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Who helps women cope?: Women's agency in households, families and communities.

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ABSTRACT

Women's experiences of poverty in post-apartheid South Africa are made real in their struggles to access resources and assets to survive. They survive sudden shocks and entrenched poverty by constructing and drawing on social support networks that provide access to adequate housing, secure tenure and sufficient income to sustain households. The social support networks of households, families and communities are investigated in the adjacent but diverse townships of Manenberg and Guguletu - resettlement areas for those who were forcibly removed from the city centre of Cape Town. Theoretical perspectives on: the South African context of support; reciprocity; social networks; and the morality inherent in networks, fail to provide information of the complexities and nuances in the lives of the women. Women are required to negotiate gender roles and position in every relationship in order to be eligible for support.

Discourses on how the South African city shaped reciprocity and gender identity within households and families provide insight into the context in which support is negotiated. Drawing on these sets of literature an analysis of life histories (constructed from a semi-structured, open ended questionnaire) is conducted of fifteen women from each township that document their struggles, frustrations, joys and aspirations. The evidence from the case studies suggests that women's experiences of poverty are actualised in their marginalisation from adequate housing, secure tenure and sustainable livelihoods.

Moreover, the mechanisms they employ to bridge these challenges, their support networks, further entrenches gender inequalities and the inferior position of women in society. A detailed analysis of their relationships reveals that in order to access support women sublimate their challenges of traditional gender identities in order conform to normative behaviour and access resources and assets required for survival. A comparison of the configuration, utilisation and value of strategic relationships within women's households, families and communities demonstrates their agency. The women interact with their context, making strategic decisions and choices that influence not only the social fabric of their communities but also their own identity.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Maps	vii
List of Tables	viii
List of Pictures	ix
List of Figures	x
CHAPTER 1: Introduction - The “Manenberg tornado”: Highlighting support networks to survive adversity	1
Organisation of the dissertation	9
CHAPTER 2: Conceptualising women’s social support networks and their influence on gender roles and normative behaviour	11
Introduction	11
Initial sets of literature consulted	12
Race in South Africa: Marker of entrenched poverty in townships	14
<i>Personal and spatial segregation</i>	15
<i>Creating a differentiated workforce</i>	17
<i>Living without families</i>	18
Social networks that mediate development, shocks and stresses	19
<i>Networks that mediate development</i>	20
<i>Configuring relationships and ‘relatedness’ in the context of the South African city</i>	21
<i>Constructing households</i>	22
<i>Conceptualising social relatedness</i>	23
<i>Reciprocity as the basis for support</i>	24
<i>Support amongst kin and non-kin</i>	25
The construction of gender identities within social support networks	27
<i>Normative behaviour: Mothers, wives and daughters</i>	27
<i>Women as guardians of respectability</i>	29
Conclusion	30

CHAPTER 3: Women configuring support in Manenberg: Primacy of family 32

'Legal backyarders': Tenure security in Manenberg	32
The evolution of Manenberg	33
<i>A historical perspective of housing and tenure in Manenberg</i>	35
Households, families, community: Social support networks for survival.....	38
<i>Fluid households and families</i>	38
<i>Charlene's household: Two symbiotic family units</i>	39
<i>Sarah's household: Several symbiotic family units</i>	40
<i>Kaelyn's household: Symbiosis across townships</i>	43
<i>The community of Manenberg: constructed on the basis of family ties</i>	47
Long histories of inadequate housing and insecure tenure	50
<i>Marginalisation from housing and tenure</i>	50
<i>Women aspire to own brick homes</i>	53
Women work predominantly in the manufacturing sector.....	59
Supportive relationships in households, family and community	64
<i>The trade-offs for financial dependence on husbands and partners</i>	64
<i>Children as support or burden of responsibility</i>	67
<i>Siblings are not an automatic support base</i>	70
<i>Friends in the community who facilitate access to livelihoods</i>	72
<i>Fragmented community: The lack of cohesive community organizations</i>	73
Conclusion.....	74

CHAPTER 4: Women configuring support in Guguletu: Primacy of community... 77

'Shack dwellers': A home but not a house.....	77
Guguletu: A product of the Apartheid city.....	79
<i>The temporary urban status of Africans</i>	80
<i>Shacks and brick houses: A dichotomy of fortunes</i>	82
History of tenure, housing and jobs for fifteen Guguletu women.....	82
<i>Moving from place to place - deepening levels of insecurity</i>	84
<i>Jobs that increase vulnerability</i>	88
<i>Life as a domestic worker</i>	90
<i>Livelihoods in the 'informal' sector</i>	92
<i>State grants as a dependable source of income</i>	94

Defining household, family and community in Guguletu.....	95
<i>Household configuration in Guguletu</i>	96
The strength of <i>amakhaya</i> and kinship links in Guguletu.....	100
Supportive relationships in households, kin and community.....	102
<i>Boyfriends as primary support base</i>	102
<i>Abusive husbands: vulnerability within the household</i>	103
<i>Women's support of other women: The role of mothers</i>	105
<i>Sibling support</i>	107
<i>Urban ubuntu: The role of church and neighbours</i>	109
<i>Organised communities: The role of SANCO at the time of the tornado</i>	110
Conclusion.....	112
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion - Women shaping their own reality	114
Parallel experiences of poverty	114
Households, families and community: Coping mechanisms after the tornado	115
<i>Family: The main source of emergency support in Manenberg</i>	115
<i>Dependence on the formal community structure of SANCO in Guguletu</i>	116
The primacy of family in Manenberg and community in Guguletu	117
<i>Comparing household configuration in Manenberg and Guguletu</i>	117
<i>Defining family and kinship links</i>	119
<i>The shaping of communities</i>	120
<i>Insights from the configuration of social networks</i>	121
Networks that link women to resources and assets	122
<i>Tenure security: Vetting by amakhaya and kin or hosted by parents</i>	122
<i>Access to homes: state dependence versus self sufficiency</i>	123
<i>Limited formal employment options: The need to be creative</i>	124
Institutions determining norms of behaviour and a moral code.....	127
<i>The ethics of respectability in Manenberg</i>	128
<i>Traditions of community structures regulating normative behaviour in Guguletu</i>	129
Gender roles that influence identity and position.....	131
<i>Abusive relationships with husbands or partners</i>	131
<i>The burden of motherhood when living in poverty</i>	133
Conclusion.....	134

References 135

Appendix A: 149

Appendix B: 151

Appendix C: 154

University of Cape Town

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1.1: Disaster affected area in Manenberg

Map 3.1: Interview area in Manenberg

Map 3.2: Manenberg in relation to women's places of origin in neighbouring townships

Map 4.1: Interview area in Guguletu

Map 4.2: Guguletu in relation to women's places of origin in the Eastern Cape

University of Cape Town

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Sources of Income for women in Manenberg

Table 4.1: Sources of Income for women in Guguletu

Table 6: Tenure and housing table: Women interviewed in Manenberg

Table 7: Tenure and housing table: Women interviewed in Guguletu

University of Cape Town

LIST OF PICTURES

Picture 1.1: Disaster affected area

Picture 3.1: Wendy houses in Manenberg

Picture 4.1: Informal dwellings in Guguletu

University of Cape Town

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Charlene's household structure

Figure 3.2: Sarah's household structure

Figure 3.3: Kaelyn's household structure

Figure 4.1: Nomzi's household structure

Figure 4.2: Iris's household structure

Figure 4.3: Nokhukhanya house structure

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The “Manenberg tornado”: Highlighting support networks to survive adversity

The “Manenberg Tornado”¹ was a traumatic event for all affected as it destroyed and damaged homes, devastated lives and disrupted livelihoods. The affected adjacent Cape Town communities of Surrey Estate, Manenberg and Guguletu were shocked by the sudden onset of the event and the extent of the damage caused by the weather event. Everyone affected by the tornado had to find ways to cope with the effects of the disaster. Women, especially those that headed households, had to act quickly and strategically to restore order in their households and minimize the impact on their lives and those for whom they had primary responsibility. This event is not the only adversity that the thirty women interviewed for this research had to cope with. Many of the women live in adverse conditions and have had to struggle to survive on a daily basis. The tornado highlighted their vulnerabilities and exposed the impoverished conditions in which they lived as well as the mechanisms they employed to survive.

¹ The term ‘tornado’ is not technically correct, but commonly used in the affected areas and in Cape Town to describe and name the event and its consequences.



Map 1.1: Disaster affected area in Manenberg (Source: City of Cape Town, 1999e: Presidential briefing)

On the 29th of August 1999 at approximately at 6:30 in the morning, homes in Surrey Estate, Manenberg and Guguletu townships were devastated by a rain and windstorm, the tornado.² As a result of this weather event, five people lost their lives, 2850 households were affected, 1844 households were temporarily displaced and 825 households were left homeless (and temporarily housed in community halls and schools). Two public assembly buildings and 263 houses were damaged³, and 1729 houses were destroyed. Infrastructure problems included the disruption of piped sewage, electricity and telecommunications. The Manenberg tornado was declared an official disaster event on 1 September 1999 by President Thabo Mbeki. The decree made finances accessible for emergency relief (MANDISA⁴ 1999). In practice,

² For details of the emergency response see the City of Cape Town Reports (1999e; 1999e) as well as details of interventions (City of Cape Town reports 2001a; 2000h) and recovery (City of Cape Town reports 2000f; 2000g).

³ Details of the repair strategy is contained in City of Cape Town reports (2000b; 2000d; 2000e; 1999a; 1999b; 1999c; 1999d).

⁴ MANDISA is a database designed and maintained by the Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme based at the University of Cape Town, using newspaper articles one of the primary sources for data.

however, those affected by the disaster primarily drew on their own coping mechanisms to overcome the effects of the incident.



Picture 1.1: Disaster affected area (Source: City of Cape Town, 1999e: Presidential briefing)

This research focuses on support networks of the women affected by the disaster who lived in informal dwellings⁵. In my analysis, I compare specifically insecurity of tenure, uncertain access to housing and concerns about income to survive in the townships of Manenberg and Guguletu⁶. Manenberg is a former 'Coloured' group area, still racially homogenous, inhabited by predominantly Afrikaans speaking Muslims and Christians. The township consists mainly of public flats and semi-detached cottages with households accommodating extended families in informal

⁵ Information about the City's response in terms of informal dwellings can be found in City of Cape Town reports (2001)

⁶ I have excluded Surrey Estate from the scope of this research because the majority of residents are homeowners and thus, insecurity of tenure was not as prominent an issue as in the other two townships.

dwellings in backyards, known as wendy houses. Guguletu is a former 'African'⁷ settlement area largely inhabited by a Xhosa speaking population. This township has a range of housing types with a mixture of formal housing as well as informal dwellings either situated in backyards of formal houses or in informal settlements⁸.

This thesis investigates how women living in informal dwellings dealt with not only the devastating consequences of the tornado but more generally experiences of marginalization due to inadequate housing, insecure tenure as well as insufficient income. In response to these conditions, I examine how women in both townships struggled to acquire material, emotional and financial resources and assets they needed to survive on a daily basis. I therefore investigate the support mechanisms in each community which they drew on to access development opportunities as well as resources required for daily survival. The occurrence of the tornado created an opportunity to consider the coping mechanisms women used to recover from a sudden onset disaster incident. It also provided the space to engage with women's survival mechanisms to overcome their experiences of poverty. In the thesis I assess social networks within households, families and in each township to understand the range of network women drew on during and after the tornado. Then I examine the ways in which Manenberg women and Guguletu women differently organised and drew on networks and the consequences thereof.

The research delves specifically into women's configuration of their households, families and communities to developing an understanding of sources of support. On household level, I investigate whom women chose to form a household with and the strategic value of the relationships within their household. In addition this analysis of householding relationships illustrates whether relationships were dynamic or stable and if they were restricted to people within women's home. In particular I draw out women's relationships with men in their households to illustrate the reasons women decided to foster and endure these relationships or end them. On a family level, I

⁷ Coloured and African refers to the racial identity designated by the Apartheid system, used in this thesis in this context.

⁸ If these informal dwellings look similar to wendy houses it is referred to as bungalows.

examine who the women considered relatives. I contrast construction of 'family' in Manenberg and Guguletu and what families provide. At community scale, I explore the degree to which women draw on community organisations both to cope with the consequences of the tornado and to negotiate access to secure tenure in particular. Women situate themselves strategically within household, family and community relationships that then shape their everyday lives and what is expected of them.

In order to understand the nature of support provided by these social networks, I explore how the women depended on relationships in households, families and communities to fulfill their aspirations for secure tenure, adequate housing and sufficient income to alleviate their experiences of poverty. Therefore in this research I assess which social networks or relationships are most useful in linking the women to tenure and the processes involved in securing tenure. Considering access to housing I investigate how the women acquired their post tornado homes and whether these homes differed from the ones they lived in before the tornado. In particular I focus on the role of the local state in providing access to homes or ensuring that women live in adequate housing, in Manenberg and Guguletu have had different histories of rights and access to tenure that were shaped directly by the Apartheid state and its establishment of rights for Coloured and African families. I therefore consider life histories to understand Manenberg and Guguletu women's different experiences of tenure and the individuals and institutions who have critical roles in their access to homes.

Lastly, I analyse women's employment and sources of income to assess the types of jobs women have found, the degree to which they provide resources to enable self sufficiency and which relationships have been pivotal in access to them. I am also able to examine whether the women utilized other livelihood strategies, for example, to access state grants or to creatively engage in the 'informal' sector to supplement or compensate for limited income from paid employment.

This thesis investigates which mechanisms facilitated women's access to assistance and support. It interrogates the expectations and requirements implicit in support. In particular I examine how support was dependent on whether women conformed to accepted behaviour. Then to this effect I consider how 'respectability' and behavioural norms are constructed and build expectations of morality in both communities. The research explores how the differences in Manenberg and Guguletu women's primary support network shaped the criteria and enforcement of respectability in each township and thus the consequences for support of challenging or refusing to conform to the moral dictates of respectability in each place. Women are strategic in their responses to these expectations of normative behaviour. I thus examine what constituted acceptable and respectable behaviour. Within women's specific social networks and the role their choice of primary support network exerted on adherence to the moral code. In Manenberg expectations are negotiated and built in families. In contrast in Guguletu, a broader pool of family, kin² and *amakhaya* provide a loose set of relationships through which women negotiate norms of morality. The norms expectations of respectability relate closely to the gender roles that women fulfill for example as mothers, wives and daughters for instance.

These dynamics shape how women decide with whom they fostered relationships and the implicit responsibilities that then needed to be fulfilled. I investigate whether the women had positive, supportive relationships with partners or spouses. I start with their reactions to abusive intimate relationships and how this shaped their positions in their household and therefore their identity as wives or partners in their society. I also consider what it means to be a new bride in each of the communities and the expectations of normative behaviour of women in this role. In addition I explore the experiences of women in their role as mothers and the effect of the strains of providing for their children on a daily basis as well as the strategies they employed and support they drew on to ensure survival. The research therefore analyses the relationships of the women in their gender roles relative to the effect of normative behaviour and the influence of their need for support and then it also provides insight

⁹ Kinship is different to the concept of family in Manenberg. Family is used to denote relatives sharing blood ties. Kinship is a broader concept that includes relatives sharing blood ties, clan and surnames.

into how the women shape who they are, their status in relation to their counterparts in these relationships as well as the society at large.

In this thesis I examine: 1) three levels of social networks - household, family or kinship and community; 2) how support is operationalised within these networks through reciprocity; 3) the women's responses to a moral code based on respectability inherent in social networks; and, 4) the effect of the negotiation of morality and need for support on women's gender roles, identity and position. There is an extensive literature that facilitates insight into the thesis's central focus: women's agency in configuring these social networks to access resources and assets to survive.

Firstly in order to understand the context of social support networks and factors that shaped households, families and communities in Manenberg and Guguletu I draw on the Apartheid City literature to describe how Apartheid legislation formalised separate racialised residential spaces and entrenched poverty particularly amongst people designated African and to a lesser extent Coloured populations¹⁰. The configuration of African and Coloured townships affects the structure of social support networks examined in the thesis.

Second, I draw on Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson (1996); Huggins (1989); Bank (1997) and Ross's (1996) notions of 'domestic fluidity' and 'diffused domesticity' to understand the configuration of households and householding and Ringsted (2004) to understand 'relatedness'. This literature provides a foundation to examine further the formation of family and kinship relationships and the way they shape communities, contextualised in research by Salo (2004), Ross (1995 and 1996, Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson (1996), and Arntz (2002) for instance. This work provides insight into the context for support and the form of support structures that women in the research draw on.

¹⁰ Khan (1990); Maharaj (1992); Metzger (2002); Boulton (2002); and Potluri (2004) specifically shed light on the effects of the Group Areas Act and differential development on housing and tenure in spaces demarcated for habitation African and Coloured. Huchzermeyer (1999); Hindson, Byerley and Morris (1994) and Mabin (1994) point particularly to the increase of informal settlement areas that accommodated the African poor on the periphery of the city.

Third, in order to understand the sharing of resources, particularly patterns of reciprocity, I review the work of Wasserman and Galaskiewicz (1994), Ross (1996), Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer (2000), Woolcock (1998), Oldfield (2000) and Pyle (1992). This body of work considers the rights and obligations that are embedded in networks which facilitate or constrain access to resources and assets that enable women living in impoverished circumstances to survive. Salo (2004) and Bank's (1997) research highlights how reciprocity in social networks is also based on expectations to conform to normative behaviour which is centred on respectability. Adherence to this moral code affects gender roles, identity and position (Ringsted 2004; Bank; 1997; Salo 2004).

This thesis's focus on the nuanced ways in which women shape their lives and the much more complicated ways in which dynamics within their social networks shape their identities, experiences, intentions and aspirations contributes to this body of work.

Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation first analyses the elements that make women's experiences and realities unique. I describe the bodies of literature that I initially engaged with to hone in on to explain the key concepts I focus on in this thesis. I consider the role of the Apartheid City in influencing the unique character of Manenberg as a Coloured and Guguletu as an African township. I investigate the micro dynamics of household, family and community social networks which are embedded in relatedness and relationships such as sharing and reciprocity. In addition, I analyse how these reciprocal relationships are gendered shaping identity and position within society. This chapter prefaces the contextual analysis of gendered social networks in Manenberg and Guguletu the two case studies that illustrate the arguments of this thesis.

The two case studies are presented in chapter three and four where the experiences of samples of women in Manenberg and Guguletu respectively are expounded upon. I discuss the how insecurity of housing and tenure in Manenberg reflects the influence of Apartheid policies on space. I investigate the choices women make in configuring their social networks demonstrating their agency. I provide information about the women's tenure, housing and employment histories which illustrates their experiences of marginalisation and poverty. In order to access material, financial and emotional assets and resources I illustrate the ways in which strategic relationships in the household, family and community social networks are drawn on. In particular I demonstrate the construction and activation of social networks that link women to adequate housing, secure tenure and sustainable livelihoods.

Chapter five presents a comparative analysis of the choices and decisions that women make to shape their lives in the two case studies illustrating their character of their agency. I compare differential responses and coping strategies to the tornado as an example of a sudden shock of the women between and within the communities of Manenberg and Guguletu demonstrating their use of their social formations highlighting the primary social support structure in area. I argue that there is a

hierarchy of support networks - family in Manenberg and community in Guguletu. I argue that the women utilise strategic relationships in social formations to mediate development needs such as access to a home, space to erect that home and income generating opportunities to sustain the household. I argue that reciprocal relationships are gendered – regulating normative behaviour and adherence to moral codes which cement gender identity and position – as a specific demonstration of the confluence of structure and agency that influences differences in experience of realities of struggle.

This research engages with the experiences in the life of women living on the margins struggling to survive and access development opportunities. Through this detailed analysis of their relationships and factors that influence their living conditions, I focus on how they configure these relationships to construct a support base to access opportunities that will enable them to survive. The use of intra-community links to engage in state-driven initiatives illustrates the intersection between local and macro processes. The investigation of the influence of gender on choices and decisions to identify, endure and maintain strategic social relationships yield important insights into agency as contextual, contingent and relational.

This dissertation provides insight into women's experiences of poverty in post apartheid South Africa, their struggles to survive and overcome their impoverished circumstances, the mechanisms they employ to access the resources they need as well as conforming to normative behaviour of respectability which reproduces gender imbalances in their society. On a conceptual level, it highlights that social networks and the relationships they are comprised of are embedded in local contexts that reflect the influence of history and culture affecting the configuration and use of social formations that are an important source of support.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptualising women's social support networks and their influence on gender roles and normative behaviour

Introduction

On the one hand, the Manenberg Tornado exposed the vulnerabilities and resilience of women living in informal dwellings in Manenberg and Guguletu. Women's vulnerabilities relate to experiences of poverty and marginalization, particularly a lack of access to formal housing, secure tenure and incomes that would enable them to create better living conditions. On the other hand, the event highlighted women's survival strategies and coping mechanisms in particular the support networks they drew on to manage the adverse circumstances they live in. This attests to the fact that they are not passive but active agents in shaping their realities.

In this thesis women's social networks are examined to gain insight into how women differently configure and use these support mechanisms to cope with living in impoverished conditions. Support networks are analysed between and within these two communities. The women's production and reproduction of households, families and communities are investigated to investigate their potential for facilitating access to housing, secure tenure, jobs and survival on a daily basis. In addition, the relationships within these networks play a fundamental role in influencing the contexts in which women live as well as shaping their identities.

This chapter examines literature on women's experiences, realities and mechanisms to cope with adversity. It provides a conceptual basis for the main arguments that the research examines. The first section provides a description of the sets of literature I engaged with to articulate the argument at the core of this thesis. In order to sketch a context for the case studies and provide insight into factors that affect the shape of these two communities, the second section specifically focuses on the role of the Apartheid City in influencing the character of Manenberg as a Coloured and Guguletu as an African township. The social structures within these townships form the basis of investigation of existing support mechanisms. The third section specifically examines

how we understand women's uses of social networks within households, families and communities to fulfill their hopes for a suitable and secure place to live and sufficient income to survive experiences of poverty. Households, family and community are embedded in notions of relatedness. The fourth section therefore describes relatedness and the nature of relationships within households and families (the building blocks of community), investigating the dynamics that operate within these social networks and that facilitate support through the sharing of resources and assets. Finally, I delve further into the relational dynamics within social networks by attempting to understand how these networks shape gender roles that influence the identity and the various positions of the women in the two communities.

Initial sets of literature consulted

Initiating a research project, with the Manenberg Tornado as an entry point, I first engaged with the disasters literature. This literature offered important insights about disaster vulnerability (Fothergill, Maestas and De Rouen Darlington 1999 Schmidlin and King 1995; Hearn Morrow 1999) and resilience (Curtis 1995; Hamid 1992; Lambert 1994). It highlighted poverty and marginalisation as indicators for vulnerability (Blaikie, Cannon, Davis and Wisner 2002), and resource sharing as critical a definitive coping or survival strategy (Hamid 1992; Lambert 1994; Rashid 2000; Curtis 1995) that enabled resilience (Pyle 1992). However, I was not only interested in the effect of the Manenberg tornado as an isolated disaster incident I wanted also to understand the daily disasters women dealt with in their struggles to survive. As I am particularly interested in resource sharing within networks I turned my attention to the arguments about social capital in the development literature (Woolcock 1998).

The social capital literature highlighted several features of networks that included: structure (Granovetter 1995 in Woolcock 1998:162), norms (Coleman 1987 in Woolcock 1998: 156), and attaining development goals (Simmel 1971 in Woolcock 1998: 169). This literature contributed to my understanding that networks are embedded in relationships as well as broader contexts (Woolcock 1998: 168) however, in its attempt to be comprehensive, the conceptual framework was incoherent as it 'draws meanings from abstract studies' or only case studies with

limited analysis (Fine 1998: 8; Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer 2000: 391). It tended to neglect critical issues such as explaining social difference, inequality, power and exclusion (Fine 1998: 9; Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer 2000: 392) in relation to networks. These issues are important as they provide insight into barriers to accessing development opportunities. Literature on gender and development, broadly informed by feminist theory¹¹, highlighted the inequities of power that resulted in the women's marginalization from development processes in society.

Research on gender issues analyses how women's position, roles and responsibilities excludes them from decision-making and development opportunities (Pearson 2000; Kothari, Minogue and Martin 2000; Imam 1997; Wieringa 1994; Sen 1996; Rowlands 1995). Women's identity is embedded in their normative gender roles and responsibilities in their relationships (Imam 1997; March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay 1999; El Bushra 2000). Women's responses to these roles also determine their relative positions (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay 1999:18) or power within these social structures (Kabeer 1999). Gender analysis asserts the importance of deconstructing dynamics within relationships (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay 1999: 18) and feminist methodologies (Mbilinyi 1992; Brinton Lykes 2001) proved invaluable tools for the analysis of the relationships women configure. Methods such as life histories are useful to provide insight into how women's lives are embedded in relationships as well as notions of gender and class (Mbilinyi 1992: 66). It was also important to establish which other contextual factors shaped women's responses to disaster incidents and their experiences of the reality of living in impoverished circumstances that reflects women's identity because gender is only one determinant of identity (Brah, Donald and Rattansi 1992; Yuval-Davis 1992; McClintock 1995).

In addition to gender, identity is also shaped by conceptions and interpretations for instance such as race (Brah 1992 in Donald and Rattansi 1992: 126), class (Anthias and Yuval- Davis 1992: 117-18), sexuality (McClintock 1995) and agency (Salo 2004). In the application of race, biological and natural characteristics such as skin colour or other physical features are utilized to designate groups upon which race labels such as 'black' and 'white' are conferred and superiority and inferiority is

¹¹ see Mangena 2003; Meinjies 1997; Salo 1994 for discussions of feminism in Africa and South Africa.

attached to these labels (Brah 1992 in Donald and Rattansi 1992: 126). Class is determined in relation to the production process and the 'capacities' and 'competencies' deemed useful for a particular economy, deficiencies result in menial low earning jobs (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992: 117-18). Agency shapes identity as it encompasses the struggles of individuals against race and class (Oyewumi 1997 in Salo 2004: 23-24) and the power to affect the circumstances in which one lives (Giddens 1984 in Salo 2004: 28). Although I recognise the role that structural factors play in shaping women's interpretations of reality and their identity, my particular focus in this thesis are the intentions or motivations that drive women to respond to similar experiences in different ways, the manner in which they shape their own lives, the expressions of their agency.

This thesis builds from this basis, in order to understand the agency women construct in their social networks in order to seek support and access to housing, tenure and jobs. To further understand the particular factors that shaped the identity of the women in Manenberg and Guguletu in the context of post apartheid South Africa, I draw on the Apartheid city literature to specifically understand how the racialisation of the city affected their need for support to survive. I explore social networks based in relatedness including understanding conceptions of household, family, clan, kin, *amakhaya* and community. I analyse the concept of reciprocity that is not only limited to sharing of resources but is also the mechanism that facilitates normative behaviour within networks. Finally, I consider how gender identity and position hinges on respectability and the policing of morality.

Race in South Africa: Marker of entrenched poverty in townships

The differences in social and economic conditions in Manenberg and Guguletu were shaped by racist policies implemented by the Apartheid regime. This section describes the use and effect of critical policies that determined race classification in South Africa. This racialisation also led to separate residential spaces for designated race groups and engineered poverty in large sectors of the society (Christopher 1994; Parnell and Mabin 1995; Robinson 1996). First, I will explain how South African citizens were legally classified into race categories formalizing segregation and initiating separate living spaces (Christopher 1994; Parnell and Mabin 1995). Second,

I describe how race categories and separated living spaces were linked to an economic system that created a differentiated workforce and the particular effects of the Coloured Labour Preference policy in Cape Town (Christopher 1994). Third, I consider the effect of these Apartheid policies on housing and the configuration of particularly African households and families (Christopher 1994; Parnell and Mabin 1995; Ross 1996).

Personal and spatial segregation

The South African or Apartheid city came about by the promulgation through a complex set of laws to organize society according to a racial hierarchy. When the Nationalist government came into power in 1948 it formalized discrimination on the basis of race (Christopher 1994: 32). The laws of Apartheid, which literally translates as 'apartness', were used to engineer segregation of the South African society (Christopher 1994: 1). Arguably the biggest impact of this system was noted in the reshaping of South African cities, the country's economic hubs (Christopher 1994:103).

Two primary laws perpetuated personal and residential segregation in the cities. Personal segregation on the basis of race was instituted with the promulgation of the Population Registration Act in 1950 (Christopher 1994: 103-105). This law initiated the compulsory classification of the population into 'Whites', 'Coloureds' or 'Africans' (Christopher 1994: 103-104)¹². Those qualifying as Whites, though the minority, were designated the superior race with Coloureds as second class citizens and Africans, the majority, designated as an inferior class. In this thesis, I am particularly interested in how Apartheid affected people designated Coloured and African as the two case studies are located in previously Coloured and African townships (Petre 1987; Thomas 1999).

The Coloured category was further subdivided into Cape Malay, Griqua, Indian, Chinese and a residual group designated Cape Coloured (Christopher 1994:104). The

¹² From this point on race labels will not be placed in quotation marks. This does not signify an acceptance of the categories but is used to make references to the group of people that had been included in these designations.

Coloured race label designated people judged to be of mixed descent. The classification criteria were based on physical attributes (for example curliness of hair and skin colour) and 'social acceptability' (Christopher 1994: 104). This population group was used to create a buffer, politically and pragmatically¹³, between Africans and Whites (Potluri 2004: 13). People classified African were also differentiated by ancestry, physical attributes, culture and the languages they spoke. There were also strong connections to place which differed with each group. In Cape Town, Africans were predominantly Xhosa speaking and had roots in the region of Transkei or Ciskei (which were demarcated as 'homelands'¹⁴ for exclusive African residence, now part of the Eastern Cape province) (Metzer 2002: 5-6). Therefore the Population Registration Act, the mechanism by which racial groups were defined, was the primary tool for the legal racialisation of the South African society.

This racialised society was further divided by the Group Areas Act of 1950 which dictated that the race groups established should live in separate areas (Christopher 1994: 105-121; Maharaj 1994: 2). This legislation ensured firstly that cities were divided into areas for exclusive ownership and occupation of Whites and competition for urban space and economic power was legally eliminated. Second, it ensured limited contact amongst the designated racial groups as the population groups were restricted to these areas (Christopher 1994: 105).

