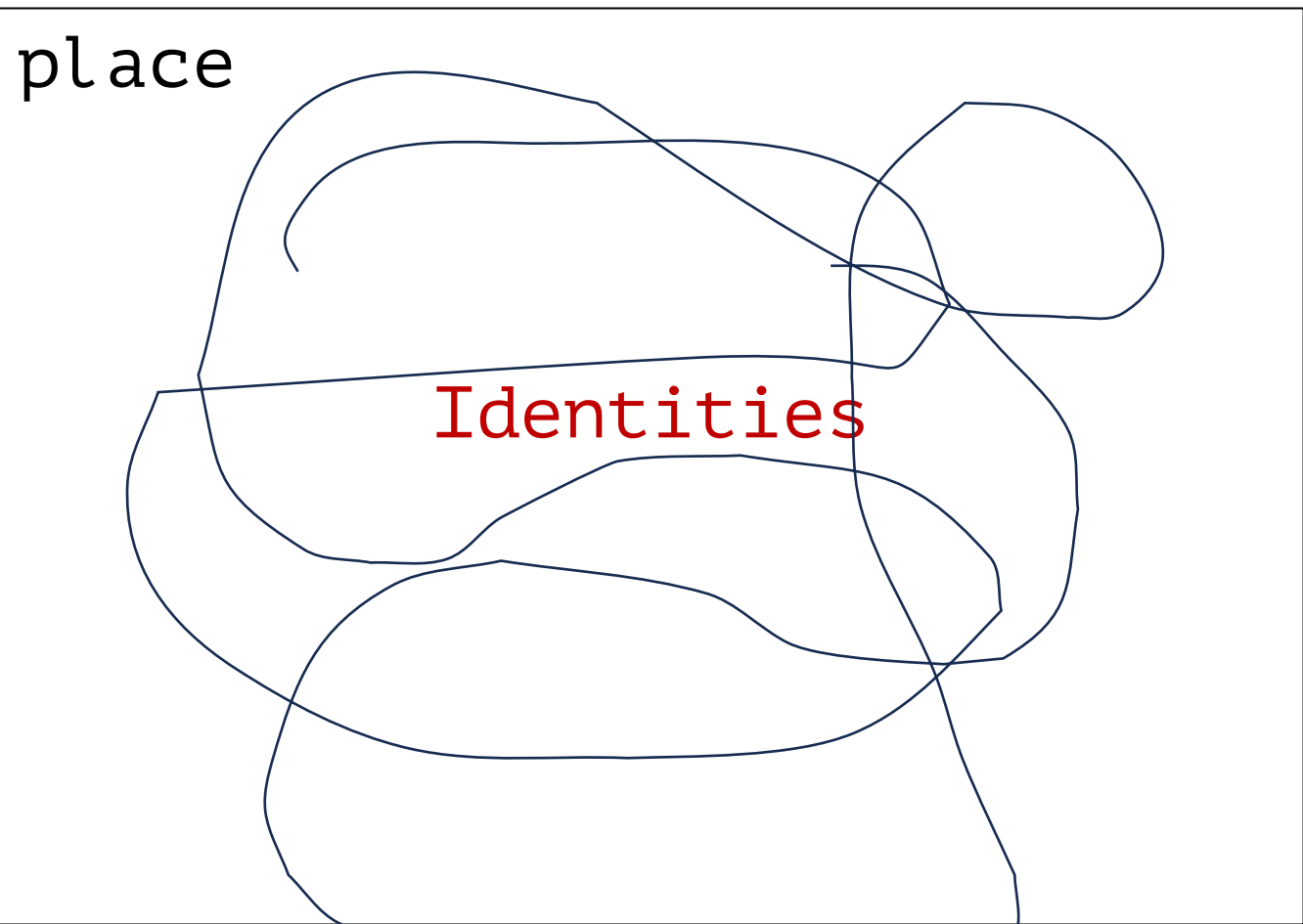
access



place

access

Identities



place

access

Identities

Stellenbosch as a 'place'

access

Identities

“Imagined geographies”
refers to the
perception of a space
created through certain
imagery, texts, and/or
discourses.



How does Stellenbosch as a place limit and encourage particular identities to emerge?

How is Stellenbosch imagined and constructed?

