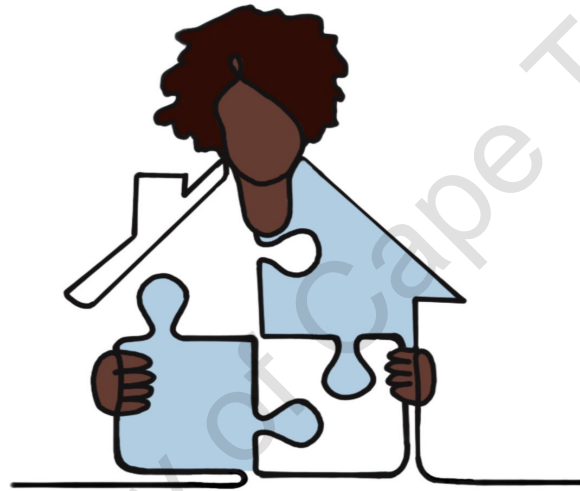


THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FORMALISATION OF HOUSING AND PLACEMAKING:  
THE CASE OF THE VICTORIA MXENGE HOUSING PROJECT



**ASHLEY JEAN HOWARD**

DISSERTATION PRESENTED AS PART FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

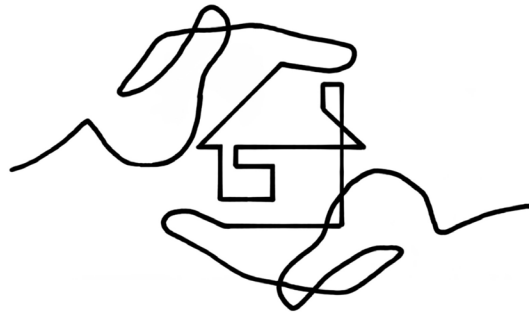
IN THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND GEOMATICS  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

SUPERVISOR: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TANJA WINKLER

OCTOBER 2023

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"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly,  
without claiming it, she stands up for all women."

— Maya Angelou

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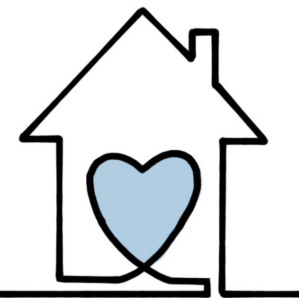
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# ABSTRACT

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The role of women in the formalisation of housing and placemaking: The case of the Victoria Mxenge Housing Project

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Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa

October 2023

The formal housing system in Cape Town presents a daunting challenge, with a significant backlog and a growing demand for housing opportunities. Policy challenges persist, including the perception that informal settlements are temporary. Thus, there is a need for a more nuanced approach to housing provision. Furthermore, gender disparities in urban spaces compound issues of well-being, safety, and community-building.

Women face obstacles in accessing employment, education, and basic services, limiting their economic independence and social agency. A gendered lens reveals intricate layers of complexity, where disparities in resource access perpetuate the marginalisation of women. Despite constitutional and legislative provisions, women still face obstacles in land ownership and housing access. Thus, there is a need to explore women's inclusion in the formalisation of housing and placemaking to redress the historical and systemic failings of the state.

This dissertation examines the multifaceted challenges within informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa. It delves into three key issues: gender inequalities, the formalisation process of housing, and the need for community-focused placemaking principles. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements and how this organisation enables a sense of community through placemaking principles. To these ends, a black feminist lens, radical planning theories and placemaking principles are employed as theoretical frameworks for this study, while the case under study is the Victoria Mxenge Housing Project in Philippi.

Methodologically, qualitative research methods (case study method and discourse analysis) are utilised to answer the main and subsidiary research questions. The tools that are used for data collection are interviews and mapping. The results of this study show that women-led organisations have a positive impact on the formalisation of housing and the community in informal settlements.

Going forward, knowledge from this research recommends planning interventions and policy changes that emphasise the importance of empowering women through the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches in community initiatives for meaningful, inclusive placemaking.

Keywords: women empowerment, inclusive placemaking, access to land and housing, and gender-sensitive planning intervention

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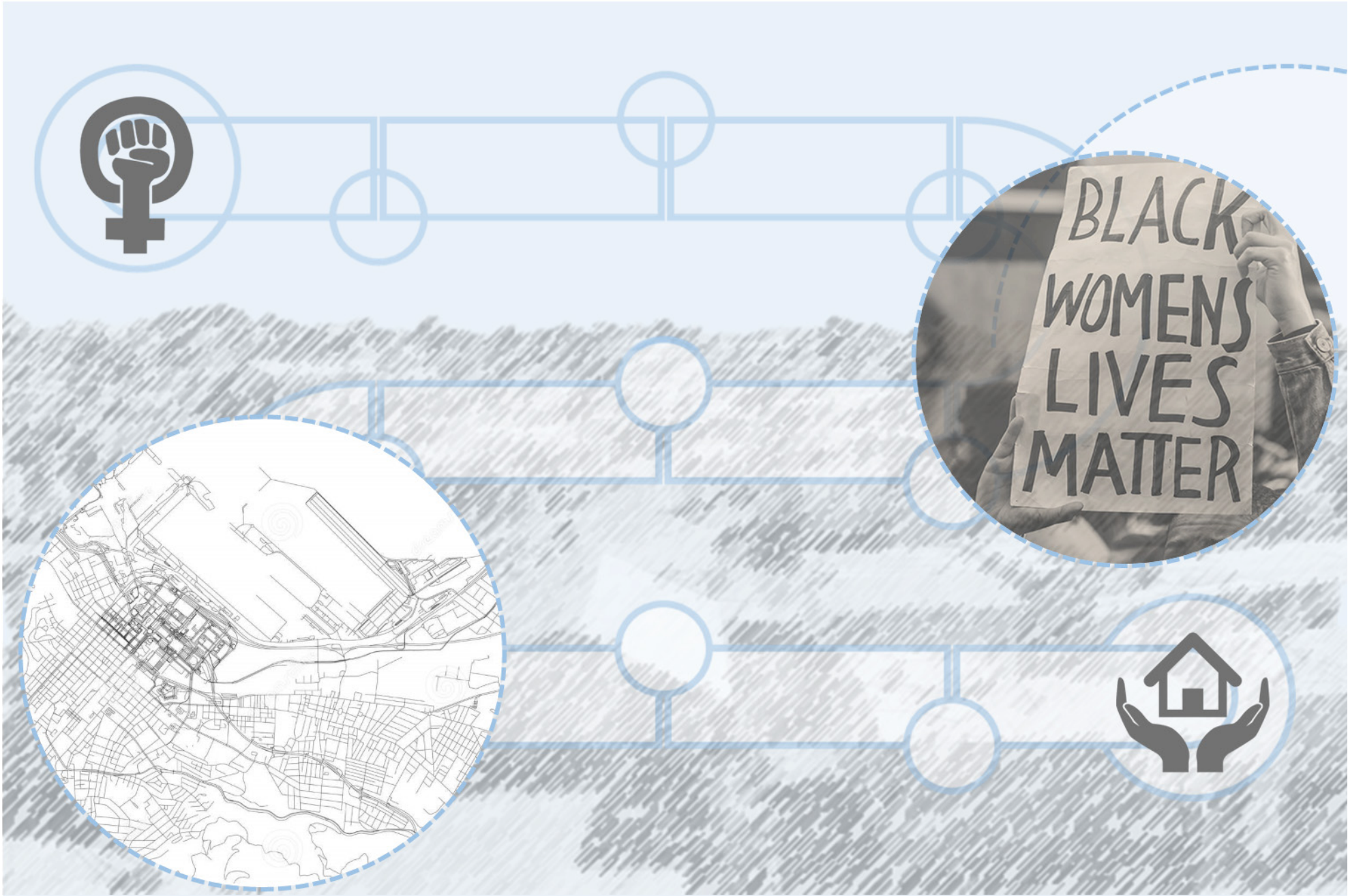
## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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ANC	- African National Congress	NCGBVF	- National Council on Gender-Base Violence & Femicide
BNG	- Breaking New Ground	NDoH	- National Department of Housing
CEDAW	- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women	NGO	- Non-Governmental Organisation
CFO	- Community Finance Organisation	NHC	- National Housing Code
CIDA	- Community & Individual Development Association	NPO	- Non-Profit Organisation
CIDB	- Construction Industry Development Board	OECD	- Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development
CIFA	- Cape Institute for Architecture	PD	- People's Dialogue
CoCT	- City of Cape Town	PHD	- Provincial Housing Department
COHRE	- Centre On Human Rights and Evictions	PHP	- People's Housing Process
CRO	- Community Resource Organisation	RDP	- Reconstruction and Development Programme
CSO	- Civil Society Organisation	SAHPF	- South African Homeless People's Federation
DAG	- Development Action Group	SDI Alliance	- Slum Dwellers International Alliance
DBE	- Department of Basic Education	SO	- Support Organisation
DOH	- Department Of Health	VM	- Victoria Mxenge
DoH	- Department of Housing		
DOJ&CD	- Department of Justice & Constitutional Development		
DPME	- Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation		
DSD	- Department of Social Development		
DWYPD	- Department of Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities		
ECD	- Early Childhood Development		
ePHP	- Enhanced People's Housing Process		
FEDUP	- Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor		
GBV	- Gender-Base Violence		
GBVF	- Gender-Base Violence & Femicide		
GEAR	- Growth, Employment And Redistribution		
HSC	- Housing Support Centre		
IDP	- Integrated Development Plan		
IMC	- Inter-Ministerial Committee		
KPI	- Key Performance Indicator		

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 Introduction

---

South Africa became a democratic state in 1994 “on the mandate of the Freedom Charter and [the] Reconstruction and Development Plan” (Ismail, 2015: 7). Accordingly, the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), “promised it would change the inequalities in society based on race, class, and gender and *bring a better life for all* (ANC party slogan)” (ibid). Yet, within two years of becoming a democratic state, South Africa’s economic policies shifted towards free-market capitalism (RSA, GEAR, 1996) that not only impacted negatively on the state’s original redistributive vision, but also on its relationship with civil society organisations and social movements.

In addition, the launch of the Housing White Paper in 1994 detailed the right of citizens to adequate housing (Massay, 2017). The provisions of this document were legislated by the Housing Act of 1997 (RSA, 1997). Massay (2017: 208) highlights the significance of this as “it replaced all previous legislation and laid out the principles of housing delivery and the role of various government departments”. In 2001, the then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, instructed the Department of Housing (DoH) to “eradicate informal settlements” (Huchzermeyer, 2008: 12). As a result, in 2004, the DoH released Breaking

New Ground (BNG) which was essentially a “comprehensive plan for the creation of sustainable human settlements” (Massay, 2017: 208). Despite this, “South Africa still has a housing crisis, with over 2.1 million households lacking adequate housing” (Tissington, 2011: 8). According to *SERI: A Resource Guide to Housing in South Africa* by Tissington (2010: 10) some of the systemic problems which have hindered and continue to plague housing policy implementation include:

1. *The politicisation of housing delivery at all levels;*
2. *poor coordination between different spheres of government in the housing delivery process, leading to delays in project initiation, approval, implementation and completion;*
3. *problems in the allocation of the national budget to local government, particularly around subsidised services such as water, sanitation and electricity;*
4. *integrated development planning processes and similarly defunct bottom-up planning mechanisms;*
5. *rampant evictions and shack demolitions by the state and private landlords/owners; and lastly*
6. *the escalation of construction-related costs.*

Figure 1.1 and 1.2 on page 12 illustrate how since the apartheid planning that segregated people due to their race, we have been battling to reconstruct and mend that divide.

To worsen matters, South Africa has a long history of gender inequality. Akala (2018: 226) claims that “the suffering of South African women is caused by several subtle [and intersectional] variables, [including] racism, social class, and sexism”. Akala (ibid) further points out that South African women “have suffered significantly in the past, and a reform strategy is required to alleviate gender disparities”. Nevertheless, as Ismail (2015: 8) highlights, “the national policy concerning women’s access to housing was reflected in the removal of discriminatory legislation [via the promulgation of] the Housing Act 107 of 1997”. The Constitution and the 1997 Housing Act marked a pivotal shift, enabling Black women to attain ownership of land and homes and granting them access to financial resources—a significant departure from the limitations imposed during the apartheid era.

However, in 2012, “these rights were again under threat from the Traditional Courts Bill, as [this] Bill restores the right of the traditional chiefs to distribute land and to decide who will inherit land should a woman become a widow” (Ismail, 2015: 8; see also Claasens, 2004; Sparks, 2004). In line with this, the recently promulgated *Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, No. 3 of 2019*, assigns land and housing allocation rights to traditional

## 1.2 The Problems under Study

leaders, despite concerns for gender equality found in the Constitution (van Veenendaal, 2020). While this dissertation refrains from focusing on communal landholdings in rural regions where traditional leaders have powers to assign land and housing allocation rights, informal settlements across various urban settings in South Africa often mimic these allocation approaches found in rural regions (Winkler, 2019). As such, patriarchal approaches are equally found in urban informal settlements, which is the focus of this research.

This chapter introduces the research project. To this end, it is structured in eleven parts. It begins by introducing the problems under study before clarifying the case under study, which is the Victoria Mxenge (VM) housing project that is located in Philippi, Cape Town. Identified problems serve to establish the overarching aim of this research and the main research questions. Thereafter, I will briefly describe the research methods and techniques used to collect data before discussing the analytical approach and ethical considerations employed. This chapter concludes with a short description of the planning recommendations that are presented in detail in Chapter 5.

---

This study focuses on informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa. Two main concerns are identified. The first is around housing challenges in Cape Town, and the second is geared around gender disparities in urban spaces.

### 1.2.1 Housing Challenges in Cape Town

The opportunity in the Cape Town context to enter into the formal housing system is extremely burdensome, especially for residents who live far from social and economic opportunities and who have not benefited from widespread social services (CoCT, 2021). This can be seen in Figure 1.3 and 1.4 on page 12 as it shows the contrast in residential and employment density.

The City of Cape Town's (2021: 13) *Human Settlement Strategy* reveals that "over 270,000 households are living in informal dwellings". While informal dwellings include backyard shacks on formal and surveyed parcels of land, between "60% and 65% [of these dwellings] are [located] within informal settlements" and comprise between 162,000 and 175,000 households (op cit.: 17).

The term 'informal settlement' in this dissertation is defined as "unplanned settlement on land that has not been surveyed or proclaimed as residential, consisting mainly of informal dwellings" (ibid); while the term 'informal dwelling' is defined as a "makeshift structure, not erected according to approved architectural plans, typically built with found materials (corrugated iron, cardboard, plastic, etc.)" (ibid). This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. The City also predicts that "over 500,000 households will require additional housing by 2028" (op cit.: 13.). This has major implications, since the City of Cape Town (2021:13) predicts that:

*This amounts to an annual requirement for an estimated 50,000 housing opportunities for the next 8 to 10 years in order to address the backlog and accommodate new households. However, when it comes to the rollout of housing, the public and private sector together are developing less than 20,000 formal new dwellings on average per year. This means that for the next 10 years there will be a shortfall in the development of formal housing opportunities of approximately 30,000 every year, assuming the average annual rate of supply by both the private and public sectors is unchanged.*



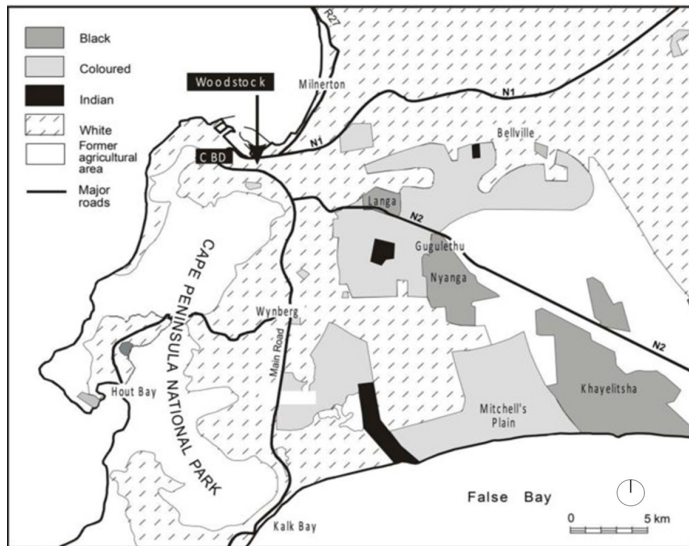


Figure 1.1: Cape Town under the Group Areas Act (Jason, 2019).

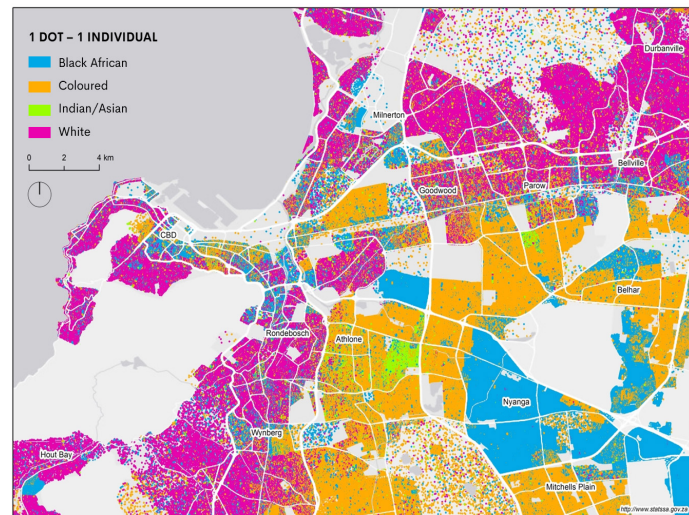


Figure 1.2: The Social Tapestry of Cape Town (RSA, 2016).

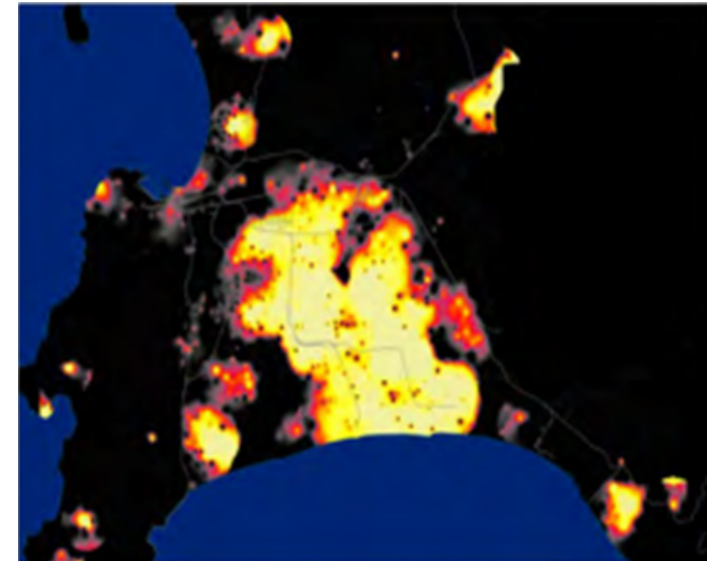


Figure 1.3: Residential Density in Cape Town (CoCT, 2018).



Figure 1.4: Employment Density in Cape Town (CoCT, 2018).

It is acknowledged that the South African government is making efforts to address the challenges faced by those who live in informal settlements. Nevertheless, it is also acknowledged that there is no 'silver bullet' to solving Cape Town's longstanding housing crisis that began during the colonial and apartheid eras (LeGrange, 1985). As such, key challenges regarding housing policies, programmes and implementation still exist. These challenges include, for example, the "widespread view [held by most policymakers] that shack settlements are temporary phenomena that will soon be replaced by formal housing [via the formal] housing subsidy system" (Pithouse, 2009: 8).

By contrast, the British architect and housing theorist, John Turner (1968; 1977), has for decades argued that informal solutions will remain the dominant means of creating shelter in the global South. Turner is thus "opposed to the eradication approach to informal settlement management" and, instead, sees informal settlements as "part of the solution" (Turner, cited in Massay, 2017: 206). Accordingly, and with Turner's argument in mind, my research rejects the idea of eradicating informal settlements, and seeks, instead, to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of residents' existing circumstances and how

these understandings might contribute to enhancing residents' lives in meaningful ways.

### 1.2.2 Gender Disparities in Urban Spaces

According to Rampaul and Magidimisha-Chipungu (2022: 1) "the roles of urban spaces in promoting people's social experiences and interactions, and access to green spaces, are critical for long-term community building". However, Larson and Jalakas (2008: 172) report that "urban environments can still be considered as a mostly masculine sphere as women are still marginalised and unsafe in urban spaces". This is because men have historically and extensively been conceptualised in urban and public spaces studies (Rampaul and Magidimisha-Chipungu, 2022). Therefore, although both men and women use public spaces, the urban environment can still be regarded as a masculine realm in which women feel uneasy, undesired, or excluded.

According to the *Handbook for Gender Inclusive Urban Planning Design* by Terraza et al. (2020: 47), examples of gender disparities in urban spaces can be seen in the following:

*For example, if a single mother in an informal settlement does not feel safe walking home at night, she may have to work informally from home and only*

*earn enough to afford a house in a flood zone, putting her livelihood and family at risk. If a retired woman with a visual impairment misses a health appointment because she gets on the wrong train, she might forego healthcare or ask her daughter to skip work and drive her to the hospital. If an 11-year-old girl has to fetch water and develops chronic back pain, she may be unable to socialize, get to school, safely walk to and from the latrine at night, or escape quickly enough when an earthquake hits. If a mother has to take her children to school, work a 6-hour shift on the other side of town, pick up the children, and do the housework, she might not be able to attend a planning meeting at the town hall, or squeeze in the time to vote in her local election.*

These scenarios illustrate how spatial deficiencies in the urban environment result in compounded negative outcomes that negate a sense of wellbeing, while triggering severe economic hardships. Faced with such challenges, women and girls of all ages and abilities often:

*(1) struggle to access gainful employment, education and other basic human endowments; (2) struggle to accumulate wealth and achieve economic independence; (3) spend more on basic services; (4) have fewer social freedoms, hindering them from building social networks to cope with risk, stress, and shock; and (5) struggle to exercise agency in public*

*decision-making, including decisions that shape the built environment.*

- (Terraza et al., 2020: 47).

This final challenge speaks, specifically, of women's exclusion from formulating their housing and placemaking needs, whilst all of Terraza et al.'s (2020) challenges equally negate opportunities to establish a sense of community. As a result, the importance of addressing violence against women in urban contexts is widely recognised at citywide, national, and international levels. Chant (2013: 20) highlights that:

*While men are more likely to become fatalities of urban violence, especially in the context of young male members of slum/gang-based groups, women are as frequently, if not more, at risk of violence in their own neighbourhoods as well as in cities at large, especially where they have to venture out of their homes to collect water or to use communal sanitation facilities.*

Hughes and Wickeri (2011: 884) note that "where dwellings are flimsy and there are no security patrols, women may be vulnerable to break-ins, theft, and rape in their own homes". Another crucial issue is that women's lack of ownership or entitlement is

widely regarded as weakening their defence against domestic violence. According to the UN-Habitat (2008, cited in Chant, 2013: 20) "domestic violence affects an estimated one in three women across the world". Another UN-Habitat report (2006, cited in Chant, 2013: 20) states that "taken into consideration with other forms of violence in urban areas, especially slums, women are twice as likely as men to suffer acts of violent aggression". A global study conducted by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) led to the conclusion that "violence against women in...slums are rampant...and emerges as perhaps the strongest cross-cutting theme" (COHRE, 2008: 14).

This resonates with recent evidence from South Africa that shows a "higher prevalence of Common Mental Diseases in Cape Town's peri-urban slums [35%] than in rural areas [27%], and that gender [being female], unemployment and substance abuse are the most common correlates" (Harpham, 2009: 112). In response, women-led organisations have been established to address inequalities and enable women to participate more fully in community initiatives to better their sense of community. For example, Matsie (2019: 6) posits that:

*The South African Shack Dwellers International Alliance emphasises the role of women leaders, women's savings groups, and collaboration to promote gender-sensitive upgrading. Therefore, empowering women not only supports their agency by addressing gender-related deprivations but also designs integrated settlements that respond to the everyday experiences of women as residents.*

These realities concerning gender disparities in urban spaces inform an additional research focus on placemaking, as well as the case under study, namely the Victoria Mxenge (VM) housing project. This case study is introduced in the next section.

### 1.3 The Case under Study

---

The selection of a case study came from reading Salma Ismail's (2015) book titled *the Victoria Mxenge Housing Project* where she writes about women building communities through activism and informal learning. In essence, the book documents how the Victoria Mxenge (VM) housing project became a housing solution that was created by a women-led organisation. The women of the VM housing project originally lived in an informal settlement in Khayelitsha after migrating to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape. Their story sparks inspiration, as women were able to self-organise, overcome gender disparities, negotiate land for their housing project, and build their own houses. As Ismail (2015: x) explains in her introduction:

*This book tells the story of poor, homeless African women in the Victoria Mxenge Housing Development Association (VM), an affiliate of the South African Homeless People's Federation, who, through a process of learning, acquired the skills to save, secure land, build more than 5,000 houses and become leaders of a housing social movement which later became an arm of the state. It describes the choices faced by women in an ever-changing social movement caught up in a struggle to mobilise for land and housing.*

In essence, the lived experiences of the VM women highlight the importance of gendered participation and leadership within housing and community development, particularly in Southern contexts. Research findings, based on in-depth interviews with VM women and other research participant, corroborate the value of a gendered planning approach when aiming to address the problems outlined in the previous section.

### 1.4 The Aim of the Research

---

This study aims to investigate the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements through the VM housing project. It also aims to explore how this organisation enables a sense of community through placemaking principles; and what planners might learn from their gendered approach.

## 1.5 The Main Research Questions

---

The main research question is three-fold, and it asks:

- What is the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements?
- How is this organisation enabling a sense of community through placemaking principles; and
- what might planners learn from this gendered approach?

