

ACCOMMODATION AND TENUOUS LIVELIHOODS IN JOHANNESBURG'S
INNER CITY: THE 'ROOMS' AND 'SPACES' TYPOLOGIES


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DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted to the Degree of Master of Science in Engineering to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other University.


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16 day of **May**, **2014**
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ABSTRACT

‘Rooms’ and ‘spaces’ are two closely linked forms of accommodation where the unit of occupation and exchange is a portion of a larger building or property, within which services and facilities are shared. ‘Rooms’ and ‘spaces’ in the inner city represented two of very few typologies research participants were aware of that allowed them access to the livelihood opportunities Johannesburg had to offer. Through participant observation and qualitative interviews this study explores two buildings featuring informal rooms and spaces and one building featuring formal rooms and spaces in Johannesburg’s inner city. While formal rooms represented the most stable support to those specific occupants, there were several ‘barriers to entry’ including the prerequisite of a stable income. There was much to be learnt from the flexibility and diversity of rooms and spaces on the informal market, which enabled occupants to cope with insecure livelihood opportunities. The research demonstrated the incredible resilience of occupants in the face of an extreme shortage of affordable accommodation in Johannesburg’s inner city (Tissington, 2013). However, the findings suggested an adverse relationship between accommodation and livelihoods demonstrated by the three ‘forms’ of rooms and spaces, where the only form available to people with the least secure livelihoods is that which, in turn, subjects them to the greatest insecurity.

KEYWORDS

informal private rental, low-income housing, multi-habitation, compounds, backyard rooms, backyard dwellings, inner-city housing, rooms, spaces, informal accommodation, subletting, social housing, communal housing, rental housing, livelihoods, participant observation, inner city Johannesburg, housing typologies

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Figure A: *The wall at the end of the month, showing hundreds of advertisements, mostly for rooms and spaces for rent. Lessors await potential lessees, and bakkies (vans) park alongside, ready for hire to move peoples' belongings.*



Figure B: *The entrance of a flat in Yeoville, inner city Johannesburg, featuring the creation of 'spaces' through the use of curtains in what was originally the entrance hall and living room.*

‘Living here is stopping being able to think.’
Interview with Donkela occupant, Interviewee 1 (29/08/2012)

‘Haai... There are too much tsotsis here [in Hillbrow]... when they take the necklace and the cellphones they are working! But I like staying here; we are right next to everything.’

Interview with Abney occupant, Interviewee 14 (12/08/2012)

‘If I had to leave here? I [would go] back under the bridge. There’s no other hope for me – not in my situation [without a stable source of income].’

Interview with Donkela occupant, Interviewee 3 (27/08/2012)

‘I never thought it would be so easy for me to get someone in [to sublet a portion of the room I rented at Hillview Mansions]. 1) Write up notice [advertising the room]. 2) Go down to wall [where all notices are advertised]. 3) Before I’ve even stuck it up, Mpumi [the girl who sublet from me] approaches me. 4) Ten minutes later she’s viewed the room, paid a deposit and she moves in tomorrow!’

Field notes from participant observation at Hillview Mansions (31/07/2011)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAPS	Association of African Planning Schools
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
Afhco	Affordable Housing Company
CBD	Central Business District
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COHRE	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
DFID	Department for International Development
DHS	National Department of Housing, South Africa
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
JHC	Johannesburg Housing Company
Joshco	Johannesburg Social Housing Company
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NASHO	National Association of Social Housing Organisations
PIE	Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (1998)
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SHI	Social Housing Institution
The City	City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affordable accommodation: Initially conceptualised in the SA context, using the same household income as is used in the qualifying criteria to be awarded a housing subsidy under the National Housing Subsidy Scheme (Tissington, 2013): households that earn a combined income of under R3 500 per month. Using the commonly accepted rule that total cost of accommodation should not be more than 30% of income (ibid), the total cost of rent and services in affordable housing should be R1 150. However, it was found that spaces were the only affordable type available on the informal market and in the formal market i.e. at Abney, two ‘households’ (see below) would also have to share (often creating ‘spaces’). This report therefore utilises the term ‘affordable’ in Chapter Four onwards specifically in relation to participants’ perceptions of whether it is within their budget or not – i.e. whether they specifically will be able to pay for it or not.

Bad buildings: Buildings ‘which were once sound in physical structure, management, use and occupancy, but have become dysfunctional in one or more ways. They are buildings which fail to meet the requirements of municipal, provincial or national legislation and by-law in ways that threaten the health and safety of occupants, neighbouring buildings and the environment.’ (Zack et al, 2009:9). Two of the buildings featured in this study, Hillview Mansions and Donkela, could be seen as fitting these criteria.

Blue Moonlight ruling: The Constitutional Court judgement which, of importance to this study, makes it obligatory for the City of Johannesburg to provide temporary accommodation where evictees of a private-led eviction would be left homeless. Full case name: *City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality v. Blue Moonlight Properties 39 (Pty) Ltd and Another* [2011] 2012 (2) SA 104 (CC) (Constitutional Court of South Africa, 2011).

Communal housing: A form of social housing in South Africa that essentially consists of ‘rooms’ as defined in the current study. One of the buildings in this study, Abney, was an example of communal housing.

Formal: Within the legal/regulatory framework set out by the State, or at least attempting or claiming to be so.

Grey literature: Research that has not been peer-reviewed. This can include news reports, reports by non-governmental organisations, those by private consultants in preparation for the drafting of policy, etc. In this report, 'grey literature' is also being referred to when the report uses the term 'the literature'.

'Home': A term many research participants in the current study used. It often referred to the place of birth, or where the parents or grandparents of the participant had settled. Many wished to return there in the future.

Household: While Moser (1998, *) indicates this to be people who 'eat from the same pot' (also to be taken figuratively), authors such as * argue that household relations stretch beyond geographical boundaries. The use of the term 'household' is generally avoided in this report, aside from where literature sources have used the term.

Housing ladder: this is conceptualised by reports such as that of Gordon and Nell (2006) as consisting of different rungs, where each rung represents differently priced housing typologies. Occupants can move 'up' or 'down' the ladder as their incomes or needs change.

Informal: Outside of the legal and regulatory framework set out by the State, and is *sometimes* in contravention of this. In this report, this framework includes bylaws on accommodation establishments, tax or registration requirements and labour laws (see Castells & Portes, 1989).

Mastanda: The manager of a room or space, who mostly lived in the same building or on the same property as the other occupants. They were generally the owner, the main leaseholder, or the person who liaised with either of these, whichever was applicable. Their responsibilities usually included ensuring the full rent was paid, finding people to rent rooms or spaces within the building/property, conflict resolution and ensuring cleanliness.

Olivia Road ruling: The Constitutional Court judgement which, of importance to this study, makes it obligatory for the City of Johannesburg to provide temporary accommodation where evictees of a state-led eviction would be left homeless. Full case name: *Occupiers of 51 Olivia Road, Berea Township and 197 Main Street, Johannesburg v. City of Johannesburg and Others*. 2008 (3) SA 208 (CC).

Participants: Research participants in the current study; occupants of rooms and spaces, mostly with whom I became acquainted while living in the building during the periods of participant observation.

Poor: While the livelihoods framework has been developed to assist with reducing poverty, I feel the term ‘the poor’ is nebulous and thus problematic. Regarding the livelihoods analysis, in many cases it is unnecessary to view ‘the poor’ as separate from the rest: authors such as Owusu (2007) have demonstrated that various characteristics the livelihoods approach confers to ‘the poor’ are in fact applicable to wealthier people as well, particularly in the Global South. Nevertheless, the concept ‘the poor’ is entrenched in many author’s definitions, and was difficult to disentangle in a literature review. Beyond Chapter Two, however, the term is avoided. Instead, this report uses the concept of whether their current accommodation and alternative accommodation was affordable to participants in the study.

RDP housing: The government subsidy programme that originated under the Reconstruction and Development Programme. While the programme changed names, the approximately 40m², three-room, single-storey, freestanding houses retained the term colloquially and ‘RDP housing’ is sometimes used in the literature in a typological sense.

Rooms and spaces: In their simplest form, both a ‘room’ and a ‘space’ refer to the portion of a flat or house, larger building or property that is designated as personal private space, where occupants share facilities (toilet, bathroom, or kitchen) and common areas including access points (doors, gates and corridors). In this report, a backyard room (a ‘cottage’) and ‘balcony’ are also seen as being part of the rooms typology. While both ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’ are physically demarcated in some way, rooms have ‘hard’, more permanent demarcations, such as brick, dry-walling, glass or hardboard, which are constructed as walls and feature a lockable door, and spaces

have ‘soft’, less permanent demarcations, such as curtains or moveable cupboards and are a further sub-division of a room. (In a few cases, ‘spaces’ are not physically demarcated.) Each room and space is thus viewed as a distinct (usually individually rentable) unit, which can be occupied by people with no previous ties to the existing occupants or the rooms or space (this is usually the case). Rooms can also sometimes be shared (i.e. without occupants erecting partitions to form spaces), and spaces can be shared further; thus there can also be separate households within a single room or space. Rooms and spaces are viewed in this report as separate, though closely related, typologies.

Social housing: Subsidised rental accommodation, which is targeted at the low- and middle-income market. Institutions are given a capital subsidy grant by government per unit developed. It is often critiqued as not catering for people with lower incomes and the majority of those in the inner city (Tissington, 2013).

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Prevalence, definitions, rationale and research question

Near the end of every month, hundreds of handwritten advertisements appear on a wall next to the main supermarket in Yeoville, Johannesburg (see Figure A on page v). One example reads simply,

A SPACE FOR TWO PEOPLE TO SHARE IN YEOVILLE;
CNR GRAFTON & PERCY; 0737179963

Another says,

A ROOM TO LET ON POP AND BEZUIDE; 4 A COUPLE OR TWO GUYS pliz;
Call 0730356479 or 0822158848.

Over 80% of the 420 unique notices advertise ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’ that have become available for rent that month (rough tabulation taken 29/11/2013). On a similar wall outside the old post office in Hillbrow, there are hundreds more; outside Ponte Tower, the same. Outside Sunnypark Mall in Pretoria, though the accommodation is known by slightly different names, the number of advertisements is almost as many. The sheer quantity of ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’ being advertised suggests a widespread phenomenon, at least in these areas. But what are ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’? If one were to respond to one of these advertisements, one would find that, in their simplest form, both a ‘room’ and a ‘space’ refer to the portion of a flat or house, larger building or property that is designated as personal private space, where occupants share facilities (toilet, bathroom, or kitchen) and common areas, including access points (doors, gates and corridors).¹

If one applies this definition to previous studies of accommodation in Johannesburg, a number support the supposition: rooms and spaces are a common feature of the housing landscape, particularly in the inner city.² Reviewed in Chapter Two, these studies include COHRE (2005), Dörmann and Mkhabela (under review), Few et al (2004),

¹ See Glossary of Terms for full definition.

² This report utilises the geographical boundaries of the ‘inner city’ as stipulated by the City of Johannesburg (2004), from Yeoville and Braamfontein in the north to Marshalltown and Benrose in the south, and Vrededorp and Fordsburg in the west to Jeppes town, Bertams and Troyeville in the east. See Section 3.1 for a map.

Carey (2010), Poulsen (2010), Lund et al (2004), Gordon & Nell (2006), Hellman (1935) and Tissington (2013). However, the typologies are named differently, go unnamed, and/or are often spoken of as the original unit, for example, a ‘flat’ rather than as separate typologies.

In fact, while again authors refer to them by different names (sometimes the local name), rooms and spaces are reported across the Global South, including in Chitungwiza (Schlyter, 2003; Dewar, 1994) and Gweru in Zimbabwe (Grant, 1996; Grant, 2007), Mwanza City in Tanzania (Cadstedt, 2009), Thika in Kenya (Andreasen, 1989), Kumasi in Ghana (Tipple & Willis, 1992), Bogota (Gilbert, 1987), Nairobi (Huchzermeyer, 2011), Mombasa (Macoloo, 1991), and Lima (Custers, 2001), amongst others.³ Needless to say, the rooms and spaces typologies seem widespread.

And yet, counterintuitively, there is a research gap. Although studies based in inner-city Johannesburg *make reference* to the phenomenon, no academic or grey literature was identified featuring spaces.⁴ Poulsen’s (2010), ‘A room in the city: strategies for accessing affordable accommodation’, is the only paper that holds the rooms or spaces typology as its focus, but the author indicates that the paper is based on the author’s previous work experience rather than research specific to that study. It seems that the perceptions of occupants of rooms and spaces have not yet been documented in any comprehensive manner. Furthermore, no study of rooms and spaces in inner-city Johannesburg features a precise definition.⁵

Rooms and spaces are not always viewed in a favourable light by government, particularly those on the informal market. The City of Johannesburg’s bylaw on Accommodation Establishments (2004) and Draft Bylaw on Problem Properties (2013) are potentially in opposition to rooms and spaces: in the past, evictions of occupants of rooms and spaces on the informal market have been undertaken, based on these bylaws (Tissington, 2013). Even though legal precedent, based on the South African Constitution⁶ protects occupants from eviction without the provision of alternative

³ Appendix 3 provides a list of all studies reviewed that feature the rooms and spaces typologies, along with the terms used by that author.

⁴ Tissington (2013) is the only author who recognises the widespread use of the term ‘space’. See Appendix 3.

⁵ And only very few studies of rooms and spaces elsewhere. See Glossary of Terms for the definition constructed from the findings of this study, and Appendix 3 for a discussion of the terms other authors have used.

⁶ The ‘Blue Moonlight’ (2012) and ‘Olivia Road’ (2008) judgements are particularly pertinent. See Section 1.2.

accommodation, the City seems to generally view this as a stumbling block in its efforts to ‘eliminate’ bad buildings (see Section 1.2). These processes are often lauded as ‘inner-city regeneration’ and ‘rejuvenation’ by government and in popular discourse at home (see eProp, 2012) and abroad (see Curnow & Joy, 2013: para. 2), yet the implications for the evictees are often overlooked (COHRE, 2005).

Rooms are provided in the formal sector, too.⁷ Three Social Housing Institutions (SHIs) operate in Johannesburg’s inner city: Madulammoho, the Johannesburg Social Housing Company (JOSHCO) and the Johannesburg Housing Company (JHC); which manage around 800 units, 600 units and 462 units respectively (Lund, 2012, pers. comm.; Tissington, 2013; JHC, 2014; Gallocher 2012). There has also been some take-up by profit developers, with Afhco securing funding from Agence Française de Développement (AFD) to partially cover refurbishment costs to create 1 300 rooms for rent (Cox, 2012). However, these initiatives unfortunately remain a drop in the ocean, and over a period of research covering two months, only nine rooms were available, demonstrating that they are ‘extremely oversubscribed’ (Tissington, 2013: 64).

Furthermore, averaged over the last ten years, inner-city property prices have rapidly escalated (Lightstone, 2007; Muller, 2013), and current government subsidies such as the Restructuring Capital Grant do not favour rooms and spaces (Chris Lund, 2 August 2012, pers. comm.; Malcolm McCarthy, 16 February, 2014, pers. comm.). While an SHI like Madulammoho acknowledges the importance of rooms as a typology, they are forced in some way to ‘follow the money’ (Lund, 2012, pers. comm.), turning their focus to self-contained accommodation. In fact, elsewhere in Johannesburg, accommodation originally built as rooms in the form of government hostels (which were often also partitioned by occupants into spaces) undergo difficult and very expensive conversion programmes into family units, despite high demand in their original form (Poulsen, 2010).

Therefore, despite rooms and spaces being widespread in inner-city Johannesburg and across the Global South, it seems that on the informal market in Johannesburg’s inner city they are, and will possibly be more so, under pressure from public and government sentiment, which is supported by legislation. Formal providers, while recognising the value of rooms, are encouraged to focus on other typologies that have more viable funding options. However, before we can argue whether this is an undesirable scenario

⁷ Rooms are generally referred to as ‘communal housing’, particularly by SHIs.

or not, we have to understand the phenomenon. We must have suitable in-depth research to be able to argue either way: to support the typologies or not. What do occupants themselves perceive what rooms and spaces have to offer? As shown, the research to answer this question does not exist.

Consequently, this report answers the deceptively simple research question, *what do 'rooms' and 'spaces' offer occupants in Johannesburg's inner city?* It utilises the livelihoods framework (Chambers, 1995; Moser, 1998) to explore from the perspective of the participants (occupants), how rooms and spaces support or undermine their 'livelihood strategies', including how the typologies affect participants' 'assets' and 'vulnerability'. To provide suitable depth to this exploration, a qualitative case study approach is followed, exploring three buildings in different areas of the inner city. The key research methods include in-depth interviews and participant observation, while the findings are supported by the author's work experience and involvement in additional projects. Lastly, experts and additional stakeholders were consulted, and feedback received from conference presentations and the review of a book chapter.

1.1.2 Structure of the research report

The research report is structured as follows. The following section describes how, while there is a myriad of policies, a housing crisis remains at a local and a national level. Chapter Two, 'Theory and Concepts', introduces the livelihoods analysis, in relation to accommodation, and shows rooms and spaces to be extensive in sub-Saharan Africa. Importantly, the findings of the literature review regarding livelihoods of occupants and the physical characteristics and practices regarding rooms and spaces are dealt with alongside the findings from the fieldwork undertaken in the current study, in the findings and analysis chapters.⁸ Chapter Three details the three components of the 'Research Methods': 'immersion', formal interviews and input from experts and additional stakeholders. It argues that a qualitative case study approach is appropriate for the subject matter, and introduces the location of the study, including the three buildings that feature as these cases. Chapter Four, 'Livelihood Strategies', marks the first of three chapters of findings and analysis, the other two being Chapter Five on the 'Physical Characteristics' of the accommodation and Chapter Six on 'Peoples'

⁸ It is hoped that by doing so, the reader's understanding of the different themes featured in Chapters Four, Five and Six (see below) will be more consolidated, and that the argument of the study as a whole will be clearer.

Practices'. The findings reported in these three chapters are divided into themes, which form the sections within each chapter. Sub-themes are arranged as sub-sections. Section 5.2 (that is, the second section of Chapter Five),⁹ for instance, argues the relative importance to occupants of 'Internal Services and Facilities', while Section 6.4.4 'Overcrowding' (a sub-theme of 'Sharing and Subletting' in Chapter 6) highlights the perceptions of occupants of rooms in spaces in contrast to policy. See the contents page (pg vii) for an overview of these themes.

Finally, the findings from each theme are synthesised into three groups in Chapter Seven, 'Summary and Conclusions'. These groups form the following sections: Section 7.2.1 'Affordability and Location', Section 7.2.2 'Flexibility, though with potential insecurity', and Section 7.2.3 'Services, Safety, Health and Management'. While it is impossible to summarise these findings further without losing important nuance, Section 7.2.4 concludes that occupants of rooms and spaces in the three buildings have managed to secure a form of accommodation that supports their livelihood strategies as best as possible, given their limited financial means and, in the case of occupants of Donkela and Hillview, tenuous livelihood opportunities. Nevertheless, the shocks and stresses occupants had to endure in Donkela, and to a certain extent in Hillview, severely undermined livelihoods, and there is definitely scope for intervention. Suggestions regarding this are covered very briefly in the following section, 'Policy Recommendations', and the final section of the body of this report looks at the 'Recommendations for Further Research'.

Lastly, vast amounts of data were collected for this report. Because the research was one of the first of its kind, a large amount of the findings from this data has been included as appendices in support of the themes explored in the main body. These have been arranged in such a way as to make navigation as straightforward as possible, with Appendix Four, Five and Six complementing the findings chapters, that is Chapters Four, Five and Six. The reader is encouraged to pay particular attention to these, as well as Appendix Two, which contains supporting photographs, and Appendix Three, which discusses the terms and typologies of rooms and spaces.

⁹ It is important that the reader understands this system of cross-referencing, as it is used a great deal in this report.

1.2 Background: Policy and Realities

1.2.1 Policy, programmes and realities at a national level¹⁰

South Africa is faced by what is often referred to as a ‘housing crisis’ (e.g. Conway-Smith, 2009:47). Section 24 of Chapter Two of the Constitution established in 1996 that ‘everyone has a right to adequate housing’,¹¹ and there is a ‘plethora’ (Tissington, 2013: 31) of complex policies and programmes. However, a ‘backlog’ of 2.4 million houses remains at a national level (Ross, Bowen & Lincoln, 2010), and there is a large unmet demand for low-income rental housing, particularly in inner-city Johannesburg (Tissington, 2013). Regarding the rooms and spaces typologies, ‘Breaking New Ground: A Comprehensive Plan for Housing Delivery’ (DHS, 2004: 14) promotes affordable inner-city housing through encouraging Social Housing developments, including ‘redefining the concept of social (medium-density) housing’ through accommodation a ‘range of housing product designs to meet spatial and affordability requirements’, including ‘communal housing¹² with a combination of family and single room accommodation with shared facilities’ and ‘hostels’. Here, it is envisaged that Government will have to contribute 70% of the total cost of [communal] units’ (ibid).

The Social Housing Act 16 of 2008, on the other hand, does not specifically mention communal housing. However, it does promote other principles relevant to this report. Section 2(1)(a) stipulates that national, provincial and local government and Social Housing Institutions must ‘ensure their respective housing programmes are responsive to local housing demands’, ensuring the ‘sustainable and viable growth of affordable social housing’ (Section 2(1)(f)). They must ‘support the economic development of low to medium income communities by providing housing close to jobs, markets and transport and by stimulating job opportunities to emerging entrepreneurs in the housing services and construction industries’ (2(1)(b)), and promote ‘integration ... into existing urban and inner-city areas through the creation of quality living environments’ (2(1)(i)(iv)), as well as ‘medium to higher density’. Tissington (2013: 23) indicates that social housing thus far has mainly benefited ‘people with formal incomes at the upper end of the income spectrum of R3 500 to R7 500 per month’.

¹⁰ Although looking at national policy, this section attempts to capture how these translate to realities regarding rooms and spaces in the Johannesburg inner city.

¹¹ This is in line with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25.1), which recognises everyone’s right to a standard of living, including adequate housing.

¹² I.e. ‘rooms’ – see Glossary of Terms

The 2009 National Housing Code includes three subsidy programmes relevant to rooms and spaces for rent in Johannesburg's inner city. The Social Housing Programme acknowledges the 'increasing need for affordable rental units which provide secure tenure to households which prefer the mobility provided by rental accommodation' (DHS, 2009: 23). The main subsidy provided here is the Restructuring Capital Grant, which provides a capital subsidy to SHIs to develop social housing projects in designated restructuring zones, of which inner-city Johannesburg is one. However, the 'RCG does not formally address' the 'important option' of communal housing (Malcolm McCarthy, 16 March 2014, pers. comm.). The Institutional Subsidy Programme was also introduced to promote the provision of rental units in the 'lower end of the rental market' (DHS, 2009: 25), and in relation to rooms and spaces, has a similar approach to subsidy as the Social Housing Programme.¹³ Through 'improvisations' (McCarthy, 2014), some SHIs have managed to utilise the Institutional Subsidy.

Lastly, the Community Residential Units Programme acknowledges that the both the two programmes mentioned 'do not provide rental accommodation affordable to the very poor (and often informally employed) because of the high cost of multi-level units (and facilities provided) and the resultant high rental charges' (DHS, 2009: 27). It includes funding for the capital costs of project development and 'future long-term capital maintenance cost' (DHS, 2009: 28). Operational costs need to be covered by rental income (ibid). The rental stock remains government-owned. The subsidy can be utilised for the development of public rental housing assets, including 'existing dysfunctional, abandoned, and/or distressed buildings in inner cities or township areas that have been taken over by a municipality' (DHS, 2009: 27). The Programme is unclear regarding the typologies resulting from the upgrading of these inner-city buildings. However, for hostels, the resultant typology can include 'self-contained units' which can include 'reasonably sized communal units (8-12 beds) with shared facilities within the unit' (DHS, 2009a: 40). Nevertheless, 'the programme is viewed by many as pure hostel upgrading, or as a glorified maintenance programme for council-owned flats' (Tissington, 2013: 25), and there also lack of clarity roles and responsibilities (Tissington, 2013). Moreover, Poulsen (2010) says that government's

¹³ The main differences being that it is available outside of Restructuring Zones, and according to the DHS (2009), in contrast to the RCG, the Programme provides for the sale of units by the SHI after at least four years.

policy on hostels in reality has been to convert them into family accommodation.

In all, while there has been some successful utilisation of subsidies in the past, Chris Lund of Madulammoho Housing Association (15 August 2012, pers. comm.) said government subsidies ‘do not favour communal housing’, and McCarthy (2014) described different workarounds that SHIs and the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government have had to come up with given this ‘gap’ (ibid). Social Housing Institutions such as Madulammoho have therefore turned to self-contained units in their new projects. The main subsidy allocation for housing on a national level continues to be for RDP-type housing.¹⁴ Nonetheless, although it has not yet been successfully used, it seems that the CRU programme could be a viable option for the development and maintenance of rooms and spaces for rent in the formal market, depending on if more clarity can be gained.

1.2.2 Policy, programmes and realities at a local level

Housing in inner city Johannesburg has been characterised in recent years by tensions between local practices of regeneration and the interests of corporate providers of accommodation on one hand, and on the other the high demand for low income rental (SHF, 2008) and the ideals espoused by the Constitution and policies such as BNG as described above. These tensions played out in high profile court cases in the late 2000s in response to private- and public-led mass evictions from ‘bad buildings’ which had been taking place since the early 2000s. Several judgements came about which set national legal precedent, including ‘Olivia Road’ and ‘Blue Moonlight’,¹⁵ which means the City is currently needing to provide accommodation to poorer residents of a number of buildings.¹⁶ The gap between demand and supply remains a crisis (ibid).

This tension is present in policy, including in some ways the recent ‘Place of Opportunity: Inner City Transformation Roadmap’ (City of Johannesburg, 2013). Similarly to BNG (DHS, 2003) and the Social Housing Act (2008), the Roadmap espouses the need for a range of options that fit the need and affordability of residents, recognising that investment in housing in the inner city thus far has not catered for very

¹⁴ See Glossary of Terms for explanation of ‘RDP housing’.

¹⁵ See Glossary of Terms for the full reference and a brief explanation of these rulings.

¹⁶ While there is an assumption by the City of ‘upward mobility’ (Tissington, 2013: 13) of these people temporarily accommodated, the notion that people can be ‘‘transformed’ out of poverty in a few months, and then move on to other accommodation, is flawed’, and there is nowhere else to go on a permanent basis.

poor households: (City of Johannesburg, 2013). The Roadmap says that ‘the single biggest urban management problem in the inner city is the high incidence of bad buildings’ (City of Johannesburg, 2013: 10), and one of the short-term priority programmes is ‘eliminating bad buildings’ (52). The previous programme that focused on this issue, the ‘Bad Buildings Programme’, according to Margot Rubin (as cited in Tissington, 2013: 35) ‘encapsulated the property-led and market-based vision of urban renewal’. Nevertheless, the new Roadmap (2013) recognises that previous strategies such as these ‘have not tackled both the causes and symptoms of bad buildings’, which are ‘fundamentally driven by a housing need’ (City of Johannesburg, 2013: 52).

With relevance to rooms and spaces on the informal market (see Section Chapter 5), the City’s ‘Requirements for premises of accommodation establishments’ (City of Johannesburg, 2004: Section 62) provide minimum space requirements and rules on use of areas within the ‘macro-unit’ that, given the practices demonstrated in this study, could have severe impact on the provision of accommodation in the inner city. The ‘Draft Bylaw on Problem Properties’ (City of Johannesburg, 2013), due to be promulgated later this year, lists a wide range of ‘problems’ that will allow the City to intervene and demand the owner or landlord to remove the occupants or face penalties. Tissington (2013:47) provides an apt summary of the current scenario regarding inner-city accommodation:

While the issue of low-income rental housing in the inner city has been repeatedly stressed in the myriad of policies, plans, programmes and strategies developed over the years, the reality is that very little has actually been done to address the lack of supply.

While there is a danger that further plans will just be one more in this ‘myriad’, the Inner City Roadmap (City of Johannesburg, 2013: 62) calls for an updated action plan for housing, which will be ‘based on adequate research’ where a ‘first action’ is to ‘define the housing need and potential housing typologies’.¹⁷ It is hoped that the research methods used in this report, aimed at capturing the voices of occupants of rooms and spaces, will enable a report that provides suitable input as the housing action plan goes forward. The next section describes these methods.

¹⁷ Furthermore, the Social Housing Act (2008) states that government and SHIs should engage in ‘consultation [and] information sharing ... thereby empowering residents’ (2(1)(g)).

2 THEORY AND CONCEPTS

This research uses the *livelihoods* approach to help understand ‘what the rooms and spaces typologies offer and what difficulties they pose to occupants in Johannesburg’s inner city’ (research question). The first section of this chapter introduces the concept of livelihoods, including the notions of *assets* and *vulnerability*. Section 2.2 then briefly reviews how the livelihoods approach has been applied to accommodation, particularly to critique South African housing policy. Section 2.3 turns to the rooms and spaces typologies in particular.

2.1 Livelihoods, assets and vulnerability

There are various ways of conceptualising livelihoods (Carney, 2002), and the current research relies on two seminal papers for clarity: Chambers’ (1995) ‘Poverty and livelihoods: whose reality counts?’ and Moser’s (1998) ‘The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies’. Rakodi’s (2002) book ‘Urban livelihoods: a people-centred approach to reducing poverty’ is also utilised as a strong conceptual overview, while the sustainable livelihood guidance sheets from the Department for International Development (DFID, 1999) provide a more practical base.

Chambers and Conway (1992) are generally recognised as having put livelihoods at centre stage, and the approach remains prominent within global development agencies (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005), including the United Kingdom government department, DFID (Clark, 2009), the World Bank (2008) and local NGOs such as Khanya-aicdd (Sangonet Pulse, 2009) and Phuhlisani Solutions (2008). Chambers (1995:174) provides a simple definition: ‘Livelihood refers to the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities [and] assets. Employment can provide a livelihood but most livelihoods of the poor¹⁸ are based on multiple activities and sources of food, income and security.’ This highlights that, although governments and economists often focus on wage employment,¹⁹ poor people in reality rely on a host of other activities to live, depending largely on their ‘assets’ (Rakodi, 2002). Even more importantly, the definition emphasises the need for researchers to be cognisant of and explore the full range of ways that people gain a living. Owusu (2007) demonstrates this through what

¹⁸ See Glossary of Terms for a discussion on the use of the terms ‘the poor’ and ‘poor people’.

¹⁹ As measured by the ‘national unemployment rate’, for example.

he terms the Multiple Modes of Livelihood (MML) approach, where he also highlights how people operate across formal and informal economies.²⁰

The livelihoods approach restores agency to poor people, instead of seeing them merely as ‘passive units’ (Rakodi, 2002:10). It recognises that poor people’s realities are often very different from those assumed by professionals (Chambers 1995), acknowledging the ‘diverse ways in which people make a living under conditions where structural constraints seem overwhelming’ (Beall & Kanji, 1999:7). Importantly, linked with this is the concept of a *sustainable livelihood*, which can be seen as ‘a living which is adequate for the satisfaction of basic needs, and secure against anticipated shocks and stresses’ (Chambers 1995:175). People utilise *livelihood assets* and employ *livelihood strategies* to take advantage of *livelihood opportunities* and achieve *livelihood outcomes*. These assets are, however, subject to an external environment that involves a vulnerability context; policies, institutions and processes; and infrastructure and services. Figure 2.1 provides a diagrammatic representation, after which each of the concepts are explored in turn.

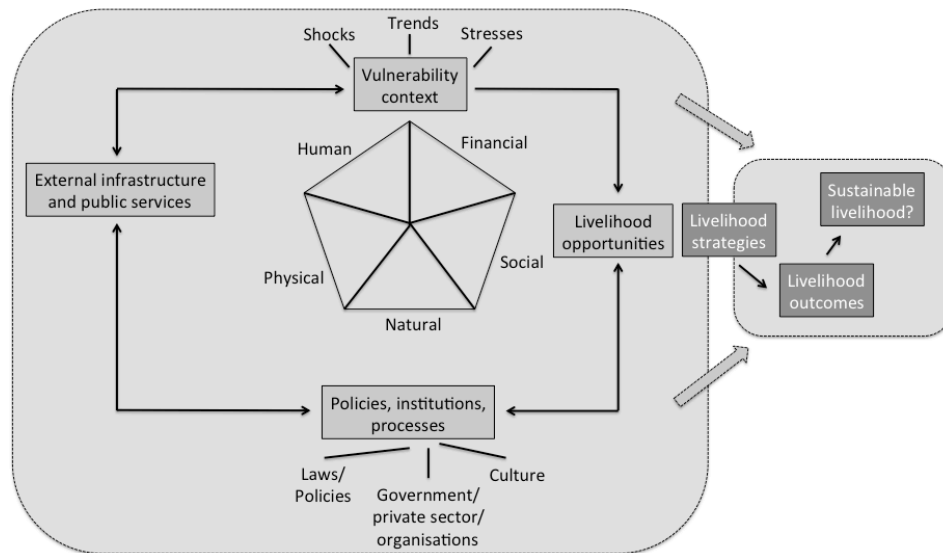


Figure 2.1: Schematic diagram of the livelihoods framework, adapted from DFID (1999), Rakodi (1998) and Vearey (2008), with input from Chambers (1995).

²⁰ See Glossary of Terms for a clarification of the terms ‘formal’/ ‘informal’.

The concept of *vulnerability* is often used as a synonym for ‘poverty’, but it is not the same (Chambers 1995; Moser 1998). While poverty measures are generally static, vulnerability ‘better captures change processes as people move in and out of poverty’ (Lipton & Maxwell, 1992:10, as cited in Moser, 1998:3). Moser (1998:3) defines vulnerability as ‘insecurity and sensitivity in the well-being of individuals, households and communities in the face of a changing environment, and implicit in this, their responsiveness and resilience.’ The environmental changes can be in the form of sudden shocks or long-term trends (Moser, 1998). In line with Vearey’s (2008) interpretation, in this report vulnerability can also include on-going and consistent (as opposed to changing) negative factors in the environment, which impact on individuals, and which Chambers (1995:175) calls ‘stresses’ (see Figure 2.1).

The means of this ‘responsiveness’ and ‘resilience’ are *assets* (Moser, 1998:3). There is no *a priori* ranking of assets: certain assets are more valued by some people while other people value them less (Baumann, 2003). Rakodi (2002:10) argues that starting one’s research by looking at assets, that is, an analysis of strengths as opposed to needs, is ‘more empirically sound, conceptually appropriate and of more practical use’.

As shown in the Figure 2.1 five types of livelihood assets are generally recognised. Physical, financial and social assets are most relevant to this report, with housing being included as physical capital. According to DFID, in addition to ‘secure shelter and buildings’ (1999:13), *physical capital* includes the ‘infrastructure’ that helps people meet their basic needs and be more productive, such as adequate water supply and sanitation, clean, affordable energy, affordable transport, and access to information (communication). *Financial capital* is conceptualised as including both the available stocks (for example, savings, such as cash or jewellery) and regular inflows of money (DFID, 1999).²¹ Reliable inflows are seen as having the greatest positive contribution to financial capital (ibid).

Social capital is seen as the social resources that people utilise when pursuing livelihood objectives, relying primarily on networks and connectedness to assist their ability to work together (DFID, 1999; Meikle et al, 2001). This can come in the form of

²¹ This contrasts with the conventional way of viewing ‘capital’, which is usually seen as the saved-up financial wealth, or funds provided by lenders/investors, that is, a ‘stock’ but not a ‘flow’.

membership of formalised groups, or relationships of trust and reciprocity, which can act as informal safety nets. *Human capital* represents the ‘skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health’ (DFID, 1999:7) that enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their desired livelihood outcomes. While *natural capital* is a focus on rural livelihood frameworks, direct access to and use of this asset is less relevant in the urban context (Rakodi, 2002).

Importantly, it is not only the amount of assets that individuals, households or communities have, but also how well they can be mobilised and managed. Moser (1998:5) describes the poor as being ‘managers of complex asset portfolios’, which people adjust to achieve the livelihood outcomes most suited to them. They employ both ‘income raising strategies’²² aimed at acquiring and improving access to resources, and ‘consumption modifying strategies’ aimed at restraining the depletion of resources (Devereux, 1993:57, as cited in Moser, 1998:5; also see Dercon, 2000). Similarly, Rakodi (2002) notes that people can attempt to invest in securing more of an asset (for instance, education in order to gain human capital), or dispose of an asset (for instance of financial assets to pay for the education). Sometimes people can also sacrifice the ability to access and utilise an asset in future, because of short-term shocks or stresses.²³ These concepts emphasise that occupants are already employing their own mechanisms to cope and succeed, given the vulnerabilities they face: it is the task of the researcher to investigate and understand these mechanisms.