B.J. Vorster building

Jan Marais Park

STELLENBOSCH

VICTORIA STREET

VICTORIA STREET

CROZIER ROAD

NEETHILING

MURRAY

VAN RIEBEECK

DE VOS

NOORDWAL EAST

CHURCH STREET

DORP STREET

PLEIN

BLOM

ALEXANDER ST.

HERTE

PAPEGAAL

PIET

TWAL

RATTRAY

MOSTERT

ROWAN

JANNASCH

JANNASCH

MERRIMAN AVENUE

CLIVER ROAD

UNIVERSITEITS-OORD

ROUX

BANGHOEK

BOSMAN

BOSMAN

DE BEER

SMUTS

RYNEVELD STREET

MULLER ROAD

BORCHERD ROAD

BIRD STREET

MOLTENO STREET

PAUL KRUGER RD.

DENNESIG STREET

STATION

Stellenbosch

access

Identities

Jewish

Female

English

Stellenbosch

access

Identities

Female

English

access

Stellenbosch

“not *my* place”

Identities

Female

English

access

Stellenbosch

“a part of this place”

Identities

Female

English

Embodied knowing has been defined as not only knowledge that resides *in* the body, but also knowledge that is gained *through* the body, through the senses (Nagatomo, 1992).

Participant 1



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“In all fairness, there are very few white people there although the few that are there still hold the economical means that’s why they can debate this forever, because it goes up and down all the time and I have never seen a revolt.” [Participant 1]