## 1.6 Introducing the Research Methods used to undertake this Study

---

Research is the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Therefore, since the main research question entail answering 'how' and 'what questions—and since it aims to investigate possible housing interventions by exploring people's experiences, their relationships and placemaking approaches, and how organisations function—qualitative research methods are used for this study. Qualitative research methods enabled me to explore and narrate events, processes and outcomes occurring in the Victoria Mxenge housing project and its surrounding context.

To this end, case study research methods and discourse analysis are employed, because the problems outlined in Section 1.2 necessitate an in-depth review of the existing housing legislation, policies, and programmes relevant to this study. These research methods are briefly introduced below and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

### **1.6.1 Case Study Method**

The case study is an in-depth investigation of an area, its development, and occurrences (Flyvbjerg, 2011). According to Yin (2018), the aim of a case study is to examine events, situations, or other real-life facts within their

context where the boundaries between the 'case' and the context are not clearly defined. This research method provides rich knowledge of women's housing struggles and how they navigate the terrain of informal settlement and planning within the South African context. As such, black feminism, radical planning theories and placemaking principles serve as the theoretical framework used to understand women's housing struggles in informal settlements.

As a researcher, I am aware of the limitations of case study research methods. These limitations include verifying collected data based on my own biases and subjective knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2011). To address this limitation, I used triangulation techniques that allowed me to collect research findings from diverse sources, including secondary sources such as history books, newspapers, and articles from journals and websites.

### **1.6.2 Discourse Analysis**

This research method allowed me to analyse policy documents and explore their inner biases and claims in a systemic, structured way. However, in terms of its limitations, discourse analysis is subject to my biases as a researcher and my interpretation of the policies, legislation, programmes, and texts under study.

## 1.7 Introducing the Research Techniques

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Data is collected via the use of qualitative research techniques including interviewing and mapping for the purpose of answering research questions.

### 1.7.1 Interviews

All interviews are conducted in a semi-structured format. Semi-structured interviews are verbal interchanges in which the researcher asks questions to obtain information from research participants (Longhurst, 2003: 1). The interviews are based on established and open-ended questions, which allows for a more natural conversation. The interview process enables a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

### 1.7.2 Mapping

In conjunction with the interview technique, I use mapping techniques to collect additional findings. Maps are essential tools for urban planning. Not only is mapping one of the primaries means whereby the planner can summarise the spatial characteristics of a community, but it is often the only way in which a sustained overall view of the community can be obtained. However, to combat subjective limitation of mapping, I drew from a variety of actors involved with my case study area in order to mitigate biases.

## 1.8 Analysis of Research Findings

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Data analysis is a process where the researcher extracts, summarises, and draws conclusions from the relevant data collected (Yin, 2018). Research findings are analysed in Chapter 4 against assessment criteria established from the literature reviewed (see Chapters 2 and 3 for details). Analysed research findings provide not only answers to the main and subsidiary research questions, but they also assist in crafting pragmatic planning recommendations that are presented in Chapter 5.

## 1.9 Ethical Considerations

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I gained ethics approval from the University of Cape Town's Engineering and Built Environment Research Committee (EBE ERC) at the start of the research process. No data collection via interviews were undertaken before clearance was granted. I also drafted a consent form to be signed by both the researcher and research participants. The form explained the topic, that the interview process is voluntarily and that the respondent can withdraw their participation at any time. Research findings were also shared with participants to confirm the accuracy of my interpretations of the data.

## 1.10 The Structure of Dissertation

As illustrated in Figure 1.5 on the right, Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature and legislation based on the topic under study. To this end, a black feminist lens, radical planning theories and placemaking principles are employed as theoretical frameworks for this study. These frameworks set up the subsidiary research questions, and, collectively, the reviewed literature and theoretical frameworks establish the themes and assessment criteria used to analyse the research findings in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 outlines the qualitative research methods and techniques used to collect data. The limitations of both the methods and techniques are presented in this chapter. Chapter 3 ends with a discussion on how data are analysed, and how an ethical approach to this research is fulfilled.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings. The findings are analysed and mapped against the assessment criteria established in Chapter 2. This chapter is structured in accordance with the themes established in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 provides answer to the main and subsidiary research questions. In doing so, the research findings are synthesised. The chapter presents several policy and other

planning recommendations that might improve the problems identified in Section 1.2 of this chapter. Some recommendations are developed from the literature reviewed and the theoretical frameworks established in Chapter 2, whilst others are drawn from the research findings presented in Chapter 4.



Figure 1.5: Structure of Dissertation (Author, 2023).

## 1.11 Recommendations

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It is foreseen that this research could potentially shape the writing of new spatial planning policies and respond to spatial concerns of placemaking to improve the state of gendered urban planning in the implementation of formalising housing. I therefore hope by means of this study to contribute to the research on gendered planning, community placemaking, and black feminism in South Africa.

## 1.12 Conclusion

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This chapter introduced the problems under study, the overarching aim of this research, and the main research questions. It further introduced the research methods and techniques used to collect data and establish answers to the main (and subsidiary) research question(s). The following chapter will review the literature and the theoretical frameworks on the topic under study in order to establish subsidiary research questions and assessment criteria for this research project.

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW



## 2.1 Introduction

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Chapter 1 introduced the problem under study, as well as the aim and main research questions. In summary, this research aims to investigate the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements using the Victoria Mxenge (VM) housing project as a case study. It also aims to explore how this organisation builds a sense of community through place-making principles; and what planners might learn from this gendered approach. To this end, the purpose of this chapter is to establish assessment and recommendation criteria from a critical review of the existing theory and literature. These criteria, in turn, set up the subsidiary research questions of this study, which are used to evaluate the case study (see Chapter 4).

The first section of this chapter defines informal settlements in South Africa.

The second section unpacks and discusses the work on the VM housing project, with a particular focus on the women's experiences. Seeing as the VM project involved the organisation's struggles with the state, Non Profit Organisations (NPOs), and community members, this provides a broad and useful selection of perspectives on the project.

The third section of this chapter focuses on reviewing post-apartheid South African housing legislation and policies. In this section I discuss the Constitution, the Housing Act, the Municipal Systems Act, the People's Housing Process, which was the approach employed in the VM project, and the revised Enhanced People's Housing Process.

The fourth section explores the concept of placemaking in housing delivery projects in informal settlements, with a particular focus on how placemaking enables a sense of community.

The fifth section provides a review on radical planning practices as this theory acknowledges and celebrates community-based organisations and residents as grassroots planners for themselves.

Finally, the chapter turns to Black Feminism with a specific focus on women-led organisations and the role of the planner, before drawing to a conclusion. To this end, a black feminist lens, radical planning theories and placemaking principles are employed as theoretical frameworks for this study. This review will become the basis through which recommendations are proposed in Chapter 5.

## 2.2 Informal Settlements in South Africa

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Informal settlements are a global challenge. However, the reasons and results caused by this challenge are often unique to particular contexts. Therefore, the South African history of informal settlements and the attempts to address them reflect an amalgamation of place-based and international influences. One driver to address this challenge is the pressure of rapid urbanisation. By 2050, global population is projected to increase to around 9.8 billion people (Ritchie and Roser, 2018). In addition, by 2035, it is projected that 50% of the population of Africa will live in urban areas (OECD, 2020).

In response to this, Cirolia et al. (2016: 4) believe this can be both an "exciting and daunting projection". For starters, they argue that "the expansion of urban centres offers immense possibility, including opportunities and spaces to reconfigure social, economic, and political systems, and processes" (ibid). However, this projection also "poses clear challenges to African states already struggling to adequately address jobs, infrastructure, and the basic needs of existing urban populations on the back of scarce resources, conflicting agendas, and limited concrete data" (ibid). Therefore, while a range of housing interventions, from rental stock provision to 'site-and-service' projects, have been at-

tempted in African cities, informal settlements and slum conditions continue to characterise the housing norm, rather than the exception (Fox, 2014).

Today, the idea of 'illegality' from an official planning standpoint is most often cited when it comes to defining informal settlements. For example, the Oxford Dictionary (2023) defines informal settlements as "houses (for temporary or permanent use) which have been built on land without formal planning approval". Similarly, the Western Cape Government (2003: 1) defines informal settlements as "residential areas that do not comply with local authority requirements for conventional (formal) townships. They are, typically, unauthorised and are invariably located upon land that has not been proclaimed for residential use".

Furthermore, the City of Cape Town (2021: 17) defines informal settlements as "unplanned settlement on land that has not been surveyed or proclaimed as residential, consisting mainly of informal dwellings"; while the term 'informal dwelling' is defined as a "makeshift structure, not erected according to approved architectural plans, typically built with found materials (corrugated iron, cardboard, plastic, etc.)" (ibid).

Therefore, for most decision-makers and implementers, grappling with informality remains a deeply conflictual and contested process.

## 2.3 The Victoria Mxenge Housing Project

Following Section 1.3, the VM project took place in three phases over the course of 20 years as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

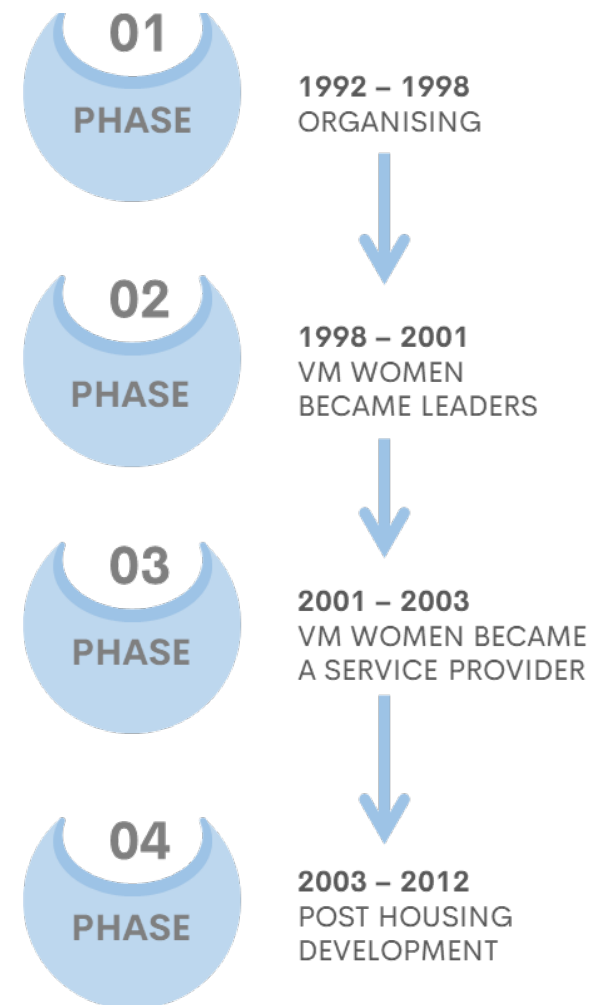


Figure 2.1: Victoria Mxenge Housing Project Timeline (Author, 2023).

During **phase one**, Patricia Matolengwe began **organising** women living in Site C, in Khayelitsha into a housing savings scheme. This allowed the women, through the People's Housing Process (PHP), to form a housing development association which enabled them to get communal rights to land in Philippi, an outer suburb of Cape Town. This can be seen in Figure 2.2 on page 25.

A significant portion of the VM women relocated to Cape Town from impoverished rural regions in the Eastern Cape (Ismail, 2015). In their places of origin, the women lived under the customary laws of the African community, where male figures assumed the role of household leaders and women did not possess land rights (ibid). According to Ismail their primary means of generating income included engaging in domestic labour, vending fruits, and vegetables, and offering childcare services. During the first phase of the VM project, the women submitted applications for housing subsidies, formulated budgets, and took charge of the planning and construction of houses and communities (ibid). However, this brought along its own set of hurdles for the VM women, such as "struggles for ownership of their homes, sharing of family responsibilities, and freedom of movement" (op cit.: xx).

*Therefore, a subsidiary question asks: why was it important being a women-led organisation?*

Upon their arrival in Cape Town, they settled on the outskirts of the city in frequently unwelcoming surroundings. In the era of apartheid, the areas where these women resided were deemed unauthorized, leading to a lack of housing and essential infrastructure and amenities provided by the state. They endured recurrent forced relocations imposed by both the apartheid government and vigilante groups.

**Phase two** began when **the VM women became leaders** in the South African Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF) and advocated for a people-driven housing process. The SAHPF was led and driven by People's Dialogue (PD), Utshani Fund, and the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) Alliance (Ismail, 2015). These were all Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which meant that there was no state support for the work that they were doing. During this period, the VM women established their housing movement by implementing savings schemes, organising meetings, and developing housing prototypes to demonstrate that individuals with limited means can construct their own homes. Concurrently, there was a surge in social

movements holding the government accountable for failing to provide essential services, and a sense of disenchantment with the state began to pervade impoverished communities (ibid).

In the final phase, **phase three**, the organisation's role transitioned into that of a **service provider**. During this period, the VM women collaborated with the state in offering services such as processing subsidy applications.

Eventually, the VM women were voted out of their leadership positions in the SAHPF, and from 2003 to 2012, the housing movement experienced significant fragmentation. The SAHPF split into two distinct organisations, with one identifying as the Federation, registered as both a Section 21 company and an NPO. Members of the second group adopted the name Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP). The VM women, who were restructured out of the old Federation in 2003, assumed leadership roles in the former Federation.





Figure 2.2: Cape Town Contextual Map (Source: QGIS Development Team, 2023; Map Illustration: Author, 2023).

## 2.4 Review of Post-Apartheid South African Housing Legislation

In this section, key pieces of post-apartheid South African legislation on housing are reviewed as the focus of my research concerns the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements. The legislation reviewed include:

- The Constitution Act 108 of 1996;
- the Housing Act 107 of 1997;
- the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000;
- the People's Housing Process of 1998; and
- the Enhanced People's Housing Process of 2009.

### 2.4.1 The Constitution Act 108 of 1996

Chapter 2, Section 9 of the Constitution enshrines the right to equality for all citizens irrespective of gender. In terms of this, the state may not "unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone based on their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth" (RSA, 1996: 6). This is significant as it was not until the introduction of the Bill of Rights in 1996 that all women in South Africa received formal recognition as equal citizens.

When it comes to housing, Chapter 2, Sec-

tion 26 of the Constitution enshrines everyone's right of access to adequate housing. According to Sections 25(5)-(9) of the Constitution, the government also has a commitment to restitution, redistribution, and tenure reform. This creates a positive obligation on the government, national, provincial, and local, to draw up and implement a coherent public housing programme capable of facilitating the rights of the diverse needs of young and old, men and women.

Moreover, the principle of interdependency of rights emphasises the interconnectedness and equal significance of economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights. When it comes to adequate housing, Tissington (2011: 11) reflects this interdependency of rights by stating how:

*the right to adequate housing is intrinsically bound up with a number of other cross-cutting rights – including the rights to public participation, equality, human dignity, just administrative action, access to information and access to justice – as well as a range of socio-economic goods and amenities. These include access to land, water, sanitation, electricity, livelihoods, transport, clinics and hospitals, schools, universities, and cultural and recreational amenities such as libraries, public spaces, swimming pools, sports fields, and religious centres.*

Similarly, from a feminist perspective, McLean and Chenwi (2009: 522) acknowledge how "the principle of the interdependency of rights means that the right to adequate housing must be read together with other constitutional rights, which impact, support, and reinforce women's access to adequate housing". These authors explain how the Constitutional Court affirms the indivisibility and interdependency of rights in South African jurisprudence, through the *Grootboom* (2001, para 23) decision, which states that:

*Our Constitution entrenches both civil and political rights and social and economic rights. All the rights in our Bill of Rights are inter-related and mutually supporting. There can be no doubt that human dignity, freedom and equality, the foundational values of our society, are denied those who have no food, clothing, or shelter. Affording socio-economic rights to all people therefore enables them to enjoy the other rights enshrined in Chapter 2. The realisation of these rights is also key to the advancement of race and gender equality and the evolution of a society in which men and women are equally able to achieve their full potential.*

The *Grootboom* decision marked the inaugural Constitutional Court ruling to provide detailed insight into the interpretation of Section 26 of the Constitution. As previous-

ly mentioned, the Court emphasised the interconnectedness of socio-economic rights with civil and political rights. This recognition of the interdependency of rights is crucial for safeguarding women’s housing rights, as well as for combating poverty, diminishing inequality, and enhancing overall quality of life.

*In light of this, subsidiary research question asks: how holistic is the housing programmes in the protection women’s housing rights?*

It is important to note that Chapter 3 of the Constitution outlines rights and responsibilities for co-operative government with Section 41(1) listing a number of principles that should apply to co-operative government and intergovernmental relations. Such principles include inter alia that all spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must:

- (1) provide effective, transparent, accountable, and coherent government for the Republic as a whole;
- (2) respect the constitutional status, institutions, powers and functions of government in the other spheres;
- (3) co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith;
- (4) foster friendly relations;
- (5) assist and support one another;

- (6) inform one another of, and consult one another on, matters of common interest;
- (7) coordinate their actions and legislation with one another;
- (8) adhere to agreed procedures; and
- (9) avoid legal proceedings against one another.

- (RSA, 1996: 21).

This stipulates the state’s obligation not only to uphold these rights, but also to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil them. Moreover, the Constitution puts in place a new relationship between the different tiers of government. In South Africa, there are three spheres of government. Each sphere of government has specific powers conferred upon it by Schedules in the Constitution. The significance of this is that power is no longer centrally held by National Government as was the case during apartheid. This allocation can be seen in Table 2.1 on the right.

Overall, the National sphere may regulate the exercise of a Municipality’s power in terms of Section 155(7) of the Constitution and Provincial spheres may monitor and support municipalities and regulate the exercise of their powers regarding municipal planning in terms of Sections 155(6)(a) and 155(7) of the Constitution.

*Therefore, an additional subsidiary research question asks: how co-operative were the different spheres of government during the implementation of the VM housing project?*

Furthermore, Chapter 3 is an important legislation that guides the Municipal Systems Act 34 of 2000 discussed in Section 2.4.3 below.

		National	Provincial	Local
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa	Allocation of powers	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013	Land Use Planning Act of 2014	BY-LAWS
	Part A of Schedule 4	Regional Planning and Development Urban and Rural Development		
	Part A of Schedule 5	Section 44(2)	Provincial Planning	
	Part B of Schedule 4	Subject to 155(7)	Subject to 155(6)(a) & (7)	Municipal Planning
	Section 155(7) Section 155(6)(a) & (7)	Regulating the exercise by Municipality of their executive authority	Monitoring, support capacity building and regulating the exercise by a Municipality of their executive authority	

Table 2.1: Allocation of Powers Enshrined for each Tier of Government (RSA, 2009).

## 2.4.2 The Housing Act 107 of 1997

The Housing Act is a key piece of housing legislation in South Africa. It outlines a number of principles to guide the realisation of housing delivery. The term 'housing development', is defined in the Housing Act (1997: 4) as:

*The establishment and maintenance of habitable, stable, and sustainable public and private residential environments to ensure viable households and communities in areas allowing convenient access to economic opportunities, and to health, educational and social amenities in which all citizens and permanent residents of the Republic will, on a progressive basis, have access to -*

- a. permanent residential structures with secure tenure, ensuring internal and external privacy and providing adequate protection against the elements; and*
- b. potable water, adequate sanitary facilities, and domestic energy supply.*

This definition aligns with what Tissington (2011), and McLean and Chenwi (2009) mentioned in Section 2.4.1 as this defines housing as more than just the top structure itself. But rather as a holistic approach taking into consideration community public spaces, amenities, and quality of life. More impor-

tantly, Section 2(1)(a), (c)(ii) & (iv), (e)(vi) & (x) defines the obligation on national, provincial, and local spheres of government to:

- (1) give priority to the needs of the poor in respect of housing development;*
- (2) ensure that housing development is economically, fiscally, socially and financially affordable and sustainable and is administered in an equitable manner;*
- (3) promote measures to prohibit unfair discrimination on the grounds of gender and other forms of unfair discrimination by all actors in the housing development process; and*
- (4) promote the housing needs of marginalised women and other groups disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.*

- (RSA, 1997: 4).

Put differently, the Housing Act demonstrates consideration for marginalised communities, particularly women. In addition, it underscores the significance of safeguarding the right to equality, alongside other rights outlined in the Bill of Rights, while working towards ensuring access to adequate housing.

## 2.4.3 The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

As stipulated in Section 2.4.1, the Constitution mandates Local government to provide democratic and accountable government to local communities and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of Local government. Local government plays an important role as "the South African local government system is premised on bringing government closer to the people through both representative and participatory democracy" (Planact, 2020: 3). Hence, local government is viewed as the pivotal institution in ensuring inclusivity within the political framework of the state.

Planact further argue that local government carries the mandate of enhancing democracy by enabling community participation. This is considered crucial for the long-term viability of the institution, as participatory democracy holds particular significance at the grassroots level. It empowers the community to connect with the governing political bodies, cultivating a sense of ownership over shared resources.

In fact, Chapter 4 of the Act (2000) is entirely dedicated to outlining community participa-

tion mechanisms, procedures, and processes. Henceforth, active engagement of the community has become a mandated practice in virtually all pivotal municipal procedures. As a result, Municipalities are obligated to facilitate community involvement in municipal processes through the implementation of comprehensive strategies that not only eliminate barriers but also actively promote the participation of marginalised groups within the local community.

In fact, from a feminist perspective, Section 4(h) of the Municipal Systems Act (2000: 20) stipulates that the council of a municipality has a duty to “promote gender equity in the exercise of the municipality’s executive and legislative authority”. This is reinforced in Chapter 4 (op cit.: 30), Section 17(3), which states that:

*When establishing mechanisms, processes, and procedures in terms of subsection (2) the municipality must take into account the special needs of—*

- (a) people who cannot read or write,
- (b) people with disabilities,
- (c) women, and
- (d) other disadvantaged groups.

Therefore, Section 17(3) emphasises that when devising and executing strategies for

community participation, it is imperative to take into account the unique requirements of women and other marginalised groups. Furthermore, Section 16 (ibid) highlights the importance of the development of culture of community participation:

*A municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance, and must for this purpose:*

(a) *encourage, and create conditions for, the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including in formulation, review, and implementation of its IDP, Budget, performance management systems and the provision of municipal services.*

b) *contribute to building the capacity of—*

(i) *the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality; and*

(ii) *councillors and staff to foster community participation; and use its resources, and annually allocate funds in its budget, as may be appropriate for the purpose of implementing paragraphs (a) and (b).*

However, when it comes to practice, Planact (2020: 12) argue that “municipalities have seemingly adopted a ‘bare minimum’ com-

pliance approach, viewing collaborative engagement, co-production, or accountability as a legal necessity or even irritation, rather than an imperative empowering tool for communities to be part of their governance”.

*In light of these comments, an additional subsidiary question asks: What are the inter-governmental relations like in housing delivery processes?*

#### **2.4.4 The People’s Housing Process of 1998**

After the 1994 elections, which saw a change in the South African government, the state’s approach to housing followed its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). But by 1998 this approach started to show signs of budgetary constraints due to a decline in the number of housing units that were being delivered (Gumbo and Onatu, 2015).

These authors found that in most cases, houses had been constructed using inexpensive and substandard materials, resulting in poor quality structures unsuitable for extreme weather conditions. These materials lacked the capacity to regulate temperatures and also to provide insulation against noise. This was the result of a prioritisation of quantity of

houses being delivered at the expense of the quality of housing construction. Gumbo and Onatu quoted John Turner who observed that "housing is not only the physical structure but also includes the development process whereby the urban poor should be accorded the necessary control and freedom to participate in its planning, designing, building and management" (Gumbo and Onatu, 2015: 3).

The shortcomings of the RDP housing gave rise to a revised national housing policy that allows for self-help housing, called the People's Housing Process (PHP) (renamed the Enhanced People's Housing Process (ePHP) in July 2009). According to the National Department of Housing (2005: 7), the PHP is a:

*housing delivery mechanism whereby beneficiary households build, or organise between themselves, the building of their own homes, make a 'sweat equity' contribution through their labour and exercise a greater choice in the application of their housing subsidy through their direct involvement in the entire process.*

In essence, the PHP approach aimed to address the primary challenges confronting the South African housing department. Firstly, it acknowledged that the government alone could not sustainably provide free housing to

the urban poor. Secondly, it recognised that the government, as the sole decision-maker, was not effectively meeting the needs of the urban poor. Therefore, the PHP symbolised a new approach to housing that promotes active participation and collaboration with the urban poor. For the first time the informal settlement problems were seen not as housing problem, but as the product of an "underlying socio-economic predicament that needs to be addressed" (Ziblim, 2013: 24).

However, this is not a new concept. According to Gumbo and Onatu (2015: 2) the "practice of housing by the people; for the people and with people has been in existence since time immemorial". In 1976, Turner had demonstrated that with appropriate support and leeway from relevant stakeholders, the urban poor have the capacity to progressively construct better-quality and larger houses.

By placing value on community participation and social capital in addition to the top structure in housing, the PHP housing delivery mechanism brings to life Gumbo and Onatu's and Turner's arguments: some of the key principles incorporated into the PHP policy include "the establishment of partnerships, the transfer of skills, community empowerment, and a process that is people-driven" (NDOH,

2005: 4).

Since the PHP was utilised during the entirety of the VM project, it is important to critically assess if and how the policy enabled livelihood interventions by asking the following subsidiary research questions:

*What skills were transferred during the project under study and between whom were these skills transferred?*

In terms of the PHP policy (2005: 20) the following four Housing Subsidy types are available to beneficiaries:

1. *The Consolidation Subsidy*, available to beneficiaries who own and reside on serviced sites without formal housing and who have not received state aid for house construction;
2. *The Project-Linked Subsidy*, available to those eligible for housing subsidies but who do not own land, or occupy a property;
3. *The Institutional Subsidy*, also for those who are landless; and
4. *The Rural Subsidy*, for those who occupy land by virtue of laws and customs of a tribe, if the land is state land; for those who hold registered quitrent

tenure rights or other permissions to occupy land; for those who occupy state land by virtue of previous legislation but who may or may not have such rights registered.