The city was symbolic of the centre of this power (Christopher 1994; Hindson, Byerley and Morris 1994). The Group Areas Act established areas for residence by Whites in the city centre. Residential areas were also demarcated for Coloureds and Indians on the periphery of the city (Christopher 1994: 116). The spaces for residence of different race groups were carefully selected. Whites were afforded areas with superior quality of environment with deteriorating and marginalised land being afforded to other race groups (Khan 1990: 56). The Native Resettlement Act of 1954 which pertained especially to African residential spaces decreed that Africans were only permitted to legally reside and own land in designated 'homelands'. Africans could not own land in freehold tenure outside homelands and therefore African group

¹³ Coloureds were given different rights as citizens and they lived in areas between Whites and Africans creating buffer zones.

¹⁴ Homelands were rural, marginalized lands designated for residence by Africans (Christopher 1994: 90).

areas were not established (Christopher 1994: 105; Potluri 2004: 12). In order to achieve White group areas in the city centre homes of Coloured and African city dwellers were demolished and their land expropriated (Christopher 1994: 116). This necessitated forced removals and resettlement of these communities, considerable distances from town and cities (Horrell 1954 in Khan 1990: 55-56). Resettlement areas for Africans were perceived as temporary until displaced persons were returned to their 'homelands' (Beavon 1982 in Khan 1990: 56).

Creating a differentiated workforce

The driving force behind personal and residential segregation was the concentration of economic power for Whites. With competition for prime land eliminated further measures were instituted to ensure that Whites had exclusive rights to the highest job categories, precluding access to these jobs by other race groups with the promulgation of job reservation policies and engineering the education system. These Apartheid policies created a differentiated workforce in cities. The city centre was the domain of Whites with protected employment as skilled working class, middle-income professional and managerial classes. Indians and Coloureds were an intermediate income group (semi-skilled and skilled workers, lower middle income semi-professionals). Africans comprised the unskilled, semi-skilled and unemployed workers (Hindson and Crankshaw 1994 in Hindson, Byerley and Morris 1994:329).

As the research area for this thesis is in Cape Town I will illustrate job market restrictions by discussing the implementation and effect of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy in the province. In 1955 Cape Town (the Western Cape province at large) was classified a Coloured Labour Preference area, a further measure in attempt to move Africans out of the area (Christopher 1994: 123-125; Salo 2004: 157).

Coloured women, in particular, were then the preferred workers in the industries in Cape Town, particularly in the clothing industry (Bhorat 2003; Salo 2004: 157). African women had to settle for cleaning jobs in these industries or in homes as domestic workers. Over time these patterns of employment have not changed resulting in traditional employment sectors for Coloured and African women (Bhorat 2003). Africans who worked in the city required by law to carry pass books that

detailed their eligibility for access to the city, verifying their working status in the city (Cole 1987 in Metzger 2000:7).

Living without families

Africans were part of the labour force of the city and therefore required housing. Previous African settlement areas on the periphery of the city were later viewed as 'labour reservoirs' housing labourers workers who were employed in cities (Beavon 1982 in Khan 1990: 56). Therefore some state and private housing (first in the form of single sex hostels then small freestanding homes) was constructed in these areas to accommodate the men who were allowed to work in the cities. African females who worked in cleaning jobs most often lived at the residences of their employers (Thomas 1999).

When men worked in cities their families were supposed to stay behind in rural areas (Thomas 1999). The African men and women that worked in cities were forced to leave children with grandparents in the rural areas (Thomas 1999). This had a devastating effect on African families. African families needed to configure families to access income to survive. Women could live in 'homelands' with husbands who lived and worked in cities (Thomas 1999). Alternatively families could try to live together illegally in the city (Huchzermeyer 1999). This led to the mushrooming and progressive expansion of informal settlements within the resettlement areas on the periphery of the city in townships such as Guguletu in the 1970's and 1980's (Huchzermeyer 1999; Hindson, Byerley and Morris 1994: 329). The reality was that no amount of legislation could curtail the entry of Africans to the city in search of families or livelihoods (Metzger 2002: 6). With no state housing built for Africans, families risked prosecution and harassment to live in shacks in informal settlements which constituted illegal squatting on peripheral land (Boulton 2002: 5; Metzger 2002: 6; Huchzermeyer 1999). The government destroyed homes in these 'illegal informal settlements' and tried to move people back to 'homelands' (Christopher 1994:123-125). Settlement of families occurred in unplanned informal townships regardless of all these strategies (Metzger 2002: 6; Huchzermeyer 1999).

On the other hand, Coloured families who lived in areas designated for White residence were forcibly removed from these areas to peripheral areas on the edge of the city (Christopher 1994: 103; Parnell and Mabin 1995: 42). Coloureds in Cape Town were resettled in townships like Manenberg. Crime and violence grew in these areas partly due to government imposed destruction of family and community networks via the resettlement process (Potluri 2004: 16). Coloureds were in a much better situation than Africans as Cape Town was a Coloured labour preference area and state housing was provided in the townships designated as resettlement areas (Christopher 1994).

In suburbs like Manenberg and Guguletu the institutionalization of racial identities, experiences of dispossession of land and forced migration, limited access to housing and employment policies, entrenched poverty (Petre 1987; Thomas 1999). Surviving these adversities entailed the development of coping mechanisms that could assist in the alleviation of daily struggles for survival and acting as links to access land and tenure, houses and jobs that would alleviate experiences of poverty and meet basic needs. This thesis will focus on social networks of households, families and communities as a coping and survival mechanisms that helps women access material, financial and emotional assets and resources. The next section therefore investigates the ability of social networks to link women living in these adverse conditions to the resources they require to survive.

Social networks that mediate development, shocks and stresses

This section considers how social networks, based on 'relatedness' within, households and families, act as support networks that enable survival and mediate experiences of living in impoverished conditions. First, I investigate conceptions of how the configuration of these social networks shapes access to development opportunities. I am particularly interested in those networks building from relationships amongst people who consider themselves to be related. Second, I will describe Ringstead's (2004) argument about relationships and how 'relatedness' is constructed. From this general understanding of 'relatedness' I will contextualize specific research on the structure of households in a South African context and explore concepts of social relatedness in Manenberg and Guguletu. Third, I explain the phenomena of

reciprocity by demonstrating support within households (conceptualized by Ross as 'diffusion of domesticity' 1996: 58) amongst kin and non-kin. Fourth, I consider how we understand the mechanisms and rules for sharing resources and assets for support of households and families.

Networks that mediate development

Social networks are comprised of individuals who form a set of interdependent relationships (Sprecht 1986 in Bopape 1993: 5). MacIntyre (1988 in Bopape 1993: 8) argues that the links between this defined set of individuals can be used to understand the behaviours of the persons involved. Networks mediate access of individuals to development processes and therefore they will either facilitate or constrain access to development opportunities (Wasserman & Galaskiewicz 1994: xii). Granovetter (1985 in Bopape 1993: 10-11) argues that the number of ties correlates with the density of the network which is an important determinant of support in crisis. This character of networks shapes the way they facilitate links to development opportunities as well. However, it is not only the number of ties but whether these ties are strategic or useful that influences the potential for support. Granovetter's (1985 in Woolcock 1998: 163) 'strength of weak ties' theory argues that networks which pull people into tight configurations of associations (strong ties) may limit access to information. These strong ties need to be complemented by weak ties (outside of primary networks) to increase access to development opportunities.

Networks operate on a micro level (for example in a community) and others work on a broader level (for example those built by the state) (Woolcock 1998: 164). Woolcock (1998: 161-167) argues that when the relationships within a community are very closeknit for example when it is built on ethnic loyalties and family ties, this discourages community members from becoming more wealthy or moving house. Relationships are therefore embedded in these networks and, in turn, these networks are embedded in 'larger institutional contexts' (Wasserman & Galaskiewicz 1994: xii). Simmel (1971 in Woolcock 1998: 168) argues that poor communities need to have social relationships outside of their community in order to attain developmental goals. This is demonstrated by Oldfield (2000) when she argues for the strategic value of external community linkages to access development goals such as housing

opportunities. In this thesis I explore social networks of households and families that build from relatedness.

Configuring relationships and 'relatedness' in the context of the South African city

Ringsted (2004: 110) found that 'relatedness' builds from biological and social processes. In addition to blood ties¹⁵, 'family-like acting' such as 'exchanging help when needed' is a primary determinant of who can be considered family. She argues that persons not related by biological means are made into relatives by 'exchange of kin terms' meaning that people find others in the urban setting and 'choose each other as kin'. These social kin make up for the absence of biological kin or step in to assist when kin will not (Ringsted 2004: 115). Therefore Ringsted concludes that "relatedness is both founded on non-negotiable elements of biology as well as on non-negotiable elements of individual behaviour" (2004: 114). In the South African context, relatedness is therefore not restricted to biological relationships.

The cultural belief in the collective rather than the individual is a fundamental issue that influences the configuration of particularly African family (Ross 1995). This sense of the collective is known as *ubuntu*. "...*Ubuntu*... is the socially constructed manner of relating to others and reflexively constituting oneself as belonging in society, and thence being recognized as a member of such. Thus, a person is a person by means of other people" (Ross 1995: 41). Cultural beliefs such as *ubuntu* critically shape conceptions of relatedness.

Moreover, however, Apartheid policies have shaped the context in which social relatedness is expressed within South Africa. I have established in the preceding discussion that African households and families were being stretched between urban and rural areas (Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson 1996: 10). This meant that there was lots of movement of households and families between Cape Town and the Eastern

¹⁵ Blood ties (family) were also of primary importance in Manenberg and Guguletu. However, in Guguletu the family was extended to include kinship links such as to clan and people having the same surname. Smaller groupings within tribes referred to as clans were related by common ancestry and situated and identified themselves in terms of the place where they settled. Therefore clan links constitute both blood and place based associations. Smaller groups of people migrated away from the clan base and then identified themselves by surnames. In this thesis persons linked by clan name or surname are referred to as kin.

Cape which is referred to as 'circular migration' (Bekker 2002). African families and households retained strong links with the area in the Eastern Cape where they originated. These links became known as *amakhaya* links (Ross 1995: 20).

Constructing households

Histories of migrancy have resulted in households becoming 'stretched' between urban and rural areas because urban centres provided the income necessary to sustain rural homes. Household dependents therefore are considered to be dispersed (Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson 1996: 10). Men or women came to cities alone looking for work and lived in migrant hostels or shacks leaving the rest of their families/households in rural areas (Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson 1996:15). Rural homes are safety nets for adverse times and were considered the true or real homes of those who had moved to the city to work (Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson 1996:21).

Urban households however, sometimes consisting of only one person, could expand to include visiting relatives at any time. Therefore the city-based households or domestic units were fluid and diverse, not conforming to notions of nuclear structures (Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson 1996: 25).

There were several reasons why persons joined a particular household. In a study on informal support networks conducted in Shoshanguve, Huggins (1989: 16) found that there were approximately 55% female-headed households due to widowhood, abandonment or divorce. In addition to those considered household residents, a household could consist at any given time of relatives on a prolonged visit, or who are unemployed, suffering an illness, are part of the support base of the household, living there in order to access a school, an orphan or foster child as well as those waiting for a house of their own (Huggins 1989: 12). Households could also include temporary and intermittent lodgers such as children that move between domestic units (Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson 1996: 23).

Conceptualising social relatedness

As households and families are social constructions, the socio-political context has a direct bearing on the definition of social relatedness. Two South African studies elucidate the notion of relatedness from a social perspective. *Amakhaya* (Ross 1995: 20; 1996: 60) and 'social kin' (Salo 2004: 161) are concepts useful to examine socially constructed family relations that have a direct bearing on the communities of Manenberg and Guguletu.

Amakhaya refers to locally created relatedness of people living in cities but originally from the same village or nearby areas (Ross 1996:60). Contract work in the apartheid historical context shaped and necessitated dependence on *amakhaya* links. *Amakhaya* associations facilitate access in urban areas to shelter, a bed, security, cash, food and jobs as well as enforcing the maintenance of areas of origin (Ross 1996: 60).¹⁶ *Amakhaya* links are cemented and maintained through cultural practices (such as initiation and death rites) when people draw together and become involved in frequent cultural practices sustaining the links between people. Apartheid policies exacerbated the splitting of African families and therefore *amakhaya*¹⁷ links are only relevant to African families. Coloured families also have social relatedness expressed in the notion of 'social kin'. Salo (2004: 161) found for instance that links within communities are often very closeknit, a 'social kin' is generated therefore from adults that frequent each others homes. These persons are often referred to as honorary 'aunts' and 'uncles' by the younger generation in the community.

These factors are important as relatedness can be understood as synonymous to support relationships and support is implicit in amongst relatives (Ringsted 2004: 111). Relationships within the household, the particular people in a home, also hold the potential for support.

¹⁶ The periodic absence of men in the households unit brought about increased independence of women and children (Manona 1981 in Ross 1995).

¹⁷ *Amakhaya* and kinship links are equally important offering women a broader base of support.

Reciprocity as the basis for support

Support within social relationships is based on the principle of reciprocity (Putnum 1993 in Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer 2000: 391). By virtue of this principle, those engaged in supportive social relationships ascribe to implicit rights and obligations of support (Ross 1996: 63). This is operationalised by a member of a network borrowing an asset or tapping into a resource owned by another person in the network. The person who borrows is then indebted to the one from whom they have borrowed (Ross 1996: 63). This means that a pool of assets or resources is never totally owned and utilised for individual benefit. Instead resources increase due to the rights to claim ownership of the assets of others (Pyle 1992). This is known as 'reciprocity transactions' (Simmel 1971 in Woolcock 1998:161) or 'norms of reciprocity' (Putnum 1993 in Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer 2000:391). Pyle (1992) found in her studies of resilience within households to famine in El Fasher, Sudan between 1982 to 1989 that resilience was increased by intra communal sharing but the negative consequence of this type of reciprocity is that control over ones own assets is jeopardised by obligations to share with others. Thus ownership of assets is subject to communal rights (Pyle 1992).

Ross (1996: 58) created the terms 'diffusion of domesticity' to explain that the boundaries of households changed intermittently. Therefore households are not 'bounded' but are 'circuits of exchange' for instance between urban and rural bases of the same household (Bank 1997: 165). Spiegel (1986 in Huggins 1989: 18) established that household fluidity is a strategy to manage limited resources in marginal circumstances.

Households, families/kin, *amakhaya* and affinal¹⁸ relationships are all potential sources of support. This is demonstrated by householding relationships of (re)production and consumption which are spread over links throughout a community (Ross 1996: 59). Householding responsibilities may be shared amongst kin (family) and affinal relationships (friendships, acquaintances and neighbours) in order to

¹⁸ Relationships with neighbours and friends.

survive impoverished circumstances (Ross 1995: 6)¹⁹. Sharing the responsibility of childcare throughout social relationships is a typical example. Even though these associations amongst individuals may seem haphazard, there is a clear structure with implicit rules related to the rights and obligations of sharing.

'Diffusion of domesticity' means that commensal relationships (such as those who occasionally eat or sleep in a household) blurs the rights and obligations that these individuals have in and to the household (Ross 1996: 63). For example, performing household tasks may make one eligible to claim the right to a place to sleep in the future. Therefore labour or money could be exchanged for a bed or food. For example, work completed by an initially external person to the household may result in the person being drawn into the household (Ross 1996: 59). Decisions about household formation are influenced by instrumentality (personal needs for food and shelter) and morality (offers of food to children who suffer from food insecurity) (Ross 1996: 59). There are other dimensions of morality within households and families that relates to support which is much more complicated than empathy.

Support amongst kin and non-kin

Households and kinship links were important sources of support. However they were not drawn upon frequently as kinship entails a different type of reciprocity. Kinship links were not used recurrently because this would entail maintenance of relationships over a long period of time. There is a higher level of obligations and rights between kin which constitutes "moral reciprocity" (Ross 1996: 60). The morality of kinship links means that individuals are very careful when drawing upon them, preferring to wait until there is an emergency. Non-kin relationships did not require the same intensity of commitment. Therefore, the households approached friends or acquaintances when they needed short term material goods – food and childcare (Ross 1996:60). "People make conscious choices concerning the kinds of relationship which they will operationalise ...decisions... based on expectations of the longevity and intensity of the rights and obligations which are incurred as a result" (Ross 1995: 26).

¹⁹ The distinction between kinship and affinal relationships may not be as clearly separate a category as affinal relationships may also be based on pre-existing kinship relationships (Ross 1995). This occurs when kin move to the same area and also become neighbours.

Examples of the differentiation between support that can be expected from kin and non-kinship relationships is demonstrated in a study by Ringsted (2004) with teenage mothers in North Eastern Tanzania, Huggins (1987) in a study of informal support networks conducted in Shoshanguve, and, Arntz (2002) in a study of social support mechanisms available to households affected by HIV / AIDS in Welkom (an urban area) and Qwa-Qwa (a rural area).

Kinship relationships are most reliable for support and help as there is an obligation. In this context, young women were especially more supported when their mothers were alive (Ringsted 2004: 109). One could also draw upon blood relatives for financial and material aid and emotional support (Huggins 1989: 18). This also supported by a study conducted by Arntz (2002: 77) who found that relatives (family) provided support with food, clothing, household labour and childcare

Non-kinship networks are available to those able to participate in reciprocal exchanges. Ringsted (2004: 109) found that the young women evaluate friends and neighbours as useful for sharing worries and joys therefore their help is limited to solving minor problems. Huggins (1989: 23) found that neighbours were drawn upon for small items like limited financial assistance.

Huggins (1989: 58-59) concluded that informal support networks provide support when government cannot or will not do so. These networks are constrained by unemployment and impoverishment from assisting those in need materially. Therefore the capacity of social networks to support is based also on contextual situation in which these networks find themselves. Arntz (2002: 77) found that the mechanism of kin support was unsustainable due to levels of poverty experience in the households of the kin providing support.

Histories of forced removal and circular migration as well as cultural traditions and practices governing rites and rituals are intertwined. Households are shaped by factors such as who supports the household financially, who performs reproductive activities and to whom the household is offering support. Norms of reciprocity amongst kin as well as within affinal relationships regulate support based on obligation and rights. In family or kinship networks the obligation for support is more intense generating

'moral reciprocity', than informal links for example with friends. The capacity of social networks to support is related to their own circumstances. Poverty and unemployment undermines the capacities of social formations such as household and family to provide support. Aside from reciprocity there are other factors that influence the codes of behaviour within social support networks.

The construction of gender identities within social support networks

Norms of behaviour are also influenced socially determined roles and responsibilities shaping normative gendered behaviour within society. In the following section, I unpack gendered roles and responsibilities and the manner in which they determine gender identity and the positions of women within their communities. I then describe how social support networks transform into institutions to regulate respectability. This enables an analysis of women's roles as mothers, wives/partners, sisters and daughters in Guguletu and Manenberg in the proceeding chapters. It will also provide insight into the processes, mechanisms and individuals that determine and maintain normative behaviour within communities.

Normative behaviour: Mothers, wives and daughters

The roles and responsibilities of women are expressed in gender labels such as: mother, wife²⁰, sister and daughter. However, the meanings of these labels are derived from the context in which women are situated and are not static concepts without dimension and dynamism (Imam 1997). This dissertation aims to demonstrate how normative behaviour are embedded in gender roles maintained and policed by other women in a moral code demonstrated by Salo (2004), Bank (1997) and Ringsted (2004). Salo (2004) demonstrates with her ethnography of the community of Rio Street in Manenberg how women are expected to fulfill their roles as daughters, wives and mothers. Bank (1997) in his study of the embeddedness and symbolism of

²⁰ To become a wife is a prized gender identity. Ringsted found that young girls who became pregnant would be limited in their choice of potential husbands and would have to marry an older widower who may have AIDS and she may have to desert her child. The morality of marriage is prized even above the risk of death. Young teenage mothers sometimes have no choice but to marry older widowers and having to desert their children in order to survive (Ringsted 2004: 105).

paraffin in the social fabric of Duncan Village in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa explored notions of motherhood and the roles of wives in establishing the moral economy within a household. Ringsted (2004) examines the gender identity of young unmarried mothers in their gender roles as daughters in East Tanzania as they assume normative behaviour in order to maintain the support of their families during and after their pregnancy.

Normative behaviour for women as mothers include: reproductive activity such as childcare and homemaking, in general 'caring' roles (Bank 1997: 68). Bank (1997:168) found that women 'underplay their roles as earners and emphasise their roles as home-makers and mothers'. This may be because mothers and mothering are held in high esteem in communities for example being described as 'stabilisers' due to their consistent presence in households (Salo 1994). Women are hesitant to jeopardise the esteem that they derive from their fulfillment of social reproduction responsibilities. This exalted position is guarded and women strive to levels of excellence in these responsibilities in order to maintain their status, as motherhood is considered the epitome of womanhood (Bank 1997: 168). These studies also demonstrate that support is predicated on reputations of respectability gained by conforming to traditional gender identities (Salo 2004: 189).

The identity of daughters is also determined by particular norms. Ringsted (2004: 101-104) found that unmarried pregnant daughters needed to assume subservient attitudes and behaviours to compensate their family for shaming them²¹. They need to stay indoors or are sent to relatives in other areas when their pregnancy is discovered. They face vulnerability to hard work, little to eat, not being allowed to have a social life and being threatened with ostracism (Ringsted 2004: 108). Good daughters, for example, were supposed to attend school regularly, assist with household chores, refrain from being sexually active and stay indoors when they have free time and after dark (Salo 2004: 165). These studies illustrate that gender identity is a process where wives and mothers police daughters to become good wives and mothers.

Salo (2004: 162-173) also found that a before mentoring process and during pregnancy (which is the rite of passage that preceded motherhood) is presided over by

²¹ A young women or daughter is ostracized for being pregnant and the only way she can restore her respectability is if a man marries her (Ringsted 2004: 101-104).

senior women who have earned the identity of mothers. The normative behaviour for mothers is measured in terms of social reproduction. For daughters it is defined by good behaviour and when this is breached for example girls becoming pregnant they will need to behave even more subserviently to maintain family respect.

Women as guardians of respectability

Women's gender identity is shaped by other women mentoring and policing respectable behaviour. Respectability (based on characteristics such as modesty) embedded in reputations, is the core of morality within communities and households (Salo 2004: 189). Salo's (2004: 155) study demonstrates how women achieved their status of respectability within households and the community. The status of the women in Manenberg has been raised by government's recognition of married women as bona fide heads of households by including them as primary beneficiaries of housing, social welfare and jobs. This power is translated and demonstrated in their policing of acceptable behaviour. Bank (1997: 68) also found that in households wives are regarded as the 'guardians of morality'. They demonstrated their roles as moral guardians by judging the manner in which their husbands spend money.

Bank (1997) illustrates how wives are the moral guardians of the household economy. Men who are the money earners often give their wives money to run the household but keep a portion for their own work related expenses. According to the women, money is only legitimately spent when it passes through the 'moral economy of a household'. Therefore the money spent by men on goods and services not sanctioned by his wife is deemed as money spent inappropriately (Bank 1997: 165-168).

Considering the dynamics that operate within social relationships provides insight into the women's motivation to initiate and maintain these relationships. Women may initiate relationships for example due to their potential for support in which case they would need to accept certain rules of conduct that the network prescribes. Therefore, an analysis of women's gender roles, the relationships they foster to form networks and the morality implicit in support provides insight into women's agency. Agency of women living in impoverished circumstances is contextualized in the places they live, the networks they belong to and their gender roles.

Conclusion

Apartheid policies ensured that the homes of Coloureds and Africans in the city centre of Cape Town were demolished and destroyed. Africans were also dispossessed of their land, not permitted to own land even on the periphery of the city. In addition Coloured families were forcibly removed to areas on the periphery of the city to live in varying degrees of squalor in townships or informal settlements. This poverty was entrenched by limited access to education and jobs. Africans were only able to access menial jobs and low skills with Coloureds given preferential treatment to access jobs for example in the manufacturing industry. The low levels of education and jobs necessitated other strategies to survive. Women thus needed to develop mechanisms that would facilitate access to resources and assets and cope with daily struggles for survival.

Social support networks are an important mechanism that facilitates or constrains support for survival and coping with adversities. The South African city affected the configuration of social support networks constructed and conceptions of relatedness as family consisted of more than bloodties and kinship, to include place-based associations such as social kin and *amakhaya*. In adverse circumstances support of households and families is facilitated through communal dependence or reciprocity and reconfiguration of social networks such as households. However, capacity for support is constrained by limited resources within networks.

Support amongst and for women is also predicated on conforming to normative behaviour in accordance with gender roles and responsibilities. Normative behaviour for women as mothers is centred on social reproduction and for daughters on respectability and acceptable behaviour. Respectability is policed by women in their roles as wives and mothers within their households and the community.

The next two chapters are the case studies from Manenberg and Guguletu drawing on critical conceptual frameworks discussed in this chapter. They provide the opportunity to understand the configuration of households, families and communities in each area, the manner in which these relationships enable the women to access development

opportunities and fulfill daily needs. They illustrate the dynamics within relationships that reinforce gendered norms and behaviour.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 3

Women configuring support in Manenberg: Primacy of family

'Legal backyarders': Tenure security in Manenberg

"Before the tornado I was a legal backyarder...I had a building plan which was approved by the local government ..."(personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003).

Before the tornado hit Shareen lived on the property of her mother in a wendy house, an informal dwelling. She had secured permission from the local authority for legal tenure. After the tornado, although she still lived on her mother's property in a wendy house, she did not have permission from the local authority to do so. She currently resides therefore without secure tenure, as the local authority is able to ask her mother to destroy the unsanctioned structure on the plot at any time. The wendy house itself was provided by the local authority as temporary accommodation after the tornado and she was allowed to retain it. Shareen accessed her home, albeit an informal dwelling, from the state and access to tenure, albeit insecure, from her mother.

The women interviewed in this township currently reside in the backyards of family members who live in and own formal dwellings (which I refer to as brick houses) in a post-tornado housing development. I investigate these women's support networks in order to ascertain how they manage to survive in the adverse circumstances that structure their lives; for example daily experiences of poverty from difficulties in providing food for a family to crisis events such as the tornado. Shareen is one of fifteen women in Manenberg whose life stories illustrate levels of insecurity which relate to daily experiences of marginalisation from emotional support and access to financial resources and development initiatives that provide access to housing, tenure and livelihoods.

Relating stories of the lives of women in Manenberg is the first of two case studies that form the basis of this research. This chapter first introduces the Manenberg context to illustrate how insecurity of housing and tenure reflects the consequences of Apartheid racial segregation policies. Second I investigate the configuration of the

social networks of the women interviewed in order to determine how women choose to structure their networks to cope with the impoverished circumstances in which they live. Third I introduce the women I interviewed through analysis of tenure, housing and employment histories have had on the women's lives. Fourth I illustrate the ways in which households, families and communities form social networks that facilitate access to financial and emotional support, tenure and housing as well as links to livelihoods. In particular I am interested in the construction and activation of social networks that link women to housing, tenure and livelihoods.

The evolution of Manenberg

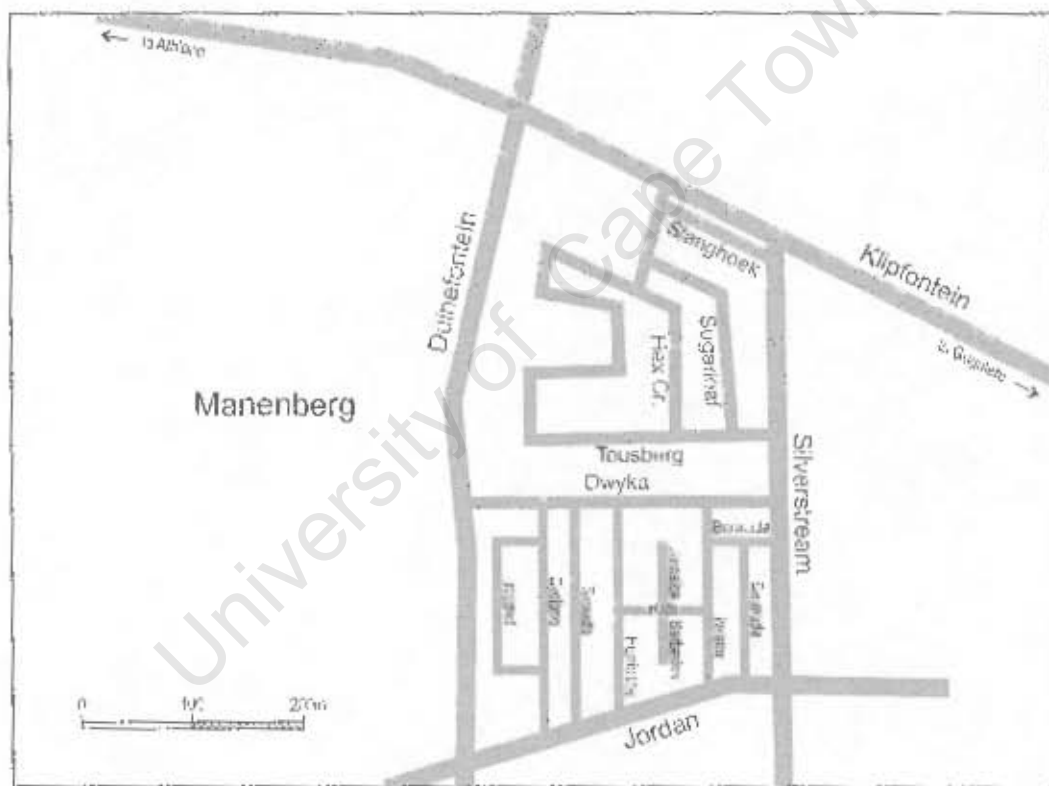
Manenberg²², a former Coloured group area and township of Cape Town, was selected as a case study area for this research project. This township was selected as a case study primarily because it was affected by the tornado enabling comparison with other affected townships. This research focuses on a micro level analysis of the experiences of women whose lives have been affected by the tornado, how they coped with this event and also how they manage to survive experiences of poverty on a daily basis.

Similarly to Salo's (2004) research on gender dynamics within this township, particularly the identity of mothers and their role in ascribing the norms and morals of respectability in the community, I focus on the identities of adult women. Here I investigate how these identities are shaped by women's agency in negotiating access to housing, secure tenure and jobs as well as intra-relationship dynamics within their social networks in households, families and the broader community.

