



Social networks, Migrants and Densification.

**How do migrant women access and sustain social networks in the context
of backyard densification in Bram Fischerville?**

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own work. It is being submitted as a requirement for completion of the BSc with Honours degree in Urban and Regional Planning to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.

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Abstract

The ambiguous nature of cities has long been discussed by many scholars. Cities are both spaces of opportunity and abject poverty; connectivity to global circuits of goods, people and ideas, yet concurrently contain spaces of marginalisation (Kihato, 2009). The increase in backyard dwellings over the years has highlighted the high demand, and low supply for low-income housing in Johannesburg where many South Africans and international migrants relocate to for greater opportunities. This research report aims to document the relationship between backyard densification and the strategies of integration of migrants into their new host society. These experiences will be documented on the basis of social networks and interaction between the migrants and the locals.

The urban form associated with backyard living provides a proximity which fosters intentioned and unintended interaction between neighbours. Backyard densification facilitates access and sustainability of social networks used by migrant women. These social networks play a significant role in the post migratory experiences of migrant women living in backyard dwellings in that they offer various types of support such as trading land, financial and emotional support and childcare just name a few. This research forms part of a greater study on resilient densification in Johannesburg, and though its scope is limited, I hope it will stir up further research pertaining to migration, gender and social networks.

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Chapter 1 Introduction to the Research

1.1 Introduction

Addressing the racially divided, sprawling and socially inequitable spatial form of South African Cities has been key to strategic spatial planning and urban spatial frameworks in South African cities, including in Johannesburg (Todes et al, 2015). The ambiguous nature of cities has long been entertained by many scholars. Cities are both spaces of opportunity and abject poverty; connectivity to global circuits of goods, people and ideas, yet concurrently contain spaces of marginalisation (Kihato, 2009). The spatial configuration of Johannesburg is largely a legacy of the past Apartheid policies of segregation. Regardless of its segregated landform, the City of Johannesburg has made attempts towards achieving spatial justice through its transport system and increased economic opportunities available through its ever-growing commercial hub. However, with a large portion of the urban poor located on the periphery, the transport system still needs to improve so to effectively compress the space between people and opportunities and reduce time spent and costs of commuting.

The quest for a better life and diverse opportunities has continued to attract many South Africans and international migrants to the city. The 2011 Census, revealed that only 56% of people counted in Gauteng were born there, meaning migrants account for 44% of Gauteng's population (Barnard and Pfende, 2012). Concurrently, 48% of the population in Johannesburg is made up of people from other provinces (CoJ, 2013), with 48% of these migrants being women. The acknowledgment of the increasing portion of migrants, and more specifically women migrants and the role of gender in migratory experiences is important if the city aims to be inclusionary. Gender specific migration policy is required as gender has an impact on most facets of migration such as the reason for migration, the type of migration, who will migrate, social networks, potential work within the new host society and experience of integration (BRIDGE, 2015). As seen later in the research 4 participants migrated because a spouse or boyfriend had required them to relocate while one participant had to migrate because of a kinship social network which required her to provide care for her deceased relative's children.

The combination of locals and migrants, as well as the legacy of the apartheid system, has resulted in an overcrowded city faced with growing issues around housing and

service delivery. Issues like these, set against the background of chronic sprawl associated with the city, have promoted a policy shift towards densification and infill (Todes, 2015). Through its Spatial Development Frameworks and Integrated Development Plans, the City of Johannesburg has placed increasing emphasis on strategic densification and infill of the metropolitan area (Todes, 2015). Densification and compaction have become one of the leading responses to achieving sustainability in the context of sprawling cities.

Densification in Johannesburg has been identified as one of the planning initiatives, along with diversification and integration, needed to accommodate the urban poor and mould Johannesburg into an inclusionary city (CoJ, 2016/2017). The City's densification plans focus on the densification of strategic areas such as nodes and areas that fall within proposed Corridors of Freedom or lie on the transport backbone. According to the City of Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework 2016/2017, plans for compaction in the city aim to densify areas which are characterised by high concentration of jobs, connectivity and public transit.

Johannesburg is not only experiencing formal densification but informal unplanned densification as well. Areas such as Bram Fischer, located on the northern edge of Soweto, have been highly affected by informal densification by means of backyard dwellings. With regards to the informal densification by backyard dwellings, authorities were initially reluctant of the practice, mainly because of the increased occupancy densities placed further strain on existing services (Poulsen and Silverman, 2005). However, the City of Johannesburg has come to view informal forms of housing as productive ways of providing more affordable accommodation for lower income groups in serviced areas throughout the city. According to the City, "providing housing for low-income households that is well located regarding public transport, hard and soft services and jobs, is imperative" (CoJ, 2016: 45). However, with such housing, certain implementation strategies are needed to ensure that the minimum safety and health standards are met and legitimised. The Informal Backyard Enablement Programme is an ongoing programme aimed at doing just that. The programme was one of the

strategies of the Sustainable Human Settlement Urbanisation Plan (SHSUP), which was approved by the City in 2012 and acknowledged backyard living as a housing option.

Though compact and densified cities are said to be more economically and environmentally sustainable, little research has been done to understand and explore the impacts of densification on the social environment of communities (Ryan, 2007).

This research report explores the nexus of migration, gender and social networks in the context of densification in Johannesburg. Mainly, it seeks to understand how migrant women, both local and international, experience urban life as backyard dwellers in Bram Fischer, Soweto. To document these experiences, the research studies the role and use of social networks in facilitating both interaction between migrants and locals as well as the integration into their new host society. It explores the way in which these networks are accessed, used and sustained; whilst incorporating a spatial element so to understand the role of the urban form on social networks. Broadly, this research aims to contribute to literature on how marginal populations, such as migrant women view and experience the city. The study locates itself in a context where the women form part of the urban poor living in informal housing. It is Kihato (2009) argument that while analyses of the city are useful, they tend to be highly based on the view of institutional frameworks, non-governmental and international organisations and agendas of the state. For this reason, the voices of the city dwellers and especially marginal groups such as women migrants remain absent as planners and policy makers define normative plans for the city. This argument, along with a gap in literature pertaining to the amalgam of migrant networks and the urban form, necessitates a study such as this where personal interactions and experiences are documented.

1.2 Problem Statement

Literature on international migration has effectively managed to document the relationship between migration and social networks (Meeteren and Pereira, 2013). The focus of this body of research has however been the role of social networks in mediating between places of origin and destination areas. Furthermore, existing literature has largely focused on specific types of migration such as refugee migrants

and labour migrants. The incorporation of social networks in migration studies has also been largely restricted to the role of social networks in the decision making process pre-migration (Negron, 2012; Haug, 2008 and Hiwatari, 2016). Cases of post-migratory experiences, involving migrants other than refugees and labour migrants, have been under documented especially in South Africa and thus posed a gap in the literature pertaining to social networks and their role in post migratory experiences.

When compared to other Sub-Saharan African countries, South Africa is said to have a more progressive official response to immigrants. This judgement was based on the fact that instead of restricting non-nationals to camps and specific settlements, it allows them to settle locally (Hoehne, 2012; Landau 2003a and 2006a). Progressive as it may be, Motha and Ramadiro (2005) argue that South Africa lacks specific projects to ensure social integration of migrants once in their new host environment. The absence of an established policy on integration of migrants means that post migration, migrants need to develop their own strategies to aid in their integration and adaptation into the community. It is these strategies, mainly the use of social networks, which I aim to document in this report.

Johannesburg is home to both intra-national migrants and international migrants. The presence of economic opportunities in the City acts as one of the pull factors attracting migrants to the city. In 2011, the internal migrant population consisted largely of migrants from Limpopo and KwaZulu Natal while the majority of the international migrants were from the SADC region (CoJ, 2013). These people migrate to cities like Johannesburg to gain better access to employment and opportunities. This gradual increase in population puts further strain on existing issues such as housing and service delivery. In response to the high demand and low supply of low-income housing as well as the lengthy process of being granted an RDP house, the urban poor look to the informal housing market constituting of informal settlements, backyard dwellings and occupied “bad” buildings. Culwick and Dawson (2015) revealed that 60% of informal dwellers in Gauteng are migrants, and if given the choice, 8% would still live in a backyard dwelling. This alludes to the possibility that living in backyard dwelling is not always based on financial circumstance but also preference.

As a result of the nature of informality, access to these forms of housing and other resources often depend on social connections in the areas. A study undertaken by Urban Landmark revealed that the urban poor use friendship and family networks to identify people who are willing to sell or rent out shelter. Gaining access to these networks was also identified by 16,3% of the participants in the study as an important way of accessing available land (Marx and Royston, 2007). Though Marx and Royston (2007) study focused on land, the research at hand looks at the importance of these networks in accessing any resource be it financial, social or physical. Another key finding of the Urban Landmark study was that the role and significance of these networks in accessing land was highlighted in the context where a socially dominated market exists.

The concept of social networks is one which is discussed significantly as a key component of social cohesion. However, literature pertaining to the relationship between social cohesion and the built environment is limited and there is a clear gap in literature to develop a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between social cohesion and the built environment in informal settlements (Ortiz, 2014).

Therefore, as seen through the works of Marx and Royston (2007), Clark (2007), Coleman (1988), Fleury (2016), Thieme and Muller-Boker (2009/10) and Steinberg (2014) it is clear that that social networks and connections act as a way of accessing certain resources within the society. For newcomers, access to the existing necessary networks may be easier when one has previous ties with family or friends in the area or difficult when the place and the people are completely foreign.

Experiences of migration often vary between women and men. They can be gender specific, in that women find themselves with greater challenges and responsibilities before and after migration. These can vary from having to take care of one's children or elderly members of the family, to being unemployed or underemployed. Acknowledging these challenges has encouraged a growth in the incorporation of gender in migration studies (Boyd and Grieco, 1998 and Monche, 2006).

What migration studies have also revealed is that there are more and more women who chose to migrate for work in what seemed to be a male-dominated field. The increasing

trend of women migrants is referred to as the feminisation of migration and will be dealt with in greater detail in the literature review. The gendered lens of migration steered me into focusing the research on migrant female networks and their role in the lives of the women, amidst the various challenges they face.

Works by Rose (2002), Fuentes (2001) and Monche (2006) have indicated that there is indeed a difference in social networks between female and male migrants. For this reason male and female migrants have varying access to certain resources such as jobs and housing. This was proven in a study done by Monche (2006) which revealed that certain jobs such as being a security guard were “perceived by Congolese participants as being inappropriate for women because of the efforts they demand and the assumptions about women inferior strength “ (Monche, 2006:58). Monche focused his study on the role of gendered social networks in the income generation among the Congolese migrants in Johannesburg, and though the study is mainly about income generation, it revealed important information regarding the impact of gender on social networks. For instance, the study showed that information regarding work opportunities, such as being a security guard, is not shared with the women and would probably be excluded from their networks and thus affecting their job hunting pool. Fluery (2016) went further in echoing Monche (2006) conclusion by explaining that the influence of gender goes beyond just income generation and that access to certain social activities and amenities appeared to be easier for men than it is for women.

Ryan (2007) notes that the post migratory experiences of migrants, once in their new communities, is a topic which has been dealt with by few researchers and thus identifies as a gap in knowledge that this research hopes to lessen. Though many have written and conducted studies on social capital, few have actually studied the gender dimension of social capital (Smith, 2000-2009; Rose, 2002; Fuentes, 2001 and Monche, 2006). Therefore, in studying the experiences of women, one begins to wonder how access to these entities is facilitated when a male figure is not present. One way in which access to various resources is facilitated is by societal networks and linkages. As evident in the works of Bookman (2004) and Skocpol (2003), the way in which women participate in and create or access local networks, whilst having to manage caring often

falls beneath the radar of social capital researchers and theorists. This research thus aimed to combine the gendered experiences of migration and social networks within the backyarding context and eventually answer the question of how migrant women access and sustain social networks in the densifying society of Bram Fischerville.

1.3 Research Rationale

Densification as a form of sustainable development should adhere to the principles of social sustainability; and ensure the growth of social capital. As a result of the existing low-income housing shortage in Johannesburg, the rapid densification occurring in many areas, including Braam Fischerville, is by means of backyard dwellings. The reasons behind living in a backyard dwelling could vary from lack of financial means to the proximity of the dwelling to activities and opportunities (Shapurjee, 2010).

Access to such housing, as well as the livelihood strategies of those residing in backyards, are largely influenced by personal interactions with the community and its members. This form of interaction results in the formation of social networks and it is these social networks that will form the bulk of my research.

These connections and relationships are built over time and are said to add to the social capital of an area. Associational life and social networks are crucial in ensuring resilience of communities. The informal nature of social networks makes them vulnerable to any change which has an impact on the social composition and demographics of an area. According to literature, the lack of support received from these networks and associations results in women becoming more vulnerable and prone to violence (Tacoli and Chant, 2014; McIlwaine, 2013). Todes et al (2016:41) explains that “cases from Johannesburg indicate that not all migrants have a shared experience of the city and that there are a wide variety of migrant spaces across the city responding to a wide variety of factors including, fear, threat, identity and promise.” Furthermore, research by Jean (2008/9) revealed that migrant women are vulnerable to being triply disadvantaged as they share the same inequalities as male migrants with

regards to ethnicity and to being a non-national on top of contending with being seen as the “inferior sex”.