The PHP policy contains ten different stakeholders, and stipulates in detail the roles and responsibilities of each:

- the National Department of Housing (NDOH);
- the Provincial Housing Departments (PHDs);
- the Municipalities;
- the Support Organisation (SO);
- the Account administration (AA);
- the Housing Support Centre (HSC);
- the Certifier;
- the Housing Support Committee (HSCom);
- the Technical Advisor; and
- the Beneficiaries.

However, when examining the implementation of the PHP policy, Manie (2004: 1) reports that "of the total delivery to date, less than 10 % have been via PHP". This shows that despite the documented evidence of the benefits of PHP, it has been an insignificant contributor to national housing delivery. Newton (2013) similarly found that the number of units that were realised through the PHP approach re-

mained rather limited.

In 2004, just over five years after the launch of the People's Housing Process, the National Department of Housing (NDOH) unveiled *Breaking New Ground: A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements* (BNG). This document sets out a new five-year plan that charted a course for the creation of sustainable human settlements. It proposes a People's Contract as the fundamental framework for implementation. This specifically emphasises the need to engage communities in a collaborative effort with the government to facilitate housing delivery. With this new approach, the NDOH aimed to revitalise partnerships with both the public and partner organisations in order to realise sustainable human settlements. The change in agenda brought about by the People's Contract created an opportunity to revise the PHP policy.

#### **2.4.5 The Enhanced People's Housing Process of 2009**

The National Housing Code (2009: 9) summarises two key changes that needed to be addressed in the new PHP policy:

i) A number of different approaches to community development needed to be accommodated with community involvement in the decision-making processes, community empowerment and the leveraging of additional resources being the determining factors for making it a project.

ii) A broadening of the scope of the PHP was needed, with a focus on the outcomes of the housing process as a whole rather than just how the housing product is delivered.

This gave birth to the Enhanced People's Housing Process (ePHP) policy and programme which replaced the PHP in 2009. The main aim of the ePHP programme is to:

*Deliver better human settlement outcomes (at household and at the community level) based on community contribution, partnerships, and the leveraging of additional resources through partnerships. This is achieved by developing livelihoods interventions which lead to outcomes such as job creation, developing a culture of savings, skills transfer, and community empowerment, building of community assets and social security and cohesion.*

- (RSA, 2009: 13).

The expansion of the PHP's scope became crucial in shaping the development of the ePHP. In addition, when it comes to the institutional arrangements, Table 2.2 on the right illustrates the key contractual and accountability relationships between the provinces, municipalities, ePHP resource organisations and the community groups.

The ePHP policy viewed housing as a catalyst to achieve broader socio-economic goals, including economic growth, job creation, poverty-alleviation, and social cohesion. However, today, despite the revised policy, ePHP has not taken off the way Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Community Resource Organisations (CROs) had hoped.

*Therefore, important subsidiary research questions ask: why is the ePHP programme not being used anymore? Is the ePHP programme still needed? And are there aspects of the policy that needs improvement?*

*In addition, is there a difference in quality of housing and quality of life between the PHP housing and housing provided by the 2004 policy, Breaking New Ground (BNG)?*

	National Government	Provincial Government	Local Government	Community Resource Organisations	Community Based Organisations
Roles and Responsibilities	Advocate, promote and support the implementation of ePHP nationally mobilising support, additional funding and technical support for the sector and ensuring the sharing of ePHP information to the sector	Ensure provincial planning frameworks pro-actively support demand for ePHP	Carry out area-based planning to inform IDPs and SDFs and to incorporate ePHP projects where appropriate	Building the appropriate capacity to support ePHP implementation and project delivery at community level. This includes capacitating the CBO with the skills needed for daily management of the project. This includes inter alia training on basic financial management, project management, general management and payment processes.	To keep individuals /communities informed of the choices available to them and to assist individuals / communities to make appropriate choices through regular communication and feedback
	Set up standards and screening procedure for ePHP CROs and maintain a database of accredited CROs for Provinces to access	Set targets for ePHP to support budget allocation	Ensure that IDPs and funding frameworks accommodate demand for ePHP	Organizational development to set up the operating procedures and systems, to get the various components of the project up and running and operating sustainable.	Facilitate access to, mobilize and adhere to the required community contributions
	Align Departmental structures and programmes to support and leverage ePHP implementation	Build capacity for ePHP in the province	Facilitate land availability to support ePHP including providing land purchase funding for communities or donating municipal land for projects where possible	Facilitating community participation, project enumeration, preparing the Project Business Plan and submitting it for approval, as well as addressing any issues relating to approval	With the CRO set up and management of the Housing Support Centre if required
	Ensure broad consumer education and awareness about ePHP	Ring fence and allocate subsidies and grants for ePHP	Provide physical services and infrastructure for the project where possible	Setting up the contractual and accountability relationship with Province and the Local Authority for the community. Provide ongoing technical support to the projects and technical compliance as well as dealing with matters relating to the NHBC	To set out roles and responsibilities with the CRO and to fulfil the roles
		Prepare and manage contracts with the CROs	Provide town planning services and township establishment funding including EIAs and rezoning	Ensuring cash flow and administering payments as well as accounting for subsidy funding per project	To set up administrative systems with the CRO and then to maintain them.
	Approval of ePHP projects and timely disbursement of project and capacity building funding to the CROs	The municipality must provide for, and fund additional facilities and amenities required by the community	Preparing progress reports in line with provincial requirements; and monitoring and evaluating progress of the CBOs and projects.	To work with the CROs to set up the value-added components for the process.	
		Monitor the CROs			

Table 2.2: Institutional Structure of the ePHP Programme (RSA, 2009).

## 2.5 Housing Delivery and Placemaking

When it comes to providing housing, compared to the rest of the continent, and even internationally, South Africa's scale of delivery is impressive. In 1994, "the dedication to formal housing delivery was seen as admirable and in line with quests to provide dignified and just living conditions for those previously excluded" from spatial justice outcomes (Cirolia et al., 2016: 6). However, this commitment was primarily focused on providing standalone and single-function housing units on the outskirts of urban areas, often overlooking the quality of the resulting settlements and their broader implications for the city and its communities.

As a consequence, this approach led to Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) style delivery, which in turn contributed to urban sprawl and a lack of sufficient access to employment opportunities and essential public services such as healthcare and education (Harrison et al., 2003). Similarly, Cirolia et al. (2016: 7) note that:

*This is due to the fact that the housing delivery programme, rather than spatial planning, was driving the expansion of urban areas, and decisions about the locations of projects were often taken by developers without cognisance of available infrastructure and services. Therefore, today we see how the hous-*

*ing programme has created social and community fragmentation.*

To this end, Matsie (2019: 3) reveals that "the effect of gender relations can devalue the contributions of women and maintain the power bias towards men in informal settlements". Limitations on women's ability to participate in community projects results in spaces that aren't designed for women. This underscores the significance of emphasising placemaking initiatives within informal settlements in this dissertation.

The concept of 'placemaking' stems from the spatial urban design theories known as place theory. Trancik (1985: 112) in his book, *Finding Lost Spaces* states that:

*the essence of place theory in spatial design lies in understanding the cultural and human characteristics of physical space. If in abstract, physical terms, space is a bounded or purposeful void with the potential of physically linking things, it only becomes place when it is given a contextual meaning derived from cultural or regional content.*

While the idea of 'placemaking' has evolved since Trancik's definition in the mid-1980s, it is still relevant to explore the role of contextual meaning in the case under study.

*Thus, another subsidiary research question asks: How does contextual meaning inform the implementation of the VM housing project?*

Moving on from Trancik, and for the purpose of this dissertation, I adopt Behrens and Watson's (2014: 10) definition of placemaking which refers to the "creation of urban environments with a unique sense of place". In particular, I too believe that "the creation of a sense of place is neither a luxury nor a romantic concern – it is essential. [However,] it does not equate simply to the creation of picturesque landscapes or pretty streets, but to a recognition of the importance of a sense of belonging" (op cit.: 11).

In other words, urban places have an impact on residents' identity through their own expressions of cultural values and experiences. Furthermore, placemaking can become a people-centred approach to spatial planning and urban policy in informal settlements. For example, placemaking can be used to improve streets, pavements, parks, and courtyards which creates safer, more inclusive and community focused spaces.

In order to further understand if and how placemaking exists within the case study, I will use the four dimensions of placemaking

posited by Behrens and Watson to guide my research. Behrens and Watson (op cit.: 67) define the four dimensions as:

*The first dimension is a sense of uniqueness. The creation of a sense of place requires embracing, and consciously seeking to promote, uniqueness, as opposed to standardisation.*

*The second dimension is a sense of balance. A characteristic of quality urban places is the degree to which there is a sustainable balance with natural systems, and a responsive balance with human needs.*

*The third dimension is a sense of symbolism. Over time, certain places acquire historical significance and are elevated over other places in terms of perceptual importance to communities.*

*The fourth dimension is a sense of legibility – the ability of people to anticipate, and orientate themselves within, settlements they do not know intimately. It is this quality which provides the particular spatial structural language of place.*

With this in mind, an additional subsidiary research therefore asks:

*How has the implementation of the VM housing project enabled a sense of uniqueness, balance, symbolism, and legibility; and do any*

*of these placemaking criteria promote a sense of community?*

However, as highlighted in Chapter 1, assessing placemaking principles alone is not enough as women tend to be overlooked in urban planning. Kneeshaw (2018) corroborates this by arguing that “the lack of participation of women and girls in urban planning produces an awareness gap, which results in public spaces that exclude them” (Rampaul and Magidimisha-Chipungu, 2022: 1).

Similarly, studies by Terraza et al. (2020) and Fritz (2021) argue that it is critical to integrate the viewpoints of women in the design of cities and communities because “it will allow women to have equal access to the advantages of the city” (Rampaul and Magidimisha-Chipungu, 2022: 7). Therefore, women’s inclusion in the formulation of their housing and placemaking needs will go a long way in redressing the historical and systemic failings.

The *Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design* (2020: 55) sums it up well by stating that:

*In addition to this horizontal, cross-sectoral integration, gender inclusion must be vertically integrated — linking “on-the-ground” community expertise*

*with government-level policy and action — to ensure sustainable impact as well as promoting vertical communication and collaboration on future projects. Community and government project partners should be brought together to co-define project goals and methodologies; conduct project activities; and evaluate project success.*

Therefore, a final subsidiary research question includes:

*How is a sense of belonging enabled through the implementation of the VM housing project?*

## 2.6 Radical Planning Theory

Radical planning was first introduced as a type of planning by Stephen Grabow and Allen Heskin (1973) in their book, *Foundations for a Radical Concept in Planning*. The radical planning model is most commonly linked into “multiple critical discourses about social transformation”, and it encompasses, above all else, communities planning for themselves (Sandercock, 1998: 97). As such, radical planning is a grassroots and place-based approach to planning that often includes professional planners (who are usually affiliated with non-profit organisations) as advisors, collaborators, or allies of a community’s desired spatial outcomes (Friedmann, 1987). The VM housing project undoubtedly resembles aspects of this radical approach to planning.

Leonie Sandercock (1998) unpacks the radical planning model in her book, *Towards Cosmopolis*. She highlights how the radical planning practice emerged in opposition to the existing “unequal relations and distributions of power, opportunity, and resources” (Sandercock, 1998: 97). Essentially, the goal of the radical planner is to work for the “transformation of systematic inequalities and, in the process, to empower those who have been systematically disempowered” (ibid).

However, Sandercock (op cit.: 98) possess the question: “What can planners do about any of these inequalities?” Many radical planners have given a range of answers to this question based on their own practice and experience of working with community members (Beard, 2003; Miraftab, 2009; Sletto, 2023). A common thread in all of the responses is learning to understand the tension between what is known as the professional planner and the radical practice itself.

Radical planning theory has thus “grown out of and been informed by experiences of oppositional practices and a tradition of social mobilisation” rather than relying on the state to secure equitable spatial outcomes, including the provision of formal housing (Sandercock, 1998: 98). Similarly, Heskin and Leavitt (1994: 127) maintain that in order to make a difference in the lives of the urban poor, an approach beyond the state is often required:

*Community-based groups who develop bottom-up programs are engaged in planning that occurs outside [of] the local planning establishment. At some point the people with whom I work will interact with either the planning establishment or other political bodies. The overall intent of this type of practice is not to create a plan as much as it is to generate a political process that involves plans or programs.*

In South Africa, a leading non-profit, non-governmental organisation that actively engages with communities is known as the Development Action Group (DAG). One way that they are able to adopt a more community centred approach to projects is through their Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. According to DAG, a livelihood comprises of “the capabilities, assets (material and social), and activities required for a means of living, whether informally or formally” (DAG, 2023: 2). Therefore, this approach is not just a means to survive, but looks at the capability for communities to thrive. The so called ‘livelihoods pentagon’ as illustrated in Figure 2.3 below, comprises of five asset capitals.

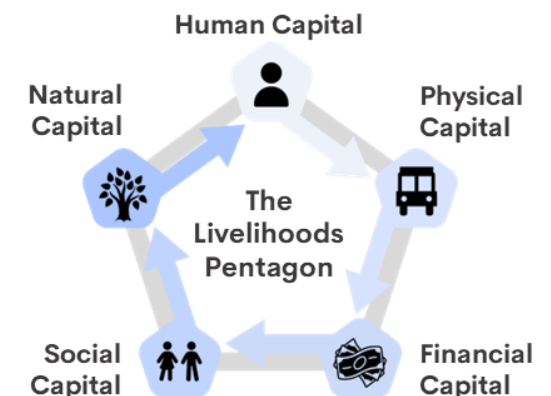


Figure 2.3: The Livelihood Pentagon Diagram (DAG, 2023).

In essence, livelihood strategies combine the assets participants can access while considering their vulnerabilities and the supported or obstructed policies, institutions, and processes. This results in a framework illustrated in Figure 2.4 below. This produces an integrated plan that seeks to address development, sustainable resource management, and poverty eradication simultaneously. More importantly, this plan is developed by and/or in collaboration with informal settlement communities that draws on their capabilities, assets, and resources of their community in relation to their needs and stresses.

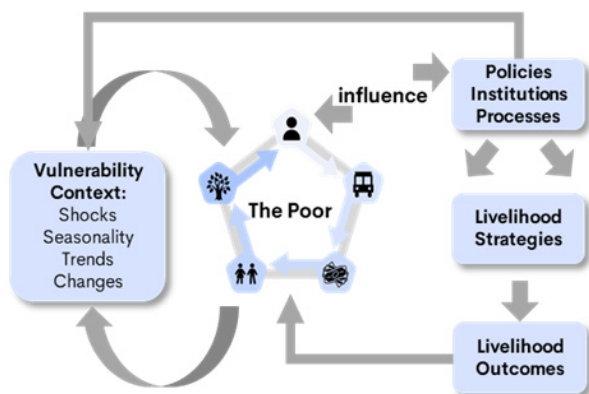


Figure 2.4: The Full Livelihoods Strategy Framework (DAG, 2023).

The approach by DAG echoes Sandercock's (1998: 99) radical praxis (drawn from Leavitt) that guides her approach to entering a community, namely:

*... gaining trust, allocating time, listening, arguing, and letting others speak. The primary requirement of this kind of community-based practice is allocating enormous amounts of time to 'hanging out' with the mobilised community.*

Adopting the radical praxis in this study (see Chapter 3) means that the role of the radical planner is never a 'top-down', pre-conceived approach. Rather, in working for social transformation in community-based organisations, the planner "acknowledges that theory and practice become everyone's concern and that the responsibilities for both are multiple and overlapping" (ibid). However, it is important to note that local knowledge and residents' lived experiences are central and extremely valuable to a radical planner.

This affirms DAG's approach to community engagement as they believe that informal communities already contain all the expertise that goes into building cities. One tool that allows DAG to spatialise the communities' assets and needs is through asset-based mapping. In short, this approach identifies three things: (1) the communities' resources, skills, and talents; (2) the communities' available capabilities; and (3) the communities' needs.

An example of what this could look like is demonstrated in Figure 2.5 below.

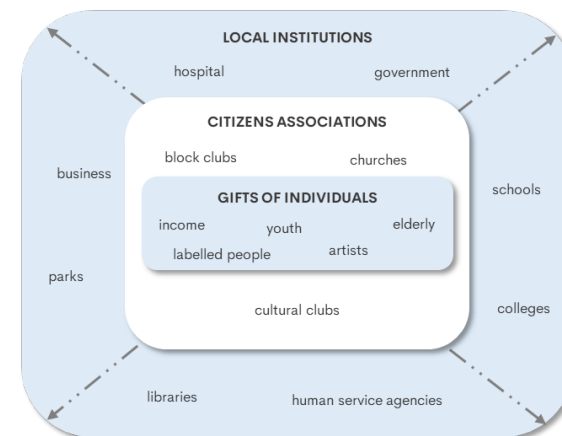


Figure 2.5: Community Asset Mapping (DAG, 2023).

Above all, radical practice depends for its effectiveness on interpersonal relations of trust (Friedmann, 1987: 402; Leavitt, 1994), and a social learning approach based on a "radical openness" (Hooks, 1990: 148).

A review of the radical planning literature necessitates establishing, by way of a subsidiary research question: *How are interpersonal relations of trust and social learning enabled via the VM housing project?*

Answers to this subsidiary research question speak to aspects of placemaking that might, in turn, promote a sense of community.

## 2.7 Black Feminism

The Black feminist movement is centred around the experiences of Black women, understanding their position in relation to racism, sexism, and classism, as well as other social and political identities (Mai-Nguyen, 2020). Mai-Nguyen (2020: 1) reveals that Black women have been excluded from “mainstream feminism because of their race, while simultaneously being excluded from black liberation movements because of their gender”. Similarly, Rebecca Matsie (2019: 3) reveals that “overlapping identities of age, gender, language, and physical ability form considerable layers of complexity within a community”. Black feminism therefore highlights and engages with the many aspects of identity that women embody, which is significant because it enables them to talk about being black in addition to talking about gender inequalities.

When it comes to academic writing, Black feminism is, however, poorly represented especially in research concerning housing in informal settlements. According to Barbara Boswell (2020: 2) this was intentional as:

*South African society has historically been organised in a way that systematically excluded black women from writing and other forms of cultural production. These systems worked on multiple levels not only*

*to disenfranchise black women and black subjects in general, but also to repress creativity and the capacity to dream. By curtailing the educational opportunities available to black women, politically disenfranchising them, and responding to anti-apartheid activism through censorship, imprisonment, violence and banning, the apartheid government effectively prohibited black women from the realm of literary production.*

As a result, the dynamics of gender relations can become complex and fragmented. This is particularly evident in the context of Cape Town, through the disparities in access to resources which are “biased towards male power and marginalise the voice, agency, and influence of women” (Matsie, 2019: 1).

Nevertheless, and according to Fayola Jacobs (2019: 27), the “late 1980s and early 1990s were transformative times for Black feminism”, since these times started to engage with Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989) conceptualisation of “intersectionality”. Thus, from the early 1990s onwards it became impossible to consider “axes of identities, such as race, class, and gender, separately” (Jacobs, 2019: 27). In fact, Patricia Hill Collins pushed Crenshaw’s work further in her 1990 book, *Black Feminist Thought*. The third edition of *Black Feminist Thought* states that Black feminism’s

aim is the realisation of a just community through “a process of self-conscious struggle that empowers women and men to actualize a humanist vision of community” (Hill Collins, 2009: 39). In her book, Hill Collins (ibid) identifies six distinguishing themes of Black feminism:

1. *the dialectical relationship between oppression and activism;*
2. *diverse responses to the challenges of sexism, racism and other forms of oppression facing Black women;*
3. *the heterogeneity of the Black women’s standpoints;*
4. *the importance of dialogue in knowledge creation;*
5. *the dynamic nature of Black feminism; and*
6. *Black feminism as being connected to a broader social justice agenda.*

*Hill Collins’ (2009) themes suggest exploring, via subsidiary research questions, what are the types of knowledges created through these dialectical relationships and processes?*

For example, Matsie (2019: 5) reveals an observation that showed a distinction in the settlement design priorities identified by men and women, stating that:

Women tend to raise more technical and vulnerability-related issues, such as safety concerns about the location of toilets or play parks. Women in informal settlements often fulfil the role of the primary child-carer, and so they are more attuned to the location of play parks in relation to harmful threats. Conversely, issues raised by men related more to political concerns, such as partisan representation on leadership structures. Participation by male residents appeared to be politicised with less engagement on substantive decisions regarding the upgrading project.

While it is important to avoid using these observations to reinforce stereotypes or reduce people to their gender identities, it is appropriate to draw attention to these distinctions for the purposes of redress. Therefore, additional subsidiary research questions ask:

how meaningfully were the VM women consulted and engaged with throughout the housing development process? And how were the VM women and community empowered through the housing project?

Answers to this subsidiary research questions also allow me to establish if and how women were (and remain) empowered through the project. In addition, as a woman of colour, answers to these subsidiary research ques-

tions allow me to expand on the Black feminist lens in academic writing, especially in the context of informality, and they allow me to demonstrate the strong links between Black feminism and radical planning.

Radical planning was born in response to the failings of rational comprehensive planning (Friedmann, 1987). Furthermore, radical planning, “uses dialectic processes to effect systemic change” (Jacobs, 2019: 28). Additionally, Jacobs (ibid) highlights that:

*According to Friedmann, a planner, committed to social justice, when presented with a problem must critically analyse the current situation, help mobilized communities identify and evaluate options, provide communities with data related to the problem, and assist the community with the technical aspects of solutions that they choose.*

This type of planner is therefore seen as a community ally who, by extension, is invested in collaborative learning and coproduction. In contrast, traditional planning has long been guilty of using a more ‘top-down’ and bureaucratic approach to planning which limits community members’ meaningful engagements and contributions to the planning process (Arnstein, 1969). Therefore, it is clear that both radical planning and Black feminism

speak to the necessity of community-led planning interventions via coproduction.

Therefore, a subsidiary research question includes, how was coproduction utilised in the VM organisation?

Another similarity between Black feminism and radical planning concerns the process of how knowledge is created. Black feminist thought involves two important onto-epistemological standpoints: “(1) lived experience [as] a way of knowing; and (2) knowledge [that] is created and validated through dialogue” (Jacobs, 2019: 29). These onto-epistemological provisos translate into radical planning, since community knowledge and residents’ lived experiences are central to the radical planning process and its desired spatial outcomes (Beard, 2003; Friedmann, 1987; Grabow and Heskin, 1973; Mirafteb, 2009).

Radical planning therefore argues that it is “only through the inclusion of this fundamental knowledge of oppression that the structures of oppression can be addressed, modified, and changed” (Jacobs, 2019: 29). This has been acknowledged by informal settlement upgrading practitioners who observe this in community participation processes.

Thirdly, Black feminist thought is an oppositional force as it considers not only how “Black women are oppressed by the patriarchy but also by capitalism and racism” (Guy-Evans, 2022: 1). Previously, oppression was understood from a one-dimensional perspective alone, namely from a race, or class, or gender perspective. But this mono-dimensional perspective erases the full embodiment of what Black women face and experience, as it erases multidimensional oppressions (Hill Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Crenshaw (1989: 142) illustrates this by arguing that:

*In one of the cases, the courts denied the legitimacy of the plaintiffs’ claims of workplace discrimination based on race and gender arguing that to rule in favour of the plaintiffs would result in the creation of new classes of protected minorities, governed only by the mathematical principles of permutations and combination [which] clearly raises the prospect of opening the hackneyed Pandora’s box.*

In other words, the Black feminist understands the complexity and multidimensional layers of oppression which includes, but are not limited to, racism, classism, and sexism. Therefore, there is a great responsibility on those who theorise about and understand oppression to act on their own knowledge and experiences of multidimensional oppres-

sions, as this multidimensionality is key to the “actualization of Black feminism” (Hill Collins, 2009: 25). Hill Collins (ibid) further identifies how to push back against systems of oppression:

*By promoting equity within existing organizations, by advocating for laws to be changed, by striving for self-definition and freedom, and by changing the nature of their problematic relationships with people, organisations, and systems.*

*Therefore, a final subsidiary research question includes: How is equity, self-definition and freedom enabled within the VM housing project?*

As a planner, it is important to question and challenge the systemic structural forces that continue to reinforce unjust systems and outcomes (Beard, 2003; Grabow and Heskin, 1973; Miraftab, 2009; Whittemore, 2015). However, as highlighted in Chapter 1, gender inequality extends into access and ownership of land. This has been acknowledged by Ismail (2015: 1) who demonstrates that women have:

*suffered from a lack of access to land, housing and finance, especially African women who were pe-*

*nalised under both apartheid and customary laws. Land and housing were allocated to families via male ‘heads of households’ and African women were considered minors under the law and therefore could not own property or access finances. This situation created racialised and gendered patterns of poverty and inequity.*

This is important as Miraftab (2001: 154,156) argues that land and housing is critical to women in many ways, stating that:

*Housing is a key resource for women; it is an asset important to their economic condition and central to their physical and social well-being. It is the site of child rearing and income generation and a nexus for social networks of support and community-based reliance... Housing is a significant economic asset to women that contributes to their independence, economic security, and bargaining power with men in their households and in society at large. Most importantly, it helps women determine their own futures and make the decisions that affect their lives.*

Despite the establishment of democracy, many South African women are still unable to access land, housing, power over resources and decision-making that would make their citizenship substantive and meaningful (McEwan, 2005). In other words, women are still largely divorced from structures of gover-

## 2.8 Conclusion

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nance at the local level, which reveals another aspect of the problem under study.

This chapter aimed to establish a theoretical framework through which findings from this research can be analysed (see Chapter 4). Key concepts and theories were defined, and subsidiary research questions were established. Table 2.3 on page 41 presents the main research questions, the literature review themes discussed in this chapter, the assessment criteria, and the subsidiary research questions that are derived from the literature review. It is to the research methods and techniques employed that this dissertation now turns.