The tornado provided an entry point for the investigation of support networks utilized after the disaster. But it was only one of many events that have a negative effect on

²² Research focusing on Manenberg refers to it as a typical example of a 'dysfunctional community' (Robins 2002: 671 Chipkin 2003: 63). Chipkin (2003: 82) concludes that in Manenberg the disintegrated family structure, unemployment and the illegal economy created by guns and drugs means that state development initiatives aim at restoring respectability by transforming gangsters by transforming them into citizens. From the perspective of spatial governmentality which aims at governance of spaces by intervening in the spaces for example facilitating individual home ownership Robins (2002: 670-671) adds, that the state has attempted to address this dysfunction with urban regeneration projects (including the post-tornado housing project) that aim to restore the social and spatial fabric of the community.

the lives of these women. The daily experiences of poverty (for example not having access to water in the house) were also considered as very serious stresses. This study focuses on women living in informal dwellings in the tornado affected area (designated as area 1 by council illustrated in the map below) bordered by Jordan, Dwyka, Silverstream and Duinefontein roads. The life histories of fifteen women in this community highlighted the manner in which the women experience poverty in these daily experiences of deprivation and marginalisation from macro development initiatives such as access to secure tenure, housing and livelihoods. In the following section I contextualise the women's experiences of insecurity of tenure and housing by sketching the history of housing and tenure in the Manenberg community.



Map 3.1: Interview area in Manenberg

A historical perspective of housing and tenure in Manenberg

Apartheid legislation sought to evict all persons deemed non-white, from the centre of the city. Following the Group Areas Act of 1950, Coloureds were given their own areas on the periphery of the urban areas. There were ruthless forced removals of entire communities to enforce this law (Christopher 2001). Manenberg is an example of a resettlement area for Coloured people.

The local authority governing Manenberg planned and approved a housing development in Manenberg in 1963, originally known as Heideveld Extension 1. Manenberg was intended as a resettlement area for 'disqualified' persons living within White Areas affected by the Group Areas Act as well as the home for a cheap labour force to service the White areas in the city centre (Christopher 2001). The first allocation into housing was in June of 1967 with the majority of people emanating from Diep River and District Six. People moved to Manenberg from townships near the city centre like Salt River, Woodstock, Claremont, Constantia, Maitland, Lansdowne and Observatory (Petre 1987: 27).

The typical housing types were blocks of flats or semi-detached houses, which were initially all publicly owned. They were very similar in appearance and architecture for example, the number of rooms and types of services available. In 1966, 5621 housing units owned by the local authority were made available for rental. By the 1980s some housing units were privately owned. However, the majority of the housing stock was sub-economic, designated for habitation by the poorer sector of the resettled Coloured population (Petre 1987: 30). In Petre's 1987 study, it was found that Manenberg had a total of 6 438 housing units. Of these, 382 were privately owned, while 6 056 were leased from the local authority. At the time almost twenty years ago, over 52% of tenants were in arrears with rent payments.

Since then, several generations of residents in Manenberg have lived in public housing (ISANDLA Undated: 65). Even twenty years ago, the local authority acknowledged that the Coloured community faced a chronic housing shortage with approximately 43 000 city families on the housing waiting list with 2 251 applications to live in Manenberg specifically. Two thirds of the housing units in Manenberg had

sub tenants (Petre 1987:30). Thus through no fault of their own many families found themselves marginalized from access to housing simply because the supply of housing by the local authority did not keep up with the demand. In consequence families lived together, forming large households in increasingly crowded single family flats (ISANDLA Undated: 66).

One family unit would own the house but would take other family units in to share the house by renting rooms to them. Twenty years ago, there were between 8-15 people in a household and reports of 30-person households in a two roomed house (Petre 1987: 30). This overcrowding of the formal flat and an ever increasing need for shelter led to the emergence of backyard dwellings. Usually wood structures were erected either by the host or tenant family. A study by Isandla (Undated: 62-70) found in 1995 that these dwellings accommodated about 30% of the population of Manenberg. When investigating the reason why family units moved to a backyard dwelling, studies found that motivations included a bid for independence, or the move was precipitated by family tensions, poverty or problems of finding alternative affordable housing (Isandla Undated: 71). The housing crisis is still acute in the township today, as illustrated by households living in wendy houses in the photo below (picture 3.1.).

Currently, of the 9341 households there is almost an even split of those who live in brick structures on a separate plot (38%) and those living in flats in a block of flats (32%) almost a third each of the population. Semi-detached houses are home to only 16% of households in the contemporary period. Therefore, 85% of households reside in formalised housing referred to as brick homes. Compared to 85% of households living in brick structures only approximately one-tenth (8%) of households live in informal dwellings (Statistics South Africa 2001).

Due to the tornado, there are now new housing developments that have replaced blocks of flats with free-standing brick homes. Other family members live on the property by erecting wooden homes, referred to as wendy houses, in the backyards (ISANDLA Undated: 71).



Picture 3.1.:Wendy houses in Manenberg

Manenberg is still predominantly governed by rental agreements, of these new post-tornado housing developments. Although there is a move towards owning ones own home. Of the 9 341 households, 65% have rental agreements. One quarter (25%) of households have homes that are owned and paid off in full and 7% of homes are owned but not yet fully paid off (Statistics South Africa 2001).

It would be incorrect to assume that living in informal dwellings in Manenberg means having tenure insecurity. In Manenberg, households are legally permitted to live in

informal dwellings on someone else's plot if they have been granted permission from the local authority. Households apply by submitting the plans to erect a structure to the relevant local authority administration (personal communication, MR, 07/03/2002). These households refer to themselves as 'legal backyarders' (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003).

There are also now many more opportunities to own houses in Manenberg. Since 1984 all cottage, semi-detached homes, owned by the local authority were put up for sale (personal communication, MR, 07/03/2002). However, at present only one third (32%) of homes are privately owned (Statistics South Africa 2001).

The women interviewed for this research thus represent 8 % of households in this community that live in informal dwellings. In the next section I introduce the household, family and community contexts to illustrate how tradition and women's choices shape these social networks.

Households, families, community: Social support networks for survival

Households, family and community play a role in contributing towards the survival and support of women living in poverty. Interrogating the configuration of each of these allows us to understand why and how people come together to form support networks. First, I illustrate how family units come together to form households and the reasons for the household configuration to understand strategic choices women make in shaping their households. Second, I investigate who constitutes the family support base to explore how this includes but often extends beyond the immediate household configuration. Third, I discuss how household and family practices influences the configuration of the community of Manenberg.

Fluid households and families

Women form households to live with others who play an important role in their lives. Determining the identity and role of these individuals are indicative of the strategic relationships women foster for their survival. In this section, I will illustrate by means of organograms how family units and households are constructed. I will do this by

illustrating who lives in the brick house compared to who lives in the wendy houses. Charlene's household is used to illustrate a typical household configuration amongst the women interviewed who live with parents or parents-in-law. Sarah's household is a large one and also the only one headed by an aunt rather than a parent or in-laws, therefore atypical in the sample. Kaelyn's household is spread over more than one township to demonstrate that household configurations are dynamic and fluid to suit the needs of women and to benefit from all members.

Charlene's household: Two symbiotic family units

Charlene was very reluctant to talk with me and though it was already afternoon she took some time to wash and dress. Once she understood the nature of the interview she became more relaxed and engaging. She is 29 years old and has lived with her parents for all of her life even though she is married. She was married in 2001 and has a son that is of primary school age. She was also pregnant at the time of the interview. Her mother lives in the brick house with her husband, Charlene's stepfather, Charlene's sister (26 years old) and brother (23 years old) as well as Charlene's son. After the tornado Charlene and her husband live in a wendy house on her mother's property (illustrated in figure 3.1. below).

Charlene is unable to work in factories due to pleurisy in her lungs. Therefore she has been unemployed for a while. Her husband used to work with a courier service but has not worked there since 3 months after their marriage, approximately 4 years. He now does piecemeal work as a driver or handyman. Charlene's mother works as a domestic worker and sometimes Charlene's husband accompanies her when people need a handyman.

Charlene's household structure illustrates that women in the sample often live on the property of parents albeit in their own dwellings. They therefore depend on their parents for access to tenure. Charlene's household is illustrated in the figure below.

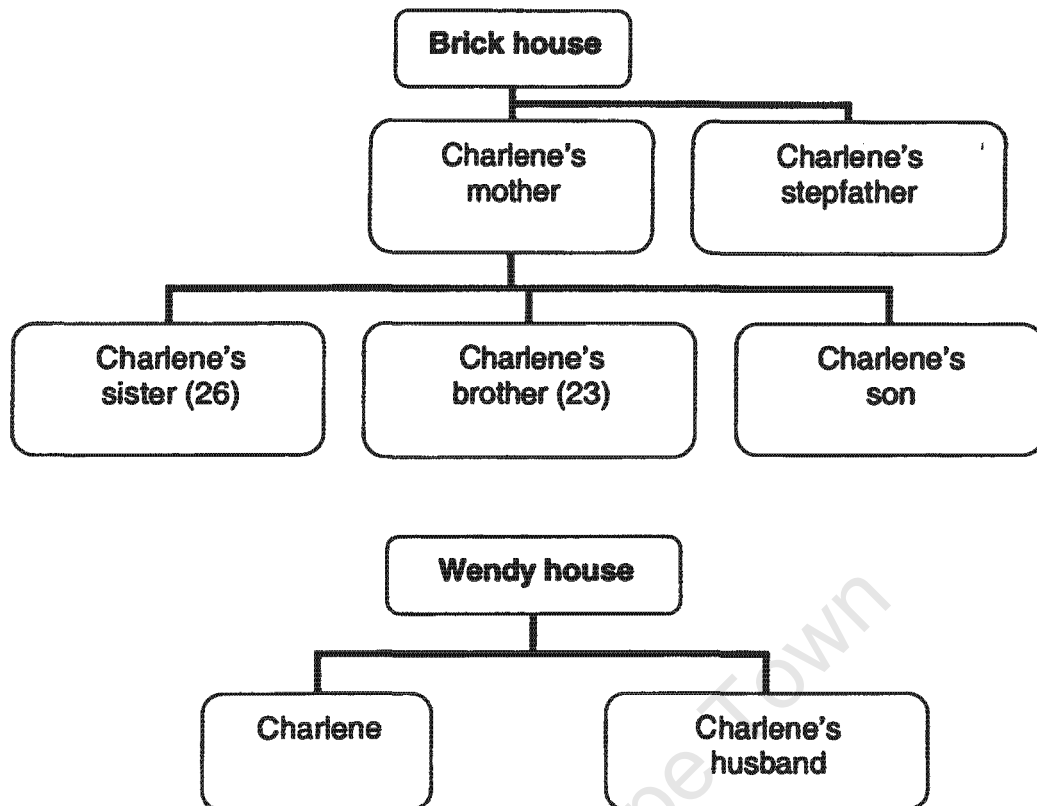


Figure 3.1: Charlene's household structure

Sarah's household: Several symbiotic family units

Sarah's household, everyone who lives on the same plot and live interdependently, (see figure 3.2. below) is atypical within the sample consisting of several family units, which consists of a women and or a man and their children, but by no means an atypical arrangement of roles and responsibilities. The head of this household is Sarah's aunt who lives in the house with her husband, constituting family unit one. Their adult son (Sarah's cousin) lived in a wendy house with his four children constituting family unit two. In addition, Sarah's other two aunts live in the brick house. One of the aunts live with their husband forming family unit three. The other aunt lives in the house with her boyfriend forming family unit four. This aunt's adult daughter (Sarah's cousin) also lives in the brick house with her son (Sarah's nephew) who are the fifth family unit. Sarah and her 3 teenaged children, live in a wendy house on the same property and form family unit six. This household, everyone living on

on one plot, therefore consists of six family units, consisting of parents and their children.

Most households are comprised of a number of generations thus several families (family units) in this township. In the example of Sarah's household, family units are distinct from each other in a number of ways. First marriage or cohabitation with partners delineates a family unit. Second when adult sons or daughters of a married couple have children of their own they would also be a distinct family unit. Third a family unit also distinguishes itself by creating their own living space in a room of the brick house or in a wendy house.

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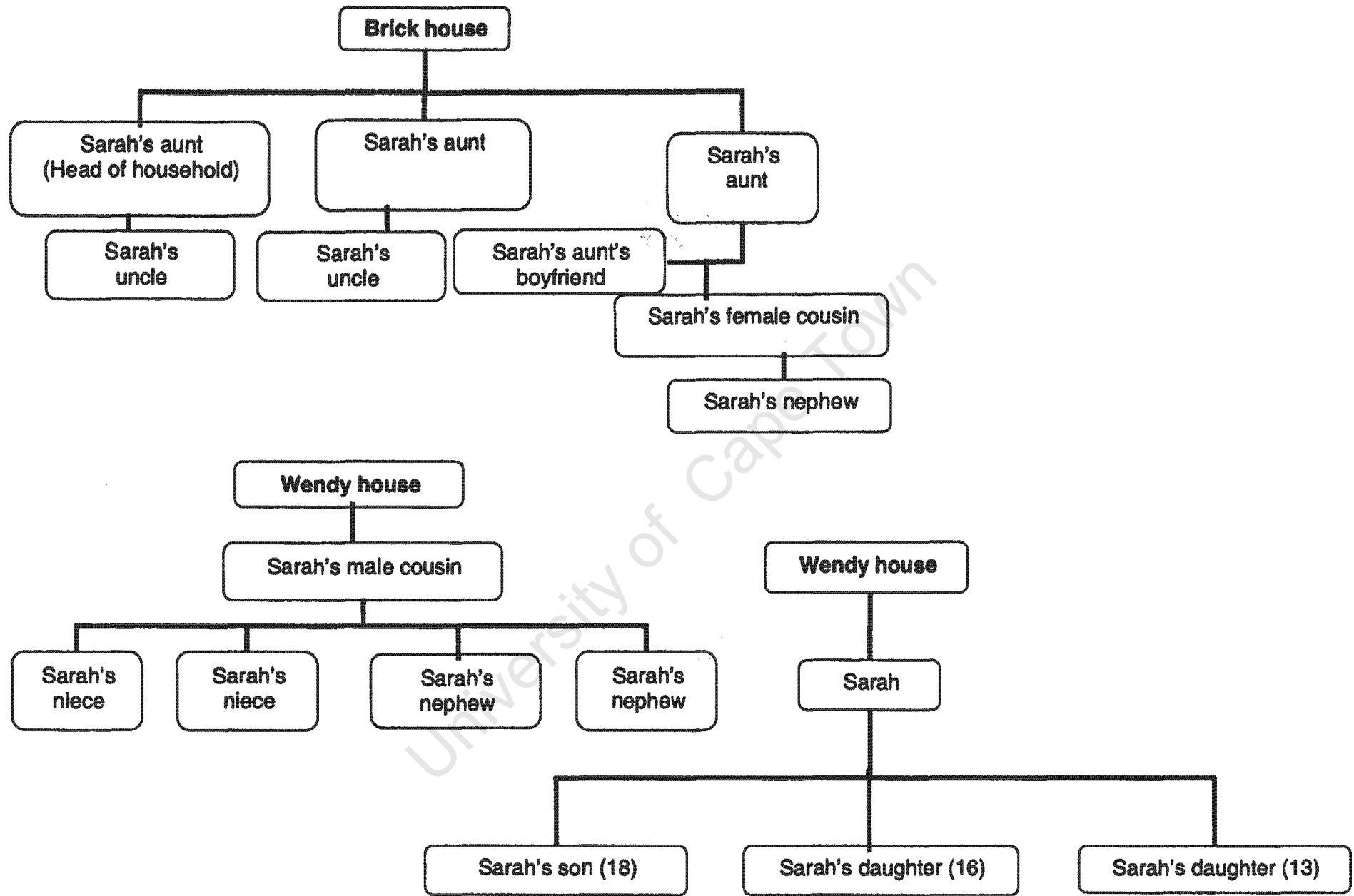


Figure 3.2: Sarah's household structure

Sarah is a quiet mature woman at 41 years old. Sarah's aunt who heads the household, is the first port of call for Sarah when there is a crisis. Sylvie performs most of the reproductive work including washing, cleaning, cooking and caring for the children, while other family members are at work. Sarah pays rent to her aunt and uses water and the ablution facilities in the main brick house. Her biggest expense is her children's clothes and school fees. She comments that:

"Everyone contributes towards the food. We are a very close family." (personal communication, SJ, 26/01/2003)²³

Sarah has moved from the property of her mother to live on her aunt's property and be closer to the rest of the extended family. This is atypical in the sample as most of the women choose to live with parents or parents-in-law.

This household consists of 17 people (13 who live in the brick house and 4 living in the wendy house and these individuals) forming six different family units. This household clearly includes several family units that would be considered to be part of the extended family, for instance aunts, cousins and siblings. Several family members have come together in this case to access housing and relatively secure tenure. In addition everyone in the household benefits from the productive and reproductive roles that are assumed by specific members in the household. Kaelyn's household also shows how several family units form one household even when some members do not live on the same property.

Kaelyn's household: Symbiosis across townships

Kaelyn is 32 years old and has recently separated from her abusive husband and father of her two children, an 8 year old daughter and a 3 year old son. Her son has suffered from seizures since he was 6 months old and is an out-patient at the Red Cross Children's Hospital. She separated from her husband because he abused mandrax. She emphasises that she tried to be a good wife to him for a long time:

²³ Afrikaans original: "Almal kom by vir die kos...ons is n baie close familie" (personal communication, SJ, 26/01/2003).

"I stuck it out for 6 years." (personal communication, KA, 23/05/2002)

She stayed with her husband for years after they married and tried to offer him her assistance to break his drug addiction, but he did not want to change. She says she does not want money from him to support the children even though she is currently unemployed. She only wants for him to foster a relationship with his children. Kaelyn sighs when she says:

"I don't want money from him all I want is for him to spend time with the kids, but it goes in by the one ear and out the other ...if it goes in at all. He came to visit us at the camp [post-tornado temporary settlement] sometimes and his son called him 'uncle'. I told him he should be ashamed that his son refers to him like that."²⁴ (personal communication, KA, 23/05/2002)

She now lives with her two children on her mother's property in one room of the wendy house which she shares with her brother. Kaelyn seemed severely traumatized by her relationship with her ex-husband and is very quiet and withdrawn, frequently seeking the assurance of her mother while we talked.

Kaelyn's mother lives in the brick house with her older sister (who works at a supermarket) and her two children, a 15 year old son and a 4 month old daughter. Her sister has also left her husband. Kaelyn's mother also lends support to one of her brothers who is also unemployed and lives in one room of the wendy house with his girlfriend and baby daughter. Kaelyn's elder brother owns a brick house of his own in Mitchell's Plain with his wife and 8 year old daughter and 3 year old son. He is an engineer and his wife works as a clerk. The children stay with Kaelyn and her mother during the day while their parents are at work. The household structure is illustrated in figure 3.3. below.

²⁴ Afrikaans original: "Wel skaam jy jou nie dat jou kind jou *uncle* noem nie?" (personal communication, KA, 23/05/2002).

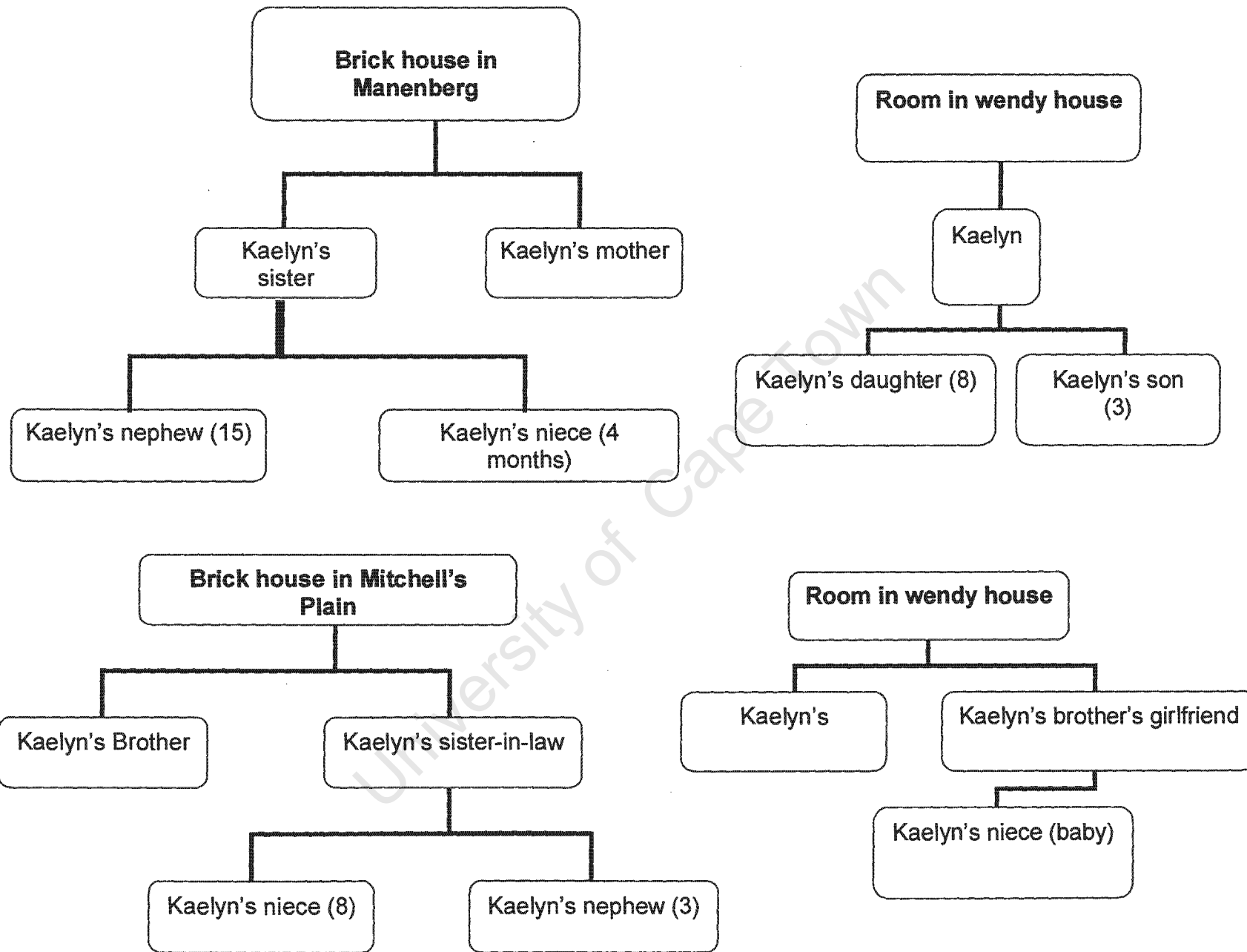


Figure 3.3: Kaelyn's household structure

Kaelyn performs most of the reproductive activities such as cooking and cleaning and assists her mother with childcare. Her brother's girlfriend works and supports him and her daughter financially. Her mother receives a private pension from her father's place of employment of approximately R900 per month. With this money she helps Kaelyn pay for school fees. Kaelyn refers to her mother as 'the bank', more with an attitude of gratitude than resentment or sarcasm. In return for the childcare services Kaelyn provides for her sister, she receives clothes and food from her sister who gets it at discounted rates from the supermarket where she works. She also receives money from her elder brother sometimes. There is an obvious interdependence amongst family members.

The interdependence of family members challenges the definition of household as people living under the same roof. Kaelyn's brother lives in a house in another township. However, he contributes to the pool of finances and benefits from the reproductive activities conducted mostly in his mother's house. For this reason, I argue that his family unit can be considered to be part of the same household as his mother and siblings. In all these cases, households like Kaelyn's, Sarah's and Charlene's are critical sources of support to the women in the home but also spanning beyond it.

Charlene's household is more typical in terms of the configuration of two family units residing on one plot with the younger generation (a daughter or son's family unit) living in a backyard wendy house. The parents or parents-in-law live in the brick house. Sarah's household illustrates a coming together of the extended family. This was not found to be typical but is certainly not a unique occurrence. In contrast, Kaelyn's household includes three family units – in addition to her mother - who live on one plot with one family unit in another township but integrally linked to the one in Manenberg.

These three family units also provide information about the division of labour (reproductive and productive) amongst members of the household. Some family members have paid employment and contribute towards the financial resources to pay for the mortgage bond, food, clothes and amenities required. Other family members contribute to the household by performing the reproductive work of cooking, cleaning

and childcare. Therefore household composition is a deliberate process that takes into consideration factors such as who fulfils which roles balanced with the moral obligation amongst family members to support each other.

Households also come together because they are not able to access housing and tenure on their own due to limited availability of housing and thus the need to live together. In Charlene's case, they are a young married couple without many job prospects. Sarah may never have enough resources from her meagre income to support three teenagers and afford to maintain a house independently. Kaelyn's life is in a state of flux as she recovers from an abusive relationship and is unable to afford a house. These symbiotic arrangements are a necessary survival strategy for these women. Although all the households are fluid and flexible, family units who live together in Manenberg were all blood relatives of each other and therefore part of the women's extended family. Family units come together to distribute reproductive and productive roles, share resources and together ensure that they access a place to stay. The centrality of family also influences community dynamics.

The community of Manenberg: constructed on the basis of family ties

The fluid concept of households which could consist of multiple related family units, also affects the shape of communities. Family units, that form part of one extended family based on blood ties, live together to form households. In this section, I illustrate how siblings prefer to stay close to each other and their parents' homes. In addition, the bonds between family members make links with other community members unusual. Collette's story shows how families – siblings – prefer to stay in close proximity to their place of birth even after they have married. In addition, Desiree's story illustrates how families are very close, feeling no need to form relationships with other community members.

Collette and her husband have been married since 17 of April 1999 – the same year that the tornado occurred. She met her husband while she attended community soccer matches where her brothers played soccer. She had three brothers and three sisters. One of her sisters – the one with whom she had the closest relationship - passed away on 28 December 2000 of tuberculosis. She is survived by her 7 year old child who

now lives with Collette's mother. Her siblings all live in close proximity to their mother. She says even when she moves house she would like to live in Manenberg.

"...all my brothers and sisters want to be close to my mother. Even if I move to a new house I would like to live near all the people I know and the familiar things I grew up with." (personal communication, CoF, 30/01/2003).²⁵

Collette's story gives insight into the two primary factors that shape the configuration of the community of Manenberg. First, women tend to marry men within their own townships. Second, children prefer to stay in close proximity to their parents. The Manenberg community is constructed on the basis of family living in close geographic proximity to each other (either in the backyards of parents or close to the home of parents), even after they have married.

We learn from Desiree that family links also constitute community links, in this case making relationships with anyone else in the community unnecessary. Desiree has five sisters and five brothers. Their response to the tornado typifies the bond of solidarity amongst them. When the tornado occurred Desiree dispatched her husband to fetch her sisters who live in Heideveld a neighbouring township to help remove their furniture. While she waited for them to return Desiree guarded her possessions from looters. She advises that:

"It helps (to have a close-knit family)... the family comes to you in times of need."²⁶ (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003)

Her siblings never hesitated to help and her brothers removed the furniture for safekeeping. That night Desiree's family (except for one of her children who opted to stay with his paternal grandmother) slept at her sister's house. They stayed there for two weeks until they were able to secure a container at the Ganubie site (post-tornado settlement). She says proudly:

²⁵ Afrikaans original: "Hulle (susters and broers) is almal orr my ma. Ek wil graag n huis he... na aan Manenberg ... na aan al die dinge en mense wat ek groot geword het." (personal communication, CoF, 20/01/2003).

²⁶ Afrikaans original: 'Dit help ...die familie kom mos daai tyd.' (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003).

*"My sisters are my friends...my bothers too, we are very close."*²⁷ (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003).

Desiree says that her siblings are her family as well as her friends. Therefore, she has no need to foster relationships with other neighbours or make other friends (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003). Almost all of Desiree's siblings live in the neighbouring township of Heideveld. Her story illustrates that families are often very close emotionally as well as living close to each other. Close knit families that are reluctant to move too far away from the family base are the third factor that shapes the Manenberg community. However, the drawback is that broader community links are not fostered and a dependence on family networks may not provide access to all the resources they need or link women to development initiatives like housing, tenure and livelihoods which the women need to improve the quality of their lives.

The other factor that could negatively have affected links between neighbours is the replacing the blocks of flats with a new post-tornado housing development of houses on separate plots. Sarah recalls when they used to live in the flats (before the tornado occurred) people were very neighbourly to each other, always borrowing food and visiting in each others' houses. However, she notices, since the post-disaster housing development where houses are on separate plots, people are more reluctant to enter into each others homes (personal communication, SJ, 26/01/2003). The houses seem to have brought with them boundaries, not only demarcating living spaces but also new conceptions of privacy. Neighbours do not seem to be so free to associate with each other in their new houses as they were in the flats which were close together.

Family ties are the main factor that affects the construction of this community. Children prefer to stay near parents, women marry men from their neighbourhoods and familial relationships are very close, diminishing the need to associate with others in the community. Neighbourhood links may also have been affected by the reconfiguration of housing after the tornado. In order to situate women in relation to development initiatives I illustrate migration and employment history of the women

²⁷ Afrikaans original: "...ek is nie so nie (friendly with neighbours) ... my vriende is my susters. Ons is baie close. My broers ook." (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003).

interviewed, providing insight into the various levels of insecurity that women experience.

Long histories of inadequate housing and insecure tenure

The women's levels of insecurity can be traced by exploring histories of migration and livelihood strategies. In this section, I trace the histories of women's migration in order to establish whether they migrate far from their birth place. I also note the type of home they lived in and whom they lived with in each place to understand whether they have always lived in informal housing with insecure tenure. Second, I explain the livelihood strategies of the women who I interviewed by listing their previous and current employment in the formal sector and discussing how they access employment. This information will provide insight into the mechanisms that women use to access formal employment, the type of employment women are accessing and particular vulnerabilities their type of employment exposes them to. I also discuss work in the 'informal sector' as well as state grants as a source of income women survive on to illustrate that there are other sources of income besides formal employment. Providing these discussions about all fifteen women in the sample, are valuable to understand the specific and relative levels of insecurity experienced by each woman.