However, some authors contest just how much decision-making power poor people have: they are often faced with very few alternatives and lack control over their assets, and can merely act opportunistically (Rakodi, 1991). Furthermore, policymakers and planners cannot simply rely on the initiatives of poor people (Beall & Kanji, 1999), but should enable greater access to a sustainable livelihood (Chambers, 2003). Importantly, however, this assistance should come in the form of promoting opportunities: supporting the assets that poor people are already utilising successfully (DFID, 1999). Before this can happen, however, there needs to be an in-depth understanding of the strategies people are already having success with. Using the livelihoods approach, this

²² Here, income is seen as stretching beyond financial income: essentially increasing the positive flow to any livelihood asset.

²³ Applied to the housing scenario in SA (see next section), people have been known to dispose of an RDP house which cost R120 000 to build, for as little as R5 000 to overcome a shock (Boudreaux, 2008).

research paper explores how some people already utilise rooms and spaces as part of their livelihood strategies.

Furthermore, it raises the question of whether the typologies act as an asset, allowing people to respond more effectively to opportunities and to be more resilient to negative changes, or whether the typologies are, in fact, an additional aspect of vulnerability. Although the general assumption amongst authors such as Moser (1998) is that ownership of housing is a key physical productive asset, Dercon (2000) says that, in practice, assets can be risky, not safe. Baumann (2003) explores a similar idea in the South African housing context (see Section 2.2).

With reference again to Figure 2.1 *institutions* operate at all levels, from the household to the international sphere, and are both public (political, legislative or governmental) and private (commercial or civil). *Processes* influence how institutions or individuals interact and can be informal or formal. *Policies* here include laws as well as social norms, ‘rules of the game’ and incentives (Rakodi, 2002:15). In all, they help to define what livelihood strategies or activities are available, for instance by promoting or undermining certain activities.

Livelihood strategies result in people effectively taking advantage of *livelihood opportunities* to achieve *livelihood outcomes* (DFID, 1999). Some common opportunities may include street vending, small-scale manufacturing, domestic service, and subletting accommodation (Meikle et al, 2001). It is essential that researchers do not jump to conclusions about what people desire as livelihood outcomes: people’s priorities may be different, for example, they may choose to spend money on friends and thus improve their social capital, rather than grow their financial assets by saving. While more income often features as a high priority (Meikle et al, 2001), people also often strive for well-being, which can result from a sense of control or inclusion, improved physical security of the household, improved health status and access to services, amongst other aspects (Krause-Vilmar & Chaffin, 2011). Importantly, reducing vulnerability can be an end in itself, through improving buffers against shocks and stresses (Vearey, 2008) and improving safety nets, for example (Dercon, 2000).

In conclusion, this section has provided a review of the major concepts involved in a livelihoods analysis, and the related terms that will be utilised in this report. Through a

review of the literature, it has also made the following findings: (i) The livelihoods approach is useful as a way of understanding the complex realities of how people ‘gain a living’. (ii) People utilise multiple modes of livelihoods, which often stretch across the formal and informal sectors. (iii) People manage their assets, investing in some, while potentially depleting others, but there is debate about how much decision-making power poor people have. (iv) All the while, livelihood strategies must navigate the external environment, as represented in Figure 2.1, of which a main component is shocks and stresses, which increase vulnerability. (v) Interventions can help to promote opportunities to assist poor people in achieving their desired livelihood outcomes: the development of the livelihoods approach is closely linked with professionals within the development field (Chambers, 2005; Moser, 1998; DFID, 1999), and has the potential to facilitate research with a practical outcome.

2.2 Studying accommodation using a livelihoods approach

The concepts of livelihoods, assets and vulnerability have been applied by various authors to research on accommodation. This section identifies some broad examples of this application, while examples specific to the rooms and spaces phenomenon are explored within section 2.3. The different ways in which accommodation can act as an asset are identified, and a critique of aspects of South African housing policy is made using a livelihoods analysis.

The common understanding of housing as an asset is as a financial asset, where households are able to ‘move up’ the formal property ladder and gain credit or financing (Rust et al, 2009; De Soto, 2000).²⁴ However, households can become asset rich in terms of structure, but not its use (Rust et al, 2009). Though writing before the development of the concepts of livelihoods, assets and vulnerability, Turner (1976) emphasised that housing must be understood not for what it is but for what it does. He argued that governments should carefully consider how people acquire and actually use and benefit from housing. In this light, the relationship between poverty and housing is complex and not well understood, especially in the South African context (Baumann, 2003). There is immense variability of individual households’ needs (Turner, 1972), and following the livelihoods approach, people value and utilise different aspects of housing as part of their strategies (Baumann, 2003; Rust et al, 2009).

²⁴ This process has in any case been shown to rely on housing market forces, which often do not benefit the poor very much (Gilbert, 2002; Rust et al, 2009).

Chambers (1995) highlights this variability, and the need to see poverty the way the poor do, but it is Moser (1998) that links the livelihoods debate more explicitly with housing, as one of the ‘productive assets’ in the asset-vulnerability framework. Moser (1998) identifies how households utilise the asset to diversify income through home-based enterprise and renting out. She also focuses on ownership, and suggests the lack of formal legal title for ‘squatter’ households creates an extreme sense of vulnerability (Moser, 1998:10). However, Grant (2007) and UN-Habitat (2003) contest whether ownership builds one’s assets base or increases vulnerability: given the changing environment faced by people, and the livelihood strategies required to gain a living, the immobility of ownership and fixed costs of services can lead to people being less able to respond to opportunities and more susceptible to shocks or negative change.²⁵ In addition, there is a tendency of low-income housing ownership projects to be on the periphery or to be ‘down-raided’, and other issues (UN-Habitat, 2003; McCarthy, 16 March 2013, pers. comm.). Furthermore, the direct utilisation of housing for income generation is also identified by Poulsen (2010) and Grant (2007), even where the accommodation is not owned.

Writing in the South African context, Baumann (2003) looks at RDP housing²⁶ from a housing-poverty relationship, using an extension of the asset-vulnerability framework (Moser, 1998). He highlights how although a house may add wealth in capital terms (although, as highlighted above, even this is debated), the overall impact of RDP housing relocation schemes may be *negative* on the very poor because of their impact on survival strategies (Baumann, 2003).

As supported by Chambers (1995) in the generic sense of access to a range of opportunities, it seems important that people (poor or not) should be free to choose accommodation options that best suit them (Turner, 1972). As recognised in the South African policy document, ‘Breaking New Ground’ (Department of Human Settlements, 2003), a diversity of housing options is essential, and the livelihoods lens can be one effective way of assessing the viability of a typology: whether it supports livelihood

²⁵ Similarly, as mentioned in Section 2.1, Dercon (2000) cautions that assets (such as the physical asset of owning a house) can, in practice, be risky rather than safe.

²⁶ ‘RDP housing’ refers to the government subsidy programme that originated under the Reconstruction and Development Programme. While the programme changed names, the approximately 40m² three-roomed, single-storey, free-standing houses retained the term colloquially and is sometimes used in the literature in a typological sense.

strategies of the occupants, strengthens or weakens their asset base, and mitigates or increases vulnerability as compared to alternatives.

2.3 The Rooms and Spaces Phenomenon

In the following section I turn specifically to the rooms and spaces typologies. A thorough search of peer-reviewed literature as well as NGO publications and additional surveys revealed 35 studies featuring the rooms and spaces typologies, most of them in large urban areas in sub-Saharan Africa (see Appendix 3 for full list). Sharing common facilities between different households within the same house, flat, compound or property is a widespread phenomenon globally, particularly in or near the urban centres of developing countries (Grant, 2007).²⁷ Due to a high prevalence of the typologies in the region (Tippel et al, 1994), as well as the location of the current study, I sought a focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

A number of studies of settlements around sub-Saharan Africa found rooms and spaces to be by far the most dominant typologies in the specific area studied. In Thika, an industrial hub neighbouring Nairobi, Kenya, 90% of low-income households live in a single rented room, and as many as 75% share the room with co-tenants or others unrelated by family (Andreasen, 1989), that is, the ‘spaces’ typology prevails. In Kumasi, Ghana, one half of the population live in the compound or ‘family house’ typology – single storey rooms arranged around a courtyard (discussed further in Appendix 5) – while the multi-story variation accommodates another quarter of city households (Korboe, 1992). Almost 60% of the sample population in Aina’s (1988) study of different settlement types in Lagos, Nigeria lived in single rooms in ‘face-to-face’ bungalows, with shared facilities on the property.

Poulsen (2010) describes a high demand for rental rooms with shared ablutions and cooking facilities in South Africa, as demonstrated by the continued overcrowding of the hostels developed during the colonial and apartheid years, with four to eight people sharing a room. In Gauteng, 72% of migrants in urban areas stay in private rental accommodation, and 77% of these dwelling units feature subletting, where rooms and spaces would be leased (Gilbert, 2008). ‘Backyard shacks’ have become more and more common in South African townships: in the late 1990s, virtually every backyard in

²⁷ The terms ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’ will thus continue to be used during this section, even where authors have used other terms (see Appendix 3 for an in-depth discussion on terminology).

Soweto hosted an informal shack or outhouse structure, accommodating 30% of Sowetans (Beall et al, 2000, in Lemanski, 2009). No tally of rooms and spaces, as defined in the Glossary of Terms,²⁸ has been performed in inner-city Johannesburg: in the few related surveys, different proxies were used. Few et al (2004), for example, look specifically at informally subdivided and reassigned commercial and industrial buildings, while Gordon & Nell (2006:5) looks only at ‘subletting landlords’. Both these typologies fall within but do not encompass the rooms and spaces typologies.

To conclude, judging by the extensiveness of rooms and spaces, it would seem that a comprehensive study of what they have to offer to occupants would be highly valuable. And yet, there is a lack of research focusing specifically on rooms and spaces in South Africa, particularly those types other than backyard dwellings (Tissington, Nov 2013, pers. comm.; Tissington, 2013; Zack, Oct 2012, pers. comm.). In fact, while the typologies are particularly prevalent on the informal market, they seem to be neglected in the formal South African housing agenda (Poulsen, 2010). Lastly, the extensive literature search carried out for the current research uncovered no studies featuring rooms and spaces that explicitly use the livelihoods analysis as set out by Chambers (1995) or Moser (1998). The current research will attempt to fill this gap: it looks at the livelihoods strategies of participants, then explores what the physical characteristics and practices of rooms and spaces offer regarding the strategies identified.

²⁸ See 2.3.3 for a discussion on the problems caused by the lack of a common term when assessing the scale of the phenomenon in South Africa.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction to research methods

Chapter Three describes and provides a rationale for the research methods used. After first relating my personal interest in the topic, I explore the methods used in previous studies of rooms and spaces, introduce the three buildings forming part of the case study approach, and describe the selection process. Section 3.2 forms the bulk of the chapter, and describes the research methods, arranged into three spheres: immersion, formal personal interviews with occupants, and input from experts and additional stakeholders. The last section describes the considerations and precautions taken regarding research ethics.

3.1.1 Personal interest

My personal interest²⁹ in low-income housing in Johannesburg was strengthened while working for Yeoville Studio at the Wits School of Architecture and Planning at the start of 2011 (see Section 3.2.1). I formed the premise that Johannesburg's inner city was one of the few places people were able to find livelihood opportunities as well as affordable accommodation, where people had 'made a plan' and achieved, outside of government or planners' interventions, a type of built environment often espoused by urban planners: compact, mixed-use and mixed-income. I started reviewing literature on affordable accommodation in the inner city, and, as described in Section 2.3, found there to be a research gap. After consultations and discussions with specialists, building owners and community activists, I began the research process described in Section 3.2, with fieldwork between May 2011 and December 2012, and between October and December 2013.³⁰

3.1.2 Methods used in previous studies, and rationale for research design of the current study

Previous studies featuring the rooms and spaces phenomenon globally utilised a wide variety of research methods. COHRE (2005) relied on key informant interviews with academics and specialists, as well as focus groups and personal interviews with occupants of rooms and spaces directly affected by evictions. Gordon and Nell (2006), on the other hand, used a quantitative method, with a number of fieldworkers administering questionnaires to the occupants of randomly selected units. Several issues highlighted in the study lacked nuance, and, having become more familiar with rooms and spaces myself, a review of the questionnaire made me

²⁹ Andranovich and Riposa (1993) note that personal interest in a research topic is essential to maintain motivation throughout the course of an extended study. I certainly would have found it difficult to remain motivated if it were not for my keen interest in the topic.

³⁰ 'Immersion' (see Section 3.2.1) took place throughout the fieldwork period. Formal interviews were held August to November 2012. Input from experts and additional stakeholders was gained mainly during the time preceding fieldwork (before and around May 2011) and the latter stages (towards December 2013), as well as during the latter stages of writing (January to March 2014).

question whether some responses were incorrect, leading to false conclusions (for example, conclusions about management of the property by the landlord or current occupants). Few (2003) combined quantitative and qualitative research, using a cross-sectional survey as well as in-depth interviews and observation in occupants' places of residence and meetings to talk about housing issues. Grant (2007) followed 100 households in a longitudinal study, using purposive, stratified sampling. Cadstedt (2010) surveyed and interviewed residents in three contrasting locations in Mwanza City, exploring their housing, careers and strategies. However, no study located in inner-city Johannesburg featured rooms and spaces exclusively, aside from Poulsen (2010), which, as mentioned in Section 1.1, did not feature fieldwork specific to that study.³¹ None of the studies utilised participant observation to the extent that researchers lived alongside the occupants.

Considering the broad nature and lack of exclusive focus on the rooms and spaces typologies of previous studies, I aimed for a deeper understanding of a select number of cases, and I took a strongly qualitative approach, allowing the voices of the participants to be captured as much as possible (see Section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2).³² The following sections describe and provide reasoning for each element of the research process.

3.1.3 Three buildings as case studies

The case study approach, where 'one or a few instances of a phenomenon are studied in depth' (Blatter & Haverland, 2012:5), is under-practised in Africa (African Association of Planning Schools, 2012). I found the case study method attractive: Flybjerg (2001:73) argues that concrete, context-dependent knowledge is 'more valuable in the study of human affairs than the vain search for predictive theories', and that 'the power of the good example is underestimated'. Furthermore, I decided an exploratory study of different forms of rooms and spaces would allow for a broader understanding than focusing on one form in particular.

The obvious sample units were buildings, as access was easier to negotiate at building level, and my initial understanding was that different buildings demonstrated different characteristics, with a large degree of similarity in the accommodation offered within one building. The study utilised 'judgement sampling'³³ This form of criterion-based sampling used prescribed selection criteria (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003): in the exploratory stages of the study, buildings were selected

³¹ Poulsen (2010) indicates that she relies mainly on her extensive work experience and a case study of one household.

³² While it is acknowledged that the qualitative versus quantitative debate is artificially polarised (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), a strongly qualitative method seemed appropriate. Furthermore, as one of the first studies of its kind, I aimed in this research to be highly descriptive as well as analytical (Andranovich & Riposa, 1993).

³³ Judgements sampling is where sample units (in this case, the buildings) are chosen because they have particular features that allow detailed exploration of the central themes (see Burgess, 1984). This is in contrast to, for example, random sampling.

as case studies because they (i) were located in Johannesburg’s inner city; (ii) fell along a wide spectrum of formality,³⁴ and (iii) seemed to be the most affordable options on the market. Eight buildings were reviewed in this way, all of which were large multi-storey buildings with around 20 or more units, in Yeoville, Bertrams, Hillbrow, Berea, and the CBD.

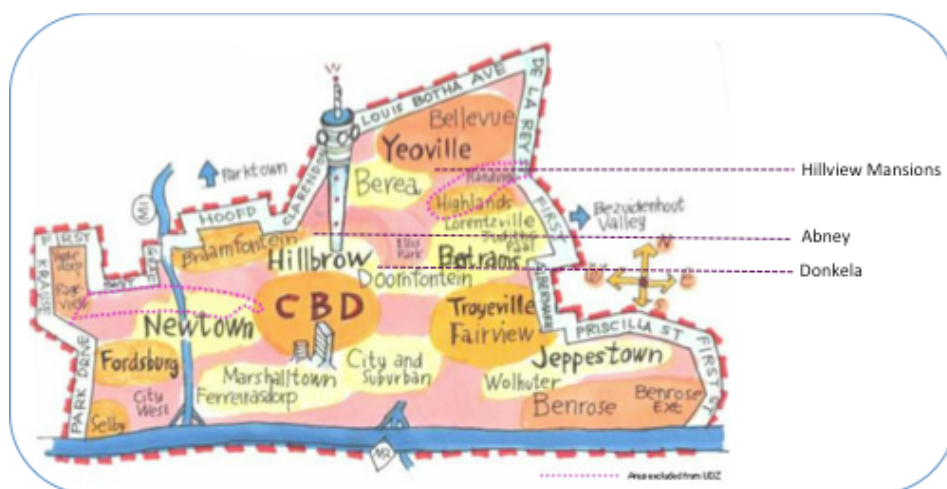


Figure 3.1: Map of Johannesburg’s inner city as defined by the City on their website and Guide to the Urban Development Zone (City of Joburg, 2004). Labels show the approximate location of the three buildings studied.

Out of the initial pool, I selected three buildings for more formal research: Donkela, Hillview Mansions and Abney. Selection was based on initial observations and discussions with participants (after which input from professionals was sought), which indicated the buildings were significantly different in terms of physical characteristics and peoples’ practices.³⁵ I also chose the buildings based on whether the management or initial participants were receptive to my research (see also discussion on ‘gatekeepers’ in Section 3.2.1). Hillview Mansions was the first building I included in my final selection, and where I proceeded first with participant observation. I then selected Donkela as a more affordable building with fewer formal characteristics, while Abney seemed to possess more formal characteristics. The methods of research in the three buildings are described in the following section.

³⁴ Flyvbjerg (2001:78) suggests that average cases often do not reveal as much as the extreme ones, which ‘activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied’.

³⁵ Criteria here included variance in the nature of the building/property and internal partitions, services and facilities, management and tenure. The findings regarding these differences are highlighted in Table A5.1 in Appendix 5 and Table A6.1 in Appendix 6.

3.2 Three components to research methods

3.2.1 Immersion: Participant observation, work experience and additional research

As mentioned above, one of the key components of this study that distinguishes it from others is participant observation. Participant observation enables a greater degree of understanding of the significance of a phenomenon to the research subjects, where the researcher is able to also experience how they relate to it. AAPS (2012:12) notes that producing a good case requires intimate inside knowledge, where the researcher should strive to break ‘through the surface of “how things appear” to reach the messy, ambiguous world of “how things are”’. In addition, some argue that researchers using interviews as their only method assume they already know what is important before they start (May 1993). Instead, I opted first for a more holistic investigation of events and behaviour (see Marshall & Rossman, 1995), before narrowing it down for the period of semi-structured interviews (see below).³⁶ Utilising participant observation as the first method in Donkela and Hillview Mansions also enabled me to have much more of a say as to whom the interviewees would be (see below).

Given that the focus of my research was the perceptions of occupants, I felt that one of the best ways to undertake the study was to experience being an occupant myself. I found the room in which I stayed at Hillview Mansions by responding to an advertisement on the public notice board placed by the *mastanda*.³⁷ After being shown the room – as any other potential tenant would be – and confirming the details of the rent, I informed the *mastanda* that one of the reasons I wished to stay there was because I was researching the phenomenon, and gained her consent to carry out my research in an informal manner.³⁸ I stayed there for over four months, building strong relationships with the caretaker and chair of the board of trustees, and in fact good friendships with many of the other occupants. In Donkela, because it was more difficult to get a room myself, I explained up front to the residents committee that I wanted to stay there primarily for research purposes, and, after they had met independently, they indicated that I could stay with the chair of the committee, as his room was large and secure (see Figure A5.1 in Appendix 5). I stayed there for less than a month, however, as I developed a bad allergic reaction to bed bugs, or possibly the insecticides used in the building, which affected my respiratory system. Unfortunately, though I was very persistent, Abney’s management company did not grant me access to stay at the building and perform participant observation.³⁹

³⁶ This implies a more inductive process, where ideas may be developed from observations rather than being tested (May 1993).

³⁷ As described in Section 1.1.

³⁸ As I did not know at that stage who the other occupants would be, I only gained their consent after I had properly met them when I moved in.

³⁹ See Henn et al (2009:48) for a discussion on the challenges of ‘gatekeepers’ (Henn et al, 2009:48). There were additional implications for the selection of interviewees (see Section 3.2.2 below).

Although I did not perform structured research in the building, at a later stage, when I needed a room to stay for only a month I sought one with my partner in the same way as with Hillview, settling on a room in a three bedroom flat in Ponte Tower. In all, I spent six months living in rooms and spaces for rent in three different buildings and almost two years in Johannesburg's inner city, both in a more formal capacity as a researcher and informally, as a resident. I made good friends with some of the occupants I stayed with, especially those at Hillview Mansions, and, as they moved a number of times in the following two years, I was able to spend time in other rooms and spaces, and meet new occupants. I gained a deep and almost intuitive sense of what rooms and spaces offered occupants, as well as how the typologies impacted on their vulnerability.⁴⁰ However, I was well aware of the considerably different experience I enjoyed, compared to the poorer occupants, due to my various 'livelihood assets',⁴¹ including savings, a stable job and income, advanced education, my own transport, office space and quiet work environment, all of which acted as buffers to any vulnerabilities experienced. In addition, as a participant observer living in the same conditions as the other occupants, my own coping mechanisms cropped up, inevitably limiting my ability to remain objective (May, 1993).⁴²

Furthermore, language was one of the biggest limitations.⁴³ Almost all the terms participants used were different when they spoke to me compared to when they spoke to one another (aside from, for instance, the flat I stayed at Hillview where the lingua franca was English, due to the different households having different home languages). When people talked amongst themselves, or meetings were held in Donkela, I had to ask other people to act as informal interpreters. These limitations cropped up to a certain extent in interviews, too, although I was able to probe more on issues I didn't fully understand, and I brought a Sesotho speaking friend along to interpret in two interviews (see Section 3.2.2).

Besides the participant observation described above, I had other opportunities to deepen my understanding of rooms and spaces. I worked for Yeoville Studio in 2011, with housing being one of the core focuses, including an exploration of 'housing trajectories' (Dörmann et al, under review), and 'bad buildings'. In 2012, I initiated a project focusing on housing in Johannesburg's inner city for Planact. This gave me exposure to interviews with residents in five buildings, as well as the opportunity to listen to and talk to participants in housing meetings

⁴⁰ During this time I used informal conversational interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1995) and heard the 'life histories' (see Marshall & Rossman, 1995:88) of occupants speaking from a diversity of backgrounds, providing 'pieces for a mosaic' or 'total picture of a concept' (ibid).

⁴¹ See Section 2.1 for a description of the livelihood assets concept.

⁴² For instance, for the first months staying at Hillview Mansions, I was defiant that the conditions were very good, probably because I knew I was going to be subjected to them for some time and the situation would have otherwise been even more psychologically challenging.

⁴³ And in fact has been one of the contributing factors to my realisation that I cannot continue living in South Africa without understanding at least one other official language aside from English and Afrikaans.

that I assisted in organising at the Johannesburg Central Methodist Church,⁴⁴ and I also received input from the MSF, Khanya-aicdd and the Inner City Resources Centre.⁴⁵ I led two projects in two buildings with rooms and spaces for rent, within which I interviewed and held discussions with occupants between June and October 2012.⁴⁶ Also in the latter half of 2012 I was part of a Witwatersrand University class project on housing in an area of the CBD, where, in the process of formulating a housing portrait, I gained extensive exposure to rooms and spaces in the informal market.⁴⁷ In the same year I worked for the Centre for Municipal Research and Advice producing booklets on social housing and I was contracted in 2013 to the National Association of Social Housing Organisations (NASHO), providing me with exposure to rooms and spaces in the formal market. For the first half of 2013, I worked for UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi, which provided me with exposure to rooms and spaces globally.

3.2.2 Formal personal interviews with occupants

Particularly when combined with observation, interviews help the researcher understand people's meanings and realities (Marshall & Rossman, 1995), as long as they are open-ended enough (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).⁴⁸ Here, participants are able to talk about the phenomenon using their own 'frames of reference' (May, 1993:94).⁴⁹

Marshall and Rossman (1995) argue that an assumption fundamental to qualitative research is that the participant's perspective on the phenomenon should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it. Nevertheless, having already completed several months of participant observation with a broader focus, I wished to explore more deeply and test certain suppositions within the parameters of the research question. As a happy medium, for the formal interview stage I chose 'semi-structured interviews' (May 1993:93), and this small degree of uniformity allowed me to compare cases and process the data more easily.⁵⁰ Within each focus area of the interview questions, I engaged in 'gentle probing' (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:81), using 'detail-oriented', 'elaborative' or 'clarity-seeking' follow-up questions (see Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:95).

⁴⁴ This allowed me to talk directly with participants in some of Johannesburg's most run-down buildings.

⁴⁵ I brought these organisations together in a partnership focusing on a participant-driven clean-up and maintenance programme.

⁴⁶ I also worked in Protea South, focusing on informal settlement upgrading.

⁴⁷ Here, I spoke with occupants of twelve other buildings.

⁴⁸ Studies in phenomenology have mapped the qualitatively different ways people 'experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand' phenomena (Marton, 1986). Though the current study is not primarily a phenomenological one, I wished to be aware of and understand this variation.

⁴⁹ Qualitative interviews in particular do not have to aspire to gain 'factual' data, but instead peoples' perceptions (May, 1993): given that 'there is only one world, and that world is one's own' (AAPS, 2012:3), this is arguably a more important measure of what a phenomenon offers or how it affects people.

⁵⁰ Also known as the 'standardised open-ended interview', Marshall and Rossman (1995:80) note that this method can provide a degree of systemisation useful in a multisite case study or where many participants are interviewed.

Qualitative samples are usually small in size, as the ‘phenomena need to appear only once to be part of the analytical map’ (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:58), and incidence is generally not the concern, but instead evidence should be highly rich in detail (ibid). Also considering their resource-intensive nature (Maree, 2012), I limited the formal interviews to a maximum of seven per building.⁵¹ Even so, volumes of data were gained (see Section 3.3). Further observation was possible, as I performed 17 of the interviews in the room or space of the interviewee. See Table A1.1 in Appendix 1 for the full list of interviewees.

Selection of participants was through a mixture of criterion-based sampling and convenience sampling, due to difficulty gaining access to all occupants (see Maree, 2012): in both Donkela and Abney I met with the ‘gatekeepers’ early on (the residents committee in Donkela, and the company CFO and then the building manager of Abney). In Donkela these original meetings allowed me virtually unlimited access, from where I could select my own interviewees, but in Abney I was restricted to those interviews the building manager arranged.⁵² Where I had the capacity to select interviewees, I utilised several criteria, including those recommended by AAPS (2012),⁵³ and my own: I tried to select a diversity of interviewees, based on the proxies of gender, nationality, age, income, dependents, location within the building and layout of their rooms and spaces. Obviously, having so many variables made comparison between subjects more difficult, but I was aiming more to compare rooms and spaces with the different buildings forming the main unit of comparison, relying on a limited number of interviews and trying to prevent bias to a particular group within a building.

As mentioned, I was able to continue interviews with select key informants from Donkela and Hillview Mansions, providing a revealing longitudinal perspective (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:54). The interviews helped put the intuitive understanding I gained as part of the process of ‘immersion’ into words (of the participants). By capturing the occupants’ descriptions and experiences after witnessing the rooms/spaces they were speaking of, I was able to draw direct comparisons with my own experiences and past and current observations. At the same time, I was conscious of the difficulty of remaining objective when I had made friends with the

⁵¹ I landed up doing only 20 in total, however, with one less interviewee at Abney, where it was more difficult to gain access.

⁵² May (1993) notes that if one’s level of entry in the case is management, it could mean other research participants are suspicious of your intentions; however, while I have experienced this in other research (Mayson, 2013), from these participants’ responses it seemed they were not concerned in this regard. For example, they immediately opened up about the challenges of living in the building, including grievances with the manager.

⁵³ Depth and length of experience of rooms and spaces, differing values and perspectives, the capacity and willingness for self-reflection, ability to communicate in English, the degree of ‘openness’ to my interest, and of course, whether they had time to participate.

occupants, as well as conscious of forming my own ideas on what rooms and spaces had to offer from the experience of living in Hillview and Donkela, which were relevant specifically to me.

3.2.3 Input from experts and additional stakeholders

In the case study research method, feedback and validation are key (AAPS, 2012), involving ongoing interaction, not only with research subjects (see Section 3.3), but also with ‘dialogue partners’ including case actors, research colleagues, policymakers, members of the public and the media (ibid). Discussions and interviews with stakeholders, as well as with the occupants included in the ‘formal personal interviews’ sample, allowed refinement and assessment of scope in the early stages, review of the findings and assistance with analysis. These experts and additional stakeholders included Dr Margot Rubin, Dr Claire Benit-Gbaffou, Prof Aly Karam, Prof Marie Huchzermeyer and, of course, my supervisor Dr Sarah Charlton of the School of Architecture and Planning, Wits University; Dr Jo Veary and Dr Matthew Wilhelm-Solomon of the African Centre for Migration and Society, Wits University; Kate Tissington and Lauren Royston of the Socioeconomics Rights Institute in Johannesburg; Chris Lund of Madulammofo Housing Association; Alison Wilson, previously from Yeast City Housing, Malcolm McCarthy of NASHO, Dr Tanya Zack an independent consultant with extensive housing experience in Johannesburg’s inner city; Emanuel Sotomi, of Housing Programme Support, City of Johannesburg; Zunaid Khan of Policy and Research, City of Johannesburg; Paul Verryn of the Central Methodist Church; and Jens Pedersen, previously from Médecins Sans Frontières.

In addition, I presented my initial findings at the Royal Town Planning Institute’s Summer School in the United Kingdom (September 2011), the Housing Roundtable hosted by University of Witwatersrand (November 2011) and the International Asian Urbanisation Conference in India (December 2011). Lastly, I produced a research proposal (November 2011), a coursework paper on one of the buildings I worked in with Planact, and a chapter on my experience living in Hillview Mansions, soon to be published (Mayson, under review)⁵⁴ Each of these outputs received comments and questions that fine-tuned the research.

3.3 Data analysis

As part of the ‘immersion’ described in Section 3.2.1, I wrote some field notes in a journal and typed up others. I also took many photographs (see a selection in Appendix 2) and some video recordings. After the period of participant observation, with assistance from my supervisor I formulated interview questions (see interview schedule in Appendix 7) in an inductive process,

⁵⁴ The chapter in particular, was written as a ‘narrative’, meaning I had to ‘cultivate a patient, detached and pre-conceptual perspective [which] ... may seem incomprehensible at first glance’ (AAPS, 2012: 12)

based on the understandings I had gained thus far (May, 1993), in order to test these through the interviews.⁵⁵

I tabulated interview notes in a large single spreadsheet, and I performed a horizontal, then a vertical analysis on these, that is, I performed a comparison exercise within the responses of one interviewee (to the different questions), and another comparison exercise between the responses of different interviewees to the same set of questions. Similarities between responses were noted, and themes drawn out in a deductive exercise. It was here that the semi-structured approach to questioning proved beneficial; nevertheless, at times I had the sense that I was drowning in the masses of data that was collected, particularly as I was all the while being confronted by my own understandings and conclusions based on the ‘immersion’ processes (see Section 3.4).

I then returned to the literature to assess my initial findings and analyses against those of other authors. Once the first draft of the current report was complete, I consulted three of the original interviewees about their opinions on the accuracy of my understanding: unfortunately, although I wanted to consult with more, the key contact person at Donkela changed his cell number, and the building had been demolished in the meantime (all occupants were evicted), while at Abney the building manager had changed and I had not developed a solid enough rapport with any of the interviewees, as I had only met each one once. Thus, unfortunately, while I had aimed to get further input from three occupants at each building, I was only able to do this at Hillview.

3.4 Ethics

There are a number of ways of conceptualising ethics, but one of the basic things a researcher can do is strive at all times to respect the human dignity of those who help her/him (Oliver, 2010). Additional general measures include trying to conduct research that has value to the people who are helping, or others in similar positions (ibid). This is something I feel strongly about, yet struggled to work out how to do it in a meaningful way. One of the immediate concrete outputs from my participant observation is a chapter to be published in a book aimed at academics and the general public, including residents of Yeoville (many of whom are occupants of rooms and spaces). However, possibly the bigger potential impact will come from a less explicit output: the benefit my own understanding has received of the complexities of rooms and spaces, particularly in Johannesburg’s inner city. I have already drawn on this understanding in debates with professionals and academics, and it has helped in my work thus far (see Section 3.2.3). I hope to continue working in the field of affordable accommodation

⁵⁵ See Section 3.4 regarding participants’ views on being recorded.

(particularly rooms and spaces in the inner city, in fact), and will be better placed to make more accurate judgements regarding any interventions as a part of this.

More formal measures to ensure compliance with ethical considerations include those enforced by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Wits University: this study received clearance from this body before formal research began. One of the most important aspects is to ensure 'informed consent' from one's participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Although I did not interview any minors, many of the participants were undoubtedly vulnerable as poor people with unstable livelihoods. In addition, research took place within a 'sensitive context' due to language concerns (see Oliver, 2010:42) (see Section 3.2.1). Thus special care needed to be taken.⁵⁶

For the current study, I produced a participant information sheet similar to that recommended by the Human Sciences Research Council (see Appendix 8) which I gave to each participant before beginning a formal interview, but I also gave a straightforward verbal summary, emphasising that they could remain anonymous if they so wish, and that no references to their name, building or room or space would be made in the published document. I then asked the participant whether he or she would (i) like to do the interview or not (in general), (ii) mind if I take notes and (iii) mind if I made a voice recording of the interview. While most people did not mind me taking notes, less than half the interviewees wished me to make a voice recording. After the interviews were complete, I asked some participants (who seemed more comfortable) if I could take a photograph. Lastly, I did not offer remuneration to interviewees, and thus the ethical concerns surrounding this practice were not an issue (see Oliver, 2010).

When performing participant observation, I employed a more relativist approach in terms of ethics (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), where I did not hold a discussion with every person with whom I informally interacted while I was staying in the buildings, but where the gatekeepers and my fellow occupants or key informants gave their informed consent in the same way as for interviews (see Section 3.2.2). Even so, I have maintained the anonymity of all research subjects in the report.

Finally, after I had completed the first draft of the current report, I approached some of the key informants for their feedback, and went through my key findings, even reading sections out. Although most of my interpretations were not questioned, respondents were uncomfortable

⁵⁶ Although many researchers aim to obtain informed consent primarily through respondents signing ethical 'contracts' agreeing to the research, Oliver (2010:37) notes that a written summary of the research may be incomprehensible to some participants. The process by which informed consent is gained needs to be adapted to ensure each participant is making a decision based on as full an understanding as possible (ibid).

about having their lives ‘thrown bare’ so explicitly, as is the case in some parts of this report, feeling that their lifestyles would be mocked by friends and family around them and ‘back home’. They again emphasised that they wanted pseudonyms used.

3.5 Conclusion

The research methods utilised in this report were wholly qualitative, with interviews with 20 interviewees aiming for depth. Participant observation complemented these interviews in Donkela and Hillview. Breadth was gained in a less structured way, through additional work experience in affordable housing, particularly in Johannesburg’s inner city. Even so, now that deductions have been made in the form of the findings and analysis of this paper, a quantitative study based on these would be beneficial. As expressed, language differences (my inability to speak the lingua franca based on isiZulu, isiNdebele and Sesotho) were one of the biggest limitations in this study – unfortunately, with the resources available, there was not really a workaround for this, given its qualitative characteristics (particularly participant observation).⁵⁷ Thus, I have tried to be conscious of this, particularly in the investigation of how participants conceptualised the typologies (see Appendix 3).