Understanding the post migratory experiences of women with relation to the use of social networks and associations within communities can assist in ensuring that future policies are more sensitive to the social environment of communities. Social networks and associations help create resilient and sustainable communities. Participation within these networks and associations allows residents to formulate an identity as well as a sense of belonging to the area. Having this sense of belonging means that residents are more in tune with their spatial environment as well. For planners, this could be informative and allow them to plan effectively for the community. With women making up 49.8% of the population of Johannesburg (Statssa, 2011), understanding how they interact and integrate within communities – old or new- is essential. It is in these interactions where we can learn and understand the trajectory of the role of the women perceived by both women and men as the years progress whilst learning more about socially constructed power dynamics.

Where previously restricted to domestic roles, women all over the world are challenging these norms and stereotypes, reshaping their identity and changing the way they are seen and treated in everyday discourse (Taib, n/d). Understanding the link between women and social networks and linkages will help in future plans so that associations or networks designated to assist women post relocation to get settled into their new host community are available, be it formally or informally. Furthermore, such networks serve as conduits through which valuable information is and can be distributed (Smith, 2000-2009). Jean argues that the adaptation of migrants to their new environment is a vital question both for their overall well-being and for the positive development of the host community in which these newcomers reside (Jean, 2008/9: 5).

Jordan (1989) effectively explained the significance of social networks in planning. He argues that studying someone’s personal interactions with his friends, and thus gaining insight into the networks they use, delineates information on not only the various aspects of the individual’s life but also on the broader socio-economic issues which

affect him and the community at large. He further continued to call this additional value for planning the “delimitation of material for ones purposes” (Jordan, 1989:76).

I believe that this research report will give insight of the role of social networks in how migrants experience life in their new society and also the limitation of not having such networks. Furthermore, I believe that by studying the social network composition unique to certain urban form, such as backyard rooms, the research will show the impact of the spatial environment on social aspects such as community interaction. Hopefully, the subsequent pages will help in building a broader picture and help the research community better understand the post migratory experiences of women in Johannesburg.

1.4 Key theories and concepts

The main theories framing this research will be a combination of the Social Network Theory and the theories of densification through backyard dwellings. The Associational Life theory will be partially used in cases where personal networks intersect with associations in the community. These concepts, along with the theories around migration, will be analysed through a gender specific lens as the research aims to document the experiences of women who have migrated to the area. These concepts not only frame the research but will also be used to analyse the findings and provide possible recommendations and implications of the research to the planning profession.

Social Network Theory

The social network theory focuses on networks and linkages that develop overtime within societies. These vary and are often a reflection of the identity of the society. The Social Network theory is often responsible for the following: “independence of actors; relations or ties consisting in the flow or transfer of resources; the constraining and/or enabling of individual actors by networks; and the generation of long-lasting ties and networks by social structures (Williams and Durrance, 2008).” As cited by Jordan (1989), Mitchell (1969) differentiates between three types of social networks viz : the structural order, where people’s relations and actions are related to the positions that they occupy in society. This is common in associations such as churches where people

are aware of the various hierarchal positions such as a priest, a clergy member or a member of the congregation. Second, the categorical order, where members are classified by cultural categories which in turn enacts expectations of certain behaviour on people, and lastly, the personal order which involves networks of personal links with friends and family (Jordan, 1989). This research focuses on the personal order and looks into personal interactions between the migrants and the local community members.

Networks and ties are built on the basis of trustworthiness and reciprocity. They aren't formalised or rigid, yet as they evolve and strengthen they become a set of shared values, virtues, and expectations within society as a whole (Beem, 1999). For the urban poor, access to resources and land is largely facilitated by social networks and associations (Marx and Royston, 2007) (De Wet et al, 2004). Therefore social networks are seen as livelihood strategies that majority of the urban poor share.

Associational Life Theory

In his article, Simone (2001) talks about the role of formal associations such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and Community Based Organisations (CBO) in facilitating a form of self-management within societies. Just as life exists in the environment and in societies, so do associations. Simone's theory has also been used in examining the more "informal" types of associations which are connections and or linkages which naturally form in societies. Tostensten, Tvendten and Vaa (2001) argue that although these formal associations play a key role in societies, it is the informal networks and linkages which are the most crucial in the survival of the population and the society as a whole. The notion of associational life is one that is largely growing within African cities and has thus been included in discussions around development. The church, for example, was identified by 80% of the participants interviewed for this study as having played an important role in the lives since migration. This is because the church as an association provides a platform where locals can interact with migrants and networks can be formed or accessed. The church is seen as what Mitchell (1969) refers to as quasi-groups. According to Mitchell, the distinction between social networks and associations such as churches "is primarily a matter of the level of abstraction at

which we are able to operate in summarising the regularities that we discern in social relationships as a whole” (Jordan, 1989:x).

Concepts of Densification

Densification can be planned, unplanned, formal and informal. The distinction often lies in its legitimacy to the City’s plans and policies. As mentioned earlier, the form of densification which I will be focusing on is that of backyard dwellings. This form of housing, which is often dealt with as informal housing, is seen as the response of individuals to the lack of low-income housing in South Africa (Huchzermeyer, 2009). In South Africa, there has been a tendency of the erection of backyard dwellings on existing RDP communities (Sharpurjee, 2010). The chosen study area is evidence of this as there is a growing demand for housing in the area and not enough supply. According to the City of Johannesburg, the 2011 census revealed that 17,4% of Johannesburg households reside in backyard dwellings and informal settlements (CoJ, 2016).

More specifically, between 2001 and 2011 the number of households found in informal settlements decreased by 5,71% while that of backyard dwellings increased drastically by 57,79% (CoJ, 2016). As this form of densification continues to spread, the city has come to accept and acknowledge the important role played by informal housing in bridging the gap between the people and opportunities and services.

The movement of people into a new society does somehow affect the social networks and association in that society. The theoretical frameworks chosen help us understand why that is so and also how aspects such as affordability, location and geographical mobility plays a role. It is much easier to try and fit a certain framework to a location than to fit specific actions to the context in a developing country like South Africa.

1.5 Conclusion: Structure of the report

Broadly, the research aims to venture on a path least travelled, which incorporates the urban form into migration and social networks studies. Although its scope is limited, this

research report hopes to highlight the sensitivity of social aspects, such as social networks, to changes in urban form and density.

The way in which the report is structured is as follows: Chapter three locates the proposed research within existing literature as well as previous studies related to the topic. A conceptual framework was formulated and used intensively to frame the research. Chapter four is a contextual chapter introducing our study area, Bram Fischerville, and the reasoning behind its selection. Chapter five provides the findings of the qualitative interviews undertaken. Analysis of the findings is also provided so to identify the gaps and correlation between the literature and the real-life experiences of the participants. Chapter six concludes the research by providing recommendations and implications of the research to the planning profession.

Chapter 2 Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction: Research question

The following methodology was used in answering the following main question and sub questions:

How do migrant women access and sustain social networks in the context of backyard densification in Bram Fischerville?

Sub-questions:

1. What social networks are prominent among migrant women in the area and what form do they take?
2. How have migrant women accessed these networks?
3. How have migrant women managed to sustain these networks
4. What perceptions do migrant women have regarding living in a backyard dwelling?
5. How does the injection of new residents affect the existing networks and associations in community?

2.2 Personal Interest and Context of emergence

The theme and focus of this research emerged firstly from a personal interest in how different people interact with each other. Studying the personal interactions between people was something I grew up doing whilst migrating from Lesotho, to QwaQwa, to Bloemfontein and eventually to Johannesburg. As a child, adapting to a new home or city was never an issue as I always had family members around me. However, adapting to a school and later on to Wits University had its own challenges as I was now migrating alone in addition to knowing no one in the area. Such experiences prompted the focus of the research to the relationship between social networks and migrant's integration and adaptation post-migration.

The Urban and Regional Planning undergraduate curriculum further fostered my interest in housing, more specifically the low-income housing occupied by the urban poor in the city. Under the administration of Dr. Sarah Charlton, I came to learn about Housing in Johannesburg and the various informal housing typologies, more specifically the livelihood strategies of the urban poor occupying such forms of housing. From here, the

interest in backyard rooms was nurtured and eventually chosen as a focus to the research at hand.

Whilst looking for funding for my honours year, I was fortunate enough to receive partial funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) to conduct further research on densification in Johannesburg under the South African Research Chair in Spatial Analysis and City Planning (SA&CP) banner. This research thus builds on an existing study conducted by David Gardner (2015) on backyard dwelling densification in Bram Fischerville. Though the previous study focused on resilient densification (Todes et al, 2015), my research looks at the impact of the existing backyard densification on the adaptation and integration of migrants into their new host community. This will be done through examining the social networks and association in the area and how they transact with the urban form and migrant residents. The focus of this research was thus guided and influenced by both personal interest and the growing study on densification in Johannesburg.

2.3 Research Design

The research approach used in answering the above-mentioned questions is one of a qualitative nature. This is because the study focuses on the individual experiences of the residents of Bram Fischerville. The study does not look to present a “single truth” (Philip, 1997) but rather to document the experiences exclusive to individuals. This proved to be an appropriate approach to the research as social networks are abstract variables which cannot effectively be studied by a quantitative methodological approach. Strategies of inquiry involved a narrative approach, which involved the study of individuals as well as the use of a case study so to explore the activities and processes undertaken by the interviewees (Creswell, 2009). This approach allowed for the multiplicity of perspectives which are crucial to this research. This was facilitated by semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews with open-ended questions to allow for participants to tell their story regarding their experiences in the densifying society of Bram Fischerville. The research focuses on the social attributes of everyday life,

therefore along with using interviews, I have used the participant observational method as well so to capture the data not spoken.

The combination of qualitative interviews and participant observation methods provided me with rich information regarding not only the social networks at play in the community but also on the social and economic challenges experienced by participants in the area, such as the level of unemployment amongst backyard dwellers.

Interviews were personally undertaken in English and in Sesotho where necessary. What posed a challenge was the fact that some participants were not fluent in either English or Sesotho; in this case a classmate fluent in both isiXhosa and isiZulu was able to bridge the language barrier and complete the interviews. In terms of identifying participants, the research planned to randomly select the first participant followed by the use of the snowball sampling method to identify more participants. The snowball method proved useless in the beginning and I was aided by a male resident who helped me in identifying women who had moved into the area. It was not until the last four participants that the snowball sampling method was used. This can thus be seen as one of the shortfalls of the study as the participants aren't linked to each other through networks. The network connection between participants would have allowed me to not only document the presence of the networks but also the strength of these networks.

I will be utilising the Social Network theoretical lens in undertaking the research. This lens categorises personal networks under weak or strong ties. As explained by Granovetter (1973), weak ties comprise of those loose networks involving neighbours, acquaintances and colleagues whilst strong ties associate with dense networks often among friends, family or those you are in frequent contact with.

2.4 Participant Criteria and Information Obtained

In order to answer the sub-questions posed and ultimately, the main question, interview questions were driven by the following information (listed below). It is important to note that, because of the personal perceptions element of this research, the qualitative

research method works best as it allows for the documentation of various narratives (Patton, 1990).

Date of migration: The study aimed to document the experiences of migrant women both directly after migration so to understand how networks and associations are accessed. Along with accessing of networks, the research explains what happens after the access and how these networks are sustained over time. For these reasons, the women would have to have migrated to the area within the past ten years.

Experiences of obtaining and living in backyard dwellings: Backyard dwellings are classified as informal forms of housing. As a result of this informality, alternative forms of access such as social relationships, are used. Literature (Marx and Royston, 2009) argues that the urban poor living in informal settlements and dwellings use social networks to access hold and trade land. Against this information as well as the backyard densification currently happening in Bram Fischerville, collecting data on whether any networks or association were formed and used in accessing backyard rooms proved important to this research. And in their absence, understand ways in which this form of housing is accessible to migrant women.

Family dynamics: Some networks are temporary whereas some can last a life time. Family members can be involved in various networks at different stages in their lives such as school-related networks for children and business networks for adults. Therefore, understanding the family dynamics can explain the various networks at play within the family and note how these networks possibly lead to other networks and associations. I anticipate that understanding the family dynamic will also provide insight on various challenges faced by the migrant women post migration such as the need for childcare, for example.

Associations with family or friends in the area prior to migration: Having previously formed networks, with family members and friends, pre-migration has been identified as a factor in facilitating integration within the new host society. The research will thus either prove or disprove the above statement and elaborate on the role of such networks post-migration. Consequently, understanding whether these networks have

changed over time or stayed the same provided a broader view on the impact of migration on existing networks and associations.