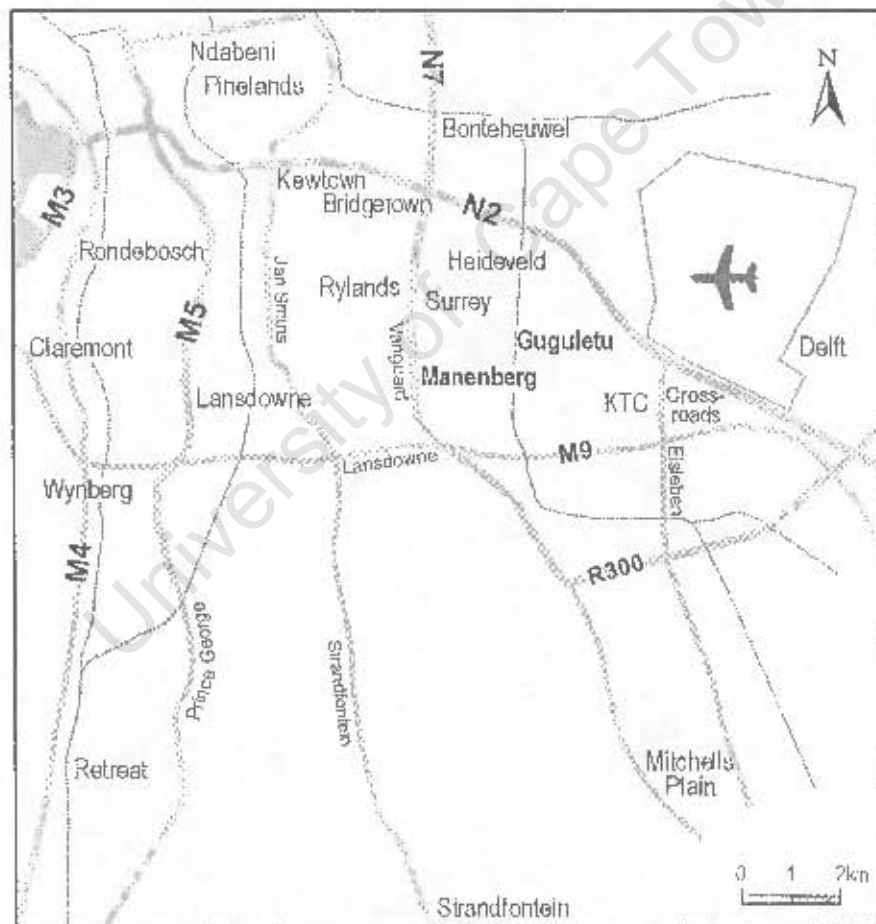
Marginalisation from housing and tenure

The history of tenure and housing of the women interviewed in Manenberg is provided in a table 6 as Appendix B. The table details information about where and with whom they lived when they were born, subsequent places they have moved to, their reasons for moving, who provided access to tenure and housing as well as the type of dwelling in which they lived at each place. This information provided several insights in relation to tenure security and housing situation of the women.

Most of the women were born in Manenberg (53%), some were born in the surrounding townships (33%) such as Heideveld, Kewtown, Lansdowne and Bridgetown and two (14%) women were born in the southern suburbs of Cape Town - Salt River and Wynberg. All originate from the City of Cape Town and more than

half of the women still live in the township where they were born. This indicates that even as adults women stay near their birth place.

Despite limited movement between townships or parts of the city, the women in the case study moved home an average of five times thus far in their lives, an average of 32 years, exacerbated due to the amount of times women had to move to transit camps during the disaster. The women interviewed did not move over great geographic distances, however, with many living most of their lives in Manenberg or moving home in Manenberg or moving to the surrounding areas such as Bonteheuwel, Lansdowne, Kewtown, Surrey Estate, Bridgetown, Heideveld. None moved further than Mitchell's Plain and Strandfontein.



Map 3.2: Manenberg in relation to women's places of origin in neighbouring townships

When women were reared by grandparents they would move house for the first time to live with their parents. This pattern applied to four of the women in the sample. The

predominant reason for moving from the home of their parents was to get married and live with their husbands. Thirteen women (87%) moved to another house after getting married whereas only one woman left the home of her parents to live in a separate home with her children although she did not get married. When looking at the patterns related to access to tenure now that the women are adults, parents still play an important role.

Access to tenure is currently provided to ten women by their parents and for four women by their parents-in-law. There was only one exception to the trend of living with parents or parents-in-law where one woman in the sample lived on the property of her aunt.

Bronwyn's experiences tell of how moving house was necessitated by the expansion of the family and limited choices because of unaffordable housing options and where people were permitted to live by the Group Areas Act. Bronwyn was born in Kewtown and lived there until she was 7 years old. Her family shared the Kewtown 'council-owned' brick house with her mother's brother, his wife and 6 children. It consisted of 2 bedrooms, an inside flush toilet, running water and electricity. At this time her parents also had five children. When another child was born into the family, they moved to a 1 bedroom council-owned brick house with an outside flush toilet, but it had access to running water and electricity inside the house. They only lived at this house for two years and the family once again increased in size. They needed more space for the family and thus they moved to a council-owned 2 bedroom flat in another part of Manenberg. The flat had an inside flush toilet and running water and electricity. The family lived here until the tornado occurred in 1999. When Bronwyn married they decided to live in a wendy house on her parents' property. They stayed there for the duration of the marriage between 1985 and 1992. During this time they had three children. Her husband continued to live with her in the wendy house up until the time of the tornado even though they were divorced.

The entire household was displaced by the tornado as their homes were demolished by the local authority that deemed the tornado-damaged buildings inhabitable. Immediately after the tornado Bronwyn lived in her cousin's house in Hanover Park – she shared a room with all three of her children. She then moved to live with a friend

of her eldest sister, in Mitchell's Plain. Bronwyn and her children then moved onto the Phoenix transit site where she was later joined by her new boyfriend. Bronwyn lived for 2 years on the property of a friend in a street close to her parents' post-tornado brick house before moving her wendy house onto her parents' property. Her current wendy house has two bedrooms and a kitchen. She shares one bedroom with her boyfriend while her two teenage daughters share the other room. Her older teenage son resides in the brick house with her parents and brother. She has access to electricity via a prepaid metered box but no running water. They use the toilet and bathroom in the main brick house.

Bronwyn first moved around with her parents to accommodate the increase in family size. At the beginning her parents had to share a house in order to access tenure security and housing. Since then they were able to secure tenure and housing for the family by leasing from council. However, since Bronwyn married she has lived in an informal dwelling with insecure tenure. This situation was exacerbated by the tornado when Bronwyn accessed a place to stay with relatives in a brick house only as a temporary measure. The state then provided a wendy house initially intended as a temporary measure although they were allowed to keep the wendy house. She therefore accessed a home from the state and tenure from her parents.

The post-disaster housing development marks the first time Bronwyn's family has been able to own a house instead renting it from the local authority. However, since Bronwyn has started her own family she has always lived in a wendy house. This story is typical for most women interviewed. Even though all the women interviewed lived in wendy houses most longed to own their own brick home.

Women aspire to own brick homes

The women interviewed aspired to own a brick house. However, very few women had a plan to obtain a house. I investigated the obstacles that inhibit women from accessing houses. Their restrictive link with family and limited resources were obstacles to attaining this dream. The experiences of Desiree, Nicole, Collette and Juny illustrate the reason why women find it difficult to access their own brick home. Desiree's experiences of a close knit family and Juny's experience of having to care

for frail parents illustrate the restrictive nature of family bonds when planning to move house. Nicole and Collette's stories demonstrate that limited financial resources make owning their own home a medium term goal rather than something that can be accomplished immediately.

Desiree's experiences illustrate how fear of breaking family bonds, constrain the women from moving house. She is independent and confident at 34 years old. She shares a home with her husband and two sons aged (4 and 9 years) in a room in the house of her mother-in-law, while they complete construction of their wendy house. As it is a three-bedroom house her mother-in-law stays in one room and brother-in-law's family shares the other room. Her husband lost his job after the tornado, due in their opinion to an unfair dismissal. Desiree is sad when reminiscing of the time of the tornado:

*"We lost our homes ... he lost his job."*²⁸ (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003)

The loss of their home was compounded by the loss of his job at the same time. Her husband is still unemployed. She has tasked her unemployed husband to attend community meetings with one of her sisters where housing opportunities are discussed. He has identified a company who has initiated a housing development in Colorado Park, Mitchell's Plain, far away from Heideveld where the rest of her family lives. They have heard that there will be a R20 000 subsidy from government. One pays R500 for a plan and R7000 for a plot which can be paid in instalments. However, the company has stopped holding meetings due to lack of interest within the community. Desiree says in disgust:

*"They [the community] do not want to attend meetings, they are only interested in completed homes."*²⁹
(personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003)

Desiree has ambiguous feelings about moving. She would like to live in her own house and be able to escape from the tense environment of her mother-in-law's home. However, she is scared of the distance that she will live from her own family. In her

²⁸ Afrikaans original: "Ons verloor ons plekke...hy verloor sy werk." (personal communications, DL, 28/01/2003).

²⁹ Afrikaans original: "Mense kom nie meetings toe nie...hulle wil net huise klaar sien." (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003).

experience (with two sisters living in Delft) transport costs inhibit the family from coming together (personal communication, DL, 28/01/2003). Whereas Desiree does not want to leave her home due to her current proximity to her family, Nicole is trying to move to a house close to where her family lives.

Nicole is a talkative 28 year old that wanted me to stay and chat for a long time. Her family consists of her husband, daughter (7 years old) and son (2 years old). They live in a wendy house (bought by her husband's mother for R14 000) on the property of her parents. Her parents share the brick house with her younger brother (23 years old). Nicole lives quite happily in her parents' backyard, but she is eager to be independent. Her parents allow them to live rent free. Her father is very supportive and has given them two years to save for their own home. He said to Nicole:

"You are young and you have to make something of yourselves...if I cannot help you then no-one else will." (personal communication, NF, 29/11/2002)

Her parents also encourage the couple to be independent.

Nicole has noticed that residents of the post-disaster housing development are moving as they cannot afford to maintain their houses.

"People are moving out of the new houses as they cannot afford the payments. We hope to get a house in this way" (personal communication, NF, 29/11/2002).

When another house in the area is sold, Nicole and her family would like to move to one of these new houses (personal communication, NF, 29/11/2002). Unlike Desiree who is trying to access a subsidy built house in Mitchell's Plain, Nicole is aiming to buy a house in the new post-tornado development with the savings she has accrued from living with her parents rent free.

Her sister-in-law, Collette is also saving for a house. Collette is a shy, soft-spoken 24 year old who took a half-day off work to prepare her home for the interview with me. She lives with her husband and 5 year old daughter in a wendy house on the property of her mother-in-law. She has just heard the news that she is pregnant again and is excited at the prospect. Collette also received a wendy house from the local authority

after the tornado. This wendy house was sold and they have purchased another from the local authority. She does not get on well with her husband's family and would like to move to her own house. There is tension between Collette and her in-laws as they do not get along well. She says that tensions in his family are created by the new sister-in-law. This is a major factor driving Collette's wishes to live independently. She believes the greatest mistake she has made in her life thus far is to stay with her in-laws.

Collette says they have worked hard for the things they have. This is made possible by her husband's long standing job (9 years) as a sheet metal worker.

*"We have struggled hard to acquire the things we have. We bought things one piece at a time as we could afford it and we sacrificed for it. Now we have all this furniture."*³⁰ (personal communication, CoF, 30/01/2003)

She would love to live in her own house. She has decided that her aims for the future are:

*"To learn to drive a car and to afford a house."*³¹ (personal communication, CoF, 30/01/2003)

Whereas, Collette wishes for independence from her mother-in-law, Juny does not wish for independence from her parents. Instead she feels responsible for them.

Juny is a jaded 36 year old who seemed disappointed by many of the recent developments in her life. She lives with her husband and 11 year old daughter and 18 year old son in a wooden structure that is annexed to her parents' brick house. Her parents live alone in the brick house. Juny and her family moved into the annexure 8 months after her parents moved into the house. She remembers this was just before Christmas in 2001. The materials cost them approximately R25 000. She says her current home is only a temporary measure and she comments in a dissatisfied tone:

"I am not happy with it yet...it was put up in a rush." (personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003)

³⁰ Afrikaans original: "...swaar gesukkel om aan die dinge te kom, ons het maar gekryp en uitgebyt tot ons daar gekom het." (personal communication, CoF, 30/01/2003).

³¹ Afrikaans original: "Om te leer ry en 'n huis te bekostig." (personal communication, CoF, 30/01/2003).

The home is not exactly what she wants for herself at this time. Juny is a mature woman with grown children of her own and living in an informal annexure to her parents' home is not what she considers acceptable.

The tornado has affected her parents severely. She says worriedly:

"My mother and father are not the same (after the tornado)... dad started drinking and mom has a nervous condition now because of the stress. I will have to look after them"³². (personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003)

She is the youngest child and is happy to be live near her parents although she does not like her wendy house and she feels responsible for caring for her parents as they are quite frail after the disaster. As her parents are already old, she plans to purchase their house when they become frail rather than buying another house (personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003).

Juny, Collette, Nicole and Desiree all want to live in a brick house of their own. They each have a concrete plan to do so. Nicole and Collette are saving for a home which should preferably be in Manenberg. Whereas, Desiree has the option of moving to Mitchell's Plain but is afraid to be separated from her family. Juny will eventually move into her parents' brick home. Only one of the fifteen women Veronique, has ever actually owned a brick house. However, they lost this house because they were unable to afford the bond instalments.

Veronique, a very nervous 34 year old, was constantly concerned about my impression of her home. She is the only one who has realised the ideal of living in her own brick home. Her husband was a teacher and he qualified for a housing subsidy that enabled them to purchase a house in Strandfontein and pay for it by means of a mortgage bond. However, more recently her husband accepted a retrenchment package without consulting her.

³² Afrikaans original : "My ma en pa is nie dieselfde nie...pa het begin drink en ma is nervous van die stress. Ek sal na hulle moet kyk" (personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003).

"I only became aware of his decision to accept a retrenchment package after he made it...he regrets this decision today. He has only been able to secure a job at a dispatch company. He taught for 12 years and wants to return to teaching."³³ (personal communication, VD, 20/01/2003)

He gave up the teaching job and could not afford the mortgage payments therefore they had to sell the house. She hastily reassures me:

"We did not lose the house, we sold it ourselves. When my husband was a teacher he qualified for a housing subsidy. When he was retrenched we could no longer afford it" (personal communication, VD, 20/01/2003)

Veronique stressed that they had sold the house of their own accord and were not forced to sell it. Her defensive tone when she informed me about this highlighted her shame resulting from losing a house to repossession by the bank. Veronique now lives with her husband in a "klein hokkie" (tiny shack) on the property of her parents'-in-law. Her father-in-law acquired the material for their home. Her two daughters aged 15 and 10 reside in the main house with her mother-in-law as her father-in-law has passed away (personal communication, VD, 20/01/2003).

This section has explored in detail the dynamics surrounding access to and security in terms of tenure and housing. Even though all the women in Manenberg aspired to own a brick house only one woman had owned a brick house but it became unaffordable to maintain. Women are not only focused on brick structures, but also on the distance the house will be from their family and building enough capital to afford to maintain a house. Others have plans to purchase their parents' home or to move to a house sold in the post-disaster housing development. The following section investigates employment security for the women interviewed in Manenberg, an issue integrally linked to their housing struggles.

³³ Afrikaans original: "Ek he took net na die tyd gehoor. Hy is vandag spyt. Hy werk by 'n dispatch company. Hy het 12 jaar geteach en hy wil terug gaan." (personal communication, VD, 20/01/2003).

Women work predominantly in the manufacturing sector³⁴

I recorded women's employment history to illustrate the sector of employment in order to demonstrate what type of formal employment the women accessed. I was particularly interested in the sector of employment and types of livelihoods the women were able to access throughout their adult lives. Many women are engaged in the traditional manufacturing sector (Ngoasheng 1992; Borat 2003).

Eleven of the fifteen women had worked in the manufacturing sector at some point in their lives. Predominantly, the women worked in clothing manufacturing but other examples of manufacturing enterprises the women were engaged in includes: electrical and plastic goods as well as biscuits. Employment within the manufacturing industry has been affected by the effects of globalisation (Bhorat, Lundall and Rosbabe 2002: 9). The experience of Sarah illustrates the effect of this employment insecurity for her family. Juny's experiences in the informal sector demonstrates why this is a difficult livelihood strategy to sustain. In addition, Nasreen's story of how she tried to access a state grant shows the obstacles in the administration of this system of income support for women.

Sarah is a quiet 41 year old and lives on the property of her aunt with her three teenage children who are the centre of her life. She has worked in the manufacturing industry all her working life. She has been a machinist at the same clothing factory for the past 12 years. Before this she worked at another clothing factory for 6 years that closed down unexpectedly. She is still in disbelief about it:

'My aunt secured a job for me at this factory and I worked there straight from school. Nearly the entire family worked there – five of us. When we returned to work in the new year [around 1992], the factory had liquiristed. We even had a Christmas party at the end of the previous year.' (personal communication, SJ, 26/01/2003).³⁵

³⁴ Borat (2003) notes that Coloured women have worked in the manufacturing sector as the preferred labourers. After Apartheid the trend of predominantly Coloured women working in the manufacturing industry remains.

³⁵ Afrikaans original: "My auntie het my ingebring uit die skool uit. Amper almal (die hele familie) werk in die selfde factory. Daar is vyfstuks van ons. Toe ons terugkom in die nuwe jaar was die factory net toe. Ons het die vorige jaar Christmas party gehad en als" (personal communication, SJ, 26/01/2003)

Many of her family members worked at the same factory at the same time. They were very surprised to discover that the factory where they had worked closed suddenly without warning when they came from their Christmas break. They remembered festivities the previous year at the factory and were shocked that they were not given any warning of impending liquidation of the factory. With entire families sometimes working in one factory, women and their families in Manenberg are particularly vulnerable to abrupt closures of factories due to liquidation.

The second most common formal employment sector was retail. Four women had worked in the retail industry. At the time of the interviews, nearly half of the women (seven women) were unemployed.

The table below illustrates the employment history of each of the fifteen women:

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Table 3.1.: Sources of income for women in Manenberg

<i>Name</i>	<i>Previous jobs</i>	<i>Current source of income</i>
Abeda, 34	Food store (4 years)	Bakery (8 years)
Bronwyn, 38	Short term contracts at clothing manufacturers	Unemployed
Charlene, 24	Electrical manufacturer (casual – 8 months)	Unemployed
Charise, 25	Clothing manufacturers; Security company (controller); Manufacturing; Retail company (cashier)	Food store (cashier)
Collette, 24	Electrical manufacturer; clothing manufacturer, Food store (casual)	Clothing manufacturer
Desiree, 34	Clothing manufacturers	Clothing manufacturer
Jasmina, 26	IEC (elections official); Manufacturing	Unemployed
Juny, 36	Clothing manufacturer (machinist -15 years)	Self employed (house shop – 4 years)
Kaelyn, 32	Police station (counselor); Security company (office management); Company (filing); Clothing manufacturer (Supervisory)	Unemployed
Nasreen, 32	Clothing manufacturer (cleaner); Toyshop (cleaner); Fisheries (cleaner)	Unemployed
Nicole, 28	Biscuit manufacturer (7 years)	Unemployed
Sarah, 41	Clothing manufacturer (machinist – 6 years); Plastics manufacturer (casual 3 years)	Clothing manufacturer (machinist – 12 years)
Shareen, 41	Clothing manufacturer (since aged 16); Food store (15 years) ; Fast food franchise (2 years)	Clothing manufacturer (Management liaison)
Vanette, 35	Clothing retailer (casual - 2 years; permanent 9 years); Lawyers office (cleaner - 2 years); Private child minder (2 years)	Unemployed
Veronique, 34	Clothing manufacturer (3 years)	Unemployed

Women in Manenberg depended on family to access jobs. Jasmina's husband linked her to the job she had in the manufacturing at the same factory where her worked at the time. Sarah's aunts were the inducted her into the clothing factories where she worked. Once one of the family members worked at a factory it was easy for others to gain access as they would share information about job opportunities. Shareen accessed her post-tornado job at a food franchise from her brother-in-law who owned a similar franchise and negotiated with the manager on her behalf. Kaelyn's cousin worked as a police officer and provided her with the opportunity to be trained as a counsellor at the trauma room.

There was only one woman, Juny from the entire sample that had ventured into the 'informal' employment sector, she sells goods from home. Juny's story shows how difficult it is to make the transition from paid employment in the manufacturing sector to being responsible to raise ones own income in the 'informal' economy.

Juny completed her primary education at Silverstream primary in Manenberg and went on to complete the first grade of high school at Manenberg Secondary School. She left school to work at a clothing manufacturer in Observatory for only one year. She then worked in another clothing manufacturer in Salt River for 14 years. She decided to leave her job as a machinist and stay home to start her own business.

"I wanted to start my own business... a 'mobile' (shop at home that sells snacks)." (personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003).

Selling perishable goods and other luxury items such as sweets and cigarettes from her home has afforded her a measure of financial independence from her husband. He also gives her most of his money after he has paid his gambling debts. However, she notes that most of their money covers only the food bill. Even though she has money, she has sacrificed her freedom of movement by selling goods from her home and now she longs for the regularity of permanent employment which would provide the finances the family needs but also give her some free time. She says wearily:

"I am fed up with being at home...I can't anymore. I am tied up in this house. I don't even get to see the beach! I desperately want to go to work now. I have asked the Lord to show me the way... but I just do not want to be a machinist again"³⁶ (personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003)

She is disillusioned at the hard work it takes to sustain her income. Her church friends that she met in the transit camp after the tornado are the only ones she ever sees since being house-bound. They are a very important source of emotional support for her. No big profits were ever forthcoming from her entrepreneurial pursuits and the selling earned only enough for survival. However, she also knows that she does not want to

³⁶ Afrikaans original: " Ek het die Here gevra om te openbaar...ek wil net nie weer n machinist wees nie." (personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003).

ever work as a machinist in a factory again. As this seems to be her only work experience, it will be hard for her to access other types of livelihoods.

Women sometimes have to resort to state income support grants to alleviate income poverty. Nasreen attempted to access the child support grant but has not been able to overcome administrative obstacles in the system. Nasreen is a timid and anxious 33 year old and a mother of three children who finds motherhood very stressful. She was only 19 when she gave birth to her first child and married her first husband in 1989. She tried to access the state child maintenance programme in the 1990's but was refused access. She remembers dejectedly the response of the government officials:

"They said: You are too young [to access the grant], you must work to support your own child." ³⁷
(personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002).

There is no such stipulation in the policy, rather rejection reflected a moral judgement of her as a young mother. Nasreen's husband died when their daughter was just 3 months old. She married again in 1992 and now has two more daughters aged 5 years and 18 months.

Sarah and Juny's experiences of work in the formal and informal sector illustrate the particular disadvantages and vulnerabilities to which they are subjected. Sarah's entire family was affected by the liquidation of a manufacturing company. Whereas, Juny is despondent about work in the informal sector and wishes to return to the formal sector. Both have limited schooling and their work experience has been confined to the clothing manufacturing sector. Therefore, it will be difficult to break out of these traditional sectors of employment unless they can draw upon other resources for different job opportunities. Nasreen's experiences of attempting to access state income support draws attention to the fact that the system has barriers which hamper access to the grants. However, the fact that she was the only one to need income support of this kind and Juny was the only one to work in the informal sector must mean that the formal sector or the women's support systems are enabling them to survive. The next section examines how support structures are drawn on in times of

³⁷ Afrikaans original: "Hulle het gese ek is te jonk, ek moet gaan werk." *(personal communication, JW, 30/01/2003).*

crisis and in the alleviation of poverty by demonstrating the value of relationships in households, families and communities for accessing resources and opportunities.

Supportive relationships in households, family and community

In order to assess whether the social formations of household, family and community are also social support mechanisms, this section discusses the role of selected relationships that women have within their homes and relationships with family and community members. I will investigate which relationships were particularly useful in providing access to resources, to find a place live as well as a means to earn an income. I also illustrate access to money and emotional support that the women deem important to cope with living in impoverished conditions.

I juxtapose the experiences of a few women to illustrate the unique nature of their relationships with significant people in their lives. First, I focus on the role husbands and partners play in providing financial support to the women. Second, I demonstrate how children can be sources of financial resources but may also be a heavy burden of responsibility for women. Third, I examine the support provided by siblings in overcoming adversity. Fourth, I discuss the role that friends in the community play in terms of emotional support and access to livelihoods.

The trade-offs for financial dependence on husbands and partners

As women in the sample share their households primarily with their husbands or partners, I investigate the consequences financial support provided to women by their husbands or partners in order to illustrate the trade-offs women make to access financial resources. The experiences of Jasmina, Bronwyn and Veronique are used to illustrate financial dependence on a husband or partner and the consequences of such dependence.

Jasmina is a self assured 26 year old who had recently been reunited with her mother. Jasmina lives with her husband and child in a wendy house on the property of her parents-in-law. She does not go out to work right now as her daughter is only a year old. She has completed matric and has worked with the Independent Electoral

Commission, as well as in manufacturing. Her husband provided access to her job in a manufacturing company. She thinks she would like to follow a career in nursing or child care. She has already investigated her options at a variety of tertiary institutions.

Jasmina, married just two months after the tornado, has now been married for 3 years. However, she has known her husband all her life as they grew up in the same area. She has been reared by her grandparents and he lived with his parents just streets away. Jasmina's husband works at a manufacturing company and is now the sole breadwinner for the family. She prefers that he manages their money and says quite flippantly:

"He does everything, pays the debts. I told him I do not want to worry about these things. He gives me a set amount of money for groceries and other things."³⁸ (personal communication, JS, 01/05/2002).

Jasmina grew up in her grandfather's house. Her maternal grandfather forbade her to have a relationship with their mother when he reared them. Instead she lived with a large extended family of uncles with their own businesses to support the family. This may be the reason she is willing to relinquish responsibility and hence power over the finances as she has always trusted the males in her life to care for her.

In contrast Bronwyn has been forced into a situation where she has no input into financial decisions. She is a gregarious 38 year old divorcee with three teenage children who now lives with a new partner in a wendy house on the premises of her parents. She split from her husband because he abused alcohol and could become "hard to handle". They quarrelled constantly and decided to split up. Before her marriage she worked in the production line of a children's clothing factory for about 2 years and moved on to other positions in a different factory for another 2 years. She also accepted several casual jobs in manufacturing companies as opportunities became available. After her marriage she worked as a domestic worker but her husband ordered her to stop working. She says that he informed her:

³⁸ Afrikaans original: "Hy doen alles (skuld). Ek het sommer gese ek wil nie worry oor daai nie, hy gee my my maand se grocery geld en wat ever." (personal communication, JS, 01/05/2002).

*"I am here to work and your job is to care for the children...[she adds] but now things are the other way round."*³⁹ (personal communication, BB, 01/08/2002)

She stopped working to care for the children. Now that they are divorced he has ceased supporting the children. She sought a court order to force him to pay child support and because he says that he is unemployed he was ordered to pay a total of R150 per month to support three teenagers. She received the payment until four months ago but since then has received nothing. She is now "basically dependent on Jeffery," her new boyfriend. At the end of each month her boyfriend gives her R200. In addition to giving money, he buys food and clothes on account for them and has also purchased some furniture including two beds. She pays his R200 as rent to her parents. She emphasises that:

*"...(I depend) on my boyfriend for everything.. and the father does nothing. I don't think it is fair."*⁴⁰
(personal communication, BB, 01/08/2002).

She is angry that the father of her children does not fulfil his responsibilities towards them. Her boyfriend also has to support his own 3 children by giving them R1500 each month. She openly admits however that she has no intention to marry him and only stays with him for the finances he contributes to the household. He is often violent when he is drunk and breaks the door down to get into the house. He shouts at her and hits her but she is thankful he does not "worry"⁴¹ the children. She says she feels trapped in this relationship (personal communications, BB, 01/08/2002). Bronwyn is willing to endure physical and emotional abuse from her boyfriend in exchange for the finances and access to resources he gives her.

In comparison, her sister Veronique trades her power by being a subservient wife conforming to traditional gender roles. Veronique lives a few roads away from her mothers' house on the property of her mother-in law. Her relationship with her husband is also one of financial dependence in exchange for reproductive activities (personal communication, VD, 20/01/2003). She explains in her quiet way:

³⁹ Afrikaans original: "Ek is daar om te werk en jy is daar om na die kinders te kyk... en nou anders om." (personal communication, BB, 01/08/2002).

⁴⁰ Afrikaans original: "...vir alles op boyfriend.. ek dink nie dis reg nie en die pa doen niks" (personal communication, BB, 01/08/2002).

⁴¹ 'Worry' denotes physical abuse or molestation.

“He will give me all the money he earns. I will not spend it to buy clothes for myself. I am satisfied when my children are clothed and the food cupboard is full. I ask him if I can go to the hairdresser sometimes and he says I need not ask. He is happy as he knows that he will get everything at the right time and he always has clean clothes and I always see to it that he has his cigarettes.” (personal communication, VD, 20/01/2003).⁴²

Veronique comes across as a very submissive wife. She did not challenge her husband’s decision to leave his teaching job and although she is given the money to decide how it is spent, it does not translate into real power. She asks, for instance, permission for spending money on herself.

Each of these stories tells of financial dependence of women on their husbands or partners. Although each situation is unique, all the women make trade-offs and these arrangements lead to variable responses and expectations on the part of their husbands and partners. Jasmina has happily abdicated responsibility to men in her life and if the need arises may not be able to cope on her own. Bronwyn endures abuse and feels trapped in a relationship because she is financially dependent. Veronique consults her husband submissively for expenditure and is very careful to always have everything the way he likes it. The next section reflects on the role that children play in supplementing or draining the financial resources of the women, adding to the types of pressures negotiated in relationships with husbands and partners.

Children as support or burden of responsibility

Very few of the women interviewed in Manenberg had children old enough to work. However, there were instances where especially boy children would be forced to work to supplement the family income. Shareen’s experience is useful to illustrate the role that older children play in supporting their mothers. In contrast, the story of Nasreen illustrates the burden of responsibility caring for younger children create.

⁴² Afrikaans original: *“Hy sal al sy geld vir my gee...ek is nie n vrou vir klere nie. As ek genoeg geld het om my kassie (kos) vol te hou and die kinders het klere, dan is ek tevrede. Ek vra hom of ek so nou en dan my hare kan laat doen. Hy se ek hoef nie te vra nie. Hy kry mos alles (byvoorbeeld sy kos) optyd en hy is skoon (klere) en het sigarette.”* (personal communication, VD, 20/01/2003).

Shareen at 41 years old is one of the older women I interviewed. She has never been married. She gave birth to her first son when she was 17 years old. The relationship with her son's father did not work out and they broke it off eight months after her son was born.