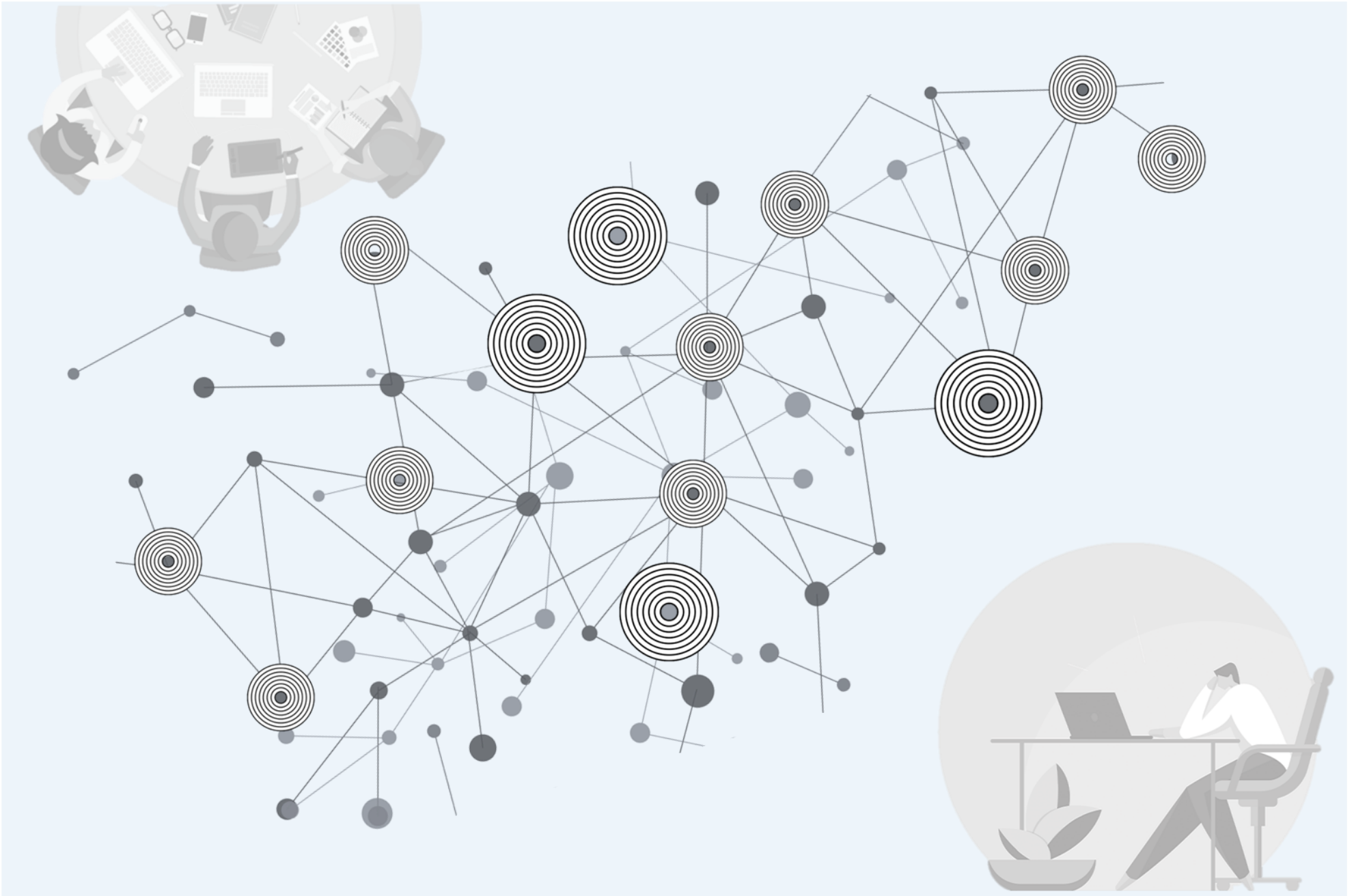
**TABLE 2.3: SUMMARY**

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES:	THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
<p><b>What is the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements?</b></p> <p><b>How is this organisation enabling a sense of community through placemaking principles;</b></p> <p><b>and what might planners learn from this gendered approach?</b></p>	<p><b>(1) The Victoria Mxenge Housing Project</b></p>	<p>i. The importance of a women-led organisation</p>	<p>a. Why was it important being a women-led organisation?</p>
	<p><b>(2) Review of Post-Apartheid South African Housing Legislation</b></p> <p>The Constitution</p> <p>The Housing Act</p> <p>The Municipal Systems Act</p> <p>PHP/ePHP</p>	<p>ii. Housing policy alignment</p> <p>iii. The status of the PHP/ePHP programme</p> <p>iv. The relevance of the PHP/ePHP programme</p>	<p>b. How holistic is the housing programmes in protection women's housing rights?</p> <p>c. How co-operative were the different spheres of government during the implementation of the VM housing project?</p> <p>d. What are the intergovernmental relations like in housing development processes?</p> <p>e. Why is the PHP/ePHP programme not being used anymore?</p> <p>f. Is the PHP/ePHP programme still needed? Are there aspects of the policy that needs improvement?</p> <p>g. What skills were transferred during the project and between whom were these skills transferred?</p> <p>h. Is there a difference in quality of housing and quality of life between the PHP housing and BNG housing?</p>
	<p><b>(3) Housing Delivery and Placemaking</b></p>	<p>vi. Contextual meaning</p>	<p>i. How does contextual meaning inform the implementation of the VM housing project?</p> <p>j. How is a sense of belonging enabled through the implementation of the VM housing project?</p> <p>k. How has the implementation of the VM housing project enabled a sense of uniqueness, balance, symbolism, and legibility; and do any of these placemaking criteria promote a sense of community?</p>
	<p><b>(4) Radical Planning Theory</b></p>	<p>vii. Trust and social learning</p>	<p>l. How are interpersonal relations of trust and social learning enabled via the VM housing project?</p>
	<p><b>(5) Black Feminism</b></p>	<p>viii. Meaningful engagement</p>	<p>m. What are the types of knowledges are created through these dialectical relationships and processes?</p> <p>n. How was coproduction utilised in the VM organisation?</p> <p>o. How meaningfully were the VM women consulted and engaged with throughout the housing development process?</p> <p>p. How were the VM women and community empowered through the housing project?</p> <p>q. How is equity, self-definition and freedom enabled within the VM housing project?</p>
<p><b>3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>5 LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES</b></p>	<p><b>7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIONS</b></p>	<p><b>17 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b></p>

Table 2.3: Summary (Author, 2023).

# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH METHODS & TECHNIQUES



## 3.1 Introduction

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The main and subsidiary research questions were presented in Chapters 1 and 2 respectively and summarised in Table 2.3. This chapter will outline the research methods and techniques that were followed in order to gain answers to these questions.

In the first section of this chapter, the research methods, namely case study and discourse analysis methods, will be outlined.

This will be followed by a discussion on the research techniques utilised, namely individual and focus group interviews, and mapping. The limitations of each method and technique are discussed and addressed in each section.

Then this chapter outlines sampling procedures, followed by a discussion of how data is analysed.

The final section discusses the ethical considerations that arise out of this research, as well as how they are dealt with. It is to the discussion of the research methods that the chapter now turns.

## 3.2 Research Methods

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Research is the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Williams (2007: 65) defines the research process as:

*Systematic in that defining the objective, managing the data, and communicating the findings occur within established frameworks and in accordance with existing guidelines. The frameworks and guidelines provide researchers with an indication of what to include in the research, how to perform the research, and what types of inferences are probable based on the data collected.*

The three common approaches to conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches. Sheard (2018: 430) states that "quantitative research deals with data that are numerical or that can be converted into numbers". In other words, the basic methods used to investigate quantitative or numerical data is through statistics. By contrast, Bhandari (2023: 1) states that "qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate innovative ideas for research".

Thirdly, George (2022: 1) states that "mixed methods research combines and integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single research study. It involves collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data to understand a phenomenon better and answer the research questions".

Therefore, since the main research questions entail answering 'how' and 'what' questions; and the research aim investigates people's experiences, their relationships between people and spaces, and how organisations function, qualitative research methods are used for this study. Qualitative research methods will allow me to explore and narrate events, processes and outcomes occurring in the case under study, namely the Victoria Mxenge (VM) Housing Project and its surrounding context. To this end, case study research methods and discourse analysis are employed.

### 3.2.1 Case Study Method

The case study is an in-depth investigation of an area, its development, and occurrences (Flyvbjerg, 2011). According to Yin (2018), the aim of a case study is to examine events, situations, or other real-life facts within their context where the boundaries between the 'case' and the context are not clearly defined.

This research method can therefore give rich knowledge of women's struggles in radical planning and how they navigate the terrain of informal settlement upgrading and planning within the South African context.

Another advantage is that case study methods allow for flexibility and innovation, which are necessary as data is collected from research participants. This allows for the capturing and telling of unforeseen circumstances and probing of questions. This then means that the case study is highly adaptable to its context (Duminy et al., 2014). Lastly, case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, thereby allowing for verifying, corroborating, and triangulating the research findings. This is important as it reveals the way a multiplicity of factors interact to produce the unique character of the entity under study.

However, as a researcher, I was aware of the limitations of case study research methods. These limitations include verifying collected data based on my own biases and subjective knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2011). To address this limitation, I used triangulation techniques that allowed me to collect research findings from diverse sources, including secondary sources such as history books, newspapers, and articles from journals and websites.

Babbie and Mouton (2002) maintain that the greatest weakness of the case study is its inability to generalise from research findings. However, despite recognising this as a weakness of the case study method, it must be pointed out that the aim of my research was not to generalise any of the findings. Rather, the aim of using case study research methods was to explore the impact of a women-led organisation on housing formalisation, how this organisation enables a sense of community through placemaking principles, and what planners might learn from the VM Housing Project's gendered approach.

### **3.2.2 Discourse Analysis**

Cummings et al. (2020: 99) state that discourse analysis is "a collective name for a number of scientific methodologies for analysing semiosis, namely how meaning is created and communicated through written, vocal or sign language". In other words, it is an approach to analysing written, verbal, and other texts (Winkler, 2022). More specifically, political/policy discourse analysis "focuses on discourses in political fora (such as public debates, speeches, hearings) and in written texts (public policies or guidelines, legislation)" (op cit.: 9). Therefore, it is a very useful tool for analysing planning policies, as well as

housing and land law (ibid). The value of discourse analysis was highlighted by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002: 64), who argue that:

*In the name of emancipation, critical discourse analytical approaches take the side of oppressed social groups. Critique aims to uncover the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of unequal power relations, with the overall goal of harnessing the results of critical discourse analysis to the struggle for radical social change.*

Therefore, this research method allowed me to analyse policy documents and reveal any inner biases and claims in a systemic, structured way. However, in terms of its limitations, discourse analysis is also subject to my biases as a researcher and my interpretation of the policies, legislation, texts under study.

### 3.3 Research Techniques

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Data was collected via the use of qualitative research techniques including interviewing and mapping in order to answer the research questions. These techniques have their own advantages and limitations which I will address below.

#### 3.3.1 Interviews

All interviews in this study were conducted in a semi-structured format. Semi-structured interviews are verbal interchanges in which the researcher asks questions to obtain information from the research participant (Longhurst, 2003: 1). The interview is based on established and open-ended questions, which allows for a more natural conversation. This also allows for greater flexibility, and personal interactions during the interviews. Thus, it creates an environment where I could start to build trust and a relationship between me (as the researcher) and the research participants. Through choosing interviews as a method of data collection I hoped to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences through dialogue and through the language that they use in constructing the different discourses.

Building trust with the participants was important in the interaction or relationship and

makes it easy for the participants to share their own experiences without fear of being judged. The research participants exhibit linguistic diversity encompassing English, Xhosa, and Afrikaans. Consequently, provision was made for an interpreter, albeit ultimately unnecessary as all participants demonstrated proficiency and ease in conversing in English.

#### (i) Face-to-face interviews

Opdenakker (2006) identifies a number of key advantages to this form of interviewing. Firstly, this interview technique can take advantage of social cues (ibid). This is extremely useful as it provides extra information that can be added to the verbal answer to a question. By using face-to-face interviews, I could gather deeper insights and gain richer descriptions of how the women felt during the Victoria Mxenge Housing Project from non-verbal responses to answers. Another advantage was the use of recording and transcribing of the interviews, where consent was given, which allowed me to gain accurate, unedited, accounts of the participants' experiences.

#### (ii) Focus group interviews

Richard et al. (1996: 449) define focus groups as:

*Groups of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research. As a research technique, the focus group employs guided, interactional discussion as a means of generating the rich details of complex experiences and the reasoning behind [an individual's] actions, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes.*

I utilised this research technique when I needed to identify a full range of perspectives. The focus group allowed me to address a group of participants as a collective which made for more ease of conversation than the more formal one-on-one interview technique. Focus groups are flexible enough to be sensitive to the personal agenda of participants and draw upon an explicit interactional quality to elicit divergent ideas and experiences rather than seeking a consensus. In this respect, the focus group was an ideal means of generating hypotheses, of investigating unexplored areas of human experience and of clarifying ambiguous ones.

In terms of the limitation, a significant factor was that the process of interviewing, making notes, recording, transcribing, and confirming the correct interpretations with the participants was extremely time consuming. Thus, in order to address this limitation, I al-

lowed enough time in the data collecting process to capture and synthesise the findings in order to gain a rich and insightful knowledge into the case study.

A second limitation for interviewing lies in regard to personal assumptions and listening carefully. In the book *Who Knows*, Sandercock (2003) writes about John Forester's thoughts on talking and listening. She reveals that "Forester emphasizes the political nature of all planning activity, in which relations of power are always involved and systemic inequalities influence outcomes" (Sandercock, 2003: 67). Sandercock reminds us to "be aware of systemic inequalities" and "work to redress them" (ibid). Therefore, to combat this, I reflected on the interviewing process and made sure that there was adequate representation as well as making sure everyone felt heard, not just a few. I listened deeply and learnt to probe responses to better understand the stories shared with me.

Lastly, I understand the complexity of mediating, conducting, and transcribing interviews, so to best prepare, I referred to John Foster's (2006) *Making Participation Work When Interests Conflict* to better my mediating and people skills. Foster (2006: 447) demonstrates that "planning done well organises hope,

enhancing our abilities to imagine our communities as we might yet really live in them, while planning done poorly diminishes what we imagine we can do, weakens our hope, and discourages action". This highlights how mediation is centred around the desire to satisfy real interest, to meet needs and diminish suffering. This is important as fostering dialogue can promote understanding and mutual trust between parties. Thus, Foster (op cit.: 454) reinforces how planners must "be clear with themselves and community members alike" by posing the question "are we here to foster a dialogue, to moderate a debate between perspectives, or to reframe proposals and agree together upon a plan of action?" (ibid). Similarly, I refer to Roulston et al. (2003) *Learning to Interview in the Social Sciences* to better my interview reflection, and transcription processes.

### 3.3.2 Mapping

Maps are essential tools of city planning. Not only is mapping one of the primary means whereby the planner can summarise the spatial characteristics of a community, but it is often the only way in which a sustained overall view of the community can be obtained. But critical research that works with humans must be ethical and intentional inquiry (Marx,

2023). Marx (2023) references Denzin's (2017) eloquent summary of key aims of ethical qualitative research, explaining that such research:

- places the oppressed at the centre of inquiry;
- uses inquiry to reveal sites for change and activism;
- uses inquiry and activism to help people;
- affects social policy by getting critiques heard and acted on by policy makers; and
- affects changes in the inquirer's life, thereby serving as a model of change for others.

- (Marx, 2023: 286).

However, mapping does have its limitations. They do not show the spirit and life of the community. According to the American Planning Association (1951: 1) the planner is continually faced with the problems of:

1. deciding which data are amenable to map presentation,
2. in what form and by what symbols the data are to be presented on the map, and
3. to what uses the maps may be put. This latter point is extremely important.

To combat subjective limitation of mapping, I draw from a variety of actors involved with my case study area in order to mitigate biases.

### 3.4 Sampling

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This research made use of a purposive approach to sampling. Purposive sampling is useful as it ensures that all constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered (Silverman, 1997). Additionally, it ensures diversity and plurality of perspectives. When looking at legislation, post-apartheid legislation and policies were selected based on their relevance to accessing housing and the VM Housing Project. Interview participants were selected based on their experiences, perspectives, and roles within the government housing mechanisms and the VM Housing Project.

In addition to the initial use of purposive sampling, a snowballing approach to sampling was also used. This approach involves asking participants who have already been interviewed to identify further participants. This is useful as it allows me to access participants that I would not have previously known. However, this approach can lead to a lack of diversity and the reaffiliation of similar perspectives and experiences. This is mitigated by clearly defining the characteristics of the required participant when asking previously interviewed participants. Additionally, by asking previously interviewed participants to identify participants who have differing opinions, this problem can be avoided (Silverman, 1997).

Interviews were conducted with a variety of participants in order to get a multi-faceted understanding of the situation. These include the VM women and Salma Ismail (the author of the VM housing project book). Additionally, I interviewed staff from the Western Cape Government who actively engage in PHP housing projects. Similarly, I engaged with NGOs/NPOs such as the Development Action Group (DAG) and the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP). Both organisations have been actively involved in community-based projects in informal settlements as well as with women empowerment and the PHP/ePHP housing delivery mechanism.

It is therefore clear that a variety of participants from different stakeholders were considered for this research: Provincial government, NGOs/NPOs, an academic, and community members. This variety allowed for data to be collected from multiple sources and, thus, ensured 'triangulation'.

### 3.5 Analysis of Research Findings

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The aim of the data analysis phase of the research process was to make sense of the data that was collected. This involved four thorough steps:

1. Transcribing, ordering, and structuring the data;
2. Organising and prioritising the data;
3. Re-presenting the data; and
4. Confirming the transcriptions with the various participants.

All interviews conducted were consented to and digitally recorded. This allowed me to be fully engaged and actively listening to the participants as there was no need to multitask during by focusing on listening and writing down. This allowed for rich responses and a relaxed interview atmosphere. However, transcribing and structuring was a time-consuming task. The real challenge was organising and prioritising data based on the assessment criteria and subsidiary research questions established in the theoretical framework (see Chapter 2). This allowed for an exploration of diverse arguments as well as the testing of these arguments in the context of this research. Sharing my research findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of my interpretations of the data was crucial as it aligns with my ethical approach to this research.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

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This research involved factors that warrant ethical consideration. Such, ethical considerations are crucial when applying the case study method because it entails documenting contemporary human affairs in its real-life context. Thus, protecting the rights of the subjects becomes imperative. As part of the protection, I conducted the case study method with care, sensitivity, honesty, and integrity. This was achieved throughout the separate phases of my research in three ways:

Firstly, ethics approval was gained from the University of Cape Town's Engineering and Built Environment Research Committee (EBE ERC) at the start of the research process. Proof of Ethics Approval can be seen in Appendix A.

Secondly, during the data collection process, I made sure to gain informed consent from all persons who were part of the case study, by alerting them to the nature of the case study and formally soliciting their voluntary participation in the study. Privacy and confidentiality is important, and I requested consent from participants to use their names in this research. Where participants preferred to remain anonymous in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality, this was respected.

Moreover, I took special precautions to protect especially vulnerable groups.

Thirdly, after data collection, I shared my research findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of my interpretations of the data and to allow participants to correct any misinterpretations.

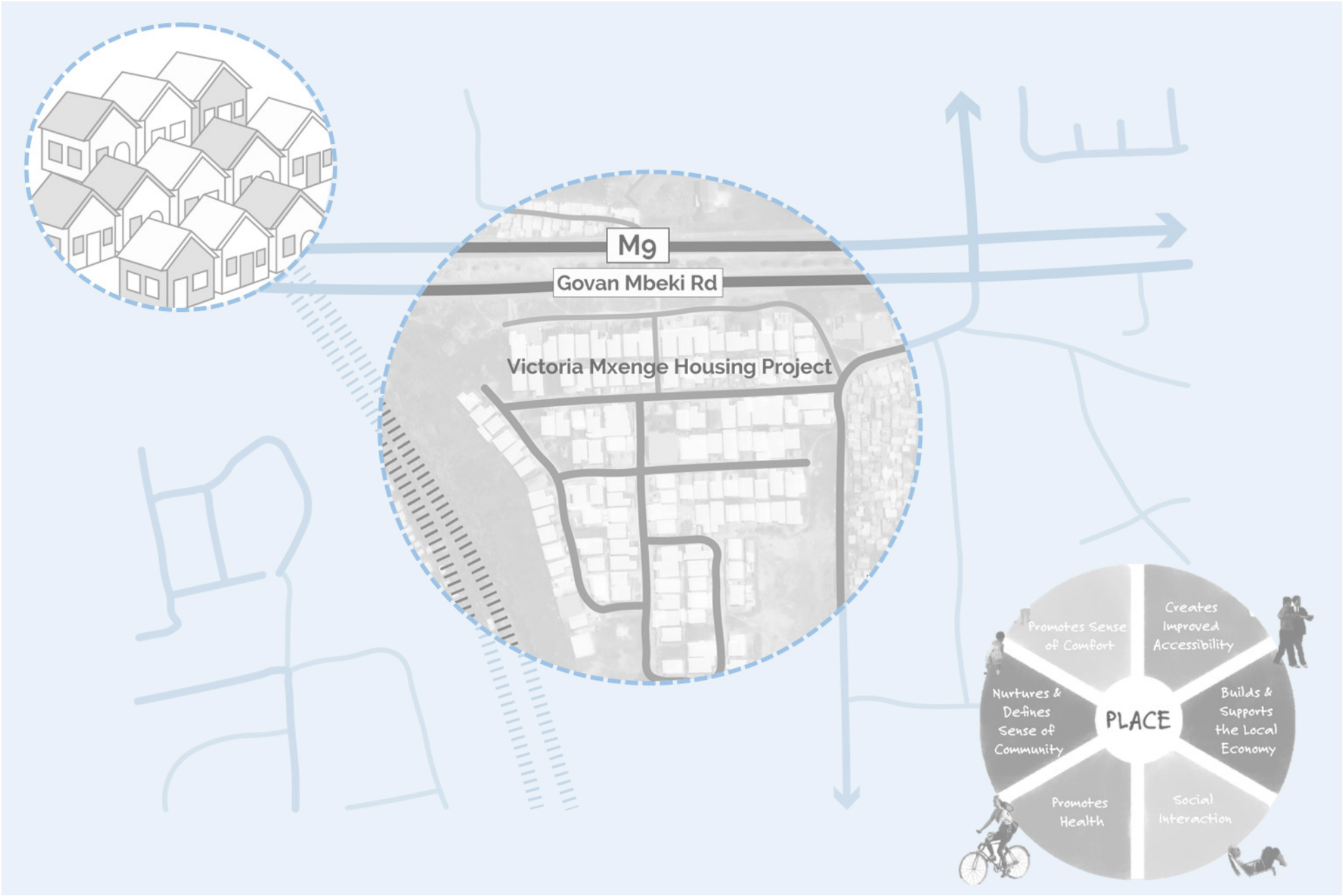
### 3.7 Conclusion

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This chapter outlined the research methods and techniques that were followed in this research, as well as their strengths and limitations. Additionally, sampling procedures and data analysis were explained and evaluated. The chapter concluded with the ethical considerations. It is to a discussion of the research findings and analysis that this dissertation now turns.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH FINDINGS & ANALYSIS



## 4.1 Introduction

The research findings – which are based on the perceptions of Provincial government, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), Nonprofit Organisations (NPOs), an academic, and community members – reveal an interesting story regarding the relationship between housing and women in the informal settlements of Cape Town. This chapter will describe the case study area and set out the findings and analysis from the research, concluding with a table which pulls all the elements together.

The aim of this chapter is to present and analyse the findings in relation to the primary and subsidiary research questions developed in Chapters 1 and 2. In doing so, the discussion in this chapter establishes the links and discontinuities between the arguments presented in Chapter 2 and the research findings. To this end, the chapter is structured as follows: the first section begins with an overview of the study area. This leads to the presentation and analysis of the research findings in the second section. To conclude, I include a table which presents a summary of the findings in relation to the five literature review themes, the seven assessment criteria, and the seventeen subsidiary research questions derived from the literature reviewed (see Chapter 2). It is to the context of the case under study area that the chapter now turns.

## 4.2 The Case Study Area: Philippi, Cape Town

Philippi is a large urban and semi-urban area in the Western Cape, South Africa. Philippi itself lies in the east, sandwiched between the residential areas of Ottery, Grassy Park, Zee-koevlei, Mitchells Plain, Crossroads, and Manenberg on what is known as The Cape Flats (see Figure 4.1 on the right). As depicted in Figure 4.2 on page 53, Philippi is divided into two sections, the first, western section being the Philippi Farmlands, known as the Philippi Horticultural Area. The horticultural area is sparsely populated compared to the surrounding city and contains many farms supplying fresh produce to the city.

Historically, it was to the Cape Flats townships that people were forcibly moved under apartheid legislation that separated the races. Philippi was formed in the 1980s, at more-or-less the same time as Khayelitsha and Delft. During apartheid it was a battleground, and today still faces huge challenges of poverty, unemployment, overcrowding and susceptibility to fire and flooding.

Figure 4.3 on page 54 shows the location of the Victoria Mxenge (VM) Housing Project within Philippi with Govan Mbeki Road to the north, the Ramaphosa Informal Settlement to the east, and the Sweet Home Informal Settlement to the west. Over the course

of the project the VM women were able to build three community structures which can be seen in blue, namely, the Nozuko Educare Centre, the Victoria Mxenge Centre, and the Ikhaya Educare Centre.