The other major difficulty I experienced was my own potential biases cropping up in the inductive and deductive processes, resulting mainly from the double-edged sword of the activities involved in immersion (see Section 3.2.1), which I tried to challenge and counterbalance through an additional review of the literature at the end of the fieldwork, as well as consulting with participants upon completion of the first draft, and experts in the field. Even so, social studies in particular are nearly always open to interpretation. I have attempted to overcome this almost unavoidable personalisation of interpretation by utilising the same theme headings in Chapters Two and Four, allowing the reader to cross-compare, as well as by including a large amount of additional information in the appendixes.

Thus, while several limitations were experienced in this study, workarounds were attempted where they were seen to be a potential threat to the integrity of the research. Nevertheless, further empirical research will be welcomed as a test of the accuracy of the findings (see Section 7.4 for recommendations for further research).

⁵⁷ In fact, this experience has been one of those that have encouraged me to learn isiZulu in the period following the submission of this research report.

4 LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

Chapters Four, Five and Six present the findings and analysis of the research,⁵⁸ also utilising an exploration of the findings of the relevant literature reviewed in this research. Chapter Four why participants left ‘home’ to come to Johannesburg, the nature of work they perform there, and the significance of the inner city in this. Chapter Five and Six then turn to rooms and spaces in particular. As the focus of this study is the accommodation, these chapters make up the bulk of the report. The current chapter should be viewed as a very brief introduction to a complex topic. For a more in-depth discussion, see Appendix 4.

4.1 Seeking a livelihood in the city

All rooms and spaces featured in the studies reviewed were in towns or cities. Many authors categorised these as urban economic hubs of some kind, whether of more local significance (Grant, 2007), national significance (Andreasen, 1989; Few et al, 2004), or regional/international significance (Mkhabela & Dörmann, under review). The primary reasons occupants moved to a town or city were to access the livelihood opportunities it had to offer, in combination with the lack of opportunities where they were before (COHRE, 2005; Grant, 2007; Hellman, 1935; Poulsen, 2010). In Grant’s (2007) study in Zimbabwe, 63% of lodgers moved to Gweru because of employment, reflecting the industrial nature of the town; most people had moved from rural areas in the region (Grant, 2007). Occupants of *corticós* in Sao Paulo mostly came from rural areas in Northeast Brazil, the poorest region in the country (Few et al, 2004).

The current study found that, faced with a lack of livelihood opportunities at ‘home’, people were drawn to Johannesburg from across the region of sub-Saharan Africa. For some, this was an act of ‘asset management’ (Moser, 1998:1), where participants⁵⁹ sacrificed better housing conditions at home, potentially exposing themselves to greater vulnerability, for the employment and/or livelihood opportunities in the city. However, their real decision-making power (and thus ‘management’ potential) seemed minimal: with no perceived livelihood opportunities at ‘home’, the only real decision was which

⁵⁸ Although the research benefited from a number of less formal research methods,⁵⁸ the findings and analysis focus on the three case study buildings where in-depth interviews were performed. See Chapter 3.

⁵⁹ The interviewees and participants specifically referred to or quoted in this report are listed in Appendix 1. In this report, ‘interviewee’ refers to a person who interviewed as part of the more formal semi-structure in-depth interviews. ‘Participant’ refers to a ‘general’ participant spoken to during participant observation. The term ‘participants’ is used to refer to both interviewees and general participants.

city to try. Participants indicated that Johannesburg had a reputation for being able to find work, more so than urban hubs in their own countries. As noted above, most occupants of rooms and spaces in the literature reviewed were of working age, and the findings of the current study also found that people wished to retire at 'home'. There could be a number of reasons for this, including those alluded to by Andreasen (1989): (i) 'home' remains the preferred retirement or resting place beyond the life stage of earning an income, because of other reasons, or (ii) the livelihoods people have secured, or the conditions people are staying in are such that they maintain their 'home' as a safety net and/or more adequate housing to return to, or (iii) a combination of both. As highlighted by Andreasen (1989) it is difficult to discern which is more relevant, and further research would be needed. See Appendix 4 for a full discussion of livelihood strategies in the literature and the findings from fieldwork, including three tables giving a sample of participants' livelihoods and vulnerabilities in the three buildings.

4.2 The inner city: Supporting livelihoods through access to opportunities

The literature reviewed for this research found that the specific locale or neighbourhood for residence was primarily decided by the proximity to the opportunities, or the reduced transport costs or ease of access to transport, which enabled residents to access the opportunities given their limited financial means. In the inner city of Lima, the large majority of occupants of rooms and spaces in Custers' (2001) study work within walking distance of their homes. Respondents in the neighbourhoods of Barrios Altos and Monserrate access the local livelihood opportunities offered by the very mixed service economy of mainly small and informal establishments (ibid). In Delhi, most residents rely on informal livelihood activities, working at home or within 20 minutes travelling time of where they live (Brown & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). They were thus able to subsist on incomes that would not pay for any form of transport other than walking (ibid). Occupants of rooms and spaces in the neighbourhood of Huruma in Nairobi are a short walking distance to the cheap minibus taxi service on the main road to Nairobi CBD, as well as being close to the *jua kali* (informal, make-do) livelihood opportunities on the same road (Huchzermeyer, 2011).

All studies reviewed on inner-city Johannesburg also highlighted the proximity, or reduced transport costs, to their place of work (Mkhabela & Dörmann, under review; Few et al, 2004; Poulsen, 2011; Carey 2010; Gordon & Nell, 2006; Trafalgar, 2006). Of respondents in Trafalgar's study, 59% (2006) indicated the proximity to work as being

the main reason they live in the inner city. Respondents in COHRE (2005) found inner-city Johannesburg was an easier place to find work or to survive without formal work than the townships or informal settlements: ‘while our respondents were well aware that the inner city streets were not paved with gold, they definitely believed that there was, at least, more bread available than elsewhere’ (COHRE, 2005:51). Respondents (45%) highlighted the significantly reduced transport costs from living centrally, enabling them to survive on the limited budget their livelihood activities generated (COHRE, 2005). One respondent highlighted that he did not know day-to-day whether work would be available at his ‘piece’ job, and if he had had to pay for transport, only to find there was no work, he would not have been able to survive (ibid).

Indeed, participants in the current study reported that their primary incentive for living in the inner city was the proximity of livelihood opportunities, or easy access to transport to them. Inner-city Johannesburg allowed participants to reduce transport costs and be more flexibly and reliably connected to Greater Johannesburg and beyond, with some areas being serviced 24 hours a day. Some participants were able to keep accommodation costs lower than if they were to stay close to work, which would be unaffordable, and others relied on the combination of accommodation and transport costs. Many participants in Donkela and some in Hillview who were still seeking work or relying on very low and unstable incomes cut transport costs completely by walking long distances: respondents indicated that there were a diversity of livelihood opportunities in the inner city and surrounds. Those participants working piece jobs could utilise a range of more flexible transport arrangements to respond quickly to opportunities, even if it was only one day’s work.

4.3 The inner city: Supporting livelihoods through access to services and facilities

Although not directly linked to earning a living, living in the inner city provided other supports, many of which allowed participants to ‘get by’ more easily by cutting costs, ensuring an education for their children or building social capital. Respondents in all the buildings emphasised that ‘everything they need’ is nearby. Shops for groceries, such as low-price supermarkets (Shoprite, Cambridge or Super Saver) were mentioned as being most useful. Some people in Yeoville mentioned the proximity to schools for their children as being what they liked about the area. Some people utilised other facilities regularly, including churches, clinics and taverns, although residents did not describe this as a key factor for living in the area. Interestingly, although only two participants

mention them in interviews, I observed participants using public parks relatively regularly to socialise and relax in (see Section 6.4.2), as well as take photographs, some of which were sent ‘back home’ (for example I11, cousin of I11, P1). Other Donkela residents also utilised the toilets at the End Street Park during the daytime opening hours. Compared to Hillview and Donkela residents, those staying in Abney seemed to utilise a more diverse array of facilities besides their place of employment and food shops, such as internet cafés, restaurants, or nightclubs further afield.

Some of the studies reviewed highlighted the importance of infrastructure and (public) services in the occupants’ decision to stay where they did (Andreasen, 1989; Custers, 2001). In Trafalgar’s study (2006), 18% of respondents indicated the proximity to schools as their primary reason. In another study, focus group participants mentioned high levels of xenophobia and targeting of foreigners for crime as reasons why they accessed inner-city rental markets, as opposed to those in the townships, despite much higher rents in the inner city (Greenburg & Polzer, 2008). This was similar to the neighbourhood of Huruma in Huchzermeyer’s study (2011) – the congestion, miscellany and fluidity associated with the tenements there resulted in fewer ethnic tensions and occupants moved there for safety.

Nothing specific was found in the literature reviewed about additional ways of decreasing costs by living in the inner city through, for instance, the proximity to low cost supermarkets, but Trafalgar (2006) found the proximity of schools to be important. Both the findings of the current study and the literature showed that, while access to services and facilities was a deciding factor for location of residence (such as the Johannesburg inner city) for some, by far the majority of participants held access to livelihood opportunities as their priority. Even so, the lower costs (for example, for food) and decreased travel times to access other services and facilities were appreciated.

4.4 Piece work, fluctuating incomes

Donkela occupants were generally seeking a job or better livelihood opportunities, informally employed (e.g. selling cooked meals), did piecework/ casual work (e.g. in a shop), or formal contract/temporary work for labour brokers (e.g. offloading trucks), and thus had unstable incomes.⁶⁰ A few were formally employed (e.g. as a security guard) with more stable incomes. Most Hillview occupants shared similar

⁶⁰ Though wasn’t studied why they were not able to get more stable jobs - Veary – e.g. migrancy status – unable to get jobs

characteristics to those at Donkela, but had generally secured more secure livelihoods (that is very few were still seeking a livelihood), or lived with partners, family or friends who had. Abney occupants had mostly found formal jobs that provided a stable income, or were supported by friends or family (including romantic partners) with formal jobs who stood security for their lease, and sometimes contributed to or covered the deposit and/or lease as well (i.e. had a fair amount of social capital). Some of those without formal incomes were students (i.e. building their human capital), while others could cover the lease with their informal or less stable incomes. This showed that of all the buildings, Abney occupants in general seemed to possess the most assets: financial, social and possibly human capital (see Section 2.1).

Many of the studies' respondents also had unreliable incomes: a study done by Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE, 2005:5) in inner city Johannesburg showed occupants engaging in 'informal survivalist livelihood strategies... which depended on access to the inner city's economic networks'. Aina (1988:34) found that less than one third of his sample in Lagos had a formal sector job, the remainder gaining a livelihood in the 'surrounding economy' from small-scale production and services, trading and artisanal and craft pursuits, household production, and selling at the local (illegal) 'railway market'. Some occupants had entry-level jobs in the formal sector (COHRE, 2005; Grant, 2007), but in Gordon & Nell's comprehensive study (2006) of landlords in inner-city Johannesburg the proportion employed on a full-time basis was less than 43%. Many of the occupants in the Thika study (Andreasen, 1989) did contracting jobs, and did not know whether they would continue to get work, in which case they would go 'home' where most of their family remained. In all studies where age is described, occupants were found to be mainly of working age, some with young children (COHRE, 2005; Few et al, 2004; Schlyter, 2003; Gordon & Nell, 2006).

In Few et al's (2004) study of occupants of non-residential buildings in inner-city Johannesburg, 35% were unemployed and seeking work, while only 37% were reported to be working. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN, 2011) found that international migrants struggled to get jobs in the formal sector, particularly those who were 'undocumented' in Johannesburg: 'most of us aren't working, we're street beggars and hookers' (interviewee cited in IRIN, 2011: paragraph 21).⁶¹

⁶¹ As highlighted in Section 6.6, many of the studies reviewed (including Andreasen, 1989; Grant, 2007) found most occupants to be migrants, both national and international.

4.5 Conclusion

The literature highlighted that rooms and spaces exist primarily in cities, that occupants moved to the city to access the better livelihood opportunities on offer. It seemed that the virtue of Johannesburg inner city was not necessarily a large availability of formal jobs, but the variety of opportunities available in making a living. Living in Johannesburg's inner city allowed participants to take advantage of the array of livelihood opportunities and economic networks within walking distance.⁶² Others utilised flexible and diverse transport networks to open up a broader range of opportunities across Greater Johannesburg.⁶³

Although the studies reviewed featured a variety of locations, the findings of alternate studies identified well with those of Donkela and most Hillview occupants in the current study. The livelihood activities of Donkela occupants were particularly insecure. These occupants of rooms and spaces were found to be relatively poor, engaging in an ensemble of livelihood activities, many of which were of a temporary nature producing unstable incomes. Many livelihoods were sought in the informal sector.⁶⁴ The livelihood activities of Abney occupants differed: these participants had generally secured formal, stable incomes of their own or relied on the support of others in this position.

⁶² Particularly for participants at Donkela and some at Hillview

⁶³ Particularly those at Abney. These options allowed participants to use a combination of mobility options to keep transport costs as low as possible (including those that required transport in the early morning or late night).

⁶⁴ The literature identified this to be the case particularly with international migrants.

5 ACCOMMODATION: PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Chapter Five deals with the physical characteristics of rooms and spaces. Again, it is participants' *experience* of the physical characteristics that receives the focus: it is not an architectural review, but rather an attempt to organise into themes the different topics people spoke about in interviews, as well as my own nuanced experiences of the physical nature of life in the building formed during participant observation and when carrying out interviews.⁶⁵ This section therefore looks at the typology of the building/property as a whole and nature of internal partitions, the internal services and facilities available to occupants, and the health, hygiene, safety and security reported by participants. Appendix 5 features a table detailing the physical characteristics of rooms and spaces in each building, diagrams showing the nature of informal partitions, and a review additional literature of the nature of rooms and spaces globally.

5.1 Typology of the building/property and nature of internal partitions

All three buildings⁶⁶ were multilevel blocks with over forty room units (Hillview significantly more), but aside from this were quite different, including the formal purposing of the building/property⁶⁷ and the nature of the internal partitions. The condition or level of maintenance of the buildings also varied, with Abney being the best maintained and Donkela the worst (see Table A5.1 in Appendix 5). These aspects link to the internal services and safety, health and hygiene, described below.

Subletting rooms and spaces in the form found in Hillview Mansions opened up a myriad of accommodation forms for occupants to choose from within just one building (see Figure A5.2 in Appendix 5).⁶⁸ Firstly, the building had a diversity of formal units, from servants' rooms to five-bedroom flats. Each unit remained largely unchanged on the outside, but the different formal internal layouts ensured that right from the start, each unit was laid out differently. Although the basic level of services and common practices seemed to be similar, owners, *mastandas*⁶⁹ and/or occupants chose to arrange

⁶⁵ Interviews were carried out in the interviewees' own rooms or spaces, allowing me the opportunity to compare their perceptions with my own, as well as gain a broader and more intuitive knowledge of conditions.

⁶⁶ In an effort to maintain the anonymity of the buildings, photographs of their exteriors have not been included in this report.

⁶⁷ 'Formal purposing' is used to refer to the purpose the building was originally built for or converted to, according to building regulations and zoning.

⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Not all flats in Rockview Heights featured rooms and spaces.

⁶⁹ A *mastanda* is a manager of a flat, building or property, usually live-in, who can also be the owner. See Glossary of Terms.

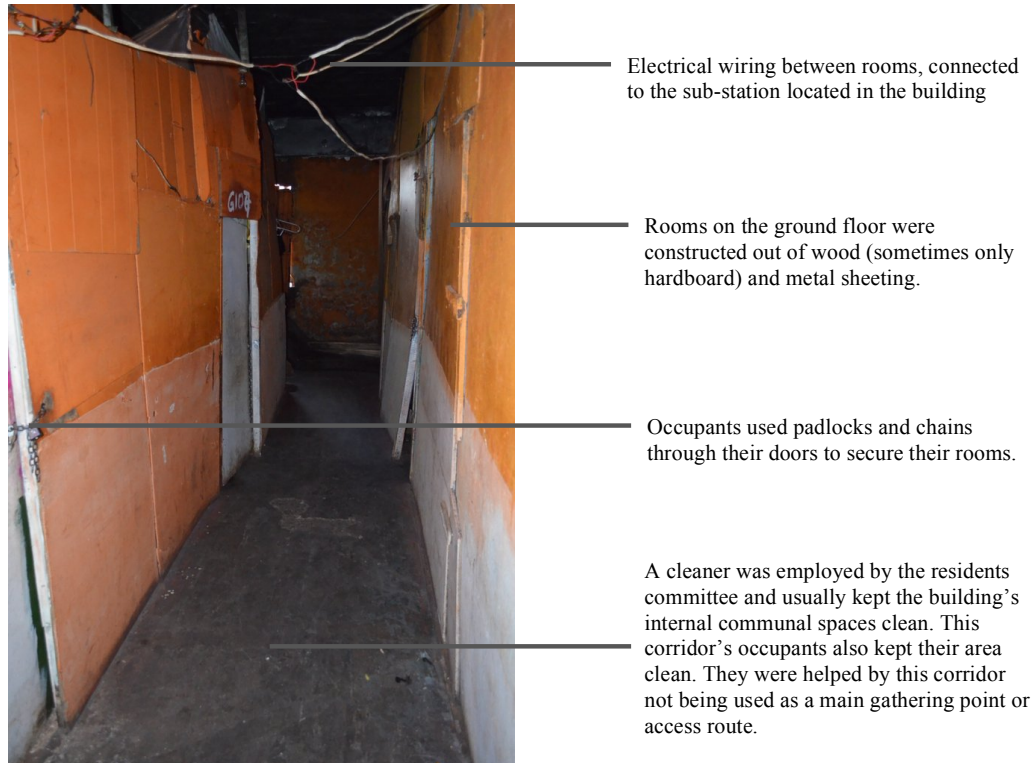
the rooms and spaces slightly differently in each flat, resulting in a choice of varying sizes, costs, security, levels of maintenance, spatial configurations and combinations of occupants. Some *mastandas* maintained a communal living area with a TV and sofas, but sectioned off an area within the room for someone to rent. Some chose to keep a separate living area for themselves, with the kitchen, bathroom and/or toilet the only communal space. Some used hardboard to create rooms to rent at a higher price, while others simply let out the space and occupants used their own material to string up curtains for themselves. In other flats, wall units or wardrobes were used to partition the room.

Furthermore, it seems that whether one can put up curtains or not can sometimes depend on whether one has paid for the space or not. Those who had not paid for it as a unit, but instead were granted the place to sleep and store some belongings often did not put up curtains: they did not seem to have the same right as those who had paid and apportioned that area as ‘theirs’. Examples of this were in I11’s room, where a ‘cousin’ was allowed to stay for free, as well as 404 Hillview, where P8 stored her belongings in a box in the corner of the corridor formed by curtains, and laid out blankets to sleep there most nights, but did not pay any rent (also see Figure 6.3 in Section 6.6 for a photograph of P11’s space).

Some arrangements happened more organically, according to the preferences of the occupants at the time (rather than the *mastanda*/owner), and based on the household makeup. For instance, I11 rented a room in Hillview Mansions with three friends. Originally, they had a more open arrangement, with only curtains separating the ‘bedroom’ spaces from the communal space. However, when I11 got a more permanent girlfriend, he negotiated a rearrangement of the room using wall units and a different curtain layout to create more privacy.

The internal partitions of Donkela were arranged more uniformly with each other, probably due to the nature of the original building (see Figure A5.1 in Appendix 5). The large open spaces of the warehouse meant that rooms were built side-by-side, forming corridors connecting the rooms to the main entrance with the stairwell, and the back entrances (see Figure 5.1 in Section 5.1). One corridor leading to the ‘office’ where P3 stayed was bricked off and had a security gate separating the rooms along it from the rest of the building, which meant they formed more of a unit. Aside from those made

out of brick, the rooms were usually constructed by the first occupants who had bought the space (usually from the building committee or through a corrupt member), and the materials remained there even after that occupant moved on. Most of the brick rooms were constructed by the ‘hijackers’.⁷⁰ I did not observe any spaces, and the research participants did not have any, that is people did not seem to make further partitions within their room even when it was relatively large. (See Table A5.1 in Appendix 5)



Electrical wiring between rooms, connected to the sub-station located in the building

Rooms on the ground floor were constructed out of wood (sometimes only hardboard) and metal sheeting.

Occupants used padlocks and chains through their doors to secure their rooms.

A cleaner was employed by the residents committee and usually kept the building's internal communal spaces clean. This corridor's occupants also kept their area clean. They were helped by this corridor not being used as a main gathering point or access route.

Figure 5.1: Corridor running between rooms on Donkela's ground floor. The light is from the camera flash – these were mostly quite dim though areas were lit from overhead lights in the rooms. (Source: author's own photograph, September 2012).

In Abney, rooms faced either onto (or over) the courtyard or to the exterior of the building, connected by a corridor with rooms opening off either side (see Figure A5.3 in Appendix 5). All rooms were modified according to building regulations as part of the conversion process, but differed slightly in size and access to a balcony. Some occupants had created spaces by using wardrobes or shelving, but most people who shared did not partition the room further. The rooms and spaces were thus very uniform.

⁷⁰ After the company who owned the building went bankrupt and the property was mothballed for some time, a syndicate took over and started renting out sections of the building as rooms in the early 2000s.

Diversity in rooms and spaces, even within the same building was beneficial to occupants' livelihood strategies. Hillview enjoyed the greatest diversity, with formal units of various sizes being informally converted and Abney the least, with limited informal conversion of the relatively uniform formal units.

While the buildings in the current study were all relatively similar in form, the literature showed a much wider range of possibilities,⁷¹ many of which were initially purposed as rooms and spaces and have enjoyed a long history in that form, such as the Swahili house (Cadstedt, 2009), face-to-face building (Aina, 1988) or the privately-owned compound house (Tipple & Willis, 1991): although Abney was formally converted to rooms, it was originally built as self-contained flats. Furthermore, although all rooms and spaces in the three buildings studied fit the criteria set out in the introduction,⁷² and many of those in the literature, the building or property, including its size and original purpose, understandably made a difference to the rooms and spaces within, with less formal planning sometimes leading to more possibilities for diversity. At the same time, commercial buildings that were informally converted into rooms and spaces have had reputations (Silverman & Zack, 2007; Carey, 2010; Few et al, 2003), and the physical condition of Donkela lived up to this. Buildings originally constructed or converted according to building regulations have much better reputations (Lund et al, 2003), and the physical condition of Abney lived up to this. However, other buildings such as government hostels built according to regulations, are far from being in good physical shape (Poulsen, 2010), so it would seem other factors such as management are crucial: see Chapter 6, 'Accommodation – Peoples practices'. When combined with appropriate management (Section 6.3) and subletting (Section 6.4), the diversity in internal partitions in particular is shown to support occupants' livelihoods very well (see especially Section 7.2.2 which ties these separate findings together).

5.2 Internal services and facilities

It was extremely important to occupants in all buildings to have well-functioning services in the building, and I came across several examples where occupants moved out when there was an intermittent supply over a longer period (such as in buildings I worked in while at Planact as well as where I9 moved after Hillview). Access to

⁷¹ See Appendix 5 for a full discussion of the different forms.

⁷² One of the aspects being that occupants referred to them using the same terms, and although the term 'typologies' did not feature in peoples' vocabulary, many people, even though in different buildings, seemed to associate rooms and spaces together.

electricity, water and sanitation, as well as lifts, and the associated charges, was prominent in residents' discussions of the pros and cons of staying in the building. Affordability and consistency in costs on a month-to-month basis was also very important to people.

Donkela residents faced significantly greater challenges in meeting their basic water and sanitation needs than those of Hillview and Abney, and the lack of access to water and toilets in the Donkela building was the main reason some residents wished to move away as soon as they were financially able. Access to electricity was seen as a huge benefit, despite the risks involved (see Section 5.4, Safety and Security), and for some occupants from informal settlements and rural areas (mostly those from Lesotho) it was the first time they had electricity in their own accommodation. Some participants blamed these people for the high level of noise: apparently the novelty (and perhaps zero cost) of having electricity in their room meant that they had the largest sound systems possible and would play them at full volume for most of the day and night.

Perhaps because of the availability of electric light, participants did not complain about most rooms and spaces having almost no natural light, due to the depth of the spaces on all floors. Those living on the ground floor of Donkela had no natural light and ventilation only from the doors on either side of the warehouse.

Hillview residents had access to electricity, water and sanitation within their units. It was expected that these basics would be in place in such accommodation, and would function normally, because of the rentals charged. Many occupants preferred Hillview to other buildings because the electricity and water costs were not charged over and above the rent, or through a per unit pre-paid meter. Some abused this, though, by, for example, heating a room overnight by leaving on all the plates of a stove. In winter this meant that the electricity would frequently trip, plunging the whole building into darkness for up to half an hour at a time. During my stay at Hillview, the substation located at the base of the building blew twice due to overloading, meaning we were out of electricity for almost three weeks until City Power upgraded the capacity. Many occupants struggled during this time, as they relied on electricity to cook, for heating, lighting, entertainment and security. They were forced to rely more on take-away food, canned food or other food that didn't need cooking, increasing their living costs. When I

returned late some evenings, I would have to carry my bicycle up the stairs in almost complete darkness, which made me feel very vulnerable.

Lastly, the lack of the working lift was a concern for a few residents who were less physically capable, such as I9, who suffered from severe pain in her legs when mounting stairs. However, probably because occupants with physical difficulties chose to rent elsewhere, where lifts worked, very few research participants had any physical ailments and the condition of the lifts was mentioned more as a reflection of the bad state of the building than something that had a severe impact on them individually.

For Abney residents, services were also a major concern, but for a different reason: the high cost and fluctuation of charges each month. They were charged an amount in addition to rent for their personal electricity and water usage, as well as that used generally in the communal facilities, such as showers, toilets and laundry. Some residents saw this all as 'rent', and because of the escalating municipal electricity tariffs, complained bitterly: each interviewee raised the escalating costs as their biggest concern staying at Abney. Additionally, some residents found the fluctuating costs resulting from variations in usage difficult to factor in and budget for when they had very little money to spare (I14, I15, I18). They found the costs of previous buildings they had stayed in much easier to plan for, where most of the costs were built into the rent – so they knew how much to set aside each month.

Refuse collection was shared in all three cases with bins on each floor for occupants to put their own rubbish, and were then taken outside, relying on municipal collection. It is interesting, however, that in Huruma, Nairobi (Huchzermeyer, 2011) refuse collection is paid for individually. In my findings, refuse collection was not a problem for individual rooms, as people generally kept their rooms clear of rubbish, even if they shared the rooms, and there was no collection at room level; however, there was a problem of refuse build-up in the communal spaces of Donkela when no cleaner was employed, in the parking garage in Hillview Mansions because of a backlog due to municipal strike,⁷³

⁷³ Although the caretaker blamed it on the municipal strike, I perceived that it was also because of the masses of rubbish accumulated each week in relation to the number of bins. The number of bins had not been increased with the number of occupants in the flats, and one of the cleaners spent a lot of time compressing the rubbish into the bins with a large pole. There was no recycling, however, which could have generated money for people (as in Donkela) and cut down on the rubbish needing to fit into the bins.

and to a smaller extent in the communal spaces of Abney over the weekend when cleaners were off-duty. See Section 5.3 for more.

In conclusion, services seem very important to people, perhaps the most important physical aspect of rooms and spaces – more so than the building/property, internal partitions, or what people shared or not. Médecins Sans Frontières also recognises the importance of services, so much so that they categorise inner city Johannesburg buildings according to the level of services they have, as they see it as a good indicator of condition (IRIN, 2011). The essential services mentioned in literature were the same as those in the findings of the current study: toilets, running water, drainage and electricity. Toilets, water (for washing, cooking and cleaning) and drainage (for pouring dirty water) were shared by occupants, while in each building, each participant utilised his or her own electricity supply particularly for TVs or radios and charging their cellphones.⁷⁴ Thus ideally, electricity should be supplied to each room. The electricity supply would preferably be of sufficient current to allow the use of irons and other higher demand products in each room, but people seem willing to utilise sharing arrangements if not (see Huchzermeyer (2011) for the difficulties and ‘workarounds’ experienced by occupants in this case). Higher demand stoves can be located outside of the room, particularly where an additional room is provided. Refuse collection seems essential to prevent a build-up in communal spaces (or public spaces, such as the street), however, Huchzermeyer (2011) in Nairobi showed that occupants do sometimes make a plan for private collection.

Reliability in supply of services is key: when water or electricity supply cut, it made people more vulnerable in terms of security, increased and unplanned for costs of living, and difficulties in heating and lighting. Stability in costs of services from month to month is also key to preventing an increase in vulnerability: participants had a very limited discretionary income as is, with limited possibility to buffer shocks in expenses.

If constructing rooms or spaces, or ensuring the basic level of services is in place, these physical aspects could be used as ‘standards’ to work off. As shown below, occupants are often willing to sacrifice other aspects of accommodation in order to save costs, but the case of Donkela, and the inner city buildings in Few et al (2004), IRIN (2011) and

⁷⁴ This was not the case in the literature, where for instance Custers (2001) and Schlyter (2003) describe rooms that do not have access to electricity.

Silverman and Zack (2007) show that occupants struggle a lot if these basic services are not reliably in place. They are also closely linked with occupants' perceptions about maintaining health and hygiene of a building.

5.3 Health and hygiene within the buildings and individual units

The following two sections, while focusing mostly on the physical aspects of rooms and spaces (including the fluctuating physical condition and the level of cleanliness), it straddles the next chapter, Peoples' Practices. Health and hygiene are grouped together, because, although in interviews I did not ask specifically about hygiene or cleanliness, when I asked general questions about health, respondents spoke of issues of hygiene. Some participants also spoke of issues of personal safety in relation to health (see following section, 'Safety and Security'), while others spoke of the stresses of sharing in relation to health (see Section 6.4). This section will focus primarily on the aspects of health in relation to hygiene.

In the literature reviewed, hygiene and health differed greatly from building-to-building, and in fact did not seem as related to the physical typology as to the type and condition of the property and, particularly, the effectiveness of management.⁷⁵ None of the studies reviewed had extensive empirical evidence as to how occupants' health had been compromised: Grant (1996:251), for instance, indicates that difficulties associated with sharing would all be 'detrimental to health conditions', but does not reference this statement. Providing more detail, Silverman and Zack (2007), referring to 'bad buildings', highlight that high density in badly managed environments can facilitate the rapid spread of disease and fire.

Through my participant observation at Donkela, I judged there to be potentially significant implications of living in the building for health, particularly that of more vulnerable groups. In fact, it was an allergic reaction to excessive bed bug bites (or the poison used to control bed bugs) that forced me to cut short my stay in the building. Indeed, Donkela occupants felt almost unanimously that the building was unhealthy. Many participants indicated that the lack of water and sanitation were the determining factors causing the unhealthy environment. While there was access to public toilets until 6pm at a park about 200 metres walk away, there was no free access to ablutions at

⁷⁵ Hence the placement of this sub-section at the end of the section on physical characteristics and directly before the section on peoples' practices.

night. Men urinated in a designated spot drain within the building on the side, which ran into the storm water drain. Women sometimes used this but often felt unsafe. Many used a building further down the road if they needed to defecate at night, where they needed to either pay or ask a favour of a friend, to use their toilet. Others would use plastic bags, and throw them into the vacant plot next door. There was also a periodic build-up of solid waste on the side of the building from the informal recycling activities, which they or the cleaner employed would mostly cleaned up when a committee insisted.⁷⁶ During the summer rains while I was staying there, there would be terrible leaks and seepage down the walls at the back of the building, resulting in stagnant water that would last for days even if some occupants used buckets to carry it out.

Interestingly, participants did not ever associate the lack of ventilation and natural light with health issues. Some spoke of the smell in the building but associated this with the sewerage and rubbish.

If you want fresh air you must go outside...It's not a problem because I'm used to the place right now. But if you come from 'home' and enter in this building, 'yoo!', you never get used to the smell. (I1, 14/09/12).

Some participants described their perceptions of the result of the unhygienic conditions. I1 said (14/09/12), 'here you always get sick – even now, people don't survive when they get sick – they die ... because of the dirty of here.' She sometimes said that the previous chairperson, P3, had sacrificed himself for the building: he had tried to make it more hygienic, but in doing so had done a lot of the cleaning himself, and she blamed his illness⁷⁷ on his time of working in the accumulated debris. I4 said (23/09/12) it 'makes a difference to your health...if you can have a cough or something it lasts longer'.

I4 was particularly concerned about her three-month-old baby, and would have preferred him to stay elsewhere but did not have any other options. I5's child got sick at less than a year old and died within twenty-four hours. Although I5 had taken the baby

⁷⁶ However, one of the reasons P3, the chair of the committee at the time I was doing participation, had gained the confidence of fellow occupants to be voted onto the committee was because he had taken a lead in a building-wide cleanup campaign initiated by the MSF.

⁷⁷ P3 went 'home' at the end of 2012 and died within two weeks. While I was staying there and in the time I was socialising with him and others in the first months of 2012, he slept a great deal, complaining of nausea, and had lesions on his face that he called acne and tried to steam off at times.

to the clinic, he did not know the cause of death. He said (23/09/12), ‘I try my best to have some better condition inside the house’, but did not feel that Donkela was a healthy place. Children were inevitably much more vulnerable than adults to hazards within the room and/or the building as a whole, such as haphazard electricity connections, stagnant water from the rains and medical waste discarded by the informal recyclers. There were also major problems with pests even within the rooms, including bed bugs, rats and other potential disease carriers. I1 (14/09/12) said of rats, ‘they walk on the roof – you’ll just see a rat passing by there. Even in my room I had two boards out, and something went “boof” like this on the bed and it was a rat’. However, she indicated of the sealed brick room I was interviewing her in, ‘they can’t get into a room like this, as long as you make sure you close the window and door’.

While staying at Donkela, I saw people using a lot of pesticides, particularly uncertified (illegal) cockroach powder and occasionally insecticide sprays. This could have possibly had a knock-on effect on occupants’ health (see for example Bassil et al, 2007): a few people had rashes, although it isn’t clear what the reason was. Even so, I was amazed during the research at how those in Donkela were faced with such adverse health conditions, but so many seemed relatively healthy, and continued with day-to-day life without debilitating ailments.

Conditions at Hillview Mansions were very different. Aside from a build-up of grease and a cockroach infestation in the kitchen, I did not feel my flat at Hillview Mansions presented any health risks to me. Participants regarded the rooms and spaces in Hillview Mansions as healthy in general, although they had different opinions about the building. Like me, they treated certain areas as ‘no go zones’, particularly the rubbish stockpile in the ground floor parking garage (see Figure A2.15 in Appendix 2). The key difference to Donkela is that in all the units I visited the occupants felt that their direct environment was generally hygienic. Even so, some felt that the inconvenience caused by sharing bathroom and kitchen facilities between many people was stressful and, in this way, unhealthy (see Section 6.4). Lastly, one participant was also concerned that some contagious diseases spread more easily with more people sharing rooms, and children remain sick for longer in close proximity to others. I felt this was a valid concern: as shown in the literature, some authors were concerned that high density in a badly managed environment could facilitate the rapid spread of disease (Silverman &

Zack, 2007), although at the same time many children did not seem to struggle with any ongoing illnesses.

In Abney, although I was not afforded the opportunity to stay there, I noted that the building was mostly very clean, in individual units as well as the communal spaces. Over the weekend, there was a build-up of litter, especially from children throwing food wrappers, etc. down, but it did not feel it would impact on my health. Participants felt the rooms were hygienic and that management tried to ensure the building remained clean. Some blamed occupants who were 'other', for example, from other tribal groups or from more rural or poorer areas, for making a mess in the communal spaces such as the washing up areas.⁷⁸

On Monday when I come back, it's shining...the problem is we, we're from different places, sometimes they leave the place very dirty, but when the cleaners come, haai! It's good. (I14, 12/08/12)

Two participants expressed their feelings that communal showers were not healthy but nevertheless indicated the showers were always clean. Some participants related the lift not working to health, as, if they were suffering from mobility issues, they struggled a lot to climb the stairs (I9, I16).

In conclusion, participants conceptualised 'health' in various ways, but most focused on the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in the building.⁷⁹ This was much easier to keep in the separate rooms of Hillview and Abney than in Donkela, mostly because of the nature of the internal partitions, and the level and reliability of services.⁸⁰ Donkela's rooms were also more subject to the conditions within the building/property as a whole, due to the same reasons. Occupants of rooms in the corridor behind the security gate considered it one of the safest, cleanest areas in Donkela, as they had access to who came and went there, and there was a greater feeling of neighbourliness.⁸¹ Furthermore, the toilets, bathroom and kitchen were contained within the locked flat in Hillview,

⁷⁸ As mentioned in Section 5.3, it accumulated over the weekend when the cleaners were off-duty.