Shareen has worked at casual jobs since she left school when she was 16 years old. Thereafter, she secured a job at a supermarket and worked there for 15 years until she accepted a retrenchment package. She went back to the retail chain (a different store) and worked there for a further three years before the tornado struck. She explains that:

"I have always worked for my sons." (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003)

Although she has worked consistently, she has not earned enough to provide for both her sons. When her eldest son reached standard nine (the penultimate year of secondary education), she was forced to suspend her son's education as he needed to work to supplement the household income. She recalls how:

"...his teacher came to plead with me at home not to end his schooling...I had no choice I told him the child must go work."⁴³ (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003)

Even though educators pleaded with her to allow him to stay in school, the need to put food on the table was more pressing. When he was 22 years old her son was shot by gangsters in both his legs. He is still able to work but cannot engage in sports as he once loved to do. Her younger son is 16 years old and he is now in standard 8. Shareen endured an abusive relationship with the father of her youngest son for 15 years. Now they have an amicable relationship and are able to converse constructively about financial support and parenting of her youngest son. Even though Shareen now has a good job and can provide everything her son needs, she feels that he needs to also take on the responsibility of weekend and vacation work perhaps because he receives everything he needs whereas her eldest son had to work to fulfil family needs. (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003).

⁴³ Afrikaans original: "...Onderwyser na die huis toe gekom...nie 'n keuse gehad nie, hy moes gaan werk." (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003).

In comparison, Nasreen, who had young children, had to care for them herself. Nasreen has only ever been able to secure cleaning jobs on a casual basis. She finds it hard to secure employment but says she needs to make an effort. She remarks knowingly:

“Jobs do not come to you...you have to go out and seek job opportunities in order to secure a job.”⁴⁴

(personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002)

Nasreen’s present husband works seven days a week – most times - at a printing company in order to meet all the family’s needs. He only earns R1000 per month and Nasreen admits it is not enough. They have clothing and furniture debts that take up half the monthly income. A quarter of his salary is paid in rental to her parents. Nasreen has arranged to get free milk at the clinic for the baby but most times it is used for her whole family. Their finances are often depleted by the middle of the month.

After they moved from the tornado transit camp they were forced to sleep in a portion of her mothers’ lounge with all their furniture until their wendy house was complete. Her mother is not very kind to her and she is very afraid of and resentful towards her mother. She says her mother knows they have no food but she does not share with them. She only sometimes gives the children some tea. When there is no food Nasreen has to take the children away. She says sadly:

“I am her child but she does not give me any food...[When it is suppertime and others in the house are eating] I take them [her children] for a walk, watch some television and then we go to sleep.”⁴⁵

(personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002)

The responsibility of having to keep children fed becomes overwhelming. Nasreen tells of her relief that her husband has a job where he can work overtime to earn extra income. She describes the pressure she feels:

⁴⁴ Afrikaans original: “Werk kom mos nie na jou toe nie... as jy nie soek nie dan kry jy nie.” *(personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002)*.

⁴⁵ Afrikaans original: “Ek is dan haar kind maar sy gee nie vir my nie...ek vat hulle vir ‘n walk, watch TV...en dan sslaap.” *(personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002)*.

*"If my husband did not have a job, I would have poisoned us all. I sometimes feel like taking the children and running away."*⁴⁶ (personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002).

These feelings of desperation have led her to have thoughts of committing suicide and taking the lives of the children (personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002). The situation in her mother's home is worsened by both her brothers' being habitual drug users. However, she says that her mother is more indulgent towards her brothers.

Shareen's experiences illustrate that older children are sometimes forced to assume the responsibilities of adults in supplementing family income. On the other hand, living in a tense environment with younger children to feed (like Nasreen does) can lead to feelings of desperation. It is important to also have emotional support to cope with life's challenges. The next section explores relationships with siblings and community friends and the ways in which they do (or do not) provide such support.

Siblings are not an automatic support base

In previous sections, the benefits of strong bonds with siblings have been demonstrated. Collette's sister was her closest confidant until she died. Desiree has ten siblings who are all very close and helpful. However, as we have seen from the relationship between Nasreen and her mother, the relationships between family members are sometimes complicated which may affect the potential for support. Therefore in this section, I illustrate the consequences of negative sibling relationships by examining the experiences of Shareen's experiences.

Shareen considers herself the black sheep of her family. Her siblings either live in the more affluent southern suburbs of Cape Town or even overseas. She mockingly says:

"I am the black sheep of the family... they [her siblings] are all high class, you can tell by the places in which they live – Rondebosch, one in Pinelands, a brother in England and another in Australia. My

⁴⁶ Afrikaans original: "As hy nie 'n werk gehad het nie, het ek ons almal vergiftig. Ek voel ek will die kinders vat en weghardloop." (personal communication, NH, 10/05/2002).

sister in Rondebosch, we don't get along because I am just a normal working class person from Manenberg."⁴⁷ (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003)

Shareen used to drink alcohol (prohibited in the Muslim religion) and this was part of the reason why her family turned their backs on her. The estrangement from her family was most keenly felt after the tornado. Even though her sister living in Rondebosch offered her mother a place to stay, the same invitation was not extended to Shareen. As a consequence she had to stay in the temporary accommodation at a school in the area. When her mother came to visit her once and found her to be ill, community members pleaded with her mother to take care of her. The sister in Rondebosch then permitted Shareen to come and stay but warned her that when she felt better in a few weeks she should leave. When she recovered Shareen left her sister's house to live in the home of a friend. While she stayed at her sister's house, her brother-in-law, who manages a food franchise, secured a job for her at a different store in the franchise group. She worked there for a year.

Shareen has turned her life around since setting the new job and a new intimate relationship. She does not imbibe alcohol anymore, has received counselling for the trauma experienced during the tornado, and now acts as a motivational speaker at her new job. She is also very committed to her new boyfriend (she is amazed that this 27 year old man is still interested in her). He is her main emotional support and she is overjoyed to be pregnant with his child since the last time she was pregnant was 16 years ago.

Shareen admits that she indulged in alcoholic beverages in the past and even hosted parties with alcohol. She is also now dating a Christian man. Even though she believes she has been ostracized from her family because she is "working class", this may only be part of the story or one perspective. It could be that Shareen's family are devout Muslims and subscribe to a strict moral code within this religion that does not allow imbibing with alcohol nor marriage to a Christian unless he converts to Islam.

⁴⁷ Afrikaans original: "Ek is die swart skaap ...hulle is almal baie high class...jy kan mos hoor Rondebosch, een in Pinelands, een broer in Engeland and een broer in Australia. Die suster in Rodebosch... ons kom nie oor die weg nie, ek is net a normal working mens van Manenberg." (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003).

Clearly, family is not a guaranteed support base. However, there does seem to be some measure of support that can be expected from family members especially in times of crisis. Her sister did allow her to live in her house, albeit for a short time, and her brother-in-law used his influence to get her a job. Therefore, family links are useful in emergencies and can be depended upon even if relationships are not close. The next section considers the role of friends in facilitating access to livelihoods.

Friends in the community who facilitate access to livelihoods

I have demonstrated that family links are often used to gain access to information about jobs as well as actual jobs. This section investigates whether community links such as bonds with friends who live in the same area are also useful in accessing jobs, especially focusing on the relationship dynamics that need to be present before community members will link one to jobs. Shareen's link with another member of a community committee and Bronwyn's link with church friends will be used to illustrate the assistance friends will provide to access jobs.

Once Shareen found a place to stay at the Phoenix post-tornado temporary settlement, she became quite a prominent member of the community. A committee was started to represent the interests of those staying on the camp and Shareen was an active member. They met regularly over the two years that they all resided there. Shareen had ended her obligation to the franchise where she was working and found herself to be unemployed once more. She decided to draw on her community links and forwarded her curriculum vitae to another member of the "tornado relief committee." This led to her current employment in a clothing manufacturer as management liaison and worker representative. She is ecstatic about her new job, she says:

"I gave my CV (curriculum vitae) to committee a member of the tornado on which we were both serving. That was the best thing that happened to me."⁴⁸ (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003)

Shareen now works at a wholesaler. The relationships that she built with members of the tornado committee were thus instrumental in convincing another member of the

⁴⁸ Afrikaans original: "Ek het my CV vir hom gegee. Daai was nou die bester ding wat met my gebeur het." (personal communication, ShJ, 26/01/2003).

committee to forward her curriculum vitae to his company thereby vouching for her as a potential employee. But what excites her most about her job is that she is a workers' representative and motivational speaker.

Bronwyn used her links with people at church to garner information about jobs. Bronwyn has belonged to the Apostolic church in Manenberg since she moved here when she was just 7 years old. There are regular church meetings and activities that members of the church attend. When her friends from church visit her they always give her information about job opportunities. She explains:

"My friends from church tell me about job opportunities" (personal communication, BB, 01/08/2002)⁴⁹

She always looks forward to these visits as they also provided invaluable emotional support to her. She talked openly with them about her relationship problems, the responsibility of caring for her children and the lack of employment which is keeping her trapped in her relationship with her boyfriend (personal communication, BB, 01/08/2002).

Women use longstanding friendships from community organisations they belong (such as Bronwyn's friends from church) as well as newly acquired links (such as other members of a tornado relief committee) to access information about job opportunities and access to actual jobs. Community links could also be useful in times of crisis such as after the occurrence of the tornado.

Fragmented community: The lack of cohesive community organizations

In this section I review the role of community organisations in response to the tornado. This discussion reveals how women were not really able to depend on coherent community organisations after the tornado and instead were able to build community through religious organisations. Shareen was part of a community committee initiated to coordinate the concerns of residents affected by the tornado. This committee is an example of an opportunistic community structure that forms in

⁴⁹ Afrikaans original: "My vriende by die kerk sal my vertel as hulle van werk geleentheid hoor." (personal communication, BB, 01/08/2002).

response to an incident or issue and disbands when the issue is no longer popular. In contrast, Abeda and Nasreen were both involved in emergency relief initiatives organised by their mosques.

Immediately after the tornado there were no coordinated efforts by community structures to respond to the need of residents affected. Instead organisations sprung up opportunistically organised around tenure and housing issues highlighted by the tornado. This organisation known as the Manenberg Disaster Committee was spearheaded by vocal community members rather than individuals who had been part of longstanding community structures. These individuals operated more out of self interest than concern for the welfare of the community members affected. The leader recalls boastfully:

'I could not believe the Mayor was calling me at home to organize the relief effort' (personal communication, GJ, 20/03/2002)

This organisation later fragmented into two organisations due to personality and power struggles between the leaders. The other organisation was known as the Manenberg Tornado Committee. The leaders report that the other organisation was 'doing things to the detriment of the community' (personal communication with J and H, 04/04/2002) Both these organisations claimed to act on behalf of the disaster affected community.

Conclusion

The women interviewed for this research who live informal dwellings and not brick houses constitute 8 % of households in Manenberg, they represent the women on the margins in this community as they have been unable to access formal housing. When attempting to understand this marginalisation it is evident that these women experience many levels of insecurity.

Firstly, women's tenure is insecure. They mostly depend on their parents or parents-in-law in order to erect a home on their property with insecure tenure as they do not have formal permission from the local authority to do so. Second, as all the women

live in informal dwellings they have up to now been unable to access housing. Rather, extended family members (including many different family units) come together to be able to afford the price of a plot of land and one formal house per stand. Family members are then all able to contribute to the household by means of assuming reproductive and productive roles. Household composition is a deliberate process that takes into consideration factors such as of division of labour and pooling resources to have a place to stay. These dynamics influence the configuration of households and families. Household and family formations are thus fluid and flexible to compensate for living in impoverished circumstances.

Community social formations are influenced by this configuration of household and family. The factors that shape the community of Manenberg are: women marrying men from within the township where they were raised; families that prefer to live in close proximity to each other and especially the parental home; as well as, the closeness of family links making other links within the community redundant. Communities are therefore made up of various families rather than interdependent community members linked in organizations to further community-wide causes. This was also evident in the power struggles that resulted after the tornado and the lack of a coherent community structure. The sense of community has also been further undermined by the development of separate housing units, which make neighbours unsure of how to relate to each other.

Third, livelihood insecurity is pervasive with many women working in the declining manufacturing sector. There were only single instances when women decided to work in the informal sector or access state income support. This is indicative that women choose to either work in formal employment or when unemployed depend upon strategic relationships within their social networks to gain information about job opportunities.

Women foster strategic relationships to fulfil their needs even if they also have to sacrifice parts of themselves in the process. When women were financially dependent on their husbands or partners they would have to make trade-offs which resulted either in a physically or emotionally abusive relationship. The women also felt pressure from their roles as mothers where they sometimes had to sacrifice children's

education to enable survival or where struggles for survival led women to feelings of desperation and hopelessness. Household relationships were more frequently a cause of emotional insecurity rather than a trusted support mechanism.

Conversely, family links are important sources of livelihoods, homes, tenure security, and assistance with child care, food and clothes. However, even these relationships did not provide a guaranteed support network when relationships were not amicable amongst family members. However, family could be depended upon in times of crisis. If there is a breakdown in the family support network women initiate and foster friendships within their communities to be assured of emotional support. Longstanding friendships in community social networks or links made by working together in community structures were also useful in securing jobs in certain cases.

Women in Manenberg primarily depended on their families for support. They lived with their family units on their parents' property and sometimes parents would provide access to a home as well. Extended families were instrumental in linking the women to jobs. In return women needed to conform to expectations of appropriate behaviour related to their gender roles as wives and mothers for example. Therefore if women acted respectably they were eligible for support from families however, if they did not conform families may ostracise them. The second case study for this research is the adjacent but different township of Guguletu. In this chapter I will also explore the support networks and the consequences of drawing on these networks for support.

CHAPTER 4

Women configuring support in Guguletu: Primacy of community

'Shack dwellers': A home but not a house

"I'm born here but I am still in a shack... people came yesterday [from the Eastern Cape] and they have houses." (personal communication, GS, 30/04/2003).

Glenda is 61 years old and was born in Cape Town. She is distressed at her inability to move to a formal brick house even though she has lived her entire life in the city. Her biggest regret and fear is that she will not be able to live in a brick house before she dies. Even though she has come so close by receiving the housing subsidy, the responsibility of having to support her family absorbs all her finances. For most of the women interviewed in Guguletu living in a brick house was one of the things they wished for most fervently.

The life experiences of women living on the margins in Guguletu help us to understand their struggles for housing, tenure and jobs. Various strategies are employed to access these resources and opportunities. As in chapter 3 in the Manenberg case study, I am particularly interested in the construction and activation of social networks that link women to housing, tenure and jobs. The social networks of women in Guguletu are reflective of the material conditions in which they live (informal housing and insecure income) and experiences of migration between rural Eastern Cape and urban Cape Town but also the choices they make. This chapter focuses therefore on women's agency in relation to how they foster and endure certain relationships because of their strategic value to access a home, space to erect that home and income generating opportunities to sustain the household.

This chapter constitutes the second case study for this research project illustrating experiences of insecurity and marginalisation of women affected by the tornado living in informal shacks in Guguletu by interrogating the way in which they draw on social networks to access housing, tenure and jobs. I interviewed women living in the informal settlements of Thambo Square and Barcelona as well as others that lived in

the vicinity of NY 150 (depicted in map 4.1. below). First, I reflect on the evolution of the township of Guguletu in order to understand the dynamics of housing and tenure, framed historically by policies affecting people classified African in the Apartheid period. Second, the migration and employment histories of the 15 women are used to introduce their experiences of tenure insecurity, inadequate provisioning of housing and limited access to jobs. Third, the configuration of their social networks found in households, family and community - will demonstrate the effects of family and community norms as well as women's choices in shaping access to housing, tenure and jobs. Finally, I describe the role that significant relationships within these networks play as support systems and survival mechanisms to alleviate tenure insecurity that is a contributing factor to experiences of poverty.

The intention of this case study is to provide a comparison of the primary support network in Guguletu that operates on the same level of importance as family in the township of Manenberg. I examine if family is constructed in the same way, have the same value in linking women to access housing, secure tenure and income sources as well as whether this is the institution that regulates normative behaviour. However, if family is not the primary support group for women in Guguletu, this chapter aims to establish what the more pivotal network is. All this information is investigated in the context of Guguletu as a township shaped by Apartheid policies.



Map 4.1: Interview area in Guguletu

Guguletu: A product of the Apartheid city

In this section I contextualise the history of Guguletu in the context of the Apartheid city. I then outline the housing and tenure crisis in Guguletu created during Apartheid through racially segregated laws, which controlled labour issues and residential areas.

*The temporary urban status of Africans*⁵⁰

When migrating for work most African men left families behind in rural areas with their only contact being the remittances from meager wages, having a dire effect on African families. However, the movement to the city of whole families continued swelling the African population in Cape Town to 105 000 by 1957. This forced the local authority to establish emergency transit camps to determine eligibility for housing in Langa or Nyanga West. Those not found eligible were expelled from the city (Parnell 1997; Thomas 1999: 23). Although the townships of Langa and Nyanga West were formed, at the end of 1958 the city council made a deliberate decision not to use brick to construct housing for Africans as this, it was argued, would encourage permanent residence. Therefore all council erected homes consisted of two-roomed corrugated structures. There were no public services nor was access to water and electricity provided in these areas (Thomas 1999: 27).

Nyanga West (initially established in 1958) which was renamed Guguletu (ironically named 'our pride'), was established as a temporary transit camp for Africans evicted from the city centre that would be returned to 'homelands'. It was originally a dormitory township for African males employed in the city who lived in four-roomed houses with outside bathrooms and toilets (Mpofana 2002: 16-20). The 1961 formal construction in Guguletu meant the establishment of four independent residential sections. Section 1 consisted of 1 244 permanent homes built in 1967. Sections 2 and 3 consisted of transitional homes with no sewerage lines Thomas (1999: 28).

The housing stock in Guguletu only increased from 3 868 to 7 392 from 1972 to 1982 whereas the population increased from 65 068 to 73 480, leading to household sizes of approximately ten persons in four rooms (Thomas 1999: 29). The roads in the

⁵⁰ Apartheid legislation such as the 1950 Group Areas Act and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 meant that the oppression of Africans was exacerbated. In a further attempt to contain the migration of Africans, the Western Cape instituted a Cape Coloured Labour Preference Policy in 1954. During this same year the passbook system was introduced requiring all Africans working in the city to carry this form of permission to access the city – with African women in the Western Cape being the first target of this discriminatory practice. All these laws colluded to ensure that access to housing and employment for Africans in the Western Cape was nearly impossible. Forcing Africans to construct their own informal dwellings on open land albeit illegally. (Thomas 1999).

township have no logical sequence and the poorly lit internal roads initially did not link with major routes (Mpofana 2002: 24). In the 1970's NY 1 housed migrant labourers with the west side consisting of blocks of flats owned by private companies. In the 1980's with relaxing pass and influx control laws, men brought their families to live with them. Families required more space than the single sex hostels provided resulting in two informal settlements at this time in northern Guguletu named KTC and Thambo Square. Over time other informal settlements developed in the northeast of the township on an old rubbish dump currently the unserviced sites (no road infrastructure, no toilets and no storm water drains) of New Rest, Kanana and Barcelona which are bordered by the N2 at the back (Mpofana 2002:21). However, no further state housing was provided resulting in a proliferation of backyard shacks and squatter settlements (Parnell 1997; Mabin 1992:20)

There was also migrant worker accommodation (single sex hostels) in Guguletu where 16 men were accommodated in 6 rooms measuring four by three metres. There were common cooking areas, cement bunks (no mattresses), cold water showers and toilets without walls (Thomas 1999:29). The apartheid state also rationalised that the work Africans performed meant that they needed only minimal infrastructure where they lived in order to work efficiently as they were only in the city on a temporary basis (Parnell 1997).

In 1984 the Cape Labour Preference Policy was withdrawn. A positive spin off from the increased availability of jobs was that African residents were permitted to buy 99 year leaseholds in African townships like Khayelitsha (Thomas 1999:30). At the same time, the stability of informal settlements was marred by violent internal conflicts in the 1980's (Hindson, Byerley and Morris 1994). Hereafter, land invasions and occupations become more pervasive on open land and also inside townships (Mabin 1992; Hindson, Byerley and Morris 1994). These dynamics led to the current status of housing and tenure in Guguletu which is largely informal in nature or a proliferation of housing that is of poor quality.

Shacks and brick houses: A dichotomy of fortunes

In Guguletu, there is an interesting split of housing types. Less than half (46%) of the 17 121 households live in a brick structure on a separate plot and a quarter of (26%) households live in informal dwellings in informal settlements. Whereas 37% of households live in houses that are owned and fully paid off there are 25% of households that occupy their homes rent free. These may be the same households who live in informal dwellings in informal settlements (Statistics South Africa 2001).

This picture of Guguletu introduces an interesting dichotomy between residents who own their own fully paid off brick home compared to a quarter of the community who live in informal dwellings rent free without security of tenure. The rest of the community lives in private rental property mostly in someone else's backyard. These households also have insecure tenure and inadequate housing. However, experiences of marginalisation in this community are exacerbated by the significant number of households who reside in informal settlements. Their level of insecurity is more acute as they live in circumstances of extreme risk and vulnerability in informal dwellings in under-serviced sites overcrowded with large numbers of dwellings. The women I interviewed for this study all lived in informal dwellings either on the plot of a home owner or in an informal settlement on an under-serviced site, with limited access to services such as communal tap. Their lives provide insight into women's experiences of surviving with uncertainty, with the threat of eviction by the local authorities and in the context of the tenuous nature of their low paying jobs and lack of access to formal brick housing.

History of tenure, housing and jobs for fifteen Guguletu women

The women in Guguletu whom I interviewed all lived in informal dwellings near to NY 150 or in the Barcelona and Thambo Square informal settlements (depicted in map 4.1.). In the informal settlements, homes were no more than structures of wood and corrugated iron situated on under-serviced sites without reticulated water and sewerage or ablution facilities in each home.



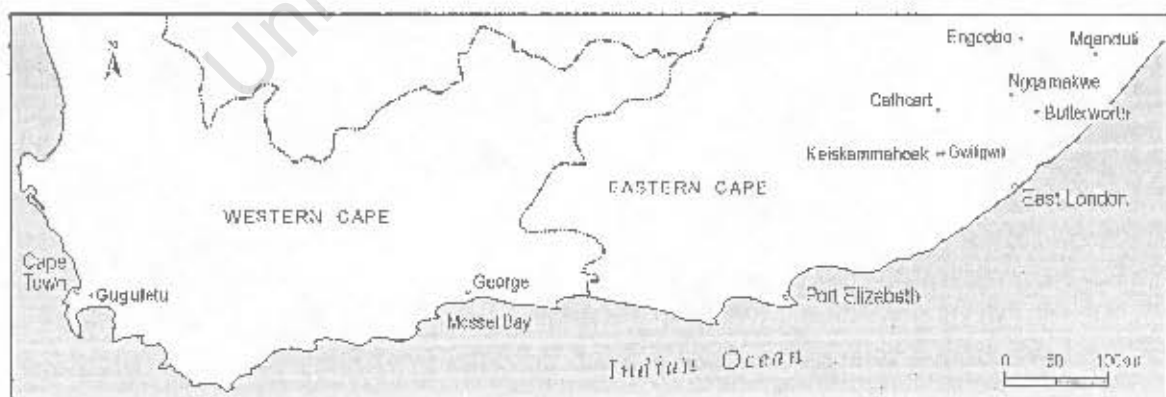
Picture 4.1: Informal dwellings in Guguletu

In this section I investigate two issues. First I trace the women's histories of migration in order to ascertain the reasons why they moved and who provided access to tenure and housing. Second I tabulate present and previous jobs to understand livelihood strategies women in Guguletu employ and how these jobs or other sources of income shape their lives. These sections will situate their struggles to access housing, tenure and income generating opportunities and the way in which they shape women's lives.

Moving from place to place - deepening levels of insecurity

The women interviewed in Guguletu sometimes moved from place to place over large geographic distances. This section traces their migration from their place of birth until the present time. I documented all the places they moved to, the reasons why they moved, who provided access to tenure and housing and the type of home in which they live (see table 7 in Appendix C). The analysis traces their experiences of marginalisation and long term strategies to access secure tenure and adequate housing.

An equal number of women interviewed originated in Cape Town as opposed to the Eastern Cape (with only one woman born in Johannesburg). Most of the older women come from the Eastern Cape but there is also an instance where a younger woman, like Nosiviwe who is 35 years old was born in Mtansani. Women that come from the Eastern Cape originated from areas such as Engcobo, Mqanduli, Cathcart, Butterworth, Keskammahoek in the Eastern Cape (depicted in the map 4.1. below). The range of ages of the women originating from Cape Town spans from Minnie at 30 years old to Glenda who is 61 years old. It is thus not possible to state categorically that the older generation of women has migrated to Cape Town with the younger cohort being born in the city. There seems to be a variety of reasons why women live their whole lives in the city and others migrate there, although this is not the focus of this thesis.



Map 4.2: Guguletu in relation to women's places of origin in the Eastern Cape

Moving around through their lives seems to reflect changes within household configurations more than any other factor. Many women moved home to live with

husbands or boyfriends or because their parents died. Another pervasive reason for moving is to access one's own home, be it an informal dwelling or a brick house. Women set great store on independence.

Only three women had access to an 'RDP'⁵¹ brick house and government housing subsidy – Nomzi, Glenda and Sibongile. However, none of them currently live in the house either because there are no funds to complete the structure or because the tornado wrought too much damage for it to be habitable. In all the cases women became aware of these initiatives to access a subsidy 'RDP' housing through involvement in community organisations or being on the housing list. Nomzi alludes to the fact that women deliberately move to informal settlements as an annual survey is conducted by government that will inform distribution of housing subsidies and eligibility for brick houses in these areas.

If they are not able to access this programme most of the women live their entire lives with insecure tenure in informal settlements and in illegal backyard dwellings. Only Connie moved from an informal dwelling to spend her formative years living in brick houses. However, she currently resides in Thambo Square, once more in an informal dwelling with insecure tenure.

To provide insight into the life experiences of women in relation to tenure and housing I draw on the lives of some women to illustrate key issues. Sibongile was born in the Eastern Cape and moved more than anyone else. Her experiences of migration are interesting as she is one of the older women who moved from the Eastern Cape to live in Cape Town. Connie has lived most of her life in a brick house before moving back to an informal dwelling, illustrating an inability to sustain residence in brick houses. In addition, there are the frustrations of Glenda who has lived in the city all her life but is still unable to afford living in a brick house.

Sibongile is a very quiet 60 year old who was born and raised by her stepmother in Transkei, as her mother worked in Cape Town. She came to Cape Town to stay with her mother in 1969. (Her mother therefore provided a means to access the city). When

⁵¹ Refers to houses built as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme

she got married, Sibongile and her husband lived with her husband's cousin. She is her husband's third wife; his other two wives had already died. They moved from his cousin's home to live with the children of her husband's first wife in NY 147 in Guguletu. When her husband died she moved to live with her friend in NY 141. This friend helped Sibongile to purchase material to build her own home in KTC where she lived until the 1980s. During this time there were skirmishes in her neighbourhood. "The fighting of the *witdoeke*"⁵² meant that her home was destroyed by fire. She then moved to Thambo Square with many others who were affected by these events. She has obtained a housing subsidy for a house in Thambo Village and has started building the house. However, she cannot live in the house as she does not have money to maintain it in a state that would be suitable for the habitation and care of her eldest daughter dying of AIDS. Thus she lives on in Thambo Square. Sibongile's migration pattern indicates that frequent moves were the result of the reconfiguration of her household when she got married when her husband died, as well as in order to make a home for herself in KTC and Thambo Square another informal settlement. Whereas most of Sibongile's life has been spent in informal dwellings, Connie is the only one in the group of women who have grown up in a brick home.

Connie is 42 years old and has one child. Connie lives alone as her child stays with her nine siblings living in NY 43 and she has evicted her live in boyfriend who stayed with her for 5 years. She now receives a disability grant as she has a heart condition. Connie was born in Nyanga East where her family lived in an informal dwelling until she was 10 years old. Then the family moved to the council brick house in Section 2 NY 89 for which they had applied. They lived there for 3 years. They gave their informal dwelling in Nyanga East to her cousin's family. After living in NY 89 they then moved to Section 3 NY 43 to be the caretaker of her uncle's shop. This was also a brick house which house her uncle gave them in exchange for caring for his shop. Connie moved to live independently from her parents. She moved to Thambo Square to live in an informal dwelling with her boyfriend in 1998 where she is still living today. Glenda is two decades older but experienced similar insecurity.

⁵² *Witdoeke* refers to the men who wore white pieces of cloths during skirmishes in informal settlements during the 1980's (Cole 1987: 83).

Glenda, a dignified 61 year old, has survived her husband and 3 of her children. When she was born her family lived in a 4 roomed brick house in Ndabeni in Cape Town. They moved from this house when she was 10 years old because of the forced removals. The family then had to rent an informal dwelling in the backyard of a shopping centre – Janjira in Rylands – living there for 15 years.

“Most people moved to Langa but we moved to Rylands.” (personal communication, GS,30/04/2003)

She now lives in Thambo Square on a corner plot where the noise from traders and traffic is never ending. During the tornado one side of the home was destroyed. In the kitchen, the cupboard and fridge were irreparably damaged.

“We did not know where to go. We heard only people living in houses could claim [compensation from government] not those living in shacks.” (personal communication, GS,30/04/2003)

She did not receive any compensation from government for her losses as she did not know whether they were eligible to claim for the damage to their property. She has secured a housing subsidy to build a brick in Thambo Village however, she does not have the money to complete the structure of the house. Although she is a brilliant and avid entrepreneur, caring for two daughters and grandchildren leaves very little money to invest in completing the house. She is very annoyed at her daughters who do not get involved with the business but expect their mother to support them:

*“Our children don’t go live by themselves, I must support them and the children (grandchildren).”
(personal communication, GS,30/04/2003)*

The women interviewed have lived in impoverished circumstances throughout their lives. This is evident in the fact that most have been unable to access adequate formal brick housing with secure tenure. Their insecurity is perpetuated by the fact that they are also not able to access jobs that enable them to rise above basic levels of survival. The following section demonstrates how their vulnerability is entrenched by their livelihoods.

Jobs that increase vulnerability

In order to understand the levels of insecurity faced by the women, the second factor that I investigated was the livelihood strategies the women employed (whether in the formal or informal economy or from state grants). This information provides insight into levels of security they were able to attain with the income from their livelihood strategies and the effect this had on their life experiences. Table 4.1. below lists previous and current income sources.

