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Making Home in Setswetla: A Narrative Exploration of 'Belonging' and 'Home' in a Contested Informal Settlement in Johannesburg

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology.

School of Human and Community Development
Department of Psychology

Research Report
(PSYC7036)
2023

Supervised by Professor Jill Bradbury

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my work and it contains no section copied in whole or in part from any other source unless explicitly identified in quotation marks and with detailed, complete and accurate referencing (American Psychological Association style). The research report has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore biographical narratives of black women who reside in Setswetla, a contested informal settlement in Alexandra (Johannesburg), as an attempt to understand how their personal stories informed conceptualisations of 'belonging' and 'home'. While literary interest in informal settlements is notable, there remained a vacuum in studies that narratively explored the lives lived within informal settlements, thus going beyond typical studies of livelihood within these settings. Through the qualitative methodology of narrative inquiry, the study attempted to better understand person-place relations through in-depth narrative interviews and photovoice. Through thematic narrative analysis, the study brings theoretical concepts to life through visual experiential narratives of participants' lives.

From the findings, it was clear that the concepts of belonging, and home were complex, especially when explored within informal settlements. The study found that participants continued to experience structural violence through the deplorable and inhumane material conditions that they live in. Through participants' narrations of social injustice, the study was able to capture visceral accounts of the antithetical nature of structural violence to belonging and feeling at home, both in a community sense and a citizenry sense. These narratives provided a powerful political critique as participants' adverse living conditions were preventable and avoidable.

More crucially, the study unearthed compelling counternarratives of agency and collective action through participants' endeavours to enforce their belonging and feeling at home amid harsh material conditions. Through their stories, the study captures human agency in action and counterattacks to structural violence. Although bonded by their struggles, even more powerful was how they were bonded by relationality, community, and resilience. The study also highlights how participants express their identities and form attachments to their homes through place-making, thus forming new meanings and relationships with place while enriching their biographical narratives. The study therefore provides a new perspective on informal settlements, and it enriches theory while simultaneously enriching our understanding of the lives lived within informal settlements.

Keywords: belonging, home, identity, structural violence, informal settlements, place identity, place attachment

DEDICATION

With deep gratitude, I dedicate research to all the women who graciously welcomed me into their lives and shared their stories.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, thank you Lord! For the privilege, the strength and the blessing of this rich work.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Jill Bradbury for her unwavering support, patience and grace as we saw this project to fruition. It was her vast knowledge, insight and encouragement that led me to a place where I was able to submit. Her passion for stories rubbed off on me, and I now immensely appreciate their power. I would like to thank Professor Andrew Thatcher and URBWAT for their financial support and contribution towards my studies. I would like to also extend a special thanks to Justice Edwin Cameron for his support when I began this journey.

My sincerest gratitude also goes to the women that welcomed me into their lives and made me their confidante of sorts. Their stories were moving and they enriched this study in such a significant way. Without them, this project would not exist.

I would like to also thank my family for their support. As a first-generation graduate, it is often difficult for them to understand my academic journey and difficulties, however, they were still there for me in the best way they could.

This project was a personal journey. What began as a mere dissertation became an existential pursuit where I questioned the meaning of 'belonging' and 'home' for myself - especially at times when imposter feelings beleaguered me. I would therefore like to extend my gratitude to my psychotherapist who journeyed alongside me.

This dissertation was written in different places and contexts. I became a nomadic writer and I was welcomed gracefully into the homes of my closest mentors and companions. To this end, I would like to thank Catheryn Christy and Louise Hawkins for welcoming me into their own private spaces so I could feel at home and see this project manifest. Their keen interest in this work came at a time of uncertainty and trepidation. Their treasured affirmations reinvigorated my dedication to this work and helped me realise its value beyond it just being a Master's thesis.

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Abbreviations

BNG	-	Breaking New Ground
BNIM	-	Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method
CoJ	-	City of Johannesburg (CoJ)
HDA	-	Housing Development Agency of South Africa (HDA),
NGO	_	Non-Governmental Organisation
PINS	-	Particular Incident Narratives
SA	-	South Africa
SACN	-	South African Cities Network (SACN)
SAHRC	-	South African Human Rights Commission
SERI	-	Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI)
UISP	-	Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme
UN-Habitat	-	United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Note: This research report utilises UK English spelling.

I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself

– Maya Angelou, *Poems*, 1928-2014

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context and Rationale

This study focuses on the experiential narratives of women who are negotiating their lives and identities in a contested informal settlement in Johannesburg, South Africa. Their narratives were explored with particular reference to how they informed conceptualisations of belonging and feelings of home. The concepts of belonging and home are indisputably pertinent to all ordinary persons and human experiences. These concepts have fascinated early scholars and contemporary ones alike for decades (Yuval Davis,2006; Sigmon & Whitcomb, 2002). As such, they have been central topics of interest within the field of psychology, among other academic disciplines.

While a home can be defined as a structure where a person lives, for this study it represents much more. As McAndrew (2015) opines, "It is a place where one is oriented in space and time and feels in control – a place that is predictable and secure" (p.1). By extension, home is also an enclave of personal expression and treasured objects, constructing a meaningful microenvironment. In this sense, a home also represents memory, routines, and rituals (Rubinstein & Medeiros, 2005). Belonging is similarly a concept with complex meaning. Firstly, it is social as it is defined as attachment to particular social groups (Gilmartin, 2017). As Gilmartin (2017) explains, these groups can vary in scale and size – from family to neighbourhoods, to more abstractive identifications such as national or transnational societies - which Anderson (1983) calls imagined communities. These are imagined communities because, despite members considering themselves to be a part of the same commonality, they will never know most of the other members of that society (Anderson, 1983). In essence, the scales of belonging can range from citizenship to the family (Gilmartin, 2017). Secondly, belonging bears a spatial meaning as it can also refer to an attachment to a particular place, locale, or environment (Gilmartin, 2017). Although 'belonging' is generally understood as a need/motivation to affiliate with and be accepted by

members of a group, this concept has much more depth beyond affiliation as it also evokes cultural, social, economic, and political implications (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Despite being conceptually distinctive, taken together, the concepts of 'home' and 'belonging' form an inextricable and intricate relationship as the need to feel safe and secure goes hand in hand with the need to relate in harmony with others and with place. These intertwined concepts (and feelings) are interwoven across personal (identities), social (socio-political and historical), and material (external conditions) circumstances which may (or may not) affect how they are experienced by individuals. Hence contextually, informal settlements provide a unique vantage point for this exploration. It is therefore important to contextualise the study and its intentions in the broader socio-political history of South Africa (SA).

The 'Land Question' debate in South Africa has continued to take many forms and articulations. Much of this protracted discourse originates from the violent dispossession of South Africans of their land during colonial times and apartheid (Mpofu, 2014). In post-apartheid South Africa, this debate has been dominated by agrarian perspectives on land; land tenure/rights; land claims; redistribution and poverty alleviation; and agricultural policies (Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007). However, contestations about rural land are linked to urban socioeconomic conditions. Hence the discourse has been largely driven by socioeconomic perspectives that focus on how the "large-scale redistribution of land can provide redress for centuries of dispossession while contributing to the transformation of the economy and the reduction of poverty, both rural and urban" (Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007, p.2). Equally important in this discourse are the symbolic ties that bind land with cultural and ancestral significance for a large constituent of our population (Low, 1992; Asante & Mazama, 2009). To this end, the rural and urban dimensions of the debate intersect through the historical "migrant labour system and the search for durable livelihoods" (Ntsebeza & Helliker, 2013, p. 4). This historically forced economic migration was imbued within rigid and oppressive urban planning from the apartheid government – spatial apartheid, which refers to the placing of marginalised population groups in remote areas that made access to socioeconomic

opportunities difficult (Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007). It has been nearly three decades since the demise of apartheid, in which millions of black[1] people were forced out of 'white-only areas' to live in homelands and crowded townships. However, the apartheid-era architecture of cities and towns continues to be a domineering feature of urban landscapes (Mwanza, 2018).

Since 1994, more black people have moved closer to cities for economic reasons, however, economic inequality has worsened (Mwanza, 2018). To this end, historical spatial injustices continue to exist in urban areas, and they have been exacerbated by the South African government's inefficiency in providing formal housing, infrastructure and basic services in periphery urban areas (Strauss, 2019). While urban populations continue to grow and migration patterns persist unabated (two-thirds of people live in towns and cities in South Africa – United Nations, 2018), urban informal settlements have continued to be a thorny grey area in the overall debate of land in South Africa. As Koot et. al. (2019) suggest, "The political dynamics of land and belonging cannot be seen apart", hence "the question of whom the land belongs to, and equally important, who belongs to the land – is more relevant than ever in independent, post-apartheid South Africa" (p. 342).

As a democratic society, South Africa remains beset with racial prejudice and racial exclusion as distinctive features of South African society. Through coloniality, which refers to the long-established patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism (and apartheid), South Africa remains subjected to entrenched racial inequalities and social structures which continue to have significant impacts on people's identities and the lives they live (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Befittingly, the legacies of colonialism and apartheid are no more evident elsewhere than in South African informal settlements. Informal settlements are residential locations that are deemed not to comply with municipal requirements for conventional or formal residence (SERI, 2019). They are places where housing units have been constructed on land that the inhabitants have no legal claim to, and these areas often do not

[1] In this study, the term 'black' is used in an inclusive sense to include racial groups that were socially and politically discriminated against during apartheid (Biko, 1987).

comply with planning and building regulations (United Nations,1997). As a result, such settlements often lack the basic services and infrastructure that are present in more formalised housing (United Nations, 1997). Informal residential areas are also characterised by inadequate infrastructure; population densities that are uncontrolled and unhealthily high; poor access to social services (including education, health, and employment opportunities); inadequate access to safe water and sanitation; lack of electricity; and health hazards (UN-Habitat, 2013). In essence, these areas are not conducive and ideal for livelihoods to flourish and their "development challenges are ever more complex and concentrated" (UN-Habitat 2013, p.3), hence they are believed to be the physical manifestation of urban poverty and inequality (UN-Habitat, 2013).

While there have been numerous studies that focus on the informality of these settlements and their various social and economic deficits (Bank & Hart, 2019), this research project prioritises the lives that breathe life into these spaces, going beyond mere livelihoods and exploring the lives that are lived there. Although literature has been emerging on this topic (Royston & Ebrahim, 2019), there remains a vacuum in understanding how people, especially women, articulate the primal needs of belonging and feelings of home (or the lack thereof) in these unfavourable conditions. In the context of persisting gender inequality, women's roles and participation in informal settlements have been of particular interest to civil rights organisations, academics, and other actors. According to Matsie (2019), the disparities in access to resources within informal settlements are coupled with gender relations that favour male power and marginalise the agency, influence, and voices of women. Women are thus collapsed into a vulnerable grouping as they bear the brunt of such precarious living conditions. They face more security risks (crime and gender-based violence); carry most of the burden for domestic and caring duties; face gender disparities in the division of labour; and have limited access to other streams of income, resources, land, and social services (Matsie, 2019). In summary, this is a case of vulnerable people in vulnerable places. Although women face a myriad of challenges in informal settlements, such blanket accounts of vulnerability inadvertently silence the nuances of the dynamics at play. Hence it is

important to capture their voices and narratives to make sense of their challenges and unearth their strengths, agencies, and powers in relation to the places they occupy.

1.2. Setting the Scene

The places in which people's lives unfold are as important as the stories people tell about themselves in those places. Setswetla is an informal settlement that is located on the periphery of the historic and famous township of Alexandra in the north of Johannesburg – a stone's throw away from the most expensive square mile in Africa (Sandton) and roughly 20 kilometres away from the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD). Alexandra township has grown considerably since its early development in the 1900's and it has always been mired in controversy. As Bonner and Nieftagodien (2001), explain, the township of Alexandra was established through colonial endeavours of racially discriminate evictions and land dispossessions. Furthermore, "Alexandra was laid out as a freehold township for Africans and coloureds in 1912. It was one of a handful of freehold African townships in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area...and the majority of new immigrants who initially bought land in Alexandra were formerly relatively prosperous sharecroppers and labour tenants squeezed out of white South Africa's farms" (p. 17).

Alexandra was initially created to accommodate 30 000 people, however, numbers have grown considerably and its population is now estimated to be nearly a million residents (Mafisa, 2019). Although formal residency in the form of segregated housing and hostels were built during the apartheid era, the township has gone beyond its means in terms of the people that it can accommodate in the context of Johannesburg's ever-growing working-class population (Nyapokoto, 2014). Additionally, post-apartheid plans to develop the township have not been successful (Public Protector, 2021). Consequently, the observations made by Ferrinho et al. (1998) in the late 1990's are sadly still relevant as they remarked that "The neglect of housing and other basic services, essential for a dignified family life, has resulted in a dense urban slum, violent and poor" (p.35).

Setswetla was founded in the 1980's during apartheid when the Alexandra township (which suffered severe service delivery problems) could no longer cater for the continued influx of people from rural hinterlands in the pursuit of employment in Johannesburg (Thatcher, 2021). As what can be called a 'spillover area', to date, it is still contested whether Setswetla is part of Alexandra or not (Mvulane, 2020) (See Figure. 1). Setswetla residents have historically expressed that the informal settlement is marginalised and excluded from developments that take place in the greater Alexandra region (Bonner and Nieftagodien, 2016). Notably, Setswetla has also followed Alexandra's population growth trend as its population and dwellings have grown considerably (Mvulane, 2020). Although difficult to enumerate due to the settlement's informality, it is estimated that more than 5000 families call Setswetla home (Webster, 2020).

Setswetla lies on an unstable, dangerous illegal dump infill along a 100-year flood line (Onatu & Ogra, 2013). While this informal settlement has borne the name 'Setswetla' for decades, the literature surrounding its genealogy, particularly its naming, remains elusive. In a variety of published works, the name also bears different alterations. Among others, the most utilised alterations are "Setswetla" (Modise, 2017) and "Stjwetla" (Webster, 2020). Although not harmful, perhaps these alterations symbolise the unsettled nature of the informal settlement. Moreover, they may also signify how a place (and its name) can have different meanings for different people (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982). Although there is no consensus on the origination of the name, 'Setswetla' (or Sjwetla) colloquially bears a derogatory connotation to nakedness. In the late 1980's, the late South African musician and composer, Spokes H, released a song titled "Sjwetla". Within the song's fast-paced and gyrating beats, he repeatedly asks a lady "Baby can you do it…this modern dance?" He continues to say "Hela ngwana, shapa stjwetla" (Hey baby, get naked) (Spokes H, 1987). The song effectively instructs the listener to undress and dance in the nude. To this end, "Setswetla" means "naked in public" and it is a humiliating and degrading colloquial noun and verb. Symbolically, there is something curious about this name in relation to the informal settlement as the place figuratively lays bare and naked – unclothed of the

important socioeconomic infrastructure and services that usually provide warmth and dignity in more formal settlements.

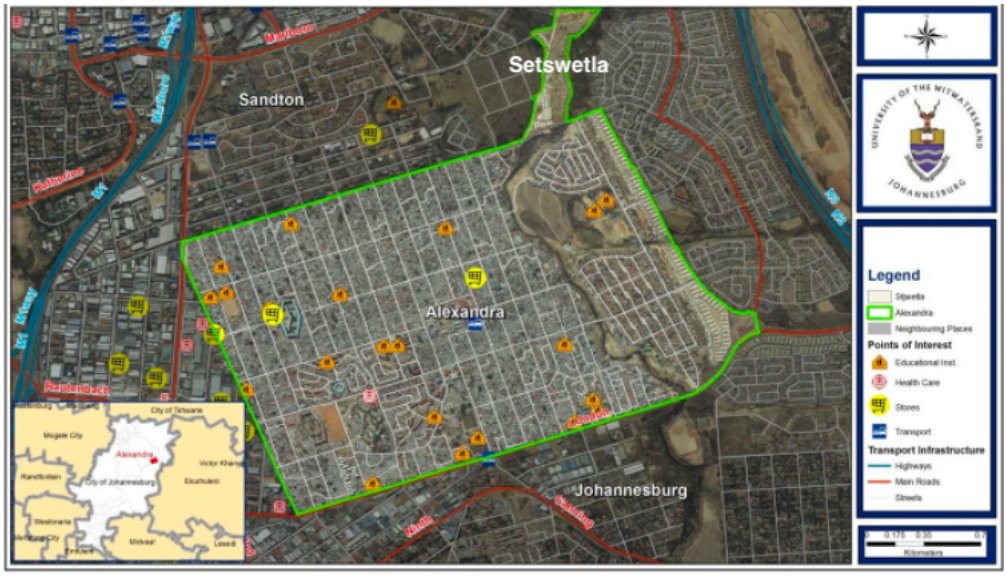

Figure 1 Setswetla on the Periphery of Alexandra

Setswetla is one of the most vulnerable locations around Alexandra due to its proneness to flash floods in rainy seasons as the Jukskei River overflows and often sweeps away shacks that have been built on the river banks (Mvulane, 2020). Additionally, the site is also vulnerable to shack fires as the shacks are built in extreme proximity to each other (Mafisa, 2019). These are critical vulnerabilities amid the socioeconomic challenges that plague Setswetla such as high levels of poverty, crime, unemployment, and lack of social services, including poor water and sanitation infrastructure (Nyapokoto, 2014). In 2021, the office of the Public Protector of South Africa (with the South African Human Rights Commission - SAHRC) released a report that investigated allegations of "Poor socio-economic conditions, lack of essential services, potential prejudice, and impact on fundamental human rights in Alexandra" (Public Protector, 2021, p. 1). The investigation focused on the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP) which was devised in the early 2000's for the development of Alexandra and its surrounding areas under the directorship of the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) (Public Protector, 2021). At least 1.3 billion rand was earmarked for the project, however, accountability of expenditure has been questionable (Mafata, 2022). Among damning findings of corruption within the project, the public protector reported that rampant mismanagement had led to a significant decline in municipal services

in Alexandra by the CoJ, and this has resulted in inadequate housing; widespread land invasion and property invasions; lack of maintenance and degradation of municipal buildings; heavy pollution; inadequate social welfare services; insufficient police presence and services, among other challenges (Public Protector, 2021). The Public Protectors' findings on Setswetla are declared below with an accompanying image (see Figure 2) of the informal settlement.

- Each tap is shared by nearly one hundred households.
- Community taps are not connected to water and drainage infrastructure, resulting in puddles and furrows of water across the settlement.
- There is a lack of law enforcement to prevent the spread of illegal constructions of shacks – some of which lie in dangerous areas such as the Jukskei River and under dangerous electricity lines.
- Chemical lavatories are shared by more than six households, and they are located more than half a kilometre from their houses.
- Chemical lavatories are allegedly only cleaned or drained once a week by Pikitup.
- Some children were found not to be in school because their parents are illegal immigrants.
- There were illegal electricity connections with live wire lines across the informal settlement.
- There was rubbish was strewn indiscriminately within different parts of the settlement.
- The Jukskei River is heavily polluted due to uncontrolled solid waste and human waste into the river. (Public Protector, 2021, p.65)



Figure 2 Setswetla near the Jukskei River

Public Protector Report (2021)

These findings paint a vividly grim picture of Setswetla and signify the extent of municipal neglect and violations of basic human rights in Setswetla. In a short walkabout documentary, Menyonyo (2022), an artist and resident of Alexandra, called Setswetla "the worst place to live in", and the findings from the public protector report prove that his assertion was justified. As the contextual texture of the area has been fleshed out, the next section provides the research aims and questions that guided this study.

1.3. Research Aims

While literature that explores conceptualisations of belonging in informal settlements remains limited (Njwambe et al., 2019; Mosselson, 2010), there are a handful of investigations into how narratives of 'home' are constructed (and reconstructed) in relation to such contexts (e.g., Njwambe et al., 2019; Du-Rand & Engelbrecht, 2001; Bock, 2014). Accordingly, this study argues that narrative inquiry offers a potentially powerful avenue in the exploration of 'belonging' and 'home' in the context of informal settlements. This study appreciates 'belonging' and 'feeling at home' as integral human needs. Hence this topic was considered worthy of study as it has the potential to reveal dormant stories of person-place relations within informal settlements, and how they relate to the larger socio-political and historical state of affairs of South Africa. Fay (1996) maintains that the relationships between stories and lived experiences show the way in which we understand the world, ourselves and others. Hence narrative identity, which is a "person's internalised and evolving life story" (McAdams, 2013, p.1), becomes a significant pathway to explore the topic at hand, especially since the act of living is inherently narrative (Fay, 1996).

This research project was therefore informed by (auto)biographical narrative inquiry which takes the form of a life story or life history to explore the lived experiences of people's daily lives, including their past, present and future (Kim, 2016). More importantly, this inquiry focuses on how people make sense of their experiences and the meaning they give to the stories they tell (Denzin, 1989). The study aimed to explore how young and older women's life stories made sense and gave meaning to the personal and social worlds in which they live and function. The study sought to uncover their relationship with place

and the creation and expression of their own identities in this particular spatial context. By exploring their narrative identities and how these inform conceptualisations of 'home' and 'belonging', the study hopes to add a different dimension to the growing knowledge that already exists regarding the topics of informal settlements, home, belonging, and identity in South African literature. The study was conducted through narratives because, as Riessman (2008) articulates, "most obviously, individuals and groups construct identities through storytelling" (p. 8). This methodology will be discussed further in Chapter 3 (Methods chapter).

1.4. Research Questions

Informed by the backdrop and discussion above, the research questions that this study explores are as follows:

1.4.1. How do life stories (narrative identities) of women residing in Setswetla inform conceptualisations of belonging (or estrangement) and feeling at home (or the lack thereof)?

1.4.2. What are the personal experiences of women living in Setswetla and how may these be represented in relation to place?

1.4.3. What possibilities do these women imagine for their futures, and how are these represented?

1.5. Chapter Organisation

This study contains six chapters and their contents are briefly overviewed below.