Participant 1
Venda
Sepedi
Sotho
isiZulu
isiXhosa
English



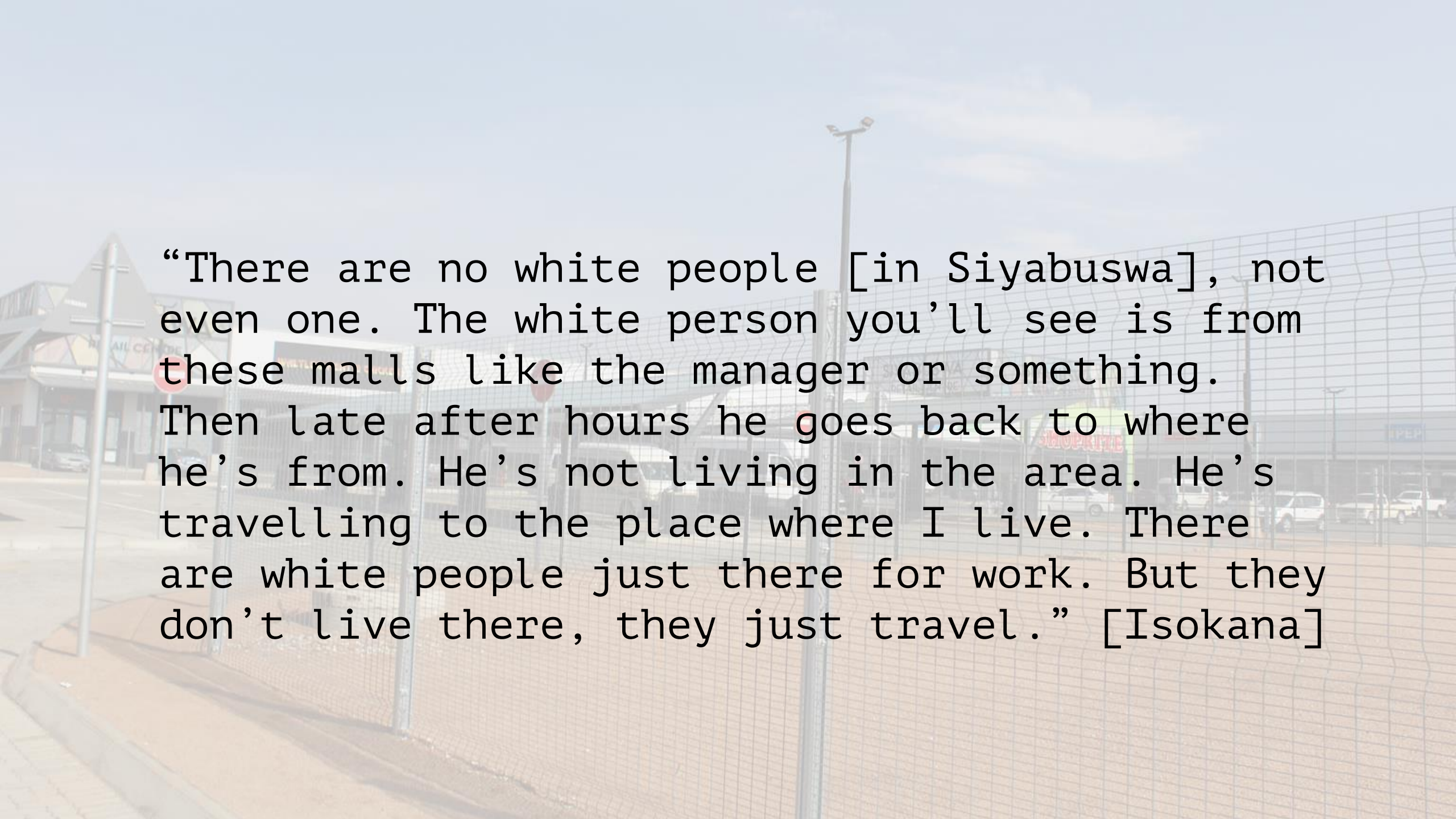
Isokana*



* names have been changed







“There are no white people [in Siyabuswa], not even one. The white person you’ll see is from these malls like the manager or something. Then late after hours he goes back to where he’s from. He’s not living in the area. He’s travelling to the place where I live. There are white people just there for work. But they don’t live there, they just travel.” [Isokana]



Participant 1	Isokana
Venda	isiNdebele
Sepedi	isiXhosa
Sotho	isiZulu
isiZulu	Siswati
isiXhosa	Sotho
English	Sepedi
	English



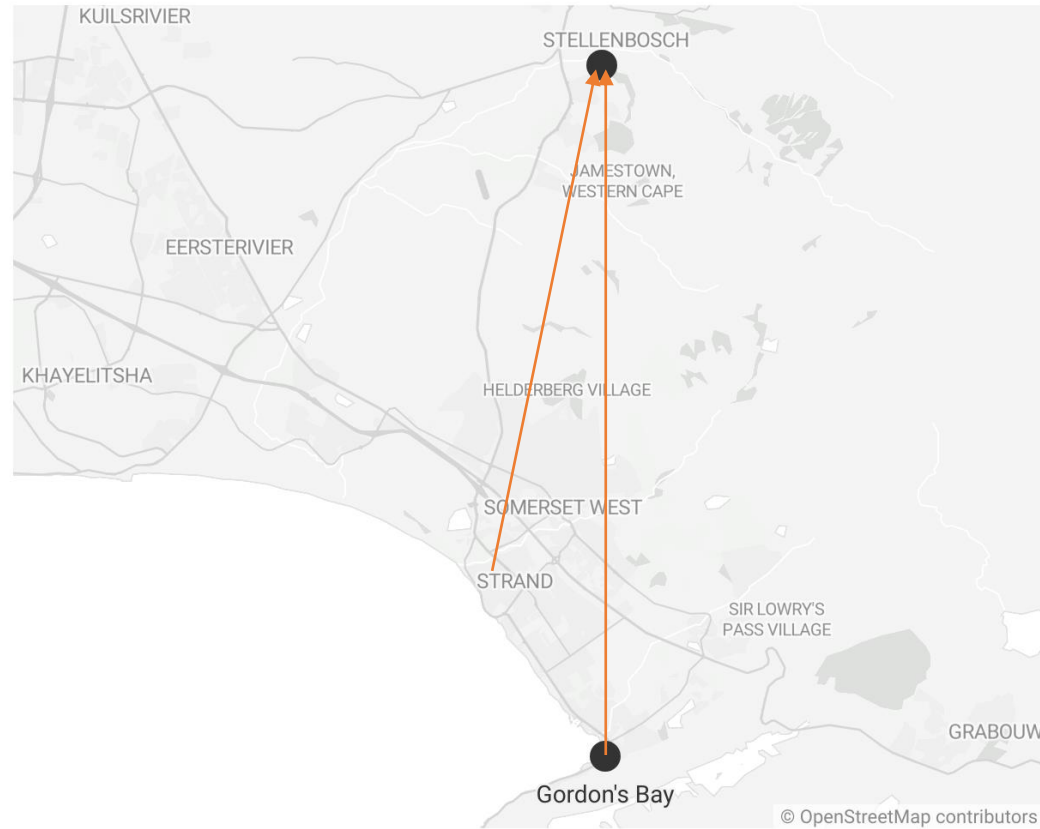
Participant 1	Isokana	Faith
Venda	isiNdebele	English
Sepedi	isiXhosa	Afrikaans
Sotho	isiZulu	Cape Flat Afrikaans
Zulu	Siswati	
isiXhosa	Sotho	
English	Sepedi	
	English	