University of Cape Town

Table 4.1.: Sources of income for women in Guguletu

Name and age	Previous jobs	Current sources of income
Connie, 42	Domestic service	(Receives disability grant)
Glenda, 61	Domestic service (2 years)	Pensionable age; Self employed (sells second hand clothes, underwear, blankets and chicken)
Iris, 61	Domestic service	Informal sector (sells food stuffs and cigarettes) Pensionable age (Received disability grant)
Leona, 47	Char jobs (stable – more than 12 years)	Temporarily unemployed (needs to inform employers of her return)
Lindiwe, 42	Cleaning companies (7 years); Restaurant (drinks server)	Informal sector (sells beers)
Minnie, 30	Fast food franchise (cleaner – 2 years); Self employed (house shop); Public works project (2 years)	Char jobs (irregular)
Molly, 40	Food franchise (kitchen hand – 8 years; Hotel (messenger, cleaner – 4 years)	Informal sector (sells cooldrinks and vetkoek); occasional char jobs; (Receives 2 child support grants)
Nokhukhanya	Self employed (beer selling)	Unemployed (depends on husband)
Nomzi, 46	Restaurants (casual while schooling)	Domestic service (14 years)
Nonto, 58	Domestic service (Eastern Cape)	Unemployed (receives child support grant and moneylenders)
Nozuko, 59	Self employed (selling :beers; knitwear; <i>schmileys</i> – grilled sheep's head)	Self employed (selling -beers; knitwear; <i>schmileys</i> and receives disability grant)
Nosiviwe, 35	Wholesaler (packer)	Informal sector (sells chips and sweets)
Pamela, 37	Restaurants (cook – 3 years)	Unemployed (depends on boyfriend)
Sibongile , 60	Domestic service (20 years)	Pensionable age (receives child support grant)
Violet, 35	Char jobs	Informal sector (sells recyclables)

Most women interviewed were only able to secure the most labour intensive and marginal jobs (see table 4.1.) More than half (53%) of the sample of women, work in cleaning jobs – either in restaurants, or in piecemeal char jobs or long term domestic service. Of those who work in domestic service many work for only one family or one extended family for most of their working lives. Sibongile for example has worked as a domestic worker for 20 years. Some women (33%) were employed in food franchises such as restaurants as cooks or cleaners. I interrogate further the life experiences of the women in formal employment, in the informal sector, or receiving state grants in order to understand how these sources of income shape their lives.

To illustrate life experiences of women who engage in domestic work, the experiences of Nomzi is compared to that of Sibongile. As many women also engaged in the informal sector, the experiences of Glenda demonstrates the struggles to make an income in this sector. In addition women also accessed state grants and the value of this income support is contextualized in Molly's life.

Life as a domestic worker

Nomzi is a jovial and optimistic 46 year old divorcee who supports her 4 daughters and 2 grandchildren. She started her working life at a young age, while she was still at school. She used to seek casual employment in restaurants during June and December school vacations. Nomzi has worked as a domestic worker for one family for 14 years. The family first lived in Rondebosch but recently moved to Lakeside. Her employer is very good to her and Nomzi enjoys working with them:

"They are good... I will stay till pension." (personal communication, NN,30/04/2003).

Nomzi says she will stick with this family until she is 60 years old and eligible for a state old aged pension.

Nomzi is busy building her house in Thambo village since 1999 with a government subsidy of R17 500⁵³: R9 000 for the land and R8 500 for the top structure of the house. Her employer helps her to buy material and also sometimes gives her furniture. She is very upset at the devastation the tornado has wrought on her new home.

"I was there...I switched off the electricity...all the windows were broken and the water came through the ceiling and the furniture was damaged...the door has a big hole and my clothes were also there. I was so mad...I bought everything cash and now I must start over, bit by bit." (personal communication, NN,30/04/2003)

Even though Nomzi has permanent and secure employment which enabled her to complete the house, the tornado damage is a major setback. She will have to save in

⁵³ This was the values of the subsidy when Nomzi qualified prior to 2003 when the interview was conducted.

order to fix the house in stages. Nomzi is happy with her place of employment and the family whom she works for as a domestic worker. However, Sibongile's experiences tell of how domestic workers are also particularly vulnerable to abuse and insecurity.

While Sibongile lived in KTC, she heard from a neighbourhood friend of a job opportunity that a family living in Newlands, who later moved to Bishopscourt, needed a domestic worker. She worked with this family for 20 years. She started with one family but was then also employed by the son in the family to work at his home. She also was asked to work in the home of the son's girlfriend. Once this son was married she also worked for his mother-in-law. At her busiest time she was thus maintaining the homes of three different households. After her 20 year period of employment with this family she was fired from her job when she was 57 years old. The family permitted her to take leave to attend her mother's funeral for 2 weeks, however the proceeding lasted for three weeks. Upon her return home she was dismissed from her employment. She thinks the real reason why she was fired may be due to the fact that she was getting older and could not work as much.

The family saved a small amount of her income on a monthly basis towards a pension. She was still employed when her first daughter died and the family where she was employed contributed R400 to the funeral expenses. They contributed R5000 to the funeral of her second daughter, four years later. They also gave her some assistance at the time of the tornado when her home was damaged. This pattern of support was quite common for domestic workers. The families that employed them become another source of support outside their communities.

Nomzi and Sibongile both worked as domestic workers. The families with whom they were or are employed lent support when the women were in need. However, the salaries earned were not enough to improve the lives of the women significantly in terms of affecting their housing and tenure status. Despite jobs, they live in impoverished circumstances only just able to care for their children and grandchildren. More women worked in domestic service in their previous employment than at the present time. Only one woman still works in domestic services. In the contemporary period, it is more common to only be able to work at

irregular char jobs. Amongst the sample of women it seems as if income generation activities have moved from the formal economy to the informal economy.

Livelihoods in the 'informal' sector

Most of the women interviewed engaged in some type of activities in the informal economy. The experiences of Glenda and Violet will illustrate some of the reasons how women earn an income in this sector.

When we interviewed Glenda she sat in a chair in the corner unmoving as if presiding from a throne. She is very dignified and a very good entrepreneur even though she is already 61 years old. She had customers filing through her house throughout our interview with her.

Although some of her children and grandchildren are still dependent on her, others live in Manenberg, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and other parts of the Eastern Cape. She has developed chronic health conditions – diabetes, high blood pressure and a heart condition - which incapacitates her for collecting the money owed to her. Her children who should be of assistance to her are either disinterested in the business or live far away. She remembers when she was younger that she was obliged to help her parents to sustain the family. Her children do not seem to feel the same obligation.

Glenda worked as a domestic worker to help her parents. She had a job as a domestic worker in Mowbray for only 2 years before she decided to leave this line of work. She has always been eager to start her own business. Her determination to succeed is evident:

"I wanted to do business for myself." (personal communication, GS,30/04/2003)

She started selling second hand clothes. She is still selling chickens, underwear and blankets. She makes her purchases on infrequent trips to Johannesburg but would like to buy internationally. She is very sad that her children do not want to join her in running the business. She talks extra loudly so that they can hear her in the next room:

"They do not even do collections (of payments for goods)!" (personal communication, GS, 30/04/2003).

Her children will not get involved even though she is old and suffers from health problems. She has received a state old aged pension for a year now and also received the disability grant before because of her health problems. The steady money from the grant is used for maintenance of her home in Thambo Square the informal settlement where she lives.

She has also received the housing subsidy of R17 500 to build a formal RDP house in Thambo Village. Even though the plot is secured she says there are insufficient funds to build the house. Glenda's experiences illustrate that apart from activity in the formal economy, most women (53%) were engaged in the informal sector.

Whereas Glenda runs her business mostly from home, Violet mostly operates outside her house looking for jobs to do. Violet is 32 years old, married and has two children. She is not able to fully depend on her husband for support to maintain the household. Therefore, Violet employs a myriad of strategies to earn some money.

She has worked cleaning houses. In particular she has a specific client who requests her to do washing. She sometimes earns R10 or R20 for doing this. She collects scrap and cardboard in Rylands and sells this for money. With the money she buys paraffin and sunlight soap. However, she also does odd jobs for food.

During the tornado the roof of her house collapsed and the water poured in. Her television, lounge suite, clothes and windows were damaged. After the tornado she intensified her search for plastic in Rylands to sell in order to recover from the impact of the tornado.

The ingenuity in creating opportunities for income generation was most impressive amongst the women in Guguletu. No project would be considered too small in scale. If it generated even a minimal income it was worth doing. Activities they typically engaged in were selling beer, *schmileys* (grilled sheep's head), scrap, second hand clothes, blankets, cigarettes from home, and *vetkoek* (homemade fried bread rolls),

cooldrink and sweets at schools. These enterprises would inevitably be on a small scale depending on the amount of capital as well as the infrastructure required to maintain these efforts (for example a functioning fridge for storing beer). In addition to formal and informal activities sometimes women have to depend on state grants for income support.

State grants as a dependable source of income

State social security grants are available for particularly vulnerable citizens within the South African society. There are grants for the care of disabled children and for disabled adults. Child Support grants for children under 14 and foster care grants for children placed in court ordered alternative care. There is also a State Old Age Pension accessible to women over 60 and men over 65. Women interviewed accessed primarily the Child Support Grant, Disability or State Old Aged Pension grants. The role of these grants as a dependable source of income is contextualized in the life of Nozuko and Sibongile.

I admired Nozuko's positive attitude and creative survival skills when I interviewed her in the home of a community leader. She is 59 years old, has two adult children and has lived in the home of her sister since she came to Cape Town in 1974, the year she gave birth to her first child. She escaped from an abusive husband to live with her sister in Cape Town because she was pregnant. She did not want to lose the baby and sought medical advice in Cape Town. She came to live with her sister who took her into her home. Her medical condition was so severe the doctors diagnosed that she would be unable to work and she was therefore eligible for a disability grant.

When she received the grant she was able to build her own bungalow in her sister's backyard. This therefore decreased her dependence on her sister and provided her with greater independence and privacy. Nozuko therefore used the grant to be more self sufficient. Sibongile also receives state social security.

Sibongile is already 60 years old but has not yet applied for the State Old Aged Pension grant which she is eligible for. However, she did apply for a Child Support Grant for one of her grandchildren and does receive the money. She is unable to apply

for the grant for the other child as this grandchild has no birth certificate. The Child Support Grant that she does receive (which is less than R200 per month) is used exclusively to buy food for the household in order to survive. Sibongile and Nozuko thus use the grants to survive and also to be less reliant on those around them – family and neighbours.

Child Support, Disability and Old Aged Pension grants were a reliable source of income that was used to sustain entire families. Five women in Guguletu benefited from child support grants. Four women who live in Guguletu received Disability Grants. Even though three of the women in Guguletu are eligible for the State Old Age Pensions, only one woman reports receipt thereof. They cite administrative problems with identity documents as the reason for not being able to access the income support from the government. The grants ensure a measure of self-reliance and dignity for those who receive it and also ensure that the families do not suffer become destitute. The grants are used to survive.

The review of migration patterns and livelihood strategies illustrates the multiple levels of insecurity that the women have to contend with to survive on a daily basis. I then demonstrate the use of social networks as a survival mechanism to cope with insecurity. The following sections therefore focus on the configuration of social networks in households, families and the community to analyse the strategic relationships that women draw on for support and survival.

Defining household, family and community in Guguletu

This thesis argues that social networks women are linked to are critical to access development opportunities such as housing, secure tenure and jobs. Therefore, to understand the extent to which women foster and activate relationships within these social networks I investigate how the most basic social networks - households, families and community - are configured in the lives of the fifteen women interviewed in Guguletu. The organisation of social networks will demonstrate who the women choose to live with in their households, the reasons for these choices as well as their conceptualisation of family, and factors that shape this sense of community.

Household configuration in Guguletu

In this section, I illustrate various types of households within the sample by means of organograms of household structures. Nomzi's household illustrates what I found in the sample to be a typical co-habitation of three generations in one household.

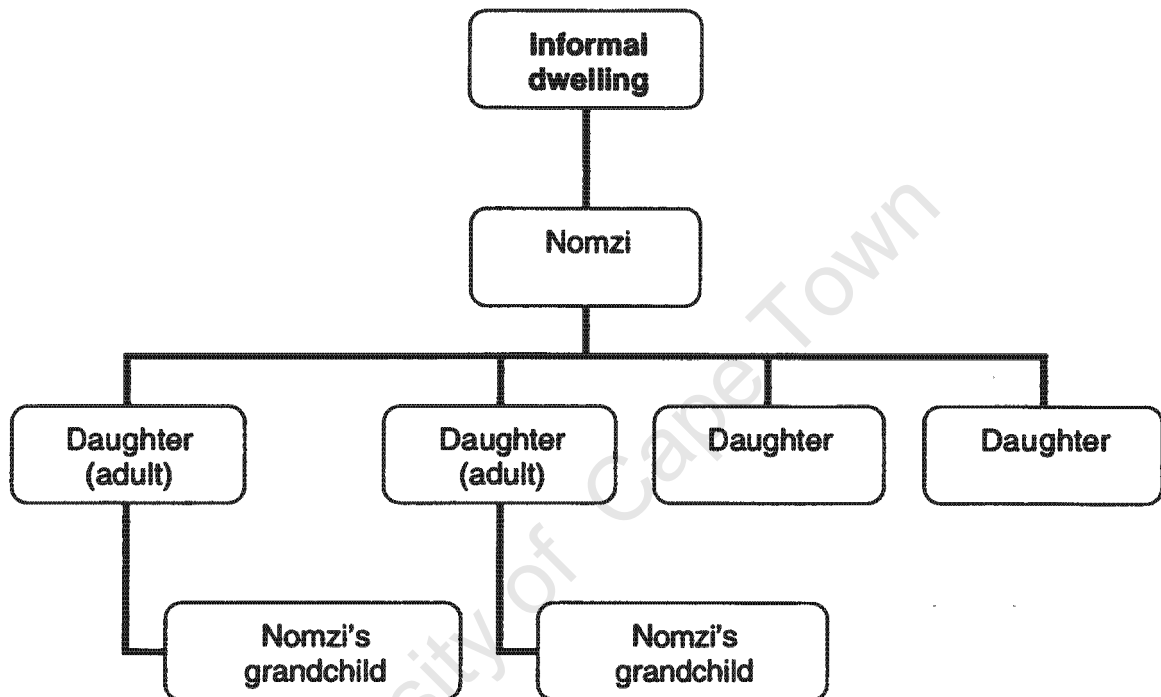


Figure 4.1: Nomzi's household structure

Nomzi lives with her four children and 2 grandchildren. She married a qualified bricklayer and plasterer in 1978. They had four daughters but her husband left while she was pregnant with their youngest child, in 1993. He did not know she was pregnant. Nomzi did not try to stop him as she suspected he had another partner. She is heartbroken about the end of the marriage:

"He was in love with someone else (personal communication, NN, 30/04/2003)"

Her divorce was finalised in 1995, two years after the birth of her youngest daughter. Both her older daughters have finished matric but both became pregnant and they still live with their mother. Her husband contributes to the maintenance of the younger daughters but not the older ones. He is of the opinion that they are old enough to care for themselves especially since they had decided to have children. She is annoyed at him about this:

"He was supporting them but when they get children he stepped out, I don't want to fight with him."
(personal communication, GS, 30/04/2003)

Whereas Nomzi is surrounded by children and grandchildren, Iris mostly lives a solitary life.

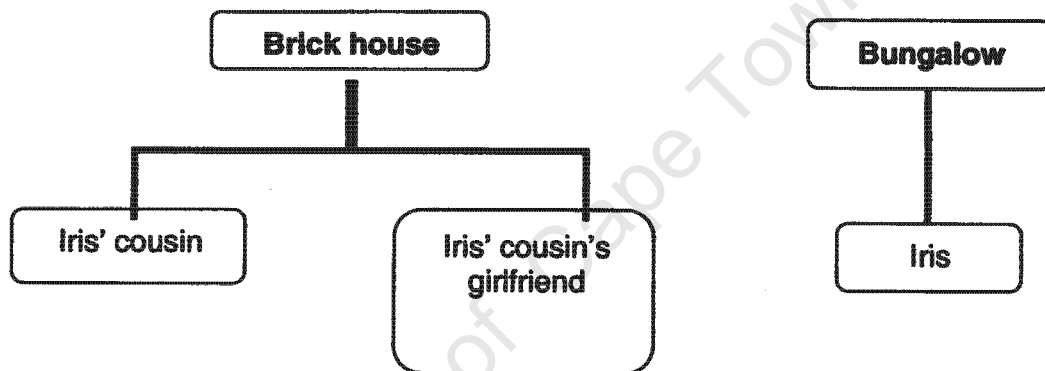


Figure 4.2: Iris's household structure

Iris is a stoic 61 year old who has never been married and has no children. She lives alone in a "bungalow" on her cousin's property, who has graciously given her a place to stay. Her cousin and his girlfriend live in the brick house. They also host another dwelling on their property that they have rented to two brothers who are not related to them.

Iris's home was a one roomed dwelling which contained her bed and a few chairs. Her clothes were kept in suitcases under her bed and she had a very small cupboard. There was also a stove on the table and some cooking utensils. She had no access to water or electricity in this dwelling and cooked with paraffin.

Whereas Iris's life is atypical as she has never married nor had children, Nokhukhanya is one of a few women in the sample who was still living with their husband and she was the only one who has a good relationship with her husband.

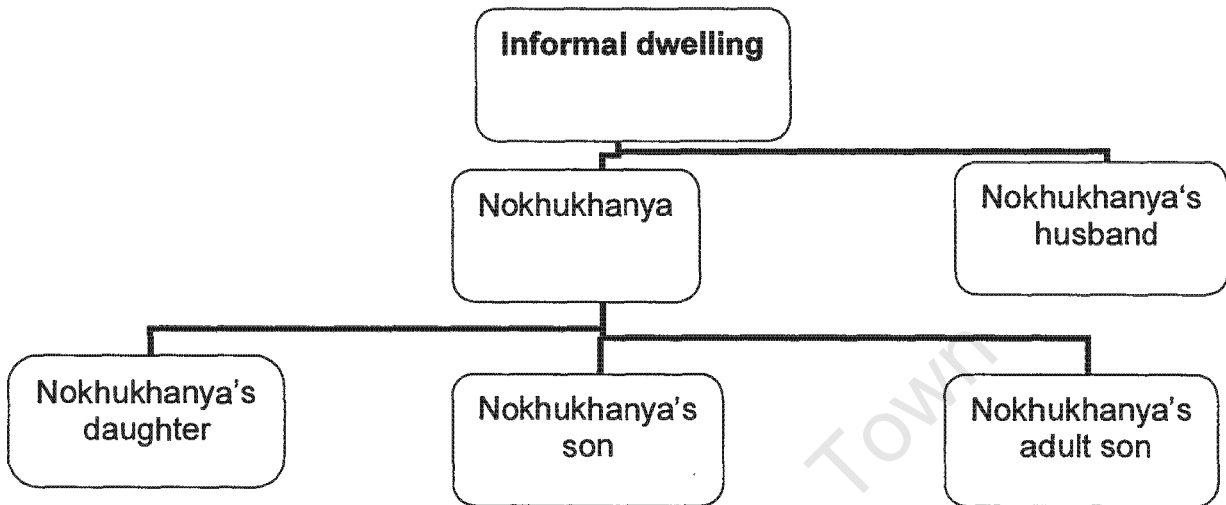


Figure 4.3.: Nokhukhanya household structure

Nokhukhanya is a serious 50 year old who has four surviving children and lives with her husband. She married her husband in 1972, they met in Johannesburg but they both originate from the village of Engcobo in the Eastern Cape. After they married she returned to their house in Engcobo while he stayed behind in Johannesburg to work in the mines. Her husband lost his job in the mines due to his involvement in a strike in 1995, they then moved to Cape Town. He was never able to find permanent work in Cape Town and has only had casual jobs on construction sites or as a gardener.

Her main reason for leaving the rural area was because she blamed the loss of her 6 other children on living there. Her husband wanted to move to Cape Town to be closer to his two aging sisters so that he could be of help to them. They have four surviving children: two sons and two daughters (2 adults and 2 teenagers). Her daughter who is 20 years old lives with Nokhukhanya's half sister in another part of Guguletu.

Although Nokhukhanya had ten children, six of them died. The firstborn to whom she gave birth in 1972 died of measles. She was then unable to conceive children between 1973 and 1977 and was very despondent, wanting to leave her marriage as she felt she was expected to bare children. The pressure to conceive emanated from her husband's male cousins however, her husband and mother-in-law did not put any pressure on her. She felt hopeless in this situation:

"If you are a wife in the rural areas you must bear children... every time you are not breastfeeding you must go and work in the fields with the oxen... I worked in the field for a long time and it was hard. I thought if I gave up my marriage I would end my suffering." (personal communication, NM, 29/04/2003)

However, after 1977 she did conceive and gave birth to ten children, but she later lost many of her children. Her son was shot before he was to go to initiation school, and one of a set of twins drowned in a river, other children were either miscarried, stillborn or only survived a few months. She is distressed about the loss of her children:

"I am sick and tired of witchcraft in rural areas ... I lost many children". (personal communication, NM, 29/04/2003)

Nokhukhanya blames the loss of her children on witchcraft in the rural area where she lived.

Nomzi's household illustrates a more typical three-generation household without any male partner, compared to Nokhukhanya's household for instance. Many women that I interviewed headed their own households. As dwellings were small they could not accommodate large households. Therefore, households would include the most important people in the women's lives – her children, grandchildren and occasionally a spouse or partner. Children who lived with their mothers were dependent upon and unable to independently care for their own children, adding an extra burden of responsibility on their mother. In the next section, I will investigate how households fit into extended families and, more broadly, the community.

The strength of *amakhaya* and kinship links in Guguletu

The manner in which kinship and the support it provides is defined in Guguletu will provide insight into the extent, reach and importance of this social network. Understanding who the women in Guguletu consider to be kin helps situate all their sources of potential support. Nonto's experiences tell of the how both *amakhaya*, people originating from the same village in the Eastern Cape, and kinship links are instrumental to her survival.

Nonto was washing clothes on a wooden bench in front of her house when we arrived to interview her. She was very wary of me as she immediately knew that I was going to ask her personal questions. I think she only agreed to talk to me because I was accompanied by two community leaders. Nonto is 58 year old and lives with her three teenage children and one grandchild. Her firstborn is a son who only ever comes home to sleep and eat and have his clothes washed but does not contribute to the household. He is the cause of grave concern for Nonto as she suspects he may be engaged in criminal activity. Her son already has a criminal record for theft. Her second child is a daughter who also has a daughter of her own. Her other child is still in primary school.

Nonto was born in Mqanduli in the Eastern Cape. When she was 3 months old her parents died in a car accident. She was raised by her uncle (her father's youngest brother) and the rest of the family. When she was 15 years old, she left her uncle's home and went to Butterworth with friends to find a job; but work was scarce. She later lived with her boyfriend in a rented home and conceived her first two children. She says smiling:

"I did not find a job there.. but I found my children there." (personal communication, NGw, 02/05/2003)

Her boyfriend left her when she became pregnant with their second child. She moved to Cape Town in 1985 and a relative with the same surname (kin) bought some materials for her to build a home in NY4. In 1996 she moved from this home to an

informal site in Barcelona secured for her by a sister, someone from the same village where Nonto was born, who also used to live in NY4.

Her third child was conceived in Cape Town. The father of this child lied about his marital status and that his wife lived in the Eastern Cape, but Nonto discovered that he was married. He now lives with his wife and 8 children in the nearby township of Khayelitsha and Nonto prefers to have no dealings with him.

Nonto is unable to find employment and has resorted to borrowing money from moneylenders. The same sister also connected her to the moneylenders to help her survive. She borrowed R1000 from the moneylenders at 20% interest. Her sister saw that she was struggling to repay the loan and loaned money to her to do so as she felt responsible for introducing Nonto to them. But now, this sister, a critical source of support, has left.

"My friend's husband took her back to the Eastern Cape in 2001 and now I am stranded." (personal communication, NGw, 02/05/2003)

She feels lost without her friend. Nonto is in deep trouble as she is unable to pay back the moneylenders the money that she owes. They are now threatening to take her house. The household primarily survives by buying food from the grandchild's Child Support Grant.

When Nonto's home was destroyed in the tornado, she received help from her older brother with the rebuilding of her home. She clarified that this brother was someone from her clan, which is place-based association as well as based on ancestry. Nonto thus considered a person from the village where she was born to be her sister and men from the same clan and with the same surname to be her brother. Therefore *amakhaya* links, purely a place-based association and kinship links defined as someone from the same clan or with the same surname were instrumental in providing building material for housing and access to tenure as well as access to financial resources (personal communications, NGw, 02/05/2003).

In parallel with Nonto's experiences, Iris's *amakhaya* links enable her to have a support base in the city. Iris's main source of support is her neighbour who comes from the same village in the Eastern Cape. Although her neighbour has died, her family still continues to care for Iris. They consider her to be part of their family. They are aware that Iris used to help their mother and this is their way of showing appreciation for Iris's support to their mother. Although Iris is alone she is not lonely. In Guguletu, there is a much broader concept of kinship that is encompassed with the notion of extended family. In addition to relatives linked by blood ties, kin also includes individuals with the same surname and clan name. In addition women can also depend on *amakhaya* – place-based associations. Persons emanating from the same rural village help provide access to tenure and housing in urban areas in many cases. Networks from rural areas are replicated in particular ways in urban areas.

Supportive relationships in households, kin and community

Social networks play an instrumental role in linking women to housing, tenure and jobs. I now investigate how household, family and community networks fulfill this function, analyzing how relationships within households are developed and fostered as the primary social network is the first step in the analysis.

Boyfriends as primary support base

First I investigate the role that boyfriends and partners played in the lives of the women interviewed illustrating these critical relationships via Pamela and Minnie's experiences. Pamela tells of how her boyfriend supports her while she is not working. Minnie's boyfriend has helped her start her own business which facilitates her independence.

Pamela is a sociable 37 year old, we disturbed her Friday afternoon visit with her friends who were enjoying a few drinks. She lives with her boyfriend and small daughter in an informal dwelling in the Barcelona informal settlement. She is proud to own the house and makes sure that we know it belongs to her, not her boyfriend. Her relationship with her boyfriend is generally good, marred only by their arguments

about her drinking alcohol. She comments cheekily about the quality of their relationship:

“Sometimes good... I always drink and he does not like.” (personal communication PM, 02/05/2003)

She is no longer employed and now she receives support from her boyfriend. He works for a few companies as a driver. She says her boyfriend is her best support system.

While Pamela is still living with her boyfriend, Minnie – who also receives assistance from her boyfriend – does not. Minnie is an outspoken 30 year old mother of three children. She is very involved in community projects and was employed in the community in a government public works project. The father of her eldest children was helpful in facilitating their move to Barcelona. He also supports his children financially and even gave Minnie capital to start a small business. She sells meat and ice-cream. They have ended their relationship but Minnie is now self sufficient.

Of the women who chose to live with partners, boyfriends were a very important source of support. Pamela’s and Minnie’s experiences illustrate how boyfriends were an important way to access a plot of land on which to erect their informal dwelling. Sometimes their boyfriends provided the materials to do so, financial resources for child maintenance, as well as capital to start small businesses. I further this investigation of household support networks by demonstrating the more complicated and contested role of husbands in the lives of women.

Abusive husbands: vulnerability within the household

Some women were married at the time of the interview or had previously been married. Nokhukhanya was the only one who reported that the relationship with her husband was a positive one as he was very supportive of her and they had endured many adversities during the almost 30 years that they were married. The experiences of Leona, Nozuko and Violet will be used to illustrate more typical abusive relationships that women endured with their husbands or ex-husbands.

Leona is a mature 47 year old whose experiences of hardship are not immediately evident as she has a very positive attitude. She is the mother of three children; two are already grown. She works at char jobs but aspires to regular employment.

"I don't mind staying in this area, this house... but I only want a job and money." (personal communication, LT, 02/05/2003)

Leona married her husband in a traditional ceremony. The relationship was very bad as he used to abuse her physically. She remembers a particularly nasty incident when she returned from her home in Ciskei and was recovering from a car accident which occurred on her journey back home. While she was not yet fully recovered from the accident, he threatened to kill her with an axe when he was inebriated and proceeded to chase her with this weapon around the house. After this incident, which was one of many, she decided to divorce him in 1997. Leona is not the only one who experienced physical abuse, Violet (who is significantly younger) is still in an abusive relationship with her husband.

Violet is 35 years old and looked very unhappy when she was interviewed. She is the mother of two children. One is a daughter who has passed matric. Violet had high hopes for her but is worried now she is pregnant. This daughter was gang-raped a few years ago and is still traumatized by the incident. Violet has a poor relationship with her husband whom she married in 1986 and she suspects he has a girlfriend. He does not share his resources with her. He earns R1500 per month but only gives her R200 at most. However, he does buy food (samp, mielie meal, sugar and 3 litres of paraffin) for the month. Her husband is abusive when he is drunk. She says sadly:

"He drinks the money and fights with me..." (personal communication, VT, 02/05/2003)

Violet still endures the abusive relationship.

However, the most harrowing tale of abuse and trauma was told by Nozuko whose need for children seemed to be more important than the quality of her relationship with her husband. Nozuko married her husband in a traditional ceremony in 1964. There

were several others who married at the same time as she did and the young brides were eager to have children. She remembers this time with great regret:

"We were desperate to have children. Everyone was married in January and the next January they all had children. I would take stones to my breast to feed and carried them like a baby." (personal communication, NGq, 29/04/2003)

She was the only one who did not conceive immediately. Nozuko was pregnant for the first time in 1967. However, she had a miscarriage followed by more miscarriages in 1972 and 1973. She left her husband because he was beating her and this caused internal injuries even while she was pregnant.

"I was vomiting blood..." (personal communication, NGq, 29/04/2003)

Worried about the pregnancy, she came to Cape Town in 1974 to seek medical advice in order to save her baby. She remembers that she had to stay in hospital for four months after delivering her baby. There were many internal injuries that resulting from the repeated abuse that she suffered at the hands of her husband. After delivering her baby she required reconstructive surgery for the damage to her internal organs.

Women interviewed very rarely cited husbands as their main source of support. To the contrary many had experienced abusive intimate relationships with partners or spouses. This may be the reason why so many of the women have chosen to head their own households and live independently of men. All the women relied on support from other women, either kin or *amakhaya*.

Women's support of other women: The role of mothers

This section will demonstrate the special supportive relationships provided to women by other women in their family: mothers to daughters and grandmothers to grandchildren. In order to illustrate the bonds between women I draw on the experiences of Sibongile who tells of caring for her grandchildren now that her daughters have passed away. In addition, Nokhukhanya tells of her continued distress about the loss of her mother even after she has passed away.