Chapter one provides an introduction and rationale for the study through a brief overview of the background of the study, where it took place and the research questions that guide it.

Chapter two reviews some pertinent literature in relation to the study, thus situating it within the South African socio-political and historical context. The chapter address the 'land question' as it pertains to land reform and informal settlements in SA. It also provides the theoretical framework for the study through discussions on the concepts and theories of belonging, home, and identity.

Chapter three outlines and discusses the methods and procedures of the study, including research design, participant selection, data collection and means of data analysis. This chapter also includes ethical considerations and a reflexivity section.

Chapter four is the first analytical chapter and focuses on participants' biographical histories and how they came to reside in Setswetla, and also discusses the difficult conditions that participants live in.

Chapter 5 is the second analytical chapter and it discusses participants' collective agencies in their pursuit to belong and feel at home. The chapter also captures their collective strengths and envisioned futures.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion to the study by discussing its significance, limitations and future areas of interest that could be pursued as an outcome of this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter reviews the pertinent literature and theories that frame this study. It begins with a brief discussion on the global phenomenon of informal settlements, and then it delves into the land question while considering some national laws (and policies) that govern informal settlements. The discussion that follows presents informal settlements as a manifestation of structural violence before the politics of belonging are fleshed out through Yuval-Davis' (2006) framework. This is followed by discussions on theories of identity, belonging and intersectionality. The chapter concludes with a review of some recent studies that focus on informal settlements and belonging.

2.1. Informal Settlements as an International Phenomenon

According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), informal settlements are a global urban phenomenon (UN-Habitat, 2013). The global figure of those who reside in informal settlements grew to over 1 billion, and the majority (80%) was attributed to the Global South (developing countries) (UN-Habitat, 2013). As an indelible feature of urban areas in developing countries, informal settlements bear different colloquial names in different locales. For example, they are called Favelas in Brazil; Kachi Abadis in Pakistan; Bidonvilles (French for tin can city) in Francophone Africa; squatter camps in South Africa (Bank & Hart, 2019), and shanty towns or slums (poor crowded areas) in different parts of the world (Smit et al., 2017). Although they are not homogenous (Jenkins, 2006), a shared similarity lies in how they are often characterised by "substandard housing with the insecurity of tenure and the absence of one or more urban services and infrastructure—sewage treatment, plumbing, clean water, electricity, paved roads and so on" (Davis, 2006, p. 8). Moreover, they often sit on the peripheries of urban areas due to the unaffordability of land in urban centres (Smit et al.,2006). Economic desperation therefore leads informal settlement dwellers to reside on "land nobody wants, and which has no market value—on a steep, unstable hillside, along a polluted river or in a dangerous flood plain" (Davis, 2006, p. 10).

The persistent growth of informal settlements has led to a plethora of international literature that focuses on different aspects of these urban phenomena. For example, some studies focus on the evolution of informal settlements across the world (Dovey et al., 2020); informal settlements and population growth (UN-Habitat, 2013); legal frameworks and informality (Chiodelli & Moroni, 2014); informal settlements as physical and social constructs (Mahabir et al., 2016); and socioeconomic characteristics of informal settlements (Wekese et al.,2011), among many others. Notably, there is also emergent international literature that focuses on the overlapping nature of informal settlements and refugee camps, placing emphasis on how these settlements are "converging spaces of global displacement" (Huq & Miraftab, 2019, p.1; Godin et al., 2017). These convergences are also seen in the temporary-to-permanence nature of some refugee camps and informal settlements (Huq & Miraftab, 2019). In Africa, where more than 60% of the urban population resides in informal settlements, there has also been a rise in the literature pertaining to these settings. Some studies on African informal settlements have looked into informal settlements as a hotbed for disease and infection (Belle et al., 2020); internal cross-border migration (Oksiutycz & Azionya; 2022); informal settlements and poverty (Turok, 2015); the challenge of informal settlements to urban planning (Awadall, 2013); public perceptions of informal settlements (Brown-Luthango et al., 2017); and in situ informal settlement upgrading, among many other topics.

To a great extent, international literature often focuses on the negative antecedents and consequences of informal settlements (Takyi et al., 2021). The present study argues that these dominant perspectives have inadvertently become 'master narratives' (McKenzie & Lafrance, 2017) as informal settlements are often viewed with a negative lens. Master narratives provide a template for how stories are told (McKenzie & Lafrance, 2017) and they "accumulate familiarity and clarity while blurring and erasing plot elements that don't fit" (Romero & Stewart, 1999, p.xiv). These master narratives perpetuate 'territorial stigmatization', which refers to the normalisation of negative constructions and the othering of certain geographical locations (Mead, 2020). Amid these often-negative perspectives (or master narratives), Melani Lombard (2014), who researched informal settlements in Mexico, argues that these settlements are prone to being misunderstood. She contends that "the lack of understanding of these

places is reflected in discourses in which particular narratives dominate, containing some problematic assumptions...that treat informal settlements as outside the 'normal' (p.3)". While it is not the purpose of the present study to synthesise global literature on informal settlements, it is important to note the global context within which it emerges and the international literature that it intends to be in conversation with.

2.2. The Land Question

Like in many other African countries, the emergence of informal settlements in South Africa has been traced back to colonial periods as colonial urban planning divided urban areas into 'European space" which was characterised by high-level urban infrastructure, and 'Indigenous space' which was characterised by poor planning, overpopulation, and marginal services (Ono & Kidokoro, 2020). The Natives Land Act of 1913 was a key policy of land dispossession in South Africa (Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007). Enacted by the Union of South Africa (the self-governing dominion of the British Empire), the act was promulgated to allocate only 7% of arable land to black people. According to Ntsebeza and Hall (2007), this law legislated territorial segregation for the first time since the establishment of the Union in 1910. Reflecting on this dispossession, Sol Plaatjie, a South African writer and political journalist, poignantly remarked, "Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African Native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth" (Plaatjie, 1982, p. 21). This reflection signifies how legislative practices not only exploited black people and appropriated their material resources but also alienated them, and robbed them of belonging in place, making them outcasts in the land of their birth.

There were other subsequent acts (e.g. the Urban Areas Act, 2923; the Slums Act, 1934 etc.) which prohibited the granting of freehold property rights to blacks on the basis that they "should only be permitted within municipal areas in so far and for so long as their presence is demanded by the wants of the white population" (Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007, p. 35). These acts eroded residential opportunities for black people in urban areas, especially in Johannesburg (Parnell, 2012) and they led to the trebling of

township populations (Nyapokoto, 2014). The advent of apartheid in 1948 was swiftly followed by more racially motivated laws (e.g. Group Areas Act of 1950; the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951) which were intended to further squeeze black people out of white areas (Mpofu, 2014) and authorise forcible removals of 'squatters' (illegal occupiers of land) off public and private land (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007).

When apartheid ended in 1994, the democratic dispensation presented South Africa with one of the most admirable constitutions in the world, laying the basis for the "construction of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous society based on justice, equality, the rule of law" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, p.3). To this end, South Africa was compelled to re-engage with the land question on democratic grounds. A key feature of this pursuit was an aspirational land redistribution programme which was constitutionally enshrined. Consequently, Section 25(5) of the constitution obligated the state to take practicable legislative measures to enable citizens to gain access to land. This resulted in the promulgation of a variety of policies that were committed to land redistribution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The constitution makes it clear that the state must "respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights" for the benefit of South African citizens (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 5). Several of these rights pertain to land restitution, including the right to equality; the right to human dignity; the right to property; the right to citizenship; and the right to housing. (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

In recent years, the South African land distribution programme has been heavily criticised for being slow-paced (Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007). In 2017, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform released the highly anticipated 2013/14 Land Audit and it was found that 79% of South African land was in private ownership, 14% was owned by the state and 7% was unaccounted for. In addition, it was also revealed that 72% of arable land in SA is owned by whites, 15% by coloureds, 5% by Indians and only 4% by blacks (Rural Development and Land Reform Department, 2017). Although this land

audit was more focused on rural and agrarian land, it still signifies how historical legislation continues to have intergenerational consequences in our unequal society. The effects of colonial and apartheid laws, therefore, remain deep-rooted within the social fabric of South African society.

Alexandra and Setswetla were greatly blighted by laws which were intended to stunt the upward mobility of black people (Nyapokoto, 2014). Although enclaved within the richest square mile in Africa and supported by post-apartheid laws that were intended to remedy years of socioeconomic segregation, the current states of Alexandra and Setswetla remain reminiscent of Thabo Mbeki's (1998) remarks when he observed that:

> "South Africa is a country of two nations, one black and the other white...One of these nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographic dispersal. It has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure. The second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor...This nation lives under conditions of a grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure" (Mbeki 1998, p.4).

2.3. Land Reform and Informal Settlements in SA

Informal settlements do not feature prominently in the broader land question debate in South Africa. As Huchzermeyer et al. (2019) suggest "urban reform is a relatively under-researched and under-considered element of the broader land-reform debate" (p.1). The South African Cities Network (SACN) also found the urban land debate to be "one of the most neglected but influential issues in post-apartheid South Africa" (SACN, 2015, p. 3). This is concerning as 64% of the South African population lives in urban areas, including 44% of those living below the poverty line (Statistics South Africa, 2016). As Mkhize (2015, p.3) highlights, urban informal settlements have been growing due to the intensity and diversity of "economic productivity, geographic location, ecological features, infrastructural capacity and socio-political dynamics" (p.3). Hence urban informal settlements are the "fastest-growing household sector in South African cities" (Royston & Ebrahim, 2019, p.1). According to the Housing Development Agency of South Africa (HAD), in 2012 more than four million people were living in urban informal settlements in South Africa (HAD, 2012). Given the fluidity of these residences, this

number is likely to have grown in the last decade (SERI, 2018). These urban areas (including informal settlements) are deemed as 'arrival cities' as they are gateways to employment opportunities (Saunders, 2010). These areas are also seen as low-cost pathways to urban economic possibilities that can influence human development and social mobility (Turok et al., 2018). It is for this reason that in urban areas, land, and the related rights to housing and services, continue to be a highly contested matter.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the right of access to adequate housing, as enshrined in section 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) is said to be the most "contested and frequently litigated socio-economic right" in the country (SERI, 2016, p. 16). Although this applicable law and its underlying principles are frequently re-interpreted and refined (SERI, 2016), this fact signifies the housing and land crisis in South Africa. The Housing Act 107 of 1999 requires all spheres of government to give priority to the needs of the poor with respect to housing development in a meaningful and consultative manner (SERI, 2016). Currently, the statute that protects residents of informal settlements is the Prevention of Illegal Eviction and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act 19 of 1998 (the PIE Act). This law was promulgated to ensure that unlawful occupiers of land are granted protection against arbitrary eviction (SERI, 2016). Another protective law is the Emergency Housing Programme, and its main objective is to provide temporary housing relief to residents of rural and urban areas in times of environmental disasters (Housing Development Agency, 2012). The last notable policy is the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme. This policy enables municipalities to allocate funding to redevelop informal settlements through the provision of infrastructure, access to basic services and tenure security in a participatory and inclusive manner (SERI, 2016). Although these policies are meant to protect dwellers of informal settlements, their implementation is often fraught with difficulties, hence they remain contested and controversial in some respects (Turok et al., 2018).

2.4. The Structural Violence of Informal Settlements

According to Royston and Ebrahim (2019, p. 1), informal settlements are "the most visible manifestation of inequitable land access in urban areas" and they bear the brunt of inequitable service

delivery, among other infringements of human rights (Mgushelo, 2014). The United Nations also notes that:

> "People living in informal settlements are particularly vulnerable to spatial, social, and economic inequalities, dependence on precarious income generation and livelihoods, poor health as well as lack of affordable housing, high vulnerability to the adverse impacts of poor and exposed environments, climate change, and natural disasters" (UN-Habitat, 2013, p. 3).

Informal settlements, as Huchzermeyer (2009) argues, are a shameful consequence of poverty and widespread inequality in South Africa. This is especially significant as South Africa has the highest Gini coefficient in the world, ranking it as the most unequal society globally (World Bank, 2022). Hence the socioeconomic difficulties experienced within informal settlements are a manifest example of what John Galtung (1969) conceptualised as 'structural violence'. Often equated with social injustice, structural violence refers to "the avoidable limitations (often socioeconomic) that society places on groups of people that constrain them from meeting their basic needs and achieving the quality of life that would otherwise be possible" (Lee, 2019, p.123). It is a phenomenon of nonphysical combat where avoidable and preventable harm to persons emerges from the unequal distribution of resources and power (Weigert, 2009). The harm is assumed to be structural as it is a product of institutions and other structures (e.g., government, police, and other state organs) that bear the responsibility of governance and administration. This form of violence limits its victims from achieving a good quality of life (Gupta, 2012) and it operates normatively as socioeconomic challenges come to be considered as ordinary difficulties of daily life (Lee, 2019). It is a silent form of violence and lacks the striking appeal of physical violence, hence it is often accepted as a matter of course (Galtung, 1969). Amid urban metropoles that accommodate the middle and upper classes, there is also a parallel reality of the working class, which Davis (2006) calls the "surplus population" (p.2). They are the "poor who have been pushed from the land only to find work intermittently, if at all, in the informal urban economy" (Davis, 2006, p.2). In sum, they are the intended victims of structural violence.

2.5. The Politics of Belonging

According to Koot et al. (2019, p. 346), "the way people belong to a place is often informed by political strategies, conscious and unconscious, through which access to various rights and resources are sought and contested." This view recognises belonging as a political and socioeconomic aspiration and struggle, and it aptly foregrounds Yuval-Davis' (2006) theoretical concept of the politics of belonging, which Crowley (1999) defined as "the dirty work of boundary maintenance" (p.15). Yuval-Davis' (2006) analytical framework looks at 'belonging' from three different analytical levels which are: social locations; identifications and emotional attachments; and ethical and political values (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This framework is useful as it explores belonging from different positionings which have implications that enmesh the individual within the broader workings of society.

In the first analytical level, Yuval-Davis (2006) emphasises how social locations, which are demographic attributes and features that people embody, are sometimes neglected in the understanding of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). From the moment we are born, we are categorised into particular races, genders, classes and nationalities to which we naturally belong (Yuval-Davis, 2006). By extension, we are also located into particular age groups, kinship groups or professions. Accordingly, Yuval Davis (2006) maintains that these are "social and economic locations which at each historical moment have particular implications vis-a-vis the grids of power relations in society" (p. 199). By way of explanation, these are not just categories because they carry different positionalities along axes of power, meaning that other categories are higher or lower than others. As Yuval-Davis (2006) notes "While people can identify exclusively with one identity category (i.e., only as blacks, only as women, only as gays etc.), their concrete social location is constructed along multiple axes of difference such as gender, class, race and ethnicity, stage in the life cycle, sexuality, ability and so on" (p. 200). Although they can be taken for granted at times, these social locations become more articulated and politicised when they are threatened in some way (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Hence a threat to social locations is equally a threat to belonging.

In the second analytical level (identifications and emotional attachments), Yuval Davis (2006) conveys the intrapersonal nature of identities and how they are important narratives that we tell ourselves and others about who we are (and who we are not). These narratives are significant in that they usually relate (directly or indirectly) to the self and/or others' impressions of what being a member of a particular grouping (national, cultural, racial, religious etc.) might mean (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Notably, these narratives are not stagnant because they shift and change. They are also temporal as they can be related to the past, present or future. Yuval-Davis (2006) also warns that constructions of belonging need not be confined to cognitive stories. This is because they demonstrate emotional investments and desires for attachment, hence they also bear affective guises. Consequently, Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 202) maintains that: "individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than positing of identity as a stable state." From this angle, identity is perceived to be constantly in transition and always producing (and reproducing) itself through complex processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

In the last analytical level of belonging (ethical and political values), Yuval-Davis (2006) notes that although social locations and identities are important aspects of belonging, even more, important are how they are valued and judged. This line of argumentation therefore leads to the interrogation of the politics of belonging. In this instance, citizenship and how it is understood plays a significant role (Yuval-Davis, 2006). If citizenship is understood to be a reciprocal relationship of rights and responsibilities between the individual and the state, the duties of the state (and the individual) become requirements instead of "mere duties" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.209). To this end, it becomes important to note the tensions that arise when the individual feels failed by the state or when the state pleads lack of resources to guarantee its responsibilities towards the individual. This of course has implications on the sense of belonging (or the lack thereof) that the individual experiences. This theoretical framework is especially significant to this study as it has the potential to reveal the multi-layered nature of how belonging and the antithetical feelings of alienation and shame are experienced among the narrative identities of women that reside in Setswetla.

In his keynote address titled 'The Psycho-Politics of Violence in South Africa', Wahbie Long (2019) maintained that structural violence inflicts shame on the poor and working classes. According to Brown (2007, p.137), "Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging, and connection." It is a feeling of indignity, humiliation, mortification, and at times betrayal (Govender & Cartwright 2021). Lewis (1971) also adds that shame is linked to unbearable threats to a core sense of identity and belonging. Notably, "Feelings of shame are difficult to escape in class society" (Long, 2019, p.6). Accordingly, democratic South Africa, with its pervasive inequalities "aggravates the psychological torture of its citizens: [since] they live in a constitutional dispensation that guarantees the equality of all yet they feel barred from enjoying its material benefits" (Long, 2019, p.7). In this way, structural violence (which manifests through the indignities of poverty and inequality), and its consequential infliction of shame on the poor and working classes, can be argued to be an antithesis to belonging and feeling at home within our imagined communities (Anderson, 1983).

2.6. Identity and Belonging

The concept of identity is an integral aspect of belonging. Anthias (2016), who critically examined and compared notions of belonging and identity, maintains that these concepts can be seen as part of the same 'family'. Bauman (1996) elaborates on this as he states that " One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence" (p. 19). As a concept, identity emerged from the interest of scholars that wanted to understand how people construct themselves and one another (Griffiths, 2018). Early theories of identity traditionally emerged from American and Eurocentric value systems which were white, western and male-dominated frames of reference (Franchi & Swart, 2003; Erikson, 1968,). Primacy was therefore given to individual development of selfhood in response to societal and internal processes, and these developmental stages

were accepted as universally applicable (Franchi & Swart, 2003). Nevertheless, postmodern theorists disputed this ideological dominance through considerations of subjectivity and relativist perspectives of the human experience.

In the South African context, there are evident inequalities concerning race, class and gender that are imbued within the structure of society and these render bounded perspectives on identity insufficient (Franchi & Swart, 2003). These 'social locations' as Yuval-Davis (2006) calls them, are markers of identity, which are variable and they have different meanings in different contexts. Furthermore, they also have social and political significance in our society. Hence for this study, identity is viewed as a complex, multifaceted, dynamic, and context-dependent construct (Franchi & Swart, 2003). This foregrounds the significance of intersectional perspectives when dealing with matters of identity.

2.6.1. Intersectional Identity and Belonging

As a country that has experienced centuries of oppression and segregation, South Africa's history has had "large-scale identity effects" (Hook, 2003, p. 114). As Durrheim et al., (2011) assert, black identity manifests as a subject position which is ubiquitous with ambivalence and conflict as 'blackness' continues to be perceived as a position of wanting, while 'whiteness' continues to be a position of privilege. The persistence of inequality therefore continues to maintain racially skewed advantages and privileges with white people enjoying a favourable share of economic activity and benefits (Durrheim et al, 2011). This can be observed from the statistics of the previous national census which found that white people's income was on average six times more than that of black people (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Despite this, racial inequality alone is not enough in the understanding of identity constructions among women because black women have been exposed to both racial and sexist prejudices, (Collier-Thomas, 1982). Hence an intersectional approach is more appropriate.

Intersectionality is a feminist standpoint which accounts for the social positioning of the social agent (Yuval-Davis, 2011). It is a vantage point that takes into account people's overlapping identities to comprehend the complexity of prejudices and discriminations that they face (Davis, 2008). It therefore

accentuates the interconnected nature of social categorisations of race, class and gender with respect to their overlapping and interdependent nature in systems of discrimination or disadvantage (Davis, 2008). Oppression is an inescapable component when looking into black identities, particularly black women's identities. This is especially important because historically, women have been marginalised through double processes of subjugation and subordination (Davis, 2008; Kiguwa, 2001). As Blue (2001, p. 121) reminds us, "Black women, who are oppressed on all sides of those equations, are left without the luxury to ignore any one aspect of race, class, gender, or sexuality in favour of another". As identity "is an effect of discursive practices" (Butler, 1990, p.24), it remains important to study it from an intersectional approach as it is the most valid approach to analyse social stratification as a whole (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Since this study focuses on person-place relations, an intersectional approach is also significant in how it can advance "the idea that social space is integral to the production of gendered identities and subjectivities…through personal negotiation of social and material spaces imbued with power differentials" (Bradbury & Kiguwa, 2012, p. 37). In this way, spaces are not assumed to be neutral as they are influenced by social relations (Massey, 1994).

2.7. The Complexities of Home

At the core of belonging, is the importance of home or 'feeling at home' (Yuval-Davis, 2006). As Bola (2017, p. 266) notes, "Home is the first thing we experience as human beings; somewhere we know, safe and warm - somewhere that keeps us". More importantly, home is a place for "restoration, refuge and privacy" (Bechtel, 1997, p. 16). In sum, to feel at home is fundamentally to belong. As Dazkir (2018, p. 4) beautifully summarises from synthesised literature:

> Attributes of home were identified as continuity, self-expression, personal identity, social relationships, warmth, a suitable physical structure, privacy (Smith, 1994), a source of belonging, regeneration, appropriation, rootedness (Manzo, 2005), a place for contention (Makovicky, 2007), and a source of stability (Norberg-Schulz, 1985). Furthermore, cultural, socio-demographic, and psychological dimensions shape our perception of home (Lawrence, 1987).

