

Image: A township that we drove by often.

Our first few days in South Africa were spent in a small tourist/resort town called Saldanha, which is on the western coast about an hour north of Cape Town. There, we met with researchers from the University of Western Cape, along with community leaders from the surrounding area. We attended a meeting where they discussed their plans for the community and the research they were planning to conduct. Unfortunately, I fell sick while we were in Saldanha and was sick for several days, so I did miss out on some of the planning meetings for our own research and a day of sightseeing in the surrounding area.

Following our stay in Saldanha, we returned to our primary residence, which was a three-bedroom townhouse in the heart of Cape Town, near the Waterfront. This area is primarily middle to upper class and white. It became very apparent in our time spent in this area that the white people were the consumers, while Black and coloured (mixed race) individuals served them. The grocery store and restaurants near our residence were primarily staffed with Black individuals. As a white person and an American, I experienced many of the same privileges there that I experience at home. Due to this, it was clear the lasting impact that British and Dutch colonialization had had on Cape Town, as well as the lasting affects of Apartheid. I imagined that Cape Town was similar to an American city because of the shared history of colonialization. This was further cemented by the reality of the townships. As the area we were in was upper class and white, while the townships were predominantly coloured or Black and low income, it highlighted who held the wealth in Cape Town, and I imagine in South Africa in general.

Following our first week, we were able to begin working on campus at the University of Western Cape (UWC), which is similar to an American historically Black institution, in that it was created when the main university in Cape Town barred admittance to any non-white persons. The campus at UWC is a mixed of older, more dated buildings, and newer construction. We were provided an office space in one of the older buildings, and it was unique in that there were bars on all of the windows and interior doors, highlighting a fear of heightened crime in the area.

Image: bars on a classroom door at the University of Western Cape

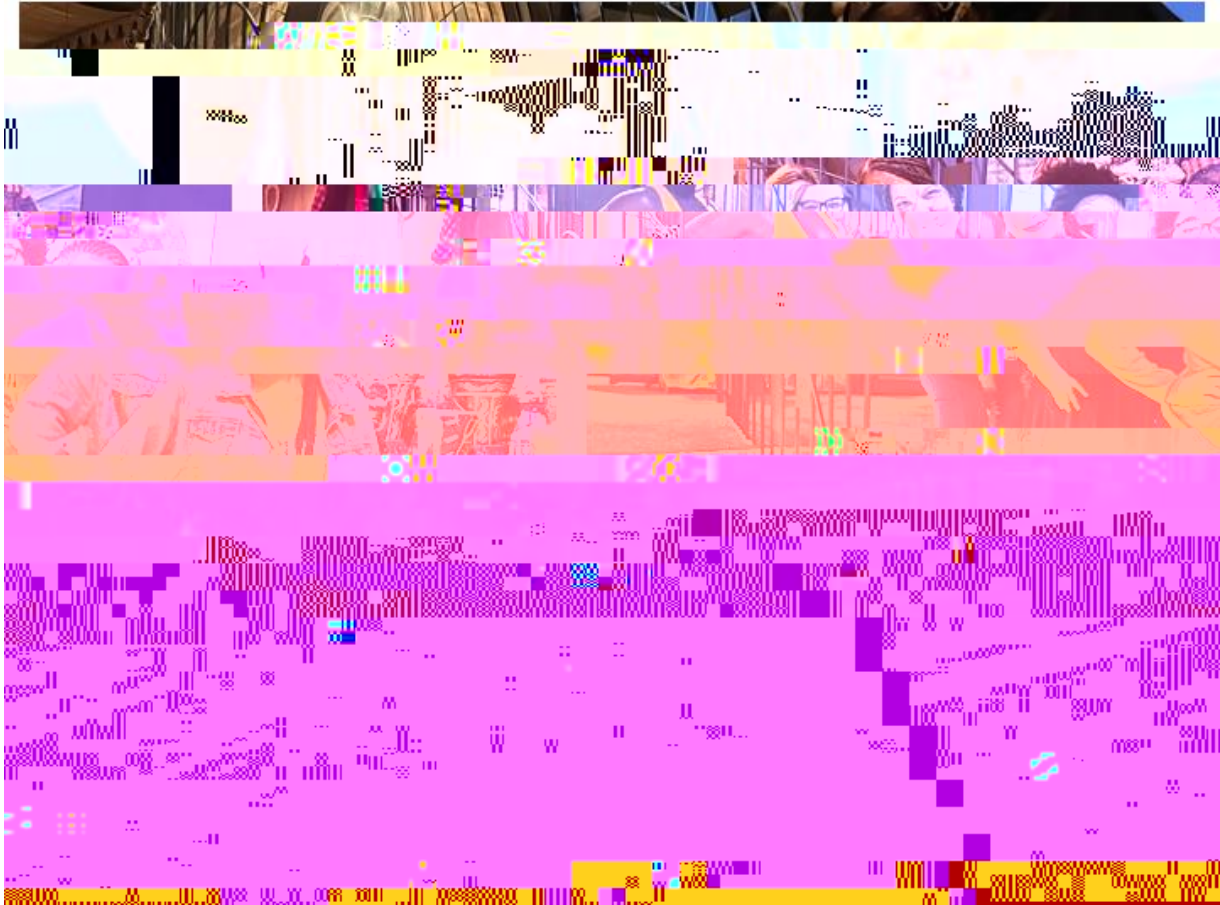




The courtyard at the restaurant where we celebrated the completion of our focus groups.



Visiting the penguins at Boulder Beach.



Our research group out to dinner and a show based around traditional African food, music, and dance.