Sibongile is a 60 year old woman who has lived a very hard life. She is very thin but still very agile. Her wisdom is evident in the way she accepts all the hardships that life has thrown her way and still keeps going. She was married and had three children. Her husband and two of her children have passed away. All three of her children have AIDS. Another daughter died and was survived by her two teenage daughters who now live with Sibongile, their grandmother.

When they became adults all her children moved away to live and work in Johannesburg. None of them ever made contact with her during that time. However, when they reached the end of their lives all of them returned home to be cared for by their mother. Even at the time of the interview she was still caring for her eldest daughter dying from AIDS. Sibongile now has the responsibility to care and provide for her grandchildren even though she receives no pension and is unemployed. She shrugs her shoulders while talking about this and indicates that she has to accept this responsibility as she is the children's grandmother. Nokhukhanya, on the other hand, misses the support she received from her mother while she was still alive.

Nokhukhanya first lived with her parents in Johannesburg until they moved back to Engcobo in 1985 when they became pensioners. When she returned to Engcobo while her husband worked in Johannesburg she lived very close to her parents. When Nokhukhanya moved to Cape Town in 1997 her mother would still use her Golden Arrows pension money to assist her with childcare. She sent money to Nokhukhanya in Cape Town for school fees for the children. Her mother died in 1997. Nokhukhanya became very sad when remembering the demise of her mother:

"I miss my mother more than the children I have lost" (personal communication, NM, 29/04/2003)

To contextualise the pain she felt with the loss of her mother – her primary support system, she compared it to the loss of her children. She was devastated by the loss and still felt bereft at the time of the interview.

Sibongile has to act as primary carer for her ailing daughter as well as teenage grandchildren. She sees this as part of her duty as mother and grandmother even though her children did not lend her any support while they were working.

Nokhukhanya's mother even shared her pension with her to help her to support her surviving children.

Mothers therefore play an important supportive role in the life of women. In most cases women from Guguletu sited a special supportive relationship with their mothers who would provide emotional and material support in terms of child rearing expenses. Mothers are active in childcare for their grandchildren while their children are alive and become primary caregivers of their grandchildren in cases when their children die. The other source of support noted in the family network was the relationship amongst siblings.

Sibling support

Most women interviewed in Guguletu had many siblings, sometimes including the children of their father's other wives. This section aims to demonstrate the support provided by siblings. Nokhukhanya tells especially of the helpful role her half sister, also living in Guguletu, plays and also the role of other siblings who live further afield. Pamela also tells of the obligation of support to siblings when they are in need. In contrast, Nomzi in turn speaks about her reluctance to draw on her brothers for support.

Nokhukhanya had five siblings but one has already died. Her brother lives in Johannesburg, her youngest sister in Pietermaritzburg. The other brother and sister stay in Engcobo in the Eastern Cape in the family home. They look after Nokhukhanya's home in Engcobo. She also has half sisters who live in Guguletu who have offered to assist her with childcare. They take care of Nokhukhanya's 20 year old daughter – feeding her and giving her a place to stay. Nokhukhanya's husband provides their daughter with all the financial support she needs to go to school. Whereas Nokhukhanya receives support from her siblings Pamela reminds us about her experiences of the moral obligations to help one's family.

Pamela had eight sisters and two brothers (two of her siblings have since died). Six of her siblings still live in her father's house and two of her siblings live in their own homes in Khayelitsha. Pamela is the 5th eldest in the family. None of her brothers or

sisters is currently employed. When she was working she had to share her resources with them. As she was too young to work Pamela's sister informed her about the job she had at a restaurant just before she was pregnant. She is very worried about them:

"They are really suffering." (personal communication, PM, 02/05/2003)

Pamela is also not working at present and is dependent on her boyfriend. She is concerned about the welfare of her family and their needs weigh heavily on her mind. She is despondent that she does not get good jobs even though she has passed matric. At the same time, she is also very depressed by the fact that when she earns a salary it will have to be shared amongst her family members. Pamela cannot ask her family for support as they are living in worse conditions than she is. Nomzi, however, opts not to draw support from her siblings.

Nomzi has 3 brothers. All of them have joined the defense force after 1994. Their employment affords them a measure of financial security. She is proud of them:

"They took the opportunity after '94...they have lots of money." (personal communication, NN, 30/04/2003)

Even though they have more resources at their disposal, she does not want to ask them for assistance. She is reluctant to approach them:

"I don't want to interfere with them ...they are married." (personal communication, NN, 30/04/2003)

She does not want to be a burden to her brothers and also acknowledges that they have their own families to support.

Nokhukhanya depends on her siblings in her home village to care for her rural house. She has also accepted the offer from her half sister to care for her child. Pamela's experience contextualises the moral obligations of reciprocity amongst family members where if you are the one earning an income it will be shared with family members who have fewer resources at their disposal than you have. Nomzi's reluctance to ask her family for support may stem from a cultural tradition of not

interfering in the lives of brothers, who are married, perhaps, reflects Nomzi's own pride. Siblings can be a good source of financial support or even a link to jobs. However, there is always a moral obligation to reciprocate. Familial links have been investigated to analyse the type of support they provide in the lives of the women, but women do not depend on family alone. The next section concentrates on community networks, particularly between neighbours, and support from church and the role they play in the lives of the women.

Urban ubuntu: The role of church and neighbours

Neighbours are a potential access point to all types of resources in addition to providing access to housing, tenure and jobs. I illustrate relationships between neighbours by drawing widely from the experiences of the women I interviewed.

In Guguletu, especially in the informal settlements it was evident that there were strong links between neighbours. Thus the women would borrow food or money or even trade childcare services. There was also emotional support amongst neighbours and a sense of solidarity brought about by shared experiences of chronic poverty. The women often visited each other to share news or provide comfort.

Pamela socialises with neighbours on a regular basis thus they provide company. Neighbours also often visit with each other providing emotional support and a sense of solidarity. Glenda's church assisted her to bury her son when he was shot as she did not have any money nor did she belong to a burial society. The congregation of the church which Connie attends sometimes provide opportunities to earn money by asking her to do some washing for them. Most of the women belonged to churches in the community but the church did not offer support in the women's struggles to survive. Instead they expected the women to contribute to the resources of the church. Sibongile and Molly receive support from neighbours with childcare. Molly does the same for them when they need to go out. Nozuko borrows money from her neighbours and repays them on grant day. Lindiwe heard about a job from her neighbourhood friend.

They were also access points to jobs. Neighbours are therefore integral in the lives of women in their informal interactions and relationships with one another. Many of the women found neighbourhood links integral to their existence. On a formal level, the neighbourhood is also organized into street and community committees under the auspices of the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO), these more formalised structures also play some role, particularly in relation to collective crises like that generated by the tornado.

Organised communities: The role of SANCO at the time of the tornado

In this section I review the role played by SANCO at the time of and after the tornado. This discussion reveals how women link with community structures to access assistance and support in times of emergency. Pamela for instance, tells of the role that SANCO played in the Barcelona settlement and Minnie provides important insight into the operation of the SANCO as a member of the committee.

Pamela's daughter was born on 21 August 1999, just days before the tornado. She was home with the baby at the time of the storm. The house collapsed and she threw herself over the baby in order to protect her from harm. Both mother and child managed to escape unscathed. Almost everything was destroyed; beds, cupboards and even dishes. Pamela says that the tornado is the worst thing that has ever happened to her as they lost everything when her baby was still small.

Pamela's household was called to a meeting by the SANCO chairman along with all other residents in the Barcelona settlement who were affected. They were immediately all registered as affected households. Later when donations and support was forthcoming she received blankets and food. She was also one of the few who received the R500 given by government to victims of disaster, perhaps because she had a baby a few days before the event. Whereas Pamela was a beneficiary of the services of SANCO, Minnie was integrally involved in operations as one of its core members.

Minnie lived in section J of Barcelona in her boyfriend's house. Their home was severely affected as the roofing material ("zincs") blew all the way to the graveyard

on the other side of the road. The entire back of the house was also blown away with built-in cupboards containing their clothes. At the time of the storm they ran around the settlement and tried to recover their clothes. The television and kitchen cupboards containing utensils were all destroyed. She recalls sadly:

"We were all lost that day... we never saw anything like that before." (personal communication, MM.02/05/2003)

She relates that everyone was disorientated. Minnie was part of the SANCO committee at the time of the tornado, elected at a general meeting that happens every 6 months. Meetings of the SANCO committee are scheduled every two weeks. She served on the committee for a total of 18 months before resigning. She decided to withdraw from the committee as she was making enemies by interrogating issues more than others were comfortable with. She remembers:

"I always asked questions as we were taught in the training...they did not like it. I decided I had enough problems with family, I did not need more from a job I was not even paid to do..."(personal communication, MM.02/05/2003)

She also became frustrated that nobody would allow deep questioning of issues in meetings.

Minnie was one of three members selected to liaise with organisations offering donations. They made the local Catholic Church the centre of operations until it was moved to the Ikwezi hall, opposite each other. The committee identified 128 affected households but they were only given a maximum of 50 food parcels which had to be further subdivided amongst the community. They were also given some rolls of plastic and "asbestos" sheeting to distribute. The local authority later informed SANCO that the area was not part of the official disaster site and therefore would receive no further assistance⁵⁴.

⁵⁴Officials tenants in Manenberg the worst affected area was completely reconstructed by means of a new housing development providing homes to people on separate plots in comparison to the flats in which they lived before the tornado. Legal backyarders were also provided with wendy houses which they were allowed to erect in the backyard of family members. In comparison women in Guguletu who lived in informal dwellings were not given new homes referred to as bungalows. Bungalows were provided to backyarders if they had homeowners who would accept responsibility and ownership of the bungalow. The formal homes in Thambo square directly adjacent to the worst affected area in Manenberg were informed that only limited repairs would be done as these women owned their own homes and did not lease them from the local authority.

The experiences of Pamela as a member of the community benefiting from the work of SANCO and Minnie who was part of the SANCO committee are used to illustrate the operation of SANCO at the time of the emergency. The role they played in protecting community interests was relayed by a council official.

The local authority found the SANCO committee very useful - after the disaster - for making an assessment of damage and need in each area. With these reports of more or less accurate numbers of affected, assistance could be more targeted. There was more community cohesion than in Manenberg and only one access point into the community via SANCO. The community liaison process was easier to handle. (personal communication, PO, 25/03/2003 and BS, 27/03/2003).

SANCO committees were instrumental in assessing damage and those affected and mediating government and other external support. SANCO committees provided a vital structure for the operation of a community network and drew attention to development problems within the community. They also provided some support to the women interviewed.

Conclusion

Most women interviewed had lived their entire lives in informal dwellings with insecure tenure. This was perpetuated by the fact that the jobs they were able to access did not enable them to live beyond basic levels of survival. Most were able to secure only the most labour intensive jobs through their familial and community networks for example cooking and cleaning either in restaurants or as chars, work completed in one day rather than over a long term, or in private homes as domestic workers who worked daily. When some women worked as domestic workers their employers would become an important support base. Many women were innovatively created livelihood opportunities in the 'informal sector' selling commodities like cigarettes, sweets and *schmileys* which were consumed in the area. There were also a number of women who accessed direct income support from the government. These grants decreased their dependence on others and were used to sustain entire families and survive independently.

In order to survive the ravages of poverty, women configured support mechanisms that are intended to facilitate access to housing, tenure and jobs which the women did not manage to achieve as well as provide support to cope with daily emotional and material insecurities. Women's household's most likely consisted of herself, her children and grandchildren. In rare cases the women lived with a spouse, partner or alone. When adult children lived with their mothers they were an extra burden of responsibility. Households frequently consisted of children but men were rare whereas an analysis of kin and *amakhaya* illustrates that family level networks would consist not only of blood relatives but also someone from the same clan or with the same surname and *amakhaya* were place -based associations which were being reproduced in urban areas.

When exploring the value of relationships within these networks, women very rarely cited their husbands or partners as critical sources of support. In actual fact these relationships generates extreme stress as they were often abusive. Therefore most women chose to live independently of men. However other women especially mothers were an important source of material and emotional support. The women often had many siblings who could be called on for support but who often shared the same socio-economic circumstances and were thus unable to assist. In addition to mothers, neighbours were considered the most important for daily survival needs. They assisted with childcare, lent money and offered the solace of friendships. Formal community structures like SANCO in Guguletu, were also instrumental in coordinating the community in times of crisis and mobilizing to highlight development needs.

CHAPTER 5:

Women shaping their own reality

Parallel experiences of poverty

As a moment of crisis, the Manenberg Tornado, has illuminated the vulnerabilities women face living in impoverished circumstances at the time of a sudden shock. In particular this research has focused on how women activate their coping strategies in response to the tornado. In addition, the survival mechanisms employed by those women to manage everyday survival struggles. I have also examined how the women access assets and resources on a longer term basis. The study is based on two case studies consisting of the life experiences of thirty women with equal representation from Manenberg and Guguletu (adjacent peripheral townships in the City of Cape Town). The townships of Manenberg and Guguletu differ partly because the Apartheid policies which classified Manenberg as a Coloured group area and Guguletu as an African settlement area. However, the women from the two case studies have parallel experiences of poverty (characterised by insecurity and marginalisation) within the context of each township. For example they all live in informal dwellings making them peripheral members of each community. The two previous chapters have illustrated the parallel experiences of insecurity, in terms of finances, emotional support, livelihood opportunities and marginalisation in terms of to secure tenure and housing. In the context of these struggles the women make strategic decisions and choices when they configure their support networks, their households, families and communities.

This chapter will explore and compare the choices⁵⁴ and decisions that women make to shape their lives, which form their agency. First, I compare differential responses of the women between and within the communities of Manenberg and Guguletu to the Manenberg Tornado. This demonstrates how they used their support networks as coping mechanisms in times of crisis and identifies the most important support mechanism. Second, I explore the configuration of women's households, families and

⁵⁴ Choices are either freely made or influenced by circumstances

communities in the two townships. This will illustrate the primacy of family in Manenberg and conversely in community links played this role in Guguletu. The process of activating their support networks illustrated a hierarchy of support structures. Third, I elucidate on how reciprocity within these social networks provide access to material, financial and emotional resources they need to survive. These longer term development needs are met by women taking advantage of the information and assets within their support networks. Fourth, I will discuss how norms of reciprocity operate to transform social networks into institutions regulating behaviour and morality. The women are expected to conform to these moral codes if they are to access resources and assets. These codes in turn influence their identity and position within their society. In conclusion, I argue that support is embedded in women's gender roles for example as mothers and wives. The confluence of these dimensions not only influences identity it also characterises the women's agency.

Households, families and community: Coping mechanisms after the tornado

In this section I argue that the women interviewed for my research were dependent on their social networks to cope with the sudden occurrence of the Manenberg Tornado. The affected households immediately drew on assistance and support from their networks: in Manenberg from families and in Guguletu from formal community structures. Many of the women in Manenberg moved their belongings and their family units to the homes of extended family members. In Guguletu the women were called together by their SANCO street or area committees to inform them of procedures for accessing emergency relief.

Family: The main source of emergency support in Manenberg

In most cases the women's siblings living in unaffected areas moved furniture for those affected and accommodated them in their homes. Desiree sent her husband to her siblings who live in the nearby neighbourhood of Heideveld to help remove their furniture from the damaged buildings. For a few weeks after the tornado they lived with her sister. The women in Manenberg depended on their extended family for support. Bronwyn went to live with her cousin and Jasmina's uncle came all the way from England to ensure that they were well.

Only those without strong family bonds were left destitute and dependant on state interventions. Charlene reported that although her mother's cousin offered to keep their furniture, they did not offer them a place to stay. Charlene and her family had to live in a temporary shelter organised by the state. Shareen also had to resort to living at the school as she did not have good relationships with her siblings. Most of the women in Manenberg could depend on their families for the safekeeping of their possessions, a place to stay and food to eat. Those who did not have this support mechanism, relied on the state as illustrated in chapter three. In contrast, another level of support network was more primary than family in Guguletu.

Dependence on the formal community structure of SANCO in Guguletu

Immediately after the tornado, SANCO, the formal community structure in Guguletu was activated. Pamela recalled that everyone affected in the Barcelona community was called to a meeting by the committee chairperson. The committee was instrumental in making assessments of those affected by the tornado. SANCO was an important intermediary, mediating state relief operations on behalf of those affected in the community. They designated persons who would liaise with state relief operations. Minnie was one of the committee members who received and apportioned donations on behalf of the affected community members. Formal community structures therefore play a powerful intermediary role between community members and the state and or other external agencies. This also means that these formal community structures are mandated to represent the interests of the community as they see fit.

After a crisis like the tornado these structures may act as gatekeepers in the community making it difficult to support the affected population. A local authority official recalled that the involvement of SANCO enabled that the relief operation to be targeted. However, SANCO was not very successful in lobbying the state to, for example, recognise that the Barcelona area was also affected by the tornado. This was not due to a lack of determination by SANCO but rather an inadequate Council agenda. The women in Guguletu trusted that formal community structures like their area-based SANCO committees worked in their best interest. They depended on these committees to mediate state interventions as demonstrated in chapter four.

Strong family bonds in Manenberg and formal community structures such as SANCO, in Guguletu, were the most important sources of support in surviving the effects of the tornado. Further investigation into the way women configure their support networks provides insight into the reasons why family is the primary support base in Manenberg compared to the primacy of community structures for the women in Guguletu⁵⁵.

The primacy of family in Manenberg and community in Guguletu

In this section, I argue that women's choices to construct their social networks are informed particularly by the nature of social relationships on household, family and community levels. These decisions are also based upon dependency on others and an understanding of what the most reliable sources of support are. Thus households, family and community are actively configured into support networks.

Comparing household configuration in Manenberg and Guguletu

Ross (1996) found that impoverished residents in 'Die Bos' created householding relationships that were not stable but flexible. The boundaries of which were influenced by situational necessity to meet short-term goals, referred to as 'diffused domesticity'.

The configuration of households in Manenberg and Guguletu provides insight into the strategic choices and decisions that the women make when shaping their support networks. In Manenberg women predominantly chose to form households with parents or parents-in-law by living in backyards with their family unit, including their children and spouses. However, this household configuration changed to include extended family such as cousins, aunts and uncles. Sarah lived with her extended family in a household that was headed by her aunt. Households may also stretch across townships. Kaelyn's brother lived in Mitchell's Plain and provided financial resources earned from his productive activities. He also benefited from the reproductive activities that were conducted mostly at his mother's home in

⁵⁵ Community structures in Coloured townships have always been problematic due to fragmented politics within communities.

Manenberg. Kaelyn's household illustrates how household members come together to pool resources and divide labour for the benefit of all household members regardless whether they live in the same house. Kaelyn's household in particular highlights that households are not bounded units, thus substantiating Ross's (1996) findings of 'diffused domesticity'.

On the other hand, the women in Guguletu formed households primarily with their children and grandchildren, these did not necessarily include men⁵⁶. Women were not afraid to live independently from men, a long history of female-headed households, has made this an acceptable household configuration (Huggins 1989). Women are solely dependent on men, meaning that women would separate from their spouses if they did not find the relationships beneficial or if they were abusive. Nozuko escaped from her abusive husband to live with her sister in Cape Town. Using her own resources Minnie set up a home, on her own, when she separated from her boyfriend with whom she initially lived. Households were mostly not self sufficient units, women drew on the support of others in the community.

I found in Guguletu as illustrated in chapter four, that neighbours were interdependent sharing resources such as food and childcare responsibilities therefore these links played a vital role in sustaining householding responsibilities. Sibongile traded childcare duties with her neighbours, showing that householding relationships extended beyond the household and included other members of the immediate community. Women in Guguletu do not remain in relationships because they are financially dependent on men. They are more interested in whether men add value to their lives and if this is not the case they know they will be able to survive independently.

In both townships, households primarily include the women's children and sometimes grandchildren. The presence of partners and spouses is central to households in Manenberg whereas men are not always essential to the households in Guguletu. Men in Guguletu play a role in the lives of the women as fathers for children or they are

⁵⁶ The exceptions to this were Nokhukhanya who lived with her husband and noted that he was an important source of support. This situation was rare amongst the women interviewed. In other cases women live alone, for example, Iris who lived in a bungalow alone on her cousin's property.

involved in kick-starting businesses or setting up homes. However, should these relationships not be sustainable, women are not afraid to live alone. Men in Manenberg are central to households whatever the nature or character of the relationship with the woman in the household. Women choose to endure destructive relationships with men. Households in Manenberg, not Guguletu, frequently included either the women's parents or parents-in-law who are an important part of the household due to their supportive role in the lives of the women. Ross's concept of 'diffused domesticity' was more applicable to Guguletu than Manenberg. In Guguletu women shared householding responsibilities with neighbours whereas in Manenberg, householding responsibilities were shared only within the household which operated as self sufficient structures. More insights about social relationships that women foster can be gleaned from investigating the configuration of family and community.

Defining family and kinship links

The configuration of family in Manenberg is determined and limited to blood ties. Women's conception of extended family in Manenberg was very narrowly defined by bloodlines including only their parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, nieces, nephews, aunts and uncles. They do not include any other extended family members outside of these linear family relationships extending to only one generation, for example aunts, nieces, cousins or grandparents. The configuration of family in Manenberg is influenced by the strong family bonds which are cemented by living together or in close proximity to each other even after children have reached adulthood as is illustrated in chapter three.

Comparatively, the women in Guguletu have more relatives thus extending the concept of family to kin as highlighted in chapter four. The kin of the women in Guguletu would include family ie. those sharing blood ties as well as persons who share the same surnames and clan⁵⁷ names. Another important link was based on a strong place-based association amongst those who originated from the same village in the Eastern Cape before moving to urban areas. These were referred to as *amakhaya* links and were just as strong and reliable as kinship links. In Guguletu the extended

⁵⁷ Clans are family members that share a common bloodline as well as a place of origin.

familial network is due to households stretching as a result of men working in cities; they were forced to leave their families in rural areas due to the laws that controlled access of Africans into the city (Parnell and Mabin 1995: 45).

The concept of family amongst the women in Guguletu extends beyond the limitation of blood ties, which forms the basis of the family concept in Manenberg. In Guguletu, family includes *amakhaya* and kinship associations including persons who share blood ties, a clan name, or a surname. Family structures affected the shape of communities in the two townships albeit different degrees.

The shaping of communities

In Manenberg, there were several reasons why family was the most important factor shaping the community. First; this was because the women married men in their own communities, interlinking families within the community. Nicole married a man from the community whom she met at the local sports ground. Second; women are reluctant to move far from the familiarity of the place of birth. Collette stayed close to her mother on the property of her mother-in-law. Third; women wished to avoid the risks of jeopardizing the close relationships with parents and siblings by moving to housing developments in distant townships. Desiree had the opportunity to move to a formal house in Mitchell's Plain but did not want to move far from Heideveld where the rest of her family lived. This was described in chapter three. In comparison, kinship was only one of the factors that influenced the shape of the community in Guguletu.

In Guguletu kinship and *amakhaya* links were used to access tenure in a township, for example, Nonto asked for the help of her brother (from the same clan) to obtain building materials for her home. Her other brother (with the same surname) mediated with the SANCO for access to tenure in Barcelona. Therefore to some extent family was a factor that influenced the shape of the community however there were other issues that also played an important role in shaping the community. Nonto's experiences highlight that tenure within informal settlements needed to be negotiated with existing formal community structures like SANCO committees that decided who would be permitted to reside in the community (especially in informal settlement areas).

Affinal relationships with friends and neighbours in the community are an important source of support due to the impoverished conditions in which women live. Sibongile and her neighbours often exchange childcare assistance when some women need to go out and work. The women configure their support networks with neighbours in the community in order to know whom they can depend on in times of need.

Due to the centrality of family to the lives of the women in Manenberg, communities are configured on the basis of family ties. However, in Guguletu kinship links are also very important shaping communities. Kinship links facilitate access to the community by mediating with the formal community structures that determine access to the community.

Insights from the configuration of social networks

Whereas Ross (1996) found that African families do not have kinship links in urban areas that are as vibrant as in the rural areas, my research in Guguletu found that *amakhaya* links were replicated and reconstructed in urban areas. Access to communities through *amakhaya* links and close relationships amongst neighbours reproduced these relationships as urban *amakhaya* links.

My research also adds an understanding of the dynamics of family relationships in Manenberg which are close bonds entrenched by residing in close proximity to each other. In addition the women choose to marry men in their own communities meaning that an increasing amount of families are linked to each other by marriage within a particular community.

The women in each community thus make strategic decisions about which relationships they foster when configuring their social networks. This demonstrates that the women's agency is relational. These social networks also act as support mechanisms that provide access to material, emotional and financial resources that the women require for survival.

Networks that link women to resources and assets

Ross (1996) found networks are useful especially to those living in impoverished conditions as they may link individuals into longer term support. Woolcock (1998) finds that networks either create opportunities or constrain the individuals that form part of it. In this section I argue that household, family and community networks either facilitated or constrained access to assets such as a space and place to live as well as financial, emotional and material resources for the women in Manenberg and Guguletu.

Household, family and community are important support networks for the women interviewed in Manenberg and Guguletu. They link the women to material resources and assets needed to survive within the context of few interventions and support from the state. In Manenberg, family as the primary network provides a home and a place to stay for women who live in their parents' backyards. Family is also the key link to jobs, mainly in the manufacturing sector (specifically the clothing industry). Many women feel that community links are redundant because families are close-knit structures that provided access to assets and resources ranging from material to emotional.

Conversely, the women in Guguletu draw on kinship and *amakhaya* links to mediate with community structures to access tenure especially in informal settlements. Kinship and *amakhaya* links provided access to material resources (building materials for homes) and financial resources (links to moneylenders or jobs). Moreover, the informal links within the community amongst neighbours were integral sources of emotional, financial, childcare and food support necessary for daily survival.

Tenure security: Vetting by amakhaya and kin or hosted by parents

For the women in Manenberg their parents or parents-in-law have been the most important link to accessing tenure. Women in most cases⁵⁸ reside in backyard dwellings on their property. On the other hand, tenure for the women in Guguletu, if

⁵⁸ The only exception to this (in the sample) is Sarah who resided on the property of her aunt.

they lived in the informal settlement of Barcelona would have to be vetted and mediated by their kinship or *amakhaya* links with the SANCO area committee. Nonto utilised her kinship links to access a space to live in the Barcelona informal settlement. In addition to tenure, access to a home was also mediated by social networks.

Access to homes: state dependence versus self sufficiency

The post-tornado housing development constructed in Manenberg was a rare state initiated housing intervention.⁵⁹ The state provided housing (albeit informal dwellings) for the legal backyarders in Manenberg⁶⁰. Thus most of the women interviewed secured their wendy houses from the local authority. In the other instances women became impatient for state interventions like Collette's household who purchased their own wendy house with resources received from her mother-in-law.

In contrast, in Guguletu only some of the women residing on the property of family members who live in formal brick housing were able to access the state informal dwellings or bungalows. For instance Iris who lived in the backyard of her cousins, received a bungalow from the state because council decided to only provide bungalows that could be erected in the backyard of someone else's property. Other women in the sample living in their self-made informal dwellings especially in informal settlements were not deemed eligible for receiving homes from the state. The Barcelona community was, deemed by the local authority, as not affected by the tornado. These women had to reconstruct homes with the meager R500 emergency assistance provided by the government. The other alternative was to draw on their resources or that of their networks, for instance Minnie whose boyfriend provided her with the capital to reconstruct her home. Even though Thambo Square was designated

⁵⁹ Up to then the strategy for housing provision had been through housing subsidies and private housing projects.

⁶⁰ Although community lobbying may have provided impetus to the intervention, it primarily was a spin off of an urban regeneration initiative that had been conceptualized before the occurrence of the tornado. However, in the sample some members were not deemed eligible like Vanette's family unit as they were considered subtenants and not legal backyarders – a beauracatic detail that resulted in only some households affected by the tornado eligible for benefiting from state support.

by the state as being an affected community, women there were not given dwellings.⁶¹ Those having formal houses which were affected in Thambo Village were only eligible for inadequate repairs to their homes. Nomzi was unable to return to her house as the local authority only fixed the roofs and ceilings but not doors and windows which required repair to restore the homes to a habitable condition⁶².

The women living in informal dwellings in Manenberg represent 8% of the population whereas the women living in informal dwellings in Guguletu represent nearly 25% of the community. However, the degree of marginalisation from access to formal housing is worse in Guguletu due to some informal dwellings being situated in informal settlements on under-serviced sites. Most women in Guguletu report living in informal settlements for decades (even their entire lives) without accessing housing opportunities. For example, Glenda is saddened by the fact that she has lived all her life in the city without being able to move to a formal house. In addition to tenure and home, networks also link the women to jobs.

Limited formal employment options: The need to be creative

In Manenberg, family, partners and friends in the community were the primary links to jobs. Many of the women are currently employed or have been employed in the manufacturing sector (more specifically the clothing trade). Most women reported vouched for by family members, this concurs with Salo's findings that women are "ingebriing" (inducted into) the sector by family links (2004). The few women who worked outside the manufacturing sector for example in the retail sector also report using friends in the community or family links to access these job opportunities. Different social networks link women to jobs in Guguletu.

⁶¹ The Guguletu community referred to the council informal dwelling as bungalows and the women in Manenberg called wendy houses.

⁶² In addition to being a survival strategy, living in informal settlements may also be a strategic choice the women make in order to access housing. Nomzi in the Guguletu case study is of the opinion that some of this is strategic squatting to increase eligibility for state housing opportunities.⁶² There are however current housing projects in the City of Cape Town such as the N2 Gateway project that targets informal settlements that may prove Nomzi right – one may need to reside in an informal settlement to access a house as you are considered most needy or poor by the state. By living in an informal settlement one is supposed to be given preferential access to formal housing without being added to a long waiting list.

In comparison, the women in Guguletu were not dependent their family networks link them to jobs. Neighbours in the community were the main resource for jobs opportunities. However, they occupied low level jobs that provided minimal income used only to survive and could not substantially improve living conditions. Therefore the women were only able to secure the most labour intensive jobs like cooking and cleaning in restaurants and as domestic workers.

Jobs could also be a means to develop support networks outside of the community in which the women reside. Women in Manenberg primarily worked with family members and would not see the need for constructing other support networks through these jobs considering that the social networks in Manenberg were self sufficient. Conversely, in Guguletu especially the women that worked as domestic workers would be able to draw on the support of their employer in times of crisis (like Sibongile at the time of the funerals for her children) or to access support to improve living conditions (like Nomzi's ability to draw on her employer to finish and furnish her house).