“A lot a lot of things happen in our area, especially with erosion and stuff.. there’s a lot of cars in our area, a lot of broken-down cars, so it causes a lot, a lot of gas into the air. So, there’s always this thing- I used to tell my friends ... the air feels thicker in Mitchell’s Plain than what it is here. So like when I get back home, I start coughing a lot. I’m, I’m never sure if it’s because I’m used to Stellenbosch’s air or if it’s because I went back to Mitchell’s Plain and it’s thicker there.” [Faith]



placemaking

Kunashe



Created with Datawrapper

“I always joke around and say Zimbabweans are like the Mexicans of South Africa.” [Kunashe]

Participant 1	Isokana	Faith	Kunashe
Venda	isiNdebele	English	Shona
Sepedi	isiXhosa	Afrikaans	English
Sotho	isiZulu	Cape Flat Afrikaans	isiXhosa
Zulu	Siswati		*understands Afrikaans
isiXhosa	Sotho		
English	Sepedi		
	English		

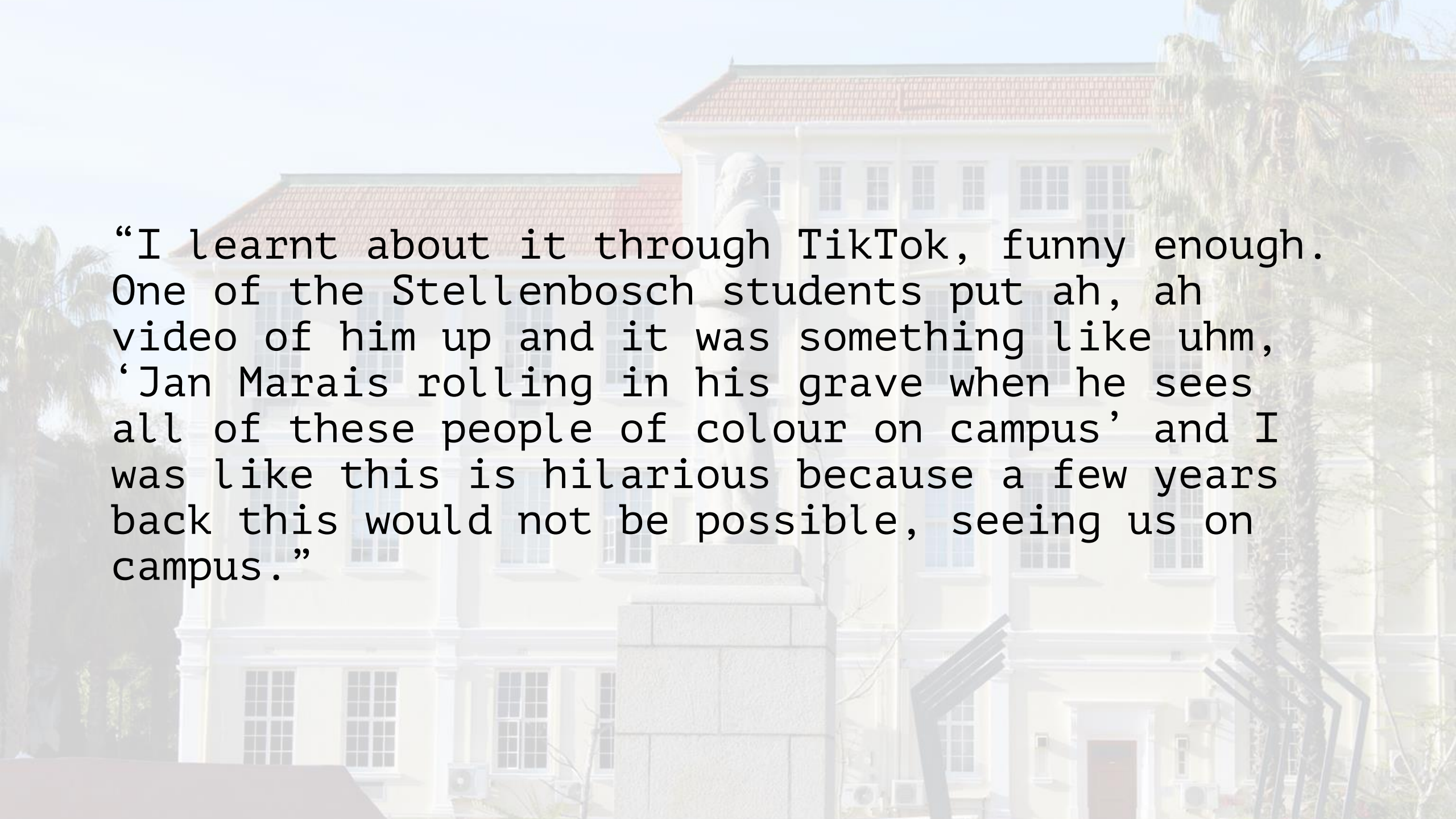


Scholars do not understand 'space' and 'place' outside of mobilities, or how we move to, between and within spaces.

Mobility is an identity issue because we all move in different ways and for different reasons. Some of us also move more than others and further away or travel in more comfort or "style".

How we move, when we move, and *why* we move, are a significant part of the stories we tell about ourselves and others, even if differences in mobilities are a result of unequal power relations.





“I learnt about it through TikTok, funny enough. One of the Stellenbosch students put ah, ah video of him up and it was something like uhm, ‘Jan Marais rolling in his grave when he sees all of these people of colour on campus’ and I was like this is hilarious because a few years back this would not be possible, seeing us on campus.”

access

Stellenbosch as a 'place'

“I went to Google and Googled the streets, buildings, and it was just somewhere I wanted to be for some reason. And then I chose it. Everybody thought I was crazy, because why would you want to go there? How do you want to get there? Who do you even know? How you're going to do this? You don't have the money, right? English. You don't have the right mindset. You don't have the right education. There was just nothing going my way. There was just nothing saying you can fit in there. Everything was the same: you can't go there. There's a destiny waiting for you, that's not it.” [Participant 1]