General everyday activities and Intensity of interaction with members of the community: Data pertaining to general everyday activities is useful in identifying the networks which are at work every day and those which aren't. Furthermore, documenting the general daily activities provided insight on the socio-economic challenges faced by participants living in the area. The level of interaction between community members contributes to the overall social capital of the community. Communities with higher interaction levels and hence stronger social capital are said to be more resilient to shock. This shock could be natural, social, or financial just to name a few. Understanding the level of intensity could also provide insight on the accommodativeness of the community to migrants or new residents.

Willingness to act and the Ability to influence: migration can be short or long term. Gaining an understanding of the women's willingness to act and contribute to the overall development of the community can provide a glimpse into the future population of the community; whether the stay will be long enough to start building connections and establishing your identity or whether it is a short term migration so establishing roots and connections is seen as redundant. The ability to influence refers to whether the participants feel like their voices are heard, for instance in community meetings. This helps to identify and understand the level of community participation.

2.5 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

As a result of time constraint, the research focused mainly on the presence of social networks and not the strength of those networks. The nature of the research required one to take into consideration any ethical issues which might be present. An Ethical Clearance (available in the annexure) was granted by the Ethics Committee under the School of Architecture and Planning jurisdiction. Along with the ethical clearance, the following ethical principles were exercised:

- Participation is voluntary
- Interviewees can decide to stop the interview at any time.
- Consent will be requested and granted by means of a formal signed consent for or an audio-recording of a verbal consent.
- Anonymity will be exercised where necessary
- No form of compensation will be offered to the participants
- Any photographs taken will be approved by those being photographed (If any).

Chapter 3 Drawing from Literature

3.1 Introduction

This research focuses on several thematic areas: migration, gender, social networks and densification. This literature review will therefore bring together works from these various thematic areas so to aid in the analysis of the post-migratory experiences of migrant women living in backyard dwellings in Bram Fischerville, Soweto. While each thematic area has been extensively studied in its individuality, the literature review demonstrates that more research, encapsulating all these components is necessary. A conceptual framework diagram has been included so as to illustrate how the various concepts and thematic areas relate. This is followed by a reflection on existing literature and similar studies that have been of assistance in this research.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

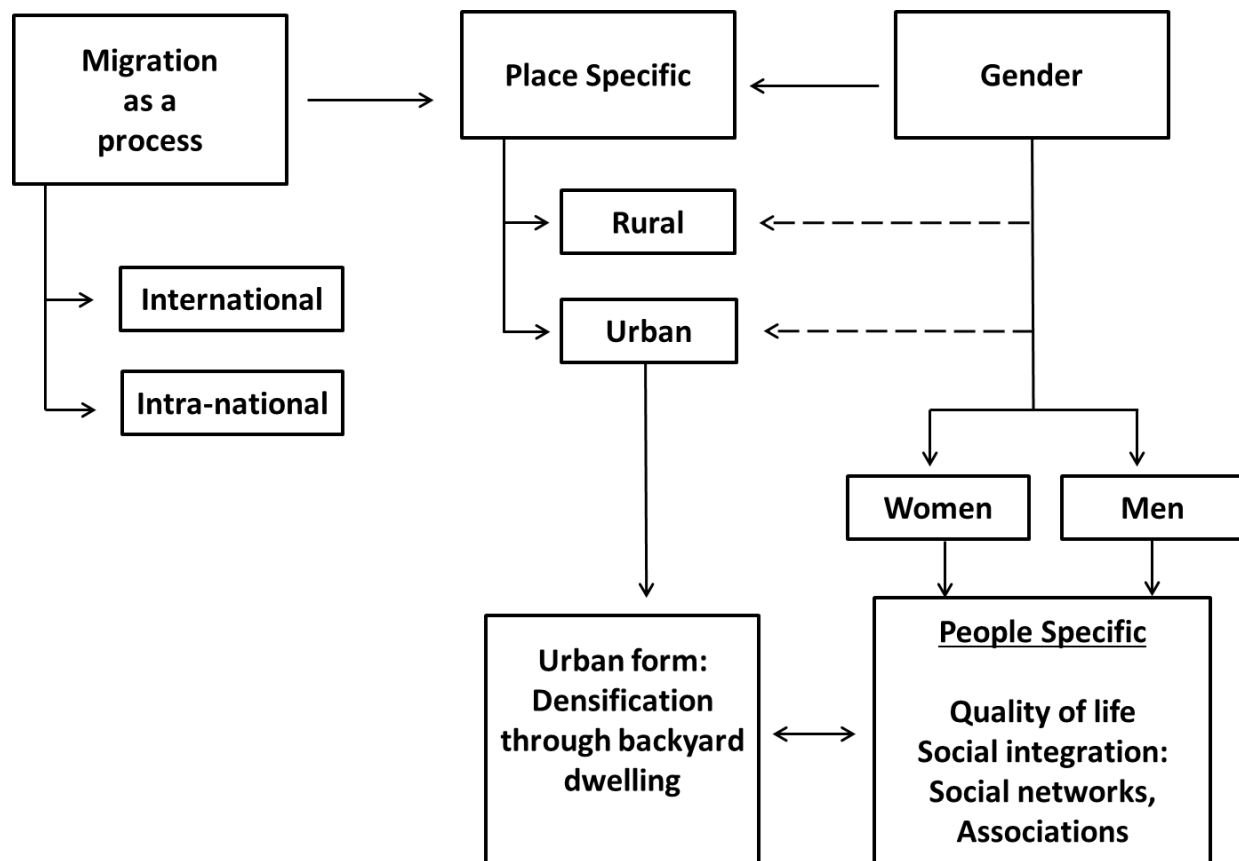
For the purpose of this research, I will be using Kok's definition of migration "the crossing of the boundary of a predefined spatial unit by one or more persons involved in a change of residence" (Kok, 1999:19). The definition is one which has been used and accepted by many scholars as it incorporates two of the main aspects of migration viz crossing a boundary and change of residence.

Migration as a process can emanate locally or internationally; thus giving rise to immigrants, emigrants, and intra-national migrants. Under the umbrella of international and intra-national migration, experiences change at various scales, diverse localities and time frames. The evolution of migration studies revealed that along with the above mentioned variants, experiences of migration are gender-specific. The process of migration was once a very male-dominated practice, however, recent studies have revealed that more and more women are choosing to migrate, irrespective of the presence or absence of a male figure. The feminisation of migration is thus an increasing phenomenon, as more women are now migrating for work purposes (Hofmann and Buckley, 2013).

Along with gender-specificity, this human mobility denotes a human rationality; people will voluntarily move towards a better life or consider the advantages and disadvantages of staying or migrating before making a choice. Migration experiences are thus also place-specific in both urban and rural contexts. Urban contexts are more likely to offer more economic and social opportunities than rural contexts; accounting for rural-urban migration and to a certain extent, urbanisation. What is of uttermost importance is that against the above mentioned facets of migration: international and intra-national migration, place and gender specificity, migratory experiences are predominantly people specific (Fairhurst, Booysen and Hattingh, 2007).

Though generalisations exist, two women can follow the same trajectory in migrating and yet report different experiences. Factors such as ethnicity, nationhood, income group or class, family structure, migrant networks and associations affect the individual person and their experiences post migration with regards to integration and identity-creation. Post migratory experiences are influenced by economic, social, political and environmental factors. This research is concerned primarily with the social element of these experiences with special reference to social networks and associations aiding in social cohesion and socially sustainable communities. Academics such as Wan Mohd Rani (2015), Vallance et al (2005), Dempsey (2012), Raman (2010) and Kyatt et al (2013) argue for the relationship between urban form and social sustainability, paying special attention to the effects of planning tools like urban infill and compaction in fostering socially sustainable liveable neighbourhoods. Such literature proved to be very useful in elaborating on how social elements associate with the urban form, and that if not mitigated, plans of compaction and densification could destabilize the organic social cohesion within the community.

With that being said the research aims to document the experiences of migrant women in their new host society, amidst the backyard densification occurring in Bram Fischerville. The conceptual diagram below will assist in guiding the research to finally understand how migrant women access and sustain social networks in the context of backyard densification in Bram Fischerville, Soweto.



Conceptual Framework

Adapted from Fairhurst, Booysen and Hattingh (2007:v)

3.3 Migration

Migration is a unique component of population change which is driven by the complex interactions of political, social and economic determinants (Statssa, 2013). Contrary to popular belief, migration and the presence of immigrants in South Africa is not a new phenomenon. In looking to understand the drivers behind migration, Collinson, Kok and Garenne (2006) argue that economic forces such as money and employment are not the sole drivers of migration. Other factors such as relative deprivation and migrant networks can be responsible for migration. However, factors driving migration vary with

different types of migration. Under the umbrella of both international and intra-national migration, short-term labour migration, long-term labour migration and permanent migration make up the migration typologies associated with South Africa.

The relationship between South Africa and international migration is a longstanding one, with the country at some point accommodating approximately 300 000 Mozambican refugees and currently granting roughly 9 million temporary visas and permits every year (Kwabe-Segatti, 2008).

Regardless of policies and acts such as the 1991 Aliens control Act and the Immigration Amendment Act of 2004, Kwabe-Segatti (2008) argue that though the South African legal framework offers migrants more guarantees and rights than ever before, their situation with regards to human rights abuse, social and economic rights as well as day-to-day interactions is still of great concern. The absence of immigrants in major development policies such as the socially-democratic Redistribution and Development Programme (RDP) and the neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy emphasises this paradoxical nature of South Africa's response and attitude to immigrants. An example of this contradictory nature would be fact that immigrants are allowed to settle anywhere locally, yet do not qualify for housing from the state (Kwabe-Segatti, 2008).

The topic of migration and specifically immigrants in South Africa is one that has caused immense controversy. In response to an ineffective department and the tedious process associated with successful migration, many immigrants resort to an illegal entry into South Africa; resulting in an unreliable migrant database and increasing levels of undocumented migration (Vigneswaran, 2008). These illegal foreigners could pose a significant risk for the nation in terms of the agenda for economic and political transformation as they are unplanned for. On the ground, cases of xenophobia have been associated with the nation as some South Africans strongly believe that illegal migrants steal their jobs and that the presence of illegals increases crime rates and the spread of AIDS (Landau, 2008). Most controversy relating to migration arises when South Africans clash with international migrants (immigrants) and not necessarily with intra-national migrants (those migrating within the boundaries of the country).

Because of the lack of borders, intra-national migrants migrate easier than international migrants. Migration within South Africa is, more often than not, a case of rural-urban migration (Richards et al, 2004). Kok and Collinson (2006) argue for the link between migration and urbanisation and that in South Africa, a significant amount movement occurs from rural areas to urban areas or cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town or Tshwane.

Those concerned with migration studies have argued that though similarities do exist, male and female experiences do vary (Chant, 1992; Resurreccion, 2009; and Trager, 1988; Fairhurst, Booysen and Hattingh, 2007). Migratory experiences are thus said not to only be gender-specific, but also time, place and people specific (refer to conceptual diagram). Therefore, though generalisations regarding migration and post-migratory experiences can be made, it is important to note that role of the actual person in shaping their experiences.

Migration of women has become an increasing phenomenon in the world (Chant, 1992; Resurreccion, 2009; and Trager, 1988). This feminisation of migration, as termed by Hofmann and Buckley (2013) and Deshingkar and Grimm (2005), describes the pattern whereby more and more women are choosing to migrate for work purposes regardless of the absence of a male figure. According to the 2015 United Nations Migration Report, international statistics revealed that in Europe and Northern America, female migrants outnumber male migrants while the opposite is seen in Africa and Western Asia.

Thadani and Todaro (1984) and Fleury (2016), have noted that the societal norms which previously subjugated women are becoming less and less practiced. This decline of patriarchy (Gugler, 1997) is part of the reason behind the feminisation of migration. Women and men can now be seen migrating for similar reasons such as the quest for better life and opportunities. This is contrast to previous norms where women were found to migrate for domestic and marital purposes or family migration and seldom individual migration. More specific to South Africa, a study undertaken by Budlender (2014) on behalf of the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) revealed various reasons for the internal migration of women and men.