⁷⁹ Those who included the degree of stress as an aspect of health related it to the stresses of sharing, which is covered in Section 6.4.

⁸⁰ In Hillview and Abney the rooms were sealed units, but the walls of most in Donkela did not reach the roof and were made from temporary, more porous materials. While Abney and Hillview usually had a reliable supply of water and electricity (aside from one period of two weeks over the three years of contact with participants in the building), Donkela did not.

⁸¹ This was interesting, as it was more similar to the Hillview 'model' of internal partitions.

shared between only those occupants. Donkela did not have these facilities, while Abney had them for each floor but they were not physically restricted for use by anyone in the building. Some Abney occupants complained about the communal ablutions, while no one at Hillview did. However, this is not necessarily a reflection of the smaller units. Management of the individual units (and flats in Hillview) was shown to be essential for maintaining a hygienic environment (see Section 6.3). It seemed that an unhygienic environment impacted severely on occupants' well-being, and many felt vulnerable to illness and even death due to the adverse conditions in Donkela.

The cleanliness of the communal areas in the building seemed to rely on the employment of cleaners, even if services were well functioning. My own experiences and those such as I14's above were that children and some adults seemed to treat the communal spaces as not being a concern of theirs, whether there were cleaners or not: even in Donkela before cleaners were employed, they had the same attitude.⁸² The compounded effect of this was a direct negative impact on everyone's vulnerability, with a build-up of rubbish. It did matter to people if the building was clean or not: in the case of Donkela, the dirt, human waste and rubbish was often one of the first things people mentioned as a negative aspect of life there, particularly when discussing health. It was partly for this reason that the Donkela residents' committee began collecting a monthly levy to employ cleaners and security, and it seems it is an unavoidable additional expense where there are communal spaces shared by many people with 'open access', that is people are able to mess and remain anonymous, even though it would mean a slight increase in monthly levies or rent. However, as is evidenced by the cleanliness of the self-contained flats shared into rooms and spaces in Hillview, if sharing occurs on a smaller scale between only those people with keys, it is possible to pinpoint who caused the mess or didn't clean and it is not necessary to employ a cleaner. This analysis links also to Section 6.3.

5.4 Safety and security

Participants usually spoke at the same time of personal safety and the security against damage or theft their possessions. Concerns went beyond damage or harm intended by other people and in Donkela, for instance, included structural instabilities in the building.

⁸² Other buildings I worked with at Planact and reviewed as part of the class project had similar dynamics.

Donkela residents told stories of serious and violent incidents around them in the same building, and most were concerned for their personal safety and those of their possessions even within their rooms. Stabbings were frequent, with more serious cases, almost every month, requiring the assistance of an ambulance. Respondents knew of a number of people who had been killed in the building. The worst violence happened inevitably between Friday night and Sunday, and was linked to alcohol abuse. Respondents also spoke of violence escalating over other altercations: someone was killed over the alleged theft of a recycling trolley. It seemed to happen most often between people who knew each other and lived in the same building. The man employed as a cleaner at the time I was staying there had been beaten so badly by other occupants who accused him of insulting them that he 'slept in ICU [the Intensive Care Unit] for two months' (I1, 14/09/2012), and, when released, was unable to speak normally. Groups already vulnerable were made more so by the risks imposed. Many women expressed great fear for their personal safety, and had had incidents themselves where they felt their safety was compromised.

If you are a woman you have to be in your house by 7 o'clock and then you ask yourself, are they going to come? Even if you see them they are not drunk at that time, they act as [if] they are drunk. (I1, 14/09/2012)

Men did not express fear for their personal safety, but for their possessions, depending on where they stayed. Those in rooms constructed with temporary materials or where the brickwork had become unstable worried about leaving their room for any significant period of time. One resident always notified his friend to keep an eye on his room when he went to work in the evenings (I3). Another only went home once a year for a few days, as he was worried someone would climb over or break the wall and rob him while he was gone, even if he left one of the two 'brothers' he trusted to look after it (I5). This obviously had serious implications on residents' mobility, and ability to maintain links with their friends and family not staying nearby. Some participants also worried while they were out seeking work. Both men and women also worried about people pushing down the boards from outside, intentionally or otherwise. One participant who stayed on the corner of a row of rooms had experienced two men pushing over his walls and television stand when fighting while drunk (I5). His wife and small baby had been sleeping at the time, and could have easily been seriously hurt, aside from his goods that were damaged.

Those like P3, who stayed in well-constructed, brick room, did not have these fears, and went home for longer periods. When respondents were asked what they liked about their rooms, one of the primary reasons they gave was that they considered it safer than other rooms (for example I6, I4).

Donkela residents also described how some of their visitors did not want to even enter the building, 'especially the girls – they don't want to cross that first door – they just stand outside on the road' (I3, 18/08/12).

Social capital had a crucial role to play in mitigating residents' vulnerability to the large number of risks prevalent in the building: 'I feel safe everywhere in Donkela because I know people where I am staying around me' (I6, 4/10/12). The women from Lesotho were particularly close-knit, and did not seem to worry about their safety as much.

Some of the girls don't care that are staying in this building; if there are many coming from the same place they are enjoying to being together – most of these girls they come from Lesotho. (I3, 14/09/12)

It was these women that were much more mobile, walking around the building at night and even drinking and dancing in the shebeen area with the men. I would almost always see them with at least one female friend, though.

There was a strong consensus amongst those not from Lesotho that it was the men from Lesotho (not including the Sotho men from the Free State) who were to blame for most violent crime in the building. This was not strongly contested by those from Lesotho either. Men from Lesotho generally stuck to themselves, and were known to spend most of their spare time drinking. However, it was also easy for South Africans and other nationalities to blame the Sotho men as a group because of their tendency to stick together.

The residents committee was also blamed for being ineffective in preventing violent crime, especially when it came to that stemming from men from Lesotho (rather than Sesotho-speaking South Africans). Those from Lesotho in fact had their own committee, and met several times on an ad hoc basis, over the period of research, mostly in the aftermath of a violent event involving someone from Lesotho.

In Donkela, another safety concern of occupants was fire, particularly an electrical fire from the 'spaghetti wiring' (see Figure 5.1, above) connecting all rooms to the overloaded substation on the first floor. During winter it was almost a regular occurrence that electrical fires started.

...there have been fires...with the electricity it bombed on the cable – some other people when we are drunk you see, they leave the things on. Maybe you forgotten and you're sleeping – something like that. (I6, 4/10/12).

Hillview Mansions also clearly contravened basic fire safety bylaws – fire hydrants were all missing and hoses broken and misused. However, respondents here were not as concerned as they were in Donkela, presumably because it had not yet proven to be an issue in Hillview Mansions or in similar buildings, in their experience. Occupants did not express other general safety fears.

Hillview occupants' other concerns were very different to those of Donkela. All units visited had secure doors or security gates, and residents referred frequently to being safe behind these: 'We just lock the front door – I am not worried too much. Sometimes it's even open in the day' (I12, 15/08/12). No one expressed fear of violence from people within their unit. Some did worry about the safety of their possessions, and most occupants (particularly those who were not *mastandas*) preferred to keep them in their own rooms and spaces. Some people also worried a little about items being stolen from their spaces, but, again, it was more by people outside the unit. For instance, while I was staying at Hillview Mansions, some occupants started leaving the security gate unlocked by mistake. In this case, participants considered my possessions a lot safer because I had a lockable room. The ability to lock almost had a symbolic dimension, as anybody who had used a small degree of force would have been able to push the door open. In addition, when I left my key with I20 and P1 for a friend to sublet my room, P1's brother ended up staying there and they also used the room to socialise in without my knowledge. While I felt my privacy had been badly compromised (see Section 6.4.3) when I got back, it seemed neither they nor anyone else had touched any of my possessions.

Participants in Hillview did express some concerns about their safety in the building outside of their units, particularly at night. Although there was a security guard, he was

known to be unreliable as he often slept. There were no known cases of violent attacks within the building, although people feared for the security of their possessions: some cars were broken into or stolen before the security gates were functional again, and there were thefts of small items like clothes off the line, if left after dark. Lastly, it was generally considered safe at Hillview for the more vulnerable to be around the building, at least during the day. Children would be all over, playing soccer in the parking levels, in the courtyard, or running around to friends' units and up and down the stairs.

Residents of Abney felt very safe within the building. For many residents it was one of the primary reasons for choosing to live there. There was a turnstile system with biometric access (fingerprints and access card), as well as a security guard on duty 24 hours a day at the front gate; visitors were required to leave an official identification document, such as a national ID book, at the office; there were CCTV cameras in the yard and in some communal areas around the building; and there was a high fence. They trusted and liked the tight security, particularly the presence of a guard at the entrance, where 'the gates are always locked' (I16, 25/8/12): I14 (12/08/12) said, 'the security is tight, my brother – [those] guys I like them'. Parents appreciated that children could play in safety in the courtyard and that the security guards would not let them out onto the street – many respondents feared the neighbourhood. Some participants expressed fear over the safety of their possessions, but only if their door was left unlocked: one had had her cell phone stolen in this way.

In conclusion, a high level of security was very important to occupants. Even though occupants saw Hillbrow as a dangerous place (possibly more so than participants in Yeoville and Doornfontein), one of the key reasons for choosing to stay in Abney was the tight security. It was important that the building was completely secured from people living outside: even though Abney was large, participants did not feel threatened personally by other occupants, and were only concerned about the theft of small items such as cell phones when they left the door unlocked while out of the room. In Donkela, despite people not trusting other occupants of the building, many were willing to pay for and valued having a security guard at the gate, particularly at night. Maintaining tight security for a building as a whole should therefore be seen as a priority.

While Hillview occupants regretted not having tighter security for the building, participants felt safe within the flat, behind lockable doors or security gates with a

shared key. Here, security guards were not employed, thus additional operational costs were not incurred, and entry was not usually barred by someone other than the occupants. Again, the nature of the internal partitions was significant and the personal space of rooms was also important to people to be secure: people in spaces indicated they envied people who lived in their own rooms. However, some still sacrificed this, if it meant a big cost saving.

Once again, many people were prepared to subject themselves to what they perceived as situations where they were more vulnerable than at 'home', in order to have money to send home, save or spend on alternatives, or simply gain a living enough to support themselves.

The physical characteristics of rooms and spaces explored in the current section act as a 'backdrop' to the following section, which examines peoples' practices regarding rooms and spaces.

6 ACCOMMODATION: PEOPLES' PRACTICES

Chapter Six explores practices around rooms and spaces. Section 6.1 looks at whether occupants of rooms and spaces have a choice as to where they stay. Section 6.2 provides an overview of the agreements and tenure involved in the three buildings, including a discussion on eviction, systems of exchange and barriers to entry that are linked to these aspects. Section 6.3 looks at management, owners and leaseholders in each building, with each building presenting a different management system. Section 6.4 explores the costs and benefits of sharing and subletting, including occupants' perceptions of the concept of 'overcrowding', privacy, flexibility in accommodating additional occupants, and lastly supportive or destructive social ties that tend to form in the rooms and spaces typologies. Section 6.5 outlines some of the ways rooms and spaces benefitted the incomes of participants directly, through rental income, home enterprise and small businesses. Lastly, in Section 6.6 the phenomenon of high mobility is explored, linked to the practices and physical characteristics discussed in previous sections. Appendix 6 provides supporting discussions.

6.1 Staying in rooms or spaces: a choice or the only option?

6.1.1 The only affordable option

In the literature, for many occupants, rooms and spaces was the only option given their need to take advantage of livelihood opportunities in a specific area. Grant (1996) suggests that lodging has existed for decades in Zimbabwe as a means to deal with a chronic urban housing shortage. In a later study, Grant (2007) highlights how low-income houses are unaffordable to many and formal rental housing is scarce, so lodging is one of the few viable housing options other than squatting. In Kumasi, the cheapest shelter that satisfied municipal standards would cost more than 12 times the annual minimum wage, net of land and servicing (Korboe, 1992). In COHRE's (2005:42) study of 'bad' buildings in Johannesburg's inner city, they found that 'the fact that people live under such poor conditions is a reflection of their desperation for housing in the inner city': the reason people are renting informally is because there is 'no other option' (Carey, 2009:19).

While there have been various private developments as part of inner-city Johannesburg regeneration initiatives, Poulsen (2010) found that all the 'successful' projects with self-

contained units are unaffordable to poor people. Moreover, rooms and spaces on the informal market⁸³ are often the first step for many migrants seeking entry into the ‘urban system’ (Grant, 1995:359), as the most affordable and flexible accommodation type (Grant, 2007). Some foreign migrants are also excluded due to the policies of some management companies, where, for instance, one landlord interviewed in Greenburg and Polzer (2008:11) said ‘we’re a South African company and we have to look after our own first...it’s illegal to rent to a refugee’. In conclusion, the studies all point to rooms and spaces being the only option affordable to occupants, with other constraints, such as restrictions by some companies on renting to foreign migrants, making rooms and spaces on the informal market the only option.

The current study had similar findings. For many participants, the reason they chose to stay in rooms and spaces was because it was the only option they could afford. A number of people in Donkela indicated that if they were forced to leave the warehouse, they would have no other place to go besides, for example, to live ‘under the bridge’ (I6, 4/10/12).⁸⁴ Another said, ‘it is going to be very hard – there is no alternative place at this time’ (I4, 23/09/12). In my research the only other options at that level of rental were two of the buildings I got to know while initiating the Planact project, one which was in far worse physical condition, with no electricity, no access to running water, and a build-up of rubbish to the second floor (see Smith, 2012), and another where a strong residents committee did not allow any more occupants not linked to those already there.⁸⁵ Some respondents indicated they would ‘go to the location’⁸⁶ (I7). Living in ‘the location’, given their situation at the time, would jeopardise many participants’ livelihoods (see Chapter 2 and 4).

For those that maintain a ‘home’ elsewhere, an accommodation option would be to seek shelter there, but for many this would mean they would again be subject to the lack of

⁸³ See Glossary of Terms for the use of ‘informal’ in this study.

⁸⁴ Often if occupants are forced to move out of one building, it results in conditions worsening in another. People living in a building close to a building I worked in at Planact were evicted some years ago. Many of the occupants of the building I worked in capitalised on the situation, and rented out their rooms to those desperate for accommodation. Because the destitute had no other options, they had to share the room with up to 20 people, and the building experienced a rapid deterioration in management structures and physical environment. Drug trading became prevalent, and there was a breakdown in residents’ ability to ensure that services remained functional.

⁸⁵ There are alternatives to rent for a minimum of about R300 to R700, but this would mean either sharing a very small space with other people, or living on the periphery of the city, in an informal settlement or backyard shack, where one would be renting a room or space in any case (I2, I4, I5 P3, P5).

⁸⁶ ‘The location’ refers to areas on the periphery of cities categorised ‘black’ or ‘non-white’ under the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950, or sometimes refers to informal settlements.

livelihood opportunities that had caused them to migrate. One respondent (I13, 18/08/12) indicated he would 'go back to Mafikeng, but job is scarce, unless you have a connection'. A number had only been able to make the move to inner-city Johannesburg in the first place because someone they knew from 'home' had told them about the availability of very affordable or free accommodation in Donkela, whether it was a vacant room, or a space available in their own room. In Hillview, very few participants were able to stay for free (see Section 6.2.2): there was no real option to arrive in the city without prospects of gaining a livelihood in the immediate term, unless you had enough savings to cover costs of accommodation.

Many Hillview occupants could afford a greater variety of alternatives than those at Donkela, but these alternatives still fitted into the rooms and spaces typologies. Their previous places of residence in inner city Johannesburg had also been rooms and spaces. If rooms and spaces did not exist in the inner city, they would simply not be able afford the more expensive accommodation and thus access the livelihood opportunities that the inner city offered.

Respondents in Abney also indicated that few alternatives existed for accommodation that could offer the same level of services, and it seemed that Joshco was the only other formal provider. A number of participants had tried to access accommodation through Joshco but there had been nothing available for a number of months. Again, all alternatives in the same price range were in the form of rooms and spaces.

Many of the people with no other options desired better places but were limited by their income. As soon as they got a 'better job', they wanted to move to a 'more comfortable' place (I4, 23/09/12). This was particularly prevalent in Donkela, where people were most limited in choice. In Hillview and Abney, almost all participants were satisfied with their accommodation, and all those in Abney indicated that did not wish to move elsewhere, unless their life situation changed (for example their children grew older), with many wanting to stay even if they earned more. Nevertheless, if self-contained units cost the same as rooms or spaces, most indicated that they would prefer to live in a self-contained unit.

In conclusion, if it weren't for the additional cost, in terms of physical typology most participants would prefer a self-contained unit. However, for most occupants, the room

or space was the only thing they could afford, and for some, they preferred allocating their discretionary spending to other items. While many participants maintained a 'home' outside of inner-city Johannesburg, which sometimes offered more spacious or self-contained accommodation, or subjected participants to less vulnerability, as shown in Section 4.1 it was quite often not a possibility for livelihoods. Thus the main alternative according to the literature and the findings would be an informal settlement far from the Johannesburg CBD, or another building of a similar type and conditions (and impact on livelihoods) to the current one. For most participants this was not a case of asset management, as their decision-making power was extremely limited:⁸⁷ the typology and conditions was the only option they could realistically afford.

6.1.2 Spending on 'home' and alternatives

As mentioned above, I5 in Donkela supports his two school-going brothers and father in Mozambique, as well as his wife who stays with him, all from money he earns from selling accessories for mobile phones and other small plastic goods on the street. He sends home between R300 and R500 every two months, and takes other consumer goods with him when he travels to see his family once or twice a year. He would not be able to play this supportive role if it were not for the minimal accommodation costs of staying at Donkela. Furthermore, despite the conditions in the building, I5 and his wife have put a lot of effort into making their room as homely as they can, including choosing to buy basic consumer goods such as a TV and hi fi. Unlike others in Donkela, he does not drink or go out, choosing instead to save his money. One of the primary reasons he left Mozambique and sought a livelihood in Johannesburg was to support his family.

One of the rooms in Donkela was occupied by five men who, according to them were living as a 'family'. Three were working in formal jobs and earning around R1 800 per month, and although they would probably not be able to rent non-shared accommodation, they could have afforded to rent rooms and spaces in buildings with better conditions, such as Hillview. However, they chose to make sacrifices regarding their accommodation in order to spend on alternatives. One sent most of his money 'home' to support his wife and two children. Another was younger and had no dependents, saving most of his money. His other discretionary spending went on clothes

⁸⁷ See Section 2.1 for a discussion on 'asset management'.

and a flashy mobile phone. He saw himself as being successful in the future where he would afford a fancy apartment, but said ‘before the sun can shine it has to be dark – this [living in Donkela] is the dark side’ (I7, 4/10/12). However, some people did not struggle with the conditions as much as others did. Men in general seemed to find the living conditions in Donkela a lot easier than women. Vulnerabilities were also mitigated through assets such as social capital. For these people, it was much less of a sacrifice to stay in Donkela, and thus the minimal accommodation costs were very attractive.

Thus for some participants, staying in rooms or spaces seemed an example of asset management: they could afford self-contained accommodation or accommodation with better conditions, they chose to stay in rooms and spaces (and sometimes worse conditions than they could afford), reducing the cost of accommodation in Johannesburg’s inner city and diverting their discretionary income to things they deemed as more important. Some of these items included a car, consumer goods such as clothes, phones or audio-visual equipment. However, other participants chose to spend on education for their siblings, support for children or family back ‘home’, or saving for their own education. Here, there was often less decision-making power involved. Younger men seemed to be the group most likely to choose to stay in rooms or spaces, while older women with children seemed to find it most difficult, particularly those sharing spaces.

The literature reviewed for this research on inner-city Johannesburg did not acknowledge those people who decided to sacrifice the opportunity to have self-contained accommodation in order to divert their financial assets elsewhere (those who exercised a degree of asset management). This is possibly an oversight, as a result of not exploring participants’ expenditure or not questioning them on the choices they made on this.

Importantly, where people stayed was not only about choosing between rooms and spaces, and self-contained units. Rooms and spaces were inevitably cheaper typologies than self-contained accommodation and had more diversity and flexibility. However, the physical conditions made a big difference on the cost of the accommodation, and it was here that people made real sacrifices, in services and facilities, the size of the room or space, etc., in order to cut costs.

6.2 Moving in, moving out and evictions

6.2.1 Systems of exchange, barriers to entry, agreements and tenure

The literature reviewed showed that rooms and spaces (almost always) involve non-ownership agreements between occupants and/or external parties: where the owner occupies a room or space within the building/property, he/she will have some sharing agreement with other occupants. However, Rakodi (1995) points out that labelling non-ownership simply 'rental' fails in recognising the wide variety of tenure in most cities. In Kumasi, a quarter of people occupy 'for free' (Tipple & Willis, 1992).⁸⁸ Similarly, Datta (1996, cited in Schlyter, 2003) highlights the common practice in Botswana of 'sharing', where social ties enable individuals to stay with relatives or friends without regularly contributing to either the rent or mortgage.

In rooms and spaces, terms of tenure vary from weekly or monthly to much longer. In cases in Ghana (Tipple & Willis, 1992) and Tanzania (Cadstedt, 2010), leases are paid up front, months or over a year in advance, likely reinforced by rent control and family obligations (Rakodi, 1995). In Thika, on the other hand, almost all tenancies are month-to-month (Andreasen, 1989).⁸⁹

In general, the type of tenure households consider appropriate to their needs varies widely (Payne, 2002). In some cases, the stability of ownership is sought, in others, households choose flexibility so as to respond to livelihood opportunities if they arise elsewhere (ibid). In most cases, it is difficult to disentangle the relative significance of positive choice and negative constraints (Rakodi, 1995), that is, whether people are choosing the tenure type that works for them best, or are forced to simply take what they are able to get.⁹⁰

In the findings of the current research, Donkela occupants expressed that there was a relatively low turnover in the building, and many research participants had themselves

⁸⁸ In a livelihoods analysis, it would most likely be observed that these occupants are 'paying' in other ways, through their social capital, human capital (for example, labour), or otherwise.

⁸⁹ In Indonesia, according to a 1985 study (Hoffman et al, 1991, cited by Rakodi, 2002), one third of renters had monthly tenancies, while half were required to make advance payments – generally a full year's rent.

⁹⁰ This links to the debate around the extent of decision-making power poor people have regarding 'asset management' (see Section 2.1).

stayed for years, some since they had first arrived in Johannesburg. Even if they failed to generate an income to cover accommodation costs, the minimal or zero cost of accommodation in Donkela meant they could continue occupying their rooms or spaces. Furthermore, even when rooms became available, knowledge of the vacancy was minimal amongst the general public; as reported by I8 and observed by myself, they were in such demand that occupants did not need to advertise: people thus generally moved into the building through friends or family that already stayed there. Thus the barriers to entry into the building were quite high. If participants didn't know someone in the building who would let them stay with them for a while, generally they would have to 'buy' a room from the household moving out: after an initial lump-sum payment, usually of about R600 to R900, it was understood that the occupant 'owned' the room, and the R100 was mostly seen as a levy specifically for the cleaning and security services. According to the system that Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) helped to set up, the levy was paid into the bank account opened by committee members, using the room number as the reference, so there was a clear record and transparency in the process: the official bank statement was printed for everyone who wished to query or challenge whether they had paid or not, and P3 was keen to show and discuss the list with me. Committee members were exempt from paying this levy themselves, but I was not able to work out whether there were additional financial kickbacks from the levies. The chairperson denied that committee members took any of this money themselves; saying the cash withdrawals were used to pay the security guards, cleaners, perform basic maintenance and cover transport, airtime and other sundry expenses incurred carrying out their duties as committee members. However, because almost all of this was in cash, it was not possible to know for sure.

The system of exchange that Hillview Mansions is part of is much more dynamic. Located just off Rokeby/Raleigh Streets and opposite the market is the Shoprite Community Board or the 'Shoprite Wall'. It could be said to be at the heart of Yeoville. At month-end, notices tacked onto the wall with bubble gum stretch almost the full block. Most of these notices advertise accommodation: rooms and spaces for rent individually or to share. The notes are mostly handwritten and basic, identifying the building name and nearest intersecting streets, and a telephone number. They are just one part of the accommodation economy operating at the wall. At month-end, lessors seeking lessees wait around the wall and approach potential lessees directly. *Bakkie*

drivers park alongside, servicing those who have found a place and wish to utilise removal services. Taxis park opposite, servicing accommodation-seekers wishing to view the accommodation once they have made contact with the lessor. Additional notices advertise second-hand furniture and appliances. Sometimes people display household items further down the street, or the *bakkie* drivers dump furniture in bad repair or no longer wanted by those they assisted to move, and other people pick these up.⁹¹

Thus the rooms and spaces market in the inner-city area of Yeoville (and Berea, Hillbrow, and others) facilitated a rapid and streamlined exchange, with participants able complete the process of moving from one room/space to another in a matter of hours. Nonetheless, not all exchanges happened through this system. Many moves within a building were facilitated by word of mouth similarly to Donkela, advertising outside the flat or at the building entrance, going door to door or through a list kept by the security guards.

When subletting a space or room at Hillview, a prospective tenant simply puts down the upcoming month's rental before the end of the month to secure tenure for the next. If the tenant cannot pay, she/he must move out. Vice versa, if the tenant wishes to leave, she/he can do so at any point, but preferably informing the *mastanda* with some days to spare before the start of the next month, so she can find another tenant. Although there are no written agreements, participants generally seemed to abide by this etiquette. The system seemed to make sense to all participants. Nevertheless, there were cases where occupants felt unfairly 'cheated' by management in the process of securing a room or space.⁹² An example of this is where one participant (P2) paid a *mastanda* in advance for to occupy a full room he had viewed. When P2 arrived with all his belongings on the back of a hired *bakkie*, he found that the previous occupants had refused to move out as they were unable to find the money, and yet the *mastanda* claimed to have already spent the money I20 had paid.⁹³ The occupant was forced to share the room for the month, and move to a room nearby at the start of the next.

⁹¹ A similar setup exists on the wall of the old post office in Hillbrow, for the rooms and spaces in Hillbrow, Berea and some of the Johannesburg CBD, and on a corner in Sunnyside, Pretoria.

⁹² Though very occupants turned to State authorities for recourse measures.

⁹³ A few participants related stories like this, but indicated that these cases were not common. There was one case related, however, where it seemed the *mastanda* made a business out of collecting rent from two prospective occupants for the same space.

In Hillview many of the owners took on subletters, choosing to stay in a room or space in order to gain rental income (see Section 6.4). Interestingly, rooms and spaces are also sublet in flats that have a formal written lease agreement in place, some even with large property companies that restrict leases to people fulfilling certain criteria like at Abney, below. However, by subletting rooms or spaces from the primary lessee in the manner described, subletters were able to overcome these restrictions, and the main lessee was able to afford to continue living there. Lastly, a few occupants were able to secure place (in the case of all the participants, this was a space) on compassionate grounds, or through relations (romantic or otherwise) with another occupant in the room or flat. When I moved into Hillview, some people stayed in abandoned cars in the building's parking garage. I20 as the *mastanda* asked the occupants of 404 if we would mind if P8, one of the people staying there, kept a small box of her possessions in the corner and slept there at night without contributing to rent, which we agreed to.

Participants at Abney were directed to the client relations department at management's head office when enquiring at the building about renting a room. As rooms were mostly fully occupied, accommodation was not advertised. Interested people were put on a waiting list mainly utilised for new projects, and notified by Client Relations about any vacancies. Before renting at Abney, potential tenants are required to put down two months deposit, and sign a written lease indicating a minimum term of six months. They have to produce salary slips and bank statements proving that they are earning a steady amount of at least three times the cost of rental, and the client relations department checks the TPN database for records of conduct and payment. Abney has additional requirements, including proving one's South African citizenship with an official ID book. These checks exclude even those people that may be able to pay using their informal income generating activities but do not have the documents to prove it (I14). Even so, some participants managed to get around these restrictions by having a family member, who did meet the requirements, sign the lease. I14's sister signed the lease although I14 paid most of it, and in return, I14 looked after that sister's daughter: they partitioned the room using cupboards to make two spaces. I16's sister signed and paid for the lease, as I16 had not secured her own income yet.

The various barriers to entry nevertheless did not seem to prevent the supply being met with equal demand, as all three buildings had virtually zero vacancy rates where rooms and spaces existed. The only vacancies in rooms and spaces were in some rooms in

Donkela where ‘owners’ had left for a while or gone missing. Even here, however, as feared by I5 (see Section 5.4 – Safety and Security), the rooms would be broken into after a time⁹⁴ and someone else would move in.

In conclusion, rooms and spaces explored in the current research involved a combination of ownership and non-ownership agreements that stretched across the informal/formal spectrum. Donkela offered occupants ‘ownership’, even though the entire property was formally owned by another company. Hillview primarily offered month-by-month rental, although main leaseholders were sometimes bound by formal written leases involving deposits and minimum terms, and some occupants were also able to secure accommodation without financial costs. The Hillview and Donkela examples were varied to a certain point, based on the needs of management or the main leaseholder and the other occupants. Abney was more uniform, with all rooms requiring deposits, written agreements and suitability assessments.

The literature reviewed also includes a variety of tenure types. Grant (2007) speaks of similar mixed tenure arrangements to Hillview in old colonial houses of Gweru, Zimbabwe, and Andreasen (1989) of month-to-month tenure in Thika. The occupation of rooms ‘rent free’ in Kumasi (Tipple & Willis, 1992) and through ‘sharing’ in Botswana (Datta, 1996), and other processes relieving occupants from direct financial contribution due to social ties and responsibilities also featured in all three buildings, with more similar relationships found in Donkela and Hillview.

However, none of the literature reviewed explicitly mentions the rental type found in Donkela, where ‘ownership’ was combined with an ongoing levy. Neither was the written agreements and linkage with formal salary slips found, as in Abney: the rooms and spaces reviewed all featured verbal agreements, and, like the participants in this study, people did not feel particularly vulnerable to this system. Lastly, none of the literature on inner-city Johannesburg or my own findings revealed rooms or spaces that required more than a month’s rent in advance, unlike what Cadstedt (2010) found in Mwanza City, Tanzania.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ With the length of time often dependent on how ‘prominent’ the departed occupant was in the building or how close she/he was to a strong committee member.

⁹⁵ Cadstedt (2010) notes that in Tanzania, leases are paid upfront six months or more in advance, due in part to rent control and family obligations.

As Payne (2002) noted, different people consider different types of tenure appropriate to their needs, and this varies widely. In this research, occupants selected the building based on their means, even when they had additional needs. Thus, most Donkela occupants would not meet the financial requirements of Hillview, and many Hillview occupants would not meet the additional requirements at Abney. Occupants of Abney would not want to stay in Donkela: occupants could be said to be making the best choices regarding limiting their vulnerability, given their constraints. Therefore, as implied by Rakodi (1995), it is difficult to assess to what degree this is asset management or, particularly in the case of Donkela, simply opportunism.

Lastly, what sets the Hillview Mansions system of exchange apart from rooms in Donkela and Abney, and in fact from the predominantly word-of-mouth or going door-to-door systems found in the literature (Schlyter, 2003), is the system of advertising. The wide availability and knowledge of alternatives is one of the biggest factors in the following section.

6.2.2 Eviction

A review of the literature showed that contracts are rarely written, but a lack of formal lease agreement may not be critical in itself: the perceived and practical risk of eviction may be negligible, and thus participatory assessments are crucial, rather than simply researching whether occupants have a title deed (Payne, 2002). Schlyter (2003:55) reports that the verbal agreement utilised in multi-habitation ‘implied mutual respect for unspoken rules and social peace’, and renting in this way still had the potential to offer similar securities to ownership (Carey, 2010). However, Grant (2007) describes how, in some cases, the absence of regulation may increase vulnerability for poor households: owners can arbitrarily raise rents, charge females extra or demand that lodgers must leave at short notice. Even so, many studies found that, despite the potential insecurity, occupants were only evicted in the case of non-payment or significantly breaking the landlord’s rules (Carey, 2010). Poulsen (2010) found in Johannesburg that, if the rent was late, the occupant’s belongings were removed and he or she was locked out until it was paid. If this took too long, the room was rented to someone else (ibid).⁹⁶ Lemanski (2009) found that the lack of regulated agreements contributed to backyard dwellers

⁹⁶ Similarly, in tenements in Nairobi (Huchzermeyer, 2011) when the tenant does not pay rent warnings will be issued, after which an ‘auctioneer’ will throw the tenant out and attempt to recover arrears from their assets.

being reliant on the whims of the landlords, yet they perceived themselves at less risk of eviction than residents of informal settlements. This was, in part, because they were ‘merged’ with households who held formal tenure rights (Lemanski, 2009:473).

In the current research, a select few participants felt a threat of eviction from beyond the *mastanda*/owner of the flat. I13 was concerned about an eviction by the City as a result of mismanagement of Hillview Mansions by the body corporate. He saw it possible that the bad state of the building would ‘catch up on them’, and thus he felt he had to remain aware of what other rental opportunities there were in other buildings and areas. Some people felt vulnerable to an eviction of the whole building, however, and at Donkela this fear was proved to be accurate. In the year following interviews, a property company successfully evicted the occupants (though alternative accommodation was provided by the City of Johannesburg to those that qualified).

However, none of the occupants felt vulnerable to eviction by *management*, as long as they paid their monthly rent and abided by the rules agreed to with the *mastanda* (See Appendix 6 more discussion on this). Hillview seemed to have the most direct causality between non-payment and eviction, although different *mastandas* had different levels of leniency, and some showed an understanding of occupants who were unable to pay due to hardship. Donkela had some bias resulting from the committee apparently choosing ‘easy targets’ to set an example, and the strength of the committee occasionally being called into question with competing groups. In these cases, it was the rent collectors (the *mastanda* in the case of Hillview or the residents committee in the case of Donkela) who also performed the evictions: they had the freedom to do so because, generally, neither the *mastandas* nor the rest of the occupants, and often not the owners, knew or utilised the law directly, as they seemed to acknowledge that the way they stayed contravened the legal system in some way (regarding overcrowding, for instance). Nonetheless, many occupants did have some idea that their rights protected them from unfair eviction,⁹⁷ which provided some kind of cushion against vulnerability as they could argue these with *mastandas*. Evictions at Abney, however, involved additional processes and parties: management spoke of a number of cases where occupants organised themselves and sought legal representation, and management itself operated within the law. Other authors such as Poulsen (2011) found similar methods of dealing

⁹⁷ Here, most did not see eviction due to non-payment as being unfair.

with non-payment as that utilised at Hillview, whereas Huchzermeyer (2011) found that in Huruma, external parties called ‘auctioneers’ were brought in.

Even so, as shown above and in Appendix 6, most occupants did not feel vulnerable to eviction, unless they were not able to pay (though Abney residents were probably the least worried about eviction). This is interesting, as it seems the lack of written agreements and implementation of the PIE Act seemed to result in additional flexibility for both the occupants (lessees) and the *mastanda* or owner.

6.3 Management

The following section explores the management systems in place in the three buildings, showing the relationship with occupants. It is split into three sections, each looking at one building, followed by a conclusion.

6.3.1 Donkela: residents committee

Donkela’s ‘official’ management was by a residents committee, made up of five members with standard portfolios, including the chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary. However, particularly after P3 died, additional friends of the committee were sometimes roped in as ‘heavyweights’ to, for instance, assist the security guards at the gate to prevent people entering the building unless they had paid the levy. All committee members were men between their twenties and fifties, aside from one woman. As noted above, the committee collected rent; recruited, managed and paid the cleaner and security guards; kept paper records of some financial transactions; liaised with external parties including the City, lawyers, researchers and the police; sorted out disputes between occupants and sometimes those with external parties on behalf of occupants; held meetings with all occupants to brief them about the evictions case they faced or encourage them to clean or attend MSF clinics. In general, they were the ‘go to’ people for residents, who held knowledge of the history and current state of the building; also in relation to the surrounding environment.