brave

“In all fairness, there are very few white people there.” [Participant 1]

“There are no white people, not even one.”
[Isokana]

“Yoh there are a lot of white people in Stellenbosch, this place is like *white*”
[Isokana]

“The first thing that amazed me was that there was no line, and we are all sitting on these comfortable chairs that fold on themselves and I am like okay I am in heaven now. I have made it. I am being accepted to a place where no one where I come from can even imagine the amount of comfort I am actually feeling right now. There’s aircon, there’s beautiful chairs. The queue is so short, and it is moving very fast. People are friendly. No one is sad, no one looks stressed, no one looks like they have just lost something.”[Participant 1]

“They would call it “posh” and, currently me that’s studying here at Stellenbosch, whenever I would come back home, they’d call me “famous” or they’d say I’m now like a star, I’m popular, because I’m from Stellenbosch now, not from home, now I’m from Stellenbosch. So they see me as this famous person, they tell me “oh so you’re back home now, Ms Stellies” or things like that and I think they see Stellenbosch as this rich area that has so much things that they don’t, like we- it’s calmer here and there’s not really gangsterism here, well I haven’t seen any gangsterism here. So, to them, I’m living the dream life here.” [Faith]

“I really like the nightlife here, it’s much easier for me to just walk here if I wanna walk home at one in the morning because it’s safer than it is back home.” [Faith]

access

Stellenbosch

“a part of this place”

Identities

Female

Social theorist
lecturer

ethnographer

English

We must always remember that **identities are not singular**, regardless of whether they cohabit a particular space. Rather, **there is always a plethora of identities existing together in one space** (Massey 2005).

Each of the four participants have a different configuration identity-related factors that influence their experience and perception of Stellenbosch.

These factors include perceptions of 'home', linguistic repertoires, gender and constellations of mobilities.