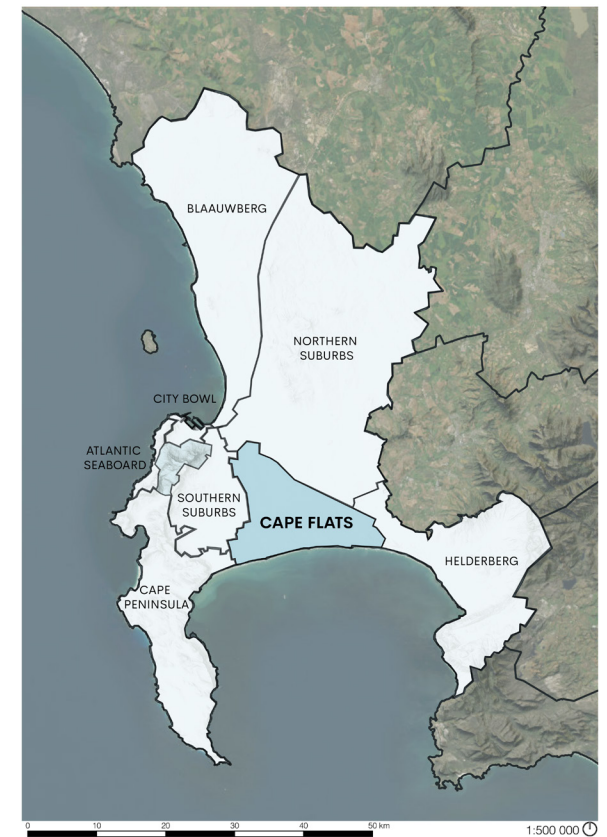


Figure 4.1: City of Cape Town Map (Source: QGIS Development Team, 2023; Map Illustration: Author, 2023).



Figure 4.2: Philippi Case Study Area Contextual Map (Source: QGIS Development Team, 2023; Map Illustration: Author, 2023).

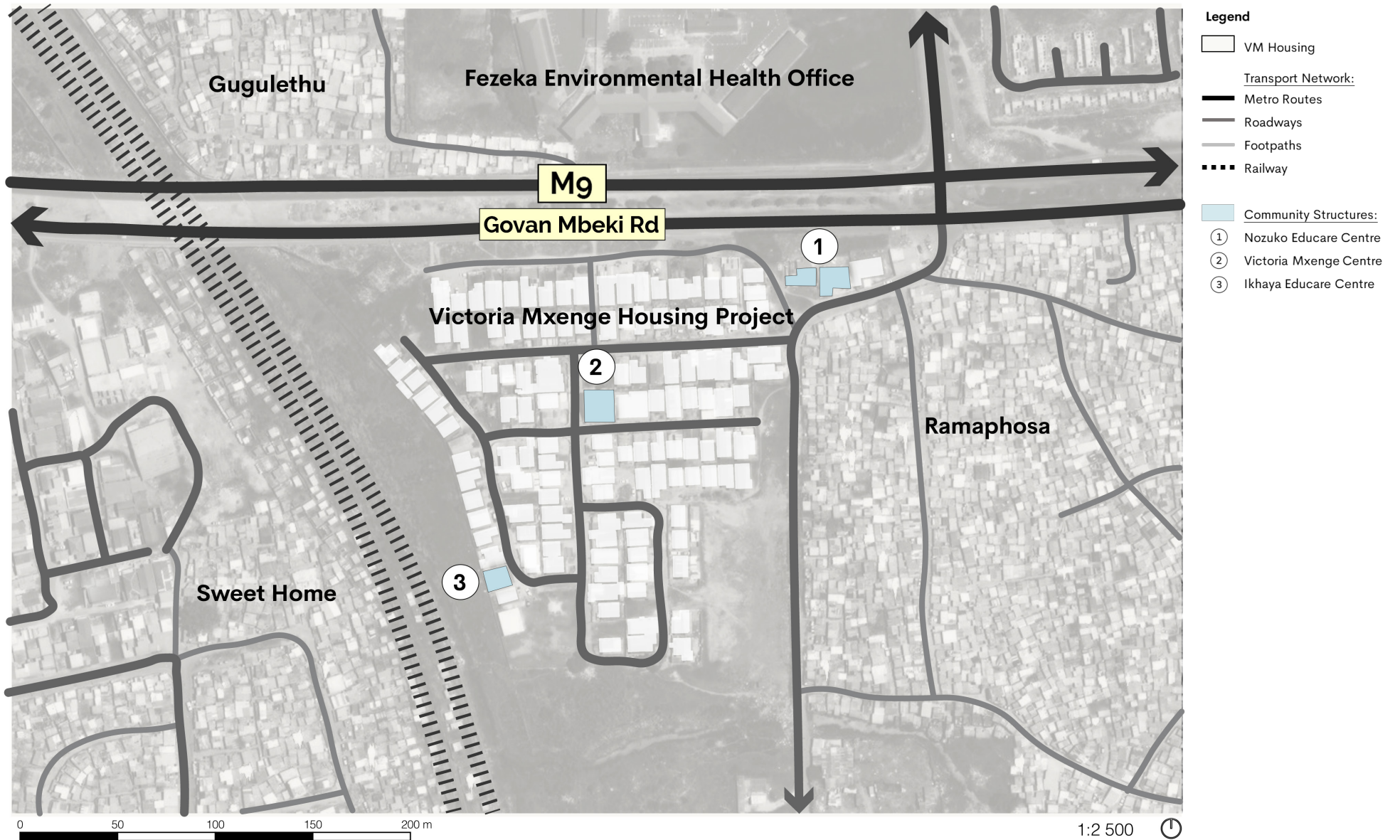


Figure 4.3: Victoria Mxenge Housing Project Contextual Map (Source: QGIS Development Team, 2023; Map Illustration: Author, 2023).

## 4.3 Assessment Criteria derived from the Literature Review

This section critically analyses the VM Housing Project against the seven assessment criteria established from the literature reviewed (see Table 2.3).

### 4.3.1 The importance of a women-led organisation

Patricia Matolengwe, the leader of the VM organisation, identified in her interview why it is so important that the organisation is a women-led organisation.

*The importance of that... it is about teaching the women the security of tenure, security of ownership, because after divorce, the women and children suffer the consequences and if the ownership is in the name of the man, the children are just being abandoned somewhere and we have been trying to say to the women, let's stand up. That was some of the reasons for us to engage with the PHP programme like this, to try and secure the future and the roof on our children. You would be surprised. It happens so fast; you don't know how, and these divorces are unfair to women where the women get chased out with the children to squatter [areas] and they aren't going to qualify anymore for housing. Those are the inequalities we are fighting.*

- (Matolengwe, interview, 14 August 2023).

Matolengwe's views reflect those of Salma Ismail, the author of "The Victoria Mxenge Housing Project" (2015), who stated that:

*the key lesson in the VM's struggle is that they, firstly they had a gendered response to the housing crisis. It was for their families and their children. So, as in women's struggle there is a gendered response. It was both a strategic response and it was also a response to an immediate need. But for them [VM], because of some of the women's experience with the Crossroads struggle, they didn't want men in the organisation because their experiences with men were bad.*

- (Ismail, interview, 18 August 2023).

This is not something unique to the VM project. When interviewing Rose Molokoane, a co-founder and national coordinator of FED-UP, she argued that:

*When we started our organisation, we realised that it is important that we empower our women because they are the one[s] taking care of the family and then when it comes to household financial management, we realised that women are good in doing that. That is why in our organisation, we said we want to have 95% percent participation of women.*

- (Molokoane, interview, 22 August 2023).

### 4.3.2 Housing policy alignment

Contrary to the literature on housing and equality discussed in Chapter 2, the research findings reveal how the government often fails to uphold its principles of inclusivity as stated in Chapter 2, Section 9, of the Constitution (RSA, 1996). Moreover, the state also fails to uphold Chapter 3, Section 41, of the Constitution which lists the principles that should apply to the cooperation of the government (ibid). This failure is demonstrated via the VM project, as well as other people-led housing projects within the wider Cape Town metropolitan area. For example, Salma Ismail divulges how:

*it was an enormous struggle to firstly get a communal title deed and after this was refused to get individual title deeds, and it [is] only now that the title deed battle will be solved, Patricia called me a few weeks back and said that they will finally be getting their title deeds. I mean they built these houses 20 odd years ago... 1996 and they [are] only getting that now [in 2023]. But that shows you how the state... we talked about the state and women, how the state is such a patriarchal state, they dragged their feet, they threw them with all kinds of legislation.*

- (Ismail, interview, 18 August 2023).

When I asked Patricia Matolengwe, from the VM organisation about this, she explained that:

*They [the local government] don't care what they are doing to us. For example, even today, we currently have a 309-unit housing project, but they [the local municipality] said that they can't be our accountant administrator as a city and when we were asking why, they just kept saying that the city can't be our accountant administrator, so the CEO of the human settlements ended up being the one who is our CFO, our accountant administrator because the city rejected us. We still don't know why. I am still interested to know why.*

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

Similarly, in another example, Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP, confesses how:

*It's a talk show not a work show. They talk to us, but they don't do what they are talking to us. In Cape Town we are having a very big piece of land where we wanted to build houses. We agreed with the province in Cape Town, in Western Cape, to say let's do co-production of this land we will offer you. We even agree to give them a very big chunk of land. So that they can build for their people and then we also build for our people. But it's still hanging because they are not sure whether they should work with us*

*or not.*

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

This illustrates that despite the establishment of a democratic state, and principles enshrined in the Constitution and legislation, women-led organisations still experience discrimination, and battle to gain cooperation from the state. Salma Ismail demonstrated this when she stated that: "the state and their patriarchal ways still didn't want women to own houses" (interview, 18 August 2023).

When it comes to housing development projects, it is critical to understand the somewhat complicated roles and responsibilities of each sphere of government. Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP summed this up as follows:

*The implementing agent for government is municipalities and the allocation for funding is national government, because they receive business plans from different provincial government through the need from the municipalities. So, if we do a proposal for funding, we do it to the provincial department and then if our project gets successful, then we will get funding through the provincial government, with the support of the municipality where we will be building houses. That's the protocol that is happening.*

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

Therefore, in order to understand where the challenges in getting approval lie, Ms Molokoane stated that:

*what we realised is that the working relationship of national government and provincial governments, it's not so conducive. It doesn't have a conducive atmosphere. They agree with the policy but with the implementation, they do different things. Then, when you go to municipality level, they also want to do their own thing because they want to do it developer-driven rather than community-driven. So, we become a target of problem because when you go to the municipality, they say "no, we don't have that allocation. You are not in our business plan". You go to the to the province, the province will tell you. "the business plan from the municipality doesn't accommodate you". So, we have sent the business plan to national, and you are not accommodated there. National says, "maybe if there's some surplus of funding, we will address you". Blah blah blah, all those kinds of excuses. So, what we realized is that the relationship of these 3 spheres of government, is the one that is having a lot of bureaucracy.*

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

This research finding is contrary to Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.1) of the Constitution which holds all spheres of government accountable to:

1. provide effective, transparent, accountable, and coherent government for the Republic as a whole;
2. respect the constitutional status, institutions, powers and functions of government in the other spheres;
3. co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith;
4. foster friendly relations;
5. assist and support one another;
6. inform one another of, and consult one another on, matters of common interest;
7. coordinate their actions and legislation with one another;
8. adhere to agreed procedures; and
9. avoid legal proceedings against one another.

- (RSA, 1996: 21).

When discussing this concern regarding the state's inability to uphold its statutory requirements with Ryan Fester — a planning practitioner based at a local non-profit organisation, the Development Action Group (DAG)— he expressed that:

*building relationships between local government and community-driven housing projects is critical. However, there are certain parameters which Government has to operate in. for example, key performance indicators, departmental budgets, deadlines which may undermine the ability of officials to be*

*relational in housing projects.*

- (Fester, interview, 4 August 2023).

Fester therefore brought to light an interesting perspective of how communities overlook city officials, and only see politics. In contrast, Patricia Matolengwe, leader of the VM organisation, argued that politics isn't on their priority list when it comes to the housing process by emphasising that:

*to me it doesn't make any difference. Why I am saying that? Because I am that person that is balancing my politics. I mean, even during that time when we were starting our project, we have been able to engage with the change in Ministers. We make it a point to say that we are engaging in a partnership with the state because we are talking about the housing project, not the politics. That is not important to us.*

- (Matolengwe, interview, 14 August 2023).

In order to address this potential friction between the state and community, Ryan Fester, from DAG, explained that the Enhanced Peoples Housing Process (ePHP) policy mobilises communities to engage more effectively with the state:

*the Community Resource Organisation [CRO] in the EPHP policy is so good because it allows the community to rather work with an NGO who's not political but also has the expertise and the capacity to take this forward. But when the community works directly with local Government, it can undermine community confidence in the process.*

- (Fester, interview, 4 August 2023).

Similarly, Salma Ismail notes that:

*I would agree that NGO involvement with technical skills and knowledge is beneficial and needed. Although I must say that now the VM women could do build houses. However, it is the City that doesn't have any confidences in the communities. The City is interested in a body, a formal body. The city was only confident in the VM women when they were with People's Dialogue, that went well. And I mean the VM women were very well known for their successes but still, building houses is still seen as a masculine occupation and certified skills acquired formally always wins out.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP, noted that it is often a battle to get the state to actively engage with community organisations and promote community involvement.

She pointed out:

*As I am telling you now, the last time when we built houses, we were able to build over 20,000 houses but after that we had difficulties to get subsidies, up until today. Then on the issue, because initially the Minister of Human Settlements was not sure on how we are doing our things, but she agreed that she would like to meet with us so that we can try and talk because I told her that I would like us to talk to you about PHP because that directorate of PHP is still there, nationally. It is still recognised. It's still having officials who are dealing with it, but the problem is in the provinces where they don't want to recognise the PHP [or the revised ePHP]. They engage with us, but they are not practicing what they are engaging with us. So, we would like to go again to inform the Minister so that the Minister can clearly understand what we mean about a people's housing process.*

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

These research findings uncover the perception that government at all levels appears to be paying "lip service" only, when it comes to communities and community organisations, and not fully meeting their constitutional mandate itemised above. The research findings illustrate a disconnect between the state's role and mandates, and the day-to-

day performances and activities happening on the ground in South Africa's informal settlements.

This research explicitly set out to understand the extent to which the state engages with women-led organisations for the purpose of facilitating resident-involved housing developments. But these findings show that due to bureaucratic government processes and inadequate state support, the VM women struggled for more than twenty years to gain ownership of their homes. This illustrates that the state's requirement to for equality and co-operative has been ignored.

#### **4.3.3 The status of the PHP/ ePHP programme**

The PHP/ePHP policy is highly favoured amongst communities as it enables citizens to actively participate and contribute to their own housing development processes. However, the research found that since the revised ePHP policy of 2009, no housing projects within the Western Cape have utilised this programme (Gontsana, interview, 2 August 2023).

Malibongwe Gontsana, assistant director in the Department of Infrastructure for the

Western Cape Government, was interviewed to gain an understanding of how active the PHP/ePHP policy is in the Western Cape. In the interview, he referenced only the PHP, not the revised ePHP. When he was requested to clarify this, he responded that:

*[They're] not separate [the PHP and ePHP policy], it's not supposed to be separate, because the ePHP policy came in around 2009. So, in other words, everything that has to do with the old PHP of 1994 or 1995 then ceased and then the ePHP had to take over. That was a National policy. However, unfortunately in the Western Cape we didn't actually implement the ePHP as in other provinces.*

- (Gontsana, interview, 2 August 2023).

When I asked why, he proceeded to illustrate that:

*OK, for example, it says you must establish a Community Resource Organisation [CRO]. So, you must establish that in order to be in line with the ePHP policy, you see. Yeah. So, the difference is that people would just establish on their own community resource organisation you see, on their own.*

- (Gontsana, Interview, 2 August 2023).

Based on this explanation, one might assume that because communities established their own resource organisations without explicitly including the Western Cape Government in these initiatives, the facilitation of ePHPs has not materialised in the Western Cape, which further suggests the Provincial Government's lack of willingness to engage and involve communities and community organisations in housing developments. However, Mr Gontsana went on to explain that the number of PHP projects in the province has decreased because:

*the PHP at the province level is no longer that active and many projects have been actually moved to the City of Cape Town... because you understand they have, you know, the capacity, you can see and maybe unlike before, where Province has to be more involved.*

- (Gontsana, Interview, 2 August 2023).

This insight suggests gaps at provincial level as well as at local municipal level, whose Integrated Development Plan (IDP) fails to make mention of projected PHP/ePHP projects despite taking on the main responsibility of implementing PHP/ePHP projects.

This research finding also confirms the city's reluctance to engage with the women-led organisations discussed in Section 4.3.2 above. As part of the triangulation process in this research, this was put to Zama Mgwatyu, a programme manager at DAG, who was instrumental in facilitating the policy changes from PHP to ePHP. He concluded that:

*what is happening is if you can track the budgets, I think pre 2019 or so, all provinces were compelled to have two cuts or to reserve 30% of the human settlement budget for PHP implementation. But what we've seen in other provinces, and even in the Western Cape, [is that] what they called PHP was managed PHP because it was driven by contractors. It was contractor driven, not community driven, you see. They will not work with any PHP groups [i.e., Community Resource Organisations]; they will just identify a contractor. I don't know; they say PHP takes time because you have to engage, and unfortunately politicians, they don't want to drag projects. They want to count numbers to say in this financial year [they can say] we've delivered this number of houses. And, unfortunately, PHP processes did not allow them to do that. Hence, they chose the easier route of identifying a big construction company and say to the big construction company he has fifty PHP ... he has 50 communities build PHP houses for them and those houses will be the same; you, see? No interactions with the beneficiaries. Yeah, that's it. The*

*Province did not even change the name to ePHP. It continued to be PHP projects irrespective of what the National Department or policy [is] saying.*

- (Mgwatyu, interview, 14 August 2023).

Salma Ismail added that:

*it is also because there are more players in low-cost housing projects. So now it is not just NGOs and the state but there are private developers applying to do low-cost housing. So, that's basically how the state delivers houses now by throwing it open.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

This research finding corroborates Rose Molokoane's experience when she engaged with the state (see Section 4.3.2 above). Manie (2004) argues that the lack of PHP housing delivery - despite the documented evidence of its benefits - is concerning (see Section 2.4.4 of Chapter 2).

Chapter 2 explicitly identified the main aim of the ePHP, which is to:

*Deliver better human settlement outcomes (at household and at the community level) based on community contribution, partnerships, and the leveraging of additional resources through partnerships. This*

*is achieved by developing livelihoods interventions which lead to outcomes such as job creation, developing a culture of savings, skills transfer, and community empowerment, building of community assets and social security and cohesion.*

- (RSA, 2009: 13).

However, the research findings show how government prefers to remove the contribution of communities and employs a more contractor-driven approach. This completely ignores the fundamental purpose of the PHP/ePHP housing delivery mechanism. The ePHP policy is meant to be an alternative to the BNG housing delivery mechanism which was solely state driven. Yet, the state has found a way to turn the PHP policy into yet another state driven mechanism through employing contractors rather than community resource organisations.

When I asked Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP, why the PHP/ePHP isn't being used anymore, she stated that:

*different Provincial governments started to not take ePHP seriously as a programme that they can implement. They were using excuses to say that this programme is too slow for them as they are looking at numbers. But for us, we are looking at the quality*

*of the community.*

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

However, Zama Mgwatyu, from DAG noted how in his experience, their organisation did manage to deliver the right amount of housing in time, yet the government remained indifferent to these outcomes. He stated that:

*So, for me, everyone was very excited about the processes. Everyone felt respected because there was no information that was reserved for committees or subcommittees. Everyone felt respected because they could go to the DAG office in Khayelitsha and engage. We could not say "you're not part of the committee". The other thing is we managed to produce the numbers in time. For example, I remember when we're doing those projects, the unblocking projects, the officials were never involved. Not even once was I called to a meeting [with the government] to say come in, but I can still remember around January, February, I received calls from the officials asking how many houses did you build in the last financial year so that they can give that information to the Minister. So that's when the Minister goes and reports. You can say in the last financial year within the PHP projects, we've delivered 900 houses.*

- (Mgwatyu, Interview, 14 August 2023).

When I asked Mr Gontsana, from the Western Cape Government, about the state's stance on the long delivery process of the PHP programme, he agreed that:

*PHP is not supposed to be a quick thing that you just decide today and tomorrow you go on site. You know, the programme itself requires time. It requires a lot of planning prior. Then if you want quick delivery, you can go to other programmes like your Integrated Residential Development Programme [IRDP]. You know, programmes that are quick, quick, you go inside quick, quick, you build, and you leave.*

- (Gontsana, Interview, 2 August 2023).

The research findings indicate that the PHP/ePHP housing delivery mechanism in fact does make a meaningful contribution towards providing housing despite the community-driven approach. In addition, the findings highlight a contradiction as Mr Gontsana (Interview, 2 August) defends the time required for PHP housing projects whereas both Ms. Molokoane (Interview, 22 August) and Mr. Mgwatyu (Interview, 14 August) argue the lack of cooperation and understanding from the government. Ms Molokoane, from FEDUP, goes on to explain this contradiction within the spheres of government, stating that:

Remember, even the President spoke about vuk'uzenzele "wake up and do it for yourself". Vuk'uzenzele actually goes along with PHP and is what we were trying to raise in all the meetings: that we are there, we are in existence. We want you to join, hence we walk the same path together. So, we are not giving up engaging the department to make sure that they bring back what belonged to the people, which is people's housing process.

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

The term "vuk'uzenzele" is Xhosa and means "get up and do it yourself". In 2003, then President Thabo Mbeki's referred to this concept during his State of the Nation address. Chapter 2, highlighted Gumbo and Onatu's (2015) argument concerning how the urban poor should be accorded the necessary control and freedom to participate in its planning, designing, building, and management (see Section 2.4.4). The concept of "vuk'uzenzele" affirms this.

While Charlton and Kihato (2006) argued that the state has a tendency to shift the blame and responsibility to provide housing onto the poor, this research highlighted the desire for communities to be actively involved in self-help programmes. In another example, Zama Mgwatyu, from DAG, argued the following:

OK. This programme - ... in the past ... there were political champions [for PHP]. Remember, politicians, who are ministers in the human settlement space, they want to brag about numbers. You don't brag about the processes. But you brag about the numbers as a politician. So, for me, I think due to the challenges and the corruption that was then in the PHP space, the politicians thought that this programme is not assisting us to deliver numbers. So, let us deprioritize it. That's it. So currently there's no political champions that are there making sure that there are budgets or staffing to support PHP groups on the ground. Because remember, I always say, as individuals we are selfish, we have got our own boxes to tick. So as the politician, one of the boxes I want to tick, if I if I'm a minister, is to deliver 1,000 houses in the end of the financial year. If now there's a vehicle that is not assisting me to deliver those thousand houses, I'm going to close that vehicle and open a vehicle that will assist me to deliver 1,000 houses.

- (Mgwatyu, Interview, 14 August 2023).

Similarly, Ryan Fester, from DAG noted that:

BNG is kind of the overarching framework and then within that ePHP sits. So, the premise of BNG is that the communities are placed at the centre of their development, but then to what extent that actually happens, whether its informal settlement upgrading, PHP, or social, it is not always clear.

- (Fester, Interview, 4 August 2023).

The research findings reveal two main concerns that government has with the ePHP approach. First is the concern with the lengthy duration period policy implementation, given its foundations based in community participation and processes. The second concern is with the lack of quantity of houses developed. However, both these concerns were questioned by NGOs working in the community housing development space.

#### **4.3.4 The relevance of the PHP/ ePHP programme**

Given the state's lack of willingness to utilise the ePHP policy, its apparent cutting of budgets, closing of PHP departments and refusal to embrace the ePHP policy changes since 2009, the research findings started to investigate the need, the areas of improvement, and the importance of the ePHP programme. Regarding the importance of the PHP/ePHP programme, Mr Gontsana, from the Western Cape Government, shared that:

I can tell you now without any doubt that the PHP programme is still needed because also the community needs it. You know the community has never rejected using the programme because it has value

for them. It has actually assisted them to get better products than when they would get from other programmes. In other programmes that are also building top structure for government, it's just a matter of what is the minimum requirement. You know the minimum requirement of a BNG house is 40 square meters, and that is it. Compared to the PHP house which is 42 to 45 square meters. So now that is why I'm saying, well, as long as people still need the programme and still value it and you know, appreciate it, I think they still have relevance even today. And also, if you look at it, the more you participate in the building of something for yourself, the more you value that thing, right? Yeah.

- (Gontsana, Interview, 2 August 2023).

When I asked Patricia Matolengwe, from the VM organisation why the PHP is important to her, she emphasised that:

You see, the actual PHP process does a lot more than just building houses. It is more. It is way more. Now, [because the programme isn't active] we are having to engage with other programmes a lot more to make up for not having the PHP.

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

It is apparent that the passion and demand from communities in informal settlements to

engage and reactivate the programme is high. It is not just for the benefit of receiving housing, but because its impact is larger (which I discuss below).

Regarding principles of independency of rights McLean and Chenwi (2009), (see Section 2.4.1), Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP, expressed how:

[Once we had an active PHP project] we then agreed to establish or to create what we call Federation Income Generating Programme, FIGP, where we give loans to our members to support their existing small businesses, or to also start small businesses so that with their income, then they can be able to continue to save and to continue to maintain their houses. That's why their houses are still intact even today, and it became successful. Unfortunately, we had more demand than supply. Yeah, because lot of funding agencies don't take poor people seriously to say if we help them with this money, they can pay back.

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

Thus, the ePHP programme appears to be crucial in fulfilling more than just the provision of adequate housing. It also illustrates Tissington's (2011: 11) standpoint that adequate housing is intrinsically bound up in the rights

to "public participation, equality, human dignity, just administrative action, access to information and access to justice – as well as a range of socio-economic goods and amenities" (see Section 2.4.1).

Ryan Fester, from DAG, mentioned another reason why the ePHP programme is needed:

I think that a lot of communities do think along the lines of ePHP. For example, because the communities, a lot of them, organise themselves, they identify land that they want for housing and that is the whole ePHP process and then they come to DAG you know, and DAG acts as a community resource organisation. So, for me, communities are doing this anyway, you know, whether government is funding it or not, or whether there is a policy or not, communities are doing this anyway, even right now as we speak.

- (Fester, interview, 4 August 2023).

With that being said, if the ePHP housing delivery mechanism is still seen as important and needed in today's South African context, I asked Ryan Fester, from DAG, what was missing from the ePHP policy:

Yeah. I don't know how to frame it for you. Because I am thinking like, there is a lot of talk as well about community land trusts which I think ePHP bor-

ders onto, to a certain degree and there are many researchers now trying to investigate what are the community land trusts looking like in the South African context. Yeah. So, could ePHP become a community land trust setting you know.