However those occupants from Lesotho,⁹⁸ especially the men, had set up their own leadership structure, made up of men. Although ‘unofficial’, this structure performed some of the functions that the residents committee performed, including dispute resolution, liaison with external parties (on behalf of the Sotho ‘community’), and being the general ‘go to’ people for most of the Basotho. The two structures were not in direct competition, as Sotho structure did not attempt to collect rent; however, some people from Lesotho did stop paying the levy, with the vocal backing of the Sotho leadership. Particularly after P3 died, many occupants had less faith in the real strength or effectiveness of the residents committee and the Sotho leadership gained prominence. I1 (Aug 2012), interviewed after P3’s death, said, ‘The so-called committee don’t work. If you go to them they say, “ah we’ll talk tomorrow”... They are scared of the Sothos... The Sothos rule us, [yet] everything they do is for the Sothos.’

Nevertheless, the chair of the residents committee remained the liaison partner with the lawyers representing Donkela occupants in the evictions case, and with the City, right until the relocation and eviction was carried out.

6.3.2 Hillview Mansions: board of trustees, owners, *mastanda* system

The management system involved different tiers, and a combination of ‘official’ management structures, competing structures and ‘unofficial’ structures. As a sectional title building, a board of trustees had the responsibility of the building as a whole, including all communal spaces and exterior of the building, payment for services, etc. Officially, they utilised a management agent to administer the water and electricity bills for each flat, which they paid as a single bill to the service providers, as well as the agreed-upon monthly levy to cover municipal rates and maintenance. In truth, the management of the building was convoluted for most of the period of research, which I was made aware of mainly through long discussions with the chair of the body corporate. However, the majority of occupants, and all interviewees were not aware of the dynamics of management at building level, and many did not perceive themselves to be directly affected, therefore I will instead focus on what did perceive as affecting them: the *mastanda* system.

⁹⁸ Sesotho was the dominant language in the building, but many Sesotho speakers were from the Free State, North West and other parts of South Africa, and did not necessarily associate with those from Lesotho.

A *mastanda* literally means ‘the one who owns the stand’ in the Ndebele/ isiZulu *lingua franca* spoken, but in fact refers to a specific type of manager. This manager does not have to be the owner, but is mostly the main leaseholder, or in the case of there being a recognised owner, the one that is in direct liaison with the owner, usually nominated by him or her. The *mastanda* advertised for and brought in subletters; collected the required total rent for the flat; negotiated and regulated the use payment of services with all occupants; assisted in ensuring the flat was clean and maintained as much as possible; attended to occupants’ complaints; and managed conflict (although sometimes they were the cause of it). They were almost always live-in, aside from the occasional case where the owner or main leaseholder maintained their role as *mastanda* even when they had moved out. *Mastandas* (for example I12 and I20) often discounted their own rental through charging the other occupants proportionally more to cover the difference (see Section 6.4), while a few managed to cover 100% of their own accommodation costs (for example I10’s plus next door neighbour), and others (very few) managed to make money (I9’s current *mastanda*).

In most cases, participants had a positive or neutral opinion of their *mastanda*. I only heard two stories of direct exploitation by the *mastanda*, as a result of fraud in the process of seeking a room or space. In both cases, a *mastanda* advertised a space and the participant paid for it in full to secure it, as is standard practice. However, it turned out that the *mastanda* had taken money from another household too, so although both parties had paid the full amount to occupy the space alone, they were forced to share.

Aside from this case, deciding whether *mastandas* ‘exploited’ the other occupants is more difficult. Often they arranged the rent in such a way as to pay minimal rent themselves, or zero rent – as I20 did in 404 Hillview Mansions. Although this could be described as a clear case of exploitation, with the rents not being fairly distributed, the *mastandas* were all from roughly the same income group as the other lessees, and often had no regular source of income. Profit was also not necessarily a goal: in flat 404, I20 allowed P8 to stay for free, out of compassion. Depending on their own financial standing, *mastandas* also often took the worst room/space in order to gain more rental income – because of the ‘perfectly competitive’ nature of the market it would not be possible to overcharge in relation to other rooms. This was different to the practices identified in the literature, for example studies done on backyard shacks (Lemanski, 2009; Bank, 2007), where the owner/*mastanda* occupied the main house, or best rooms.

Most participants described a relationship of mutual assistance between the *mastanda* and occupants of the flat. Examples included sharing of food, or buying groceries and airtime for each other when ill. Nevertheless, there were a few stories of victimisation and conflict, particularly between nationalities or tribes. One participant's *mastanda* feared witchcraft and was constantly suspicious of the other occupants using the kitchen while she was cooking, for fear they did something to her food. Another participant described how the *mastanda* consistently refused to make her 'tribemate' turn down the volume on his sound system, even when the other occupants complained. Xenophobic tensions existed between other occupants as well in a few other cases.

The management model specific to the 'subletting type' of rooms and spaces plays a big role in creating the flexibility and allowing it to function in the longer term. If the *mastanda*, or live-in manager, is responsible, she or he can keep a close eye on the unit, ensuring that the facilities are not abused, and the high turnover of residents does not result in excessive amounts of wear and tear. She is responsible for ensuring the total rent is collected, whether she then pays it to the owner or external manager of the flat, or keeps it herself as the owner. She works quickly to replace an occupant if payment is not received, helping ensure that rental income is kept constant and services continue being paid for, thus remaining reliable. Vacancy rates are kept to a minimum and the transition from one tenant to another is streamlined allowing the month-to-month tenancy.

Living in the same units as those that they collected rent from incentivises the *mastanda* to ensure the flats are kept clean and maintained, as well as possible within their capacity. In addition, they are more likely to secure prospective tenants when they view the room/space if the living conditions are seen to be good. The higher the rent the *mastandas* are able to charge the other occupants, the greater proportion of the total they are able to cover, thus minimising their own expenditure on accommodation. If potential occupants feel the conditions are not fitting for the price of the rent, they will simply look at another of the vast number of rooms and spaces up for exchange at the end of each month.

As mentioned in Section 5.3, in Hillview virtually all the flats were clean (well-swept floors, disinfected bathrooms and tidy kitchens), even if they were not well maintained. There was often a clear internal system in place to ensure this:

The rules were we should clean in time, in a week we could divide the days...we couldn't give men to clean...in fact we were the four women that did it. We could clean two days, two days each in the whole flat. (I9, 12/08/12)

In flats where there were both men and women, the women generally cleaned, while men bought the cleaning products. In flats where it was only men or only women, it was a bit more versatile, and generally everyone helped to clean, but usually the decision as to the details of the system would be taken by the *mastanda*.

6.3.3 Abney: Client relations, building manager

Abney's management system was more formal than the other two buildings, and more in line with their official organogram (see Figure A6.3 in Appendix 6) Occupants were usually in direct contact with the building manager, who lived in a room in the building with his wife and child. Accommodation in the building was one of the perks of the job, for which he was also paid a modest salary. He attended to minor complaints; attempted to resolve conflicts; assisted with rental collection from those tenants who were late; alerted head office to the need for maintenance and ensured it was carried out correctly in the building; and managed the permanent staff (cleaners and security guards) within the building. If there was an issue with tenants he could not handle, he escalated it to head office, usually the client relations department. The floor committees were not functioning during the period of interviews, as there was no specific need for them – they did not have any particular responsibilities, though they (and other competing management structures) became more organised and prominent in the rent boycott in the period after my interviews.

6.3.4 Conclusion

Hillview Mansions drew the most similarities with the literature, including Hungwe's (2013) account of *mastandas* in Kempton Park and Tembisa, Johannesburg; Carey's (2009) account of rooms and spaces in inner-city Johannesburg; Schlyter's (2003) of Chitungwiza and Grant's (2007) of Gweru (see Appendix 3 for a full review of the literature). Although none of the other research referred to it as the *mastanda* system, they all relied on managers who shared similar responsibilities as those noted above, and who were almost all live-in, as with those at Hillview. The main difference was one that the typology of the superstructure caused: instead of managing a property, which

often included freestanding backyard dwellings, *mastandas* at Hillview all managed a closed unit – a flat. Similarities also arose in what *mastandas* were prepared to sacrifice; Schlyter (2003) also indicated that *mastandas* often sacrifice better conditions within the unit/property in order to save more on rent. There seemed to be mixed perceptions of having managers living in the same building/ property. It was found that when resident, mutually beneficial relationships often develop, though as with some of the participants in the current study, other research (Cadstedt, 2003) reported mixed feelings, with some occupants and *mastandas* preferring to keep a strictly business relationship. Nonetheless, given the very challenging circumstances occupants of rooms and spaces faced (see Section 6.4.6 in particular), and given the system of exchange, the unit level management offered by the *mastanda* seemed to offer a degree of stability and organisation for all occupants, decreasing vulnerability for the main leaseholders or landlords, and often the occupants (see Section 6.3).

The management systems of Donkela and Abney did not feature in the literature on rooms and spaces reviewed for this study; however, in the case of Donkela it is most likely because there were not featured in the study rather than that they did not exist. Few et al (2003), for example, studied similar buildings in Johannesburg's inner city but did not feature their management systems. Abney's official system was formal, governed by an organogram officially put in place by a relatively large management company, which was very different to any of the informal systems reviewed in the literature. Here, even where they were originally purposed as rooms, they featured more flexible systems. However, even in Abney, organic systems sprang up in times of crisis for occupants, although, as mentioned, I was not able to cover this period in depth in my research.

Again, obvious relationships of exploitation are not common, as seen in the section on evictions in 4.3.3, above. As the building manager in Abney was paid a salary and provided with free accommodation in the building, so the residents' committee members were exempted from paying the levy in Donkela, and the *mastanda* was usually able to discount their cost of accommodation. Donkela occupants raised many issues about the residents' committee being largely ineffective; however, not one

indicated that they were exploitative or even that they found it a problem that the committee members did not pay the levy.⁹⁹

However, there were mixed feelings about whether the *mastanda* was being unfair if they were able to get away without paying any rent, as at Hillview Mansions, or in those few cases where they made money. When it was found out by other occupants at 404 Hillview that I20 and P1 were only contributing R100 to rent and were not the owners, they expressed a lot of discontent, although no one actually approached I20 to demand that a more equal distribution be arranged. The amount *mastandas* were able to discount against their proportion of the rent was essentially determined by the difference between what occupants (subletters) were willing to pay, and the amount of rental demanded by the owner. However, given the obvious high demand for accommodation in inner-city Johannesburg (Tissington, 2013; Gordon & Nell, 2006), if every flat featuring rooms and spaces has a *mastanda* discounting their own rent by almost 100%, at scale, the cost of all rooms and spaces will escalate accordingly. This is important, as, with such meagre incomes, small proportional increases in rental can be significant to occupants. In the case of flat 404, my rental could easily have been reduced by R200 to R300 if I20 and P1 paid roughly the proportional amount for space by square metres as the rest of us were paying. This would seem to have dire implications for occupants' vulnerability, with increasing costs of rental eroding the benefits of the lower cost of accommodation associated with rooms and spaces.

6.4 Sharing and subletting: costs and benefits

There were a range of costs and benefits in the different forms of rooms and spaces. This section attempts to capture the nuances of the findings by looking at four different themes: 'overcrowding', 'privacy', 'accommodation of additional occupants', and 'social ties', which is split into two sections, the first looking at 'supportive' and the second, 'destructive social ties'.

⁹⁹ This finding could also have been influenced by the fact that most of the people I spoke to were introduced to me by the committee: although they were critical, they were not the ones refusing to pay rent. Unfortunately, because of language and safety issues, I was not able to speak to members of the 'competing' Sotho leadership.

6.4.1 Overview of the literature

Rooms and spaces, in many cases, would not exist if the owners or main leaseholders of the larger unit did not decide to sublet a portion. The practice is widespread: in a study in a neighbourhood of Bogota, 57% of owners with more than one room rented out space, and in a neighbourhood in Lusaka, one third did so (McCallum & Benjamin, 1985). In inner-city Johannesburg, most owners who chose to reside in their flats decided to sublet; 73% to strangers they did not know before (Carey, 2009; Gordon & Nell, 2006): the private rental sector is essential for the livelihoods of many small-scale landlords (Cadstedt, 2010; Carey, 2009). Many households rely on multiple modes of livelihood (Grant, 1996) and rental income can be the most consistent of all streams (Schlyter, 2003). Grant (2008) identifies how, when households faced increasing vulnerability such as the shocks of retrenchments and high inflation in Zimbabwe, even lodgers sublet their limited space to ‘provide some insulation’ (Grant, 2008:83).

It is mostly the practice of subletting that results in what many authors refer to as ‘overcrowding’. In inner-city Johannesburg, Few et al (2004) notes that the number of people per rooms or space ranged from three to 12 (compare this with the local regulations noted in Section 1.2.2). Lemanski (2009) argues, based on her study of a neighbourhood in Cape Town that the South African government’s policy of homeownership only functions because backyard dwellings generate income for poor homeowners to manage the demands of formality. It is common practice in Zimbabwe for households entering the housing market to occupy only one room while renting out another, and profits are ploughed into the construction of more rooms for rent (Dewar, 1997). Over time, the household can choose to expand into the additional rooms (ibid).

Indeed, the oft-mentioned overcrowding threshold of two persons per room seems to be readily overlooked by the urban poor (Follain et al, 1982).¹⁰⁰ Schlyter (2003) notes a study of rooms and spaces in Zimbabwe by Withers (1992) where only a third complained about space, and half even claimed to be satisfied with their accommodation. Lim et al (1984) note that ‘the current policy approach to elimination

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, as McCallum and Benjamin (1985: 283) say, ‘many people continue to be surprised and dismayed by the stubborn persistence of the urban poor in preferring rental income over extra family living space. The poor obviously have a high tolerance for what outsiders perceive as overcrowding so long as it provides space which can be profitably rented out’.

of crowding, which emphasises one dwelling per household, is not likely to be effective’.

Even so, although occupants prioritised other aspects over personal space, a number of studies showed it was a luxury they wished for. Respondents in Schlyter (2003) desired separate bedrooms for parents, boys and girls. Furthermore, living in close proximity to each other and sharing sometimes limited facilities seemed to exacerbate any social dissonance. Grant (1996) describes how sharing to the extent found in some lodging houses increases everyday stress and affects the ability of the household to remain unified. She found that, for adults, the lack of privacy strains sexual relationships, and, for children, can create adverse conditions for studying for school (Grant, 1996). Schlyter (2003) and Bank (2007) describe very difficult experiences related to the operating of ‘shebeens’ on the same property as the lodging house and backyard shacks.¹⁰¹ Schlyter (2003:33) says, ‘it was a hard life. No one in the house could sleep until the morning, when the drinking stopped...most of the lodgers were single people who themselves participated in the drinking’. Bank (2007:221) found interpersonal violence and ‘anti-social behaviour’, which was also associated with the ‘excessive alcohol use’ prevalent in the yards studied.

Therefore, it seems that, contrary to regulations, many occupants of rooms and spaces sacrificed the physical asset of living space in favour of another asset, particularly an additional income stream¹⁰² for stability purposes or otherwise, or in other cases to invest in growing their physical asset of housing over the long term (Dewar, 1997).¹⁰³ In some cases, occupants compared their situation to those around them and found it favourable space-wise (Schlyter, 2003). Many occupants also built up social capital with each other. Nevertheless, living in such close proximity exacerbated social tensions, particularly where there was a culture of alcohol abuse. Importantly, though, Schlyter (2003:64) highlights that the feeling of congestion has more to do with the social relations and the design of the space than with the number of persons per space unit. Again, it would seem that effective management is key.

¹⁰¹ A shebeen usually refers to an informal drinking place where one can buy alcohol, similar to a ‘tavern’.

¹⁰² A type of financial asset (see Section 2.1).

¹⁰³ UN-Habitat (2003: 121) states that ‘poor families are prepared to live in appalling housing conditions because they have higher priorities than housing, such as educating the children or setting up a business’.

6.4.2 'Overcrowding'

Although many participants found the smaller spaces difficult, such as P10 at Hillview 404, participants generally seemed to take on people to share spaces when there was even a small amount of floor space to spare, particularly at Hillview Mansions. I never saw people renting a room as big as I did in Hillview Mansions 404 (16m²) to stay in alone, unless they had a number of children or were the owners of the flat and employed with a stable job.

Furthermore, some participants even described the living conditions at Hillview as spacious, for instance I12 who stayed with her granddaughter and sometimes her daughter in a space in the dining room/hall area of the flat where she was the main leaseholder, sublet two other spaces in that room, and the bedroom to another couple. Therefore, the number of occupants in the rooms as a whole did not seem to impact on participants' perception of crowding, but the size of the space needed to be big enough to fit what the participant wanted. Here, floor area was important, but participants used other innovative means to maximise storage space where floor area was limited. Walls were used to hang various items from washing basins to clothes, beds raised high on bricks and crates to store things beneath, and stackable, pest-proof paint buckets used to store food and consumables. The bed provided the primary place where occupants and visitors sat and watched TV, ate and socialised, and where small babies slept and played. After being made up for the day, the bed was essentially the 'living area', cutting out the need for additional seating or furniture aside from storage space.

The same techniques were employed in Abney and Donkela: people were extremely efficient at managing space, with I8 for example sharing a 9m² room with four other men (see Figure 6.1 below and A2.8 in Appendix 2).



Washing hanging up above the bags to dry in front of an open window (other occupants seldom opened theirs).

A bag belonging to each of the occupants (one was away).

[Some occupants painted their rooms with gloss paint as they felt it kept the bed bugs at bay.]

Figure 6.1: Very efficient storage using the wall in I7's room, when sharing a small room with four others. Many people kept personal possessions and clothes in bags. (Source: author's own photograph, October 2012)

Many Donkela residents on the first and second floors actually had comparatively larger living/sleeping areas than people at Hillview, because the practice of subletting spaces was not nearly as common (see Section 6.4). Those in the newer rooms on the ground floor did struggle with the lack of space at times (see I5, below), but people especially on the first and second floor did not complain about space. I8 chose to continue staying in a 9m² room even though he said he had the option to stay in other rooms. This was due to the social ties with the other occupants there: the feeling of 'family' as another occupant called it. Some rooms even felt empty in Donkela, as occupants did not have money, or chose not to spend it, on furniture. In Hillview Mansions, my large room felt empty, containing Mpumi, my sublettor's bed, my bicycle, microwave and small set of shelves, with the rest of mine and Mpumi's possessions packed away in the built-in cupboard, and my bed on the balcony. Like many did in other flats (I12, I10), if I had agreed, Mpumi could have advertised a space and brought in an additional sublettor, allowing her to reduce the amount she spent on rent.

In Abney, it seemed that most occupants found their room to have enough space, with I19 saying it was 'comfortable', and I18 (23/09/12) saying, 'we have enough space – everything is here – bed, wardrobe, fridge, TV, and I still have a little space. I have space just to relax and move around.' Some Abney occupants were concerned about the lack of space due to the inability to fit the furniture they wanted (sofas, TV stands, wall

units, and otherwise). Others with children found it more challenging. No one found it unhealthy or felt there were risks involved of sharing a single small living and sleeping area.

Some participants indicated that they utilised semi-public spaces within the buildings and public spaces without, to socialise, relax and literally get some space. At Hillview, the courtyard and parking garages were heavily used by children, and the rooftop by teenagers and adults. Often occupants stepped outside their flats to the interior walkways to chat in pairs or smaller groups. At Donkela, the 'shebeen' area was heavily utilised, and also the larger rooms within the building. The street outside was used for meetings held by the residents committee, where all occupants were invited, and by the Sotho leadership's meetings and larger social gatherings. In addition, some occupants utilised parks and public spaces further afield. I5 (23/09/12) said, 'There is not enough space here. I like to relax – on Sundays especially go somewhere else for a few hours to the park there...Sometimes I stand outside – just for few minutes...Sometimes it's too noisy.'

Interestingly, the public spaces at Abney seemed less well utilised, with occupants spending more time in their own rooms socialising or watching TV, or socialising at particular venues such as bars outside of the building. This was possibly because the rooms were generally larger, and because many had slightly more disposable income than occupants at the other two buildings to spend on leisure activities.

In conclusion, it was clear that, in general, occupants prioritised finances over space. This was the finding, too of Follain et al (1982), Lim et al (1984) and UN-Habitat (2003). Sometimes the rooms and spaces occupied were considerably smaller than the minimum floor areas stipulated in the City of Johannesburg bylaws (see Section 1.2.2), and would be considered as overcrowding and thus illegal. However, as found in the literature (for example Schlyter, 2003), people considered smaller spaces the norm – understandably seeming to judge this based on what they saw in their direct surrounds – and actually recognised their room as spacious if it was larger than others (I12).

Subletting, and the ability to sublet in more challenging times, provided a buffer against financial knocks, and could be initiated as an additional income from one month to the next (see 'Flexibility in accommodating additional occupants' below).

Nevertheless, as in Section 6.4.5 on ‘Destructive social ties’ describes below, and raised by participants like I5, above, it can be very stressful sharing space to this degree, and public and semi-public spaces seem crucial to develop and maintain for the well-being of occupants.

6.4.3 Privacy

Opinions on privacy or lack of it varied widely amongst research participants. For some, particularly men, privacy was not an issue. For example, one participant chose to stay with a number of ‘brothers’ in the same room even though he had the opportunity to stay alone. He benefitted in other ways from this larger household.¹⁰⁴

Some participants described how they preferred to remain emotionally distant from the other occupants of the flat, so as not to be subject to gossiping or interpersonal conflict. They purposefully did not make friends within the unit. At Hillview, P10 and I10 kept to their space, although it was the smallest. Curtains were treated as walls – people would not enter another’s space without permission, and it would be considered a transgression of privacy if one entered while the occupant was out. Even though I left my room unlocked at Hillview while I was out, I20 phoned me the first few times she wanted to enter to hang washing on my balcony.

One Abney resident did not mind communal ablutions or sharing her room with another, but did not like staying in an apartment block because she could not be anonymous should she choose to: ‘In a flat you have to meet many people. In a house you can just stay alone somewhere.’ (I18, 23/09/12). A number of residents complained about using communal facilities, but this seemed to be more related to health concerns than privacy.

In conclusion, privacy was conceptualised differently by different participants, and was not a concern for some occupants, particularly men. People employed different tactics to handle the issue of privacy, given the situation of living in such close quarters with others: some made close friends, some purposefully did not. Nevertheless, personal space was generally respected, even where the division between that and communal space was only a curtain. Thus while occupants of rooms were envied, spaces still

¹⁰⁴ Briefly why, and maybe refer to elsewhere in text – social capital section

offered occupants a good degree of visual and physical (if not aural) privacy, as a result of peoples' practices, given the physical characteristics of the typology.

6.4.4 Accommodation of additional occupants

Research participants had also all found an arrangement that accommodated those people they wished to live with, given their economic circumstances and livelihood strategies. No participant in Donkela or Hillview felt restricted by the accommodation in terms of who they wished to stay with on a long term basis: most were staying with one or two family members or close friends, and preferred it that way. For instance, many participants had children, but preferred them to stay elsewhere. One participant indicated, 'I don't want a family near me because they are trouble – if you stay with a family it is not right.' (I1,14/09/12). Some did have regular visitors, however.

This was possibly due to the flexibility rooms and spaces offered at buildings like Hillview Mansions. P1 and I20 had problems with their relationship at the same time as they were being evicted from their space by the owner because of non-payment. They moved to separate places, but I20 needed P1's financial support for their child and within two months moved back with him – he then rented a room at the last minute, rather than sharing as he had been. When I20 went home for a short time, P1 gave up the room to cut costs then rented another room again when she returned.

Abney residents also responded that they did not wish to live with additional people to those they were staying with, but felt limited by having to pay extra per night when they had visitors. Some wanted their partners to stay, for instance, when they were off work, but the cost proved prohibitive. Few had regular visitors.

Mastandas of rooms and spaces at Hillview or Donkela generally allowed occupants to take on guests for a few days without any extra cost to the occupant (in some units such as I11's this needed to be negotiated). I20 had no income of her own, and was dependent on others for accommodation amongst her other needs.

The flexibility in the number of occupants in Donkela and Hillview Mansions meant that occupants were also able to return a favour (financial, a place to stay on another occasion, or food, for instance) by allowing people to stay the night: in 404 Hillview Mansions people could stay without permission from or payment to any management

structures, and when P1's brother stayed, he sometimes paid for food for P1 and his family.

However, a number of participants in Donkela indicated that due either to their own apprehension or those of their visitors, they did not receive people from outside the building. For example, I3's female friends feared entering the building. I4 (23/09/12) said, 'I wouldn't want my friends to come and see the conditions that I'm living. My friends from my childhood would be shocked.' However, here the problem was not that they were living in shared accommodation, but the state of the actual building.

In conclusion, as mentioned in the previous section, the flexibility in rooms and spaces in Donkela and Hillview allowed occupants to reduce their vulnerability: they could allow others to stay in exchange for social and/or financial capital. Even so, some Donkela occupants essentially described an erosion of social capital, as they were ashamed of their living conditions in the building, and did not want people (such as childhood friends) to come and visit – let alone stay – who they would have otherwise invited if they had been at 'home'. Abney, meanwhile, had the opposite problem: there was no flexibility without increasing the cost of accommodation, even though occupants wished that friends or family could stay for short periods of time occasionally. Here again, participants could easily experience an erosion of social capital.

6.4.5 Supportive social ties

Many people described strong bonds with people in their building. While Abney residents did describe bonds with other residents, they were stronger in Hillview and strongest in Donkela, where residents also depended on them the most. One interviewee at Donkela said, 'these people are the family – there is a lot of loving going on and you feel at home' (I7, 4/10/12). I4 (23/09/12) also said, 'we get on very well – like we family...it's only once some of us start drinking: there is that problem'. I13 (18/09/12) at Hillview said, 'most of us we know each other so to be friends is simple – there is nobody that don't get along in the building.'

Strong social networks benefitted a range of aspects of life in inner-city Johannesburg, including health, finances, the ability to find a job, mobility and access to resources, navigating bureaucracy and securing legal status, as well as locating and securing the room or space in the first place. Some participants who were not as healthy or mobile

often relied on the other occupants in the flat for assistance. This came in a variety of forms, from financial to physical. The shared nature of rooms and spaces facilitated these connections and in some way ensured that even occupants who had not developed strong social ties with people in other aspects of their lives had other occupants in close proximity to rely on to a certain extent.

Many participants told stories of either assisting or being assisted when in short periods of financial need. Much of this assistance went between friends in the same unit, or building. I9 sublet a portion of her space to help reduce her expenditure, but sharing with a person also benefitted her in other ways and they assisted each other. She said (12/08/12), ‘Sometimes I couldn’t manage to cook for myself...Sometimes the legs were painning me so much I needed help even covering me with the blanket as you remember. P4 used to help me for the month’ [that they shared the room].

In return, I9 assisted P4 when P4 stopped earning an income because of her advanced pregnancy. Here I9 speaks of the arrangement at 404:

We sometimes shared the food. I could help where necessary and when I had. Most especially P4 – by the time P4 came she never had money, never had food. Things like sugar and those essential commodities – things like soap. Even I gave I20 sometimes some washing powder – when I have I cannot be mean to them. (I9, 12/08/12)

Some people, particularly women in Donkela, relied on financial support in the longer term, even for the most basic items such as food. As many residents were very building-based in their leisure time and socialising, these social support structures were predominantly focused within the building.

A number of participants in Donkela and Hillview Mansions felt that they were more able to find a job as a result of social connections with people in the building. ‘Staying in Hillview is good to find a job – there’s many people who’s working here, and others they call me for piece jobs. If I continue staying here I’ll get another job’ (I11’s friend, 15/08/12). Participants also relied on connections for help moving between rooms and spaces and transportation of goods to the market, for instance, for a reduced price.

With a large number of occupants of rooms and spaces being foreign African nationals (estimated in Appendix 4 to be just under half of occupants), people assisted each other with information and direct help to navigate the often complicated bureaucracy associated with obtaining and maintaining refugee status, securing a bank account, etc. Some also relied on friends who were South African citizens, to help secure visas, for instance.

Much of this was facilitated in Hillview by the integration of people from a wide range of income groups and demographics, working in different positions (or unemployed) and with access to different resources. Participants lacking certain resources were, therefore able to gain access to resources otherwise unavailable to them. Hillview Mansions had a particularly diverse set of occupants, due to the diverse physical typology and thus rentals, combined with relatively well-functioning services and facilities. This diversity in people and with different incomes also led to some occupants successfully running businesses that utilised other occupants in the building as their market (see Section 6.4.5).

In conclusion, while the previous section dealt mostly with the implications of flexibility on social ties with people outside of the building, this section deals with those within. Staying in rooms or spaces involved a high degree of sharing, providing many opportunities for occupants to get to know one another, working on joint projects, asking each other for assistance, and simply bumping into each other more often than if they were staying in a self-contained unit. Social capital was also built up within the building, particularly within Donkela because, as seen in Section 6.1.1, many occupants moved straight into Donkela from outside of Johannesburg, and thus the first (and sometimes only) stronger social ties they made were within the building. Abney, on the other hand, was on the other side of the spectrum, because many people had relationships, for instance, with colleagues at their formal jobs, schools or other institutions, or fellow occupants at previous residences in Johannesburg. Given that their incomes were much more meagre and unstable, and given the adverse conditions they faced on a daily basis, Donkela occupants were more vulnerable in general than Abney residents, and thus needed more support and often turned to each other.

6.4.6 Destructive social ties and a culture of ‘anti-social behaviour’

Many of the participants in Donkela highlighted the main problem of staying there as being the culture of heavy drinking and partying, which they said led to increased noise levels, theft, violence and abuse. One interviewee said, ‘living here is stopping being able to think’ (I1, 14/09/12). There was a unanimous sense that this was worst between Friday and Sunday, and impacted greatly on their safety and security, with some fearing to go out of their room (see Section 5.4). Some participants blamed the setup of the building and its management for the development of this culture:

Staying here encourages people to drink...in a way, we forget about problems. If I stayed somewhere else I wouldn’t enjoy drinking – a place makes you... You can see this place – the stresses – most people don’t even have money for food but for booze there is. I think it’s some sort of depression or something like that. (I4, 23/09/12)

Occupants related this drinking and partying culture to further rule-breaking and violence: ‘people mustn’t urinate by the steps, or all over, but...most especially on weekends everyone just does it’ (I4, 23/09/12).

In Hillview Mansions, certain units were known as the ‘place to go’ for a party and only people who enjoyed that kind of lifestyle rented a room/space there. Because management occurred on a unit level as well as a building level, the other units were not as affected, and there was not a ‘culture of deviance’ across the whole building, as in Donkela.

In Donkela, there had been some success in working together with an officer at Jeppestown Police Station, with whom they had a good relationship, to cut down on the antisocial behaviour. Stabbings, ATM card fraud and even throwing dirty water onto the street was reported, with the culprits pinpointed mostly by committee members. During the course of research, certain committee members were working with the police to gain enough evidence against a known drug dealer who had moved into the building. The unofficial policy was to turn a blind eye to trading in alcohol and, to a small extent, cannabis, but harder drugs were clamped down on.

One of the criteria the police had for working with the committee is that they put in effective security at the front gate. Near the end of the period of research the committee was unable to continue supporting this because occupants were refusing to pay their levy, and committee members were worried the police would soon stop supporting their efforts at crime reduction.

Therefore, close social ties (peoples' practices) and the degree of sharing combined with the stressful physical conditions of the building and dominant culture can result in already vulnerable people being drawn into certain destructive behaviour, or being at risk from other people's behaviour. Destructive social ties seemed to be entrenched in the general dynamics at Donkela, and thus occupants who wouldn't otherwise participate in activities such as heavy drinking, or would be more focused on gaining a livelihood, found it difficult to escape being snared in.

There are ways of reducing this vulnerability; however, experience at Donkela showed that it is extremely difficult to quell a culture that has become entrenched.¹⁰⁵ Some academics argue that one should root out elements of criminality in a building, rather than looking at options of relocation or eviction (Claire Benit-Gbaffou, November 2011, pers. comm., Kate Tissington, August 2012, pers. comm.). The residents committee in Donkela tried this through close collaboration with the police, but it had very limited effect.

In conclusion, rooms and spaces can result in both positive and negative social ties, and usually involve a combination of both. The literature is relatively inconclusive, with fine grain studies describing similar nuances of beneficial and non-beneficial social ties. Bank's (2007:221) localised study of backyard rooming, where she describes a culture of 'anti-social behaviour' and Schlyter's (2003) of lodging studies also link many of the problematic ties to a culture of drinking, with Schlyter describing the difficulties of living on a property that also serves as a shebeen. But aggregate reviews (UN-Habitat, 2011; Rakodi, 2002) suggest that generally positive, mutually beneficial relationships exist. Even though Hillview Mansions and Donkela both had a high degree of social ties, Hillview seemed to have a much greater proportion of positive ties in comparison to Donkela, even though the security was not nearly as tight as at Abney, and sometimes

¹⁰⁵ In my work with Planact at another inner-city building, the culture was much more problematic, as it gradually became evident that the majority of occupants were heavy drug users.

the space constraints and stresses that go along with these were tighter than either Abney or Donkela.

6.5 Rental income, home enterprise, businesses

Research uncovered a number of ways rooms and spaces assisted directly with income generation, by providing rental income, providing space for storage, manufacturing or retail, or creating jobs in cleaning, security and maintenance of the accommodation. A number of participants were small-scale traders or entrepreneurs, and used their room or space to store their goods. In Abney, a participant bought Tupperware in bulk and stored it in her shared room to sell to clients around Johannesburg, and others did hair or operated an informal cab service for other occupants that knew them through word of mouth, but entrepreneurs did not seem to operate to the same degree as at Hillview or Donkela.

In Hillview Mansions, participants offered services such as computer and cell phone repairs, child minding, photography and liquor retail as well as salon services, but very seldom advertised: again, one found out through acquaintances or other people in the building. The spaza shops, shebeen and take-aways at Donkela were all run by residents. At the end and beginning of the month, people found employment assisting other occupants to move their furniture and belongings in and out of their units when they were moving between accommodations, particularly up and down the stairs at Hillview Mansions. Lastly, many residents act as in-house maintenance and cleaning staff for the buildings, particularly at Hillview Mansions and Donkela. The security guards and cleaners for Donkela are residents, organised by the residents' committee. Donkela, Hillview and Abney all have live-in caretakers/management. Amateur or semi-qualified artisans, such as plumbers, welders, or electricians (who helped when there were difficulties with the electricity supply or rigged the informal electricity connections from room to room) were sometimes sourced internally for ad hoc jobs at Donkela and Hillview.

To gain these livelihood opportunities, people relied directly on the social networks that were prevalent in rooms and spaces, as many of the jobs were obtained through word of mouth, simply being friendly with other occupants.

Perhaps most importantly for Hillview occupants, subletting rooms or spaces offered additional income, utilised mainly as a way to subsidise their own costs of accommodation. As with *mastandas* described in Section 4.3.4, in many units where more flexibility was allowed, other occupants were able to sublet a portion of their accommodation in times of additional financial constraints: if they were renting a room, for instance, they could sublet a portion of it as a space, or even a portion of their space, as long as they continued to cover the full amount required by the *mastanda*. I was able to halve the cost of my accommodation by subletting the room, while I maintained a degree of privacy by sleeping on the closed balcony. When I9 needed to send more money ‘home’ to Kampala for one of her children who became ill, she advertised and found P4 to share her space, also halving the proportion of rent she had to pay. Abney also offered the possibility of sharing the room, with some leaseholders bringing in an additional roommate to share the rent, though the flexibility was limited, as not more than two adults were allowed in each room. The practice of subletting did not seem as common in Donkela, with no participants reporting sharing for financial reasons. This was possibly because the monthly costs of Donkela were publically known to consist only of the R100 levy. However, financial returns in return for sharing could have occurred in a few rooms without the committee members or me knowing about it.

The literature verified many of these findings. As raised in Section 6.3 ‘Management’, many people rented for income-generation purposes. However, the literature did not feature cases of subletting to the same degree as found in Hillview Mansions (here there were three levels of letting; with the owner leasing to the *mastanda*, who leased a room and balcony to me, who leased the room to another occupant). Accessing the livelihood opportunities and subletting supported livelihoods in a very direct way, through generating or at least supplementing occupants’ financial flows.

6.6 Mobility

In the studies reviewed, occupants of rooms and spaces were highly mobile, facilitated in part by the nature of tenure.¹⁰⁶ There is a strong connection between the rooms and spaces typologies and migrancy, both within and between countries (see, for instance, Few et al, 2004; Greenberg & Polzer, 2008; Andreasen, 1989; Poulsen, 2010; Grant,

¹⁰⁶ Shown above to be non-ownership in all cases studied, and predominantly rental, with non-written agreements, etc.