There was a tension in this case between employers who assist the women to access resources on the one hand but control the working context sometimes leading to exploitation. These opportunities for earning an income as well as access material resources is highly valued and the women are not eager to jeopardise their positions. There is a certain type of bondage involved where the employer may expect or perceived to expect that the women would do more than what she is employed for. The women may have to work for other households as a favour or part of the obligation of maintaining a good relationship with the primary employer. Sibongile, worked for several family units, but was not allowed sufficient time to attend her mother's funeral and was subsequently fired after more than two decades of working for these families. Working as a domestic worker was no longer a viable formal employment option for her.

In Guguletu, low level employment as domestic work does not guarantee that women are able to elevate themselves and their households above the basic survival levels. As domestic workers the women earn meager salaries and therefore not many of the younger women are attracted to pursue this as a feasible livelihood option. In the

absence of viable employment, women in Guguletu have initiated a range of income-generating opportunities. Violet collects recyclable cardboard and plastics to add to her pool of finances. Nozuko knits jerseys and sells *schmileys* and Lindiwe sells beer. The women are satisfied that they are able to survive from the money they generate from these enterprises. On the other hand, only one woman in Manenberg left the manufacturing industry because she thought that earning her own income would be easier. She sells chicken and other commodities from home but is disheartened by the long hours and wants to return to formal employment. In Guguletu, income from informal economic activities was minimal sometimes necessitating other livelihood strategies.

To supplement income from economic activities in the formal and informal sectors, some women in Guguletu also access state income support like the State Old Aged Pension, Disability and Child Support Grants. Women are aware of these grants and how to access them from neighbours and friends who have applied for these grants. The grants are instrumental in the survival of whole families. The Child Support Grant is received by Nonto's household was the only source of income for the entire household, it was mainly used to purchase food. Grants also decrease women's dependence on their familial social network for survival. Nozuko was able to purchase her own building materials to erect a home in her sister's backyard instead of living in her house.

Livelihood insecurity is perpetuated in Manenberg due to the declining manufacturing sector and the family network that constrains the women from accessing different employment opportunities. As families are the main link to employment, women's options are limited. Many family members work in one factory, therefore if the company is liquidated, many family units can be crippled by the lack of financial resources. Sarah and three of her aunts (who all form part of one household) worked at the same factory and were severely affected by the liquidation of the factory where they were all employed.

Simmel 1971 in Woolcock's (1998) notes that access to resources depends on the diversity of ones network links. The experience of the women in Manenberg resounds with this theory. The almost exclusive use of family to access resources and assets

resulted in limited job opportunities. However, the Manenberg case study illustrated that family also facilitates access to other requirements such as tenure and housing which means that the network is almost self-sufficient making up for limited opportunities with the sharing of resources. Whereas the domestic workers in Guguletu may have more integrated networks where the extent of reciprocity was different and these networks did not necessarily link women to state initiatives. This role was once again performed by local formal structures within community networks. This discussion highlights that women are aware of which relationships will be useful to access different resources. This provides further evidence that women's agency is relational and founded on reciprocity. The ability to depend on a certain relationship for support is bound up in the obligation to return the support when it is required. This obligation can be more complex than a simple reciprocity in kind, an exchange of the same resource provided.

Institutions determining norms of behaviour and a moral code

Ross (1996) demonstrated with her research in 'Die Bos' that individuals struggling to survive, understood the value of social relationships as well as the obligations attached to becoming part of social networks. Social networks operate on a basic principle of reciprocity that encourages the sharing of assets especially in times of need. Pyle (1992) found that reciprocity can also mean that ownerships over one's own assets are jeopardised by obligations to share with others. Therefore people make strategic decisions relating to the relationships where they exercise their rights for support and also accept the obligation for reciprocity. The type of reciprocity depends on the nature of the relationships. Ross (1995) found that family networks bore the greatest obligation to reciprocate as the obligation to assist family members was greater than to any other network referred to as 'moral reciprocity'.

In this section I argue that reciprocity may not only extend to sharing of material resources but also extend to an acceptance of a moral code. Social formations are transformed into institutions that enforce rules for social interaction and determine normative behaviour of its members. The dictates of this moral code influences what would be considered acceptable behaviour in the family or community.

In order to benefit from reciprocity within a social network the women have to adhere and conform to norms of behaviour or moral codes dictated by their primary support networks. The moral code imposed by the family of the women in Manenberg ensures that they conform to conceptions of 'respectability'. Deviations from this code result in penalties that may include marginalisation or ostracism. In the same way, formal community structures in Guguletu, have the power to regulate access to the community and mediate with the state on behalf of community members as well as determining the normative operation of this formal structure. Respectability extends to the fact that new community members need to be vetted by existing residents. Therefore respectability is a cornerstone of morality in both communities.

The ethics of respectability in Manenberg

Respectability in Manenberg relates to accessing material resources and opportunities such as housing, tenure and jobs. It translates into the type of livelihood strategies and house that is acceptable in the community. The women who did not receive state informal dwellings bought their own dwellings which were the same as the state ones. This indicates conforming to a norm within this area of what a respectable informal home should look like. All these structures were erected in the backyards of family members, indicating that respectable tenure was implicit in this arrangement. With regard to livelihood strategies, work in the manufacturing sector was deemed respectable demonstrated by the women being inducted into their jobs by family members. However, certain livelihood options such as domestic work in the formal sector would translate into an acknowledgement of poverty that is believed to apply only to persons that were classified African. The rationale is that women should draw on their families rather than resort to these 'extreme' measures to survive. Only Nasreen who had been shunned by her mother would accept a cleaning job.

When women in Manenberg fail to comply with the moral code of their family they can depend on 'moral reciprocity.' Shareen has been ostracised by her family for drinking alcohol and engaging in relationships with men who are not Muslim. However, Shareen's family allowed her to stay with them when she was ill after the tornado and linked her to a job when she was destitute. Thus families will shun the

person who has contravened the moral code but will not abandon them when there is a crisis.

In my research, I found that sustained reciprocity within families was contingent on conforming to the morality embedded in this primary social support network. The institution of family especially in the case of Manenberg determined norms of behaviour, a moral code that required adherence if one were to draw on family links for support. In Guguletu the women adhered to the dictates of the formal structure of SANCO.

Traditions of community structures regulating normative behaviour in Guguletu

In Guguletu respectability is operationalised by being vetted with formal community structures. The role of SANCO, as a formal community structure, is not only evident in its ability to mobilise the community when they are in crisis and mediate on behalf of the community with external agencies it also regulates the who would be permitted to form part of the settlement.

SANCO would need to vet whether external agencies were deemed acceptable for community members to engage with. This was evident when I attempted to enter the community to conduct research without being accompanied by a committee member or being vetted by the committee. The women who I approached would not talk to me in fact they were fearful of any type of interaction and urged me to talk to the 'committee'. Once I used the appropriate method of explaining the intent of my research to a recognised community leader and she decided that it would not be detrimental to the community, I was allowed to speak with community members. The way the community members knew that I had been vetted is that I was accompanied by a SANCO leader in their area. The formal structures therefore conferred respectability on external agents or agencies.

SANCO committees also have their own way of regulating normative behaviour within their structures by means of protocols and processes that have been developed over time and cemented into the tradition of the organisation. Executive members of SANCO area or street committees become aware of these protocols as they perform

the tasks delegated to them by the committee. When Minnie was appointed as liaison for the Barcelona community to receive and apportion donations, she started question the rationale adopted by SANCO when making decisions about the way things needed to be divided. She was met with stern reprimands to perform only her duty and not question the decisions taken. Even within the executive committee she noted there are individuals whose opinions are respected and acted on more than others. She decided to quit her active role in the SANCO executive committee as she was gradually being marginalized and victimised for questioning decisions.

Respectability was also a crucial factor when seeking to form part of a settlement – this related to tenure. Women who wished to live in a settlement would need their kin or *amakhaya*, who were already respectable residents of the settlement, to mediate and negotiate with the SANCO committee on their behalf. Therefore a woman was respectable if she had *amakhaya* or kin who were willing to intercede with the committee on her behalf.

Once a woman was accepted in a community daily acceptable behaviour was enforced by neighbours. Women were judged to be good neighbours if they were willing to share resources such as trading childcare services or assisting with food or income support of other households. Respectability was also linked to the women refraining from imbibing in alcohol. When I remarked to the community leader who sat in on interviews that Violet really seemed to be struggling to survive even though she had a boyfriend who was working, the community leader remarked that Violet was her own worst enemy as she was using her scarce resources to buy alcohol.

Therefore respectability being central to the moral codes of Manenberg and Guguletu but the criteria and enforcing of this morality differed between the communities. In Manenberg respectability related to women living in a certain type of informal dwelling erected in family members backyards as well as working in jobs that were sanctioned by family members. Women in this township could not live in makeshift informal dwellings, live in informal settlements nor work as domestic workers. In Guguletu, respectability related to being vetted by formal structures (SANCO) or informal associations (like neighbours) within communities. Respectability was earned by following the appropriate procedures in the communities, having

recognised links in the community and behaving in a neighbourly fashion and not squandering scarce resources. Enforcing respectability was also linked to other processes within relationships and social formations for example the processes that shaped gender identity and position.

Gender roles that influence identity and position

The way in which women in Manenberg and Guguletu engage in the relationships within their social formations related to their interpretation and negotiation of their gender roles. It also dependent on how they conformed to norms of behaviour and morality. In addition these gendered roles will affect their experiences of reality as it will influence their identity and power (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay 1999:16-18). Investigating how the women in Manenberg and Guguletu engaged in these roles as well as normative moral behaviour provides insight into their agency as well as how gender identities are enforced. I do this by examining the gender roles of women wives/partners and mothers. In this section I argue that the roles and responsibilities of the women interviewed shape their identity and position in their respective communities. This relates to differential agency between and within communities.

Abusive relationships with husbands or partners

In both Manenberg and Guguletu women maintain intimate relationships that have strategic value. Spouses in Manenberg would provide financial support or security for instance, Veronique whose husband was the sole breadwinner. They would also facilitate access to jobs for example, Jasmina whose husband informed her of a job opportunity at his place of employment. Collette resides on the property of her husband's mother therefore indirectly he provided access to tenure and a home. Partners in Guguletu facilitated access to livelihoods, Minnie's boyfriend provided start up capital for her business. They also facilitated access to housing and tenure for example, Pamela's boyfriend negotiated with SANCO to stay in Barcelona and used his income to construct a home for them.

Household relationships for women in Manenberg and Guguletu were more often causes of stress than beneficial for survival. In Manenberg, spouses and partners were

the primary source of financial support but, the pervasiveness of abuse in these relationships meant that a woman's position is one of inferiority. This was evidenced by docile and subservient behavior. Veronique believes she controls the expenditure but asks her husbands permission to spend money on herself. Jasmina refuses to participate in budgeting and paying the bills. Conversely in Guguletu the women chose to divorce from abusive husbands and take on the responsibility of living independently even as heads of households. Nozuko, who escaped from an abusive husband in the Eastern Cape to live with her sister in Cape Town so that she could give birth to her child safely. Leona stayed married to her abusive husband until he took advantage of her weakened state while recovering from an accident to threaten and intimidate her physically. After this incident she decided to divorce him. However, most women headed their own households instead of enduring abusive relationships.

Marriage in the Manenberg community is not so much a choice that young women make for themselves as a consequence of the normative behaviour within families. Women often marry early in their twenties and very often stay with their husband's family who take on more responsibility for the new family unit after they are married as the couple rarely has enough resources to make their own way. Many women for example Collette, Veronique, Nicole, Nasreen lived with the families of their spouses immediately after they married. The relationships with their mothers-in-law are not very easy as living in close proximity means that women are constantly monitored for their worth. It is the perfect opportunity for mothers-in-law to induct the new brides into the preferences of their sons and the normative behaviour within the new family that she has joined. Collette admits that living with her mother-in-law is the biggest mistake she has made as she is not made to feel welcome and comfortable. New brides therefore have very little power within their new families and their gender identity is enforced by their mothers-in-law.

On the other hand, the women in Guguletu have a different experience of being a new bride especially if they were married in the Eastern Cape – the base of African families. The most important function of a new bride is to bear children. Failure to do so resulted in having to take on the role of herding cattle or working in the fields – labour intensive duties normally assigned to young unmarried men. Nozuko recalls

that when she did not conceive after the first year of marriage that she was sent to the fields and had to work long hours doing very hard work. In addition, the inability to conceive caused much distress as the women internalised their failure to fulfill expectations. Nokhukhanya recalls how her husband's family, especially the men in the family, put pressure on her when she did not conceive. She even considered leaving her husband to save him from embarrassment but fortunately her husband and mother-in-law did not put the same pressure on her. The position of new brides is very low with traditions, patriarchy and the women's husband and mother-in-law influencing the experiences of the women in their roles as wives.

In Manenberg and Guguletu relationships with men were fostered and maintained for their strategic value but women in Guguletu were not afraid of living independently of men especially in urban areas. In Manenberg, the women would endure physical and emotional abuse from husbands as it is considered more respectable to be a married woman. Women in Guguletu would separate from abusive partners or spouses. In Guguletu and Manenberg young women who decide to marry have very little power and their behaviour and gender role of being wives are enforced by cultural traditions and mothers-in-law. Investigating the gender role of motherhood also provides significant insights.

The burden of motherhood when living in poverty

Most women interviewed in Manenberg were married, thus a child mostly lived with both parents when they were growing up. However, in the majority of relationships the inequity of responsibilities will mean that children are reared far more actively by their mothers than their fathers. Jasmina, Veronique and Nicole were all housewives and therefore would be more available to their children however fathers are portrayed as the providers. Motherhood can be very stressful with some women feeling very anxious when her husband is unable to provide for all the needs of the children. During dire times, when there is no money for food, Nasreen has even thought about poisoning her children and committing suicide because she is overwhelmed by not being able to cater to their needs. Only the fact that her husband works so hard in order for the family to survive has inhibited her from following through on these thoughts.

Conversely, amongst the women in Guguletu it was not unusual to choose to raise their children on their own without the assistance of the fathers. Nonto opted to look after her own child without involving the father of the child as she found out that he was married. Later in their lives, the women in Guguletu would have to care for adult children and grandchildren because they were unable to find a place to stay or jobs and therefore survive independently. Glenda still cares for several of her children and grandchildren even though she is very ill and Sibongile who is caring for her daughter, who is dying from AIDS, and the grandchildren from her other daughters who have already died of AIDS.

On the other hand, in Manenberg the women would expect to increase their household finances particularly through boy children. Shareen decided to take her eldest son out of school so that he could work to earn supplementary income for their household. Bronwyn pins her hopes of a better life on her eldest son who she believes will seek formal employment to improve the financial resources of their household and perhaps freeing her from the abusive relationship she currently engages in to access income.

Motherhood is a role that all women take very seriously and the responsibility creates much strain in impoverished circumstances. Women in Manenberg would refrain from working to care for their children whereas mothers in Guguletu drew very strategically upon their networks in order to work as they could most often not depend on the children's fathers for support.

Conclusion

In my research I have demonstrated how the differential responses to the Manenberg Tornado have uncovered the women's vulnerability and more importantly the strategies they use to cope with a crisis, overcome daily survival challenges and access longer term material, emotional and financial assets and resources.

First, I argued that family (in Manenberg) and community (in Guguletu) were central coping mechanisms that helped women have a place to sleep and eat as well as secure their belongings after the tornado. Women deliberately configure these social networks to provide support in crisis and to mediate access to adequate housing,

secure tenure and sustainable sources of income. Family in Manenberg, facilitated access to housing (albeit wendy houses in the backyard), relatively secure tenure on a family plot and linked women to jobs primarily in the clothing manufacturing industry. In contrast, community structures such as SANCO in Guguletu provided access to tenure in informal settlements where they regulated access, protected community members from evictions by local authorities. *Amakhaya* or kin living in the same community would assist the women to procure building materials and help build houses. Neighbours provided access to income by linking women to cleaning jobs, raising awareness about state grants as well as encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives within the community. The primary social networks in both communities were however, unable to link women to opportunities that enabled them to escape in impoverished conditions they lived in.

Second, I argued that women invested in strategic relationships that shaped the configuration of their households, families and communities in order to access the support they required to survive. I demonstrated that on household level women in Manenberg endured abusive relationships with spouses because they provided financial support or security. Parents or parents-in-law were also instrumental as they allowed women to live in a wendy house in their backyard and would even sometimes help the women purchase their wendy house. Conversely, in Guguletu, women's households were centred on their children and/or grandchildren. In order to provide for their children women divided householding responsibilities with neighbours such as sharing food or childcare duties. At the family level women in Manenberg considered blood relatives to be their family and therefore would ask for money, food, access to jobs and a place to stay from for example aunts, cousins or siblings. In comparison, women in Guguletu have a broader base of who they consider to be their relatives for example *amakhaya* included everyone that originated in the same rural village in the Eastern Cape and kin includes blood ties (family), persons sharing a clan name and surname. *Amakhaya* and kinship links were used to vet women with the SANCO committee to access tenure, moneylender to access finances and buy materials to construct a home. On community level the women in Manenberg linked with friends from church to provide information about jobs but did not need extensive community links when family provided sufficient support. In contrast the women in

Guguletu depended on formal structures such as SANCO to mediate with the local authority on their behalf to improve their living conditions.

Third, I argue that sustained support and reciprocity is predicated upon respectability which is the cornerstone of morality in both communities. In Manenberg respectability is policed by senior women in the community who judge how women fulfill their gender roles for instance as mothers and wives. Conversely in Guguletu respectability is related to respect of formal structures such as SANCO and neighbourliness or *ubuntu*. By conforming to these moral codes women cement or exacerbate existing power imbalances within their households, families and communities. Therefore women's agency is demonstrated in the ways she interprets normative behaviour and negotiates her gender identity making tradeoffs on her position in order to survive.

This dissertation provided insight into the agency of thirty women living in the adjacent Cape Town townships of Manenberg and Guguletu. They have parallel experiences of poverty highlighted by their marginalisation from adequate housing, secure tenure and sustainable sources of income. In order to overcome living in impoverished conditions they configure strategic relationships within households, families and communities which act as their social support networks. However, the support is conditional and depends on how the women conform to norms of respectability in their roles as mothers, daughters and wives and their deference to community structures and protocols. Therefore women assume subordinate positions in their households, families and communities to enable them to fulfill their aspirations to own a brick house with secure tenure and have enough income to provide for themselves and their children.

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Appendix A:

Household interview: Semi structured, open-ended questionnaire

Demographics:

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Address:

Household:

Who is part of this household? (age, sex, relationship with main house)

Why did you form this household? (family or other relationship basis)

Tenure:

- Where did you live before? (places, types of dwelling, services – from birth to present) [History of housing and tenure]
- Description of current abode (Drawing):
- When and why did you move here? (date and reason)
- How did you obtain your site and dwelling? (relationship with homeowner, permission from authority)
- Which services do you receive?

Livelihoods:

- Highest formal qualification attained
- Other courses?
- Present employment or source of income? If not formally employed, what are your responsibilities in the household?
- Previous employment (History of employment) – Employment period and date, reason for leaving, employer and location, job title and responsibilities, source of job

- According to your skills and past experience, what jobs do you think you can do? Are there any opportunities for you to be employed? What is stopping you from going after that job?
- Who earns money in the house and who decides how it is spent? (power relationship, monetized society)
- What is your income and expenses?

Social networks:

- Do you have family and / or friends here? (in the place of residence)
- Do you help each other? How do you help each other? Who would you call on if you had a financial, physical, health, relationship, job crisis? (Reciprocity) (Draw a spider's web)
- Do you belong to an organisation and how does that help in times of need?

▪ **Adversity:**

- How were you affected by the tornado? (impact, losses)
- Who helped you and did they do? (for the tornado)
- What, in your life, have you considered to be a crisis? Why? How did you cope? What did you cope? What did you do to get over it? (Historical perspective throughout your lifetime)
- Were you able to fully recover from the crisis? What mechanisms or people did you use to recover?

Appendix B:

Table 6: Tenure and housing table: Women interviewed in Manenberg

Name and age	Place and conditions at birth	Places moved to	Reason for moving	Access to tenure and housing	Type of dwelling
Abeda (34)	Lansdowne (parents)	1. Manenberg 2. Manenberg 3. Phoenix site 4. Manenberg	1. unclear 2. Tornado 3. Tornado 4. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Rented home 3. City council 4. Mother	1. Flat 2. unclear 3. Wendy house 4. Wendy house
Bronwyn (38)	Kewtown (with parents in uncle's home)	1. Manenberg 2. Manenberg 3. Manenberg 4. Phoenix site 5. Manenberg	1. Increase in family size 2. Increase in family size 3. Got married 4. Tornado 5. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Parents 3. Parents' property with husband) 4. City council 5. Boyfriend on parents' property	1. unclear 2. unclear 3. flat 4. Wendy house 5. Wendy house
Charlene (24)	Manenberg (with parents in grandparents' council house)	1. Manenberg 2. Phoenix site 3. Manenberg	1. Own family home 2. Tornado 3. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. City council 3. Mother	1. Flat 2. Wendy house 3. Wendy house
Charise (25)	Manenberg (with maternal grandmother)	1. Manenberg 2. unclear 3. Manenberg	1. Live with mother 2. Tornado 3. Resettlement after tornado	1. Aunt 2. Mother 3. Mother	1. Wendy house 2. Unclear 3. Wendy house
Collette (24)	Manenberg (with mother in semi- detached cottage)	1. Manenberg 2. unclear 3. Manenberg	1. Got married 2. Tornado 3. Resettlement after tornado	1. Mother in law's property with husband 2. city council 3. Mother in Law	1. Wendy house 2. unclear 3. Wendy house
Desiree (34)	Heideveld (parents)	1. Manenberg 2. Heideveld 3. Ganubie site 4. Manenberg	1. Got married 2. Tornado 3. Tornado 4. Resettlement after tornado	1. unclear ¹ 2. Sister 3. City council 4. Mother-in-law	1. unclear 2. unclear 3. Container 4. Wendy house
Jasmina (26)	Manenberg (with grandparents in flat)	1. Surrey estate 2. unclear 3. Manenberg	1. Got married 2. Tornado 3. Resettlement after tornado	1. Rented home with husband 2. City council 3. Parents' -in-law	1. Brick annex to house 2. unclear 3. Wendy house

¹ 'unclear' denotes information that did not come out clearly in the flow of the interview

Name and age	Place and conditions at birth	Places moved to	Reason for moving	Access to tenure and housing	Type of dwelling
Juny (36)	Wynberg (with parents in grandparents' home)	1. Manenberg 2. Manenberg 3. Strandfontein 4. unclear 5. Heideveld 6. Phoenix site 7. Manenberg	1. Own family home 2. Got married 3. Tornado 4. Tornado 5. Tornado 6. Tornado 7. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Parents 3. Brother 4. unclear 5. Rented property 6. City council 7. Parents	1. Flat 2. Wendy house 3 Room in the house 4. unclear 5. Brick house 6. Wendy house 7. Wooden annex to parents house
Kaelyn (32)	Manenberg (with parents)	1. Tafelsig 2. Phoenix site 3. Manenberg	1. Got married 2. Tornado 3. Resettlement after tornado	1. Sister-in-law 2. City council 3. Mother	1. Brick annex to house 2. Wendy house 3. Wooden annex to house
Naseema (32)	Unclear (with maternal grandmother)	1. Manenberg 2. Bonteheuvel 3. Manenberg 4. Easter Peak site 5. Manenberg	1. Live with parents 2. Get married 3. Live with parents and new husband 4. Tornado 5. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Unclear but with Husband 3. Parents 4. City council 5. Parents	1. Council house 2. Unclear 3. Wendy house 4. Unclear 5. Wendy house
Nicole (28)	Bridgetown (with grandmother in council house)	1. Manenberg (with parents) 2. Manenberg 3. Phoenix site 4. Manenberg	1. Live with parents 2. Move home with parents 3. Tornado 4. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Parents 3. City council 4. Parents	1. Flats 2. Flats 3. Wendy house 4. Wendy house
Sarah (41)	Manenberg (with mother in a wendy house on grandmother's property)	1. Manenberg 2. (moved eight times after the tornado) 3. Manenberg	1. unclear 2. Tornado 3. Resettlement after the tornado	1. Mother 2. unclear 3. Aunt	1. Wendy house 2. unclear 3. Wendy house

Name and age	Place and conditions at birth	Places moved to	Reason for moving	Access to tenure and housing	Type of dwelling
Shareen (41)	Salt River (in rented room with parents)	1. Manenberg 2. Manenberg 3. manenberg 4. Rondebosch 5. Manenberg 6. unclear 7. Manenberg	1. Own family home 2. Moved with parents 3. Own home for children 4. Tornado 5. Tornado 6. Tornado 7. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Parents 3. Parents 4. Sister 5. Friend 6. Mosque 7. Mother	1. brick house 2. Flat 3. Wendy house 4. Room in house 5. Room in a house 6. Container 7. Wendy house
Vanette (35)	Manenberg (with parents)	1. Manenberg 2. Charlesville 3. Mitchell's Plain 4. Surrey Estate 5. Manenberg 6. Sherwood Park 7. Rylands 8. Manenberg (with parents)	1. Moved with family 2. Got married 3. Rented home 4. Lease ended 5. Tornado 6. Tornado 7. Tornado 8. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Rented room with husband 3. Mother-in-law 4. Rented room with husband 5. Parents 6. Rented room with husband 7. Rented room with husband 8. Parents	1. Brick house 2. Brick annex to house 3. Brick annex to house 4. Brick annex to house 5. Room in brick house 6. Garage 7. Room in house 8. Wendy house
Veronique (34)	Kewtown (room in uncle's home)	1. Manenberg 2. Strandfontein 3. Manenberg 4. Tafelsig 5. Ganubie site 6. Phoenix site 7. Manenberg	1. Increase in family size 2. Get married 3. Sold their brick house 4. Tornado 5. Tornado 6. Tornado 7. Resettlement after tornado	1. Parents 2. Husband 3. Parents 4. Sister 5. City council 6. City council 7. Parents-in-law	1. Unclear 2. Brick house 3. Unclear 4. Unclear 5. 'cabin' 6. Wendy house 7. Wendy house

Appendix C:

Tenure and housing table: Women interviewed in Guguletu

Name and age	Place and conditions at birth	Places moved to	Reason for moving	Access to tenure and housing	Type of dwelling
Connie (42)	Nyanga East (parents in informal dwelling)	1. NY 89 2. NY 43 3. Thambo square	1. parents receive council house 2. parents caretakers of uncle's shop 3. unclear	1. parents 2. parents 3. unclear	1. Council brick house 2. Council brick house 3. Informal dwelling
Glenda (61)	Ndabeni (parents in brick house)	1. Rylands 2. Thambo square	1. Forced removals 2. Own home	1. rented backyard dwelling from landlord 2. unclear	1. informal dwelling 2. informal dwelling
Iris (61)	Ngqamakanwe in Eastern Cape (parents)	1. Durban 2. NY147	1. Father died 2. unclear	1. Aunt 2. Cousin	1. unclear 2. Informal dwelling then post tornado bungalow
Leona (47)	Kieskamahoek (Qoboqobo) in Gwilligwili village of Ciskei (parents)	1. Port Elizabeth 2. NY1 3. KTC 4. Barcelona	1. Live with uncle 2. Married 3. Escape from abusive husband 4. Live independently	1. Uncle 2. Husband 3. Brother 4. <i>Amakhaya</i>	1. unclear 2. Backyard informal dwelling 3. Informal dwelling 4. Informal dwelling
Lindiwe (42)	KTC (parents in informal dwelling)	NY 147	parents receive council house	parents	Council brick house
Minnie (30)	NY 2 (paternal grandparents)	Barcelona	To live with boyfriend	Boyfriend	Informal dwelling

Name and age	Place and conditions at birth	Places moved to	Reason for moving	Access to tenure and housing	Type of dwelling
Molly (40)	Nyanga East (parent in informal dwelling)	1. Guguletu 2. unclear 3. KTC 4. Thambo square	1. Moved home 2. Lived with boyfriend 3. Separated from boyfriend 4. Home destroyed by fire	1. pensioners 2. unclear 3. unclear 4. Own	1. unclear 2. unclear 3. Informal dwelling 4. Informal dwelling
Nokhukhanya (50)	Johannesburg (parents)	1. Engcobo in Transkei 2. NY 147 3. Barcelona	1. Parents return home at pensionable age 2. Follow husband 3. Chased away by niece	1. Parents 2. Sister in law 3. brother with same clan name	1. Unclear 2. Backyard informal dwelling 3. Informal dwelling
Nonzi (46)	Retreat (parents in informal settlement)	1. NY11 2. Thambo square 3. Thambo village 4. Thambo square	1. parents receive council house 2. live independently 3. moved to own RDP brick house 4. tornado	1. parents 2. unclear 3. Government subsidy 4. own home	1. Council brick house 2. informal dwelling 3. brick house 4. Informal dwelling
Nonto (58)	Mqanduli in Eastern Cape (parents)	1. Mqanduli 2. Butterworth 3. NY 4 4. Barcelona	1. parents died 2. find a job 3. boyfriend left her when pregnant 4. live independently	1. Uncle 2. friends then boyfriend 3. unclear 4. brother with same surname	1. unclear 2. rented home 3. unclear 4. Informal dwelling
Nozuko (59)	Engcobo in Transkei (parents)	NY 147	Escape husband and seek medical attention	Sister	Brick house
Nosiviwe (35)	Mtansani in Eastern Cape (parents)	1. Crossroads 2. Thambo square	1. unclear 2. Step brother moved back to Eastern Cape	1. Stepbrother 2. unclear	1. unclear 2. Informal dwelling

Name and age	Place and conditions at birth	Places moved to	Reason for moving	Access to tenure and housing	Type of dwelling
Pamela (37)	Guguletu NY 6 (parents)	Barcelona	To live with boyfriend	Boyfriend	Informal dwelling
Sibongile (60)	Transkei (stepmother)	1. NY 147 2. NY141 3. KTC 4. Thambo Square 5. Thambo village 6. Thambo square	1. Married 2. husband died 3. Own home 4. Own home 5. moved to own RDP brick house 6. Own home	1. Husband's first wife's children 2. Friend 3. Cousins 4. House destroyed by fire 5. Government subsidy 6. Tornado	1. backyard Informal dwelling 2. unclear 3. Informal dwelling 4. Informal dwelling 5. Brick house 6. Informal dwelling
Violet (35)	Near NY 43 (parents)	Thambo square	Many others move	unclear	Informal dwelling

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