- (Fester, Interview, 4 August 2023).

However, when I pose the same question to Patricia Matolengwe, from VM organisation, she believed that:

*There is nothing wrong with the policy. The problem is the way they implement housing. We just want them to have the mechanism that we can use. We want it to be available.*

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

This research finding leads back to the issue of PHP/ePHP housing projects been developer-driven and not community-driven. Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP, highlighted issues of how the state address skills development when it comes to people-led projects:

*But the challenge is what the Minister does with training. The government gives training without a corresponding housing project. You should train the people where the project is. Because what is normally happening is they [national government] get*

*funding from different institutions of government like the CIDA [Community & Individual Development Association] and CIFA [Cape Institute for Architecture] and then they just give training at random; then after the training those people get [made] redundant, they don't get hired, they just disappear. So, it's just a waste of money and energy. So, we have taken a stand as an organisation that we will try to engage with them because we have submitted many proposals in different provinces, although we didn't get responses yet, but we are planning to follow it up so that we can get something out of it.*

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

Similarly, Zama Mgwatyu, from DAG, noted that:

*Corruption took place. So as DAG we took a decision to say, OK, we are not appointing a big construction company. Let us take the difficult routes but let us make sure that mentorship is there. That means identifying emerging construction companies, training them, mentoring them, making sure that we tighten our management systems.*

- (Mgwatyu, Interview, 14 August 2023).

Lastly, when it comes to the inclusion of women, Ryan Fester, from DAG, suggests a gap in the ePHP policy could be:

*if you are going to go down the policy route, other issues with ePHP, very similar to RDP, is that people who have benefited from housing before, are not going to qualify under ePHP, which is a problem for women who get divorced.*

- (Fester, Interview, 4 August 2023).

With that being said, two key beneficial aspects of the ePHP programme that no other housing programme enables better, is the transfer of skills and knowledge, and the quality of housing and life. This was mentioned by all participants from communities in informal settlements to NGOs and NPOs to the state and is demonstrated below.

Firstly, Salma Ismail recalled that:

*if you think about the Peoples Housing Process, for them [the VM women], the PHP and learning was integral, and they said that it had to be integrated otherwise you couldn't build a community without the learning. So, the big change between them and how the state builds is that when they build, their slogan says: "they don't just build houses, they build communities".*

- (Ismail, interview, 18 August 2023).

Similarly, Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP, identified that when it comes to their people-led housing developments, their organisation engages with four tools to ensure a transfer of skills, two of which are:

*The first tool is savings and putting women at the forefront of mobilising and organising through savings. The second tool is exchange programmes, making sure that we learn from each other. Remember, we are dealing with people who are disadvantaged, who are semi-illiterate, [some] who are totally illiterate, and we want to empower them. So, empowerment comes in different ways. It can be a workshop, can be a meeting, but the important tool for us to understand exactly what the people want to achieve is exchange programmes learning from each other.*

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

Ryan Fester, from DAG, similarly argued for the importance of the transferring of skills:

*DAG's whole thing is about enabling communities. The right way is to train people up so that they can lead their own development processes. So yeah, we are definitely in the business of capacitating, training communities up and it works. Like really, we see it! I don't know if there were two people who were at the bottom [offices] when you came in. But they are part of our training programmes, and we train*

*them up and then they lead, you know, they take the skills that they've learnt, and they call meetings with the City officials without us even knowing and then when we meet with them again in a month's time, they'll say OK this is what we've done so far. You know, and so yeah, we do actually see it being very successful and obviously you don't have to like really train people on everything. It is those soft skills. How to present, how to speak, what are the policies, those things actually make a hell of a difference.*

- (Fester, Interview, 4 August 2023).

This research finding corroborates the National Department of Housing's (2005) key principles that were incorporated into the PHP policy (see Section 2.4.4). When I asked Malibongwe Gontsana, from the Western Cape Government, what could be improved in PHP projects, he too emphasised the importance of skills transfer:

*Yeah, for me, one [important aspect] that comes into my mind is skills transfer. You see, and I think we could have done better, or we should do better in terms of skills transfer. For example, in PHP there are small contractors, so they still need a lot of advice and guidance, if I may put it that way... I must say we tried, you know, even the municipality, they [are] still trying in the Programme. But, if*

*I can compare [PHP] to other programmes, PHP is actually producing a lot of brick layers, people who from nothing ended up having companies, and then bettering their lives. But I still feel that we can do better, yeah.*

- (Gontsana, Interview, 2 August 2023).

One of the issues with housing delivery in South Africa is the mono-functional housing units with a focus of quantity over quality, as highlighted by John Turner (1976) stated in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.4.4). But the research findings show that the PHP and ePHP programmes not only produce quality housing but also positively impact on the sense of community as a whole. Patricia Matolengwe, from the VM organisation, reflects on the resilience and quality of the VM project compared to the BNG housing projects within the Philippi area when she stated that:

*it is a big difference. It is a big difference. That is why most of the people are still trying so they can get the same [quality] as ours which we are telling them that there is no way... you know to secure the subsidies is not easy. If you are to compare ... the RDP houses to our houses of more than 20 years now, in our time, with all the climate changes, it affects all of us, but we are a still better off. That is why we were worried about the stormwater and all that*

that is happening because it causes damages. So, the fact that the government is encouraging that type of housing over the PHP is just making a business. Because they are now having to refix their own houses and the government doesn't care.

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

Despite how happy and satisfied Patricia is with her home, she is saddened by the dissatisfaction and poor quality of housing for those in her community who aren't able to access the ePHP programme. This research therefore reveals deeper issues that communities in informal settlements face: climate change and the lack of basic services. Ziblim's (2013) argument that informal settlement problems are not just housing problems but underlying socio-economic challenges (see Section 2.4.4) supports this finding. In addition, Rose Molokoane, from FEDUP, alluded to another deeper issue with regard to the quality of housing:

for us [the FEDUP organisation], we are looking at the quality of the community so that at the end we prepare the people before we build a house so that the people can have a total ownership of their own house. And I must tell you that to date, the 20,000 houses that we built for our people, they're still staying there. It's just a fraction, I can maybe mention

200 or 150 of them that were given to the next owner because people are dying, and people are relocating going back to the rural areas, but the vast majority of the units that we built are still owned by the 1st owner of the house and they are taking care of those houses, unlike I'm sorry to say, like the RDP which are free. When it cracks, they say government come and pay. When the paint is getting off, government come paint, not forgetting that the government said, we just give you the entry to your house, then you can take care of it. And now a lot of them have sold out their RDPs, it is a challenge to our government, but I'm proud to say that with our organisation, those houses are still there.

- (Molokoane, Interview, 22 August 2023).

However, Ryan Fester (DAG) argued the opposite with regards to the difference in the quality of BNG and PHP housing:

No, [there is no difference in the quality of a BNG or PHP house], not really, hey, because at the end of the day, what dictates that size and the construction material is like policy, but it's also the property market, you know things become very extensive. So, to me, I haven't seen much of a difference to be honest. Yeah, to me it looks the same to be honest. But I do get the whole idea of installing ownership in people and making people feel like they are part of developing their houses.

- (Fester, Interview, 4 August 2023).

Even though he does not dispute the previous interviewee's statements, he does highlight a growing challenge that many South African's face today. That being the cost of construction materials. Therefore, even if the ePHP subsidies get reintroduced into the housing budget, the added barrier of affordability burdens communities in informal settlements.

#### 4.3.5 Contextual meaning

In Section 2.5, Behrens, and Watson (2014) argued for the importance of place and sense of belonging. The research found this to be something that was important to communities when developing housing projects.

While the City of Cape Town has a mandate to build affordable housing within well-located areas, the demand to improve existing, mostly distant informal settlements through the provision of formal housing, basic services, and amenities, still remains. This meant that the research had to investigate the contextual meaning of place. Smit et al. (2007) argued that people develop attachment and place importance in where they live, referring to this as the "meaning of place" — which might also be understood as "contextual meaning".

Contextual meaning goes beyond the quality of the house: it includes the social networks and relationships established within the community (see Section 2.5). The research therefore needed to explore how, and if, PHP or ePHP projects enable this sense of contextual meaning and community.

Salma Ismail described an interesting scenario that illustrates the strength of community within the VM project:

*Look, other informal settlements such as Ramaphosa settled right on their [the VM community] doorsteps and the Ramaphosa youth were violent. The informal settlement Ramaphosa were largely unemployed and had no access to water, sanitation, or electricity and VM understood this situation as this had been part of their history. Sadly, some of the VM youth who didn't have housing yet, joined the Ramaphosa community and showed some of the Ramaphosa youth where the VM community's water and electricity meters were. So, the Ramaphosa youth tapped into their water and electricity and didn't offer to pay so as the theft became extreme, VM tried to negotiate with them, but the youth would not participate, and this led to violence and the women sat up all night and kept vigil to protect their houses. They were sitting up all night on watch and the police didn't do anything. So, I contacted the Humans Right Commissioner Chris Nissan, and he*

*went and spoke to them there, but the VM women also tried to integrate the Ramaphosa community, they said to them "why don't we go and apply for water and for the electricity" but the men were vicious. The VM women tried to speak to the Ramaphosa women and offered them creche facilities, but the Ramaphosa women were not interested. It was a huge conflict.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

See Appendix B, the article by Joel Bolnick for more details. This example illustrates the connection and bond that the VM women have formed through the PHP programme, as they feel a sense of pride for, and ownership over, their houses individually, and as a collective.

However, it also highlights the vulnerability that comes with not having housing. Housing, when done right, can unlock security of tenure, ownership of land, acquiring skills and knowledge to better lives and communities in informal settlements. This example affirms that being actively involved in building your own home is integral to a sense of ownership, was the learning of skills and knowledge that the PHP programme enabled. Salma Ismail added:

*I mean you could even see when they had the issues with the Ramaphosa community, how the VM community stayed together and how they protected one another. I mean even when there was a burglary, they wouldn't send them to the police. The community would sit them down and talk to them and ask why did you do this. They disciplined that person and made them return the stolen stuff. So, there was that protection for one another, of their homes and neighbourhood.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

Zama Mgwatyu, from DAG, also noted how the PHP engendered a sense of community:

*For me, there were other benefits that were there in the PHP, for example, those people who got their houses through PHP processes invested in those houses. They understand the value of those houses. They don't get their house today and sell it tomorrow because they know that they contributed towards the building of those houses. There's much more emotional attachment to a house that you have helped to build than a house that you only saw when you are given a key. You see, but, unfortunately, in the political space those are not things that are tangible. You cannot brag about saying how many people in, in a housing project, have not sold their houses.*

- (Mgwatyu, Interview, 14 August 2023).

Furthermore, Mr Gontsana, from the Western Cape Government, explained why the PHP programmes had created such a strong sense of place and community:

*Remember the PHP program allows a maximum participation from communities. So, for example, there are so many people's lives that is actually improved because of this PHP program, you see. This then encourages people to establish their businesses and people started to sub, you know, doing sub constructions, and then ended up being a real company, you understand. And that has sort of Construction Industry Development Board [CIDB] gradings that are very good and that are very high. You see, so also on the social part as well. I mean socially people find meaning in their community because they have meetings, they have to discuss. Yeah. Then they form bonds, then people appreciate each other more now because "I now know my neighbour more than I did before". So, that is how the social part is actually developed and built among the community.*

- (Gontsana, Interview, 2 August 2023).

These research findings show that "contextual meaning" in the VM housing project was enabled via the social networks, relationships, material connections and attachments to place that the PHP fostered. In other words, through the coproduction and participation

of communities in the housing process, interpersonal relationships flourished, and a sense of ownership was instilled, thereby creating a shared sense of community. Thus, the PHP programme engendered collective solidarities through "contextual meaning".

#### **4.3.6 Trust and social learning**

As noted in the literature review, radical planning acknowledges the importance of local knowledge and the residents' lived experiences rather than imposing only expert-driven knowledge and ways of "doing" planning. Furthermore, the goal of a radical planner is to work for the "transformation of systematic inequalities and, in the process, to empower those who have been systematically disempowered" (Sandercock, 1998: 97; see Section 2.6). Given the history and context of the VM Housing Project, my research looked at it from a radical planning perspective, focusing on how the VM women engaged in social learning and gaining trust throughout the implementation of the VM Housing Project (see Section 2.3).

Salma Ismail provided significant insight into the project:

*for them [the VM women], the PHP and learning was integral, and they said that it had to be integrated otherwise you couldn't build a community without the learning. By also using a popular education methodology to teach and that involved a lot of participation because they saw it as a social process rather than an individual learning thing.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

She further illustrated how the VM women overcame prejudices:

*They always made their presence felt. They used to role play what they would say, how they would interact with the ministers, what they would say, what were their demands. No, no, they were very clear with what they wanted, and they would always go as a collective, never as individuals. They knew the power laid in the collective. I mean, look there are always frictions, there always is, but they managed those things, and they worked through it.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

Similarly, she continued to note that:

*I remember when the women had to tell the men that the houses were in their name, they wouldn't let the wife tell the husband alone. The elders and the women would tell them together, go to each house*

*together to tell them. They lived very much in a communal way, and it was very safe! I used to go there all the time, no worries, But I wouldn't do that now. But you must remember that these women battled a lot, they were fighting apartheid and customary law. So, the ownership was vital to them. Plus, it gave them that security that they didn't have before. So, that was the key thing for them.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

These research findings align with Heskin and Leavitt's (1994) views, set out in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.6), that in order to make a difference in the lives of the urban poor, an approach beyond the state is often required. Thus, the VM women give an excellent example of how radical planners should engage with them, and how they are "radical planners" for themselves and in their own capacity. This is seen in the parallels between the importance of gaining trust, allocating time, listening, arguing, and letting others speak within the VM community and what Sandercock (1998) argues the approach of a radical planner should be (see Section 2.6).

#### **4.3.7 Meaningful engagement**

Patrica Hill Collins (2009) argues for the importance of dialogue and knowledge cre-

ation (see Section 2.7). My research led me to uncover the types of knowledges created through the housing processes and if/how coproduction was utilised in the VM organisation.

As mentioned in Section 2.7, as a woman of colour, this research finding allows me to expand on the Black feminist lens in academic writing, especially in the context of informality. In Section 4.3.3 above, Salma Ismail demonstrated how learning was integral to their methodology (Interview, 18 August). This is evident in how coproduction was utilised throughout the VM project. Salma Ismail expressed the importance of participation and dialogue in the VM project, recalling that:

*I mean when they met for meetings it was long because they have to come to a consensus and they have to have everybody in because their experience was if there was someone who doesn't agree, they can wreck the whole thing. You know? That is their experience. So, they used to sit long until they have convinced everybody.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

Similarly, Patricia Matolengwe, from the VM organisation, stressed how integral knowledge creation was to them:

*we were not just like a contractor or developer you know. We were about educating people around housing.*

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

This view highlights the importance of the principles of independency of rights (Section 4.3.1) along with understanding the value of skills transfer (Section 4.3.3). Ismail gave insight into how the VM women engaged in coproduction:

*It was about problem solving, dialogue, and a lot of that was built on their traditional ways of education where the community sits and dialogues and solves problems in the rural areas that's how they did it. They felt that they didn't want hierarchy, so they had to change roles and leadership and they also insisted that everybody learns skills. They didn't just stay with one person; it was widely distributed. So, they had a very engaging social process of learning and formed a community of learning.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

This corroborates Friedmann's (1987) argument of the importance of local knowledge and the residents' lived experiences (see Section 2.6). In describing DAG's work with local residents, Fester highlighted the role of

CROs in this regard:

You see, with DAG, we believe in the relational approach. So, what we try to do is a partnership assessment. Then from there we will start to capacitate communities around legislation and policies so like for example ePHP: what is ePHP exactly? what is the process? Who are the role-players? Is it city government? is it provincial government? is it national government? how does the funding flow? and who are the warm bodies right? So, DAG's role is building that relationship, getting to know people and people getting to know us and then from there we take it forward to say let's run some workshops with the community so that they can understand the policies, they can understand the process, where the funding comes from and then from there, we will stay to broker the relationships with the right people.

- (Fester, Interview, 4 August 2023).

Thus, creating strong relationships with the state, being educated, and informed about housing and legislation, and engaging in workshops is one way that CROs like DAG tries to work with communities. DAG's Zama Mgwatyu, concurred:

*I think one of the advantages of PHP is the influence that is opened in the policy for communities to influence the implementation processes. Then through*

*the policy and us being a CRO, we assist the communities, especially in understanding the technical know-how, especially towards the implementation.*

- (Mgwatyu, Interview, 14 August 2023).

This research finding confirms Friedmann's (1987) argument that radical planning, in Section 2.6, "uses dialectic processes to effect systemic change" (Jacobs, 2019: 28). When it comes to black feminism, this approach is seen as a benefit to communities who, by extension, are invested in the dialectical processes of collaborative learning and coproduction.

Given how successful coproduction was in the VM project, I started investigating how meaningful were the engagements between the VM women and the various stakeholders. Overall, the VM women experienced some form of systematic oppression and disempowerment throughout the implementation of the housing project. This can be seen in the comments from Patricia Matolengwe, from the VM organisation:

*they did not take us seriously ... from the beginning. So much so that they said that we were people who undermined your profession as a planner. For example, the town planner who used to be on our*

*site from the City, he hated our project. He hated it. That's why we didn't get any support from the City until he resigned at the City. So, we have only been recognised or listened by the City as from 2018 so it was after he left the City. While we were thinking we were supporting his profession and working together: even though we were uneducated we wanted to learn and work together.*

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

In order to address this, Ms. Matolengwe believed that:

*the policy needs to be changed somewhere to accommodate the struggles women face in the community because there are women who are victims to that. The others aren't even divorced. They are in separation. Most of the people are in separation and they are suffering.*

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

This research finding corroborates Ryan Fester's take on gaps in the ePHP policy (see Section 4.3.5). There need to be an acknowledgment of women's struggles in order to fulfil Chapter 2, Section 9, of the Constitution. Therefore, the research findings expose deeper issues as discussed by Guy-Evans (2022) in Section 2.7, where he argues that "black

women are oppressed by the patriarchy but also capitalism and racism" (p. 1). This can be seen from Salma Ismail's comment that:

*South Africa comes from such deep colonialism that the prejudice of "uneducated" rural black women is still very present. I mean you can just look at the GBV stats, you know, to see how powerless these women are.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

According to the World Bank Brief (2019: 1) "the rate at which women are killed by intimate partners in this country is five times higher than the global average". Amanda Gouws (2022: 1) has noted that "South Africa has notoriously high levels of violence against women. The latest police figures show that 10,818 rape cases were reported in the first quarter of 2022. The country has among the highest rape incidence in the world".

There are three deeply concerning challenges that have been arisen from this research. The first correlates with what Ryan Fester from DAG mentioned about how City officials see participation as a tick box exercise rather than a means for meaningful engagement. The second highlights the recurring concern of lack of willingness and care from

the government to involve communities and community organisations in housing development projects. The third is about the patriarchal, bureaucratic, institutional system that continues to oppress black women in informal settlements in South Africa. Despite the challenges, there are several examples of how the VM women and communities empowered themselves through the housing project. Salma Ismail emphasised how:

*The VM women were working with the housing Ministers very closely. They [VM women] used to invite them on all levels, provincial, national and the City. They used to invite them, to have discussions about any new legislation, when new Ministers came in, they made sure that they went to parliament to make their presence seen, they made sure they interacted with the new Ministers.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

This illustrates how the VM women were able to change the nature of their problematic relationship with the system through "knowledge that is created and validated through dialogue" (Jacobs, 2019: 29; see Section 2.7). Salma Ismail continued:

*But the VM women worked very hard. I mean they were domestic workers who would come home and*

*help each other build houses and watch each other's kids. They were very committed to housing delivery.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

When I asked Patricia Matolengwe, from the VM organisation, if the VM housing project unlocked self-definition, freedom, and passion for change (as defined by Hill Collins (2009) in Section 2.7), she commented that:

*We [VM organisation] try and influence that [the housing development processes], to try and say that they [the government] must educate people more, as people become victims if communities do not know or understand about housing. We make it a point in our community and in other communities to say that we are involved in and used to work with housing projects. We make it a point that awareness is there. Yes.*

- (Matolengwe, Interview, 14 August 2023).

Similarly, Salma Ismail noted that:

*Although people like Patricia had power, she is very powerful both in the community and councillors.*

- (Ismail, Interview, 18 August 2023).

Patricia Matolengwe's remarkable contribu-

## 4.4 Conclusion

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tions to the VM project and their impact on the community garnered significant recognition. She received a standing ovation for her presentation on women-led housing at the UN Habitat Conference in Istanbul in 1996 (Ismail, 1999). This accomplishment vividly demonstrate the intricate connections between women empowerment, education, and the power in the collective.

Overall, the experiences of the VM women through the VM Housing Project confirms that Black feminist thought is still seen as an oppositional force. The findings reinforce how the VM women promoted equity within existing organizations, how they advocated for laws to be changed, and how they held space in meetings throughout the implementation of the housing project. The findings illustrate how the VM women used knowledge as a political weapon in challenging power structures to transform their social conditions.

Table 4.1 on page 72 and 73 presents a summary of the main research questions; the literature review themes, assessment criteria, and subsidiary research questions derived from Chapter 2; and also summarises the research findings presented in this chapter.



**TABLE 4.1: SUMMARY**

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES:	THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH FINDINGS:
<p><b>What is the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements?</b></p> <p><b>How is this organisation enabling a sense of community through placemaking principles; and what might planners learn from this gendered approach?</b></p>	<p><b>(1) The Victoria Mxenge Housing Project</b></p>	<p>i. The importance of a women-led organisation</p>	<p>a. Why was it important being a women-led organisation?</p>	<p>It was important to empower women through security of tenure and land ownership as they were the ones taking care of the family, were good at managing household financials, and had bad experiences with men.</p>
	<p><b>(2) Review of Post-Apartheid South African Housing Legislation</b></p> <p>The Constitution</p> <p>The Housing Act</p> <p>The Municipal Systems Act</p> <p>PHP/ePHP</p>	<p>ii. Housing policy alignment</p> <p>iii. The status of the PHP/ePHP programme</p> <p>iv. The relevance of the PHP/ePHP programme</p>	<p>b. How holistic is the housing programmes in protection women’s housing rights?</p> <p>c. How co-operative were the different spheres of government during the implementation of the VM housing project?</p> <p>d. What are the intergovernmental relations like in housing development processes?</p> <p>e. Why is the PHP/ePHP programme not being used anymore?</p> <p>f. Is the PHP/ePHP programme still needed? Are there aspects of the policy that needs improvement?</p> <p>g. What skills were transferred during the project and between whom were these skills transferred?</p> <p>h. Is there a difference in quality of housing and quality of life between the PHP housing and BNG housing?</p>	<p>Despite the establishment of a democratic state, women-led organisations are still experiencing discrimination and battle to gain ownership of their homes.</p> <p>The VM women struggled for more than 20 years to gain ownership of their homes due to bureaucratic government processes and inadequate state support, thereby nullifying the state’s requirement to enable equality and cooperate as a state.</p> <p>There is a disconnect between the spheres of government roles and mandates, and the day-to-day performances on the ground. The intergovernmental relations were described as non-conducive as they agree in policy but differ in implementation. Therefore, the state is seen as non-relational who sees community engagement as a tick box exercise.</p> <p>There is a lack of willingness from the government to engage with the programme as the government prefers to remove the contribution of communities and employs a more contractor/developer-driven approach. Thereby completely ignoring the fundamental purpose of the PHP/ePHP housing delivery mechanism.</p> <p>The provincial government, CROs, and communities all believe that the ePHP programme is needed and wanted. The only gap in the policy is that people who have benefited from housing cannot qualify under ePHP which is a problem for women who are divorced/separated. However, there are issues with the implementation process. This includes issue with developer-driven approach and corruption. Suggestions were also made that ePHP has the potential to engage with communal land.</p> <p>Types of skills that communities learn consist of saving, understanding technical and legislative knowledge about ePHP and housing, job creation, learning how to build and construct their homes, engaging in exchange programmes, and social cohesion.</p> <p>Yes, there is. The PHP/ePHP programme doesn’t just produce a higher quality of housing but impacts the overall quality of life amongst individuals and as a collective. However, an important factor to consider is that building materials have become increasingly more expensive which can impact the size of the housing.</p>

Table 4.1: Summary (Author, 2023).