2007). Studies showed most participants to have limited interest in settling in the locale they were currently resident in (Andreasen, 1989; City of Johannesburg, 2007; IRIN, 2011), and various South African studies showed patterns of circulatory migration to be strong (Dewar, 1997; Greenburg & Polzer, 2008; Mabin, 1990; UN-Habitat, 2003). This contributed to residents making sacrifices in their current accommodation, investing back 'home' (Poulsen, 2010; UN-Habitat, 2003), and placed flexibility requirements on the accommodation in the city in terms of the number of people able to be accommodated at any one time (Grant, 2007). These findings challenge policies that advocate providing title deeds and that encourage incremental upgrading of rooms and spaces (Andreasen, 1989; Wang & Li, 2006). Nevertheless, the direction of causality is unclear; it is uncertain, if the accommodation improved, whether occupants of rooms and spaces would prefer to settle in the city rather than migrate (Andreasen, 1989; Potts, 2000). See Appendix 4 for a full discussion.

Furthermore, there was found to be a high degree of mobility within the same city. In Grant (2007) virtually all lodgers in Gweru had been in their current accommodation for less than five years and 42% for less than one year. Tenants were found to be similarly mobile in Thika (Andreasen, 1989). In inner-city Johannesburg, Few et al (2004) found that only 11% saw themselves as living in the current building for more than two years: 24% estimated one year or less. Nearly a third of migrants in Greenburg and Polzner's study (2008) focusing on inner-city Johannesburg saw themselves moving in the next six months.¹⁰⁷ Mkhabela and Dörmann (under review) describe rooms in Yeoville as 'sites of circulation'. However, different authors described this in different lights: some positive, some negative. Occupants utilised flexibility within the system to move easily, in more financially or otherwise challenging times, within the same city or elsewhere, including back home, and others were ready to move as soon as a better livelihood opportunity or an accommodation option presented itself. Some sources indicate that the stability that ownership provides is not the priority of many tenants: in fact owners can suffer from 'excessive stability' (UN-Habitat, 2003:124).¹⁰⁸ Other authors relate mobility to poverty. Thus, mobility could be seen as a facet of rooms and

¹⁰⁷ The mean number of residential moves for migrants since coming to Johannesburg was 7.5 times. Only around 13% expected to be in the same accommodation within the next two years (Greenburg & Polzner, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ The sub-section on sharing and subletting above showed how the practice of subletting facilitated more flexibility for owners.

spaces that suits peoples' livelihood strategies and enables better access to changing livelihood opportunities,¹⁰⁹ or it could be seen as a factor adding to occupants' vulnerability.¹¹⁰ Perhaps it is both. See Appendix 6 for a supporting discussion.

In the current research, occupants in the three buildings had very different degrees of mobility. In Donkela, many occupants had stayed in the building since they had moved to Johannesburg up to five years before, or since the building began to be occupied. Many occupants in Abney were in a similar position: they had moved there after the building opened in 2009. At Hillview, some occupants, particularly the primary leaseholders, had been there even since the 1990s, but many in rooms and spaces moved every few months. Most participants who could afford it also went 'home' frequently. This was sometimes for longer period of time, for instance if they were not able to source any livelihood opportunities at the time (see for example P4, below).

In Donkela, there was a lack of permanence in how participants spoke about living in the building: most expressed that they did not see it as a place they wished to stay in long term, and would move if they managed to secure better livelihood opportunities. Indeed, people seldom moved to rooms in other buildings similar to Donkela.¹¹¹ People generally moved onto the ground floor, then when a room with better physical conditions (usually on the first or second floors) freed up they shifted. Some also moved to rooms that had become vacant in order to stay alone again. For instance, I1's brother came to Johannesburg and she allowed him to stay in her room with her, but when P3 died she moved in with her boyfriend, to his room, and her brother stayed alone in her old room (although she retained 'ownership', keeping some of her belongings there).

At Hillview, there was the potential for very high mobility, where one could move every month if one wished, within the building or to other buildings. There was a high availability of rooms and knowledge of alternatives due to the system of exchange (see

¹⁰⁹ That is, whether the accommodation was flexible or not, the livelihood opportunities would be somewhat volatile

¹¹⁰ That is, additional volatility, and a cause of additional stresses or shocks for occupants.

¹¹¹ However, there was some reshuffling that took place, particularly after residents were evicted for a few days, and then allowed to return, due to a court interdict.

Section 6.2). Flat 404 saw mobility that was probably higher than other flats, but examining occupants' housing trajectories shows what is possible.¹¹²

P11, who moved in after I had left the flat, struggled to get any work, and so moved into another space in the same building that cost less than one third of what he was previously paying. However, it was much less comfortable, and he saw it as a temporary solution for a few months while he found his feet again. P4, a Zimbabwean, had been living in Johannesburg for two years. She fell pregnant and managed to get financial assistance from her aunt's boyfriend shortly before her child's birth, allowing her to move from a building similar to Donkela to Hillview Mansions, where she shared a space with I9. She gave birth three weeks later at Johannesburg General Hospital (which featured much better, free medical services than hospitals in Zimbabwe), and cared for her baby in the space. In the second month, her baby received his inoculations and was declared healthy, and simultaneously her aunt's boyfriend said he could no longer support her. She decided to return 'home' to Zimbabwe to benefit from the support her mother could provide. In each case, she adjusted her accommodation to best suit her needs within the financial means available to her.

Similarly, I9's location needs changed several times, and she utilised the flexibility of rooms and spaces to ensure her accommodation requirements were met in the best possible way, given her budgetary constraints for that month. By changing the area and building she lived, even by less than one kilometre, she was able to minimise the walking she would need to do on a daily basis, and thus continue gaining a livelihood, despite problems with her legs. I9's initial move out of Hillview was more due to relationship stresses with her ex-husband (see Section 6.4) – a situation many people experienced – in combination with mobility difficulties due to her legs, living on the fourth floor without a lift. Others, such as I20 and P1, moved because of issues with paying rent (see the section on evictions in Section 6.2.2). Still others moved because of changes in tenure above them, for instance, if the main leaseholder moved out, or if the flat was being sold or refurbished, as was claimed by I20 and the previous *mastanda*, in order to get rid of problem tenants, they were forced to find another place to stay.

¹¹² 'Housing trajectory' is a term used by e.g. Dörmann et al (under review) to describe the 'path' people take in their decisions regarding accommodation; the different places they move between.



Curtains dividing the space with that of P11, next door.

Mounted posters featuring prayers and psalms

Figure 6.2: Some people decorated and set up very homely spaces, even though the floor area was limited. This was often based on how long they saw themselves wanting to, or being allowed to stay in the particular room or space. Compare Figure 6.3. (Source: author's own photograph, August 2012).



Lack of furniture: only a storage box, bed, sealed container for food, and a TV.

Curtains separate P11's space from the space of his neighbours, but there are no curtains between his space and common area

Figure 6.3: The space of P11, who only saw himself staying there until he could get a job again. The owner of the flat allowed him to occupy the space in exchange for acting as mastanda. The owner felt the other occupants were overusing the electricity and water, and wanted him to keep an eye on them. (Source: author's own photograph, August 2012).

Similarly to I9 moving out of Hillview partly because of the lack of a working lift, other occupants of rooms or spaces in similar buildings to Hillview Mansions moved because of unstable services. A building in Yeoville where I did some initial research was

located on a street where there were frequent blackouts at the time. People who did not know about this issue would respond to an advertisement and move in, but soon become frustrated and move to another area in Yeoville. There was thus extraordinarily high mobility in the building. Here, the system of exchange described in Section 6.2.1 above meant that occupants would not have to endure situations of increased vulnerability for long.¹¹³

Occupants in Hillview Mansions, however, generally chose to stay in the building if possible (unless they, for example, had developed a bad reputation for not paying rent). With electricity being included as part of rent (see Section 5.2) and big rooms compared to other buildings, it was an attractive place to stay. I13 came with his domestic worker mother in 1988 and although his mother moved back ‘home’, he continued to stay in the building.

In Abney, contrary to the ideals of upward mobility, as symbolised by the housing ladder utilised by some professionals (Alison Wilson, Mar 2012, pers. comm.), participants liked staying there and were keen to continue staying there in the future, unless their life situation changed, such as their children growing older. Unless participants were moving outside of Greater Johannesburg, such as going ‘home’ more permanently, there was not much mobility. This was the case of moving between buildings and within the building.

In conclusion, faced with fluctuating incomes and expenses, some participants utilised the flexibility of rooms and spaces at Hillview Mansions to adapt their accommodation expenses to their cash flow at the time. Similarly to the practice of subletting portions of one’s room or space, some occupants decided to move to less satisfactory accommodation in order to mitigate shocks. Rooms and spaces at Hillview Mansions, in particular, therefore, offered occupants the possibility of ‘consumption smoothing’, where occupants adjusted their costs to mitigate their vulnerability caused by shocks that translated into the erosion of their financial assets or flows (see Dercon, 2002). Others, particularly primary leaseholders (who adjusted their accommodation expenditure through subletting – see Section 6.4) and those who perhaps had more stable incomes, did not move as frequently, with some renting the same room for many

¹¹³ Although the adverse of this is raised as one of the issues of rental tenure: tenants are less likely than owners to invest in their area or hold the necessary authorities accountable (UN-Habitat, 2011).

years. Here, rooms and spaces were shown to have the potential to provide very stable tenure, mitigating vulnerability caused by being forced to move. However, in other cases, where occupants were forced to move, a degree of increased vulnerability would be experienced (see Section 6.2). Occupants of Donkela moved less frequently, and were probably less mobile because there were fewer options for them to move elsewhere, as discussed in Section 6.1. Abney residents remained relatively stationary as well, seemingly because they were happy with the accommodation and generally had more stable (formal) incomes than those at Hillview or Donkela (see Section 4.4). After providing an overview of the research, the following chapter synthesises the findings of Chapter Four, Five and Six into three overarching themes regarding the rooms and spaces typologies, and livelihood strategies (see Section 7.2).

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Overview of Research

This report asked, ‘What do “rooms” and “spaces”¹¹⁴ offer to occupants in Johannesburg’s inner city?’ The report utilised a case study approach, showcasing rooms and spaces in the buildings Donkela and Hillview Mansions in the informal market and in Abney, in the formal market. Donkela was originally a multi-level warehouse, informally converted into rooms; Hillview was a large block of flats informally converted into rooms and spaces; and Abney was a block of flats formally converted into rooms as ‘communal housing’.¹¹⁵ By utilising the livelihoods framework (Chambers, 1995; DFID, 1999; Moser, 1998) the research explored the physical characteristics of rooms and spaces, and the associated practices, from the perspectives of the occupants. The methods of participant observation and semi-structured, in-depth interviews assisted this cause.

In broad overview, the research established that not one research participant said they were born in inner-city Johannesburg, though some had been living there for some time,¹¹⁶ and most continued to think of a place outside of the inner city¹¹⁷ as ‘home’. Many returned ‘home’ to visit when they could, or when they were unsuccessful in securing livelihood opportunities for a while. Some saw themselves returning ‘home’ in the long term, such as when livelihood opportunities arose there, or when they were beyond working age. Most had left ‘home’ not out of choice, but out of the necessity of gaining a living, which Johannesburg provided opportunities for. The livelihood activities of Donkela occupants were particularly insecure. These occupants of rooms and spaces were found to be relatively poor, engaging in an ensemble of livelihood activities, many of which were of a temporary nature producing unstable incomes. Many livelihoods were sought in the informal sector.¹¹⁸ The livelihood activities of

¹¹⁴ See definition of ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’ in Glossary of Terms, also discussed in Appendix 3.

¹¹⁵ ‘Communal housing’ is a form of social housing in South Africa.

¹¹⁶ One of the reasons for this could well have been the racial restrictions of the past: all the participants would likely have been classified as ‘black’ or ‘coloured’ under apartheid legislation and thus barred from living in the inner city, unless as a domestic worker, until the system of pass laws became less strict in the area (see Crankshaw, 1995). The participant who had been resident in inner-city Johannesburg for the longest had been there for over 30 years, but most participants had been there for less than ten years.

¹¹⁷ Some still within Greater Johannesburg, however.

¹¹⁸ The literature identified this to be the case particularly with international migrants.

Abney occupants differed: these participants had generally secured formal, stable incomes of their own or relied on the support of others in this position.

Living in the inner city allowed participants to take advantage of the array of livelihood opportunities and economic networks within walking distance.¹¹⁹ Others utilised flexible and diverse public transport networks to open up a broader range of opportunities across Greater Johannesburg.¹²⁰

The rooms and spaces typologies provided a set of accommodation options upon which occupants were reliant. Furthermore, some aspects of the typologies supported occupants' livelihood strategies. However, other aspects¹²¹ undermined livelihood strategies and caused additional vulnerability.¹²² The occupants of each of the three buildings featured in this report relied on different livelihood strategies, and the building in which they were resident impacted on these strategies in different ways. The following Section 7.2 describes rooms and spaces in each of the three buildings, in relation to occupants' livelihoods. It is a summary of the findings of Chapters Five and Six, arranged into three themes.

7.2 Rooms and spaces and livelihood strategies

The findings regarding the relationship between livelihoods and accommodation for rooms and spaces in Johannesburg's inner city reveal three core themes: affordability and location; flexibility (but with potential insecurity); and services, safety, health and management.

7.2.1 Affordability and location

For most occupants, the rooms or spaces typology was the only accommodation options they could afford in Johannesburg's inner city.¹²³ Some occupants in Donkela indicated that if they had to leave the building they were currently staying in, they forced to stay

¹¹⁹ Particularly for participants at Donkela and some at Hillview.

¹²⁰ Particularly those at Abney. These options allowed participants to use a combination of mobility options to keep transport costs as low as possible (including those who required transport in the early morning or late at night).

¹²¹ Sometimes closely tied to those who supported livelihood strategies.

¹²² In the form of shocks and stresses.

¹²³ Here, the looser definitions of rooms and spaces is used, and thus 'cottages' and 'balconies' are included (see Section 5.1). Although dormitory-style accommodation has been built in inner-city Johannesburg (such as Transitional Housing), it is limited (Tissington, 2013) and most participants were not aware of it.

‘under the bridge’ (I6, 4 October 2012). For other occupants, rooms and spaces allowed a greater degree of asset management: some occupants prioritised other livelihood assets¹²⁴ over housing, and the relative affordability of rooms and spaces¹²⁵ allowed them to realise a greater degree of decision-making regarding their expenditure.¹²⁶

The practice of subletting, in greatly assisted occupants of rooms and spaces in Hillview to reduce the costs of accommodation. Current occupants could sublet a portion of their room or space in exchange for a portion of the rent. Potential occupants may not afford the rental of a full flat (if subletting was not allowed). In addition, occupants of all three buildings ran informal businesses that relied in some way on the relationships and degree of sharing linked to life in rooms and spaces. Donkela occupants were particularly reliant on this; many of their customers were fellow occupants.

7.2.2 Flexibility, though with potential insecurity

The three buildings offered different degrees of flexibility and diversity in the rooms and spaces offered there (see Sections 5.2 and 6.4.4). Hillview Mansions had the most flexible tenure and system of exchange, as well as the greatest diversity in affordability. This diversity was linked to the wide range of configurations of both the rooms and the spaces typologies. The flexibility was mostly due to the *mastanda* management system, which was closely linked with the practice of subletting¹²⁷ and sharing (that is, without a financial exchange), as well as the wide availability and knowledge of alternatives. Barriers to entry were low. In short, if one had enough cash to cover rent, even just for the month ahead, one could find and secure a room or space and move in, all in a matter of hours. This flexibility and diversity allowed movement ‘up’ and ‘down’ the housing ladder, and to the most suitable location within the inner city, or ‘home’, from month to month if necessary. This provided immense support to occupants with insecure livelihoods and incomes.

¹²⁴ These priorities included investing in housing back ‘home’, supporting dependents, saving for education, or consumer goods.

¹²⁵ More affordable than self-contained accommodation, for instance.

¹²⁶ Although there were a few people like this in Donkela, most were in Hillview and Abney. Those who were at Donkela seemed to be men of working age, who were less vulnerable to the conditions imposed by life in the building.

¹²⁷ Where occupancy was closely linked to ability to pay for the month ahead, and where, vice versa, eviction was closely linked to non-payment.

Tenure at Donkela was perceived by occupants to be a form of ‘ownership’.¹²⁸ Securing accommodation in the building was much more difficult; however, once one had secured a room,¹²⁹ flexibility was less of an issue than in the other two buildings studied, as the accommodation was significantly more affordable on a monthly basis. That is, even those occupants unable to attain livelihood opportunities that provided any stability in income may not be evicted, as long as they could cover the relatively low¹³⁰ monthly levy. Nevertheless, occupants felt insecure about leaving their rooms, particularly for longer periods of time (if the occupant needed to go ‘home’, for instance).

Abney’s terms of tenure and system of exchange were the least flexible, and monthly costs were much higher. However, at the same time, occupants had also secured more stable livelihood opportunities – generally formal jobs or incomes – or had people willing and able to support them. In fact, this was one of management’s requirements that had to be met by someone wishing to rent a room. It was less important to Abney occupants to have flexibility and diversity of accommodation, in terms of livelihoods.¹³¹

Furthermore, two of the buildings offered flexibility in the number of occupants of the room or space. Donkela occupants, and most in Hillview, were able to offer additional family or friends accommodation in their room or space, at least temporarily, without being faced by additional costs.¹³² Abney occupants struggled with the additional costs imposed by management.

The benefits described above regarding flexibility of rooms and spaces in Hillview and perception of ‘ownership’ in Donkela were closely related to the buildings operating outside of legal frameworks, that is, they operated informally (see Glossary of Terms). This had consequences for occupants. Abney occupants were protected from unfair evictions by various legislation and case law (see Section 1.2), enforced by written lease agreements and other formalities. Cases where people perceived they had been unfairly evicted, including occupants of Donkela and Hillview, were uncommon. However,

¹²⁸ Where one paid a monthly ‘levy’ of R100 for cleaning and security services.

¹²⁹ A room was secured mostly by paying a lump-sum to ‘buy’ it from the previous occupant, or in the case of a new room, the residents’ committee.

¹³⁰ Low in relation to costs of accommodation in the other two buildings.

¹³¹ Some Abney participants did struggle with the fluctuating costs of services, however (which at the time of interviews were also rapidly increasing).

¹³² This enabled occupants to provide some security to dependents, and also provided the potential to build social capital.

there were numerous cases where occupants were evicted by management due to their inability to pay rent, and some because of repetitive rule breaking. Interestingly, occupants did not perceive this as ‘unfair’.¹³³

There were cases, however, where occupants felt unfairly ‘cheated’ by management in the process of securing a room or space (see Section 6.2.2), though very few occupants turned to state authorities for recourse measures. Some participants also found ‘unfair’ the practice of some *mastandas* taking advantage of high demand by charging the other occupants an amount of rent to cover the full costs of their own accommodation or even gain an income from other occupants’ rent. Lastly, but significantly, participants were unanimously concerned about the high cost of accommodation in inner-city Johannesburg: while rooms and spaces were considered the most affordable option *in relation* to other typologies (and many people indicated this as the main reason they liked their room or space), accommodation here was by no means considered easily affordable.

7.2.3 Services, safety, health and management

It was very important for occupants to have easy access to a water source, toilet, electricity and a place to cook.¹³⁴ It was important to have a place to throw dirty water where it drained away, and have their rubbish removed from the building/property. All buildings offered the public services, or general availability of services, that came with living in inner city Johannesburg. However, while participants at Hillview and Abney were satisfied with the type of services within the building,¹³⁵ participants at Donkela found the situation very challenging without a reliable water source or toilets in the building. Without these services, they were heavily reliant on public services or private buildings in the surrounding area, sometimes in exchange for payment or favours.¹³⁶ This undermined livelihoods and contributed a great deal to the stresses of living in Donkela (see Section 5.2).

¹³³ Some people felt vulnerable to eviction of the whole building, however. See Section 6.2.2

¹³⁴ Whether this place to cook was their room or space, or shared.

¹³⁵ Note some, however, were not happy with the degree of sharing.

¹³⁶ Most relied on toilets such as those at a nearby park particularly during the day, and on those in other buildings during the night when public facilities closed, or for urinating used a drain leading to the main stormwater drain. They used this same drain to throw wastewater. A tap outside the building provided an intermittent source of water, but if not working then occupants mostly used the same facilities as the toilets.

Safety was also considered one of the most crucial aspects of accommodation.

Occupants of Donkela felt very unsafe in the building, and there was something of a culture of ‘social deviance’ and violence. Occupants of rooms built with penetrable material, such as hardboard, felt very insecure in their room and space as well, while those in brick-walled rooms mostly felt safe there.¹³⁷ Those at Hillview felt safe in their room or space (due to the lockable security gate or front door of the flat) but wanted the building’s security systems to be upgraded.¹³⁸ Abney occupants felt safe in the whole building, appreciating that it had 24-hour security, CCTV and a turnstile system with biometric access.

Occupants of Donkela felt the building was very unhygienic, and a few blamed illness and deaths of other occupants on the conditions in the building (see Section 5.3).

Hillview and Abney, on the other hand, mostly felt that their rooms and spaces were hygienic places to live, although many Hillview participants felt that sections of the building were very unhealthy and avoided them.¹³⁹

Thus, after the relative affordability of their accommodation, participants found services, safety and health the most important aspects. It seemed that they were prepared to sacrifice space and pay more for their accommodation in order to gain access to services, whatever the degree of sharing.¹⁴⁰ If the degree of sharing was decreased and the amount of space per person increased at Hillview, far fewer people would have access to these services.

The degree of sharing had benefits for social capital, where many people relied on the mutually beneficial relationships that developed. However, the high degree of sharing of services and communal space, and limited personal space and privacy also led to severe tensions in relationships. Effective management was imperative for lessening these tensions, as well as preventing certain people from overusing and abusing the services, as well as communal and private areas.

¹³⁷ Except where there were structural issues with some of the walls.

¹³⁸ A turnstile and biometric access had been installed, but didn’t work at the time of participant observation or interviews (it was later fixed). 24-hour security guards were employed, but most participants considered them ineffective.

¹³⁹ A few interviewees in Abney felt the communal facilities became unhygienic over the weekends.

¹⁴⁰ Most rooms in Donkela featured more space per person than rooms and spaces in Hillview.

7.2.4 Conclusions

Overall from the findings above,¹⁴¹ this research found that, while occupants in Donkela were faced by the most tenuous livelihoods, they lived in the building that, out of the three studied, resulted in the most additional shocks and stresses.¹⁴² Hillview occupants had been more successful in securing livelihood opportunities, and many aspects of this ‘model’ of rooms and spaces were of great support to these livelihood strategies. There were some aspects, however, that caused additional vulnerability, and those living in spaces (which were more affordable than rooms) faced a greater degree of shocks and stresses. Abney occupants had the most secure livelihoods, and staying in that building also resulted in the least additional shocks and stresses. These findings seem to suggest a highly adverse relationship, where the only accommodation available to people with the least secure livelihoods is that which subjects them to the greatest insecurity.

This research has demonstrated the incredible resilience¹⁴³ people seeking a livelihood in Johannesburg’s inner city. If people earned a stable, high, formal income, rooms and spaces would likely not be the desired accommodation option. But participants in this study were reliant on transient livelihood opportunities. Occupants of rooms and spaces have managed to secure a form of accommodation that supports their livelihood strategies as best as possible. Nevertheless, the shocks and stresses occupants had to endure in Donkela, and to a certain extent in Hillview, severely undermined livelihoods, and there is definitely scope for intervention. Suggestions regarding this are covered very briefly in the following section.

7.3 Where to from here

UN-Habitat (2003) suggests that government has to take a leading role in steering the strategic, long term, sustainable development of cities. However, the agency cautions against reducing the stock of affordable housing through processes of gentrification, unintended or otherwise.¹⁴⁴ Carey (2009:2) describes two pilot projects where Gauteng Province built formal backyard rooms ‘in an attempt to eradicate informal dwellings

¹⁴¹ Note that many of the nuances revealed by the findings are not possible to capture in this short section.

¹⁴² Also some people that chose to stay there in order to majorly cut costs on accommodation to spend on other things?

¹⁴³ See Section 2.1 for use of the term ‘resilience’.

¹⁴⁴ For instance, were Hillview Mansions to be ‘formalised’ into rooms and spaces in the form that Abney provides, it would have severe consequences on the livelihoods of Hillview’s current occupants (see Sections 4.4 and 6.1).

and provide tenants with better living conditions'. However, 'an evaluation of this effort has demonstrated that...people were displaced, and living conditions do not appear to have been improved'. She suggests that government or organisations should 'do no harm' where aspects of accommodation are 'currently working' (ibid). The current research showed that in the three buildings studied, rooms and spaces 'worked' for occupants' livelihood strategies in different ways. However, occupants' livelihoods were also undermined in some ways. It is hoped that the findings of this research summarised above can in themselves contribute towards providing direction for any intervention.¹⁴⁵ It is here that I hope occupants' livelihoods will be able to see improvement.

In the case of any intervention, the executor should heed Carey's (2009) warning, above. Berner (2001:302) suggests that 'what is needed, in brief, is a bridging of the gap between the legal and the illegal systems, starting with the recognition that illegal systems have in the past achieved far more than any official initiative'.¹⁴⁶

Lastly, intervention by no means has to take place only within the realm of housing. The findings of the current study suggest that insecure and unstable livelihood opportunities, by extension, lie at the root of the additional insecurities experienced one of the forms of rooms and spaces in particular. Few et al (2003) emphasise the need to address the complex nature of the housing crisis in developing country cities: 'the housing problem is not something that can be solved by architects and planners alone' (Few et al, 2003:439). Occupants will benefit from interventions here.

7.4 Lessons for practice

Although the aim of this paper was to begin the discussion as opposed to drawing hard and fast conclusions or provide specific recommendations related to current housing policy, it is possible to highlight some lessons for practice that can be taken forward. Policymakers and professionals should be cognisant of how the three different forms of rooms and spaces studied benefit the livelihoods of occupants, as well as how they

¹⁴⁵ Indeed, the livelihoods approach used for this paper has been formulated largely by development practitioners with an eye to 'operationalising' the findings (Rakodi, 2002:12).

¹⁴⁶ This could, in fact, already be happening. Ponte City, for example, is owned and run tightly by a single, formal management company, the Kempston Group, similarly to Abney. However, as I experienced first hand when subletting a room from a *mastanda* there with my partner, they 'turn a blind eye' to subletting,¹⁴⁶ and a similar management system as Hillview exists in many flats.

undermine livelihoods. This can be taken on the scale of the individual occupant, as well as together.

The first consideration can be over whether to support, through policy or practice, the forms of rooms and spaces in each building. Each building will thus be touched on here in turn. I started the fieldwork feeling that Donkela was very valuable as accommodation, as it provided by far the lowest cost accommodation, and still had a semi-functioning management system. However, after staying there, and interviewing different occupants, it seemed it had the potential to more severely undermine occupants' livelihoods than support them. Occupants could become 'trapped' in the 'culture' of anti-social behaviour, and were subject to a great deal of shocks and stresses resulting from the lack of services, violence and danger such as electrical fires, stagnant water, lack of ventilation and natural light and pest, and more. Nevertheless, the 'decision' would ideally be made individually. Depending on an occupant's location within the building and particularly ones current health, abilities age and gender, some occupants were much less vulnerable, and were able to benefit from the low cost and good location of the building. However, for the most vulnerable in the building, particularly women and children living on the lower levels (see for example, Section 5.4), if there were any possibility of alternative accommodation being available, they should be the ones to take it up.

Rooms and spaces in Hillview Mansions were more supportive of livelihoods in general. The management system and availability and general structure of the internal services on a per-flat basis allowed some easing of the social tensions and physical pressure that the high densities and mobility had the potential to cause. Nevertheless, occupants of spaces, particularly those sharing spaces, faced far greater vulnerability than those in rooms. No matter how small the room was, the physical characteristic of having a sealed, closable area to sleep and store one's possessions made a very big difference, and participants unanimously valued living in a room over a space. Again, for women and children, and particularly women with young children who were mobile but not yet disciplined enough not to stray into other spaces, who cried in the night, and other issues, this was more important. Single men were much more likely to stay in a space and spend the money saved on other things. This sometimes created tensions

between male and female partners. Design interventions could be investigated here, such as using floor to ceiling dry walling to split the larger rooms. Indeed, this has already been done on an informal basis by mastandas and formal basis by large property companies (where rooms and flats rent for roughly the same as those partitioned using brick and mortar). The management system could still work in this setup.

Abney presented a situation that supported occupants' livelihoods well for the occupants. As explored in Section 7.2, it was more limited as to which people were able to stay there. However, for those that were able to stay, minimal changes would need to be made to the physical nature of the rooms, or system: it 'worked'.

Reflecting on the conceptual framework, i.e. the sustainable livelihoods framework, there are several implications of the research. The generic framework adapted to suit this research and shown in Section 2.1 could be adapted further to represent the findings of this research. The following figure shows the initial steps one could take in doing this.

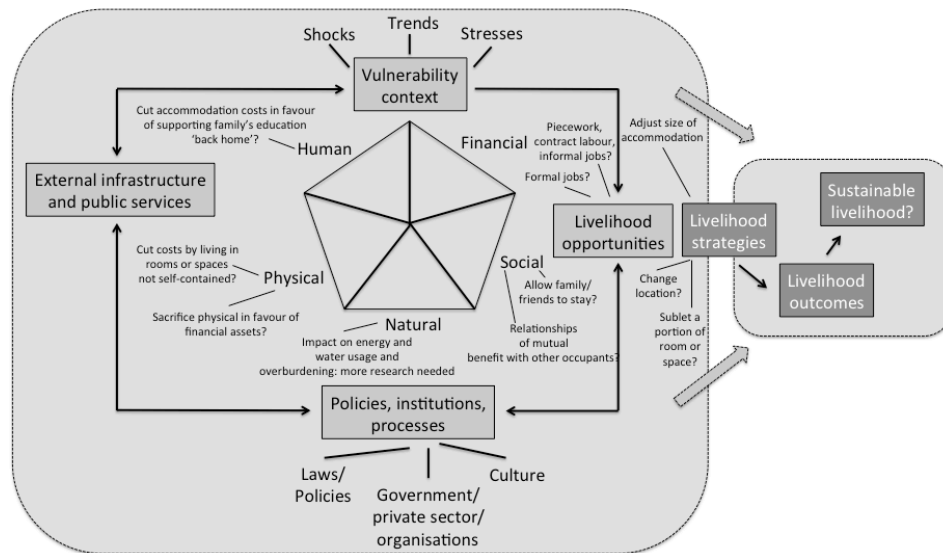


Figure 7.1: Adapting the generic framework into one relevant for the analysis of rooms and spaces. (Adapted from Figure 2.1).

As part of narrowing down the focus of this paper within the reaches of a single research question, it was decided that the perceptions of occupants would be the focus, and that management would have to be the focus of further research in the field. However, the nature of the management system at Hillview Mansions even more so than the other two buildings meant that by studying the occupants, one was also mostly studying the managers: the *mastandas*. As shown in Section 6.3 and 7.2, the main conclusion one can draw here is that the *mastanda* system of management was essential to maintaining many of the livelihood supports that the Hillview Mansions rooms and spaces provided, and lessening the shocks and stresses. One of the key virtues of this system is that it operates without explicit government or external intervention. It seems clear that where it is working, it should be left to do so. It would be difficult to ‘artificially’ set up this system in other buildings which currently have a formal system, but elements of it could certainly be borrowed, for instance the incentives for *mastandas* to keep a well-functioning and fully occupied set of rooms or spaces through being able to discount their own accommodation costs, keeping the scale of management to similar ratios, i.e. one live-in *mastanda* per around eight to 16 occupants (which corresponds with the sharing of common facilities), etc.

Lastly, one of the key findings of this research is that occupants across all three buildings seem to prefer cutting accommodation costs while maintaining safety and security, hygiene and particularly the availability of basic services even where shared by many people within the larger unit, rather than more living space. This should be kept in mind in new developments, wherever costs can be saved by reducing the space available. However, currently Joburg bylaws restrict the density of rooms and spaces to rising to the levels found in some of the flats in Hillview Mansions, and these would have to first be revised.

7.4 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

While the research methods utilised for this study were chosen for a number of benefits (see Chapter 3), like any methods, they presented some limitations. Firstly, the case study approach was useful for exploring rooms and spaces in the specific buildings; however, while these findings were verified in broad strokes by ‘immersion’ as part of

my work experience and additional living experiences in inner city Johannesburg (see Section 3.2.1), similar research in other buildings in the inner city would be highly beneficial in order to compare findings, thus testing and adding to the current findings.¹⁴⁷ Case studies of other forms of rooms not studied in this paper could also be studied to strengthen the discussion of rooms and spaces as defined typologies (this study provides a start to this discussion in Appendix 2). Additional studies could provide insights into other areas where rooms and spaces are prevalent,¹⁴⁸ as well as in cities where the typologies have historically received more state support than in inner city Johannesburg.¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, while the qualitative method was well suited to the aims of the current study (see Section 3.1.2) a ‘larger scale [data] collection and quantitative analysis’ can benefit studies such as the current one by revealing the findings of ‘in-depth relatively small scale studies are “typical”’ (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005:27). A quantitative analysis, perhaps using the findings of this study as a starting point, may benefit a statistical understanding of the extent of rooms and spaces in Johannesburg’s inner city, and thus the scale of any intervention required.

It is hoped that any further research into inner-city accommodation will benefit from the findings of the current study, whether the alternate research supports or contradicts these. Lastly, I hope that the current study, and any further research, does not simply end up as research for the sake of research. Utilising the suggestions included in Section 7.3 and 7.4, I truly hope that occupants of rooms and spaces, and, by extension, the research participants in the current study, can derive some benefit from the work put into this report.

¹⁴⁷ See AAPS (2012) for a discussion on the benefit of multiple case studies on a particular phenomenon.

¹⁴⁸ As indicated in Section 1.1 and Appendix 3, it seems the typologies are by no means localised to inner-city Johannesburg.

¹⁴⁹ Campsie (1994), for instance, provides a historical overview of rooms and spaces in Toronto, looking at the consequences of intervention by the municipality.

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APPENDIX 1: Interviewees and Participants

In this report, ‘interviewee’ refers to a person who interviewed as part of the more formal semi-structure in-depth interviews. ‘Participant’ refers to a ‘general’ participant spoken to during participant observation. The term ‘participants’ is used to refer to both interviewees and general participants.

Table A1.1: List of interviewees from the semi-structured in-depth interviews¹

Building	Interviewee	Date of formal interview
Donkela		
	11	14 September 2012
	12	14 September 2012
	13	14 September 2012
	14	23 September 2012
	15	23 September 2012
	16	4 October 2012
	17	4 October 2012
	18	19 October 2012
Hillview Mansions		
	19	12 August 2012
	110	15 August 2012
	111	15 August 2012
	112	15 August 2012
	113	18 August 2012
	120	25 August 2012
Abney		
	114	12 August 2012
	115	12 August 2012
	116	25 August 2012
	117	25 August 2012
	118	23 September 2012
	119	28 September 2012

¹ The names of interviewees have been removed, as I indicated to all participants that they would remain anonymous and their names confidential.

Table A1.2: List of general participants

This list of participants is mostly from my time living in the building and socialising with occupants I got to know from this experience.

<i>Building</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Approx. date of communication</i>
Donkela		
	P3	February 2012
Hillview Mansions		
	P1	May-September 2011
	P2	May-September 2011
	P4	May-September 2011
	P5	May-September 2011
	P6	May-September 2011
	P7	May-September 2011
	P8	May-September 2011
	P9	May-September 2011
	P10	May-September 2011
	P11	May-September 2011

Note: this table shows participants from participant observation in Donkela and Hillview Mansions. Only participants that have been specifically referenced are included.

APPENDIX 2: Photographs

Note that people's faces have been obscured in line with keeping all participants anonymous in this report. Also note that all rooms and spaces (and most of the areas featured) look larger than they actually are, due to the use of a wide angle lens in order to capture as much as possible of the small area in a photograph.

The Shoprite 'wall' where rooms and spaces are advertised



Figure A2.1: The Shoprite Wall, showing some of the 'moving economy' that operates particularly at the end of each month. (Source: author's own photograph, November 2012).



Figure A2.2: The Shoprite Wall close-up, showing the approximate proportion of advertisements for rooms and spaces, and the terminology and wording used. (Source: author's own photograph, November 2012).