The concept of home is dynamically rich, especially in the globalised world in which we are living. It is indeed through home (and place) that we can experience locations and create a variety of meanings

through complex interactions that unravel as we negotiate material and social aspects of the environment (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1992).

Home is also a place of identification and where identities are expressed. Smith (1994) found that when residents decorate their homes, they do so to create a warm and secure environment. In this way, homes become a canvas where people impact their surroundings in such a way that reflects their sense of self, and in so doing, they derive benefits from that (Sigmon & Whitcomb, 2002). Rechavi (2009) also maintains that meaningful objects in residents' homes often invoked memories and thoughts about loved ones, experiences and places. This is the sense of comfort, security and continuity (Lewis & Butler, 1974) that is derived from objects of "remeniscentia" where particular house items are inferred "as inducers of reminiscence" (Casey, 1987, p.110). Hence home can be considered a "natural repository for cherished possessions and memorabilia" (Sherman & Dacher, 2005, p.1). As a place of habits and rituals, for those who are spiritually/religiously inclined, it also becomes a setting for sacred religious/spiritual engagements and objects (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2005). Through these interactions with intimate spaces, residents can be in their homes while feeling connected to the external world (Rechavi, 2009). In this sense, a home is a place where belonging is sculptured and continuously refined. An enclave of protection against worldly hazards. Douglas' (1966) distinction of "home" and its "other" therefore becomes significant in this instance as "an opposition between purity (of home) and danger (of the outside world)" (Dovey, 2008, p.23). This inside/outside dialectic, as Dovey (2008, p.24) notes, is ordered along the lines of "closed and open, safety and danger, familiar and strange, self and other, [and most importantly] private and public". Notably, home is also a place that accommodates our life cycles, and it acquires different meanings in childhood, adulthood and old age (Oswald & Wahl, 2005).

Despite positive connotations, 'home' is still a complex concept as Zingmark et al. (1995, p. 12) warn that home can also be a place of "discomfort and restlessness." Manzo (2005), adds that negative meanings and emotions can also prevail, and these negative associations can lead to an absence of

belonging (e.g. abuse, poverty, etc.). In this instance, it becomes clear that home is complex, and while it can be a source of belonging, it can also be a source of estrangement. It is indeed a physical structure that bears witness to our triumphs and tragedies; preferences and peeves; contentment[s] and discontents; including our growth and decline.

2.8. Place Attachment and Place Identity

According to Twigger-Ross & Uzell (1996), people are active agents and shapers of their environments. Additionally, they often favour places that make sense to them and feel attached to places such as home (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982). Although individuals experience different places in different ways, place attachment plays a significant role in how they understand themselves and relate to others. Place attachment refers to the emotional bonding that takes place between individuals and their meaningful environments (Low & Altman, 1992). These are emotional bonds that are strengthened (or weakened) over time through residential biographies and length of residence in particular locations (Oswald & Wahl, 2005). Notably, place attachment is not only an emotional or cognitive experience as it also includes cultural/spiritual beliefs and activities that connect people to place (Low & Altman 1992).

These attachments are important for a sense of belonging and they are also anchored by families and communities. Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that the need to belong is entwined with the needs to form and sustain lasting interpersonal relationships. Hence a sense of belonging in a positive family environment where one feels supported and understood is an important aspect of how people bond with, and create meaningful environments (Bank & Hart, 2019). In the same vein, a sense of community, as conceptualised by McMillan and Chavis (1986), is integral to place attachment as it refers to the extent to which a person feels they belong within their community. It describes a shared identification, history (experience), and participation (collective agency) between a person and respective members of their community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Consequently, low levels of belonging or severance of relations within families or communities may result in estrangement, alienation or a detachment from

place (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). As a concept, place attachment aptly captures the environmental, intrapersonal, and interpersonal tenets of belonging.

It is no surprise that studies of place attachment have gained a lot of traction as 'person-place' bonds have become fragile in the face of globalisation, increased mobility and invasive environmental challenges that threaten the existence of, and our connections to, places that are salient to us (Sanders, et al., 2003). According to Scannell and Gifford (2010), place attachment conceptualisations have highlighted the distress and grief that comes with forced relocations and residential instability (i.e. threats to home), which are repetitive traumatic events in South African history and shape the contemporary socio-political landscape (Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007). Moreover, these salient bonds are seen in how people who are attached to particular environments can experience a heightened sense of safety despite present dangers (for example during war, conflicts, etc.) (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In light of this, the exploration of place attachment in informal settlements therefore becomes important in relation to the present study.

According to Deaux and Burke (2010), an individual's identity is firmly anchored in, and cannot be understood separately from the society (or community) within which it exists. This leads us to what Proshansky (1978) conceptualised to be 'place-identity'. Proshansky (1978) defines place identity as "those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioural tendencies relevant to a specific environment" (p. 155). He further describes this sense of self in place as a "potpourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings" (Proshansky, 1978, p. 60). As a unique substructure of the self, place-identity plays a significant role in personal identities; the intelligibility of actions or activities; the expression of tastes and preferences; and it can also mediate efforts to change environments (Durrheim & Dixon, 2000). In this way, place identity can be understood as the self-definitions that are derived from places i.e., the identification of individuals with place and

the extent to which place plays a role in how the individuals define/describe themselves. Notably, place identity emerges when individuals integrate their experiences about the physical environment (thoughts, values, memories, categorizations, preferences) into their definitions of themselves (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). For this study, place attachment and place identity were deemed significant because of their potential to accentuate conceptualisations of 'belonging' and 'home' among participants as they identify and negotiate with their intimate spaces and social environments. Turning from this theoretical framework and the discussion of core concepts, the focus will now shift to a review of literature, particularly of studies focused on belonging and informal settlements in South Africa.

2.8. Informal Settling in Pursuit of Home and Belonging

In the South African context, 'belonging' has been largely studied from racial (identity) and social cohesion perspectives (Bock, 2014; Mosselson, 2010). This is unsurprising given the racial history of segregation in the country. As the democratic dispensation ushered in aspirations of equality, it became important to interrogate the extent to which people remained marginalised despite political democratic rights and how socioeconomic inequality remained highly racialised. Despite the prolonged focus on belonging in relation to racial inequalities, there is a steady emergence of literature that focuses on belonging (albeit in a broad, non-conceptual sense) in relation to place, and some of this work focuses on informal settlements.

As previously discussed, the pursuit of land possession is inextricably linked with socioeconomic rights and better livelihoods. Despite this, as this study argues, it is also a pursuit to belong. This sentiment was vividly captured by a research report which was published by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI). In 2019, SERI synthesised findings and implications from three separate research reports as part of their 'Informal Settlement Research Series' (SERI, 2019). The report which was titled 'Informal Settlements: Norms, Practices and Agency', was based on site-based parallel research which was conducted in Ratanang (Klerksdorp, North West) – "Left Behind" (2019), Marikana (Phillipi, Cape

Town) – "Our Place to Belong" (2019), and Siyanda (Kwa Mashu, Kwazulu Natal) – "The Promised Land" (2019).

This research series was aimed at shedding light on "the more plausible measures that can be taken to improve how informal settlement upgrading is carried out" (SERI, 2019, p.5). This is in light of the national government's plans for informal settlement upgrading which were: 'Breaking New Ground: A Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Human Settlements (BNG)' (2004) and the 'Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP)' (2018) and they were being undertaken by the Human Settlements Department (HSD) of South Africa to improve living conditions in informal settlements (HSD, 2019). According to Huchzermeyer (2010, p. 137) both these plans were released to shift the narrative around informal settlements from 'eradication' towards i*n situ* 'upgrading' in desired locations. The synthesised publication from SERI asserted that informal settlements are not as 'informal' as they are presented to be because:

> "People organised themselves individually and collectively to secure access to land where the market, the economy and the state were failing. They [residents] organised their residential and economic land uses, they self-provisioned access to the most rudimentary services and imposed their own order on an environment that existed without formal recognition. They defended against eviction, often brutal, and often on multiple occasions" (SERI, 2019, p. 74).

Althusser's (1971) concept of "interpellation" is therefore significant in this regard, as it recognises "how the human subject is both formed as an entity through the social order and yet has agency within it" (Althusser, 1971, p. 25). It was indeed through a collective agency that residents of these informal settlements were able to secure access to land, water and housing rights (SERI, 2019). Notably, this report also recognised the resilience of dwellers living in informal settlements. Dyer and McGuinness (1996) define resilience as the capacity for individuals to overcome adversity, and in this report, resilience was observed in how residents endured difficult circumstances and external shocks such as unpredictable weather and possible evictions. It was on this note that SERI advocated for the upgrading

of informal settlements to be considerate of existing agencies, arrangements, and practises of the settlements being upgraded (SERI, 2019).

Although this report emphasises how difficult life in the 'informal' was, a core theme that was found across all three informal settlements was the need for recognition and belonging by the dwellers (SERI, 2019). As captured in the report, "Over and above the material needs for access to land and services, the research also found that achieving recognition and a sense of belonging were fundamental to residents" (SERI, 2019, p. 79). This finding highlights that the political dynamics of land are intertwined with belonging, as asserted by Koot et al. (2019).

In 2019, Bank and Hart (2019) published a study that explored land reform and belonging from a placemaking perspective. Placemaking is defined as the "construction of place by a variety of actors and means, which may be political and discursive but also spatial, social and cultural" (Bank and Hart, 2019, p. 15). In their study, Bank and Hart (2019) maintained that informal settlements present a variety of challenges (lack of social infrastructure, lack of electricity, water, sewage, crime etc.) to residents and this results in being *unsettled* and lacking a sense of placeness. Consequently, residents of informal settlements find themselves in insecure, precarious states that infringe on their ability to achieve *homemaking* (feeling at home) (Bank & Hart, 2019). Despite this, they noted that residents of informal settlements often enjoy a sense of social cohesion based on their ideas and experiences of collective struggles (Bank & Hart, 2019).

In another study, Njwambe, Cocks and Vetter (2019) explored belonging in informal settlements in relation to rural-urban migration. Their study sought to interrogate the relationship that migrants have with 'Ekhayeni' - their rural family home. They collected data from 36 migrants who were originally from Centane (a rural area in the Eastern Cape) and staying in Khayelitsha, a peripheral informal settlement in Cape Town. Njwambe et al. (2019) collected and interpreted migrants' narratives of life in the city and returning home in terms of perspectives of place attachment. Their study found that the

landscapes of the rural home remained very central to migrants' cultural identity, belonging and well-being while in the city (Njwambe et al., 2019). Their analysis showed that living in informal settlements (while working in the city) was an insecure pursuit due to landlessness, poor job security, low wages, rising costs of living and lack of social security, while the rural homes still provided 'insurance' (Njwambe et al., 2019) and security. To this end, the majority of modern migrants continue to "perceive urban areas as a temporary space for work and economic gain, while the rural area remains ekhayeni – a rural home with cultural and ancestral significance (Njwambe et al., 2019, p. 415).

As mentioned by Bank and Hart (2019), collective struggles among residents of informal settlements are important to explore in relation to belonging, and Storey's (2021) study sheds some light on this subject matter. Storey (2021) conducted a study that looked into access to water in informal settlements in Cape Town. Since formal water supplies are close to non-existent in these informal settlements, Storey (2021) sought to explore how water infrastructure was created, shared and maintained in Khayelitsha. Expectedly, residents were very resourceful in filling in the gaps to access proper water systems. Although makeshift and crude, these water systems provided a lifeline to the community and their utilisation lay at the behest of every user. Storey (2021, p. 1) noted that "residents of informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa, access water through a maze of infrastructural pieces stitched together by social connections, political solidarities, and intersecting needs". At the core of Storey's argument is that structural exclusions may have led to the emergence of informal technologies which elicit/unearth new forms of belonging (belonging by exclusion) in South Africa's informal settlements. In this sense, belonging is co-constructed through collective agencies and collective resilience.

These studies are important in how they shed some light on belonging within South African informal settlements, hence this study builds on them (in a theoretical manner) in its attempt to capture more intimate narrative accounts of person-place relations vis-à-vis 'belonging' and 'home'. As elaborated in the next chapter, this was done through explorations of the storied lives of nine women in Setswetla.

Chapter 3: Study Design and Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological framework of this study. It starts with a discussion of the methodological approaches employed and this is followed by a description of the participants who took part in the study. The procedures utilised in the process of data collection are then discussed, followed by a methodological discussion of how the data were analysed. Finally, ethical considerations are explored before the chapter concludes with a critical reflexive reflection to situate the authorial voice within the study.

3.1. Methodological Approach: Narrative Inquiry

This study is broadly rooted in an interpretivist, phenomenological paradigm and recognises that participants are also active and powerful agents of their narratives or life histories (Munro, 1998). This paradigm is appropriately adopted through a qualitative research design as the study is concerned with the lived subjective experience of individuals (Smith & Osborn, 2007) and "the way in which people make meaning in their lives" (Henning et al., 2004, p.20). Qualitative approaches are rich in diversity. As Creswell (2013, p. 5) maintained, "Those undertaking qualitative studies have a baffling number of choices of approaches". For this study, narrative inquiry and photovoice were employed.

Narrative inquiry is a specific type of qualitative research where the participants are asked to talk about their experiences in the form of a story (Leiblich et al., 1998). As Jackl and Taylor (2020) assert, stories or narratives are told so that listeners can get a sense of what it is like to experience the world of the narrator. According to Webster and Mertova (2007), narrative inquiry is an effective method for gathering individual experiences, thoughts and feelings. This approach provides researchers with a "rich framework through which they can investigate the ways human beings experience the world through stories" (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013, p. 4). Narrative inquiry is rooted in interpretive hermeneutics and emanates from the notion that human beings can understand and give meaning to their lives through stories (Squire et al., 2008). Although popular, narrative inquiry is a complex and difficult mode of research to pursue (Squire et al., 2008). As narrative inquirers, we are beset with challenges concerning the excavation of stories; dilemmas regarding prioritising stories (which narratives are worthy?); and

sometimes interviews do not produce desired lengthy responses and instead, we get short interviews with brief, fragmented answers (Kim, 2015). Despite this, narrative research remains compelling as it leads to a more profound understanding of the human condition (Kim, 2015), and is a particularly powerful tool for linking psychological (personal) and social (collective) realities. Squire et al., (2008) elaborate on the significance of narrative below:

> By focusing on narrative, we are able to investigate not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them and by what means; the mechanisms by which they are consumed; how narratives are silenced, contested or accepted and what, if any, effects they have. For many of us, problematic as they are, narratives carry traces of human lives that we want to understand (p. 2).

In addition to this, narrative inquiry also holds the potential to reveal intricate and contradictory layers of meaning, thus leading to a richer understanding of individuals in their respective contexts (Andrews, 2008). This research focuses on women's narratives of identity in relation to place, exploring how participants navigate and construct selfhood (Kim, 2015) through the storied nature of identity construction (Squire, 2008; McAdams, 1997). This is vital because, through our collection of people's stories, we can grasp truths about their experiences as they express how they want to be understood (Riessman, 2008). Through this exploration, we are also able to observe how biographical narratives are constructed and the imaginative work involved when they are disrupted and require reconstruction (narrative reconstruction) (Williams, 1984). This is supported by McAdams (1993):

> "If you want to know me, then you must know my story, for my story defines who I am. And if I want to know myself, to gain insight into the meaning of my own life, then I, too must come to know my own story" (p.11).

This study adopts an experience-centred approach where the focus is on narratives as the means of human sense-making and the meaning-making of experience (Squire, 2008). Polkinghorne (1988) describes narrative meaning as a "cognitive process that organises human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes" (p.1). In this way, we can explore individual and internal representations of phenomena (events, thoughts and feelings), which are given external expression through narrative

(Squire, 2008). This is done with an acknowledgement of the temporal variations that exist across the different circumstances within which people live their lives (Squire, 2008). The experience-centred approach is advantageous as it focuses on the constructive powers of narrative and captures stories that have social effects by giving voice to people that have been traditionally marginalised (Squire, 2008). Since personal narratives are sequential and meaningful (Squire, 2008), for this study participants' narratives were explored according to their progressions and evolutions from childhood experiences to the present day. Accordingly, selfhood is understood as told-into-being (Bradbury, 2020) where the stories that participants tell of their past and present social contexts helped to make meaning, render possibilities of new understandings and offer opportunities to imagine new futures. This is in line with Bradbury's (2012, p. 342) reminder that "we need to think about the past in ways that will enable us to rethink the present and construct the future."

3.2. Participants

This research study is part of a larger multi-disciplinary project that is looking into greywater treatment in Alexandra. The project is called Accessible Greywater Solutions for Urban Informal Townships (URBWAT[2]) and it is led by academics from the University of the Witwatersrand. While URBWAT focuses on the built environment through the construction of wetlands in Setswetla, this study focuses attention on salient psychosocial dynamics and narratives of the experience of those who live in the informal settlement. Since the URBWAT project is a well-established and known entity in the community of Setswetla, research participants were initially sourced through the project. According to Fossey et al. (2002), appropriateness and adequacy are important guidelines when coming to qualitative research sampling. Hence the sampling process was intended to attract participants and informants who were most appropriate to provide relevant data that were aligned with the aims of this research.

[2] [2] URBWAT (Urban Water - Accessible Grey Water Solutions for Urban Informal Townships in South Africa) is working in Alexandra and they are exploring implementations of alternative grey-water treatment systems in the form of constructed wetlands. The project draws on a variety of fields (biological sciences, social science and engineering) to understand the specific context with a view to designing, building, implementing and monitoring a grey-water treatment system which will exceed the lifespan of the funding. Professor Andrew Thatcher (Chair of Industrial Psychology at University of the Witwatersrand) is the Principal Investigator for URBWAT's social science division. This research project is funded by URBWAT.

Purposeful sampling was therefore utilised in this study. It is a type of non-probability sampling method in which participants are identified and selected due to their relation, knowledge and experience with the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Since the core research questions were specifically intended for residents of Setswetla, 'residency in Setswetla' was a fundamental criterion for participation in the study. As alluded to in the introductory section, another important criterion was gender as the study intended to capture women's narratives. However, this approach recognises that women are always "more than (just) women" (Bradbury & Kiguwa, 2012, p.32) and that the selection of a single aspect of identity as most significant is always contextually dependent and fluid (Ndlovu, 2012).

As an attempt to capture generationally balanced narratives, the nine participants selected were young (mid 30's and below); middle-aged (late 30's to late 50's); and older (60's and above). Two mother-daughter family pairs were included in the sample. Although the sample was purposive, snowball sampling was also utilised where existing research participants helped recruit others through their acquaintances (Palinkas et al., 2015). While the sample size was small (nine participants), it was appropriate for this kind of in-depth and interpretive study.

The process of recruiting participants broadly began as a rapport-building exercise before data collection could take place. After two visits to Setswetla under the auspices of URBWAT, I felt I was prepared to start recruiting participants on a bright September Tuesday morning. My first day of fieldwork coincided with a weekly soup kitchen for the elderly which is run by Magdeline, one of the research participants whom I previously met through URBWAT. As a community leader and founder of a Non-Profit Organisation that serves the community of Setswetla, she was my initial point of contact.

As I walked towards the passage that led to her home, I was greeted by a gratifying aroma of curried cabbage which was being cooked on the stove. As I knocked and entered Magdeline's house, I found her with two of her team members cooking and preparing the food to be served on the day. I politely

asked if I could join in the cooking and they joyfully agreed with Magdeline saying “We could never say no to an extra pair of hands”. I spent the morning of that day assisting the soup kitchen team with preparing food – they assigned me to meat duty. A few hours later around midday, elderly community members started trickling in and they were given juice before the food was served. Magdeline’s soup kitchen receives a variety of soon-to-expire foods from Woolworths on Mondays, hence it is convenient for the soup kitchen to take place on Tuesdays, while the food is still fresh.

Although there were a lot of casual conversations on this day, it also became an opportunity for me to explain my reason for being there and the purpose of my research as a way to entice interest for participation. Through this shared experience, I was able to have a feel of the environment, build rapport and connect with some of the residents. This therefore became a day of connecting with potential research participants and scheduling times for when we could be able to hold our interviews. During the scheduling of an interview (see information sheet – Appendix A), I would kindly ask my participants to take photos of things that were meaningful to them - whether it was something they liked or did not like - in their homes or their environments. Fortunately, all participants had camera phones or alternative means of capturing photos as requested to aid the photo-narrative aspect of the study. For this reason, sample. In this way, participants also played an active and participatory role in the collection of data (Langa, 2008).