Reason	Male	Female	All
Work	43%	25%	35%
Work-seeking	23%	14%	19%
Family	15%	39%	26%
Education	9%	10%	9%
Other	11%	12%	11%
All	100%	100%	100%

Budlender (2015:35)

The study revealed that two of the main reasons why men and women migrate within South Africa is for work and family purposes. Though women predominately migrate for family-related purposes, a large percentage of them migrate for other reasons such as work and education. Literature has revealed that a recurring reason behind this migration is that women see migration as a step towards liberation (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Roggeband and Mieke 2007). Such migration numbers concentrate in certain provinces and cities such as Gauteng and/or Johannesburg. The table below shows the gender concentration of intra-national migrants in the Gauteng Province as per the 2001 census:

	Gauteng Residents Born Outside Gauteng					
	Thousands			Proportion		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-14 years	213.3	218.5	431.8	6.8	6.9	13.7
15-64 years	1358.1	1222.6	2580.7	43.1	38.8	81.8
65+ years	56.4	84.3	140.7	1.8	2.7	4.5
Total	1627.8	1525.4	3153.1	51.6	48.4	100

Adapted from Oosthuizen and Naidoo, 2004:11

From the above tables, one can deduce not only the reasons for migration but also the number of women taking part in the migration. Migratory experiences vary between women and men and their social identity prior and post migration. Fleury (2016) highlights the various gender specific factors which affect international and intra-national migration such as preparedness, kin-ship networks and societal structures and norms of the original and new society. Acknowledging the difference in women and men's experiences, literature has shown that unless a woman is migrating alone, she is often faced with more challenges than men (Ryan, 2007). For instance, along with adapting to a new location, and getting employed, women also have to ensure the wellbeing of the family (if applicable) and getting their children well integrated into the environment. Women are also often faced with challenging existing norms or labels which restrict them to certain roles and identities. Therefore, migration also acts as a platform for women to reinvent themselves and create new identities.

According to Elder and Phurutse (1997), based on a study conducted in KwaThemba Hostel, east of Johannesburg, the pre and post migratory experiences of women are as a result of the gendered identities negotiated in place. Against this, we can learn that other than employment and marital purposes, women sometimes choose to migrate because the gendered politics of their current community present various opportunities and constraints for them (Elder and Phurutse, 1997). The idea of place-based identities isn't necessarily covered in this research, however should not be disregarded when documenting the post-migratory experiences of the women in Bram Fischerville, as these experiences are highly people specific. As mentioned earlier, this is because migration can sometimes act as an opportunity for the invention of new identities; for example women who were previously cast and restricted to domestic roles could now reinvent themselves as business women.

Though Curran and Saguy (2001) provide a framework for the role of gender migration and social networks in cultural change, focus is placed on networks which exist between the new host society and back at home. One of the reasons for this focus was because it is through such networks that migrants send money back home in their place of origin. Furthermore, various pieces of literature on the incorporation of social networks in

migration studies has also been largely restricted to the role of social networks in the decision making process pre-migration (Negron, 2012; Haug, 2008 and Hiwatari, 2016).

Understanding the relationship between gender and network development within a new host society has proven to be an area explored by few (Ryan, 2007; Boyd, 1989 and Jean, 2008/9) and thus highlights a need for a study such as this. Ryan (2007) and Boyd (1989) argue that there are tenacious gaps in our understanding of migrants' post-migration social networks, and that the complexities associated with balancing transnational networks and local networks, specifically for immigrants, should be understood by all, including policy makers. In agreement with Boyd (1989), Jordan (1989) argues that networks which involve certain groups such as migrants should encourage more research of broader conditions and the effect of social networks on the people involved in them, whilst associations such as churches should offer and incorporate various genres of information. The importance of this to the current study is seen in the amount of participants, 80%, who identified the church as not only an important association for religious purposes but also for its role in creating a space for the formation of more networks between them and the locals.

Ensuring the inclusion of migrants and understanding the role of such social entities in fostering a sense of belonging to their new community will in turn incentivize more migrants to better their community and contribute to the economic development of the area. Deshingkar and Grimm (2005) stress the need for migrant support programs within communities which are identified as migration hot spots. Focus should be placed on women and children migrants, as they can be vulnerable in new localities. These programs will assist migrants get well integrated into their new society and could include:

“Better access to information on the job market; Mechanisms that allow access to services, food etc. And to reduce potential harassment; Personal insurance; ... and Improved education facilities for the children of migrant families (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005:52)”

Such programs could come in the form of formal associations or informal networks facilitated by community members and social groups so to be accurate and respond effectively to the needs of migrant women.

Against the above information, there is recognition that a more nuanced policy on migration is necessary in South Africa. Kwabe-Segatti and Landau (2008) argue that such a policy should be founded on the appreciation of the role of migration in regard to South Africa's society as well as its economy as a whole and not only place focus on specific sectors such as mining and agriculture. What has become clear is that the South African government's official policy on migration does not have the full support of the African National Congress's own political constituency. This is a sentiment shared by many who view the Department of Home Affairs as an inefficient and corruption infested department (Kwabe-Segatti and Landau, 2008).

Kwabe-Segatti and Landau (2008), Ellis (2008) and Vigneswaran (2008) argue that the palpable communication breakdown between the policy makers and the department officials in-charge of immigration enforcement has resulted in immigration officials lacking the professional capacity to fulfil their basic duties and ensure effective migration for interested and affected parties.

Against the background of increasing immigration and an inefficient department, legal migration to South Africa is a rather daunting task. Immigrants often grapple with paying a bribe to enter the country and acquire necessary documentation; resulting in the high numbers of undocumented migrants. It is clear that, accompanied with the stress of leaving one's home and moving to a new country, the post-migratory experiences of migrants and immigrants in South Africa is far from ideal. Greater social and economic support is needed to ensure that migrants are well equipped in starting a new life in a new host society. However, in order to provide such support, reliable data on the number of migrants and immigrants in South Africa is needed. Decreasing the number of undocumented migrants requires an effective department and migration enforcement, so to make migrating to South Africa not such a taxing experience.

3.4 Social Networks and Associations

The role of associations and social networks in ensuring resilience of communities is one that cannot be overlooked. Against the background of migration, social networks have been said to play a pivotal role in facilitating successful migration in the long term

(Curran and Saguy, 2001). Instead of existing as isolated beings, people are connected to each other through social networks and shared understanding. Networks have also been said to be slightly different to association because of their flexibility and response to individual needs (Lourenco-Lindell, 2001). Networks are your day-to-day personal interactions, such as friendships and family connections. Associations on the other hand, also cater to individual needs yet on a larger scale. An example would be the church association. The social construction of these social networks means that networks often follow the identity and norms unique to their society. However, there are some networks which are a constant in most societies such as networks of obligation (Curran and Saguy, 2001).

Networks are often seen as crucial in facilitating the formation of communities and permanent settlement. These networks often assist people to gain access to niches of the urban informal economy as well as finding places to live and work (Tostensten, Tvendten and Vaa 2001; Curran and Saguy, 2001). Social networks have also been deemed crucial in helping societies overcome crisis. They are therefore seen as a valuable resource that should be used so to reduce vulnerability and improve resilience. To many of the urban poor, social networks and associations also serve as a form of insurance which comes to the rescue in times of shock or disaster (Thieme and Muller-Boker, 2009/10). This insurance is because social networks work on principles of trust and reciprocity; requiring those who are part of the network to be accountable and trustworthy. As a result of the role played by social networks, it is important to understand how one gains access to these webs, for both immigrants and local migrants. The aim of this research was to see just how the experience of accessing and sustaining these networks translates in Bram Fischerville, through the experiences of women migrants.

Social associations and networks are often used in gaining access to livelihood opportunities, resources and autonomous action (Simone, 2001). In trying to understand how the urban poor access, hold and trade land, a study undertaken by Urban LandMark (Marx and Royston, 2007) revealed that people use friendship and family networks to identify people who are willing to sell or rent out shelter. These forms of

shelter can range from informal settlements, to backyard dwellings and occupied bad buildings. Furthermore, 16.3% of participants who took part in the Urban LandMark study identified the access to these networks as an important way to access available land. Notably, the importance of these networks is amplified by the type of land market associated within the area.

The land market within which these networks operate and facilitate access to land is a socially dominated market accompanied by various elements of financial or economic rationale. In socially dominated land market, “the supply and demand of land are mediated by social relationships” (Marx and Royston, 2007:5) compared to a financially dominated land market where the setting of price dominates the supply and demand of land.

For this reason, most if not all transactions are facilitated through some type of social relationship. This implies that the absence of these networks, within a socially dominated market, could restrict the access of land and possibly other resources.

The concept of networks thus becomes more than just a component of measuring social capital; it starts to identify as an affordable mechanism which makes relocating or migrating into the urban poor environments possible, whilst ensuring and facilitating social cohesion. Therefore, the combination of opportunities, spurred by social networks stands out as a mechanism which makes moving into an informal settlement or dwelling possible (Marx and Royston, 2007).

With that being said, one deems evidently it sensible and plausible for urban informal areas to display more social cohesion than formal areas. Richards et al (2004) reiterate this and argue that low income formal suburbs, which are often overcrowded by backyard dwellings, tend to display a greater level of social cohesion than the formal suburbs in the inner city. It is the works of Marx and Royston (2007), De wet et al (2008) and Richards et al (2004) which highlighted the possibility of a correlation between the presence of social networks and income status. What the research revealed was that because of limited funds, which was evident with 80% of participants, people living in backyard dwellings relied on their friends, family members and also neighbours for assistance in most everyday struggles. Such as being low on money, not having

enough to eat and provision of childcare. Similar findings were discovered by De wet et al (2008) in their study on Johannesburg poverty and livelihoods. The household study was conducted on 695 stands located in eight of the city's most deprived wards and revealed that "friends and family members seemed to be the most frequently cited source when asked where respondents turned to for assistance vis-à-vis food or financial concerns" (De wet et al, 2008:16) Similar findings were discovered in Bram Fischerville, with the exception of newly formed friendship ties being stronger than the ties which already existed pre-migration.

Thieme and Muller-Boker (2009/10) and Curran and Saguy (2001) explain that these networks, though often informal provide societies with a sense of security and belonging to those living there. Such networks also provide a level of support, be it through friendship or kinship. However, for those migrating into a new society, these networks and associations can sometimes seem exclusive and difficult to penetrate. The socially constructed hierarchies between insiders and outsiders can sometimes make access to these networks nearly impossible, with insiders feeling a greater sense of entitlement to spaces and opportunities in the community than the outsiders (Nyamnjoh and Brudvig, 2014). For women, the usefulness of these networks lies in the presence of strong and weak ties which yield a variety of sources of information and support through various circuits (Rose, 1997). This consequently implies that, for women, the presence of networks and ties is beneficial regardless of the strength of the network. Literature has been successful in stressing the importance and the role of social networks in the lives of migrants and indirectly alluded to the impact of their absence.

A study undertaken by Ryan (2007) revealed that women (nurses) who had recently migrated with their babies to Britain for employment purposes found it much easier to penetrate such networks compared to those without children. This was because women who shared common circumstances, such as child care, learned to lean on each other and offer support where needed. Ryan (2007) and Curran and Saguy (2001) both concluded that social networks are stronger and more prominent among group members who share similar circumstances or histories and are in situations where a common threat is identified. This implied that, for the large part, migrant women living in

backyard dwellings are more likely to have more networks and ties with other migrant women who lived in backyard dwellings. It then became paramount to keep variables such as gender, housing and being a migrant constant, so to gauge the level of interaction between members sharing the same circumstances and see the applicability of Ryan (2007) and Curran and Saguy (2001) argument regarding similar circumstances fostering social networks. The lack of the support received from these networks and associations results in women becoming more vulnerable and prone to violence (Tacoli and Chant, 2014 and McIlwaine, 2013). What this revealed for the research was that the lack of these networks could in fact have an impact on the level of crime against migrant women, and be that the case, special consideration needs to be placed on the social wellbeing of migrants in societies all around the world.

With regards to migrants and social networks, a study was conducted by Ryan (2007), which looks at how immigrant women with children access social networks. The study proved to be very useful as it focused on migrants and networks. This study reiterated the point previously made by Rose (1997) in that sharing similar circumstances fosters more networks and ties. Since this study was done in Britain, the author urges for a similar study to be done in a different context so to confirm whether the following statements are true: Immigrants who are surrounded by working locals are most likely to get employed faster; having a child aids in faster access of social networks and in the long run quicker integration in to the society. The research revealed that having children did play a role in facilitating access to social networks in the area. However, many participants were unemployed regardless of being surrounded by working locals, which meant that Ryan (2007) findings regarding migrants being likely to be employed if surrounded by working locals was only applicable in the British context.

A study conducted by Jean (2009/9) proved to be most helpful in this research. The study was aimed at understanding the social networks of migrants and their negotiation of the City of Johannesburg. His argument was that “having a multitude of weak ties opens doors towards new opportunities and new currents” as “having relationships with a wide assortment of individuals from diverse backgrounds would provide the migrant with numerous opportunities and a wide range of knowledge useful in negotiating and

overcoming some of the difficulties associated with migrating to a new urban environment” (Jean, 2008/9:74).

Previous studies on associational life have been conducted by AbdouMaliq Simone in his paper “Between the Ghetto and the Globe” (Simone, 2001). He doesn’t look at gendered experiences of migrants; however he compares Johannesburg with Dakar in terms of the important role played by associations as they intersect with economic and political activities and specific institutions. This further echoed the importance of the research in that social associations are linked to and have an impact on other areas such as politics, thus their growth and welfare could in turn translate directly or indirectly in other areas.