Implications for classroom practice

We are all diverse, in multiple ways.

We don't have to always revert to 'race'.

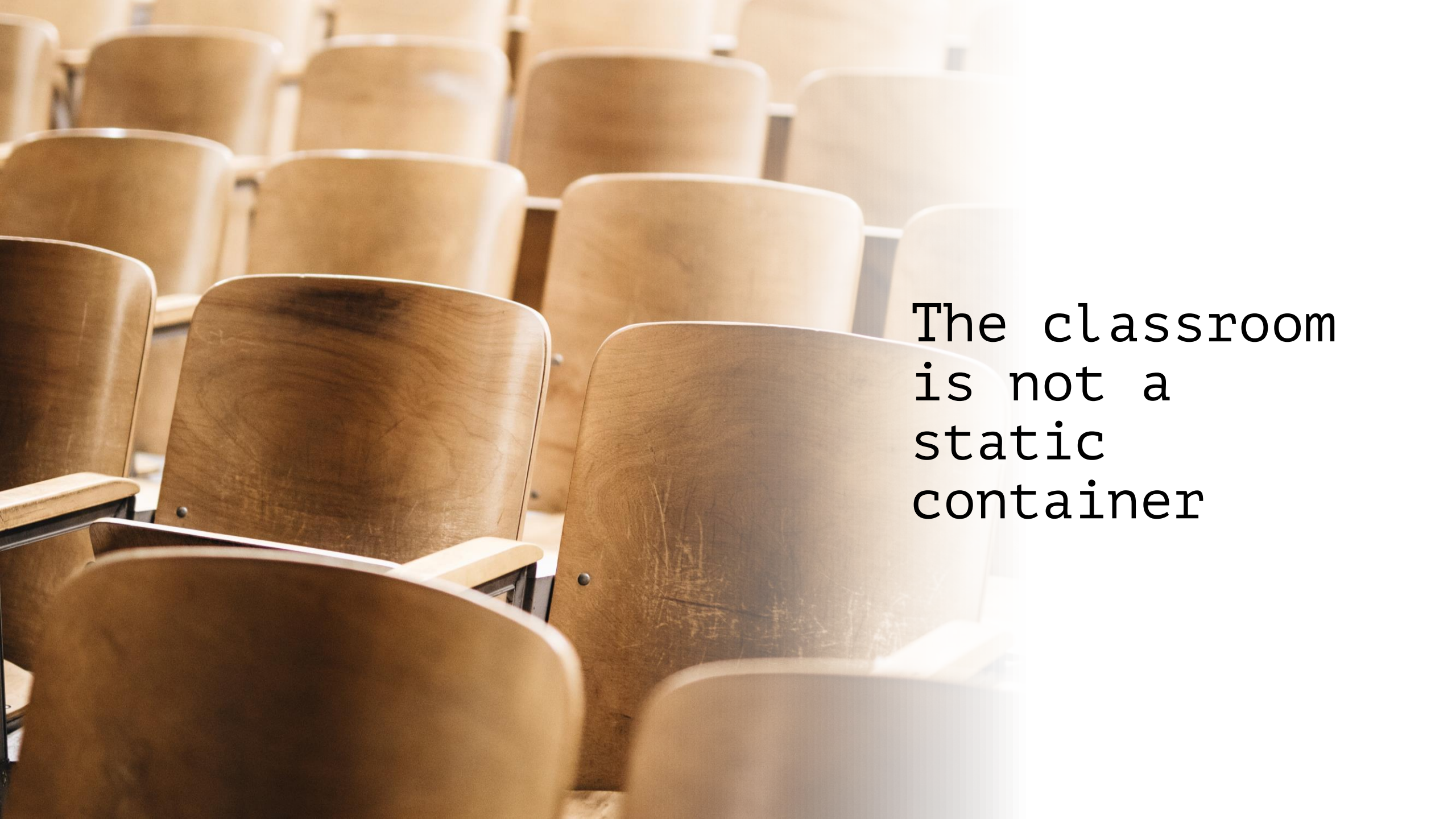
What is your experience and perception of Stellenbosch as a place?

Where do you move to, from and between?

How do you do so?

Why is this the case?