Donkela



Stairs connecting the ground, first and second floors externally (there was another internal staircase)

Occupants in Donkela sometimes threw plastic bags out of their windows which contained rubbish and sometimes excrement.

Figure A2.3: Outside area used for hanging washing to dry. (Source: author's own photograph, September 2012).



There was a periodic build-up of rubbish outside the building. One had to walk over this area with stagnant water and excrement in the dark if one didn't want to urinate in a bucket in the room at night.

Figure A2.4: Outside passageway leading to side of building (separate entrance) where informal recyclers sorted the collected materials. The French drain used for urinating and throwing dirty water (which then flowed into a stormwater drain) was also located here. (Source: author's own photograph, September 2012)



The extra bed belonging to P3 that I used while staying at Donkela. I was expected to use my own bedding.

Figure A2.5: The room of P3 (the first building chairperson during the period of study) which I shared during the period of participant observation. (Source: author's own photograph, February 2012)



Figure A2.6: The room of 15 and his 'wife', (not officially married), who is featured here. (Source: author's own photograph, September 2012).



Figure A2.7: 12 in the former room of P3 where I stayed. She took over the room with her boyfriend when P3 died. (Source: author's own photograph, September 2012).



All five occupants shared a single bed and put blankets on the floor. 17 worked night shifts as a security guard four nights a week, while the others were sometimes away (one was at 'home' when this photograph was taken).

Figure A2.8: 17 chose to stay with four others in a room (one occupant not present) even though he could have likely secured another room as chairperson of the building's residents' committee. He indicated he enjoyed the feeling of family, amongst other things. (Source: author's own photograph, October 2012).



The three occupants shared a mattress on the floor.

Figure A2.9: Three males occupied this room two doors down the corridor from where I stayed (informal recyclers). It was often very messy and dirty. (Source: author's own photograph, February 2012).



Taped up window remained closed – I indicated that she did not want to let the flies or the smell in.

Figure A2.10: A collection of stuffed toys on the window sill. 14, her boyfriend and their 7-month-old baby lived in this brick room which had been constructed by a syndicate who had taken control of the building in the past. Most brick rooms were on the top floor. (Source: author's own photograph, September 2012).



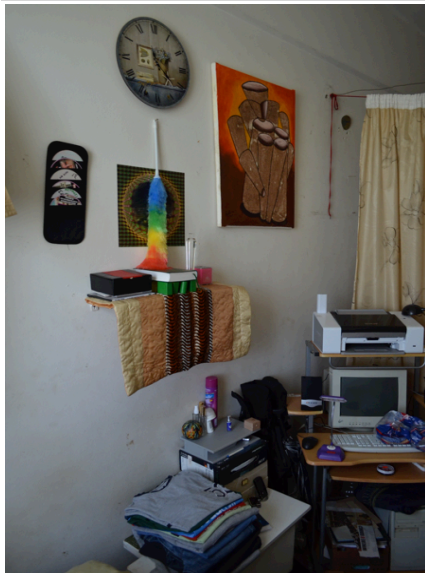
Hardboard walls have been covered with material.

Figure A2.11: Some people put a lot of effort into making their room 'homely' and comfortable. (Source: author's own photograph, September 2012).

Hillview



Figure A2.12: The space of 19. Some occupants had many possessions and used almost every available wall and floor area to store them. Here there was only a small gap next to the bed in order to get in and out. (Source: author's own photograph, March, 2012).



Figures A2.13 and A2.14: Some occupants preferred to sacrifice space for consumer electronics and clothes, as well as savings. The space featured in these two photographs belongs to the cousin of 111, where they rented a room together with two others, and partitioned it into three spaces. The different occupants put different amounts of effort into their own spaces. (Source: author's own photograph, August 2012).



Figure A2.15: The ground floor parking garage where large amounts of rubbish began to be stored during a municipal rubbish collector's strike, and which seemed to grow due to there being too few bins for the building. The area was a haven for rats and children were told to avoid it. (Source: author's own photograph, June 2011).



Figure A2.16: Toilets in the flats featuring rooms and spaces seemed to always be kept very clean, even if not well maintained. This toilet was used by 9 adult occupants and one infant. (Source: author's own photograph, June 2011).



Curtains partitioning the space from the rest of the room.

Figure A2.17: P4 in her space with here new-born baby. P4 had only blankets and clothes, and used the bed that was left by the previous occupant. She shared this space with another occupant – the photograph is taken from next to this occupant's bed. (Source: author's own photograph, August 2011).

Abney



Figure A2.18: The communal spaces such as this washing up area were kept very clean during working hours (week days) by cleaners paid by the management company. Occupants complained about other occupants dirtying these areas which resulted in a build up over weekends. (Source: author's own photograph, July 2011).



Figure A2.19: The corridor running between the rooms. Note the adherence to fire safety regulations demonstrated by the presence of the fire escape sign. Management of Donkela and Hillview Mansions did not make the same efforts to comply. (Source: author's own photograph, July 2011).



Figure A2.20: Some occupants complained that the rooms lacked built-in cupboards. This occupant shared her room with another, and said there was not enough space for her furniture. (Source: author's own photograph, July 2011).



Figure A2.21: The room of I16, who stayed alone. She planned to start studying and was supported by her older sister. (Source: author's own photograph, August 2012).

APPENDIX 3: Rooms and Spaces: Terms and Typologies

A3.1 Comparison of terms used for ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’ typologies: summary

Ideally, the current study would utilise already-accepted and common names for the typologies, for ease of further research and a quicker understanding as specific typologies. As an attempt to find these terms, the following explores and compares some of the terms used by other authors.

Schlyter (2003:7) utilises the term ‘multi-habitation’ for the situation where ‘people who do not define themselves as one household share a living space that is clearly not designed for multi-family purposes’. Tipple coined the concept based on his research of West African compound houses (Schlyter, 2003).² Similarly, in a study of low-income private rental in South Africa, Carey (2010:8) includes rental of backyard shacks as well as rooms within the main dwelling, but also does not include ‘rentals occurring in buildings originally designed and built for other purposes’. However, as Beijaard (1990, as cited in Rakodi 1995) says, ‘there is a real crossover between those purposed for single-family accommodation and those not: e.g. the characteristics of landlords and tenants may be similar in each case’. This ‘crossover’ was reported for example in the cases of ‘communal housing’ (Lund et al, 2004), the ‘Swahili house’ (Cadstedt, 2009), and ‘rooming tenements’, which in some ways are purpose-built for individual room rental and also where sometimes more than one family rents (Huchzermeyer, 2011). One should rather not attempt to distinguish between those rooms and spaces that have been originally ‘designed’ as such (Schlyter, 2003: 7), those modified by a single agent according to building regulations or not, or those which have undergone more gradual changes on a unit-by-unit basis. It follows that the term ‘multi-habitation’, at least with the meaning Schlyter (2003) designates it, is also perhaps not that useful to use in the current study.

Grant (2007: 78)’s study features lodging, which she defines as ‘the informal rental of rooms and part-rooms’,³ that are formed either through ‘involution’ (the division of existing space) or adding rooms to a house. Available servants’ quarters, cottages or shanties can also be rented out. This is similar to Doermann and Mkhabela’s

² Grant (2007) also refers to Schlyter and Tipple’s (1998) conceptualisation of ‘multi-habitation’ (Grant, 2007: 78), although interestingly she does not explicitly equate this to lodging, and does not go on to utilise the term in the article.

³ Here, ‘part-rooms’ would seem to equate to ‘spaces’.

(forthcoming: 2) concept of ‘urban compounding’, again linking ‘rooms’ to subletting and rental. Grant (2007: 78) also includes ‘renting rooms in squatter settlements where illegality of tenure has not precluded commercial development’, specifically where the informal shelters are ‘erected for the sole purposes of renting’ (Grant, 2007: 78): mostly, the ‘rooms’ she refers to here share common facilities maintained by the person or group who has authority (if not legal tenure) over the land and rooms. Grant (2007: 78) does not define what she means by ‘informal’, and possibly runs the danger of falling into the same trap of trying to distinguish between buildings originally purposed as rooms and spaces and those not, as described above.

These difficulties in definitional clarity could maybe have been overcome if the authors had striven to utilise the terms used by the occupants themselves. Schlyter (2003: 10) utilises the local town council’s definitions of a ‘tenant’ as ‘a person who had signed a rental contract’, even though she observes that ‘contract-holders had very strong security of tenure, and people did not distinguish them from owners’ (ibid). This is despite her participants being the occupants rather than the council. In the current study, it seems wise to instead use the framework of categorisation used by the participants.

Communal housing is defined in Lund et al (2004), writing for the Social Housing Foundation, as long-term tenure for the rental of individual rooms with cooking in rooms or communal kitchen, and communal lounge and/or outdoor area, ablutions and laundry. Communal housing is purpose-built as such, and formal in that it passes the relevant building standards and bylaws. However, again the line between being ‘purpose-built’ and not is again thin, as in many cases, rooms rented according to a formal contract are in turn sublet or shared between two or more households (Lund et al, 2004).

As can be seen thus far, although there are a variety of types of buildings or properties featured, ‘rooms’ seem to form the common denominator. Tipple and Willis (1992) refer to the living units in his study of the ‘private compound house’ in West Africa as ‘rooms’, where all households share one bathroom, toilet and kitchen area. Doermann and Mkhabela (forthcoming: 2) also describe one ‘currency’ of their concept of ‘urban compounding’ being ‘rentable rooms (in houses, apartments, backyards and hostels), often subdivided or shared in existing or adapted structures’. They trace the

word ‘compound’ to the Latin ‘componere’, meaning ‘putting together’ or ‘assembling’ (Doermann & Mkhabela, forthcoming: 2). Thus both Tipple and Willis (1992) and Doermann and Mkhabela (forthcoming) seem to utilise the term ‘rooms’ as a sub-typology, which together form ‘compounds’.⁴

One of the typologies noted by Carey (2010: 8) in the study of ‘low income private rental’ is ‘rented rooms’, where she includes those where ‘the physical structure can be formal or informal’, and where the rental agreement is informal, but excludes government hostels even where they are in the process of being privatised. The scope is problematic, because the article (ibid) relies heavily on the concepts of ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ to categorise but does not define the terms. Furthermore, it claims that the term refers to the physical character of the accommodation considered as being informal, rather than the nature of the lease agreement, i.e. peoples’ practices (Carey, 2010: 8). This contradicts the scope of ‘rented rooms’ as quoted above (Carey, 2010: 8).

Perhaps one of the most relevant articles given the location of the current research is Poulsen’s (2010) article specifically on ‘rooms’ in Johannesburg, however, here again, the author seems to assume the reader has a clear understanding of the typology without explicitly defining it.

As can be seen, there is no single definition that encompasses the typologies I have decided to call ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’. Almost each study conceptualises the local version of rooms and spaces slightly differently, yet none provides an explicit definition or set of criteria for assessing whether an accommodation type forms part of the typologies. The definitions reviewed above contrast in various ways and were sometimes internally inconsistent. There thus seems a need to provide a definition that captures as many of the similarities as possible.

There is some correlation regarding the basics. Firstly, the various definitions included both the physical characteristics and peoples’ practices. ‘Rooms’ are units that are occupied individually by one or more households, with shared facilities including toilets, bathroom, common areas and sometimes kitchen, washing and outdoor communal space. Most authors (aside from those that include free-standing

⁴ However, Doermann and Mkhabela (forthcoming) also include an additional component to urban compounding that refers to peoples’ practices: ‘compound interest’

shacks for rent) link ‘rooms’ to subdivision of a larger unit or property, and with non-ownership tenure. Regarding the ‘spaces’ typology, there are references such as Grant’s (2007: 78) to renting ‘part-rooms’, but no author consistently uses a specific term. Even so, many authors also write about how rooms themselves can be shared, subdivided and sublet, resulting in two or more households occupying one room. In the current study I compare these findings from the literature with my own findings, to achieve the definition of the rooms and spaces typologies.

The following table presents just a few of the documented cases of rooms and spaces around the world.

A3.2 Studies featuring cases of ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’

Table A2.1: Studies featuring cases of ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’

Theme covered in relation to ‘rooms’ and ‘spaces’	Location	Authors
Accommodation in ‘Bad buildings’/ informally converted buildings	Inner City Johannesburg, South Africa	COHRE (2005)
‘Lodging’ / ‘Multi-habitation’; ‘Sharing’ (rent free)	Chitungwiza, (Harare), Zimbabwe; Botswana	Schlyter (2003)
Lodging	Zimbabwe	Dewar (1997)
‘Compounding’ in various buildings	Yeoville/ inner city Johannesburg, South Africa	Doermann & Mkhabela (Under Review)
Private rental - rooms	Thika, Kenya	Andreasen, (1989)
Roomers, privately-owned compound houses	Kumasi, Ghana	Tipple & Willis (1992)
Loteamentos (subdivisions)	Brazil/ Bogota, Colombia	Gilbert (2007)
Tenements (from sub-division)	General	Rakodi (1995)
Thika land tenants	Calcutta, India	Rakodi (2002)
Swahili House	Three different types of unplanned settlement in Mwanza City, Tanzania	Cadstedt (2009)
Majengo areas (multi-roomed Swahili houses)	Mombasa, Kenya	Macoloo (1991)
Rooming Tenements	Nairobi, Kenya	Huchzermeyer (2011)
Callejones	Lima, Peru	Custers (2001)
Casa subdivide (sub-divided house dwelling)	Lima, Peru	Custers (2001)
Backyard dwellings	Cape Town, Johannesburg, other, South Africa	Lemanski (2009)
Sharing	(Kings Road House), Los Angeles, USA	Maher & McIntosh (2007)
High-density lodging (in informal flat complexes and old European-style houses and peri-urban cottages)	Gweru, Zimbabwe	Grant (1996; 2007)
Rooms	Johannesburg, SaoPaulo	Few et al (2004)

Corticcos	Brazilian Cities	UN-Habitat (2003)
[Low-income private rental] – possibly in backyard shacks – ‘Rented rooms’	Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, South Africa	Carey (2009)
Rooms, including formal and informal	Johannesburg, South Africa	Poulsen (2010)
Communal housing, e.g. Cornelius House	Johannesburg, South Africa	Lund et al (2004)
Transitional housing	Urban centres, South Africa	Poulsen (2000)
‘Renters’, backyard shacks, rent-free	Port Elizabeth, South Africa	Morange (2002)
‘Face-to-face’ buildings/ rooming units	Lagos, Nigeria	Aina (1988)
Rooms in a ‘native yard’	New Doornfontein, Johannesburg, South Africa	Hellman (1935)
Subletting landlords	Hillbrow/Berea, Inner City Johannesburg, South Africa	Gordon & Nell (2006)
Backyard dwellings	Alexandra, Johannesburg, South Africa	Shapurjee & Charlton (2013)
Mastandas	Thembisa and Kempton Park, Johannesburg, South Africa	Hungwe (2013)
Rooms and spaces, informal small-scale private rental	Inner city Johannesburg, South Africa	Tissingon (2013)
Conventillos (centrally located rental tenements)	Argetina, Chile, Uruguay	UN-Habitat (2013)

Note: these studies do not necessarily feature rooms and spaces as the main subject matter, but describe the typologies well enough to be able to group the typologies featured as rooms or spaces. See reference list for full details on study including title.

A3.3 Findings of the current study

The terms participants used to describe rooms or spaces differed, depending on whether they were speaking to each other, speaking to me, or advertising them, for instance on the Shoprite Wall. If they were speaking to each other, and all parties were isiZulu or isiNdebele speakers (the ‘street lingo’ or lingua franca was dominated by isiZulu), they would refer to where they stay in (mostly) isiZulu. Because I do not understand the language, I was not able to assess whether the terms they used were the same as the terms they used when speaking English.

For Hillview, if someone was speaking to me or other people not able to understand the isiZulu-based ‘street-lingo’, or if she or he was advertising the space they would use English as the lingua franca (unless they were from, for example, the Congo where French is the lingua franca). To differentiate between different types of accommodation, for instance when I was using follow-up questions in interviews, participants would generally use ‘room’, ‘space’, ‘on rooftop’ or sometimes a specific different section of the property such as ‘balcony’, ‘garage’ or ‘cottage’. These were the same terms written on paper when advertising, for example on the Shoprite wall (although sometimes ‘espace’ or ‘eroom’ was used). In general conversation, if they were talking in English, and we were outside of their flat, they would usually use ‘my place’, ‘the flat’ or sometimes ‘my house’. If inside the flat, participants would occasionally use ‘my place’, but would usually use ‘room’, ‘space’ or, for example, ‘balcony’.

I had to ask different people to explain how they were referring to their place when speaking socially in the ‘street lingo’. Interestingly, it seemed that when participants needed to refer to the different accommodation arrangements, the same way of differentiating was used. *iKamelo* was used for ‘room’, *indawo* for ‘space’, and ‘ibalcony’ for balcony, for example. This pointed to people conceptualising the rooms and spaces as typologies according to the criteria above, even when speaking socially, or not in English. When they were outside the flat, they would say, for example, *Ngivakatshela umngane inline yakhe*, thus using *indlu*, or ‘house’ to refer to where they stay.

For Abney, the same terms were used, although because partitioned spaces did not really exist here, people referred more to sharing the room. For Donkela, it was slightly more ambiguous, as not everyone seemed to all use the word *ikamelo* when not speaking English. This is again interesting, as I was also not completely sure that the accommodation type there could be included in the same typologies as rooms or spaces. Many would use *indlu* (‘house’), even when in the building, implying that they conceptualised it as more separate.

A3.3 Reflection on and Analysis of Terms and Typologies

The definition of rooms and spaces featured in the Glossary of Terms is a result of months of re-sifting through the data, brainstorming the categories and criteria, and

questioning different people about my understandings. And yet, there remained some ambiguity until the end. One of the key outputs was figuring out the right questions to ask: untangling the threads that make up rooms and spaces in the three buildings within which fieldwork was performed, and in comparison to those featured in the literature reviewed. Are rooms and spaces one typology, two typologies, or several? Are they a sub-typology of a broader typology? Or are they in association with other typologies, or perhaps a sub-typology or sub-typologies? Do each of the three buildings studied feature different entirely different accommodation typologies? Should they even be compared? Or is each building a separate example of rooms and spaces, that is sub-typologies of the rooms and spaces typology? Do rooms and spaces exist in other models in the inner city, and beyond? The following addresses these questions, organised into a discussion on rooms, spaces and buildings/ properties.

A3.3.1 Rooms

The names people give, and the meanings behind these, can be a sign of how people conceptualise their specific form of accommodation in relation to other forms, and thus the distinction between typologies. It thus seems that the units found in Hillview and Abney could comfortably be referred to as ‘rooms’, and part of the same main typology. This conclusion is supported by the finding that some Abney participants had stayed in what they called ‘rooms’ in buildings similar to Hillview, and compared the two using the same terms. They spoke of these previous rooms as alternatives to where they were currently staying: they thus seemed to be thinking of them as the same ‘units of exchange’ (see Glossary of Terms). Using this logic, the units of habitation found in Donkela less easily fit into the ‘rooms’ typology. When *not* speaking English, not all participants used the translation for ‘room’ when referring to their units, and indeed the typology was different to rooms at Abney and Hillview. Participants also did not seem to see their current accommodation as ‘units of exchange’ with those at Hillview and Abney, pointed to the fact that they were at least different *sub*-typologies.

Nevertheless, *when speaking English*, many participants used the term ‘room’ when I asked about the place they stayed. Others used ‘space’. Thus, the terms and meanings behind are obviously highly nuanced. Those authors that referred specifically to these units of occupation in their studies of similar buildings in Johannesburg’s inner city also unanimously used ‘room’. When forming the definitions found in the Glossary of

Terms, I was able to design a definition that encompassed the form of accommodation found in Donkela. And thus, for this report, I grouped the Donkela units as part of ‘rooms’, even though most of the rooms there did not share all the same physical characteristics to those in Hillview and Abney. However, the accommodation typology found in buildings such as Donkela should be flagged for further research, preferably by someone who is fluent in the ‘street lingo’, and comparisons made with how occupants of free-standing shacks in informal settlements as well as backyards refer to their accommodation (the physical materials used for the walls are more similar to shacks in informal settlements or backyards than those used in Hillview or Abney).

Although not featured in the buildings in this study, the term ‘room’ is also used to refer to other accommodation in South Africa, even in the inner city, which would likely not be included in the same typology due to (sometimes subtle) differences in peoples’ practices. A shared flat or commune, for instance, of which I was a part in inner city Johannesburg, could also easily be seen as being made up of ‘rooms’, and indeed, while staying in there we naturally referred to our unit of occupation as our ‘room’. However, the distinction would likely be made in peoples’ practices, while living in the accommodation, and when exchanging the accommodation: how much of a separate *unit* each room is. In my commune, for example, I signed the lease, but did not act as a *mastanda*: I found my fellow occupants through my friends and connections, and there was a sense that we all had joint rights over the common spaces in the flat. We split the rent according to the size of the room: everyone knew the total rent, and we ‘shared’ it, rather than paying the rent specifically for your room (even though everyone paid into my account, and I paid the landlord). In essence, the *flat* was the unit of exchange, and unit of occupation, rather than the rooms.⁵ Even if I were to have advertised on a classifieds listing service such as Gumtree,⁶ I would have advertised it as sharing a flat, rather than only renting a room. How people utilised the common spaces at my commune also differed from my experience in Hillview and other ‘rooms’ that I would include as part of the current study’s definition. At the commune, people would spend time chatting in the kitchen, central hallway, dining area, balcony or even bathroom. In 404 Hillview, the common areas

⁵ This was similar to a room I rented in Nairobi, in an eight-room commune. There were social ties involved.

⁶ See www.gumtree.co.za. Some *mastandas* in Yeoville also use Gumtree.

such as the kitchen and hallways were generally utilised for their functions: people cooked (talking to each other sometimes, if they happened to be in the same room), and left, also eating in their rooms.⁷ In any case, every space that did not directly provide basic services⁸ was apportioned for private occupancy. In Abney people cooked in their rooms and also washed their dishes, and left. The meeting room downstairs was seldom utilised, remaining dead space. Children were the only people who used the courtyard where the jungle gym was located. Socialising happened in people's own rooms or spaces, or outside. Therefore, it was not even so much the cost factor, as I had originally envisioned, that separated out the different forms of accommodation and made one form 'rooms' and another simply 'sharing a flat',⁹ but the additional practices. In this way, one could perhaps start drawing up a further list of what would likely *not* be included as part of the 'rooms' typology, as well as what is less clear.

- Doesn't seem to be the same as free-standing shacks, particularly not those in an informal settlement, but this requires further research.
- Not the same as a bachelor flat/ studio, or self-contained unit.
- Not a dormitory, and not transitional housing.
- Not co-housing (see <http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/feb/24/co-housing-lifestyle-community> or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohousing>) – which is intentional communal living and owned. Or cooperative or communal housing in a North American or European sense. (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2013/12/19/250548681/bay-areas-steep-housing-costs-spark-return-to-communal-living>).
- Not boarding houses.
- *Likely* not to include (student-type) communes.

⁷ Although quite often in other flats (and with those people I became friendly with in 404 Hillview), friendships would form and one would do more activities together. It was not, however, an 'intentional community'.

⁸ The bathroom, toilet, kitchen and access corridors.

⁹ My portion of the rent at the commune, for instance, was in fact less than my partner and I paid for the room at Ponte City, for instance.

What needs to be investigated further as quite possibly being included as part of the ‘rooms’ typology:

- Rooms in backyards constructed out of brick or ‘hard’ materials, referred to on the Shoprite wall as ‘cottages’.
- Rooms in backyards constructed out of iron sheeting.
- Rooming houses, for instance those found previous in e.g. Canada.

The following figure represents my current thoughts on the linkages of these forms of shared accommodation. Importantly, once again, because these other forms of accommodation did not form a part of the three buildings covered as main case studies in the current research, further research would have to be carried out to provide clarity on these complexities.

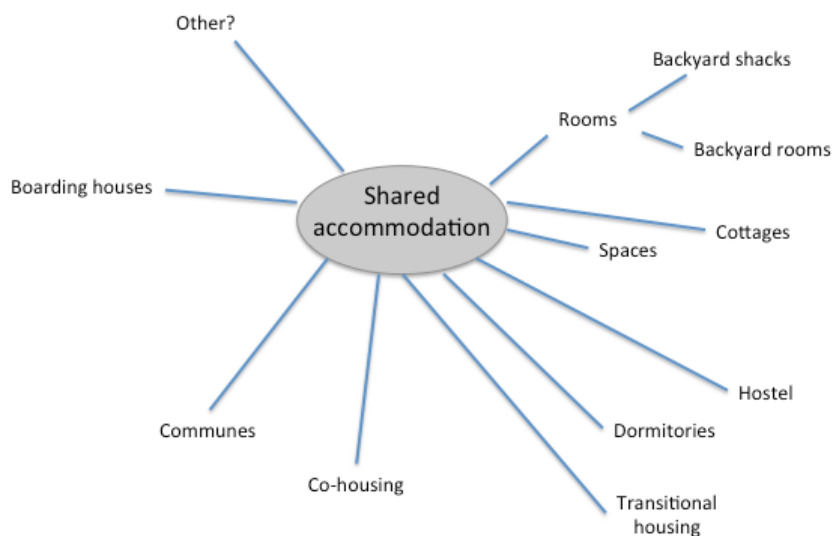


Figure A3.1: Forms of shared accommodation and potential linkages.

A3.3.2 Spaces

‘Spaces’ presented other (though different) nuances which made the form of accommodation difficult to pin down as a typology with a clear definition. However, in their ‘core’ most common typology, they were relatively uniform.¹⁰ Hillview was the only building where ‘spaces’ were clearly exhibited as units of occupation. On

¹⁰ Even though no studies featured them and only Tissington (2013) mentioned them as a typology.

‘the Shoprite wall’, ‘spaces’ were the main accommodation type referred along with rooms. They are even advertised as ‘units of exchange’ in the online classifieds listings, Gumtree or OLX. Here, if one views a ‘space’, one would generally expect to find a unit like is described in the Glossary of Terms. If there are no curtains, one can put up one’s own.¹¹ Furthermore, it seems that whether one can put up curtains or not can sometimes depend on whether one has paid for the space or not. Someone that did not pay for it as a unit, but instead was granted the place to sleep and store some belongings often did not put up curtains: they did not seem to have the same right as those that had paid in apportioning that area as ‘theirs’. Examples of this were in I11’s room, where a ‘cousin’ was allowed to stay for free, as well as 404 Hillview, where P8 stored her belongings in a box in the corner of the corridor formed by curtains and laid out blankets to sleep there most nights but did not pay any rent.

Furthermore, from discussions with people in Gugulethu, Cape Town and Sunnyside, Pretoria, as well as a perusal of the online classifieds listings Gumtree and OLX (including here looking at Durban’s CBD), it seems that in other areas in South Africa ‘spaces’ exist and possess the same physical characteristics. However, they are not referred to in the same way, or thought of as quite as defined a ‘unit of exchange’: they do not seem to have a specific term that is unanimously used as a reference. In Sunnyside, for instance, and it seems in Durban’s CBD (OLX/ Gumtree), ‘spaces’ are advertised as ‘rooms to share’. One would therefore not really be able to use the term that occupants did in inner city Johannesburg in these areas, and perhaps one would have to look at a broader term.¹² Research in areas outside of the Johannesburg inner city will assist in providing more clarity on this.

In addition, there were several other portions of the flat, house or property that did not fit clearly within the typology of ‘room’ or ‘space’, for instance, the closed balcony that I slept on and kept some of my belongings. Advertisements on the Shoprite wall referred to this type of unit as a ‘balcony’, and so did participants in everyday speech (even when not speaking English – *ebalcony*, for instance). However, with curtains up to cover the glass windows between, it fit the criteria of a ‘room’ as laid out in Glossary of Terms. In Sunnyside, Pretoria, this unit of occupation was interestingly

¹¹ Putting up curtains allowed one to define one’s private space – people described and behaved that curtains are in fact treated almost as solid as ‘hard’ walls.

¹² This would unfortunately not follow the same logic of using the same as that used by participants, as was followed in this study.

called a 'half room' (Martina S, 24 October 2013, pers. comm.). I certainly thought of the balcony I stayed in as a 'room', and, depending on the design of the balcony (how much privacy it afforded), participants felt it was more secure and private than a space. But in this report I decided to 'play it safe' and not include it as part of rooms or spaces, instead referring to it separately as participants did. In addition, other units of occupation advertised on the Shoprite Wall such as a 'cottage' or a 'bed', although not included in this study, should also be explored more in relation to the rooms and spaces typologies. It seemed a cottage, for instance, was still shared accommodation, because it referred to a room constructed with brick (as opposed to iron sheeting, for instance), in the backyard. The same term seems to be used in Gugulethu, Cape Town (Jane B, 12 February 2014, pers. comm.). Thus it seems likely that when the occupants of 'cottages' in the backyard are sharing facilities, one could group 'cottages' as falling within the rooms typology. From accounts by people who had stayed in such accommodation previously (I19, P4), a 'bed' seemed to be where one rents a bed within a room or space, and 'bed to share' was where one could stay in the same bed. These could also possibly be seen as units of exchange, being advertised separately, but as mentioned were not nearly as common as rooms and spaces. Again, these are nuances that should be flagged for further investigation.

A3.3.3 An overarching typology?

Lastly, it is difficult to say whether rooms and spaces can be referred to as belonging to the same overarching typology. Within this report, I have stuck to referring to them as separate typologies, playing it safe. However, rooms, spaces and the additional typologies advertised on the Shoprite Wall existed in the same market, and shared many physical characteristics, as well as practices of the occupants. Along with the need to investigate a term to refer to 'spaces' to include the typology in other areas, seems the need to investigate an overarching typology, which would then mean that rooms, spaces and the others become 'sub-typologies'. 'Shared accommodation', for example, would be too all encompassing (as it is commonly used to include 'co-housing', etc.). 'Communal housing' has similar connotations of 'intentional communities' in Europe and North America, while in South Africa the term is used in the field of housing to refer specifically to the form of formal rooms provided by SHIs.

It is perhaps because of these difficulties that no previous author has provided a clear definition or 'checklist' of criteria of what forms a room, and what forms a space, despite the potential usefulness of this exercise. In the definitions in the Glossary of Terms, I acknowledge these complexities by using the words, 'usually' and 'mostly'. It is unclear whether, given the nuances explored above, whether it will be possible to ever see these typologies in a completely black and white sense, though.

APPENDIX 4: Livelihoods Strategies (Complementing Chapter Four)

Brown and Lloyd-Jones (2002:189) provide an excellent list of attributes of urban livelihoods, and their implications for space and location. Those, in addition to aspects already mentioned, are summarised as follows. *Informal enterprise* accounts for up to 70% of employment in some low income cities. Informal enterprises can be very small, which means in terms of space requirements that they can often be home-based. However, 'insensitive planning regulations' (Brown & Lloyd-Jones, 2002:189) can hinder such enterprise. *Location* is significant, in part due to limited *mobility*. Access to good markets is key, but poor people are often faced with unaffordable transport costs. Moreover, as suggested above, the *linkages* found in large cities as a whole provide the best conditions to find a market niche (for example, in informal enterprise). Nevertheless, *spatial exclusion* of the poor can result from spatial planning and land-use regulations that exclude livelihood opportunities, for instance street trading, from large parts of the city.

A4.1.1 Livelihoods of occupants of rooms and spaces

Poulsen (2010) indicates many of her respondents engaged in temporary employment around Johannesburg, while many in a nationwide study done by Lund et al (2004) did part-time jobs or piecework.

Grant (2007) traces lodging households over a three-year period of increasing economic turbulence in Zimbabwe. At the start, 56% participated in the formal sector only, and almost 75% relied on only one mode of livelihood. At the end of the period, only 40% relied on one mode, and the proportion engaged in three modes grew from two to 20%, while 37% added self-employment activities, or joined the informal services sector. In general, the low and sometimes unreliable incomes of many occupants made them vulnerable to any calamity, from unemployment to interpersonal stress (Grant 2007).

An excerpt from Hellman's (1935: 44) comprehensive descriptive piece on a 'native yard' in New Doornfontein, dating back almost 80 years, demonstrates very similar dynamics to those in the more recent studies highlighted above: 'Among one hundred women in Rooiyard, only ten per cent earned one pound or more at a legitimate [sic]

occupation. The remaining women were entirely dependent upon their beer business to augment the family income’.

A4.2.2 Migrancy and ‘home’

Most studies identified the occupants of rooms and spaces as migrants (for instance, Few et al, 2004; Greenberg & Polzer, 2008; Andreasen, 1989; Poulsen, 2010; Grant, 2007). Some were longer term or semi-permanent, for example in Aina’s (1988) study in Lagos or some of the participants in COHRE’s (2005) study of one street in Johannesburg. Occupants in Sao Paulo had lived in the city an average of 15 years (Few et al, 2004). However, some studies found them to be much shorter-term – as few as a mean of two years in Trafalgar’s (2006) tenant survey in Johannesburg.

Many migrants were from relatively nearby, such as neighbouring states of Lagos (Aina, 1988) or areas of Gweru (Grant, 2007), or even outlying neighbourhoods of Johannesburg (Poulsen, 2010), maintaining temporary homes in the city in order to save on commuting time and costs (Few et al, 2004). Many travelled back ‘home’ frequently, for puberty rites, funerals and mourning activities, for example, residents of Johannesburg’s inner city (Hellman, 1935) or Gweru (Grant, 2007). Grant (2007) found in Gweru that most occupants were from a rural area, or smaller town.

Many respondents had no interest in settling in the city or neighbourhood where they were occupying the room or space. A respondent in Andreasen (1989:24) said, ‘I am just here for my job... I do these contracting jobs. If they finish, I can decide to go home, either this year or next year. It depends on how the work is.’ Similar sentiments were echoed by some participants in studies in Johannesburg (City of Johannesburg, 2007; IRIN, 2011). COHRE (2005) identified about a third of respondents in Johannesburg as being migrants from rural areas, surviving on the bare minimum and remitting the rest of their income home.

Since many of these migrants see their move as temporary, they seek accommodation accordingly (Poulsen, 2010; UN-Habitat, 2003). If they invest in housing, it will be at ‘home’, or in any case the remittances they send will leave less for housing in the city (UN-Habitat, 2003).¹³ Studies showed that accommodation in the city needs to be

¹³ Poulsen (2010) traces three generations of a family over 30 years and through several moves between different rooms around Johannesburg, where ‘home’

flexible: ‘lodging’ households (Grant, 2007) expanded and contracted frequently, as family members moved back and forth between their rural homes and urban lodgings. Similar cases have been recorded in numerous other African cities such as Nairobi (UN-Habitat, 2003).

Migration in South Africa is a well-studied phenomenon (Greenburg & Polzer, 2008; Mabin, 1990; UN-Habitat, 2003). Dewar (1997:84) describes circulatory migration between rural and urban areas in South Africa as ‘extensive and deeply entrenched’. The majority of migrants emphasise the importance of rural values and retirement in the rural areas, though a minority wish to live with their entire families at their place of work (ibid).

These patterns of circulatory migration and corresponding accommodation requirements are in contrast with Turner’s (1972) theories of urban settlement and needs as depicted in his model of income and residential priorities – also reported by Wang (2004) in the case of China: migrants do not necessarily transform from rural to urban dwellers, but return to the rural. They also contrast with the standard ‘international solutions’ to housing problems in cities of the Global South, such as home ownership and formal title (Andreasen, 1989).

Even so, it is unclear whether the migrant status was maintained due to strong ties to the rural areas or whether these ties were kept due to insecurities in the city. For example, a longitudinal study of migrants in Harare found that in 1994 only half as many migrants felt that their future lay there as in 1988, due mainly to increasing economic turbulence resulting in insecurity of employment and earning potential (Potts, 2000). Andreasen (1989:24) writes of participants in Thika: ‘As long as urban living conditions including housing and economic security remain so poor, the relations to the rural home are fundamental for survival and as “life insurance”.’

A4.2.3 Seeking a livelihood in Johannesburg

None of the interviewees or general research participants was born in Johannesburg inner city, although some had been living there for a considerable time (one since the 1970s). Some participants were born in outlying areas of Johannesburg, such as

remains their rural place of birth, and any spare resources get invested in houses there.