As weeks went by, I got familiar with the area and its people. Hence I was able to approach more participants who fit the criteria. I politely told them about my research and politely asked them to partake in the study. Not everyone who was approached agreed to participate in the study. Nevertheless, those who took part in in-depth narrative interviews came with at least two photos that they would talk about as requested. The interviews were semi-structured and this flexible approach made ample space for spontaneous narratives to emerge. Appendix B provides the interview schedule of open-ended questions that were asked to participants. Although participants were all black women, they varied in age,

ethnicity, length of time in Setswetla, home language and places of origin. The profiles of the nine research participants are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Research Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	**Age**[3]	**Place of origin**	**Occupation**	**Language of Interview**	**Length of time in Setswetla (years)**	**Living with:**
Karabo Malatji	45/F/B	Marble Hall (Limpopo)	Self-Employed	Sepedi	20+ (10 years at Jukskei River and 8 years in Greenhouse)	Husband, 2 children and 2 grandchildren
Magdeline	65/F/B	Soweto (Gauteng)	Unemployed/NGO leader	Setswana	16+	Alone
Mavis	38/F/B	Alexandra (Gauteng)	Unemployed	isiZulu	16+	Husband and 3 children
Wendy Khumalo	62/F/B	Brits (North West)	Domestic Worker (part time)	Setswana	16+	1 child
Sibongile	48/F/B	Kwa-Nongoma (Kwazulu-Natal)	Unemployed	isiZulu	9+	Partner and daughter
Mpho Khumalo	30/F/B	Brits (North West)	Self-Employed	Setswana	16+	Partner and 2 children
Lerato	22/F/B	Katlehong (Gauteng)	Unemployed	Setswana	7+	Partner and two kids (pregnant)
Ayanda Malatji	18/F/B	Setswetla (Gauteng)	Learner (Matric)	Setswana	18+ 20+ (10 years at Juisker River and 8 years in Greenhouse)	Mother, Father, 2 siblings and 2 cousins
Jabulile	24/F/B	Botlokwa (Limpopo)	Unemployed	Setswana	18+	

3.3. Data Collection

The process of data collection is a critical aspect of the research process. As previously noted, for this study, data collection comprised two complementary methods of in-depth (narrative) interviews and photovoice. This study adopted Tom Wengraf's Biographical-Narrative-Interpretative-Method (BNIM) during the interviewing process. As an interviewing technique, BNIM enables in-depth expression and

[3] F – Female

comprehension of "the complexities of individual and collective lived experiences in and across time" (Wengraf, 2001, p. 56). The technique draws on fundamental topics within biographical research such as memory, agency, and temporality as a way of exploring participants' unique subjectivities through the storying of their experiences (Wengraf, 2001). Interviews with participants differed in length - some lasted for 45 minutes and others lasted for up to 2 hours. The interviews also took place in various locations within Setswetla. Some interviews took place inside participants' homes, and others were held outside due to a lack of privacy in participants' homes, among other reasons. The data collection process was a month and a half long (September-October 2021) and I made 15 visits to Setswetla during that time.

Generally, the data collection process was collaborative in nature and this helped in the co-construction of the emerging data. The process remained dynamic through how informants chose to express themselves and share what was meaningful to them. The adoption of a narrative approach was useful in this regard as it focused on the person while enabling them to tell their own story in whatever way they chose to and omit what they wanted to be untold (Squire, 2008). The in-depth interviews had a latent temporal structure which traversed the past, present and future (Wengraf, 2001). Interviews were initiated with an open-ended question (see Appendix B) and this invited the participants to share whatever came to mind regarding who they were, where they were from, and how they came to live in Setswetla. Participants also expressed their personal experiences of life in Setswetla, what brought them joy (or despair) and what disheartened them. Future narratives were also elicited where participants were invited to think about (or rethink) their imagined futures (Bradbury & Clarke, 2012; Wengraf, 2001). In essence, the interview process was a reflective exercise where participants shared their unvoiced narratives and prospects. Follow-up questions were asked where relevant to capture the significance of particular experiences or phenomena.

Because the focus was on narratives of place-identity, home and belonging, these narratives were facilitated by the photovoice technique. Put simply, photovoice is an action-oriented data collection

method that enables participants to capture their photographs which are incorporated into the interview process to produce photo narratives (Marsh et al., 2016). This technique was first introduced by Collier (1957) and it has been utilised in a variety of disciplines ever since. The inclusion of this technique is accordant with Squire and Esins' (2013) assertion that narrative methodologies may be enriched by visual methodologies, especially where the focus is space and place (Bradbury & Kiguwa, 2012). According to Marsh et al. (2016), photovoice helps to promote dialogue and elicit more information from the research participant while aiding the in-depth interview for richer data. Rose (2016) also adds that photovoice is significant in narrative studies as it encourages participants to explain their chosen photographs, thus leading to greater insights into the individuals' experience and stimulating participants to talk about things that are often viewed as normal parts of everyday life. Hence photos may lead participants to talk about thoughts and feelings that have laid dormant (Harper, 2002).

Photovoice may also promote collaboration and mutual respect between the researcher and the participant as the research participant will be more directly involved in the research process. As Rose (2016, p. 7) asserts, "This collaboration can empower participants to become co-researchers as they share the images they have created and explain their meaning to the researcher in the interviews…they become the expert in their experience". Since the purpose of narrative inquiry is to present an individual's story to the listener/reader (Webster & Mertova, 2007), the incorporation of a photo, elicits personal meanings and explanations of the image as assigned by the research participants themselves. The selected photographs aided the interviews as they facilitated a narrative recollection and meaning-making that pertained to participants' experiences and relationships with place and space. They therefore solicited different means of perceiving ordinary spaces and advanced the narration of participants' experiences within their social milieu.

According to Kim (2015, p.239), "Stories are about [personally experienced] human plights…stories of those who experience human plights every day tend to get buried. Hence the role of narrative inquiry is to excavate those stories and use them as seeds for social justice". On the same coin, Cowling (2005)

recognises the reflection and the desire for positive change that accompanies storytelling and dialogue. In this context, photovoice was utilised as an attempt to visualise the relationships and plights that Setswetla residents have with their social contexts and place. Since informal settlements have already been argued to be a representation of social injustice, narrative inquiry and photovoice were deemed appropriate for this study as they had the potential to highlight how structural violence manifests in its brutal disruption of life through personal stories (and photos). It is indeed "the conversion of private trouble into public plight that makes well-wrought narrative so powerful, so comforting, so dangerous, so culturally essential (Bruner, 2002, p 35).

3.4. Narrative Thematic Analysis

Research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty.

-Bourdieu & Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 1992

Within narrative inquiry, there are numerous and creative ways of analysing data. While some researchers choose to focus on the structure of narratives, others focus on the content of the narrative as informed by their epistemological and theoretical orientations (Riessman, 2008). In line with the latter strategy, this study utilised thematic narrative analysis. Thematic narrative analysis is the most commonly used method of analysis and as Riessman (2008) asserts, it is also the most straightforward approach that often appeals to "novice researchers who are working with narrative data for the first time" (p.137). Thematic narrative analysis is concerned with the content of 'what is said' rather than 'how it is said', hence the content is the primary focus of this analysis (Riessman, 2008, p.101). Nevertheless, the intention is to also keep the story of the narrator "intact". In this case, the stories collected are analysed through the meaning ascribed to them by the storytellers and these can also have meaning beyond the narrators, creating "possibilities for social identities, group belonging and collective action" (Riessman, p.101). Often this kind of analysis is informed by the theoretical background of the research and the concrete purpose of the investigation, hence there is minimal focus on how a narrative is spoken or the structures of the speech (Riessman, 2008). In light of this study's

theoretical interest, the analysis was primarily built on linking the narrative themes that emerged with the theoretical concepts discussed in the literature review. As a result of adopting Wengraf's (2001) BNIM, the data collection process yielded a lot of rich stories where participants provided detailed accounts of recollected experiences and events. According to Wengraf (2001), these are 'Particular Incident Narratives' (PINs) and they capture accounts of particular experiences that participants have lived through. Consequently, for this study PINs became important as focal points of analysis, thus enriching the broader thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008).

This method of data analysis was appropriate for this study as it intended to explore narratives of women living in Setswetla as articulations of key theoretical concepts. In this way, the analysis interprets and compares narratives as they are constituted in the research interviews (Riessman, 2008) to observe how 'what is told' connects to the topic under investigation. Since this study has an emphasis on space and place in relation to belonging/home and narrative identities, context is treated as significant throughout the analysis. The goal of the analysis was not to generalise the results to the overall population but to "interpret the meaning and function of stories embedded in interviews" (Riessman, 2008, p. 107) consistently with the theoretical interests that framed this study. To this end, theories of belonging, home, and identity (as discussed in Chapter 2), informed the reading for themes with a careful focus on participants' experiential accounts to emphasise their phenomenological perspectives. Squire (2008) regards the alternations between theory and data as necessary 'hermeneutic circles' that develop analysis. Hence in the analysis, both inductive and deductive techniques were utilised because, while theory was used to make sense of the data, the theoretical train of thought was inspired by the data itself.

Upon the completion of data collection, all recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Since transcription is inherently the beginning of analysis (Wengraf, 2001), I started to note rudimentary patterns and themes that emerged in the transcript margins in accordance with the thematic narrative analysis. After transcribing the data, the second stage focused on the organisation and preparation of the data within each interview so I could acquire a general sense of it. In the third stage, I began manually

coding the data through emergent themes across all interviews. Coding as defined by Glesne (2016, p. 11) "is the sorting and defining those scraps of collected data…that are applicable to your research purpose." In the last stage, the data were then interpreted to create a coherent collective narrative. This process was continuously iterative in nature as I had to read and re-read transcripts to identify recurring words, ideas and patterns that were generated through the data (Butina, 2015) and think about the ways in which the data speak back to the theoretical concepts that framed the study.

This study utilised biographical narrative inquiry to explore the lived experiences and perspectives that participants have of their daily lives. Of importance was how participants made sense of the meanings of the stories they told (Denzin, 1989). Hence the meaning-making processes were vital in understanding participants' biographical narratives (narrative identities) in relation to the space they inhabit, their sense of self and their sense of belonging. These personal experience narratives (Squire 2008) were crucial in examining lived experiences, but they were not exclusively personal as they emerged within historical, social, and cultural contexts (Chase, 2005). As Leavy (2009) states "Narrative inquiry attempts to collaboratively access participants' life experiences and engage in a process of 'storying' and 're-storying' to reveal multidimensional meanings and present an authentic and compelling rendering of the data" (p.27). It was therefore these patterns of meaning that were analysed to extract themes within the data because ultimately narrative inquiry intends to understand human experience that is meaningful and human actions that take place informed by this meaningfulness, projected in stories and narratives (Polkinghorne, 1988). It is however important to note that 'meaning' as Polkinghorne (1988) reminds us, is not "tangible nor static" (p.9). Moreover, as narrative inquirers, we do not have direct access to the realm of the meaning of others as we "are at the mercy of the storyteller's recollection or introspection" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.9). The function of narrative meaning is to therefore "form an understanding of a purpose to life and join everyday actions and events into episodic units" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.9).

3.4.1. Visual Analysis

According to Langa (2008), visual analysis is more than merely describing an image as the process involves unearthing the personal meaning ascribed to images, the social contexts within which they emerge and how they are presented. Riessman (2008) posits that images can invoke emotions and imaginative identification. Additionally, they can also "generate collective critique in contemporary times" (Riessman, 2008, p. 317). The images collected in this study often evoked detailed PINs (Wengraf, 2001) where respondents narrated their experiences in relation to place, hence it was important to analyse them through their setting, gaze, and what they represented to the narrators. The visual analysis was therefore conducted in tandem with the narrative themes that emerged.

It is important to note that the data being analysed are individual narratives that form part of participants' identities and how they perceive the world and make sense of their personal experiences. The study therefore does not intend to draw any firm conclusions. On this, Mishler (1995) cautions narrative researchers by stating that:

> "It is clear that we do not find stories, we make stories. We retell our respondent's accounts through analytic redescriptions. We too are storytellers and through concepts and methods – our research strategies, data samples, transcription procedures, specifications of narrative units and structures, and interpretive perspectives - we construct the story and its meaning. In this sense, the story is always co-authored, either directly in the process of an interviewer eliciting an account or indirectly" (p. 117)

With this in mind, the study does not position itself as "the discovery of truth" (Rose, 2016, p. 8). However, it is positioned as a modest attempt of exploring and interpreting the biographical narratives of a few women in the informal settlement of Setswetla with respect to aspects of belonging and home.

3.5. Analysis Chapter Organisation

The analysis section is divided into two chapters. Despite some temporal elements, the emergent themes are not chronologically linear. Rather, they represent narrative time oscillating between time zones and episodes of participants' storied lives. The analytical chapters are divided to emphasise their narratively thematic substance. The first chapter primarily focuses on place and the structural violence of racialised inequality, while the second chapter focuses on narrative identities and agentic constructions of place identity. The themes are titled in a way that captures a creative essence and they are deepened by the application of the theoretical concepts discussed in the literature review. In Chapter 4, the first theme is titled 'The Impetus to Setswetla' and its discussion is centred on the biographical histories of participants and the circumstances that led them to reside in Setswetla. The second theme is titled 'Narratives of Social Injustice' and it provides narrative accounts of the inhumane material conditions that participants vehemently deplored but continue to endure (which are a threat to belonging), thus revealing the wrath of structural violence. The chapter concludes with a discussion on "The Burden of Shame" which is conferred on participants through the severe material deprivations and injustices that they live through.

Chapter 5, which is titled "Agency in the Pursuit to Belong at Home" reveals the agentive endeavours of participants in their pursuits to belong and feel at home in the face of the wretchedness that emanates from structural violence. The first theme of "The Creation and Essence of Home" details the narrated processes and efforts involved in the establishment of physical houses, and it also provides an important discussion on the sentimental representations of objects within participants' homes. In the subsequent theme of "Narratives of Collective Resilience", a discussion ensues on how participants are effectively

re-storying their lives against the master narratives of the informal settlement they inhabit. The chapter concludes with "Future Narratives" where participants shared the imagined prospects that they envisioned for themselves.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethics are well-founded standards and principles by which researchers need to abide to do no physical or psychological harm to those taking part in the research (Stangor, 2011). As such, this study intended to maintain the research ethics that the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and international research communities uphold. As the study involved human participants, ethical clearance was sought and granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) at Wits (Appendix C). As the researcher, I made sure that all participants that took part were over the age of 18, were informed of what the study was about and were able to provide informed consent. The consent form (Appendix D) was accompanied by an information sheet (Appendix A) which detailed the aims of the study, what was expected of the participants, and how long the interviews would take, among other relevant details. The consent form also made it clear that there were no benefits (monetary or otherwise) that would be granted to the participants if they took part and that participants were welcome to excuse themselves (or withdraw their data) from the study should they wish to do so at any point in the research. Participants were also welcome to ask any questions they had and they were provided with my contact information in case they needed to contact me.

Privacy and confidentiality were explained to the participants, albeit with limitations due to the use of transcript extracts in the analysis of the data. However, it was explained that the personal data collected would be anonymised to eliminate any identifying information and stored in an encrypted and secure external hard drive. As per the sampling methods of this study (especially snowballing), some participants knew one another. It was therefore vital to conduct interviews with acquainted participants on different days and in the absence of others. In this way, the privacy and confidentiality of the data was strengthened.

In addition to the ethical concerns above, there was also a concern for the safety of the researcher and participants. South Africa is a country that is rife with crime (Meth, 2016) and informal settlements are no exception. More specifically, Alexandra continues to be a crime-ridden area as evidenced by old and recent news reports (Modise, 2020; & Siso 2023). Consequently, various measures were taken to minimise risk. Since this research was part of a larger project, I made sure to orient myself with the environment and build rapport with some respondents through URBWAT. In addition, all interviews were conducted in the late mornings and early afternoons to avoid conducting interviews after hours as this would inconvenience the participants and pose a risk to myself.

Conducting qualitative research in the middle of a pandemic is a risky business. Not only does the researcher put themselves at risk but they also put research participants at risk. It was therefore important to follow all the governmental guidelines to curb the Covid-19 virus. As the researcher, I made sure that I was always wearing my mask (that covers my nose and mouth) and also made sure that research participants were wearing their masks during interviews. In all interviews, social distancing was adhered to and a sanitiser was also made available. I had to assess my health at all times and made sure that I would not go to the field should I experience any symptoms consistent with Covid-19. By extension, I made sure that the research participants were not feeling unwell during our interviews. At the time of data collection, South Africa was on Level 1 lockdown restrictions and I made sure to follow current affairs to remain up to date and conform to all regulations presented by the government.

Due to the personal nature of this study, participants were also provided with information regarding mental health and counselling support from the Emthonjeni Centre at the University of Witwatersrand and telephonic counselling services from the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (see Appendix A).

3.6. Reflexivity

What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.

—Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, 1958

Reflexivity in research refers to how "the researcher should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their data" (Mason, 1996, p.6). Additionally, Squire et al., (2008) remind narrative inquirers that "issues of positionality, reflexivity, and power…lie at the heart of narrative research" (p.8). Accordingly, a reflexive account from myself as the researcher is thus warranted. As a black man who grew up in an impoverished township in the East Rand of Johannesburg, there was an unspoken familiarity about Setswetla and its people. Nevertheless, there was also an experiential divide as I had never grown up in an informal settlement where squeezing oneself through small passages was the way to move around. All the shacks were intimately built next to each other and the contest for space and land was evident from my first day there. This experience therefore served as a reminder that I was indeed an outsider that was looking in (Fay, 1996). I therefore had to be aware of how my own intersectional identity was an inescapable aspect of this research project.

Although I grew up in a township that continues to have its socioeconomic challenges, Setswetla was a very different context. The place itself invoked within me feelings of sadness, fear, shock and interestingly, non-belonging. I was sympathetic to residents of Setswetla until I realised how problematic sympathy was due to its uneven power dynamics which often lead to disconnection and alienation (Brown, 2021). Hence, a more empathetic approach (Brown, 2021) - which I began to appreciate through psychotherapy - was more useful as it enabled me to connect with the environment

and its people. On this note, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the emotionally taxing nature of this study – from fieldwork to the eventual write-up. The deeply emotive stories I collected were so visceral to the extent that I needed to allocate some of my therapy time to process my participant's realities.

As a male researcher who was primarily interested in interviewing women, I was initially naïve about the complexities of gendered research and my masculinity. Perhaps having been raised in a fatherless matriarchal household influenced this naivety but it became apparent that it was imperative to confront my masculinity (Langa, 2008) and educate myself on conducting qualitative research in gendered contexts. Ortiz's (2005) concept of 'muted masculinity' was therefore significant as it helped promote a sense of equity between myself as a male researcher and the female participants that took part. The adoption of this thinking was beneficial as it heightened my awareness and helped me avoid displaying hegemonic masculinity (Ortiz, 2005). This was a continuously reflected upon aspect.

As Few et al., (2003) suggest: "the theories we select to explain a phenomenon results from our own personal experiences and how we understand our social location and that of others in the world" (p. 206). This research project is a product of my interpretations and the data analysis may not be an accurate representation of what participants intended to convey. Additional insight was therefore helpful through the aid of my supervisor. Furthermore, as a novice narrative inquirer, I faced numerous difficulties in implementing some of the narrative techniques I had learnt, especially during the data collection process. For this reason, some initial interviews felt like journalistic 'question-and-answer' type of interviews. Although valuable lessons were learnt through this, it is not an unusual occurrence because stories can indeed be shaped by listeners Riessman (2002). In closing, the dynamic nature of the stories collected is acknowledged (Squire, 2011) as they may be expressed differently to a different audience, in a different setting, and at a different time.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents the first phase of narrative thematic analysis with a primary focus on the material conditions of Setswetla and structural violence. The analysis begins by exploring participants' narratives of coming to live in Setswetla, particularly tracing patterns of internal migration from rural family homes to the city of Johannesburg. The analysis then moves to narrations of the material conditions that participants live through, and these are analysed through the theoretical concepts of structural violence (Galtung, 1969) and shame (Long, 2019; Brown, 2021). Through an exploration of participants' intersectional identities in place, the analysis conveys the palpable texture of structural violence and the incongruent tensions that emerge through the politics of belonging (in a citizenry sense) (Yuval-Davis, 2006) within informal settlements.

4.1 The Impetus to Setswetla: Narrative Reconstructions

Richter (2012, p.2) opines that "Every story has a beginning and an end. What lies between these two points is the journey." The first narrative theme pertains to the early journeys of life and the driving forces that led participants to eventually reside in Setswetla. Notably, this theme was enriched by older participants as they had more to say on the topic. The common sentiment among most young participants was that they came to Setswetla as a result of their parents. In a general sense, participants' motivations to come to Alexander/Setswetla fell within the confines of rural-urban migration (Ntzebeza & Hall, 2007) as participants pursued employment in Johannesburg. Thus, settling in Setswetla was socioeconomically motivated, in one way or another. Despite these logical economic motivations, there were other factors involved as participants narrated personal stories that evoked painful memories of unbearable circumstances that propelled them from earlier homes. Magdeline's excerpt below expands on this point.

Magdeline: I spent half of my life [in Soweto] because I was with my parents and then my father passed away in 1979. I stayed there [Soweto], got married, had a child in 1974 and then I had my second child in 1984. So most of the time I was there. So, after that, I had a divorce. It was due to many things - you know how men are. So I decided to

> come this side to live with my brother and leave that side…My intention was that I had to leave the environment that caused me pain [Soweto]. And then I came this side, I stayed with my brother and then he found me my own place...You see when you have stayed so long with someone, certain things happen, and then he leaves you to stay with someone else. So, I decided to leave them behind in hopes to find peace.

Magdeline was married with two children while staying in Soweto. When marital conflicts could no longer be endured, she divorced and left for Alexandra (and later Setswetla). She left an environment that caused her '*pain',* an environment where she felt she no longer belonged. Magdeline's story illustrates how families provide foundations for home and the important role they play in nourishing belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bank & Hart, 2019). Hence when familial relationships fail, as demonstrated by Magdeline's story, one's sense of belonging diminishes and one may eventually feel estranged or detached from place (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sibongile's story echoes Magdeline's as she also recounted experiences of 'non-belonging' in her father's household in KwaZulu Natal. As a maternal orphan, she was adopted by her father's family in her late teens. However, when her father passed away, her situation took a dramatic turn.

Sibongile: My father died and when he died - well I was born out of wedlock - so there were some family conflicts, that's why I ended up having to come look for a place here. Me and my [half] brothers were no longer getting along well. It was difficult because there were conflicts because my siblings were born in marriage, and I was born out of it. So, it was like I was an outsider because my dad was no more. But when he was alive, we all lived together, once he died things changed…They chased me out - Because when you treat someone badly, it is the same as chasing them away. You also realise that you can't be living like this and find a way out of that situation.

Correspondingly, Lerato also added a younger voice to this theme as she recounted her difficult upbringing and the circumstances that led her to stay in Setswetla.