In looking to deduce patterns relating to the presence and strength of social networks, Wan Mohd Rani (2015), Vallance et al (2005), Dempsey (2012), Raman (2010) and Kyatt et al (2013) argued that there is a direct correlation between the urban form and social entities like networks and association. For planners and policy makers, this highlighted the importance of studying the trajectory of accessing and sustaining networks within communities before proposing any changes to the urban form. What was fascinating was that, though some correlations between density and networks were found, they were largely influenced by the form in which densification was taking place and not necessarily the density itself. For example, residents who live in high rise buildings did not have as much interaction with their neighbours as compared to a community where densification occurred horizontally.

Wan Mohd Rani (2015) argued that “residents of compact urban form tend to have higher chance to have social interaction with their neighbours either, of certain intention or unintentionally” (Wan Mohd Rani, 2015:63). However, Raman (2010) argued that high density does not necessarily mean more interaction and more networks. He further explained that high densities within gated communities and tower blocks (flats) reported minimal social networks than the rest of the community. This was further emphasized by Major et al (1997) in that the ‘hierarchical and repetitive’ layouts were often found to have such social problems. In the context of Bram Fischerville, where densification is occurring horizontally in the form of backyard dwellings, the structure of networks and

the type of interactions taking place were largely a result of the urban form and the everyday interactions with those staying in the same yard.

3.5 Densification by means of Backyard Dwellings

Densification involves the increase of horizontal and vertical densities so to accommodate more activities on a smaller surface area. As elaborated on by Turok (2011), the rationale of densification focuses on the following: firstly, the need for a more sustainable city, both environmentally and financially; secondly, the agglomeration of economies or positive externalities that may result and lastly, the potential for social inclusion and integration.

Academics such as Todes (2015) and Donaldson (2001) have published many informative works on densification in South Africa. Todes et al (2016) explains that studies around the spatial features around Johannesburg have revealed that levels of densification are occurring in the city, although not in places which were anticipated by policy. Furthermore, the benefits from densification appear to be complex and unevenly distributed; deeming it crucial to ensure that all possible negative outcomes are mitigated. Though many benefits are associated with densification, parts of Johannesburg which have densified over the years have not upgraded infrastructure and social services to cater for the growing population. Planned densification is inclusive of high residential densities and mixed use developments and activities and efficient service delivery. It is driven by policy and supported by the City and its constituencies. Unplanned densification on the other hand is mostly driven by individuals, often in areas where other factors such as activities and services involved in densification aren't upgraded to accommodate the new densities. Unplanned densification often manifests as informal densification; be it in informal settlements, backyard dwellings or occupied building. Soweto, which was originally a planned RDP settlement has seen a boom in backyard dwellings over the past 10 years (Gardner, 2015).

Informal densification can thus be seen as an undesirable form of densification as it is not inclusive of all components involved. This is highly applicable to the case of Bram Fischerville where, against the ongoing densification through backyard dwellings, many residents are still unemployed or work in town because they are unable to get work in the area. Huchzermeyer (2003), Turok and Borel-Saladin (2015) and Lemanski (2009) have focused largely on the informal forms of densification, being that of informal settlements and backyard dwellings, and arguing for the important role played by informal housing in locating the urban poor advantageously throughout the city. The growth in backyard dwellings, according to Turok and Borel-Saladin (2015:7) is because backyards provide the following:

“More flexible accommodation to rent; Greater proximity to economic opportunities...; Better access to essential services; A regular source of income to poor homeowners acting as landlords; And higher residential densities...”

Densification in Johannesburg has been identified as one of the planning initiatives, along with diversification and integration, needed to accommodate the urban poor majority and mould Johannesburg into an inclusionary city (CoJ, 2016/2017). The city's densification plans focus on the densification of strategic areas such as nodes and areas which fall within proposed Corridors of Freedom or lie on the transport backbone. According to The City of Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework 2016/2017, plans for compaction in the city aim to densify areas which are characterised by high concentration of jobs, connectivity and public transit. Developments will cater for low to high income groups while the diverse residential typologies will be provided so to accommodate a variety of household structures. In light of densification, South Africa acts as a unique study in that much of the growth in informal housing sector occurs by means of backyard shacks located within established townships, rather than the usual free-standing shacks in informal settlements (Turok and Borel-Saladin, 2015).

With regards to the informal densification, the City of Johannesburg has come to view informal forms of housing as productive ways of providing more affordable accommodation for lower income groups in serviced areas throughout the city. According to the City, “providing housing for low-income households that is well located

regarding public transport, hard and soft services and jobs, is imperative (CoJ, 2016: 45). However, with such housing, certain implementation strategies are needed to ensure that the minimum safety and health standards are met and legitimised. The Informal Backyard Enablement Programme is an ongoing programme aimed at doing just that. The programme was one of the strategies of the Sustainable Human Settlement Urbanisation Plan (SHSUP) which was approved by the city in 2012 and acknowledged backyard living as a housing option. The programme, if implemented correctly, can change the narrative concerned and image depicted of backyard living.

When looking at informal dwellings and forms of housing, we are referring to informal settlements, bad buildings (which are formal buildings which have been illegally and informally occupied) and informal backyard dwellings. Though reluctant at first, City's attitude towards informal dwellings is now that of acceptance and acknowledgement of the important role played by informal housing, especially backyard dwellings, in bridging the gap between people and opportunities and services. The practice of informal backyard rental housing has many benefits such as providing the urban poor with affordable shelter, densifying low density urban areas and generating income for home owners and should, for the above mentioned readings, be supported yet monitored (Borel-Saladin and Turok, 2013). According to the City of Johannesburg, the 2011 census revealed that 17,4% of Johannesburg's households resided in backyard dwellings and informal settlements. The table below shows the change in households living in informal backyard dwellings and informal settlements (CoJ, 2016:48)

Year	Informal Settlements (households)		Informal Backyard Dwellings (Households)	
	Number	% of all CoJ Households	Number	% of all CoJ Households
2001	133 400	12.7%	78 572	7.5%
2011	125 788	8.8%	123 977	8.6%
% change 2001 to 2011	-5.71%		57.79%	

Change in households living in informal backyard dwellings and informal settlements

As a result of the nature of informality, it should be noted that reliable statistics are hard to come by, however that does not dispute the fact that there has been a great increase in households living in informal backyard dwellings over the years. Between 2001 and 2011 the number of households found in informal settlements decrease by 5,71% while that of backyard dwellings increased drastically by 57,79% (CoJ, 2016).

It is possible that the increase in households in informal backyard dwellings could have been caused by people moving out of informal settlements, which are sometimes peripheral and overpopulated, to backyard dwellings, which provide better access to services such as water and electricity. Soweto, south of Johannesburg, contained the largest concentration of informal backyard dwellings with approximately 230 652 families in backyard dwellings (CoJ, 2016). The research therefore conducted interviews in the community of Bram Fischerville located on the periphery of Soweto.

As this form of densification continues to spread, the city has come to accept and acknowledge the important role played by informal housing in bridging the gap between the people and opportunities and services. With regards to residents, backyarders often find themselves in vulnerable situations because of their position as tenants through verbal agreements (Lemanski, 2009). The backyard dwelling means different things to various social groups:

“for migrant workers, the physical dwelling may mean a temporary shelter in which to get by while conserving their finances. For affluent families, the home may be a repository for wealth, and a place of comfort, stability and security. For many poor households in tough neighbourhoods, it is a site of periodic violence, vulnerability and hardship. For some men, the home may represent a place of relative relaxation, but for many women it may be a place of unpaid work and stress” (Turok and Borel-Saladin, 2015:7).

As mentioned previously, access and trade of land in informal housing communities is facilitated by a socially dominated market (Marx and Royston, 2007). The role of social relations and networks in helping to identify people who are willing to rent out space or

rooms is of uttermost importance; regrettably the lack of these social interactions can result in moving into an informal settlement or backyard dwelling impossible. For this reason, because of the constant interactions and social engagement, informal areas are said to display more social cohesion than formal areas. De wet et al (2008) reiterate this point and argues that low income formal suburbs, which are often overcrowded by backyard dwellings, tend to display a greater level of social cohesion than the formal suburbs in the inner city. Furthermore, studies by Wan Mohd Rani (2015) revealed that a high density environment where close proximity is a factor initiates more interactions among urban dwellers. Taking into account the density and proximity, interaction in backyard living environments and informal settlements often occurs intentionally and unintentionally, often resulting in a lot of smaller networks and more frequent interactions (Raman, 2010).

A study looking at the densification of Cato Manor in Durban, Eliasson, Hessle, and Leonsson (1998) recognised the importance of social networks to women in the area. The study is therefore very successful in capturing the relationship between women and social networks. In an interview conducted during the study, one of the women responded that densification is ideal because it will mean stronger networks and more relationship. She continued to state the following “If I cry, the first person to hear it is my neighbour (Eliasson, Hessle, and Leonsson, 1998: 85). Densification therefore increases the number of individuals involved in various networks, which eventually strengthens the networks themselves. In informal housing environments, social interaction has been seen to take place close to one’s home, in the garden or in the street (Dempsey et al, 2012). For this reason, such interaction is easily influenced by the physical layout of the environment and overall urban form.

3.6 Conclusion

The above literature review aimed to provide insight on the existing literature relating to migrants, networks and backyard living. It has revealed that though studies relating to migration and social networks as well as social networks and the urban form are

available, little research has been done which incorporates migration, networks and a spatial focus on the urban form.

Chapter 4 Bram Fischerville

4.1 Introduction

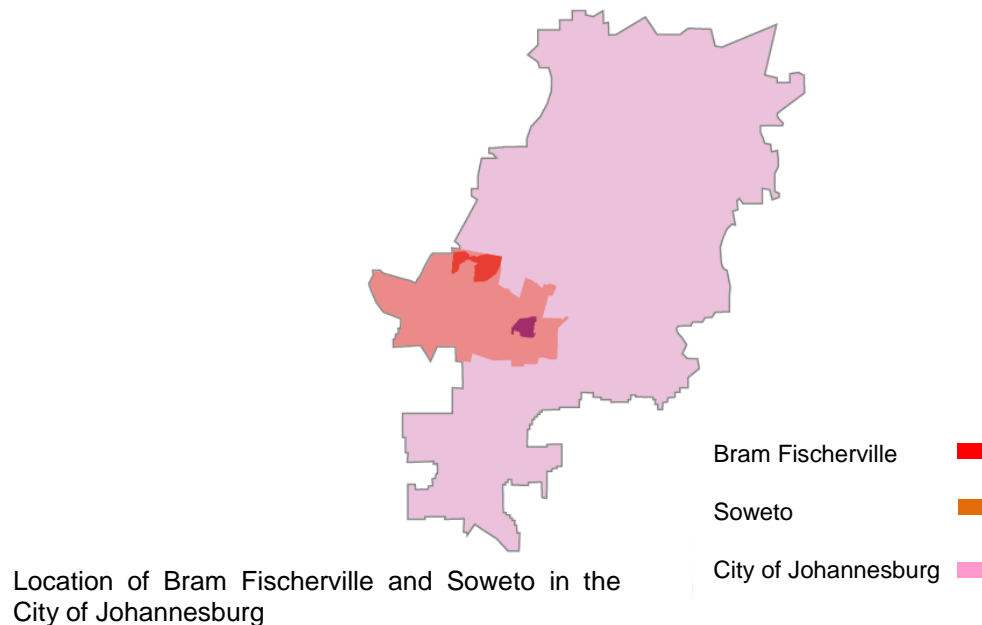
Set against the apartheid background, Bram Fischerville, Soweto, is one of the settlements in Johannesburg which is still immersed in poverty (CoJ, 2010/11). The Regional Spatial Development Framework 2010/11 highlighted the fact that the settlement is in serious need of low-income housing opportunities which will, in the long run, assist the poor out of poverty while simultaneously addressing issues of inequality, vulnerability and social exclusion. The growing demand and limited supply of low-income units accompanied with slow delivery of subsidised housing has led to a sprawling of backyard dwellings on existing properties. The settlement also faces issues around transport infrastructure, waste management and storm-water management. Regardless of these issues, the settlement still appeals to those searching for a better life, closer to the city and its opportunities.

Bram Fischerville was chosen as the case study area for two main reasons. Firstly, location: the City of Johannesburg serves as a magnet to both international and intra-national migrants in search of more opportunities and general improvement of their lives. The city also embodies various dynamics of urban migration (Jean, 2009) and also functions as a multicultural hub accommodating migrants from SADC regions and within the borders of South Africa.

Secondly, with the City of Johannesburg growing more and more, provision of inclusive accommodation which caters for all income groups is limited. Areas located on the periphery, such as Soweto, provide more affordable forms of housing for the urban poor. This form of housing is inclusive of formal and informal types of housing such as backyard dwellings. Bram Fischerville is known to be undergoing unplanned densification by means and backyard dwellings, making it ideal for the research at hand.

4.2 Background

Bram Fischerville is a large low income settlement in the City of Johannesburg located north-west of Soweto. Geographically, it is located 18 km from central Johannesburg and has Roodepoort and Randfontein as small towns.