**TABLE 4.1: SUMMARY**

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES:	THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH FINDINGS:
<p><b>What is the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements?</b></p> <p><b>How is this organisation enabling a sense of community through placemaking principles;</b></p> <p><b>and what might planners learn from this gendered approach?</b></p>	<p><b>(3) Housing Delivery and Placemaking</b></p>	<p>vi. Contextual meaning</p>	<p>i. How does contextual meaning inform the implementation of the VM housing project?</p> <p>j. How is a sense of belonging enabled through the implementation of the VM housing project?</p> <p>k. How has the implementation of the VM housing project enabled a sense of uniqueness, balance, symbolism, and legibility; and do any of these placemaking criteria promote a sense of community?</p>	<p>The connection and bond that the VM women have formed through the PHP programme, as they feel a sense of pride for, and ownership over, their houses individually, and as a collective. Therefore, the contextual meaning doesn't only lie in the quality of house, but in the social networks and relationships established within the community.</p> <p>Through the coproduction and participation of communities in the housing process, interpersonal relationships flourished, and a sense of ownership was instilled, thereby creating a shared sense of community and meaning of place.</p> <p>Research findings in this case study revealed that the placemaking criteria was not of importance to them. Rather their key focus and priority was on land ownership, quality of housing, and education.</p>
	<p><b>(4) Radical Planning Theory</b></p>	<p>vii. Trust and social learning</p>	<p>l. How are interpersonal relations of trust and social learning enabled via the VM housing project?</p>	<p>Learning was integral to them as they saw it as a social process rather than individual learning. Roles and responsibilities were never fixed but took place on a rotational system where everyone had equal opportunity to gain knowledge and skills throughout the implementation process.</p>
	<p><b>(5) Black Feminism</b></p>	<p>viii. Meaningful engagement</p>	<p>m. What are the types of knowledges are created through these dialectical relationships and processes?</p> <p>n. How was coproduction utilised in the VM organisation?</p> <p>o. How meaningfully were the VM women consulted and engaged with throughout the housing development process?</p> <p>p. How were the VM women and community empowered through the housing project?</p> <p>q. How is equity, self-definition and freedom enabled within the VM housing project?</p>	<p>Types of knowledge included applying for housing subsidies, saving, drawing up budgets, designing and building their own houses, problem solving, skills development, technical and legislative knowledge, leadership skills and public participation.</p> <p>Through role playing, meetings, social gatherings, model building, designing, and building their houses together.</p> <p>Overall, the VM women experienced some form of systemic oppression and disempowerment throughout the implementation of the housing project. Research findings indicate deeper rooted issues of patriarchy, capitalism, and racism.</p> <p>By working closely with the ministers and constantly engaging with new legislation and policies. Through the PHP, they acquired skills and knowledge which enabled them to influence community housing projects in informal settlements and actively engage with various stakeholders effectively.</p> <p>It is enabled through the interconnections between women's education and empowerment, both as a collective and individually. Overall, the VM women advocated for laws to be changed, held spaces in meetings, and utilised their knowledge as a political weapon in challenging power structures to transform their social conditions.</p>
<p><b>3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>5 LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES</b></p>	<p><b>7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIONS</b></p>	<p><b>17 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>17 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH FINDINGS</b></p>

Table 4.1: Summary (Author, 2023).

# CHAPTER 5

## RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION



## 5.1 Introduction

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This dissertation aimed to assess the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in Philippi, and how this organisation enabled placemaking principles through the People's Housing Process programme. To this end, main and subsidiary research questions were asked in order to collect relevant data. The research methods and techniques used to collect this data were discussed in Chapter 3. Furthermore, this investigation was undertaken by employing the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. This framework, in turn, allowed me to develop assessment criteria that were used to assess the case study (see Chapter 4).

Chapter 4 presented and analysed the research findings in relation to the main and subsidiary questions. My research findings demonstrated that women-led organisations had a positive impact on the formalisation of housing and the community in informal settlements. The positive responses were largely due to the focus on social capital and cohesion in conjunction with housing. The findings affirm that a gendered approach to housing can enable a sense of community, empower women, and improve the community's overall quality of life.

This chapter aims to synthesise the research findings. To this end, the answers to the main and subsidiary questions will be provided in the second section of this chapter.

Recommendations for policymakers, government, civic forums, planners, and community members will be provided in the third section. The recommendations are centred around bringing women to the table, making it easier for them to contribute once they have a seat at the table, and then changing bureaucracy and planners' mindsets through gender inclusive placemaking principles in the formalisation of housing.

The fourth section of this chapter explores limitations of this study, followed by a reflection on the research process and, finally, the last section provides a conclusion to this dissertation.

## 5.2 Answers to Research Questions

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### **5.2.1 What is the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements?**

My research suggests that through the housing development process, poor and working-class women were able to acquire skills and knowledge (see Section 4.3.1). This was important as it enabled women, who were previously excluded from decision making processes, to influence community projects and actively engage with various stakeholders effectively. The types of skills and knowledge discussed in Section 4.3.5 include applying for housing subsidies; saving; drawing up budgets; problem solving; designing and building their own houses; understanding legislation and acquiring technical knowledge; leadership skills; and public participation. These skills empowered women individually and collectively, and equipped them to advocate for change, hold space in meetings, and challenge power structures in government to transform their social condition. In other words, in the case under study, women-led organisations created a platform for women's voices in the formalisation of housing in informal settlements.

In addition, the research demonstrated that when women-led organisations were involved

in formalising informal settlements, impacts included:

- a greater contribution to the economy (as women are able to contribute to the working sector);
- gender-based violence decreased (as women were able to leave unsafe homes and gain ownership of houses); and
- the social cohesion amongst communities was strengthened (as women gained influence and recognition in the overall wellbeing of their children), as were social networks in the community.

These findings corroborate Miraftab's (2001) argument that housing is a key resource for women as it is an important asset to their economic condition and is central to their physical and social well-being (see Section 2.6). The members of the VM organisation successfully overcame conventional obstacles to assert their ownership rights over both the land and their respective houses. By promoting inclusive participation and cultivating a culture of shared leadership, the initiative fostered strong, interconnected relationships among the women involved. This dynamic not only instilled a deep sense of pride but also empowered the majority of women engaged in the project (see Section 4.3.6).

### **5.2.2 How is this organisation enabling a sense of community through placemaking principles?**

Matsie's (2019) view was that women tend to raise more technical and vulnerability-related issues (see Section 2.6). The research found that the biggest contribution that women made when they were included in the housing process was to build social capital. The VM organisation developed strong learning systems and used the group's accumulated experiences and specialised knowledge of community needs to build capacity within their community. This was expressed in their dress, songs, and the ways that meetings were addressed. Salma Ismail (2015: 61) illustrated how "the VM women said they believe in learning and teaching all the time and sharing with other women who have no money and are poor like us; if they can do it, so can other communities".

This research finding corroborates Jacobs' (2019: 29) view that black feminism involves two important onto-epistemological standpoints, "lived experiences [as] a way of knowing; and knowledge [that] is created and validated through dialogue" (see Section 2.6). This research found that women gaining access to and ownership of housing in the

informal settlement under study, unlocked deeper connections and bonds in the social networks and relationships of that community. This enabled the development of a sense of pride and ownership of place as they attached meaning to where they are situated. In turn, this can be seen in the increase of desirability of women-led formalised housing projects in informal settlements.

### **5.2.3 What might planners learn from this gendered approach?**

The research revealed that the gendered approach to housing led to the decline in gender-based violence, an increase in contribution to the economy, and an overall increase in quality of life and desirability within informal settlements. (see Section 4.3.5). This affirms Kneeshaw's (2018) standpoint that when women are excluded from participation in urban planning, it results in women having limited to no access to the city and its amenities (see Section 2.4). The research findings demonstrate that women are bound to positively contribute insights and placemaking principles into planning and government housing processes which currently appear to be failing in the provision of adequate and quality housing to the urban poor (see Section 4.3.4). Furthermore, instead of relying on

failed patriarchy and bureaucratic systems, supporting women and women-led organisations can impact the quality of places which can impact the safety and well-being of our city as a whole.

#### **5.2.4 Why is the PHP/ePHP programme not being utilised anymore?**

It was found that there is a lack of alignment and clarity on the PHP/ePHP programme. Local government referenced ePHP, whereas Provincial government utilised the PHP programme, and National government's PHP/ePHP department is inactive (see Section 4.3.3). Community Resource Organisations (CROs) and communities are therefore unable to effectively mobilise and implement the PHP/ePHP programme. In addition, the research demonstrated a lack of willingness from the government to engage with the programme, as the government appears to prefer a more contractor/developer-driven approach, rather than a community-driven approach.

However, this contradicts the National Department of Human Settlements' standpoint (RSA, 2009: 13), which states that the determining factors for a project must be through accommodating "community involvement in

the decision-making processes, community empowerment and the leveraging of additional resources".

Furthermore, the research concluded that the developer-driven approach has been adopted due to two main concerns (see Section 4.3.3): the first relates to the length of time involved in community participation and processes; the second relates to the low number of houses produced annually if communities are involved. The result is that the objectives of the PHP programme are not being realised despite the benefits it offers (see Section 2.3.4, Manie (2004) and Newton (2013)). However, both these concerns have been disproven by NGOs working in the community housing development space (see Section 4.3.3).

#### **5.2.5 Is the PHP/ePHP still needed? And are there aspects of the policy that needs improvement?**

When it comes to the need for the PHP/ePHP housing subsidy programme, my research findings are clear: the Provincial government, CROs, and communities all believe that this programme is beneficial and wanted (see Section 4.3.4). There are two key beneficial aspects of the PHP/ePHP programme that

no other housing programme rivals: first, the transfer of skills and knowledge, and second, the quality of housing and quality of life.

The second beneficial aspect corroborates Turner's (1976) point that the urban poor, if given support and latitude by relevant stakeholders, can build better houses for themselves in terms of quality and size progressively (see Section 2.3.4). However, a cautionary note is needed here, in that neoliberal forms of governance have come to interpret Turner's argument as a means of absconding from supporting the urban poor in accessing affordable housing. In other words, since the late 1970s (when Turner posited self-built options), governments across various world regions that subscribe to market-oriented policies have increasingly relinquished their responsibilities and mandates to provide affordable housing for the urban poor. Instead, they are placing that responsibility almost exclusively on individual households (which is evidenced via my research findings).

Responses regarding improvements of the PHP/ePHP policy from the research findings are diverse. However, they all stem from issues with the implementation process, namely the developer-driven approach. This approach goes against the main aim of the ePHP

## 5.3 Recommendations

programme which is to:

*Deliver better human settlement outcomes (at household and at the community level) based on community contribution, partnerships, and the leveraging of additional resources through partnerships. This is achieved by developing livelihoods interventions which lead to outcomes such as job creation, developing a culture of savings, skills transfer, and community empowerment, building of community assets and social security and cohesion.*

- (RSA, 2009: 13).

The ePHP programme needs to be applied and utilised more effectively and with greater commitment from the Western Cape Provincial Government. However, a significant gap in the programme (and in the National Housing Code, 2009, generally) is that individuals who benefited from state subsidised housing whilst they were married are disqualified from applying for another subsidy should they divorce or separate from a former partner. This highlights a gender insensitivity and blindness in the current policy and ePHP programme that necessitates urgent rectification, especially for vulnerable women in abusive relationships.

The following recommendations are directed at national, provincial, and municipal government; policymakers; civic forums; planners; and community members. Recommendations are based on suggestions derived from the literature reviewed (see Chapter 2) and research findings (see Chapter 4). Figure 5.1 below provides a suggested priority action timeline for all eight recommendations. They have been categorised into short, medium, or long term depending on the complexity and time needed to achieve the desired outcome.

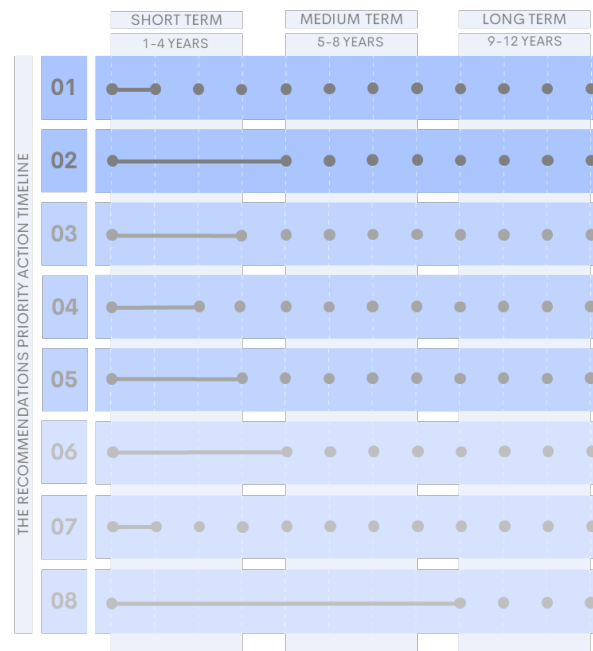


Figure 5.1:  
The Priority Action Timeline for all Eight Recommendations (Author, 2023).

### 5.3.1 Recommendation for National Government to support women-led organisations

Organisations led by women present a valuable prospect for enhancing the skills, knowledge, and social connections of women, enabling them to engage in more productive partnerships with governmental entities and contribute actively to subsequent decision-making procedures that influence the built environment. Figure 5.2 on page 80 illustrates the range and location of existing women-led organisations throughout the City of Cape Town that advocate for women and are making a difference in communities.

Therefore, it is recommended that the National Government, specifically the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) should support existing women-led organisations when it comes to housing development projects. The IMC are currently a key facilitation and political liaison in the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NCGBVF) processes. In other words, they ensure that National Government provides the needed financial support, spending approvals and policy inputs to the NCGBVF.



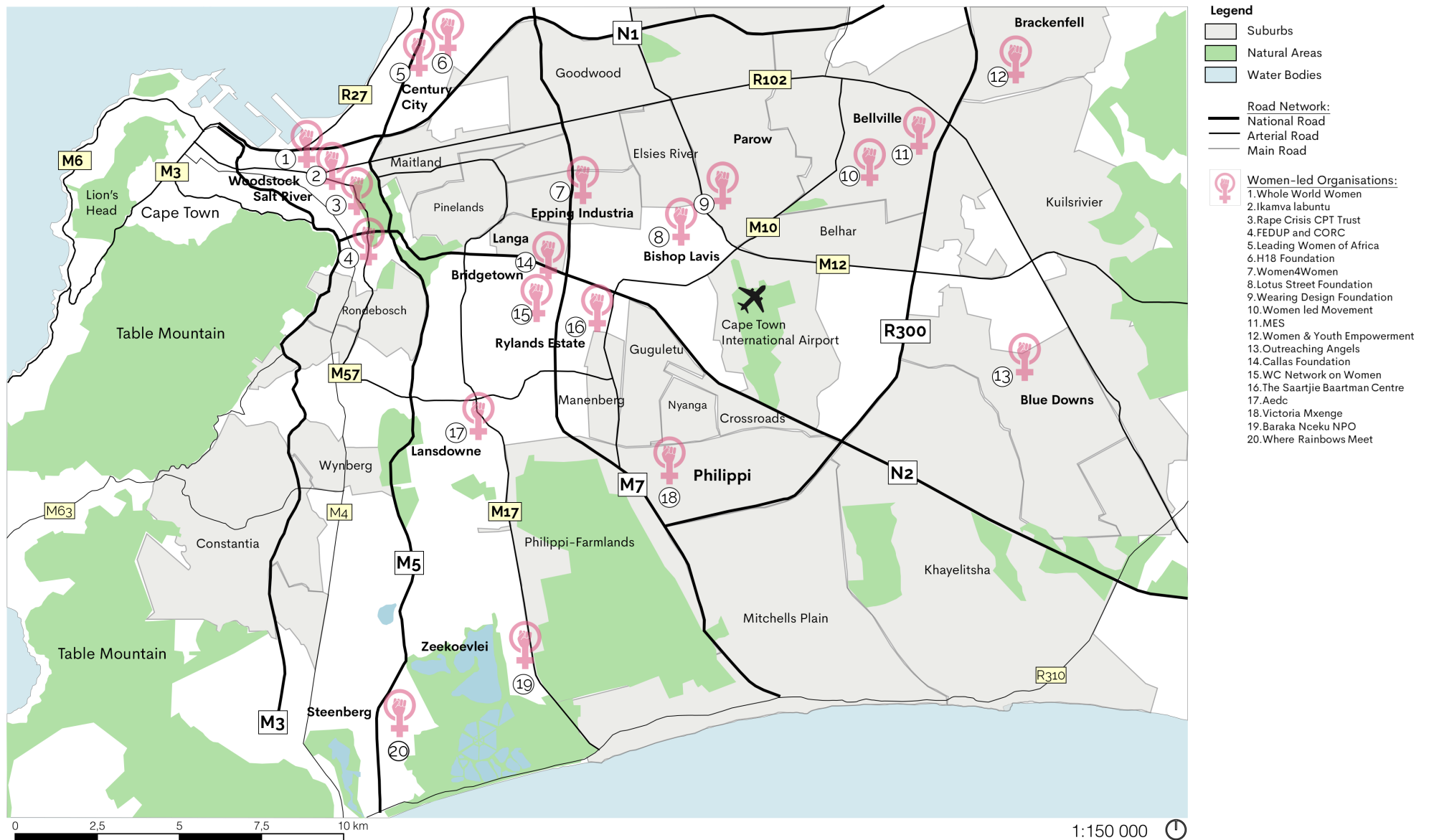


Figure 5.2: Existing Women-led Organisations in Cape Town (Source: QGIS Development Team, 2023; Map Illustration: Author, 2023).

In addition, they oversee the implementation of the GBVF programmes and activities and ensure that the NCGBFV has the requisite operating environment to perform functions free of manipulation and undue influence. Therefore, they have the power to incorporate women-led organisations into National Government's implementation programmes. Therefore, the National Government does not have to reinvent the wheel or invest in creating new programmes in order to capacitate or include women's voices into housing and social development projects and processes. Instead, it can collaborate or sponsor existing organisations that are successfully engaging with women in informal settlements. Such a gendered approach allows for a fundamental re-alignment of mindsets and resources to achieve results.

However, simply having female beneficiaries in a catchment area is not enough! Rather, the state needs to be intentional and deliberate in establishing gender-sensitive principles through collaboration, funding, and following through on goals in procurement and delivery of gender inclusive projects. Such principles also necessitate redressing current market-oriented policies that place the responsibility and burden of housing provision on individual households. Turner's (1976)

original argument included state support and latitude for self-built option, which neoliberal forms of governance have 'conveniently' ignored.

### **5.3.2 Recommendation for policymakers to review and amend the National Housing Code**

The Constitution enshrines the right to equality for all and guarantees the right of access to adequate housing to everyone (as discussed in Section 2.3.1). To this end, an attempt has been made to incorporate gender concerns and ensure women's participation in the delivery of housing. However, the research findings suggest that the legal and social framework within which housing delivery takes place results in inequalities in accessing state subsidised housing programmes.

McLean and Chenwi's (2009: 518) argued that "much of South Africa's housing policy focuses on providing basic minima, thus denying the systemic constraints experienced by women within the social structure, which necessarily affect their enjoyment of housing rights and their rights to equality and dignity" (see Section 2.3.2). As discussed in Section 4.3.1, these 'systemic constraints' include women's greater vulnerability, when inade-

quately housed, to gender-based violence; their particular vulnerability to forced eviction; and the disproportionate burden they bear to provide childcare.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the National Housing Code (2009) take these 'systemic constraints' into account. McLean and Chenwi (2009: 518) suggest this can be accomplished by "ensuring that women's livelihood strategies are not disrupted when the state undertakes to improve housing through upgrading programmes or relocating communities, so that they have opportunities to work from home when they have young children, and that they have access to formal credit to facilitate better housing". This will ensure that the social capital and sense of community that women enable will be protected.

In addition, it is recommended that the implementation of housing needs to be done in conjunction with the supply and accessibility of social and infrastructural services in order to create liveable spaces, improve quality of life, public health, and economic opportunity. To this end, including cross-cutting rights in the housing process, as argued by Tissington (2011) in Section 2.3.1, become fundamental in creating the conditions for gender-inclusive housing.

### **5.3.3 Recommendation for all tiers of government to utilise the ePHP policy**

Given the lack of alignment in the implementation of the PHP versus the ePHP programme, it is strongly recommended that all spheres of government come to an agreement to utilise and implement only the ePHP programme (which addresses some of the limitations of the previous PHP programme), as it enables CROs to champion community-driven housing processes and community engagement. In other words, by agreeing to fully engage with the ePHP programme, issues of developer-driven projects, lack of meaningful engagement, concerns of quality housing, and community upliftment will all be fully addressed (see Section 4.3.3 and 4.3.4). Not only will it create clarity on the approach that different spheres of government are implementing, but it will also ensure that the project is community-driven, whilst enabling skills transfer and quality outcomes.

Another recommendation established from the research findings in Section 4.3.4, looks at how the ePHP policy can fill gaps in communal land processes. Therefore, it is recommended that future research on this should be explored.

### **5.3.4 Recommendation for policymakers to review and amend the Housing Subsidy Scheme**

Research findings indicated restrictions in access to housing subsidies (see Section 4.3.7). Unfortunately, a requirement under the housing subsidy scheme that ignores the interest of women is the criterion that an applicant must be legally competent to contract. However, McLean and Chenwi's (2009) argue that in practice, this is interpreted restrictively to mean that the applicant must be 21 or older. Thus, young people may be forced to remain in households where they are subject to abuse, or face homelessness. Many young women have children before the age of 21, and may be left homeless, unable to access the housing subsidy because of this criterion. Clearly, this disproportionately affects young women because women under 21 constitute more than half of pregnant women in South Africa.

Another restriction (see Section 5.2.5) regarding access to housing subsidy is the criterion that an applicant must be married or habitually cohabiting with a partner; or they may be single, but they must demonstrate that they are financially responsible for dependants who reside in the same household (RSA,

NHC, 2009). Further, and of greater concern, qualifying for a housing subsidy necessitates "never having benefited from any government Housing Subsidy Scheme before" (op cit.: 109). Thus, people who have benefited from housing subsidies cannot qualify for another subsidy should they become divorced or separated from a former spouse. As a result of this 'one subsidy only' criterion, women are often forced to remain in unconducive and vulnerable relationships, since they are unable to qualify for another housing subsidy. From an equality and safety standpoint, restricting households to only one subsidy fails to recognise women's specific needs and vulnerabilities. It is therefore recommended that the criterion of "never having benefited from any government Housing Subsidy Scheme before" (ibid) be reviewed and amended to counter gender-based violence by establishing gender-sensitive policies that recognise women's specific needs and vulnerabilities.

### **5.3.5 Recommendation for communities, civic forums, and National and Local Government to catalyse placemaking in informal settlements**

Section 2.2 unpacked the establishment and process of the VM Housing Project. The research findings illustrated the success and

impact that the VM organisation had on the social capital of communities as they received many accolades (see Section 4.3.7). It is recommended that communities engage with women-led organisations to catalyse place-making principles in their areas through social upliftment projects.

It is further strongly recommended that Local Government partner with civic forums when designing social development interventions in informal settlements. According to the National Plan on GBVF, the state has an obligation to fund the structure and the roll out of the National Strategic Plan, across different tiers of government. At a provincial level, the Plan is championed by the Premier and at a district and local level by the Mayor.

Moreover, the housing funds allocated by the National Government may be supplemented by a National GBVF Fund, sourced from National Treasury, development partners, and private sector contributions. Consequently, it is imperative to allocate resources to facilitate swift responses for organisations dedicated to addressing GBVF, ultimately enhancing the sustainability and accessibility of interventions and services. What follows is a description of three precedent-setting studies of women-led organisations that are positively

contributing to women empowerment.

### **Precedent Study No.1: Ikamva labantu**

#### **Background:**

Ikamva labantu is an organisation with a mission to harness South Africa's potential through community-led projects, focusing on putting people first and human security. Since 1962, Ikamva Labantu has been building connections in township communities across the country. Today, the organisation advocates for these communities and provides support and resources to grassroots projects, driven and owned by community leaders. Ikamva Labantu believes that communities know exactly what they need in order to thrive; we just help them get there. Overall, their ground-up approach is rooted in activism and champions local knowledge and solutions. Ikamva Labantu is an organisation made up of over 100 committed field workers, most of whom come from the same communities that they work to uplift. Together, we actively work towards a more just society where human rights can be fully realised.

Figure 5.3: Ikamva labantu Background (Ikamva labantu, 2023).

Programmes provided by Ikamva labantu include an Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme and the Afternoon Angels programme. The ECD programme works with established community preschools to train principals and practitioners in best-practice techniques and to support them with educational resources so that they can improve their offering. This is important as the training equips principals to better manage their preschool and become financially self-sufficient, while providing quality and age-appropriate education to the children in their care.

The Ikamva Labantu organisation currently has a preschool in Khayelitsha, called Kwakhan-ya Educare which serves as a training facility where practitioners can gain practical experience and mentorship in the classroom.

The Afternoon Angels programme was initially started by a group of 53 women from Cape Town's townships. These women opened their homes to local children to provide a place of safety where they can receive a nutritious meal, emotional support, and a space to play in the afternoons. The programme serves as a preventative measure as it keeps children away from the dangers of the streets and provides a warm, nurturing environment for them to feel safe, supported, and free.

### **Precedent Study No.2: Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (BWA)**

#### **Background:**

The Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (BWA) is the largest and most prominent association of business and professional women in South Africa focussed on the empowerment, inspiration and development of women and youth who are active participants in the economy. The BWA provides a valuable platform for the inspiration and empowerment of women in business through a variety of initiatives and opportunities for personal growth and development. Apart from creating networking opportunities for its members, it makes a strong contribution towards developing the next generation of women business leaders. It plays a key role in highlighting the current status of women in leadership and acts as a lobby group that advocates on women's business issues in an effort to transform the economy.

Figure 5.4: BWA Background (BWASA, 2023).

Two key programmes that communities and government should be aware of is Sanitary Sista's and Businesswomen of Tomorrow. The Sanitary Sista's programme began as the concept of empowerment across every milestone of a woman's life, and not just at the start of adulthood. This programme provides sanitary pads to school-going girls in impoverished communities where a lack of access to proper sanitation and running water makes these girls particularly susceptible to disease and infections. The BWA together with its partners and members have successfully embarked on a project which involves the collection and distribution of sanitary pads for underprivileged young women.

The Businesswomen of Tomorrow programme was established to unlock potential and break the cycle of poverty through education. This organisation provides workshops that have been designed to prepare Grade 11 and 12 learners with the principles, concepts, and skills to help them make a success of their entrance into the workplace. High-calibre speakers have enlightened the girls on a range of relevant topics from making informed career choices, understanding finances, and preparing for a job interview. This programme ensures the next generation of businesswomen are motivated and equipped to succeed

when they enter the business environment.

### **Precedent Study No.3: MES**

#### **Background:**

MES is a Christian social development organisation that has been changing the heart of the city since 1986 and has been actively working towards providing sustainable solutions to pervasive poverty in the inner cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) and Kempton Park. MES in Cape Town is situated in Bellville, Durbanville, Brackenfell, Scottsdene and Belhar. MES Cape Town believes in a space where hope is possible, where values and norms are nurtured, where the disempowered are empowered, where human potential is developed and where dignity is restored. MES Cape Town provides services regardless of age, religion, or sexual orientation. The services rendered to our client groups include a holistic approach of prevention, intake and intervention leading to a sustainable exit for each individual. Presently MES Cape Town focuses on learners, adults, social support services and enterprise projects. The pre-schoolers and youth groups form part of our expansion strategy for 2020 and beyond.