Lerato: My mother passed away in 2007 and then I had to move here in Alexandra with my aunt…It was eight kids, nine with me, ten with my other brother, there were ten of us living together, eleven with her and twelve with her husband in a two-room house. I stayed with my aunt for three years. There was a time when I was mistreated …For example I didn't have clothes and food, obviously, there is no love there, she has her own kids - I don't think she can give eight children love and then still have some left

> for me, so there was no love and there was no connection. I was starting to realize that my aunt did not love me fully. The thing that hurt me the most was that there was a child who was the same age as me - she was two years older than me. She [Aunt] would buy her fancy clothes...This child would see a shoe that she likes and then she [Aunt] would buy it for her. There was a time I stole clothes from this child, the nice ones that she [Aunt] used to buy for her…I was jealous, I wanted them [clothes], I admired them, I wanted to look like other kids for example. I wanted to look like my friends. Sometimes I would wear them and then return them in time before they noticed that they are gone. There was a time when I took all of them, all her clothes and then I left and went to Jacqueline [friend], and then my auntie came to Jacqueline's house, she came with a few people and then they took the clothes and then she hit me and told me to never come back home - that's when I stayed with my friend Jacqueline.

These narrative extracts signify the central role of the family in belonging/alienation. These are tales of familial disruption and displacement. Since stable familial relationships are central to one's sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011), this theme highlights how strained familial relations can have negative implications on belonging or feeling at home. Yuval-Davis (2006) reminds us that when one's identity is threatened, they become less secure in themselves and their sense of belonging (non-belonging in this case) becomes central to them. Sibongile's narrative signifies this as she was born out of wedlock but was able to be incorporated into her father's family when her biological mother passed away. Her inferred identity as a 'love child' probably created discomfort within her new family, however, in the presence of her father, she had an anchor to legitimise her status to belong. Despite this, her father's passing accentuated her 'illegitimate' identity within the family and this ultimately led to her ejection through [in]direct means. Lerato's narrative also highlights how an 'illegitimate' identity can be a threat to one's sense of belonging. As a teenager who was 'adopted', her identity felt threatened and she resorted to desperate measures in an attempt to assert it. Taking and wearing her cousin's clothes may be interpreted as a cry for belonging both within her family and also with her trendy peers.

On the whole, participants' experiences of estrangement and alienation seem to have prompted narrative reconstruction which refers to the imaginative work involved when one's biographical narrative is disrupted (Williams, 1984). Williams (1984) argues that "beliefs about the causes of misfortune are human interpretive practices that meet our need to narratively reconstruct discontinuities in an imagined biography" (p.177). Accordingly, in the presence of threats to their sense of belonging, participants'

narrative identities were disrupted and this compelled them to reimagine their biographies. In this sense, the pursuit to live in Alexandra/Setswetla was underscored by a departure from 'un-home-like' environments that accentuated antagonism and alienation. As an 'arrival city', Setswetla was indeed a "point of entry into the metropole [Johannesburg] and all of its offerings" (Kemper & McManus, p. 42). While these 'offerings' (possible opportunities) may have had socioeconomic elements, it could also be argued that the longing to belong was part of the impetus to move, to journey to the city. Participants therefore adventured into unchartered territory to enrichen their narrative identities and find a sense of belonging, and of course, home.

4.2. Narratives of Social Injustice: The Wrath of Structural Violence

In their hopeful pursuits of narrative reconstruction (Williams, 1984), participants moved to Setswetla with the hope of leading better livelihoods through securing employment in the close-by urban metropolis to sustain themselves and their families. However, in the midst of poverty, inequality and unemployment (or precarious informal employment), their aspirations were usurped by the realities of deprived material conditions within the informal settlement. Moreover, what was intended to be a temporary living arrangement for some turned out to become a semi-permanent arrangement, a common experience in these settings (Huq & Miraftab, 2019). Accordingly, this section focuses on socioeconomic narrative disruptors and how they complicate belonging and what participants regard as home. This theme emerged from the constellation of narratives that alluded to the lack of socioeconomic infrastructure and services within Setswetla. The subthemes in this section focus on water, sanitation, electricity, rising population, and crime. As previously mentioned, structural violence refers to how social structures and social institutions may cause harm to individuals by depriving them of their basic needs (Galtung, 1969). The following narratives therefore foreground the manifestation of structural violence in Setswetla and how it accentuates non-belonging. This was a theme that emerged across all participants as they told different tales of their trials and tribulations in Setswetla. Despite their well-intended aspirations, participants expressed frustration and even disgust regarding the overall conditions under which they live.

4.2.1 Toilets

Setswetla, like many other informal settlements in South Africa, does not have formal water and sanitation infrastructure (Public Protector Report, 2021). In the absence of this critical infrastructure, residents of Setswetla do not have toilets in their homes and are compelled to manage with shared mobile toilets that can be up to 500 meters from their places of dwelling (Public Protector, 2021). While this temporary intervention is an important provision by the government, these shared toilets pose a variety of risks for users, particularly for women. The following PIN from Mavis, with an accompanying photo from her, provides clear evidence of this.



Figure 3 Mavis's Predicament

Mavis: Hey these toilets they are giving us problems. Especially us ladies because they are giving us infections. I once went to the clinic and explained how I felt and they told me that it is an infection. They asked if I am using a public toilet or my own toilet, I told her [nurse] a public toilet, and she said that is where I am getting the infection from. They gave me an injection and there was nothing I could do…but we do not know if it is the chemicals that are giving us the infections or the dirt...and I think it's four of us [families who share the toilet]. There's a lady with her husband and kids which makes us ten. Then there's Pretty and another granny - As well as another guy - so that means it is fourteen people using the toilet…. Every Tuesday when they [Pikitup] clean the toilet, you just go and wash the toilet and make it clean because they do not clean it properly…if you do not want to live with that, [then] you have to build your own toilet. And I was planning on building one but now we are not working properly so I can't build it since it's expensive.

Located near a dumpster, Mavis's picture reverberates with the indignity of the circumstances under which residents are compelled to relieve themselves. The picture presents a symbolic finishing blow of structural violence as the location represents where all forms of human waste converge. When personally experienced, it is a truly devastating assault on the olfactory senses. In this case, the bathroom privacy that the suburban neighbours of Setswetla take for granted is a privilege as residents here are compelled to handle their private business in public - and of course, these structural indignities are normalised as part of the course of daily lives (Weigart, 2019). In her excerpt, Mavis details the implications of these conditions for her health as she has already become sick from them. Studies show that communal toilets are associated with "poor health outcomes such as helminth infections, enteric fevers, diarrhoea, and adverse maternal or birth outcomes (Hossain et al., 2022, p. 3). As she laments the unsanitary conditions of the toilets, she also decries the indolence of Pikitup as they do not thoroughly clean the toilets to hygienic satisfaction. Moreover, sharing a toilet with others also means that some users may absolve themselves of the duty of maintaining good hygienic conditions of the toilets as they may feel that it is not their responsibility.

The physical harm that results from this unsanitary situation is compounded by the assault on dignity incurred in the usage of these toilets. As the International Union for Conservation of Nature (2019) asserts, a toilet is indeed a protector of dignity. For women, the risks are not only health-related because when nature calls in the evening, they may also find themselves at risk of crime or gender-based violence (Hossain et al, 2022). Accordingly, the lack of proper sanitation and in-house toilets in Setswetla signifies a structural threat to the female identity, thus threatening their sense of belonging in place (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Mavis's PIN speaks to the "personal negotiation of social and material spaces [that are] imbued with power differentials" (Bradbury & Kiguwa, 2012, p. 37). From an intersectional lens, her social location (Yuval-Davis, 2006) as a black working-class woman presents her with avoidable and preventable hazards in the face of structural violence. And she is not alone as inadequate access to sanitation was a common objection among research participants. To curtail its effects, others such as Wendy, Mpho and Magdeline have negotiated with close neighbours and pooled

resources to buy their own mobile toilets over which they have control and can lock. Nonetheless, for the vast majority, government-supplied mobile toilets continue to be the only option.

4.2.2. Drainage Systems

The lack of sanitation infrastructure in Setswetla is also evident through the absence of proper drainage systems. Grey water, which is wastewater from bathing, washing dishes, etc., continues to be a problem because the only way to dispose of it is through makeshift furrows that crisscross the informal settlement and lead to the Jukskei River. This is dangerous as it creates health and environmental risks hence URBWAT has entered the fray to try to alleviate these issues through the construction of wetlands that are intended to filter the greywater to reduce contaminants before the water reaches the river (Thatcher, 2021). The lack of proper drainage systems in Setswetla has dire consequences for daily living. Lerato's picture below depicts this. The image shows the pathway that leads to the door of her shack. The entrance of her home faces a neighbour's makeshift drain used to dispose of grey water. To avoid the muddying of the passage, residents have placed an assortment of bricks and rocks to use as they totter through the jagged pathway. In the PIN below, Lerato, who was pregnant at the time of the interview, shares her ordeal.



Figure 4 Lerato's Jagged Pathway

Lerato: This is the water that affects us in our neighbourhood because sometimes there's mosquitoes and flies - sometimes [if] you are walking and wearing slippers, you fall inside the water. You can't really wear white shoes in this place, there is water everywhere - someone will do their laundry and then they will just pour the water anywhere. They made us drains [makeshift drains constructed by the community]…so the pipes that they had were too small for grease and stuff, so now they're trying to put in larger pipes so the waste can travel properly…I'm pregnant and I might fall and get hurt. There are bricks - They've put bricks over here and sometimes when you're passing by, you might slip and fall. I once fell over here; they were busy in the house and so I was coming to this side. I was passing over here and there was water. I slipped and I fell. I fell and split my mouth [lips] open…My mouth was split open, I fell here near the water. So I told them now, I'm pregnant, please do something, because if I fall and something worse may happen. They must just fix this situation

Kgaugelo: So that that day it became an emergency...

Lerato: Yes, that day it felt as though somebody had pushed me, everyone in my area would ask me what happened. They were wondering if maybe my partner hit me, you're even afraid to say 'I just fell'.

Kgaugelo: So did you go to the hospital?

Lerato: Yes, I went in for treatment, they even had to stitch me. They saw that the wound had already festered - even my partner's brother saw me and he said 'You are really injured, please take it seriously' …the next day I went [to the clinic] and it had already been infected, it was yellow and that's when I had to go to the hospital for treatment

Generally, residents of informal settlements experience a wide array of environmental problems due to the lack of drainage infrastructure (Thatcher, 2021; Tayler & Mark, 2007). Lerato's picture and narrative above demonstrate this. In her excerpt, she laments the presence of pests due to puddles of untreated grey water and bemoans the reckless water disposal practices to which residents have become accustomed. This has been a concern as through their agency, residents have taken up the task of creating makeshift drainage systems, however, they are prone to malfunction as they are not industry-grade solutions. Lerato also recounts a dreadful experience where she slipped and fell on her face while negotiating her steps on the pathway. Now as a pregnant woman, she expresses her fears and emphasises the risks posed by her living conditions through a narrative of frustration and disappointment. In this way, her intersectional identity as an unemployed black woman is threatened daily by her living circumstances, and her pregnancy made her more vulnerable.

Lerato's PIN highlights the health and environmental risks inherent in Setswetla due to the lack of proper sanitation and water infrastructure. Although dangerous, these risks have been normalised as part of life in the informal settlement. Through bemoaning the status quo, Lerato joins other participants of the study in their subtle protest and political critique of the government through their narratives (Riessman, 2008). Since these narratives recount the lack of the most basic services and resources to which residents are constitutionally entitled, they reflect perpetual structural violence (Weigert, 2019) and a dereliction of duty from those who were voted into power. Not only would the desired resources and services make life easier, but they would also function as a blanket of dignity, providing the much-needed warmth that is assumed to come with belonging through citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

4.2.3. Electricity

The topic of electricity was another pervasive theme that emerged among participants' narratives. Like many other informal settlements, Setswetla has limited electrical infrastructure and this has unsurprisingly led to a plethora of illegal electric connections in the area (SERI, 2019). South Africa continues to endure almost two decades of an escalating energy crisis affecting all citizens. Whereas more affluent members of society may find alternative sources of energy in gas or solar, in working-class neighbourhoods or informal settlements such as Setswetla, where the electricity supply has always been inadequate or non-existent, illegal connections are multiplying (Public Protector Report, 2021). The photos below were shared by Sibongile and Mpho as they deplored the dangerous state of affairs caused by the electricity crisis in Setswetla.



Figure 5 Electric Axis



Figure 6 Electric Washing Lines

Sibongile's picture (Figure 5) on the left portrays an electricity pole that has become one of the many fulcrums of illegal electricity connections in Setswetla. This view, taken by Sibongile from her balcony, shows the innumerable assortment of wires that crisscross residential roofs as they dangerously slither to the various homes that they are meant to light up. Resembling a spiderweb, this dangerous situation remains a frustrating moral dilemma for Sibongile and others in the community. Mpho's picture (Figure

6) on the right show live wires that are used to transmit electricity and as she notes: "*They look like washing lines now…[but] during the evenings they turn red!. This is not safe"*. In the excerpt below, Sibongile speaks about her picture and how she is affected by the situation.

Sibongile: These cables come from very far where there is electricity, it's very far. So, all this is electricity that they are stealing. There are even cables that pass here by my house, which is dangerous but there is nothing that I can do because people are suffering. We are all suffering because we don't have electricity. The electricity we have comes from very far. So, if you are wanting to take electricity from that side, you must buy that long wire. I also had to do that because I had no choice…and when it is winter, the electricity from the transformer only supports the people from the other side and we are excluded. During winter, the cables [also] get overpowered by electricity demand and then then they burst and we are left with no electricity. Even the transformer - sometimes it explodes and we are then left with no electricity. So summer is better than when it is winter because we use a lot of electricity during winter. Then you would also find that during Winter we don't even watch the news and we cannot keep up with what is going on because there is no electricity.

In this extract, Sibongile laments the dangers of the illegal electricity connections that pervade Setswetla. Her narrative also highlights the normalisation of risk where desperation has led to risky practices to assimilate and gradually become acceptable over time, which is another manifestation of structural violence (Weigert, 2019). Although aware of the illegality of these connections and the risks they pose, a life without electricity would be unbearable. Sibongile therefore *"had no choice"* but to join others and break the law in order to connect her household – a moral dilemma that she openly acknowledges.

Sibongile's tale highlights a citizenship conundrum where structural violence limits access to necessities (Weigert, 2019), thus compelling citizens to illegality. Although she 'belongs' in a citizenry sense as she is South African, she is deprived of the resources and services that citizens are constitutionally entitled to due to inequitable service delivery (Mgushelo, 2014; Long, 2019). As Yuval-Davis (2006) contends, the reciprocity of citizenship between the state and the individual is centred on each party fulfilling their requirements – and these are not mere duties. Hence when failed by the state that can no longer be trusted to provide basic necessities, individuals find alternative ways to meet their needs. In this instance, the state's responsibilities to residents of Setswetla have been nullified and as Yuval-Davis (2006) suggests, this has

implications on the sense of belonging (or lack thereof), that they experience. Sibongile, like many other residents, therefore enacts her own belonging in place and at home by illegally connecting electricity to her house for her own comfort. This interestingly signifies the failure of both parties in fulfilling their requirements (Yuval-Davis, 2006) as the state cannot guarantee electricity for residents, and residents cannot guarantee to be law-abiding citizens. Interestingly, since illegal electricity connections are a common practise in the community of Setswetla (and many other informal settlements), they may be serving a function of anchoring belonging in place on a local level, however, a sense of national belonging in a citizenry sense within their imagined community (Anderson, 1983) is severely undermined.

4.2.4. Othering while Othered: The Plight for Scarce Resources

While tensions between the state and its citizens are notable, the participants' narratives also point a finger at newer residents as Setswetla's population continues to grow unabated (Public Protector Report, 2021). Contestations about belonging in Setswetla are exacerbated by its rising population (which is hard to track) and the impact that it has on resources and services available Participants who have lived in Setswetla for a long time blamed the scarcity and dwindling of resources on residents that came after them. This is why the sentiment of being 'encroached upon' was ubiquitous, especially among participants. Karabo, who stays in the Green House (a residential compound on the edge of Setswetla established by Gift of the Givers), joined other participants such as Wendy, Magdeline, and Mpho when she vented below:

> Karabo: The challenges that we have are the shacks that keep mushrooming here. When anybody finds an empty space, they just build a shack and the more shacks they build, the more we have the challenge of electricity because they build their shacks next to our transformer and then they make illegal connections from there. So we end up fighting with people because they tell us "you don't own this electricity" and then now we have to live in conflict and we have to make noise in order to protect the transformer…

Karabo's extract directly speaks to Crowley's (1999) assertion that the politics of belonging pertain to "the dirty work of boundary maintenance" (p.15). It highlights the intra-community conflicts and divisions that originate from scarce resources around the settlement – hence the boundaries need to be

maintained. As a resident in the more 'sheltered' and resourced Green House, she condemns the illegal occupation of land as it has led to inconsistent electricity supply for her home. This is ironic as she also benefitted from the illegal occupation of land in the past when she resided on the banks of the Jukskei River. This reflects Ngwenya and Cirolia's (2021) observation that conflicts in informal settlements are not only between communities and the government, but they can also be present among residents themselves. According to Long (2019), this is how structural violence operates in a class society. Sennett and Cobb (1993) also add that "In turning people against each other, the class system of authority and judgment-making goes itself into hiding; the system is left unchallenged as people enthralled by the enigmas of its power battle one another for respect" (p.6). Accordingly, this narrative displaces the political critique aimed at the state to more accessible scapegoats (new residents), while the source of frustration is actually the government and its malfeasance and inability to provide equitable resources. This highlights the battle to belong in place and it is an attempt to absolve new residents of their rights to belong. This matter is further complicated by legal structures that are in place to protect dwellers of informal settlements. Ayanda's extract below points to this as she talks about a once-empty plot of land that people have recently occupied.

Ayanda: So for me personally, I feel like the South African government is failing us as a people. Because it is us here, and then there are bond houses over there, and we all pay for electricity – then it's these houses (new shacks) steal electricity and then it leads to political clashes. People can build houses wherever they want and after 24 hours, the law says they are not supposed to be evicted - so we have too many rights. So it's not right for us.

In her expression of encroachment by landgrabbers as a threat to space and resources, Ayanda deplores the ever-growing numbers of new settlers and she laments how they are protected by the law after 24 hours of occupying a piece of land. The law in question is the previously noted PIE Act (Prevention of Illegal Eviction and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act 19 of 1998). While this law is meant to protect

dwellers of informal settlements, Ayanda expresses dissatisfaction with this legal conundrum as it protects those that she deems as not belonging to the neighbourhood that she has called home most of her life. This is indeed a case of othering while othered because Ayanda and her neighbours are already bearing the brunt of structural violence in the social worlds, and this is exacerbated by newcomers who dwindle the already scarce resources that they depend on. Interestingly, none of the participants expressed xenophobic sentiments and this was surprising as Alexandra has been known for xenophobic flare-ups of violence against foreign Africans (Hassim et al., 2019).

4.2.5. Crime

The most poignant antithesis to belonging as per the narratives collected in this study was the rampant criminality in the informal settlement of Setswetla. The majority of participants expressed concerns and fears in connection to how unsafe Setswetla can be. This was not surprising because South Africa has earned its place in global rankings as one of the most dangerous countries in the world and as the most dangerous country in Africa (Galal, 2023). In 2022, South Africa registered one of the highest murder rates globally, registering 82 homicides daily (Koko, 2023). Residents of Setswetla are therefore not alone as most South Africans are worried about crime and violence in the country (Galal, 2022).

According to Wang (2022), informal settlements have long been a hotbed for unlawful activities. He notes poverty, inequality and high rates of unemployment as some of the interrelated factors that contribute to crime in these settings (Wang, 2022). Additionally, the 'informality' of the settlement also exacerbates crime due to the lack of police visibility as highlighted by the public protector report on Alexandra (Public Protector Report, 2021). Participants told stories of criminal acts that were either personally experienced or experienced by close family members, friends and neighbours. According to the Public Protector (2021), the South African Police Service has not done enough to address inadequacies in law enforcement in Alexandra, hence an assortment of crimes (murder, theft, gender-based violence etc.) remain prevalent in the township. Setswetla is equally (if not acutely) affected. Residents complained about random

gunshots at night, robberies, house break-ins, and gender-based violence in the informal settlement. The detailed PIN below conveys Jabulile's narrative of loss as a consequence of crime in Alexandra.

Jabulile: Let me tell you, it was during my pregnancy. My father left on a Saturday - we had a huge fight on Friday, we exchanged words, [and] he told me that he didn't want me in his house. I said fine, I will leave! So you know with pregnancy, certain things can annoy you - for me it was men - any man that I met, I would end up fighting with them - even my baby daddy, he annoyed me. So on the Saturday I decided to take a bath and planned to go for a walk with my dad so I can apologize, only to find out that he has already left. He went to go play the lotto at shell garage, he had won around 90 rands and he used that money to play again. So on his way back, he ran into a couple of guys and they started harassing him and they stabbed him. I was the first person he called.

Kgaugelo: I'm so sorry about this…

Jabulile: He calls me on the phone - he's like 'Where are you ?' and I'm like 'I'm at home'. He said 'They've stabbed me, come fast, I'm dying' - I asked him 'Where are you?', he said he was going to play the lotto and they stabbed him (crying). I told him I was coming, I was 9 months pregnant at the time. I went and got my mother, we found transport - when we arrived at the scene, there were already a lot of cops [starts crying]. He was 64 but would leave the house to go and work. He would say 'I'm working for you my child - as soon as you get a job, I will retire'. They couldn't see his wound properly, it was inside but there was a lot of blood coming out from the back. He was holding the wound and he was like 'They have really stabbed me'. We waited for the ambulance. When the ambulance came, it took us to Edenvale [Hospital] and we waited and waited. When we were in Edenvale they said that they could not assist him, so now we had to take him to Johannesburg [Charlotte Maxeke Hospital] - when we got to Johannesburg, they told us to leave and they will call us the next day. He is the one that called us. When we got there [the next day], he was okay - they had not found him a bed yet, so he was still at the trauma ward. I brought him stuff - I brought him clothes, food - and they said that this person really needs help and I could not leave. I was with him and he kept on saying how he was feeling a lot better and I was like 'If you are feeling better that means you will be home in no time'. I left and then the next day they called saying that he was at the ICU – that is when my head started going crazy. Just yesterday I was with my father, and we were laughing and he said he was feeling okay, the next minute he is in the ICU? My mom went over there - that man - I've never seen so much trauma in my life (sobbing). It was so bad. It was very painful for me.