The settlement was one of the first major RDP developments in the post-apartheid South Africa and the largest RDP development in the Soweto area of the City. Initial planning of the settlement aimed to provide accommodation for the masses living in overcrowded houses, informal settlements and backyard shacks in and around Soweto. Though this planning initially targeted those already in and around Soweto, more beneficiaries were drawn from further afield as Alexandra near Sandton (Gardner, 2015).

The development of Bram Fischerville occurred in four phases with the first phase commencing in 1997 and the final RDP phase completed and occupied by 2002. Along with RDP developments, a bonded housing development was established and completed in 2010 (Gardner, 2015). Majority of the settlement development only began in 2001 and continued in phases until 2011 with some of the fastest densification

occurring post-2011. To date, the settlement is characterised by a combination of RDP developments and formal and informal backyard dwellings.

4.3 Context

Soweto, inclusive of Bram Fischerville, is well located and well served from a transportation perspective, making access to its surrounding easy and affordable. Its advantageous location acts as a pull factor to many looking to access the city. Though well located in relation to its proximity to neighbouring cities and transport facilities, Bram Fischerville is said to be relatively isolated from its immediate surrounding. This is attributed to large open areas such as a cemetery, grassland, a tailings dam and low-lying wetland areas which boarder the whole settlement.

Access to the settlement is facilitated by two major access routes. Mobility in the area is further facilitated by trunk routes, precinct access way – used mostly by public transport- and local road ways – often lacking paving and maintenance. Though the public facilities found within the settlement, such as schools and parks, have increased over the years, they are still insufficient when set against the area's population density (Gardner, 2015). Bram Fischerville is said to be a community which contains strong cultural and social networks, which have continued to grow, making it an appropriate site for this study.

Looking at the housing typologies in the area, three types of subsidised RDP houses dominate; free standing detached houses, semi-detached units and drive-in's (comprises of four houses built in close proximity to each other). The provision of these housing configurations, as well as the gradual addition of formal and informal secondary housing structures, have allowed for the accommodation of various family types. The images below depict the gradual densification of the settlement since 2001.



Bram Fischerville 2001



Bram Fischerville 2004



Bram Fischerville 2007



Bram Fischerville 2011



Bram Fischerville 2014



Bram Fischerville 2016

Overall, studies undertaken by the city revealed that Soweto contained the largest concentration of informal backyard dwellings with approximately 320 652 families residing in backyard dwellings (CoJ, 2016/17). Though there aren't statistics available to show the number of backyard dwellings in Bram Fischerville at present, however the maps above show the significant growth in secondary structures in the area since 2001 and could be used in projecting or predicting future trends.

The presence and growth of backyard dwellings over the years prompted the selection of Bram Fischerville as my area of study. Accompanied by demographics and statistics of the migrant concentration within Soweto, literature has explained that informal housing settlements have been known to have stronger ties and social networks than formal neighbourhoods.

4.4 Formal and informal densification

As previously mentioned, the formal settlement taking place in Bram Fischerville is largely subsidised RDP houses of various configurations. Informally, backyard units dominate. These either take the form of formally constructed rooms or backyard shacks. Gardener (2015) highlights the fact that on average, there is one backyard unit per four houses in Bram Fischerville, with some properties having as many as 10 units. Over the years, the number of backyard dwellings increased drastically from 134 dwellings in 2001 to 1276 dwellings in 2011 (Gardener, 2015). Though majority of these units are used for residential purposes, some are used as taverns, spaza shops and salons.

The settlement also has mixed use social facilities such as schools, parks, retail stores (both formal and informal), day-care centres and churches. As the settlement grows, moving more towards being a mixed-use rather than just residential, evidence of vertical densification is becoming more evident. The move towards a mixed-use settlement appears to follow an organic pattern with residents choosing to offer certain services such as catering or convenient stores from their residential homes. The lack of space on existing sites has resulted in double storey developments as people resort to building upwards rather than across (Gardener, 2015). This upward densification can be seen, not only on the main house, but also on the backyard dwellings in Bram Fischerville.

From this information, one can see that regardless of the lack of space, residents of Bram Fischerville have found ways to accommodate more and more people on existing property. As Bram Fischerville continues to become a home to locals and migrants, the expansion of the settlement seems inevitable.

As stipulated in the Johannesburg Spatial development framework 2040, future plans for Soweto aim to unlock Soweto as a true city district. This will be done by improving Soweto in terms of its connectivity, compaction and resilience. Economic developments should cater for all income groups while residential densification should be provided and facilitated by various community led development initiatives including backyard accommodation (CoJ, 2016/17). Such initiatives will, however, have to ensure that the necessary health and safety requirements, as per the City of Johannesburg specifications, are met and adhered to. Bram Fischerville location within Soweto means that it is included in these plans, therefore the number of household in backyard dwellings could in fact continue to climb and possibly double by 2040.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to introduce the study area while also providing reasons as to why is was the ideal location for this research. Based on the above information, it is clear that the densification happening in Bram Fischerville will continue to progress and thus needs to be acknowledged and planned for in the future.

Chapter 5 Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides the findings from the case study undertaken in Bram Fischerville. Findings were obtained through semi-structured qualitative interviews so to document the personal experiences of the migrant women living in backyard dwellings. Selection of participants was based on the following criteria: gender – the study aims to document migrant women experiences – occupancy of backyard dwellings, migratory status and length of stay in the area. Ten women were selected and interview with the context of Bram Fischerville. The names of the participants have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms. With that being said the study aims to document the post migratory experiences of women residing in backyard dwellings, placing focus on the access, use and growth of social networks and associations. Each section will be concluded by an analysis locating the findings within the literature previously discussed in Chapter 2. The research revealed that the configuration and structure of the built form specific to backyard dwellings aids in the access and creation of social networks. The Close proximity with fellow yardmates results in intended and unintended interactions. This interactions end up fostering strong and weak social networks beneficial to the integration of migrants within their new host community. Secondly, that the influx of new members (migrants) have various impacts on existing social networks. And lastly, the research recommended that Development plans should respond to information provided by the social networks so to not plan a development that destabilizes social cohesion. Below is a detailed profile of all participants.

Name	Age	Place of origin and reason for migrating	Length of stay	Employment status	Backyard dwelling type	Household structure	# of units in the yard (incl. main house)	Relationship with main house	Prominent social networks
Nono	25	Zimbabwe; Spouse	3 years	Unemployed	Zinc dwelling	Husband and two children (3 and 10)	5	None – basic tenant and landlord relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbour-friendship • Church • Stokvel
Nthabiseng	28	Eastern Cape; Financial circumstances & Boyfriend	5 years	Employed	Brick dwelling	Boyfriend and one child (7)	6	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbour-friendship • Kinship
Sylvia	42	Zimbabwe; Kinship (Childcare)	4 months	Self-employed	Zinc dwelling	Two children (14 and 16)	3	Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship • Economic networks • Church
Zanele	29	Maputo; Boyfriend	6 years	Self-employed	Brick dwelling	2 children (only during the holidays)	7	None – basic tenant and landlord relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship • Economic networks
Naledi	36	Rustenburg; Financial circumstances	2 months	Unemployed	Brick dwelling	2 children	3	Basic- seldom interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NONE
Maria	48	Roodepoort; work	2 years	Unemployed	Zinc dwelling	One dependent (21)	2	Kinship – uncle (civil relations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship • Stokvel
Tshepang	24	Qwa Qwa; Spouse	3 years	Unemployed	Brick dwelling	One dependent (4)	4	Kinship – husbands grandmother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbour-friendship • Church
Kgoledi	23	Mahikeng; work	3 years	Unemployed	Brick dwelling	One child (8 months)	4	Kinship – uncle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship • Church
Tumi	46	Rustenburg; work	10 years	Unemployed	Zinc dwelling (extended)	Husband, three children (23, 18 and 6) and one gran child	3	Strong friendship – almost like family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church • Stokvel
Denise	24	Venda; To study	3 years	Employed	Brick dwelling	One child (only during the holidays)	8	friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbour-friendship • Church • Stokvel

5.2 Access of prominent networks and associations in the area

The migrant community of Bram Fischerville consists of a complex web of networks and associations which work directly and indirectly to fuel the social capital of the community. One of the prominent associations found in the area is associated with religious purposes, being the church. 8 of participants belonged to a religious association of their choosing. The church, and sometimes small prayer groups, acted as a key element in facilitating the integration and accommodation of migrant women into their new host society. There are 5 churches located in Bram Fischerville (shown below) with a few more located in neighboring settlements such as Meadowlands, Tshepisong and Roodepoort. One participant attends church in Roodepoort as this was her previous church before relocating to Bram Fischerville. In this case holding on to ties from the place of origin has hindered her progress in creating new ties in the area of destination. The role played by the church is an important one as it opens doors for access to other networks, formal and informal. When asked about access to various associations and networks in the area, participant 4 responded:

“My neighbour and I became friends after she invited me to church. Now I am very much a member of the Universal church. We even host prayer groups in our yard sometimes...but they started getting too big so (the landlord) complained.” - Tshepang

The second biggest network found in the area is that of kinship. This network relates to the connections or relationships associated with family. 6 of the participants identified connections with family members as having had an impact in their post-migratory experiences. This network doesn't restrict family to immediate relatives but is also inclusive of extended family. 2 participants used family members to substitute child care when they are unable to stay with their own children.

“...my kids attend school in town. If I need to run errands, I leave the kids at my mother's place in Orange Farm, she is the closest relative I have...” - Naledi

“...My late partner’s brother still visits and helps me out there and there. I’m grateful for him because it’s not easy you know, especially when you don’t get money every month...” - Zanele

The kinship network isn’t like other networks which are unique to a specific location. Kinship networks stretch over communities as migrant women still hold ties with those from the place of origin. Though residing in Bram Fischerville, most participants still had kinship connections in other areas such as Orange Farm, Protea Glen, Tshepisong, Roodepoort and Mahikeng which have in some way made migrating to Bram Fischerville easier.

“The closest relative I have is a cousin in Protea Glen. She has become somewhat like my best friend since I’ve been here. We visit each other a lot. She has helped me a lot, not just financially, but emotional support as well. We have become much closer than I thought we ever would.” – Tshepang

The third most prominent network in the area is referred to as a “Stokvel” which is an informal financial scheme. The scheme, often comprising a small group of women, relies strongly on trust and reciprocation. All members of the scheme are expected to pay a certain monthly contribution, which is then given to one member as a lump-sum. Members alternate monthly until all members have received the lump-sum at least once. For example, in a stokvel with 6 women and a monthly contribution of R500, woman A will receive R2500 in the first month, woman B will also receive R2500 but in the second month and so on. When it is woman A’s turn to receive the bulk of the money, her payment to the scheme is void, hence why the payout amount is R2500 and not the expected R6000. Associations like this help in cases where a member experiences a financial shock of some sort, and as a result of its informal nature, one can always negotiate should crisis strike.

Though the financial assistance received from such a scheme helps the women in slowly improving their financial status, it does have a downside. As mentioned earlier,

the scheme relies strongly on trust and reciprocation. Woman A pays her contribution trusting that the others will do the same, and that the money that will return to her will be five times greater. Therefore, as a member of the scheme, one needs to regularly be in possession of the required amount every month with no grievances. 2 of the participants were previous involved in such an association but had to drop out because they didn't have a steady income to pay for the contribution. One participant responded:

“...I have nothing I just stay on my own. If I could get a better job, I think I would re-join a *stokvel* because I cannot join a *stokvel* then complain that I don't have money on other months. It's a very nice way of saving money for rainy days...” -Zanele

For the unemployed, access to such existing networks can seem a bit restricted; making *stokvel* exclusive to those who can afford. However, the amount of money required is decided and agreed upon at the conception of the *stokvel*, so such exclusivity can be avoided.

“I am part of a stokvel. It took a while to form it though because it took a while for me to make friends. But we just grouped ourselves and since most of us do not work, we were able to agree on an amount that we could all afford...” - Maria

Being a migrant also makes it difficult to tap into networks such as *stokvel*. This is because the level of trust required needs some time to grow. One participant chose to leave her new *stokvel* in Bram Fischerville because of creative differences with old members

“...I used to be part of a *stokvel* but there was gossiping and backstabbing so I stopped now, I am only focusing on one (*stokvel*) from work...” - Nthabiseng

Findings show that 4 of the migrant women who were part of a *stokvel* felt that their lives had improved since being part of the association; while 6 of those who weren't part of a *stokvel* wished to do so but couldn't due to financial constraints.

The following networks, though not as prominent as the above mentioned, have had a large impact on the pace at which migrant women get integrated into the community. Whereas the church association interacts once or twice a week, and the *stokvel* once a month, the following personal network are networks which participants engage with daily. Firstly, the research looks at the business-related networks. 2 of the participants are informal business owners, selling sweets on the side of the road and operating a hair salon respectively. Because of the services they render and the goods they sell, participants have been able to interact with various people which they wouldn't normally interact with.