Figure 5.5: MES Background (Admindigi, 2023).

Three programmes of the MES Organisation have been selected. In each, communities and local government can participate. This includes the Safe Space and Canteen, the GROW, and the Social Work Services programmes.

The Safe space and Canteen initiative is about restoring dignity by moulding and empowering homeless/jobless adults to improve their psychological, emotional, and physical skills, while being accommodated at a safe place to overnight, covering their most basic needs (food, clothing, and toiletries).

Similarly, the GROW Job rehabilitation and Occupational therapy programme is providing access to a job rehabilitation process for the homeless/jobless adults, leading to an increased occupational intelligence that results in earning a living, restored dignity, enhancement of a person's attitude and self-worth.

The social work services focus on all groups by empowering them to live sustainable, independent, and meaningful lives through counselling, workshops, after care, social relief, family reunification and rehabilitation programmes.

All three of these precedent studies illustrate but a fraction of meaningful community engagement and social upliftment projects that are happening in Cape Town. Together with the financial support from National Government and championing support from Local Government, the state can empower women in informal settlements through existing community-based organisations such as these, that are already making a difference in our city.

### **5.3.6 Recommendation for Provincial Government to establish a gendered approach to planning and data collection**

As mentioned in Section 5.3.1, establishing a gendered approach to planning can significantly impact women's lives. It is recommended that an annual gender inequality index be established, through the collection of gender-disaggregated data. Such an index could be used to guide decision making around land access, use, ownership, and management. This recommendation can be led by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) with the support of the Commission for Gender Inequality, STATS SA, and the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD). Therefore, the DEA&DP would need to establish a GBVF cleaning house that sources relevant data, analyses, and synthesises it to enable, disseminate, monitor, and evaluate the use of research information. To this end, STATS SA would be responsible for the data collection; the DWYPD would be the national repository for GBVF research; and the DEA&DP would be responsible for the creation of a disaggregated comprehensive dashboard relating to women inequality and responsible for evidence-based mapping.

These additional resources could assist in identifying restrictions or oversights in existing and commonly used land management tools and practices. STATS SA should work together with existing women-led organisations when collecting data, so that deeper insights into community experiences and knowledge can contribute towards implementation frameworks. For example, the Slum Dweller International (SDI) Alliance organisation that supports urban poor communities has an existing community data collection initiative. They engage in profiling (rapid assessment of a settlement); enumeration (household level socio-economic surveys) and mapping. By using such existing sources of data, STATS SA could partner with existing organisations to create new relationships — and even institutions — that make poor urban women integral role players in the decisions that affect their lives.

### **5.3.7 Recommendation for National and Local Government to promote gender-Inclusive participatory processes**

Gender inclusion involves actively integrating women's viewpoints into decision-making processes, to ensure that their perspective and influence are of equal quantity and quality compared to men. As discussed in Section

2.3.3, the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 (2000: 20), Section 4(h) stipulates that the council of a municipality has a duty to "promote gender equity in the exercise of the municipality's executive and legislative authority". Moreover, Chapter 4 of the Act is entirely dedicated to outlining community participation mechanisms, processes, and procedures. Sadly, very little attention to redressing gender inequality is mentioned. The only provision for this is in Section 17(3) of Chapter 4 (op cit.: 30) which states that:

*When establishing mechanisms, processes, and procedures in terms of subsection (2) the municipality must take into account the special needs of—*

- (a) people who cannot read or write,*
- (b) people with disabilities,*
- (c) women, and*
- (d) other disadvantaged groups.*

However, there is no mechanism, process, or procure that clarifies how municipal officials should take taking women into account. Through the Municipal Systems Act 32 (op cit.: 2), municipal officials have a legal obligation to "move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities and ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable to all". Therefore, it is recommended that municipal

officials who facilitate community projects must respect and understand that community knowledge and experiences are as important in meeting gender needs as technical expertise and theory.

It is also recommended that gender-sensitive training and support should be provided for municipal officials to equip them in community participation processes. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJ&CD) could lead this initiative, with support from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Premier from the provincial government, and the Mayor at district and local levels. This would strengthen leadership and accountability within and across government and non-government sectors to adopt a zero-tolerance policy to gender inequality within South Africa.

This approach to participation would also reinforce that community projects need to be driven by locally identified priorities: and that the priorities of women are of equal importance to those of heterosexual, cisgender men. An example of an effective tool that identifies community issues and priorities is through asset base mapping from the Sustainable Livelihood Framework employed by

the Development Action Group (DAG) discussed in Section 2.6.

### **5.3.8 Recommendation for all tiers of government to promote awareness of gender intersectionality**

There needs to be a recognition of women's multiple intersectionalities when reviewing and amending existing housing policies and subsidy programmes. This will necessitate a deeper awareness of black feminism, especially with regard to housing in informal settlements (see Section 2.6). Such an awareness could be established via education and training programmes for National Government policymakers and Provincial Government officials responsible for co-ordinating and implementing housing programmes in accordance with national housing policy. This recommendation is backed up by Akala's (2018: 245) suggestion (presented in Chapter 1) for the creation of "a broader and multifaceted approach [in policymaking] that reflects the divergent states embodied by marginalised women".

Similarly, McLean and Chenwi (2009) illustrated how other international instruments were more nuanced, and specifically emphasised the importance of adequate hous-

ing in the achievement of gender equality in the context of gender violence (see Section 2.3.1). Another way that awareness could be incorporated is through the South African *National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide* (2020: 37). This recommendation aligns with the outcomes of pillar six, which is:

- (1) *Improved understanding of the extent and nature of GBVF, broadly and in relation to specific groups and forms in South Africa;*
- (2) *Adoption of GBV policies and programming interventions that are informed by existing evidence-based research; and*
- (3) *GBVF related information across different government management information systems, is readily used to address systemic challenges and facilitate effective solutions and responses.*

In other words, the implementation of education and training programmes that bring awareness to the systemic constraints that black women experience could allow all three spheres of government (National, Provincial, and Local) to take steps in the right direction when it comes to achieving equality. When it comes to adapting and rolling out of school-based programmes, the National Department of Basic Education (DBE) could take lead with the support of the Provincial Departments of

## 5.4 Limitations to the Study

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Education, and the Department of Social Development. The implementation programmes in Post School Education and Training Systems, should be led by the Department of Higher Education and Training with support from public and private institutions. Similarly, parenting and ECD programmes will need to be led by the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Social Development (DSD) with the support from the Department of Health (DOH), and the Civil Society Organisations (CSO).

The process of data collection ended up being more complicated than I had anticipated. This is due to the minibus taxi strikes happening at the same time as the fieldwork phases of the research project. Therefore, issues of safety meant that I was unable to visit and walk around Philippi to complete planned observations and mapping. Community members recommended it was best to just drive by to take photos, to use internet sources, and GIS for mapping data.

In addition, due to time constraints, I had to limit the number of research participants involved in this study. I had to be very selective about research participants from the community, which might have worked against me in terms of not acquiring a diverse enough sample size. The lack of viewpoints from local government is due to the poor response, at times an unwillingness and the very restrictive ethics approval process needed to interview municipal officials. This was extremely unfortunate, as the City of Cape Town's perspective would have enhanced the research findings and the recommendations made in this chapter. Nevertheless, I remain grateful to all the participants from whom I was able to learn.

## 5.5 Reflections

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In reflecting on the research, it is clear that the interview process ended up being more complex than I had anticipated. The location of the interview became an important factor. Where interviews were scheduled as online meetings, the process tended to be quick and to the point which was not conducive to open dialogue. The interviews that took place at coffee shops and over meals were more detailed, nuanced, and less rushed, which allowed me to probe for deeper insights, participant reflections and open dialogue. Nonetheless, I was impressed by how fruitful and passionate each participant was when discussing women and community-driven housing projects.

As a young woman of colour, I tried to approach this research with an open mind and allowed the research findings to guide me when considering the recommendations. I found that despite my initial intention to address concerns of placemaking, my research led to a greater concern for women to gain security of tenure and access to title deeds. As a black feminist in the planning space, this research topic has become very personal and meaningful, and I hope to contribute more research in this space in the future.

## 5.6 Conclusion

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Chapter 1 presented the problem under study, the overarching aim of the research, and the main research questions. A gendered lens overview of housing in South Africa was provided. This chapter further explored issues of informal settlements for women in South Africa, with a particular focus on Cape Town.

Chapter 2 reviewed the relevant literature and legislation based on the topic under study. Based on the literature reviewed, subsidiary research questions were established, which, in turn, informed the assessment criteria, namely: the importance of a women-led organisation; housing policy alignments; the status of the PHP/ePHP programme; the relevance of the PHP/ePHP programme; contextual meaning; trust and social learning; and meaningful engagement.

Chapter 3 outlined the research methods and techniques used to collect data. The limitations of both the methods and techniques were discussed. This chapter ended with a discussion on how data would be analysed, and how an ethical approach to this research would be fulfilled.

Chapter 4 presented my research findings. The findings were analysed and mapped against the assessment criteria established in

Chapter 2. Findings demonstrated that women-led organisations have had a positive impact on the formalisation of housing and the community in informal settlements. To this end, my research findings affirm that a gendered approach to housing enables a sense of community, empowers women, and improves the community's overall quality of life.

Chapter 5 provided answers to the main and subsidiary research questions. In doing so, the research findings were synthesised. The chapter went on to present policy and other planning recommendations on how the problems identified in the study might be resolved. Some recommendations were developed from suggestions derived from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Other recommendations were drawn from the research findings. They are summarised in Table 5.1 on page 89 and 90. Before presenting this table, I wish to end my dissertation with quotes from Maya Angelou and Meghan Markle.

“the ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned”

– Maya Angelou (1986)

“women don't need to find a voice, they have a voice, and they need to feel empowered to use it, and people need to be encouraged to listen”

– Meghan Markle (2019).



TABLE 5.1: SUMMARY

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES:	THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH FINDINGS:	THE RECOMMENDATIONS:		
What is the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements?	(1) The Victoria Mxenge Housing Project	i. The importance of a women-led organisation	a. Why was it important being a women-led organisation?	It was important to empower women through security of tenure and land ownership as they were the ones taking care of the family, were good at managing household financials, and had bad experiences with men.	It is recommended that government and associated funding organisations support women-led organisations through funding and skill development training programmes.		
How is this organisation enabling a sense of community through placemaking principles;	(2) Review of Post-Apartheid South African Housing Legislation	ii. Housing policy alignment	b. How holistic is the housing programmes in protection women's housing rights?	Despite the establishment of a democratic state, women-led organisations are still experiencing discrimination and battle to gain ownership of their homes.	It is recommended that amendments to the National Housing Code by acknowledged women's systemic challenges for women to access land ownership more easily.		
and what might planners learn from this gendered approach?			The Constitution	c. How co-operative were the different spheres of government during the implementation of the VM housing project?		The VM women struggled for more than 20 years to gain ownership of their homes due to bureaucratic government processes and inadequate state support, thereby nullifying the state's requirement to enable equality and cooperate as a state.	
			The Housing Act	d. What are the intergovernmental relations like in housing development processes?		There is a disconnect between the spheres of government roles and mandates, and the day-to-day performances on the ground. The intergovernmental relations were described as non-conductive as they agree in policy but differ in implementation. Therefore, the state is seen as non-relational who sees community engagement as a tick box exercise.	
			The Municipal Systems Act	e. Why is the PHP/ePHP programme not being used anymore?		There is a lack of willingness from the government to engage with the programme as the government prefers to remove the contribution of communities and employs a more contractor/developer-driven approach. Thereby completely ignoring the fundamental purpose of the PHP/ePHP housing delivery mechanism.	
		PHP/ePHP	iii. The status of the PHP/ePHP programme	f. Is the PHP/ePHP programme still needed? Are there aspects of the policy that needs improvement?	The provincial government, CROs, and communities all believe that the ePHP programme is needed and wanted. The only gap in the policy is that people who have benefited from housing cannot qualify under ePHP which is a problem for women who are divorced/separated. However, there are issues with the implementation process. This includes issue with developer-driven approach and corruption. Suggestions were also made that ePHP has the potential to engage with communal land.	It is recommended that all spheres of government come to an agreement to utilise the ePHP programme as it enables CROs to champion community-driven housing processes and community engagement effectively. It is recommended that further research on the connection between communal land trusts and ePHP policy should be explored.	
				iv. The relevance of the PHP/ePHP programme	g. What skills were transferred during the project and between whom were these skills transferred?		Types of skills that communities learn consist of saving, understanding technical and legislative knowledge about ePHP and housing, job creation, learning how to build and construct their homes, engaging in exchange programmes, and social cohesion.
					h. Is there a difference in quality of housing and quality of life between the PHP housing and BNG housing?	Yes, there is. The PHP/ePHP programme doesn't just produce a higher quality of housing but impacts the overall quality of life amongst individuals and as a collective. However, an important factor to consider is that building materials have become increasingly more expensive which can impact the size of the housing.	It is recommended that government housing finance mechanisms needs to be more inclusive to women such as allowing child-headed households and divorced women to access housing subsidies.

Table 5.1: Summary (Author, 2023).

TABLE 5.1: SUMMARY

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES:	THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:	THE SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH FINDINGS:	THE RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>What is the impact of a women-led organisation on the formalisation of housing in informal settlements?</p> <p>How is this organisation enabling a sense of community through placemaking principles;</p> <p>and what might planners learn from this gendered approach?</p>	<p><b>(3) Housing Delivery and Placemaking</b></p>	<p>vi. Contextual meaning</p>	<p>i. How does contextual meaning inform the implementation of the VM housing project?</p>	<p>The connection and bond that the VM women have formed through the PHP programme, as they feel a sense of pride for, and ownership over, their houses individually, and as a collective. Therefore, the contextual meaning doesn't only lie in the quality of house, but in the social networks and relationships established within the community.</p>	<p>It is recommended that communities engage with women-led organisations to catalyse placemaking principles in their areas through social upliftment projects. Similarly, it is strongly recommended that Local Government partner with civic forums when designing social development interventions in informal settlements.</p>
			<p>j. How is a sense of belonging enabled through the implementation of the VM housing project?</p>	<p>Through the coproduction and participation of communities in the housing process, interpersonal relationships flourished, and a sense of ownership was instilled, thereby creating a shared sense of community and meaning of place.</p>	
			<p>k. How has the implementation of the VM housing project enabled a sense of uniqueness, balance, symbolism, and legibility; and do any of these placemaking criteria promote a sense of community?</p>	<p>Research findings in this case study revealed that the placemaking criteria was not of importance to them. Rather their key focus and priority was on land ownership, quality of housing, and education.</p>	
	<p><b>(4) Radical Planning Theory</b></p>	<p>vii. Trust and social learning</p>	<p>l. How are interpersonal relations of trust and social learning enabled via the VM housing project?</p>	<p>Learning was integral to them as they saw it as a social process rather than individual learning. Roles and responsibilities were never fixed but took place on a rotational system where everyone had equal opportunity to gain knowledge and skills throughout the implementation process.</p>	<p>it is recommended that a gender inequality index through the collection of gender-disaggregated data be done annually as it can guide decision making around land access, use, ownership, and management.</p> <p>it is recommended that municipal officials who facilitate community projects must respect and understand that community knowledge and experiences are as important in meeting gender needs as technical expertise and theory. In conjunction, it is recommended that gender-sensitive training and support should be provided for municipal officials to equip them in community participation processes.</p>
	<p><b>(5) Black Feminism</b></p>	<p>viii. Meaningful engagement</p>	<p>m. What are the types of knowledges are created through these dialectical relationships and processes?</p> <p>n. How was coproduction utilised in the VM organisation?</p> <p>o. How meaningfully were the VM women consulted and engaged with throughout the housing development process?</p> <p>p. How were the VM women and community empowered through the housing project?</p> <p>q. How is equity, self-definition and freedom enabled within the VM housing project?</p>	<p>Types of knowledge included applying for housing subsidies, saving, drawing up budgets, designing and building their own houses, problem solving, skills development, technical and legislative knowledge, leadership skills and public participation.</p> <p>Through role playing, meetings, social gatherings, model building, designing, and building their houses together.</p> <p>Overall, the VM women experienced some form of systemic oppression and disempowerment throughout the implementation of the housing project. Research findings indicate deeper rooted issues of patriarchy, capitalism, and racism.</p> <p>By working closely with the ministers and constantly engaging with new legislation and policies. Through the PHP, they acquired skills and knowledge which enabled them to influence community housing projects in informal settlements and actively engage with various stakeholders effectively.</p> <p>It is enabled through the interconnections between women's education and empowerment, both as a collective and individually. Overall, the VM women advocated for laws to be changed, held spaces in meetings, and utilised their knowledge as a political weapon in challenging power structures to transform their social conditions.</p>	<p>It is recommended that there needs to be more awareness on black women systemic constraints through educational programmes and through the education system curriculum.</p>
<p><b>3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>5 LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES</b></p>	<p><b>7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIONS</b></p>	<p><b>17 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>17 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH FINDINGS</b></p>	<p><b>8 RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p>

Table 5.1: Summary (Author, 2023).

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# Appendix A



2023/06/27

EBE/00257/2023

RE: Research Ethics Committee Project Approved with Condition(s) Letter

Dear Ashley Howard,

Your application for ethics review of your project titled

An investigation into the impact of a women-based organization on the formalization of housing and how his organization enables a sense of community through placemaking principles: The case of the Victoria Mxenge housing project.

has been reviewed and evaluated by the

Engineering & Built Environment Committee.

Based on the information supplied your application has been conditionally approved.

Please note the following additional conditions associated with this approval:

- (i) It is noted that children/minors might be interviewed. Here, it is essential to obtain consent from their parents or guardians. This approval is conditional on measures being taken to ensure that this can happen. Otherwise, minors should not be interviewed.  
Further, the reviewer had some questions and offered several recommendations:
  1. Language maybe a barrier, will you use an interpreter?
  2. Did you think about a data management plan? UCT's DMP service is useful for you to work through how data will be stored, secured and destroyed, so it is recommended that you create your DMP on their site. You should then consider updating in your consent form what you should tell respondents about how their data is secured.
  3. Where is the study site, you have not been too clear on it? You will need to consider whether you need to ask for clearance from the administrative leads that run these settlements or manage them. Please discuss this point with your supervisor.
  4. Your research instrument is incomplete without the draft questions you intend to ask. It is in listing the questions that one can review more clearly if any of the questions are likely to cause any harm to reputations. We appreciate that it may have been a bit early to have these questions ready for the ethics review, but please may review your questions you intend to ask these participants with your supervisor prior to going to field.
  5. You may not show pictures like those of the women in your proposal without their written consent.

Proof that you have met these conditions, in the form of letters of permission or other relevant documentation, should be supplied to the REC, via the eRA system.

Once you have met with the above condition(s), you may proceed with your research project titled:

An investigation into the impact of a women-based organization on the formalization of housing and how his organization enables a sense of community through placemaking principles: The case of the Victoria Mxenge housing project.

Please note that should:

- (i) any serious or adverse effects to participants occur and/or,
- (ii) aspect(s) of your current project change and/or

- (iii) any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project occur then you should immediately report this to the approving REC. You may be required to submit an amendment to this application, in order to determine whether the changed aspects increase the ethical risks of your project.

Regards,

Engineering & Built Environment Committee.

RE: Approved Ethics Form

Harro Von Blottnitz

Mon 2023/10/16 11:46

Dear Ashley,

Thanks for providing information on how your research went.

From the evidence provided, it is clear that the one explicit conditionality was adhered to. The advice and recommendations given were also engaged with by yourself and your supervisor.

I don't think there's a point in a formal letter that retrospectively converts the conditional approval into a full approval. From my perspective, there are no hurdles to you submitting your dissertation for examination. You may want to copy this message into an appendix of your dissertation, where it would complement the conditional approval letter.

I trust that your research journey has yielded important new insights.

Best wishes for the examination!

Harro

Prof. Harro von Blottnitz (Pr.Eng.)

Chair: Ethics in Research Committee

Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment

University of Cape Town

## The very least women of Victoria Mxenge should expect is security

Women in their sixties stay up all night to defend their neighbourhood

30 April 2020 | By Joel Bolnick (/author/525/)

Opinion (/category/opinion/) | Cape Town (/region/South%20Africa/Western%20Cape/Cape%20Town)

Photo of a group of women in a street at night (/media/uploads/images/Third%20Party/Victoria%20Mxenge.jpeg)

**Women of Victoria Mxenge guarding their homes and neighbourhood throughout the night. Photo: Patricia Matolengwe**

On the weekend of Freedom Day, a battle over electricity turned violent after women from the Victoria Mxenge housing project tried to stop illegal connections being made by people from nearby Ramaphosa informal settlement, Cape Town.

Separated from Victoria Mxenge by a narrow servitude road, fringed by piles of garbage, Ramaphosa came into being about two years ago at the height of the land expropriation debate in the National Assembly. The settlement, on marginal land unsuitable for development purposes, has been growing ever since. It is a mosaic of zinc sheets and wood, plywood and corrugated iron. Its occupants live without basic services: no water, no roads, inadequate sanitation and no electricity.

Some residents from Ramaphosa have been tapping into one of Victoria Mxenge's electricity boxes for many months. This has been tacitly and pragmatically accepted by the women leadership in the small formal housing estate, recognizing that their neighbours in the informal settlement were in desperate need of lighting for convenience and for safety. They also accepted the fact that in the absence of arbitration and regulation by the state, they stood to come out second-best in any violent confrontation.

But things changed dramatically over Easter weekend and then again this Freedom Day weekend. The nationwide Covid-19 lockdown had confined many idle young men to their settlements, if not to their houses, and strangled the informal economy. Youth in Ramaphosa settlement began to vandalize the formal houses, stealing doors and window frames in broad daylight. The surge in demand for electricity saw them tap into additional electrical boxes in Victoria Mxenge.

When requests for intermediation by the local councillor proved fruitless and demands for the restoration of the earlier tacit agreement were rebuffed by the Ramaphosa community, the Victoria Mxenge members removed the illegal wiring themselves. The Ramaphosa youth responded by barricading the single entrance into the Victoria Mxenge housing estate and laying siege to the community. Incidents of stone-throwing and the firing of weapons followed.

Repeated efforts to get the police to intervene, including calls to JP Smith, mayoral committee member responsible for safety and security, finally elicited a response from the police, who came in a convoy, broke through the barricade, withstood a fusillade of rocks and stones, and arrested three residents of the Ramaphosa settlement.

This predictably ramped up the tension and not long after the police had left, without leaving any presence whatsoever, the barricades were back and word got out that the Ramaphosa community were waiting for nightfall to launch an attack on Victoria Mxenge.

Since 23 April the women have been spending their nights guarding and patrolling their homes. On Saturday, the attack was launched and repelled, but not before all the electricity boxes had been petrol-bombed, several houses damaged and nine people injured. The stand-off continues. The army is nowhere to be seen and only after the latest round of violence has one police vehicle been stationed in the Victoria Mxenge housing estate.

Victoria Mxenge is no ordinary community. It is an icon of participatory development, community self-reliance and the power of women. Built 25 years ago by the women who still run its communal property association and hold the community together, Victoria Mxenge, the human settlement, comes from the struggles, the labour and the savings of the women of Victoria Mxenge, who planned and built it and have raised their families here. It has inspired a generation of women slum-dwellers across the world to organise themselves and contribute materially and conceptually to their own development destiny.

In the first decade of democracy in South Africa, Victoria Mxenge was a regular destination for influential politicians who wanted to honour and be seen with the women who had built their own homes, including President Nelson Mandela and President Bill Clinton.

Nowadays this venerable neighbourhood shows signs of wear and tear, but its resilience remains. More diverse, more open, more human in its scale than most state-subsidised housing developments, it is also more vibrant, more throbbing with life than the geometrical grid of middle class neighbourhoods that it first aspired to copy and then was turned away from by its own harmonious incoherence and openness. Everywhere in Victoria Mxenge there are tell-tale signs of its own origins in the informal settlements that surround it.

The residents of Ramaphosa informal settlement do not see it that way. They see a community that has roads, houses and services while they have not. And it is a community in their immediate vicinity that has all the hallmarks of an easy target.

When the residents of Victoria Mxenge look at Ramaphosa, they stare into their own past for they too emerged from stagnant puddles, rutted streets and rabbit warrens of ordered chaos.

What differentiated Victoria Mxenge from the millions of state-sponsored low-income homeowners, was that they built their own houses. They planned the layout of the plots and the public spaces and streets. They dug the trenches for the infrastructure and they made the bricks and door frames and window frames with their own hands. The design and finished product are not without their flaws, as any urban planner or municipal official will be quick to tell you, but Victoria Mxenge has a coherence born of the incoherence from which it emerged. It is a coherence that points to a better urban future.

And when the residents of Victoria Mxenge look at Ramaphosa, they also stare into the future. Some of their own children, tired of living in overcrowded rooms in their familial homes, were the first to occupy the Ramaphosa land. Now outnumbered, overshadowed and out-maneuvred by droves of new residents they are perhaps in the most precarious situation of all, with a vanishing foothold in formality and an insecure one in the informal areas to which they have had to retreat.

In a constitutional democracy such as ours the very least the people of Victoria Mxenge (and Ramaphosa) should expect is that the institutions of the state will intercede to keep the peace, as they no doubt would do if such violence were to break out in the leafy suburbs of Newlands or Camps Bay.

With the national lockdown, when 73,000 soldiers are on the streets, the very least the people of Victoria Mxenge should expect is that the army would guard the untarred strip of servitude road that barely divides the two communities. And that they would stay there until peace returned, so that in this time of Covid-19, women in their sixties would not have to gather in groups and stay awake all night to protect the homes they built with their own sweat, blood and tears.

*Joel Bolnick is founder and former Managing Director of CORC and Shack Dwellers International (SDI)*

*Views expressed are not necessarily those of GroundUp*