Unfortunately, Jabulile's father succumbed to the stab wound inflicted by criminals while in the intensive care unit at the hospital. The wound was deeper than initially thought, and Jabulile and her family were devastated by this. This visceral narrative of loss points to the extent of devastation that crime can wreak

in people's lives and how mere statistics do not do justice in capturing the extent of desolation incurred by its victims. Jabulile's father was the sole breadwinner and his loss led to a variety of difficulties within the household. Additionally, this traumatic loss was a life-altering event for Jabulile. Such a significant disruption in a biographical narrative is catastrophic and undoubtedly alters one's narrative identity (McAdams, 2008). Jabulile's identity is characterised by heartache, grief, and insecurity, destabilising her possibilities for belonging in place.

Overall, these narratives represent a disruption of narrative identities where the prospect of a potentially positive life in Setswetla can dramatically convert potential place attachments into detachments and alienation. These narratives of structural and actual interpersonal violence are antithetical to belonging. They signify that structural violence is indeed a "process that works slowly through general misery, diminishing the dignity of human beings and ultimately killing them, sometimes without anyone being aware that it is happening" (Lee, 2019, p.125). It is a process that limits individuals' access to basic necessities and also deprives them of the safety they require to feel at home and belong. Positioned as a political critique, these narratives affirm Yuval-Davis's (2006) premise that belonging is political. Setswetla therefore becomes a place where women's intersectional identities are endangered and this reality has implications for the extent to which they can belong (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is indeed true that "Black women, who are oppressed on all sides of those equations, are left without the luxury to ignore any one aspect of race, class, gender, or sexuality in favour of another". As an expression of the exclusionary 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.1), these narratives also point to the burden of shame inflicted on them as discussed in the next section.

4.3. Home as a Paradox: The Burden of Shame

Long (2019) notes that "in an unequal society that professes equality for all, shame rears its head at every turn" (p.6). This was the case with most participants as they provided narrative accounts of the unsettling nature of being associated with the informal settlement in which they reside. When they engage with the external worlds and are compelled to convey their social (and place) identities, a

perturbation emerges – the feeling of shame. As previously noted, "Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging, and connection." (Brown,2021, p.137). As an infliction of structural violence (Long, 2019), shame is the emotion at the core of not belonging. Govender and Cartwright (2021) contend that the self (subjectivity) is a carrier of socio-political and historical baggage, and since Setswetla is a territorially stigmatised settlement (Mead, 2020), being a 'resident of Setswetla' is an 'identity marker' (Volkan, 2001) that essentialises inhabitants of the informal settlement beyond its locale. It is a shameful identity and Ayanda's PIN below bears this burden.

Ayanda: Well, I had a fun childhood besides the fact that we didn't have water and electricity – I had a fun childhood – a lot of games were played – because we didn't have electricity, so like as children we use to play a lot – that's what built us the most and made us connect…but when it rained, that's where we'd be the most stressed about houses being swept away by water – I also worried that my books would be swept by the water and there was also a lot of rats, so I always stressed about where to put my books because sometimes we would find that our books have been eaten by the rats. I attended a school [primary] in Alexandra and they didn't understand where I stayed. My book once got eaten by a rat and they would ask me "Why is your book like this?" and I would tell them, and the class would laugh. So it was difficult at school. Even now – it is still difficult at school [a suburban secondary school] when I tell them that I'm from Setswetla - because they have their own stories - like that Setswetla is not a place for human beings to live in; people that stay in Setswetla are dirty - they are not intelligent or anything like that. So it becomes a challenge to tell others that I'm from Setswetla.

In this extract, Ayanda narratively articulates the paradox of being a resident of Setswetla. As she recounts her childhood experiences, she glosses over the socioeconomic difficulties of water and electricity. However, as Ayanda shares fond memories of her childhood in Setswetla, the shame embodied by her place identity emerges in her anecdote where her books were eaten by rodents and she had to explain this matter in class. The mindlessly brutal laughter that followed was so dispiriting that her own sense of belonging was annihilated by an emotional experience of disgrace, humiliation, mortification and perhaps betrayal – the feelings that often accompany shame (Govender & Cartwright 2021). This narrative highlights how Ayanda, and other residents of Setswetla, endure a sense of inadequacy and human deficiency in the eyes of others (Wurmser, 1981) due to where they reside.

Although participants may try to feel at home in their intimate spaces, ambivalent feelings emerge when the perceived wretchedness of their environment is exposed. This is a characteristic of shame as it often occurs before an audience – "an external judge in whose eyes (and by comparison with whom) one appears weak, failed, foolish, incompetent, ridiculous, rejected, inferior, contemptible—in short, shameful" (Gilligan, 2004, p.44). This sentiment is further captured by Mpho's excerpt below where she expresses her resistance and eventual surrender to being a resident of Setswetla.

Mpho: I did not have a choice but to get used to the area. I had to make peace with it. This is where I am now, this is where I live - like it or not - I need to get used to it. But I was embarrassed, I didn't even tell people where I stayed because of Setswetla. Even my friends - when they must come over, the thought of them having to go through Setswetla is another thing… It has a bad reputation - even now, people see Setswetla as another place, I don't know. It's like we eat people or kill people [here] - and Setswetla is safe let me tell you. No one will mug you at Setswetla, no one. No one will do anything to you there, it's home - it is our home.

Although Mpho had to make 'peace' with residing in Setswetla, she was not at peace with telling others where she was from and this signals the tension of identifying with a place like Setswetla. According to Lewis (1971), shame is linked to unbearable threats to a core sense of identity and belonging, hence it is often denied or occurs out of awareness (Govender & Cartwright, 2021). In this instance, belonging to Setswetla becomes a threat to one's own identity and disrupts their narrative biography (Munro, 1998) as it means one may not freely belong in other (or more formalised) spaces. Hence this 'identity marker' (resident of Setswetla) somewhat becomes a forbidden detail of participants' place identities.

This shame also highlights a fear of being rejected or humiliated by others (Gilligan, 2004) – a counter to the social nature of human beings as previously argued in earlier sections. In her denial of this identity Mpho protests against the territorial stigma and 'master narrative' of Setswetla as a place of danger, murder and even as she exasperatedly posits, a place of cannibals. The peculiarity of her protest is intriguing as participants decried the criminality of Setswetla and Alexandra. She attempts to legitimise Setswetla as a home and a place where people can safely belong despite the extreme difficulties she has

already expressed. This contradiction may reflect Scannell and Gifford's (2010) assertion that people who are attached to particular environments can experience a heightened sense of safety, even when their place is situated in a war zone. Although contradictory, for Mpho this is an attempt to preserve her place-identity and rid herself of the burden of shame that she bears, especially in the eyes of others.

Shame is the antithesis of belonging. It represents discomfort, incongruence and estrangement in the face of indignity. In the case of this study, shame seemingly originates from the structural violence that continues to afflict Setswetla and its residents. This is a subtle combat that prevents residents from fulfilling their most basic of needs, while simultaneously inflicting shameful identities on them. Arguably, this shame is misplaced as those who should be ashamed are those who are in power – the social institutions that have enabled these realities to be normalised, especially since participants' plights are preventable and avoidable. This results in the paradox of home (and belonging) as it becomes difficult to reconcile what 'home' is versus what it should be or represent. Sibongile's excerpt below advances this dilemma:

> Sibongile: I do feel at home [here] but I wouldn't call it a home because can you even see where I stay and how it looks? There are days when I just come home and cry about the money I'm spending here because I would rather be spending it knowing that I'm building a real home, where I can stay for as long as I live. That would be much better. And I cry because it would be nice to get a nice place to stay, in a nice area with a street, electricity and water. That would be better. But now I've spent money on this place!

Sibongile's excerpt points to the paradox of home belonging in conditions of poverty and structural violence. Although she 'feels at home', she laments the shame she endures from her undignified living conditions. Through her efforts, she has been able to construct and modify her environment to suit her needs. However, the socioeconomic conditions of Setswetla make her question whether this was a good investment as she realises the precarity of her situation. Her tears are therefore a reflection of this ambivalence about her home - a place of pride, yet also a place of shame. Despite all her efforts of building a makeshift double-story house with a balcony, she questions whether it is a "real home" because it lacks

the socioeconomic comforts that accompany more formalised settlements – water, electricity, streets etc. In this sense, her shame is more pronounced due to the disparity between socioeconomic classes (Gilligan, 2004) because Setswetla is bordered by the kind of homes and formal settlements that she wishes she could occupy. Sibongile's home is therefore a representation of her hopes and dreams while also being her cause for despair. The paradox of home was a pertinent theme across most participant interviews as they expressed coexisting positive and negative feelings regarding Setswetla and their homes. Jabulile's excerpt below concisely captures this predicament.

> Jabulile: I love Dubai and cherish it, but for me, I don't want my son to grow up here - it is toxic - I feel like a lot of things don't happen for me because of my environment. We are a lot and we fight for things in Setswetla.

Although Jabulile expresses her love for the house that her deceased father built for her (*Dubai*), she also laments how the informal settlement limits her from attaining her full potential. As such, raising her son in Setswetla, as she exclaims, is not the most ideal situation. In the face of structural violence, she seems willing to leave behind a treasured heirloom that her father built and left behind for her. A poignant realisation on her part.

As the pursuit to feel at home and belonging are fundamental human needs (Oswald & Wahl, 2005), participants' attempts to foster these feelings are disrupted by the structural violence of place which pierces so deeply to an extent that shame and ambivalence are par for the course. This is important as it signifies the "complex interrelationships among place (environmental context), life history, and evolving personal identity that characterise the meaning of home" (Oswald & Wahl, 2005, p. 5). Bonded by their shared struggles of indignity in this ambivalent relation to place, participants narrate their agencies in their pursuits to belong at home.

Chapter 5: Agency in the Pursuit to Belong at Home

According to Andrews (2008), narrative inquiry can open contradictory layers of meaning, thus allowing one to understand more about individual and social change (Andrews, 2008). Whereas the preceding chapter discussed narrations of disruptive structural violence concerning belonging and feeling at home in Setswetla, this chapter discusses the agency and the active efforts of participants in their pursuit of belonging in place. While the overwhelming wretchedness of their external milieu remains beyond their control, they express aesthetic imagination and exert remarkable efforts within their humble abodes to feel at home and belong. This chapter therefore explores counternarratives to the passive accounts of victimhood, through participants' agentive endeavours as they go against the grain of structural violence in the best ways that they can. Through narrations of place-making, the analysis conveys narrative reconstructions (in a more literal sense) and demonstrates the significance of place identity and place attachment within the politics of belonging. By focusing on participants' meaningful lives, this chapter also captures their collective action and agency, together with their narrative imaginations of the future.

5.1. The Creation and Essence of Home: Place-Making and Place-Identities

This section builds on the preceding discussion on the reconstruction of narratives, albeit in a more literal sense. In this study, most participants (except a few of the younger participants) went through different journeys and processes in their pursuits to own land and build homes in Setswetla. Through their narratives about building the physical structures of their homes, participants linked the material with interpersonal bonds and the attachments formed between person and place, and in relation to others. The first theme in this section, which is titled 'Home as Infrastructural Pride', discusses the physical and financial efforts involved in the building of home, including some inventive creations that accompany attempts to make home a convenient place. The second subtheme, 'Home as Sentiment[ality]' discusses the meanings ascribed to objects within the home and their sentimental functions.

5.1.1. Home as Infrastructural Pride

This sub-theme focuses on the great lengths to which participants went to establish their own homes. These narrations of place-making, which is defined as the construction of place by a variety of actors and means (Bank & Hart, 2019), were central to participants' narrative identities as they explained (and displayed) the hard labour, personal efforts and time involved in building their homes. In the photo below, Mavis recounts her story and the circumstances under which she built her home with her husband.

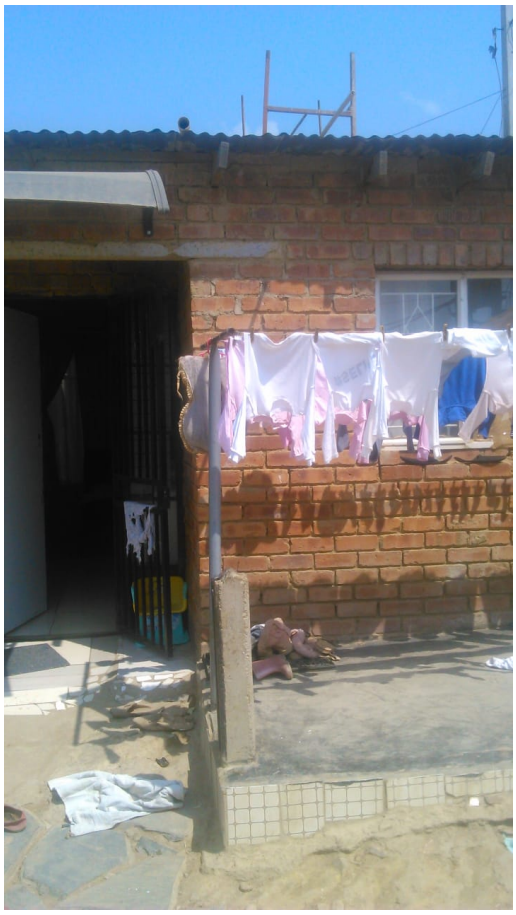

Figure 7 Mavis's Home

Mavis: So, we did find this place, someone was selling a piece of land then we went and bought the piece of land and started building our house. I love this place! I was here all the time while they were building because I wanted something nice…When we came here, we came and cleaned and cleaned and cleaned… I'm pregnant at the time and I have a small child. I must carry that child on my back with a big pregnancy walking from

> Tsutsumani to London Road [1km]. Early at seven [am] we must leave the house and go to twenty (Alexandra section) to get some bricks and cement for the house. So we piled the bricks for the house and the problem now, was we didn't have money to transport those bricks to the site because it was R450 for a load so we could only do one load. Then we started doing the foundation and the bricks were not enough… I got a call from Pretty who stays here and she said there was a dump truck that came with bricks and I told them to put them on our plot. There was a dump here, so they kept dumping them for me to start building and they said they want a cold drink in return. I gave them R70. For all these bricks that made my home, I paid R70! Do you know how much these bricks are?

In this excerpt, Mavis details the difficult experiences that she endured in the pursuit to find land and build her home. Her physical and financial strain were vividly depicted in her story of place-making. Hence she beamed with pride when she exclaimed that "I love this place!" as it was a representation of hard work and personal investment. This personal investment, as Dixon and Durrheim (2004) assert, is an important process in the construction of place identities because it captures the 'domestic attention' that people give to the spaces that they inhabit (Cicognani, 2014). As can be seen from the photo, Mavis's house was built with clay bricks and she also managed to build a small veranda where she improvised a washing line for her convenience. This is an important feature as Setswetla does not have big yards that can accommodate washing lines. Through her direct supervision in the building of her home, Mavis affirms Sigmon and Whitcomb's (2002, p. 28) assertion that "We need to impact our surroundings in such a way that reflects our personality, our sense of self, and in so doing, derive benefits." While these benefits may vary, for Mavis and others, underlying the dynamic interactions between person and place in the construction of home, is the need to belong. As a place for "restoration, refuge and privacy" (Bechtel, 1997, p. 16), home often represents warmth, comfort and safety. As Chaudhury and Rowles (2005) suggest, it [home] is a primary human aspiration that helps us to feel at one with ourselves and our world.

However, amid these romanticised imaginations, Zingmark et al. (1995, p. 12) warn that home can also be a place of "discomfort and restlessness." This was the case for Karabo as the Jukskei river banks of Setswetla were her home for several years before she was moved to the Green House, a residential compound on the edge of Setswetla established by Gift of the Givers (Humanitarian NGO) for those who were displaced by the Jukskei river floods of 2013 (Manala, 2014). Opined by Davis (2006) like a prophecy, Karabo indeed stayed on "land nobody wants, and which has no market value—on a steep, unstable hillside, along a polluted river or in a dangerous flood plain" (p. 10). For her at the time, 'home' represented precarity, discomfort and danger. The photo below[4] depicts her current living arrangement while her accompanying PIN contrasts this with where she previously lived.



Figure 8 Karabo's Current Abode: The Green House

Karabo: I used to stay in Setswetla by the Jukskei River. We were in the danger zone because when the rain fell, it would swell the river and shacks would be swept away. I was very lucky - one day my three children went home (to Limpopo) and it was on a Friday. They left on a Friday afternoon, so that night, it rained so hard, especially in the morning hours. Our shack was swept away completely - if my children had been there, I would have lost three children at the same time if they didn't go home that day – because [After the floods] there was no bed, there was nothing - the shack fell into the water. My worry is that these kids used to sleep in the shack, all three of them, including myself...Yah, hey! This [The Green House] was great progress because here we do not have fear of what might happen if it rains. We also don't have fears that the

[4] The car in the photo does not belong to Karabo's family. It belongs to a relative who was visiting.

> shacks would catch fire because our shacks here are nicely spaced – one shack is there, and another one is there. They are not as tightly packed like where we were staying. When we stayed that side, you'd just randomly get a call while you were at work and they would tell you that shacks are burning or water has entered your house. So since we got in here, we now have peace of mind.

In her excerpt, Karabo expresses the fear and perpetual anxiety invoked by her vulnerable living arrangement on the banks of the Jukskei River. Her family was living on the edge, both literally and figuratively. Torrential rain that swells the river is not uncommon. Although intermittent, it is typically an annual occurrence (Mvulane, 2020) and the destruction and losses that people incur are manifold. While material losses are generally considered minor, the loss of lives is what most concerns residents (Mvulane, 2020). This was Karabo's primary worry but fortunately, her children were safe in Limpopo when the floods destroyed her shack and affected many families. Karabo was relieved when she was moved to the Green House with her family. This Gift of the Givers intervention provided new prefabricated homes to seventy families (Manala, 2014). The one-room dwellings came fully furnished with a double bed, a chest of drawers, sheets and pillows, among other amenities and groceries (Manala, 2014). The compound was fenced and had 24-hour security (Manala, 2014). Through this initiative, Karabo's "discomfort and restlessness" were replaced with warmth, comfort and safety. She feels she has found a place where she and her family belong and can call home.

In the next extract, similarly to Mavis and Karabo, a narrative of infrastructural pride is expressed by Sibongile who built her house as an upper level on top of another due to the lack of space in Setswetla. She was desperate for a place at the time because she was working in Midrand as a domestic worker and needed somewhere to live. Upon building her home, Sibongile opened a small tavern where customers could come and enjoy cold beverages while on her balcony. It is a tricky climb as one has to take flight on a makeshift stairwell while holding onto a thin piece of metal that acts as a guiding brace. In the excerpt below she shares her delight in what she built.



Figure 9 Sibongile's Balcony

> Sibongile: I love this view. I can see the Gautrain passing by, even if I've never been on it. I love this view - And I wish one day I will ride the train but for now, there's no money, so I enjoy the view. It's nice, I love this place. My customers sit nicely while looking at the view and enjoying the breeze, instead of sitting in one room where it's stuffy with cigarette smoke - Because there are people who drink alcohol but they don't smoke. So I did not want to put them all in one place.

In this short extract, Sibongile expresses her pride in the balcony that she built for herself. Additionally, she is also proud to create a space where her customers can sit comfortably and enjoy their cold beverages with a breeze, thus making her place home for others. According to Oswald and Wahl (2005, p. 3) "Home is where we belong. It is in our experience, recollections, imagination, and aspirations". This is aptly captured by Sibongile's excerpt as her sight of the Gautrain, which seems to represent the pinnacle of modernity and an opulent lifestyle, contrasts with her reality. For Sibongile, this is a life desired and it is seemingly within reach but also not easy to obtain. This stark contrast reveals the tensions between where Sibongile is and where she would like to be. She therefore draws an aspirational meaning to her home as it represents a stepping stone towards her wishes.

This aspiration is also evident in Jabulile's narrative about growing up in Setswetla. She was raised by both her parents, however, her father passed away in 2018 after being stabbed. Before he perished, he

had built Jabulile a two-roomed house in Setswetla, roughly 500m from the Juskei River. While Jabulile's home represents her father's legacy for her, it also bears aspirational connotations for both him and her.



Figure 10 Jabulile's Dubai

Jabulile: He called it Dubai. He said 'My child lives in Dubai'…He was looking for a place for me, he said I was grown. We used to stay together, the four of us. My mom, my dad, and Bonolo [Jabulile's son] and he said I shouldn't be living with them, that I should have my own place. He fought for me to get space. He started with a shack and then he extended it and added bricks. It started off as a shack, and then he made a one-room.

Jabulile's father built her this house as a way of affirming her adult identity. From its nickname -'Dubai' - one can capture the affectionately humorous bond between this father and daughter duo. Furthermore, this moniker also infers how the father wanted the house to be unique and aesthetically appealing. Thus calling the house 'Dubai' – which is a world-class city and a symbol of modern opulence and luxury - is a masterstroke as the house itself is starkly different from the shacks that surround it. Wolfensberger (19986) reminds us that "Often, a building has a much louder and more honest voice than the men who may talk to us about it and its purpose" (p.36). In this sense, a house speaks to the perceptions of home and its aesthetics and character tell us about the identities of its inhabitants. Hence as an extension and manifestation of one's identity and values, the structure of home can represent one's hopes and dreams, as illustrated by both Sibongile and Lerato. Through this process of place-making, place identity is anchored in physical form through person-place interactions (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004).