Inquisitive undoing and disruption

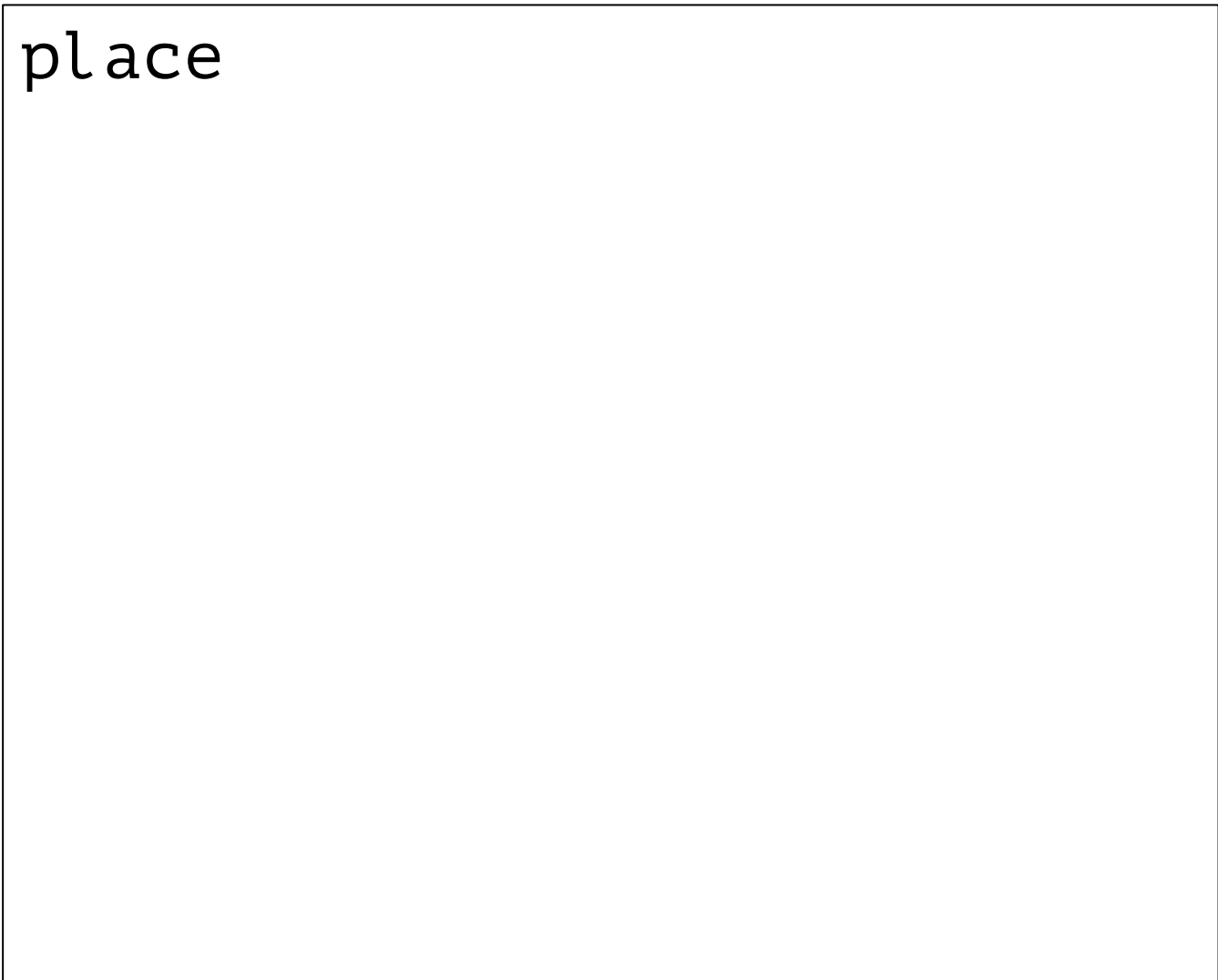
A photograph of rows of empty wooden chairs in a classroom, viewed from behind. The chairs are arranged in a tiered fashion, receding into the background. The lighting is warm and soft, coming from the right side, creating a gentle glow. On the right side of the image, there is a white rectangular area containing text.

The classroom
is not a
static
container

Teaching as “border crossing”

Teaching as “bridge-building”

access



Thank you