"...The salon has become a chilling spot. People around here know me very well and we are able to stay together in peace as well as help each other out in times of need..." -Zanele

"...My customers are my friends. I now see myself as part of the community of Bram Fischerville; I have customers, some being regular – from school kids to old people..." – Sylvia

Secondly, there are traditional associations between neighbours. 9 of participants identified the relationship they have with their neighbours and their landlord as one of the networks which have affected their stay in Bram Fischerville, in good and bad ways. The relationship between the participants and their landlords is the first network which is formed immediately after migration. Positive relations can facilitate integration just as negative relations can ruin it.

"...I definitely felt welcomed. When I arrived to my backroom, the people who lived in the main house were an elderly couple. And they were so friendly. Though I was still young, they took me under their wing and helped me get my first job in the area. Regardless of the age

difference, we respected each other. I like the fact that they treated me as an adult, it made me want to stay in Bram Fischerville permanently...” - Tumi

*“...I and my landlord had a mother-daughter relationship. When I did not have food, she would help me out and I would do the same...she passed away though and the new landlord wasn't very nice and didn't communicate the important things well so I decided to move to phase 2”
- Zanele*

“...You know, when people wake up on the wrong side of the bed, you don't mind it because it's normal. Sometimes, things get difficult and you cannot really start an argument with someone in their own yard, you have to respect them and keep quiet because we are begging for a place to stay...” - Zanele

Lastly the research looks at the relationship between participants and their neighbours. 4 of the participants identified the relationship they have with their neighbours and fellow yard mates as beneficial to their stay in the area. The amount of backyard rooms can range from 2 to 11 rooms in one yard. This means that interaction between the participants and their yard mates is sometimes almost unavoidable as taps and toilets are often communal. This proximity came out in literature as one of the factors which contributed to the strong social cohesion of informal housing developments.

“...My yard mates became the people I referred to as friends...” -Tumi

“...The neighbours to my left and I have a good relationship. We help each other out quite often. Even in the smallest things like asking for an onion or a cup of sugar. The ones to my right, we don't even talk...” - Tshepang

Sharing common circumstances, like having children, has helped one participant in making friends in the area. This is similar to the findings in Ryan (2007) study where children facilitated accessing or securing of networks for their parents.

“...Moving here, I was worried about transport because my child attends school in town. But my daughter made friends with the child front opposite us, and his mother was able to connect me with the taxi that normally takes her son to school. We’ve become friends now...”
Naledi

One participant shed light on a network which used to dominate in the area but has since decreased in size and is only found in specific areas of Bram Fischerville. This network was known as the Street Committee and comprised of several women and men from the neighbourhood.

“...the street committee helps people out. When you have problems like someone has damaged your property or your child is being troublesome, or say you are having issues with your landlord or fellow yard-mates, the street committee would help you to solve the problem, for free. They aren’t as common anymore, but we still have them in my street. Its just a group of men and women in the neighbourhood...” –
Tumi

The presence and role of the kinship network was indeed a recurring theme in the literature pertaining to social networks and associations. The findings show that real life experiences of the migrant women in Bram Fischerville had in fact played a significant role in the women’s lives post migration. Though the gender lens was ignored, Fleury (2016) identified kinship networks, alongside other factors, as having an impact on international and intra-national migrants pre- and post-migration.

As noted by Ryan (2007) and evident in the results above, the need for childcare can sometimes provide women with children somewhat of an added advantage in gaining access to certain networks. 8 of my participants revealed that they call on their family members or neighbours if ever they are in need a babysitter. Similarly, the networks between the participants and their neighbours (inclusive of yard-mates) ranked as one

of the most dominant networks at play in the lives of the migrant women in Bram Fischerville. Such networks are constantly at work because of their proximity and response to individual subjects. One participant explained that she and her neighbour help each other out a lot, even in something as small as asking for an onion. Such networks thus provide a level of support, be it through friendship or kinship.

Moreover, in concurrency with the provision of support, these networks often assist people to gain access to niches of the urban informal economy as well as finding places to live and work (Tostensten, Tvendten and Vaa 2001; Curran and Saguy, 2001). The use of friendship and kin-ship networks in accessing resources, livelihood opportunities (Simone, 2001) and a backyard dwelling was shared by 8 of the participants interviewed. Marx and Royston (2007) stated that as a response to the informal nature of backyard dwellings (inclusive of all informal forms of housing) access to available is largely facilitated by social relationship. This proved to be the case for 9 of the participants who had either used kinship networks, friendship networks and/or church association members to obtain their backyard dwelling.

The way in which the above networks are accessed and sustained varies from participant to participant. The ease or difficulty experienced when accessing and sustaining these networks was largely related to the sense of community expressed by the 10 participants. For example, 8 of participants who were involved in networks with their neighbors and friends, felt that they had a say in what happened in their community; their willingness to act

8 of participants had a kinship influence in accessing networks upon arriving in Bram Fischerville. Due to the informal nature of their residential situation, participants stressed the crucial role played by family members in them getting a backyard room and being residents of the area. Against the demand for housing in the area, having connections has proven to be highly important in accessing a backyard room or land to erect a room.

“...the backroom is husband’s grandmother’s old place. We have been looking for a house but they aren’t easily available.”- Tshepang

“...having my uncle around was okay. I mean it was nice to know someone when I first arrived. And he helped us get the backroom so yeah that was great...” - Kgoledi

One participant, who moved to Bram Fischerville to provide childcare for her niece and nephews, explained that because the children were already familiar with the area and had already been part of the necessary networks it was easier for her to get acquainted with the space. In this way, her access to some networks was facilitated by her fitting into her family’s existing networks.

“I came to Johannesburg to take care of my brothers’ kids, my brother and his wife both died the children then wanted to stay and continue with their studies here so I had to come down to SA...the children showed me the best place to put my stall so that I could get a lot of customers ” -Sylvia

20% of the participants had moved to Bram Fischerville to join a spouse or boyfriend. Therefore, similar to the case above, access to networks was granted on the basis of prior association.

“...I moved from Maputo to my boyfriend’s place. He asked me to come stay here and I kind of got used to this place...” - Zanele

...my boyfriend was the one who help me find this place as he knew people from around here...” - Nthabiseng

Following the kinship access route, the church is the second biggest way in which participants access and sustain networks. The church, as a formal association, acts as an indirect access portal to other informal networks. 80% of participants identified the church as playing a constant significant role since the day they moved in. The church

provided a common ground where most participants were able to make friends and establish their identity in their new host society.

"I actually felt very welcomed when I first arrived. Mainly because I had my uncle in the main house but also because of the church. I got a chance to meet more people and make friends..." - Kgoledi

"...My neighbour initially invited me to church. It was great because I moved alone I didn't not know anyone in the area. But it was through the church that I met these ladies. They have become like my family, I am with them all the time..." - kgoledi

Along with the church, 50% of participants identified their neighbours and landlords as key entrance points to some networks. 20% of participants use their neighbors for childcare when they are unable to look after their children.

"When I arrived to my backroom, the people who lived in the main house were an elderly couple...though I was still young, they took me under their wing and helped me get my first job in the area..." -Tumi

"...I don't work but if there is some where I need to go, I ask the lady next door to look after her" -Kgoledi

20% of the participants used their businesses as access points for various networks. One participant owns a hair salon which has become somewhat of a communal relaxation area for the people in her street. She was able to find a crèche for her nephew through one woman who had come to the salon. The second participant owns a snack stall on the side of the road. Some people went from being customers, to regulars, to friends.

"I see myself as part of the community of Bram now; I have customers, some being regular. My customers are my friends" - Sylvia

"I got one of my friends through clinic visits the other stays around here in my street and my other friend sells fruit around here." - Nono

One participant was unable to identify any networks which she had been a part of. This is largely due to her recent migration to the area as she arrived in Bram Fischerville 4 months ago. Participant Naledi's is the perfect example in explaining the role of the individual in social networks. Little to no effort was made from her side thus her lack of social ties

"Making friends was and is difficult. Because I don't go out often. I can spend the whole day indoors...We (other backyard dwellers and myself) haven't talked much coz I am still new to the area." - Naledi

5.3 Sustaining and developing networks

Looking at how these networks develop and are sustained over time, I will be assessing networks based on three criteria– Attendance, Interaction and Reciprocation (A.I.R)

Attendance: This refers to attendance of community meetings and church services. Due to their occasional occurrence, attendance is crucial to becoming part of the church. Attendance of community meetings is also important for various reasons such as: to identify as a resident of Bram Fischerville, to meet other residents and lastly community meetings are distributors of information which is important to the community.

"I attend community meetings so to hear what's happening and to see and be seen. I feel like you need to attend them all the time. Even if you don't have complaints so that when the day comes and you do need help, people will be willing to help you." – Tumi

Interaction and reciprocation: These two criteria are the most important factors in sustaining networks. Interaction and reciprocation focus on the actions of community members with each other. Networks such as *stokvels* and neighbour-relations rely largely on interaction and reciprocation. One participant identified the communicative component of interaction as an important factor in friendship.

“...you can’t stay in the same area, talk once a month then call each other friends.” -Tumi

“...I can definitely count on the people from my church. A friend of mine recently had a traditional celebration and as her friends from church, we already knew that we were expected to help the night before in making cookies and cooking. She didn’t even have to ask, we just knew. That’s the type of relationship we have.” – Denise

One participant who had recently migrated to the area (4 months ago) wasn’t involved in any networks or associations in the area. She relocated alone with her children after her husband passed away. In their absence, she spent 9 of her day in the room with her kids. She only interacted with her landlord once or twice a month when she paid the rent. According to literature, the lack of the support received from these networks and associations results in women becoming more vulnerable and prone to violence (Tacoli and Chant, 2014) and (McIlwaine, 2013). Fortunately, this was not true in her case as she has not had any problems in Bram Fischerville.

Networks and associations aid in access to resources and opportunities such as a place to live and work. 60% of participants were unemployed women who relied on family and friends for financial support. What was expected from the literature, being that migrants who are surrounded by working locals are most likely to get employed faster, wasn’t the case in Bram Fischerville. This could be attributed to the lack of jobs in the area or a gap in the skills and requirements for the available jobs.

What the literature accurately covered was the level of trust and reciprocity associated with networks. Social networks work on principles of trust and reciprocity, requiring those who are part of the network to be accountable and trustworthy. It is therefore understandable why communities with strong social networks and association are cohesive societies with more social capital than those without networks.

5.4 Perceptions of Backyard living: A woman’s experience

The focus of the research was on women living in backyard dwellings. Backyard rooms and dwellings form a great part of the Bram Fischerville fabric. Over the past decade, the area has densified by means of informal housing as more people move to Johannesburg in search of a better life. This paper will now examine at the perceptions and experiences of the women with regard to living in a backyard dwelling.

Affordability

The sentiment of affordability was shared by all participants. Rent for backrooms and backyard shacks in Bram Fischerville range between R450 and R900.

With 60% of participants being unemployed, and 20% being employed in the informal sector, living in a backroom was the most financially feasible option.

"I moved from Norwood in 2011 because I lost my job so maintaining rent was difficult. I moved here after that, my boyfriend help me to find this place that I can afford." - Nthabiseng

"You know, as a person, when you are not used to renting or have not grown up in an area that is rented out, it becomes difficult...things here are very different, it's always noisy and you hardly have your peace of mind." – Nthabiseng

Availability

2 of participants moved to Bram Fischerville because of the availability of a Backroom.

"I was looking for a place to stay in Johannesburg and a family friend told us there was space here. I was desperate so I settled for a backroom." – Naledi

"I walked around and asked in the main house, they told me that they were in the process of building backrooms and once they were done, they called me and I moved in..." -Denise

Location

Regardless of the living conditions, one participant explained that the location of the backroom makes it tolerable.

"Its better than nothing I always say. The space is small but it convenient. I'm one step closer to improving my life just by being in Johannesburg." - Kgoledi

Landlord relations

The tenant-landlord relationship contributes to the perception of the women on backyard rooms. As a result of being on someone else's property, one participant felt that she had no right to voice her grievances.

"Sometimes, things get difficult and you cannot really start an argument with someone in their own yard, you have to respect them and keep quite because we are begging for a place to stay." - Zanele

"...she passed away and the new landlord wasn't very nice and didn't communicate the important things well so I decided to move." - Zanele

Size

9 of participants felt that the size of the backrooms was too small for their specific family dynamic. Overtime, one participant was able to extend her backroom to suit her preference, turning what was just a room into a home for her husband and son.

"Living in a shack is different, the shack gets cold and there is a lot of dust that comes in in winter. The garage space was much better than the shack." - Sylvia

"... the room is quite small and I have two kids, as soon as I can get myself a house, I'm out. I just want my own house." - Naledi

“That is my house. My home. It was small at first but I have extended it to suit my needs. I will never move out of it.” - Tumi

Privacy

Backyard dwellings provide a higher level of privacy compared to bad buildings. For this reason, one would move from an informal settlement or occupied building to a backyard dwelling where privacy and services are guaranteed.