The expression of place identity is also captured in Mpho's narrative. She is Wendy's daughter and she grew up in a one-room shack with her mother. As she is now a self-employed adult with two children and a partner, she has been fortunate enough to move from Setswetla as she currently resides in Linbro Park, a suburban neighbourhood near Sandton. Despite her newly founded suburban identity, Mpho's endearment towards the informal settlement in which she grew up is clear through her daily presence in Setswetla. When two of her mother's neighbours moved, she bought their land and built herself a room and three other rooms that she now rents out. Located right next to her mother's shack, from the outside (see blue line in Figure 11 below), her room is inconspicuous, enclaved among corrugated shacks. However, once one opens the door, one is welcomed into a beautiful and opulent setting that seems out of place compared to its surroundings. In the excerpt below, Mpho shares her affection for Setswetla and her pride in the home she built.



Figure 11 Mpho's Home

Mpho: This is where a lot of things began, this is my home [Setswetla]. You see even now, I haven't rented it out, I don't think I will because of the love I have for this place. That's

> why I said even if my situation fails that side [Linbro Park], I will always come home. Any day any time I will come back home….If you look around a lot of places in Setswetla, you will see a lot of amazing things. People improve things for themselves. This is where we spend most of our time.

Mpho's excerpt signifies the intricate relationships that form between person and place. As she has spent most of her life in Setswetla, Mpho has grown to love the place of her upbringing, despite the difficult conditions that beleaguer the settlement. To her, Setswetla is the genesis of her life where "a lot of things began". This affirms Despres and Lord's (2005, p. 317) assertion that "people's experiences and emotions toward their current residence (or dwelling) are very much related to their residential biography and length of residence in the neighbourhood." Hence instead of discarding her identity as a resident of Setswetla due to her newly established identity as a suburban resident, Mpho has chosen to embrace both. Possibly, this may signify a tension between what has been ordinary for all her life, an essence of her own place identity, and what she is still assimilating to with her family. In this way, her sense of belonging is much more rooted within the familiar locale that she vouches for (Setswetla) amid establishing her new place-identity in Linbro Park which she feels may not last, is ironically experienced as temporary and transient despite being more permanently built.

As previously noted, Setswetla residents do not have proper access to water and sanitation (Public Protector, 2021). As there are no taps within households, residents have to fetch water at designated watering spots around the settlement. For Wendy and other elderly community members, this poses a challenge as they have to fetch water with containers and return to their dwellings, and this is a heavy exercise. To circumvent this predicament, Wendy devised a solution for herself. The picture below shows the tap she erected in her shack as a way of making her home functional for her needs. In her accompanying excerpt, she explains what led her to this solution.



Figure 12 Wendy's Tap

Wendy: Hey! No, I was just so tired of carrying buckets of water every day. So I thought let me just buy some pipes and call that young man [neighbour] so that he can put a tap in my house. So I bought the pipes and I asked him 'how many metres of pipes are needed?' and he said 12. So I showed him the pipes and I asked him to make a tap for me. And ever since then, I just saved myself from a lot of problems. I don't pick up a bucket anymore.

In this extract, Wendy's initiative makes her home convenient and functional. As a way of filling the gaps where the government is failing, Wendy connected her tap to the main water line because she could no longer bear the burden of carrying buckets of water at her age. Located right next to her door, the tap is a testament to her agency, taking charge of her environment and making it work for her needs. As Oswald and Wahl (2005, p. 25) assert, "Home acquires new meaning in old age because it serves to compensate for the reduced functional capacity of the ageing individual...To maintain autonomy, either environmental changes or behavioural adaptations must generally occur." It is indeed true that elderly individuals give their households more domestic attention as an attempt to expedite daily routines (Oswald and Wahl, 2005). However, this speaks to Wendy's agency in her attempt to feel conveniently at home.

5.1.2 Home as Sentimental[lity]

As a “natural repository for cherished possessions and memorabilia” (Sherman & Dacher, 2005, p.1), a home bears symbolic representations that transcend its physical integrity. Narratives of place-making and place identity were deepened by the stories that participants told of a variety of objects within their homes. According to Lewis and Butler (1974) household objects have the potential of providing a sense of comfort, security, and continuity for dwellers. This is further captured by Casey’s (1987, p.110) “remeniscentia”, a concept that infers objects “as inducers of reminiscence.” The sentimentality of home was clear in how participants acted on their personal spaces in a way that represented their identities, values, memories, and in some cases, spiritualities. These objects were integral to participants’ sense of belonging in place, and they were also an important expression of their identification and attachment to their environments.

The sentimentality of objects at home is illustrated by Magdeline’s photo and the excerpt below. As one enters the passage that leads into her home, one is greeted by a variety of neatly ordered pot plants on both sides of the stoeps in the passage. Upon entering the nursery-like enclosure, it becomes clear that the plants and flowers, which she grows and sells, represent more than just a business activity for the owner.



Figure 13 Magdeline's Flowers

Magdeline: I love gardening, I love flowers. A flower has no jealousy, it has no bad heart; it brings life, it gives light. You talk to flowers and name them - You speak life into them - if you don't have love how will your flowers survive?

Kgaugelo: So, flowers are a symbol of love…

Magdeline: Yes, and I was born in February, the month of love. I'm also like that - I love people, and no matter what you do to me, I'd rather keep quiet and leave you be. I don't like conflict. I'm good by myself in my house doing my work. People come and what I have, I give them.

Kgaugelo: Where did the love of flowers come from?

Magdeline: At home [Soweto] there were flowers. Daffodils and all that - my father loved flowers. During spring and summer, I'd pick them and put them nicely in the house. I grew up like that. I loved them. Even today I still love them that's why there are so many [here].

In this excerpt, Magdeline shares her love for flowers as they are a representation of "love and purity" for her. As "remeniscentia" (Casey,1987, p.110), plants and flowers have a significant representation in her narrative biography and place identity, evoking fond memories of childhood and manifesting as a nostalgic continuity. This is indeed a representation of home for Magdeline and it undoubtedly anchors her sense of belonging in place. Magdeline's narrative therefore shows that "memory and home are both vehicles for transcending the flux of time and becoming grounded in temporal unity" (Chaudhury and Rowles, 2005, p.12). Thus with flowers in place, there is a sense of self that is preserved and an attachment to place that prevails (place-attachment).

Wendy's object of "remeniscentia" (Casey (1987, p.110) was a framed picture of the Bishop of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) of which she is a congregant. The framed photograph of Bishop Lekganyane (Eternal light) in his youth is hung up against Wendy's wardrobe which divides her shack as the front of the wardrobe faces her bed, while its back faces the kitchen/living area. In the excerpt below, she shares her PIN by speaking about the significance of this photograph.



Figure 14 Bishop Barnabus Lekganyne

Wendy: Yes, My bishop! This man has given me life! His church has given me life. His church has really given me life. Once I started attending his church, my life got better and better. I was in the Lutheran church and I left it to join ZCC. I had an issue of hurting swollen feet, but when I got into this church, I got healed. I joined ZCC in 2007, September. It has been a while since I joined…Hai, I had a lot of problems yoh! My life was on a downhill and then one of my sisters told me 'Let's just go join the church' – and it had been a while since she started telling me this. I joined the church one morning. It was 7 am and there was a Mpoho (church service) close by. We just went there, the two of us…And when we got there, they asked us if we were sanctified - I was sanctified in Brits [North West]. With the church on this side [Setswetla], I just go for our church tea but everything else I do on that side.

Kgaugelo: All right. So as you have Lekganyane's picture here in your house – what does that mean for you?

CM: This Is my protection – I don't know how to say this. But when I see him, I feel like all my problems disappear. He has my life in his hands, he is protecting me. Even when I pray I say his name, Lekganyane! [Eternal light]. Even though I never met him, I place him in my prayers. This is our faith as ZCC members. All my problems, I give them to him. And when my things go well, I acknowledge that my Bishop has fixed things for me – even God has fixed them but as for us, we have faith in Lekganyane because he is our Bishop. He is our spiritual leader.

In this extract, Wendy conveys a religious connection to the inanimate picture that she has in her house. As a member of the ZCC, one of the largest churches in South Africa, Wendy uses the photo to reminisce about a time in her life when she was physically unwell. She recounts how attending the church changed her life for the better and emphatically holds her membership in high regard. Beyond "reminiscentia"

(Casey, 1987, p.110), for Wendy, the picture does not only represent protection from evil spirits or bad things in the world. It is also a reinforcer of her religious identity and a reminder of her sense of belonging in her church (and at home). In effect, Wendy's narrative conveys her home as the "setting for the practice of religion and religious activities, and also as sacred space and repository of sacred artefacts" (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2005, p. 81). In this sense, the picture is a representation of another home, albeit a spiritual one. Hence as a sacred artefact, the photo plays the role of connecting Wendy's spiritual home to her physical home.

As would be expected, family photographs also featured among participants' most cherished objects in their homes. The photograph below shows Mavis's family wall, and her accompanying excerpt proclaims its significance.

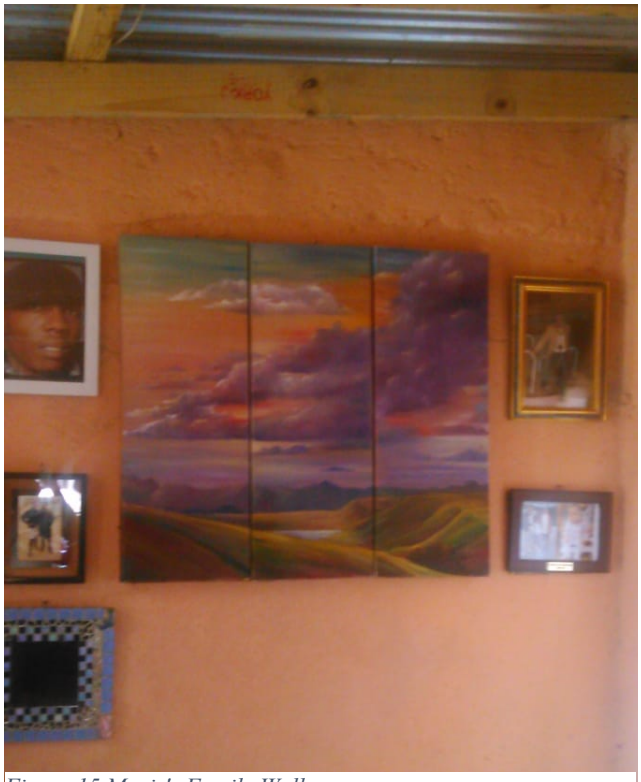

Figure 15 Mavis's Family Wall

Mavis: Yes the big painting I got it from the lady who I was working for...This is where we keep our memories, all the photos. My husband loves photos! He shoots everything and records everything and puts it in the computer. He always says, "These are our memories please don't remove them, even if I'm dead and you marry again tell them that this was my husband". I was like, 'No after you there's no one else it's only me and my kids'.

As the bearer of memories, Mavis's wall of photos is a representation of her community and family. It is also an affirmation of her identity as a wife and serves the same function for her husband. With its aesthetic and appeal, the wall adds a salient warmth to Mavis's home environment (Smith, 1994). It is a link to the past that signifies how objects embody reminiscence within the home (Casey, 1987). Lewis and Butler's(1974) sentiment is therefore appropriate here as Mavis's wall provides "comfort, continuity and security" (p.62) for herself and her family. More importantly, the wall is an integral aspect of their belongingness in place and feeling at home.

This section has fleshed out the intricate dynamics imbued within person-place relations. These narratives signify what participants have imparted on their environments in their attempts to belong and feel at home. Indeed the "experience of home is associated with defining, maintaining, and recreating self-identity" (Chaudhury & Rowles, 2005, p. 3). As shown by the analysis, through the process of place-making, place identities are creatively constructed through the making of participants' physical environments. In this way, participants draw different meanings and affections concerning their places of dwelling. This is in agreement with Twigger-Ross and Uzell (1996) as they contend that people are active agents and shapers of their environments.

5.2 Narratives of Collective Agency, Resilience and (Re) Storying

Against the backdrop of various socioeconomic difficulties that bedevil residents of Setswetla, the capacity of participants to withstand, and in some instances overcome these challenges is remarkable. Befittingly, the stories that have been thematically discussed thus far could be argued to represent narratives of resilience. Dyer and McGuinness (1996) define resilience as the capacity for individuals to overcome adversity. For this study, resilience saliently emerged as a re-storying of participants' lives to belong despite their difficult circumstances. This was reflected through individuals demonstrating positive outcomes and commendable functioning (Schoon, 2006) in the face of structural violence. These narratives inadvertently point to participants' strengths and abilities as they resiliently navigate and negotiate socioeconomic

adversities that have become normal parts of their lives (Bartone 2006). Perhaps the ability of some participants to minimise everyday hardships indicated the consideration of negative experiences not just as threatening but also as meaningful components of their life journeys (Bartone 2006). This meaning-making process does not serve to justify participants' deplorable living conditions, but it serves to highlight their strengths and agencies, especially as lives within informal settlements are often shone in a negative light.

While personal resilience was noteworthy, an important source of strength for participants proved to be their involvement in different supportive networks. Through some participants' involvement in different Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), they have been able to create new meanings in their lives, educate themselves and look after one another within their community. One such example is Magdeline's NGO which is called 'Kopano ke Matla' (Unity is Power) which she founded in 2018. Through her initiative, Magdeline has been able to offer an often forgotten segment of society, the elderly (Owen-Larsen, 2018), an opportunity to come together, exercise, and as described in the reflexive section, dine and network. Although her organisation was disrupted by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, an activity that endured the pandemic was the feeding scheme. To date, Magdeline continues to receive food that is nearing expiry from Woolworths and she cooks it with the help of volunteers from Setswetla such as Wendy, Mpho and Karabo. In the picture and excerpt below, Magdeline shares the inspiration behind her NGO.



Figure 16 Donated Groceries from Woolworths

Magdeline: It's a feeding scheme and we also give wellness sessions. We teach the elderly how to eat healthy and exercise, and then I educate them on how certain foods help with certain things - things like ginger and garlic as well as fruit…We attended workshops with pro bono lawyers, [and] that was when I found my love of helping others. In terms of the elderly, I felt [old] people were neglected, they were abused, and housed in bad conditions. What happens when the shacks burn down? Who will help them carry their stuff? That is when I saw that there is a gap. I wanted to be the voice of the voiceless.

According to Du-Rand and Engelbrecht (2001), elderly people living in informal settlements are extremely vulnerable due to a variety of factors that range from increased dependency to limited resources, and adverse physical conditions. Furthermore, they often find themselves feeling lonely and of little value to their families and society (Owen-Larson, 2018). Pervasive ageism, which manifests through stereotypes and prejudices against the elderly, also plays a role in their estrangement and alienation from society. True to its name, Kopano ke Matla unites elderly individuals in Setswetla and provides them with a social space and community where they can belong. This is especially important because a sense of belonging is crucial to ageing well (Nolan, 2011). This signifies the important role

that NGO's can play in society as they fill the gaps where government interventions are lacking or not present.

Karabo, who is a volunteer for Kopano ke Matla, also shared a personal anecdote which highlighted how NGO involvement and participation can be a source of personal growth and well-being. In the excerpt below, she describes how her involvement with Rays of Hope, an NGO which provides psychosocial services in Alexandra, helped her reconcile with unresolved emotional pain and draw a different meaning from her experiences in the pursuit of becoming a better mother.

Karabo: In the rural areas, you don't know that a person can get stress, or that a person can get depression – you don't know. Because I think my mother – when I was growing up – when I started going to Rays of Hope, I started to realise that my mother had a lot of stress, but I did not know she had stress because I would just see her drinking methylated spirits – I would see her always drinking Granpa's and stuff like that. But actually, she had a lot of stress, you see? The reason why none of us at home finished schooling is because my mother was such a harsh person at home. We did not know what the problem was. She was so obnoxious and she would start swearing at us the moment she gets off the bus. She would get off the bus at the bus stop and start swearing at us and we did not know what the problem was. But she told us about her problem in the last few days before she passed away. The thing is, she was pregnant in 1965 and her family refused to marry her to the family of the man that impregnated her, the Tladi* family. So they married her to my father because my father's family had cows. So when my father married her, they made babies and made babies, I think we were 7 children. So, while we were so many, my father ran away and went to Cosmo City (Gauteng), so he stayed there. My mother raised us alone, so she had that anger but we did not know what that anger was for. So she told us during her last days. But when you were home, because there are no social workers that you know, you just know about the chief only - but when you get to Gauteng, it's better because you start getting to know that there is someone called a social worker, there's someone who is a counsellor. So when I went to Rays of Hope, I realised that my mother had depression. But before, when I was at home, we did not know what it was.

Karabo's account signifies how supportive networks not only function as a source of resilience but also as an opportunity to learn and unlearn as we make meaning of our life experiences. It would seem that her experience at Rays of Hope was an opportunity for her to heal in a supportive space where her own emotional needs were met – a safe place where she could belong and enrich her narrative identity through meaning-making (McAdams, 2008). In this example, resilience is drawn from meaning-making as Karabo was able to make sense of her own mother's situation and draw strength from her immediate

network. Karabo's daughter, Ayanda, was also an active participant in a youth NGO, the Nthethelelo Foundation. This women-led NGO focuses on skills development for young girls in Alexandra. Ayanda shared the photo below and expressed the importance of how the community fostered by the Nthethelelo has become an integral aspect of her sense of belonging and narrative identity (McAdams, 2008).



Figure 17 Ntethelelo Foundation

Ayanda: Uhm, okay, well the container is our safe space. It's a place where we learn a lot because we don't have a library in our community, so this place becomes our library. It's a place where we learn and a place we seek refuge in. So the container came this year…It was donated by the AIDS Health Foundation because they help us with most of the stuff that we need, so they donated it because they saw that we needed a space to meet in…And we got exposed to a lot of things because we got confidence-building talks, shows – and there are people from different spaces who come and talk to us. And we also went to Durban just for a holiday, and then we also went to the human rights festival just to cite our poems and yeah - we have been to different places just for exposure – it's showing us that out there is a world that you guys need to be involved in. Yes, it is doing something for ourselves – because before, we just used to sit in the house – there was so much we didn't know. We would sit in the house or be on the streets, so since the organisation came, we are no longer on the streets, there's more opportunity to sit and talk – it is helping us realise our potential – because some of the children here are actresses but we don't know, others are good in public speaking but we are not aware – so this way we can connect as girls and talk about our issues and to also talk about gender-based violence because people also need to know that gender-based violence is not just when a person hits you, emotional abuse is also gender-based violence. So yah, it's been fun

These narratives of imagination and agency signify the degree to which participants can affect change in their lives or influence others in their environment. In these attempts at re-storying their lives, the

daily wretchedness of place is resisted by human ideals of social connection, dialogue, friendship and belonging. Through their involvement in supportive networks, participants assert their sense of belonging and carve broader meanings of home - meanings that transcend the four walls they inhabit. In this way, the endearment of home is represented through social connections where participants form new 'families'. In this way, participants are able to create their own social capital which is linked to a strong sense of community, purpose and high levels of engagement in public life (Portes, 1998).

As an informal settlement, Setswetla is subject to "territorial stigmatization" which is a phenomenon that expresses and normalises othering and negative constructions of certain geographical locations (Mead, 2020) and this has become Setswetla's 'master narrative' (McKenzie & Lafrance, 2017). In light of this, participants' involvement in non-governmental organisations and drawing meaning from these experiences, can be seen as counter-narratives as they attempt to re-story their lives in place while resisting the harmful storying(s) of dominant and often negative narratives (McKenzie & Lafrance, 2017). In this sense, their deep-rooted resilience and agency can be interpreted as an attempt to 'talk back' to the injurious master narratives (McKenzie & Lafrance, 2017) that often blanket Setswetla. Thus through community involvement and drawing support from each other, participants create counter stories or what Nelson calls "narrative acts of insubordination" (Nelson, 2001, p.8), as an enactment of their agencies in the pursuit to belong, within a social milieu that bears testament to governmental deficits, failures and inefficiencies. This resilience is a form of 'breaking free' from the pathological master narrative of place and it is an important aspect in the re-authoring of their own narrative identities within an oppressive social world. It is important to note that these narratives of resilience are presented with caution as Carney (2004) advises because they often are at risk of being romanticised. Long (2021) also warns that "resilience discourses" and their accompanying arguments for social change, at times, "begin to appear somewhat overstated" (p. 55). With all things considered, these narratives still reveal the collective strengths and ingenuities inherent in place-making. These are indeed "the stories which people tell and live which offer resistance, either implicitly or explicitly, to dominant cultural narratives" (Andrews, 2002, p.1).

5.3. Future Narratives: Retreats, Hopes and Quests

Polkinghorne (1998) contends that the experiences of the past extend into the future and through narrative inquiry, the temporal dimensions of life are given significance (McAdams, 2001). This section therefore discusses the futures that participants imagined for themselves. Cowling (2005) recognises the reflection and the desire for positive change that accompanies storytelling and dialogue. Accordingly, future narratives gave participants opportunities to pause and reflect on the future lives that they would like to lead and often these were positive outlooks. The contextual realities experienced in Setswetla had an impact on how these women envisaged their futures, hence it was of interest whether Setswetla was part of those future imaginations or not. While some participants longed to return to their rural homesteads, others were hesitantly optimistic about being relocated elsewhere in the city or the possibility of the formalisation of the informal settlement. Additionally, the younger voices were daring in their intention to venture into the unknown in the pursuit of warmer homely environments beyond Setswetla. Hence this section is aptly titled 'Retreats, Hopes and Quests'. What follows are accounts from a few participants who shared their visions about their future.

Karabo: …Last year, I actually wanted to move back home [Limpopo] but my daughter told me that I cannot take the family home when she is [still] doing grade 11 and about to do matric. This would have meant she would have to cook for herself after school, do the dishes, and she would not have enough time to study, so I decided to stay because of her but I don't think I'll still be here after 5 years…I don't see that happening…I am waiting for her to complete her studies…if she gets a bursary and goes to university, that would be a dream come true. My plan is to go home, get home and work on farms because people there work on farms. And you know, when you work far, you could tell a person to build your house according to your plan and they could end up wasting material or selling it and then they tell you that it has run out because you are not there. So it is better when you are there to monitor everything…and people that work on farms back home have a lot more things than us who are here in Gauteng. Because when we are home, we all eat on the same plate but when you are here, you have to pay people to check on your house, so you see that your things are not going to go well?

In this excerpt, Karabo expresses her longing for Ekhayeni, her rural family home where she was raised (Njwambe et al., 2019). Her impatience to return is evident in how she previously weighed her options

and discussed the matter with her family. Through her engagement with them, she sacrificed this longing to return, staying in Setswetla (Greenhouse) for the sake of Ayanda, who was then in Grade 11. As she reminisces about her rural home, her fantasies come alive, notwithstanding that her rural home was once inconducive for the life that she wanted to live with her family. Nevertheless, her need to go back home is more personal as reflected by her extract because her mission in Johannesburg (to find work and take care of her children until adulthood) is nearing completion. Inherent in her account is the need to belong to where she once belonged – Ekhayeni (Njwambe et al., 2019). In this sense, through meaning-making, Setswetla has come to represent a means to an end - and as the said 'end' is now in sight, Karabo has become more prepared to go back home. This is a classic illustration of circular rural-urban migration where an extended urban residence is followed by an eventual retirement at the rural family home (Posel & Marx, 2013). Karabo's sentiment was also shared by Wendy.

Wendy: I'm still staying there in Brits. My home, home is Brits [North West]. This side is only for job. My everything is there - here it is temporary. When I die, I'm going be buried at home. Everything that is mine will go there. I am only staying here because of work. Actually, after two years I am going home! I only have two years remaining here, I must go rest. I can't work non-stop. At 65 years of age, that is the time for a person to go home and relax - [uses her hand to count] 64, 65 – so I am 62 now – 63, 64, 65! Then I have to go rest myself and take care of my affairs. When I arrive at home, they will see that "she is now here! – she will also join us to cook, she will do this and that"…I am actually impatient, I have been wanting to go back home. I want to go home - I haven't bought [floor] tiles. I have to send tiles home in December, then I will be done…I renovated my mother's house. No one was staying there - I stay there because I am the last born. So they told me to stay there and I have been fixing the house ever since – it's only the tiling that is remaining now. I did the roofing and everything else…I don't want to start afresh when I am there - going up and down looking for tiles and stuff. When I go there, everything must be sorted. When I arrive, I just want to relax - I want to rest.

In this extract, Wendy conveys her own longing for Ekhayeni (Njwambe et al., 2019). As she emphatically expresses her impatience to go back home, Wendy defines Setswetla (and of course Johannesburg) as only a place of labour, a place that she ventured into during her youth when she was unemployed and needed to fend for her child (Mpho). In this sense, life in Setswetla becomes as laborious and tiring as her domestic work, bearing testament to the strenuous and challenging nature of living in the informal settlement. Her

identity as a Setswetla resident thus coincides with her identity as a domestic worker. Hence her retirement from domestic work simultaneously signals a 'retirement' from Setswetla. Having lived here for nearly two decades, her imagined future is not that of continued labour but of rest, relaxation and recognition - "When I arrive at home, they will see that 'she is now here!'"

In line with Karabo's meaning-making, for Wendy, Setswetla has come to represent a place where ends needed to be met, and once this was nearing completion, the yearning for the rural homestead became more prominent. *Ekhayeni* (Njwambe et al., 2019) thus becomes the place of ultimate belonging – the one true home. In Wendy's case, the return to this 'real' home is an honouring of her inheritance as the last to be born in her family. In both Wendy and Karabo's narratives, the rural home appears to be sacred, while Setswetla is merely a strategic base for livelihood and enriching the rural home. This is consistent with Njwambe et al's (2019, p. 414) assertion that "a large number of people that leave their rural areas in search for work still consider themselves to be members of their rural households and many intend to return to the rural areas later in life."

Not all participants had the option or desire of returning to their rural homesteads or alternatives. Instead, some hoped for a government-assisted relocation or some kind of upgrading and formalisation of Setswetla. The following excerpts elaborate on this common sentiment among informal settlement dwellers (Seri, 2019):

Magdeline: What I want for this place is that - even if they don't move us, they could at least build. If not, I hope we can move from here, [so that] everyone can have their own yard - For people to have their own space. It was fine back then, but now there's a lot going on - illegal water and electricity connections - the water we had when we first moved here when you watered your garden, the pressure was just right, and now it just drips.

In this excerpt, Magdeline laments the population growth of Setswetla and how it has accentuated *narratives of socioeconomic discomfort*. This highlights the contested nature of Setswetla and how the place continues to grow unabated, thus making it less homely. In her imagined future, she hopes that the government could at least formalise or upgrade Setswetla so that it can resemble a decent neighbourhood, as has been the case with some informal settlements in South Africa (SERI, 2019). However, she realises the long odds of this happening and resorts to the potential of residents being moved to government-built homes where electricity and water are available. As the avid gardener that she is, she reminisces about the days when she could care for her plants without any water difficulties in Setswetla – and as previously noted in the *Place-Making* section, this is an important aspect for how she perceives home and fosters her own belonging in place. The longing for a more formalised settlement highlights a yearning for a dignified place that she can confidently call home and belong to. It is a yearning for recognition and reprieve from her current living conditions. Sibongile also shared a similar sentiment below:

> Sibongile: I'd just like to a for the government to just give us a place to stay. A place where we can stay comfortably with a street and electricity as long as it's a nice place. Where you can put your own gate and be safe. That's what I wish for. Everyone needs water and electricity and they have a right to get those things. Yes, that's the home I would love. Because I'm the same as not having a home anymore. So I would love for a place that I could call home. A place that my child can also be proud to call home, a place that is warm. But here you can't call it warm as you can see how it is…Even now If someone is injured or sick, you would have to walk and carry them until you get to the street up there. It's because ambulances cannot drive on these passages. We would have to wrap the patient in a blanket and carry them all the way to the ambulance.

Similarly to Magdeline, Sibongile expresses the need for decent living conditions where people feel safe, and where basic necessities are provided for. As she shares her hopes for the future, she repudiates what she currently calls home as the home she imagines for herself is remarkably different from her current residency. This imagined home is a place where shame is removed and replaced with dignity – not just for those who are well, but also for the sick and vulnerable. Sibongile's expression of the difficulty that those who are confined to their beds due to sickness go through to get assistance is a painful reminder of the depths of the collective shame that Setswetla residents bear. It is through her excerpt that we are

reminded of the nakedness of Setswetla which she wishes would be replaced by the warmth of a more formal and official settlement. Although citizens are entitled to housing, human dignity, property etc. as per the Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996), these excerpts highlight Yuval-Davis's (2006) assertion that citizenship is not a guarantor of belonging.

While imagined futures had slight variations among older participants, the overwhelming sentiment amongst younger participants was that of relocating or living life elsewhere in future. The eagerness to leave was visceral and permeated all their imaginations of the future.

> Ayanda: I want to take my mom out of here. I want to – I don't want to see myself here. My goal was that by age 21, I don't want to see myself here. Even my mom, I don't want her to be here…Well, I want to come back and give back. I want to build a community centre where people can showcase their different talents and we have more groups like this [Nthelelo Foundation] in the community - have our own library - and then change this place into a better place and make it a more habitable space where can live properly…I feel like my parents have sacrificed a lot. So if I am able to gather my things properly, I would like to give back to my parents and also give back to my community.

Ayanda appears to have set a much earlier deadline to leave Setswetla compared to her older counterparts. As she exclaims her position, she imagines removing herself from 'here' – the wretched place that has burdened her with embarrassment and shame as seen in the *Paradox of Home* section. The inspiration drawn from the Nthelelelo Foundation is present as she aspires to come back to Setswetla to give back in a similar way that she has benefited. More importantly, Ayanda appreciates the sacrifices undertaken by her parents, hence she also wishes to relocate them elsewhere. Despite the uncertainties of the 'elsewhere', it is clear from her account that it would be very different from their current living circumstances. Lerato expressed a similar sentiment, albeit with different motivations. As she has grown up in Setswetla herself, her imagined future is intended to safeguard her children so they can have a different upbringing and lead dignified lives.

> Lerato: My wish is for me to have strength - for me and my person to work together because we are still young - for us to be able to work together so that we can move his parents - they are the ones that raised our kids. I just wish for all of us to leave this place. I want a

> home that has a kitchen and dining room - that has toilets. I want it to be a home - I want it to be warm. Not this thing that if I am taking a bath my children need to be asleep or when my partner is taking a bath the kids also need to sleep - I grew up in a place like that and I think it sort of messes with a child's mind. I want my kids to live freely.

As she grapples with the difficulty of turning her imagined future into a reality, Lerato hopes that she and her partner could gain enough strength (socioeconomically) to move their whole family to a 'warmer home' that has basic necessities available at their disposal. Similarly to other participants, her critical hope is clear in how her reflections are a realistic assessment of her environment, albeit through a lens of equity and justice (Dugan, 2017) as she imagines a better future for herself and her family, including a sense of debt towards the older generation. Again, the removal of shame becomes a focus as privacy remains compromised in her current living arrangement as she expresses concern about bathing in front of children due to lack of space or a decent bathroom. Thus through her imagined future, she intends to protect her children from developmentally inappropriate exposures, while simultaneously protecting parental (adult) privacy. In this excerpt, she depends on her youthful identity as a marker for future possibilities, similar to the other youthful participants of the study.

In their imagined *retreats, hopes and quests*, the participants generally aspired towards hopeful futures, possibly in Setswetla but mostly elsewhere. They imagine themselves in environments where they have access to basic services and warmer homes, where belonging can be nurtured, a place with which they can identify. These imagined futures convey aspirations towards societal transformation where structural violence is overcome by equality and inclusion – where shame and embarrassment are replaced by decency and dignity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study explored the narrative identities of nine women in Setswetla in order to further understand conceptualisations of belonging and home within informal settlements. This approach goes beyond the typical socioeconomic analysis of material conditions and livelihoods to focus on the lives that breathe life into informal settlements. Inspired by Lombard's (2014) imploration for us to better understand informal settlements as they are often misunderstood, this study sought to unearth dormant stories of everyday life to reveal the meaning-making processes that accompany person-place relations within the informal settlement. With its theoretical interest, the study hoped to bring theoretical concepts to life through the qualitative methodology of narrative inquiry, including photovoice to provide visual texture to the research.

From this study, it was evident that 'belonging', and 'home' are incredibly complex concepts that are intricately connected. Despite this, the study was able to make remarkable findings through the thematic narrative analysis of the data. The study found that although the *Impetus to Setswetla* may have been economically motivated (entailing rural-urban migration), in the face of limited options, some participants stayed there for longer than expected and made it home. Moreover, family dynamics also contributed to this as some participants were estranged from their previous residences and families. This signified the politics of belonging and feeling at home (or lack thereof) within family systems, and how severance may lead to alienation/non-belonging. Accordingly, residing in Setswetla was an opportunity for narrative reconstruction where participants envisioned better lives for themselves as they hoped to enrich their narrative biographies and care for themselves and their families.

Like informal settlements all over South Africa and across the globe, Setswetla continues to bear the brunt of poor socioeconomic and material conditions and poor service delivery, manifestations of structural violence. Hence in their pursuits for better lives in the 'arrival city' of Johannesburg, participants were met with inhumane and deplorable material conditions. Through *Narratives of*

Injustice, participants shared visual stories and particular incident narratives that showed their plights, signifying their lived experiences of structural violence which have become normalised as part of their lives. They told visceral tales of the disruptive nature of lacking basic services, and how these prevented them from meeting some of their basic needs, e.g., electricity, water, sanitation, electricity, and crime. In this way, their lives and the lives of those they love were continuously threatened, and their human dignity was undermined by their living conditions. Through these narratives of social injustice, the politics of belonging were further fleshed out, especially in relation to how they complicate belonging in a citizenry sense. Furthermore, these narratives also shed light on how territorial stigmatisation and structural violence inflicted shame on participants' identities, thus accentuating sentiments of non-belonging when participants engage with the external world beyond Setswetla. Arguably, this shame is misplaced as those who should be ashamed are those who are in power – the social institutions that have enabled these realities to be normalised, especially since participants' plights are preventable and avoidable. Their poignant narratives signified a political critique and how structural violence and its accompanying shame, were antithetical to belonging and feeling at home.

Remarkably, in the midst of deprivation and inhumane material conditions, participants also shared compelling narratives of *Agency in the Pursuit to Belong at Home*. This was evident in the personal and financial efforts that they put into the creation of their homes, including their ingenuities in sculpturing treasured enclaves where they could feel at home and rightfully belong. Despite unfavourable conditions, through placemaking, their place identities were enriched through the constructions and modifications of their intimate spaces. Additionally, participants also conveyed attachments to their homes and the sentimental significance of objects within them. As active agents and shapers of their environments, participants' homes become enclaves of personal significance. Their homes represent personal expression; familial legacies; sacred spaces for religious/spiritual practices; and aesthetics. These narratives signified the cherished home and how it is a canvas of identification and connection. In sum, participants' homes captured their hopes, aspirations, and dreams. More importantly, their homes highlighted their fight to belong and feel at home in place, despite inhumane material conditions.

An equally significant finding from the analysis was the powerful *Collective Agency and Resilience* of participants in their attempts to re-story their lives against the master narratives of territorially stigmatised Setswetla. This was evident through their involvement in different NGO's that fill the gaps where the government is failing. Through their involvement and building a sense of community, participants shared how they have enriched their narrative identities and created new meanings in their lives, while also helping others. Hence in their narratives of collective resilience, the significance of relationality and community proved to be integral to their sense of belonging and feeling at home within their community. These narratives of imagination and human agency in action signify the degree to which participants can affect change in their lives or influence others in their environment. In this way, they resist the wretchedness of place through human ideals of social connection, dialogue, friendship and belonging. In a sense, these counter-narratives captured how participants talked (and acted) back to pathological master narratives of place and as they re-author their narrative identities within an oppressive social milieu, thus resisting potentially harmful storying(s) of their lives. Accordingly, participants proved not to be passive victims of structural violence as they conveyed powerful counternarratives amid an unfavourable state of affairs. This proved that they were still able to live rich and meaningful lives, despite their day-to-day conditions. It is important to note that participants' resilience does not at all mean that all is well as their living conditions are unjustifiable.

In the descriptions of *Future Narratives*, the material circumstances of Setswetla were influential. Some participants longed to go back to Ekhayeni, their rural homesteads, as their reasons for being in Setswetla were no longer pertinent. Others hoped for government-assisted relocations or an in-situ upgrading of the informal settlement. The younger voices overwhelmingly envisioned different quests that were beyond the boundaries of Setswetla. Participants imagined futures where their basic needs are met and where they belong and feel at home while living dignified lives. In conclusion, this research has shown that despite the deplorable material conditions of injustice that bedevil Setswetla,

participants' individual agencies and collective actions were integral in their fight to belong and feel at home.

Overall, this study utilised narrative inquiry to turn dormant life stories into compelling political critiques and unearth the collective agencies of the voiceless while exploring how these informed conceptualisations of belonging and home. Through its pursuit, the study simultaneously enriched theory and our understanding of the social lives within informal settlements. It is indeed "the conversion of private trouble into public plight that makes well-wrought narrative so powerful, so comforting, so dangerous, so culturally essential" (Bruner, 2002, p 35).

Limitations

This was an ambitious study. Accordingly, it had its own limitations. The adoption of narrative inquiry and photovoice was incredibly useful, however, it yielded a large amount of data. Due to the limited scope of the study, not all collected data could be utilised, hence the richness of some emergent themes was lost. Notably, the biggest limitation of this study was time. Time constraints limited the potential depth and breadth of the study as it is evident that with more time and resources, the study may have become far-reaching and could have captured other unexplored aspects concerning the topic under investigation. Although theoretically inclined, the study had to be limited as the threads of the literature revealed numerous points of interest that may have benefitted the research. While focusing exclusively on women proved to be a powerful avenue to explore their experiences in Setswetla, it may be argued that the inclusion of men (and other genders) may have further enriched the study. Similarly, the inclusion of non-South African participants who reside in Setswetla may have also been beneficial as it would have enabled further exploration of citizenship in terms of rights and responsibilities. Notably, informal residency is not only limited to informal settlements as there are many backyard dwellings which may have been interesting to explore in the neighbouring formal township of Alexandra. This may have also been a beneficial point of interest. On a more reflexive note, my initial naivety may have blinded me from my own masculinity and the complex nature of gendered work. Although this study

challenged me to confront this, it may have benefitted from a more incisive mind on feminist studies. Despite this, this study was an important learning curve which I intend to hone for future research. Overall, more could have been done, however, the scope and time of the study proved limiting.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended for similar studies such as this one to be conducted in other informal settlements in South Africa and elsewhere. It is indeed through such intimate accounts that we can gain a better understanding of the lives lived in such settings to reveal their power and agency. Hence larger and longitudinal studies may be beneficial in future, especially with the inclusion of participants with multiple identities. This research has shown the importance of agency among informal settlement dwellers, hence more research could be conducted on this subject. Their agency also signifies the importance of consultative collaborations when providing interventions within informal settlements. For the most part, it remains crucial to continue conducting narrative research that unearths rich data to aid our understanding of the lives lived within informal settlements. It is through such insights that we can realise the true power of stories and how they can challenge perceptions within our social worlds.

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Appendix A – Information Sheet

Research Information Sheet

University of Witwatersrand
Faculty of Humanities
School of Human and Community Development
Department of Psychology
Johannesburg

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is **Kgaugelo Sebidi** and I am a master's student in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am collecting individual stories of residents of Setswetla under the supervision of Professor Jill Bradbury from Wits. The aim of this research project is to find out how the personal stories of residents of Setswetla express their nature of belonging (or lack thereof) to the area.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview with me. This interview will include questions about your own life story and you relate to Setswetla. The interview will take 60 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview using my voice recorder. Additionally, I would like to invite you to bring any photos that you have or may have taken to the interview. These photos can be of anything that means something to you. If you agree to bring the photos, we will also talk about them during the interview process.

The recording of the interview will be stored in a safe and password protected computer and your data will be anonymized to ensure your privacy and confidentiality. Only I, as the researcher will have access to this recording. If you agree to share the photos with the study, please be aware that the images may be used as part of the study. If there are pictures that you are not willing to share, please feel free to let me know.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, and you will not receive any direct benefits from participation. If there are parts of your story that invoke uncomfortable or unbearable emotions, please let me know and only share as much as you are comfortable with. I should

also add that there are also no disadvantages or penalties if you choose not to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume another time.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 2 years. With your permission, the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Due to the personal nature of this study, it is possible that participants may feel triggered by questions that evoke memories, experiences, and events that may spark intense emotional reactions. Should you need support for this, I have enclosed the numbers of counselling centers that can offer assistance and psychological support: Life-line Johannesburg 0861 322 322 Emthonjeni Community Counselling Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand 011 717 4513 South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) 011 262-6396/

Yours sincerely,
Kgaugelo Sebidi

Researcher:
Kgaugelo Sebidi, 1487777@students.wits.ac.za, 0810876239

Supervisor: Prof. Jill Bradbury, Jill.Bradbury@wits.ac.za, 0117174515

Appendix B – Interview Schedule



1. Without including your name, please tell me a little about yourself (demographic information – age, gender, home of origin, education, work, language, etc.)
2. Please tell me the story of how you came to live in Sestswela?
3. Please tell me what the name "Setswetla" means to you.
4. Please tell me about your home/household – who do you stay with?
5. Please tell me about your neighbourhood/community.
6. How long did it take you to build your home? (possible sub-question)
7. What made you leave the previous place where you lived before. What brought you here?
8. How do people access water in Setswetla and how is it managed?
9. How do people access sanitation and how is it managed?
10. How do people access electricity in Setswetla?
11. How are resources accessed and managed in Setswetla? (e.g., water, electricity, toilets etc.)
12. How would you describe the social relations of this community? How do people get along?
13. What are some of the things you appreciate about living in Sestswela ? (or are you happy with staying here? What brings you happiness in this area?)
14. Are there things you don't appreciate about this place?

15. What are some of the biggest challenges that you and the community face here in Sestswela?
16. How are these challenges resolved/ being resolved?
17. Are you happy with staying here? What brings you happiness in this area?
18. What are your future hopes for yourself and for Setswetla?
19. Photo-elicitation – may you please tell me more about this picture and what it means to you?

Appendix C – Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE:	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MCLIN/21/07**
PROJECT TITLE:	Finding Home in Setswetla: A Psychosocial Narrative Study of "Belonging" in a Contested Informal Settlement in Johannesburg.
INVESTIGATOR	Sebidi Kgaugelo (1487777)
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	SHCD/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	11 June 2021
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Minimal Risk
EXPIRY DATE	31 December 2023

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 21 June 2021 **CHAIRPERSON** G.Eagle

(Prof. Gillian Eagle)

Cc: Prof. Jill Bradbury (Supervisor)

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I 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 **Date** **01 / 07/ 2021**

Appendix D – Consent Form



Informed Consent Form

University of Witwatersrand
Faculty of Humanities
School of Human and Community Development
Department of Psychology
Johannesburg

Title of project: Finding Home in Setswetla: A Psychosocial Narrative Study of "Belonging" in a Contested Informal Settlement in Johannesburg

Name of researcher: Kgaugelo Sebidi

I, ……agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO

Participant Signature

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

Researcher Signature

…… (signature)

…… (name of person seeking consent)

…… (date)