“My boyfriend used to stay in Hillbrow and we moved to here (BF), Hillbrow was not a suitable environment for us as we used to share and divide space with curtains and hardly had any privacy” -Nono

“Because we currently share with 2 or my husband’s cousins so it’s a bit crowded for a lady you know. There isn’t much privacy.” -Tshepang

Security of tenure:

2 of the participants explained that their length of stay in Bram Fischerville was not up to them. As a result of the informality, there is no certainty that your landlord will never evict you.

“I don’t know how long I might stay here, with people, you never know because they might decide to extend their house and kick you out. However, I would still move and find a place here in BF.” – Zanele

The perceptions and experiences of backyard living in Bram Fischerville are concurrent with previous studies and literature mentioned in Chapter 2. Factors which favoured backyard living, included proximity to resources, affordability, availability and privacy (to a certain extent). Turok and Borel-Saladin (2015:7) attributed the following factors as making backyard living more favourable: “More flexible accommodation to rent; Greater proximity to economic opportunities...; Better access to essential services; A regular source of income to poor homeowners acting as landlords; And higher residential

densities...”. However, the ability to extend and reconfigure one’s backroom to meet her specific needs is slightly overlooked in literature. What this revealed to the research is that unfortunately should one move out, the money spent on the improvements is not reimbursed by the landlord. The capital stays with him/her. For this reason, women who live in the informal “ZoZo” structures are more likely to move with their structure to a different yard.

Similarly, the size of the backyard dwelling, lack or security of tenure and landlord-tenant relations recurred through the literature as aspect which push people away from backyard rooms. Upon doing the research, one participant shared the yard with 10 other backyard structures and the main house. This level of density caused the yard to be so overcrowded that very minimal interaction took place. Though overcrowded for the residents, having more backyard dwellings in a yard the means more income for the landlord. Therefore, this is seen as a plausible reason for the size of the formal backyard dwellings.

Understanding the perceptions which the women have on backyard dwelling shares some insight on how residents feel about this form of densification. Factors such as location, availability and affordability still present themselves as key reasons why this form of housing works for the urban poor. Furthermore, this form of densification produces an element of proximity which facilitates intentional and unintentional interactions between migrants and their neighbours.

The injection of new people into the community was seen as a good thing by 80% of the participants. The shared sentiment, specifically to the stokvel network and the informal business owners, was that more people means more money and more customers. However, one participant felt that the impact was relative and unique to individuals.

The socially constructed hierarchies between insiders and outsiders can sometimes make access to these networks nearly impossible, with insiders feeling a greater sense of entitlement to spaces and opportunities in the community (Nyamnjoh and Brudvig, 2014). This proved to be the case with one participant, who, after accessing a stokvel network had to drop-out because of conflict with existing members.

“...I used to be part of a stokvel but there was gossiping (locals calling her a lekwerekwere- foreigner) and backstabbing so I stopped now, I am only focusing on one (stokvel) from work...” – Nthabiseng

5.5 Conclusion

Against the background of migration, social networks have been said to play a pivotal role in facilitating successful migration in the long term (Curran and Saguy, 2001). When asked how long she is planning on staying in Bram Fischerville, one participant responded that she was in no hurry to move but should her landlord require her to, her first choice would be to remain part of the Bram Fischerville community, but just in a different section.

In a similar study conducted in Durban, one of the women responded that densification is ideal because it will mean stronger networks and more relationship. She continued to state the following “If I cry, the first person to hear it is my neighbour (Eliasson, Hesse, and Leonsson, 1998: 85). This reliance on neighbourly-networks was also evident in the lives of the migrant women in Bram Fischerville.

One participant who had previously formed networks explained that since the migration, her relationship with her uncle has not improved, in fact their connection has weakened. Densification and the injection of new members into the community doesn’t necessarily mean more interaction. Individual can choose to stay indoors and keep to themselves rather than interacting with others. A study conducted in USA revealed that there has been a significant decline in the involvement of the members in various associations such as community groups and soccer teams accompanied by a corresponding increase in the individual activities such as staying in and watching television (Smith, 2000-2009).

Chapter 6 Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This research report unpacked the dynamics of social networks, gender and migration in urban poor context of Bram Fischerville through the experiences of migrant women from within and beyond South African borders, living in Johannesburg. By personally documenting the experiences of a population group which is often sidelined, it provides a view of the city through their eyes.

6.2 Overview of the Research

The research aimed to document the experiences of migrant women living in backyard dwellings in Bram Fischerville. In order to do this, the research question I planned to answer was that of How do migrant women access and sustain social networks in the context of backyard densification in Bram Fischerville? Findings correlated with existing literature in that social networks aim in the integration of migrants within their new host city.

The study focused on both weak and strong ties in order to measure the types of support obtained from both. Participants within the community of Bram Fischerville made use of Kinship networks, friendship networks, financial schemes (stokvels) neighbor-networks and the church association as a pool of resources. In cases where a participant was not involved in any networks, reasons fell on individual as she preferred to stay indoors. The level of dependence and use of social networks were also attributed to the urban form. Backyard dwellings are often located in close proximity to each other, thus fostering intentional and unintentional interaction among people occupying that yard and facilitating the growth and development of social networks.

In summary, the research revealed that the configuration and structure of the built form specific to backyard dwellings aids in the access and creation of social networks. The Close proximity with fellow yardmates results in intended and unintended interactions.

This interactions end up fostering strong and weak social networks beneficial to the integration of migrants within their new host community. Secondly, that the influx of new members (migrants) have various impacts on existing social networks. And lastly, the research recommended that Development plans should respond to information provided by the social networks so to not plan a development that destabilizes social cohesion

6.3 Implications and recommendations

The significance of adding social network analysis to planning discourse lies in the fact that social networks operate within economic, social, political and environmental contexts and thus tell us a lot of the society (Tonkiss, 2013 and Jordan,1989) such as level of unemployment and other ills affecting the community. As future planner, I feel that it is our duty to balance these various pillars so to plan and design sustainable environments.

From the research, one can understand the nexus between the urban form and social networks. Informal backyard densification facilitates the formation of social networks and therefore confirms that informal settlements are more socially cohesive than formal suburbs. It is this informal nature which plays the pivotal role, therefore planners should not be quick to suggest the formalisation of informal housing as this tampers with the very entity which brings about social cohesion. In non-academic terms “If it’s not broke don’t fix it” - plans formalization of informal backyard dwellings should come from the people. In cases where densification is unplanned, it should be left to its organic pattern, but be monitored so to ensure healthy and safe living. (Dempsey, 2008). Development plans should respond to information provided by the social networks so to not provide a development that destabilizes social cohesion and deviates from social sustainability.

For groups like migrants and women, social networks are of uttermost importance as they lessen vulnerability post migration. As a result of their delineation of information, associations such as churches should provide various genres of information especially

to migrants new in the area. Lastly, as seen in the unemployment levels of participants in this research, and also seen in Jean (2008/9) study the “harshness of the economic situation of migrants and of their employment status, and the apparent influence of social networks, must be considered within the broader economic reality of South Africa whereby unemployment rates are estimated to be around 30% “(Jean, 2008/9:76).

Thus, going forward, I propose that plans of densification, compaction or infill be more community specific so to understand the relationship between the existing urban form and the resident’s networks and interaction patterns. Ignoring this relationship can as a result weaken existing networks and derail social cohesion instead of promoting it. The densification pattern of 4-storey walkups may not necessarily be fitting, especially in the context of Bram Fischerville.

6.4 Conclusion

One cannot underestimate the integral difficulties in obtaining a clear picture on the experiences of migrants in the context like Johannesburg. The findings in this research are timely and unique in that they provide an interpretation of specific migrants residing in the urban poor Johannesburg. Based on the preceding pages, one can deduce that migration, both local and international, will continue to affect Johannesburg and other cities like it. Therefore, as a result of the “multicultural and profoundly unequal African city” (Jean, 2008/9: 82) that is Johannesburg, more research needs to be done so to dissect and capture experiences which might be unique to certain migrant groups and ethnicities. Thus, this research should be taken as one part of a broader picture.

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Annexure

FORMAL (SIGNED) CONSENT FORM

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the student researcher Pulane Mphatsoe of the purpose, procedures, and my rights as a participant. I have received, read and understood the written participant information sheet. I have also been informed of:

- ☐ my role in the research in the form of a semi-structured interview
- ☐ the duration of the interview
- ☐ the reasons for why I was selected to participate in the study
- ☐ the voluntary nature, refusal to answer, and withdrawing from the study
- ☐ no payment or compensation will be offered
- ☐ no loss of benefits or risks
- ☐ anonymity
- ☐ confidentiality
- ☐ how the research findings will be reported

I therefore agree to participate in this study by completing the interview.

I AGREE / DO NOT AGREE to audio-recording during interviews.

PARTICIPANT:

Printed name

Signature

Date

Participation Information Sheet

Good day, my name is Pulane Mphatsoe and I am a student from Wits University, currently doing my honours degree in Urban and Regional Planning. In order to complete my degree, I am required to produce a research report, for which your help is needed.

I am interested in finding out more about the lives of women living in backyard dwellings in Bram Fischerville. Would you be available and interested to take part in the research? This will involve a one-on-one interview, for less than 1 hour, to answer the questions provided.

You were chosen for the study because as a woman, who has been living in the area for 0-5 years, your experiences will help me understand your relationship with the Bram Fischerville community. As well as how people interact with the locals and those who just moved in to Bram Fischerville.

If you are interested and available to take part in this research, I will ask you to sign a consent form. Following this, I will ask you questions regarding your experiences in the community. The information you disclose to me, along with 9 others, will help me to complete my research.

Please note that:

- Participation in the research is voluntary and optional.
- Anonymity is guaranteed.
- The interviews will take place at a place, date and time of your choice and will run for 1 hour at most.
- Should you wish to stop the interview at any time, you are welcome to do so.
- Anything you say will remain confidential and your identity will remain anonymous,
- Your personal stories and opinions will be analysed and reported coherently and where need be, you will be quoted using a pseudonym or a participant number.
- There will be no form of compensation provided. This means that you will not be getting paid for taking part in the research.
- There are no benefits involved. What you say will be used for academic purposes only.
- The transcripts from the interview will be anonymous so to ensure no risk of exposure.
- The information gathered from the interviews will be put together in a research report which will be available at Wits University.
- Please let me know if you would like a summary of the research report, so that I can make that available to you.

Should you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. Thank you very much for taking the time to read this and I look forward to hearing your story.

Contact details:

Researcher:
Pulane Mphatsoe

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Supervisor:
Alexandra Appelbaum
011 717 7731

Interview questions

How do migrant women access and sustain social networks in the context of backyard densification in Bram Fischerville?

What social networks are prominent among migrant women in the area and what form do they take?

Do you have children? If so how old are they?

Do you work? If so where and for how long have you been working there?

When you are at work, who looks after your children?

How have migrant women accessed these networks?

Why are you living in Bram Fischerville?

Did you feel welcomed when you first arrived here?

Do you think the experience would have been different had you been a man?

Was it difficult to make friends or meet new people?

Do you think the experience would have been different had you been a man?

Did you have any relationships with family or friends in the area before you moved here?

If so, have these relationships improved your life in anyway?

If not, do you feel that their presence could have made a difference?

Looking at the relationships which already existed, have they become stronger or weaker since you've been here?

How have migrant women managed to sustain these networks

Do you feel like you are part of the community in Bram Fischerville?

How would you describe your community?

Are you part of any groups or organisations in the community?

Are you willing to act or take part in activities or projects within the community?

Do you feel that you have a say in what happens in your community?

How would you rate your ability to influence people in and decisions relating to your community?

How do you think you can better the community?

Do you feel part of any other community other than for Bram Fischerville? If so, please explain.

What perceptions do migrant women have regarding living in a backyard dwelling?

How did you come to live in a backyard dwelling?

Do you think the experience would have been different had you been a man?

How long are you planning to stay in Bram Fischerville and in the backyard dwelling?

How would you describe your experience of living in a backyard dwelling?

How would you describe your relationship with those living in the main house?

How would you describe your relationship with others who live in backyard dwellings?

How does the injection of new residents affect the existing networks and associations in community?



**SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE
AND PLANNING**



CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: SOAP88/24/06/2016

PROJECT TITLE: Evaluating the impacts of backyard dwelling densification, on social networks and linkages.

INVESTIGATOR/S: Pulane Mphatsoe (Student No. 710354)

SCHOOL: Architecture and Planning

DEGREE PROGRAMME: BSc Honours Urban and Regional Planning

DATE CONSIDERED: 19 July 2016

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE: APPROVED

EXPIRY DATE: 19 July 2017

CHAIRPERSON

(Professor Daniel Irurah)

DATE:

cc: Supervisor/s: Alexandra Appelbaum

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATORS

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature

22/07/2016

Date

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