Orange Farm or Grasmere (40 kilometres south from the Johannesburg CBD). Others were from small towns or rural areas around South Africa, such as Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal, and a number from Klerksdorp, North West. All but one came from spatially and economically peripheral locations, that is, outlying informal settlements in other towns or rural areas. Just less than half the interviewees (9 out of 21) came from other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, from both urban hubs (although often from the periphery of these) such as I20 who came from a 'location' in Harare, and smaller towns or areas such as I5 who came from Mozambique. Although the interviews were by no means statistically representative, perceptions amongst participants, and my own observations, indicate similar proportions of foreign African nationals, that is, that around half of inner-city residents are non-South Africans, mostly from elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. I8I8 and P6 (the managers of Donkela and Hillview Mansions respectively) indicated that slightly over half the occupants were South African-born, but many were new to Johannesburg. Abney is only open to South Africans but the manager indicated that most people are from outside of Johannesburg. Interestingly, these perceptions correlate with other studies featuring occupants of rooms and spaces in inner-city Johannesburg (Few et al, 2003; Poulsen, 2010; Greenburg & Polzner, 2008), as well as those featuring other urban hubs such as Lima (Custers, 2001) and Lagos (Aina, 1988).

There were fairly obvious pull factors. Most interviewees indicated that their primary reason for coming to the city of Johannesburg was to find work – specifically, they were 'looking for a job'. Three respondents indicated that Johannesburg offered better opportunities to pursue their educational goals. What is perhaps more interesting, however, is that the push factors of the previous locations, rather than the pull factors specifically of Johannesburg, brought many to the city. Most respondents said that the key reason for moving to Johannesburg was that there were no opportunities to support themselves and their family where they came from: 'In Zim there's no jobs and at that time there was no food...' (friend of I11, 15 August 2012). Another interviewee (I5) indicated that his family didn't have any money, and it was up to him to somehow find a way to support them. His twin brothers were still in primary school and his father was 'not in the position to support'.

Many staying in those rooms and spaces with particularly bad conditions in Donkela and Hillview, as well as other buildings, such as one of those I worked in when at Planact, were not staying in Johannesburg out of choice: they expressed the desire to go back as soon as an opportunity surfaced at 'home'. In Donkela, one respondent's aunt found him a job in Klerksdorp, where he had been born, and even though he had been getting contract work in Johannesburg, he had decided to go back home (I7). A Hillview respondent indicated that 'if there are jobs I can try go back. But now there is no jobs.' (friend of I11). Another Hillview respondent said, 'I don't want to go back to Uganda because it's a country where you can't get a job. Here you'll stay a hard life, but ... I'll get something small and I can look after myself.' (I11, 15 August 2012).

In a number of cases (particularly in Donkela), participants were moving from homes in peripheral areas that actually provided better housing conditions, such as water and sanitation inside the homes, formal brick structures and a variety of household amenities and appliances (for example I2, I4 and I1). They sacrificed the better housing conditions for increased livelihood opportunities in the city. At the same time, most participants were either ambivalent or expressed that they wished to return home as soon as they could, or to retire.

These findings correlate strongly with those of the literature. Seeking a sustainable livelihood seems closely linked with location. Occupants of rooms and spaces moved to Johannesburg, recognised as an urban economic hub in the literature, to access the perceived livelihood opportunities there, as they did in the studies in Gweru (Grant, 2007), Sao Paulo (Few et al, 2004) and others.

A4.2.4 Piece work, fluctuating incomes

Most participants in Donkela and Hillview Mansions had not managed to secure a permanent formal job that would provide them a steady, single source of income. However, a number of participants did what they called 'piece jobs'. Examples included contract work awarded on a daily basis for labour brokers loading trucks or working on farms (I3, I7 and friends); cleaning, cooking and ironing for wealthier families; ad hoc child minding for people in the same building (P5); handing out flyers and advertisements (I20); or working in a shop in the CBD when needed during busier periods (friend of P3; I2). Furthermore, a number of participants did not

generate any income of their own, with some having given up trying to find work, and relied on other people for support. A select few of these received income from their families 'back home' or elsewhere (the opposite of a 'typical' remittance study such as Orozco (2010), while most relied on financial support, or food, clothing and airtime from their social connections in Johannesburg.

Others were getting by (and some supporting dependents 'back home') through running their own micro-enterprises in the informal market. In addition, although others described themselves as currently unemployed, they would get by selling sweets, or *amakipkip*,¹⁴ buying very large bags of it from wholesalers and filling sandwich bags to sell for R1 each.

Around a quarter of the men living in Donkela (as estimated by I8) were informal recyclers, who would collect waste from across Johannesburg, including residential areas, retailers, factories, and even hospitals. They would sort the waste in an area on one side of Donkela – originally the loading zone for trucks to reverse into – and then sell it to companies who performed the actual recycling of the materials.

P4 made a living by doing women's hair, starting out on the street, working from the same corner every day in Yeoville. When she moved into Hillview Mansions she was eight months pregnant, and got tired waiting for customers; but by that time she had built up a base of loyal customers, who would call her to go to their accommodation when they needed their hair done. Thus she would only go out for specific appointments, and could continue working until the day she gave birth. Even so, her income continued to be relatively unreliable, and she relied on her aunt's 'husband' for 'top-up' financial support and I9 for food and basics occasionally (see below).

I11 didn't have a steady job per se, but dabbled in a range of different occupations. Generally he bought second-hand cell phones, *fong kong*¹⁵ earphones and other small accessories from wholesalers around Johannesburg's inner city, and sold them at different markets, including school markets and fêtes, travelling to Durban if he found out from someone about a good market there that would give him access to wealthier

¹⁴ Popped flavoured and artificially-coloured maize, popular and very commonly sold on the streets of Johannesburg.

¹⁵ *Fong kong* refers to fake brand-named goods not made by that company but copied usually by Chinese manufacturers: they look exactly like the original product but are often of inferior quality.

customers. He also helped out an ‘uncle’ (a family friend, also from Uganda) for a while in his plumbing business. Being in inner-city Johannesburg allowed him direct access to wholesalers, the full range of cheap transport options to whichever market he was going to. Despite adversity, he was able to generate enough to get by and even send very small amounts to his brother and sister, and his child in Uganda. He rented a room with three other males, who partitioned it into spaces.

P6 worked as a contractor for a company that fixed microscopes, and was paid decently when he was called out, but sometimes would not receive a call for the whole month. As alternative sources of income P6 also rented out a section of his living room, and owned three other flats in the building from which he collected rent.¹⁶

Not everyone’s income was unstable, however, for instance, P7 worked as a chef at a seafood restaurant, earning a regular though low salary. Most leaseholders in Abney had a formal job of some kind, because of the criteria for taking out a lease (see below). Participants in this research included a secretary, call centre agent, construction worker and even a higher paid accountant. But a few occupants who did not have formal jobs had negotiated for a family member to sign the lease on their behalf. One gained an income through selling Tupperware through personal connections, but most were students or people seeking formal employment, and had another person covering their living expenses.

The lack of a steady income definitely left participants at Donkela and Hillview more vulnerable than those with stable jobs at Abney. It also meant they had to be vigilant ‘asset managers’, constantly making decisions about where they gained an income. This was not a stress-free process, but many people were certainly good at it, combining piecework with formal employment as well as relying on boyfriends, family and friends.

The findings for Donkela and many participants at Hillview correlate well with the other studies of the occupants of rooms and spaces in Johannesburg’s inner city, including COHRE (2005), Poulsen (2010) and Shisaka (2006), which show that that

¹⁶ However, due to the unregulated services in these flats, he struggled to make a profit, with over ten people staying in one flat and occasional abuse of heating, etc.

occupants of rooms and spaces (i) draw on a multiple modes of income, (ii) often have fluctuating, informal income sources and (iii) are relatively poor. Lund et al's (2004) nationwide study had similar findings, as well as Andreassen's (1989) of occupants in Thika and Aina's (1988) in Lagos. The findings for Abney are mostly quite different, which seems to do with the selection criteria before becoming a tenant. Many participants at Hillview and most at Donkela would not even qualify for a lease at Abney, and did not seem to have the same social capital as those who relied on this at Abney.

Few et al's (2004) finding for non-residential buildings in inner-city Johannesburg that only 37% of occupants were reported to be working is similar to the findings in Donkela; however, the remainder are likely to be getting by in a similar fashion to those at Donkela, through piecework, utilising social capital, and ad hoc work: as mentioned above, participants did not report this as having 'a job', even though they were gaining an income from it. This could thus be an oversight on Few et al's (2004) part: as noted by Chambers (1995), researchers need to be cognisant of the full range of ways poor people gain a living, which is oftentimes not from a formal job providing a single income source. However, interestingly, the quotation, 'most of us aren't working we're street beggars and hookers' (IRIN, 2011: para 21) suggests that poor people themselves do not recognise what they are doing as 'working' or 'a job'; echoed by participants reporting in the current study. This, again, emphasises the need for researchers to question and explore further, through in-depth, qualitative studies.

A4.2.5 Access to livelihood opportunities in the inner city

Most participants in Donkela and Hillview indicated one of the best things about the area was the proximity to 'jobs', and more importantly, opportunities to get a job. They did not have to incur costs for transport when job seeking, which can prevent people from getting a job if they do not have the money to lay out for significant transport costs at the start (I8 and others).

Those working intermittently on a 'piece' basis also appreciated living in the inner city. I3 worked for a labour broker based in Sandton, and would sometimes finish work at 10pm or later. He paid a guard who worked the same shifts and owned his own vehicle to give him a lift back for R10. He could also take a minibus taxi, but it would have been more expensive at R13. A number of people made transport choices

based on very small differences in cost. I3 said that he would not find anything closer to his place of work, as accommodation in this area entirely unaffordable and he did not know where he would be able to access it either. He also wanted to stay in the inner city in case he needed to look for other 'piece' work. Living in Johannesburg CBD allowed him a variety of transport options, of which he was able to choose the cheapest. Although the respondent incurred costs for transport of up to R20 a day, he only forfeited the money when he got a call for work (unlike if he were to buy a discounted weekly or monthly bus or train ticket, for example).

Those running their own micro-enterprises in the informal sector also appreciated living in the inner city, as described by the following respondent:

Staying in the city is easy because when you're looking [for a job] you don't need to look for any transport. For example if you're buying and selling, you can sell some things in Krugersdorp, but you'll have to come to the city to stock things. (I9, August 2012).

Particularly in Donkela, despite the building being close to main taxi routes and a train station, most people relied on their feet for daily commuting. While staying there I found people's perceptions of distance to cover by foot different to mine: a half hour fast walk was not seen as long. Some walked for over an hour instead of paying for transport. The informal recyclers would make three to four trips a week with their trolleys, utilising the inner city's central location to access vast areas of Johannesburg in all directions. I would see some of them leaving shortly after midnight to walk to Sandton, arriving there at dawn when people started putting their rubbish bins out for the municipal trucks. They would spend much of the day walking around Sandton, collecting the recycling, and reach home at around nightfall, then sort the goods on one side of the building. They would then walk in the other direction the next day, to take the goods to a recycling depot in Newtown.

In Abney, most respondents seemed to actually work outside of the inner city, commuting up to 45 minutes away. They still valued their location highly in terms of access to their jobs, though. Here, it was about proximity to public transport to

destinations across Greater Johannesburg¹⁷ and beyond that allowed them to take a single taxi or train from near their residence to their destination: ‘I am using the taxi to get to work [in Edenvale, approximately 18 kilometres away]. It’s in the next street – that’s why I’m saying everything is next to me.’ (I17, 25 August 2012)

It was also the 24-hour nature of transport in the city that enabled people to take work that people living in other areas would need private transport for. An Abney respondent had to be at work at OR Tambo International Airport at 5am on some days, and she could take a direct taxi from an informal rank just two minutes’ walk away. All Abney residents spoke of the proximity to taxi ranks and the bus or train station as one of the main reasons they chose to stay in Hillbrow, despite concerns about safety and security: they would not have to walk far to get transport late at night.

¹⁷ ‘Greater Johannesburg’ is used here to refer to the areas also surrounding the city of Johannesburg, including the West and East Rand, Midrand, Fourways and Centurion.

A4.3 Sample of occupants in the three buildings

Table A4.1: Selection of occupants of Donkela: livelihood opportunities secured, some physical assets and vulnerabilities.

Occupants	I2	P3	I8
Age	20	31*	42
Place of birth/ 'home'	Lesotho	KwaZulu- Natal, South Africa	Kroonstad, Free State, South Africa.
Current livelihood opportunities secured (amongst others)	Supported by sister, who is supported by her boyfriend. Goes 'home' occasionally.	Residents' committee chair full time/ gets odd jobs (unclear). Other friends, etc provide support sometimes	Security guard at two different companies in Braamfontein and Johannesburg CBD (one at night, one some days).
Previous livelihood	High school learner	Temp worker at cosmetics factory	Security guard
Dependents and level of support	None	None	Two children, wife and mother at home.
Sample of vulnerabilities reported (not necessarily in order of severity)	Unreliable financial flows and possibility of sister's boyfriend no longer providing support. Violence from men in building when they are drunk. Going to toilet at night. Permanent noise from neighbours).	Ill. No reliable financial flows (lives partly on generosity of others). (Unclear from communication where he gets any income – possibly from a proportion of the levies deposited from other occupants.	Reliable, permanent job, being a male and having roommates that act as 'family' means a great deal, minimising vulnerability. Dependents need additional support at times – emergencies. No other reported vulnerabilities.
Living arrangement	Hardboard room shared with sister.	Brick room – stays alone.	Brick room shared with 4 other males. 1 main bed.
Items of monetary value in room or space	Two-plate stove, mattress and blankets, table, pots (not owned by her but shared with her sister). Clothes, classic colour phone (not shared).	Hi fi, two beds and blankets, large wardrobe, iron, ironing board, cupboard, coffee table, two-plate stove, kettle, various buckets, washbasins and household items e.g. pots, clothes, basic mobile phone (not shared).	Bed, TV, DVD player, ironing board, washbasin, cleaning materials and basic household goods, iron, two-plate stove (shared). Basic cellphone, wheelie bags, clothes (not shared).

*Ages were approximated here, as I did not always know the exact age of general participants.

Table A4.2: Selection of occupants of Hillview Mansions: livelihood opportunities secured, some physical assets and vulnerabilities

Occupants	I20	P10	P2
Age	31	57*	22
Place of birth/ 'home'	Outlying township of Harare.	Township of Kampala.	Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Current livelihood opportunities secured (amongst others)	Hands out flyers advertising a crèche. Supported by boyfriend (son of child). Almost all rent covered by other occupants (acts as <i>mastanda</i>).	'Husband': she assists him at market, he buys all food and other items. When he was 'home' she posed as a <i>sangoma</i> to earn extra.	Currently looking for employment. Supported by parents at home. Sometimes assists with computers in return for cash/ favours.
Previous livelihood	Supported by previous boyfriend.	Unknown: number of years in current setup.	High school student.
Dependents and level of support	Son (2 years old) who stays with her.	Older children – do not need support.	None
Sample of vulnerabilities reported (not necessarily in order of severity)	Constantly has to nag boyfriend for money for the child and her. Crèche owner often unreliable with payment and not regular work. Scared of going out at night alone. Immigration papers not in order: has been deported previously.	Reliant to a large degree on 'husband' (unmarried). Involved in big fights with ex-wife/ fellow occupant. Accused of witchcraft, etc. Hardly goes out without husband (religious beliefs).	No income, unsure of how long parents will be willing to support, and thus how long he will be able to cover rent to stay in Johannesburg.
Living arrangement	Curtained space shared with boyfriend and son.	Curtained space with husband.	Curtained space – lives alone but girlfriend often stays.
Items of monetary value in room or space	TV, hi fi, bed and blankets, iron, pots and pans, microwave (not working), toys for child, bed-side table, washbasins (shared). Clothes, accessories, basic phone (not shared).	TV, hi fi, many phones (awaiting sale), other electronic equipment for sale, pots, mirror, bed and blankets, washbasins, TV stand (shared). Clothes, basic phone (not shared).	Basic smart phone, basic desktop computer, table, armchair, pots, bed and blankets, clothes (not shared).

*Ages were approximated here, as I did not always know the exact age of general participants.

Table A4.3: Selection of Abney occupants: livelihood opportunities secured, some physical assets and vulnerabilities

Occupants	I19	I17	I16
Age	28	30	20
Place of birth/ 'home'	Durban, South Africa	Rustenberg South Africa.	Eastern Cape, South Africa
Current livelihood opportunities secured (amongst others)	Accounting officer for a mining company.	Administration officer/ receptionist	Supported by sister with everything. Wants to start studying at beginning of next semester.
Previous livelihood	University of Johannesburg student.	Receptionist	Supported by parents.
Dependents and level of support	Son who stays with girlfriend's mother in Durban	None	None
Sample of vulnerabilities reported (not necessarily in order of severity)	Limited vulnerabilities. Feels secure about job, room, etc. Does not go out after dark unless he's driving.	Feels very unsafe in Hillbrow, especially on the way to the taxi in the early morning.	None reported, although some safety concerns about the area after dark.
Living arrangement	Brick room – lives alone.	Brick room – shares with roommate.	Brick room – lives alone.
Items of monetary value in room or space	Car, hi fi, TV, two-plate stove/mini-oven, microwave, fridge, wall unit, table, wardrobe, two armchairs, chair, desk, bed-side table, mirror bed and blankets, Weber braai, iron, ironing board, pots and pans, clothes, clothing accessories, smartphone.	TV, stove, toaster, wardrobe, bed and blankets, iron, pots and pans, clothes and accessories, classic phone.	TV, hi fi, stove/mini-oven, microwave, fridge, bedside drawers, stool, cupboard, bed and blankets, iron, ironing board, pots and pans, clothes, basic phone.

APPENDIX 5: Physical Characteristics of Rooms and Spaces

Note: this Appendix complements Chapter Five in particular

A5.1 General characteristics in the three buildings

Table A5.1: Physical characteristics of rooms and spaces in the three buildings studied (complementing Chapter 5)

	Donkela	Hillview Mansions	Abney
Building/property: size, number of floors, formally planned units and typologies	Warehouse. 3 floors. Roughly 130 units. No windows on ground floor. Windows at front and rear of building on second and third floor: many broken, many boarded and taped closed. Main door at front of building and area originally for trucks to reverse in on side. Limited original brick and mortar divisions into office and some storage areas.	Block of residential flats. 7 floors incl. 2 floors parking and rooftop servants' rooms. 86 original units ranging from single on rooftop to 5-bedroom flats; mostly 1-bedroom flats. Forms three sides around large courtyard with walkways on each floor. Windows for each room on outward facing walls and/or onto walkways.	Communal housing: converted to spaces/rooms for rent according to building and planning regulations. Seven floors as well as rooftop, 119 units.
Nature of internal partitions	Top floor informally converted by hijacker syndicate pre-2008 to rooms roughly 8m ² with brick walls 3m high but not reaching roof. Barbed wire coils on top of many walls. 1 st floor converted to rooms of roughly same size (though varies widely), while ground floor rooms smaller and more recently built. Ground and 1 st floors built individually by initial occupiers with hardboard, metal sheeting and other materials. All rooms in the centre do not have access to a window.	Most units informally partitioned and sublet in the form of rooms/spaces using informal temporary material. Typically the kitchen is left without being subdivided, even if large. Spaces would be in the living room and bedrooms, though bedrooms remain rented as a full room. These are sometimes further sublet further or shared as spaces. All rooms access to windows, but not the internal spaces.	N/A – remains as formal conversion in the form of rooms/spaces (communal housing). Rooms are 16 m ² and above.
Internal services and facilities	Originally two toilets but blocked many years ago. Tap outside building, but sometimes it was stolen for the metal, and sometimes not working. Informal electricity connections to each room. Various <i>spaza</i> shops within building including one open past midnight daily, <i>shebeen</i> open drinking area, take-aways. Washing lines strung up outside. No lifts.	Kitchen and separate bathroom and toilet, with formal provision of water and sanitation in each flat except servants' rooms on rooftop: 2 communal ablution blocks. Formal electricity provision for each unit with occasional informal addition and temporary outages. Alcohol sold on rooftop where there is an area to socialise and drink. Washing lines on rooftop and some balconies. Lifts do not function.	Formal water and sanitation provision on each floor. Electricity in each room. Shared showers (cubicles), ablutions and washing up facility for each floor, laundry room and lines on roof, courtyard with jungle gym. Room available for group meetings. Lift usually functioning.

A5.2 Figures showing the ‘nature of internal partitions’

(Complementing Section 5.2)

Note: these figures should in no way be seen as architectural drawings. No scale has been used, and the rooms in the different buildings are only in approximate proportion with on another. The aim is for the reader to get a general sense of how ‘rooms’ differ to ‘spaces’ in terms of demarcations, and the possibilities within each of the buildings/ properties.

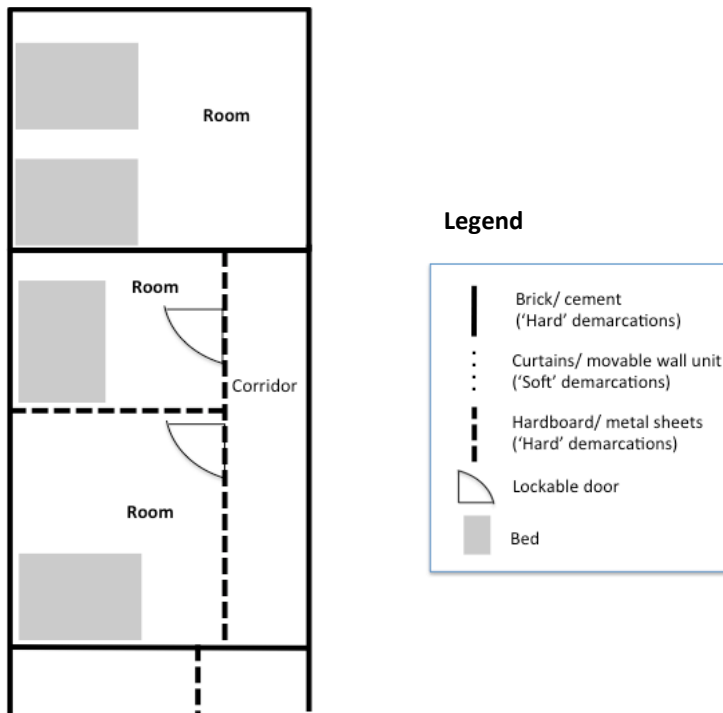


Figure A5.1: *Nature of internal partitions in a section of Donkela, with the room at the ‘top’ being the one I lived in while performing participant observation (see Figure A1.5 in Appendix 1).*

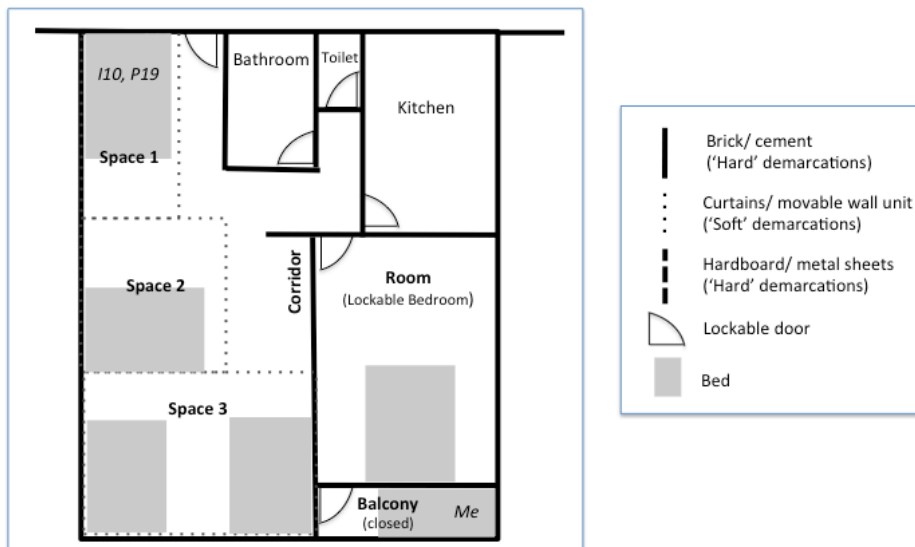


Figure A5.2: Nature of internal partitions in Hillview Mansions Flat 404, where I lived while doing participant observation

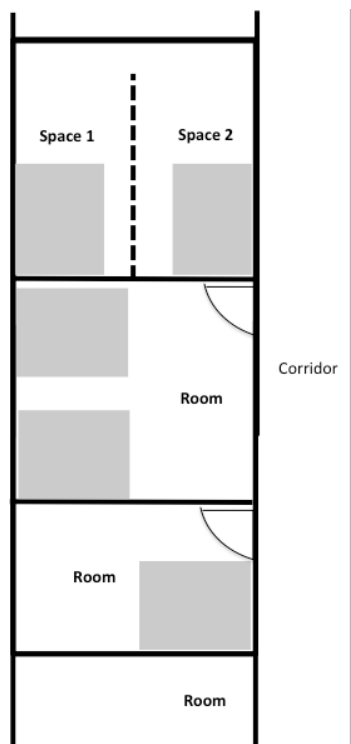


Figure A5.3: Nature of internal partitions in a portion of Abney

A5.3 Literature Review of general physical characteristics (complementing Chapter Five as a whole)

The accounts in the literature on rooms and spaces outside of Johannesburg were mainly of rooms, rather than spaces (partitioned with curtains or malleable material). However, I have observed spaces in Nairobi, Kenya in a number of rooms (such as rooms constructed for government employees) where more people are required to share, as well as in Sunnyside, Pretoria and Gugulethu, Cape Town.

The literature describes wide variety in buildings/properties. In some regions, buildings within which rooms and spaces exist have a long history of being purpose-built as such: in Ghana and much of West Africa, the privately owned ‘compound house’ is the dominant form of housing occupied by the urban poor (Korboe, 1992; Tipple & Willis, 1992). The ‘Swahili house’ of East Africa is also purpose-built and made up of rooms and spaces (Wells et al, 1998), although the layout is very different.

Poulsen (2010) identifies two purpose-built types of ‘rooms’ in Johannesburg: public and private hostels, and former domestic worker rooms in blocks of flats or suburban homes. There are many types of hostel, including large multi-storey buildings with shared rooms, communal ablutions and kitchens either inside or in a separate building, or single-storey buildings with rooms arranged around courtyards containing the ablution and kitchen facilities (ibid).

There are also many examples of existing buildings being formally¹⁸ subdivided into rooms and spaces (Poulsen, 2010; Lund et al, 2004). In one case study in Lund et al (2004) of ‘communal housing’ in South Africa, a commercial building has been converted according to building regulations, and has different uses on each floor.

Elsewhere, rooms and spaces have been formed by informal subdivisions of the outer structures. Few et al (2004) describe how the large open spaces of some commercial buildings in inner-city Johannesburg are subdivided, using board and plastic, into numerous small units, which IRIN (2011:para 3) describes as a ‘warren-like maze of

¹⁸ See Glossary of Terms for my understanding and application of the term ‘formal’ as opposed to ‘informal’.

shacks and flimsy partitions'. Often there is no access to a window, as well as poor insulation against the elements (Few et al, 2004).

The structures built behind the 'lodging' houses in Chitungwiza (Schlyter, 2003), the 'face-to-face' buildings of Lagos (Aina, 1998) or low-income houses of Cape Town (Lemanski, 2009)¹⁹ are quite different to those described above. Here, it is the property rather than the building that is subdivided, and the rooms and spaces are formed by building additional unregulated or illegal structures.²⁰

In many of these examples, the rooms and spaces are built in such a way (sometimes through temporary materials) such that 'space may be altered quickly to conform to immediate needs' (Grant, 2007:78).

Therefore, it can be seen that rooms and spaces are internally partitioned into units within a variety of quite different buildings/properties; from large buildings originally built for commercial purposes, to residential yards. Buildings can be purpose-built as rooms and spaces, or formally or informally subdivided at a later stage. When these findings are combined with an examination of peoples' practices, the impact on occupants' livelihoods can be seen.

Services

Despite the diversity of outer structures and internal layout, the basic services that exist (or, importantly, that are desired) on the properties or within the outer structures are very similar in each of the cases reviewed; as well as what is shared and what is not shared. In the 'private compound house' of Kumasi, Ghana, there is a shared bathroom (simply a room with a small drainage hole), a kitchen (a shelter where utensils are stored, open on the courtyard side), and a toilet (usually a bucket latrine or long drop) (Tipple & Willis, 1992). Some households (16%) have exclusive use of a kitchen (ibid).

In Lagos, 90% of the occupants of rooms and spaces share a toilet situated in the yard, and 60% cook their meals in the corridor or in their rooms (Aina, 1988). In

¹⁹ Unfortunately, of all the literature reviewed, only two authors, Lemanski (2009) and Schlyter (2003) included illustrations or photographs of the building/property or rooms and spaces.

²⁰ Nevertheless, the services and facilities, such as ablutions are also shared between all occupants of the property (Aina, 1998; Lemanski, 2009; Schlyter, 2003).

Johannesburg, in 20%–25% of the derelict buildings Few et al (2004) studied, services were obtained from elsewhere, for instance public toilets, parks and hotels. These residents found the lack of services very challenging (ibid). Furthermore, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) informally categorises inner city Johannesburg buildings into three categories: the ‘good’ buildings have water and lights, the ‘bad’ often don’t have electricity, while those few in the ‘very bad’ category don’t have water, toilets or electricity (IRIN, 2011).

In many of the ‘rooming tenements’ of Nairobi (Huchzermeyer, 2011), water sources and low current electricity supply is shared. Tenants self-regulate their electricity consumption, for example ensuring only two irons are used per floor at a time, in order not to trip the electricity (ibid). The ‘bath’ is described as ‘only a room with a drain’ (Huchzermeyer, 2011:204), where tenants have to take a candle with them. Refuse disposal is a growing problem, with room-by-room private garbage collection outfits, paid for individually by tenants, filling the public services gap (ibid).

In backyard dwellings (Lemanski, 2009) and multi-habitation/lodging (Schlyter, 2003), electricity, water, sanitation and refuse collection is shared between those who rent and the landlord. Although this sometimes posed difficulties (Lemanski, 2009), many poor lodgers got access to services they may not have afforded otherwise (Schlyter, 2003).

In conclusion, access to services can support livelihoods (DFID, 1999), and they seem highly important, as highlighted by, for example, MSF, using internal services as their proxy for categorisation (IRIN, 2011). The consistency in what services and facilities are available (or desired) within buildings points towards there being a ‘bare minimum’ of what rooms and spaces should offer occupants. This includes a place to wash or dispose of water, a toilet, and water supply. Some buildings/properties included kitchens, while in other cases residents cooked in their rooms. Electricity was provided in some cases. Refuse collection was privatised in only one of the cases reviewed.

Further accounts of rooms and spaces: physical descriptions

The *private compound house* (Tipple & Willis, 1992) is usually single storey, although in the main towns of Ghana there are now many two and three storey compounds. A compound house typically covers about 30 square metres and consists of three rows of about 15 rooms ranged around a rectangular courtyard, with kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities on the fourth side. Access to all rooms is through the central courtyard which is reached through a single door at the side or rear of the building. Most houses are now built of cement blocks rather than the traditional rammed earth (Korboe, 1992; Tipple & Willis, 1992).

The *Swahili house* is rectangular with four, six or eight independent rooms, with a corridor running through the middle of the house (ibid). There is an enclosed backyard where domestic activities take place and toilets are located (Cadstedt, 2006; Wells et al, 1998). The 'face-to'face' buildings of Lagos (Aina, 1988) seem comparable, where a bungalow-type structure houses rooms opening up onto a central corridor. The 'callejones' (meaning 'corridors') of Lima are described similarly: purpose-built rooms are arranged along both sides of a longitudinal corridor. However, the buildings are much larger, often accommodating more than fifty households (Custers, 2001). They are constructed mainly of clay or bricks with a wooden roof and a sand floor, and are known for being in a state of deterioration and lacking light and ventilation (ibid).

In an example of *communal housing* (Lund, 2004), a commercial building was subdivided into rooms and spaces. The first floor is open plan containing kitchen, TV room, etc., the second and third has rooms of various sizes to accommodate a diversity of households, and the fourth has larger rooms at higher rental. Communal ablutions are on each level.

In *casa subdividida*, houses dating to the colonial era which used to accommodate one household, have since been subdivided further and further, and apparently are also severely deteriorated due to lack of maintenance and the Liman climate (Custers, 2001).

In the *subdivided commercial buildings* of Johannesburg (Few et al, 2004), The outer structure itself is often in a state of severe disrepair, with 'broken windows and doors,

peeling paint, leaking pipes, cracked and damp walls, and missing fire escapes and extinguishers' (Few et al, 2004: 435).

Regarding *overcrowding*, Huchzermeyer (2011), for instance, suggests one of the key reasons for the high occupancy in tenements she studied in Nairobi being the relatively high rents. The average number of people per room in the studies reviewed ranged from three (Few et al, 2004) to five (Grant, 2007), though some rooms were found to house up to 30 people (Krause-Vilmar & Chaffin, 2011).²¹

There were several stresses likely related to the degree of sharing. Respondents in Cadstedt (2009) complained of the high noise levels and a lot of gossip between households, and many authors described high levels of conflict, for reasons including competition over women or revenge due to perceived infidelity (Hellman, 1935), and sharing facilities fairly, cleaning or cost sharing (Schlyter, 2003).

²¹ Rosser found in 1972 that more than half of all urban households in India occupy only a single room with an average occupancy rate of 4.35 persons.

A5.4 Figures from the literature showing rooms and spaces

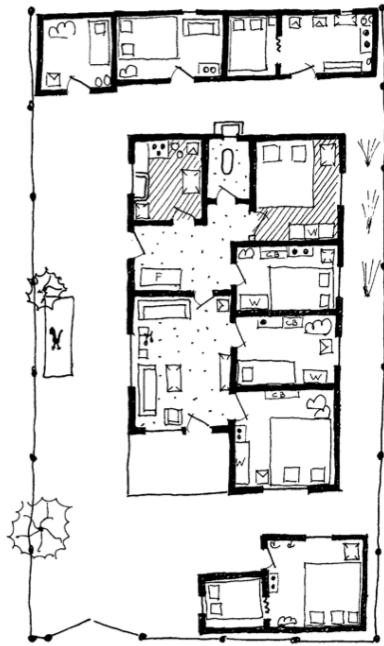


Figure A5.4: An example of a 'lodging house': sketch in aerial view (Source: Schlyter, 2003)

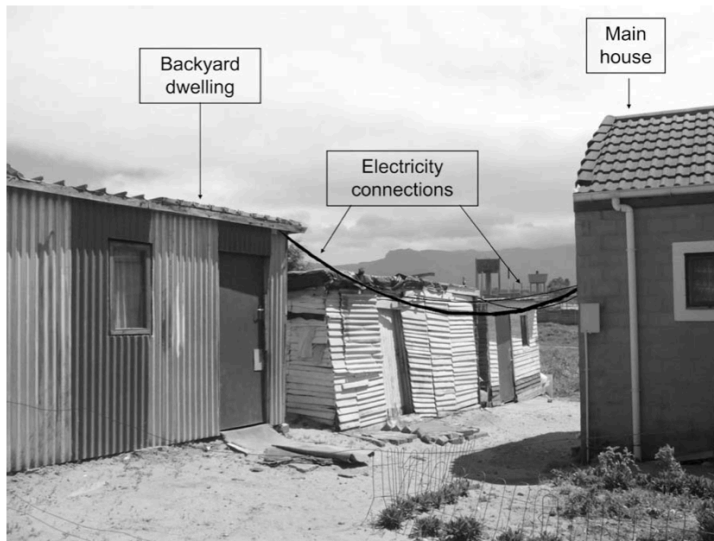


Figure A5.5: Backyard dwellings in Westlake Village, Cape Town (Source: Lemanski, 2009)

Although the current study features buildings and flats divided into rooms and spaces, the literature contains various accounts of a property being the larger 'unit' which is divided: backyard dwellings are a typical example of this (Lemanski, 2009, Shapurjee & Charlton, 2013). Some participants in the current study moved to backyard dwellings in residential properties in Yeoville, and COHRE's study (2005) looked at similar arrangements in Bertrams, demonstrating that this form of rooms and spaces exists also in inner city Johannesburg.

Interestingly, whether purposed as rooms and spaces or not, or whatever the sub-category, the additional rooms concerning the basic services remained very similar. These were a bathroom/washroom where occupants washed (sometimes just a room with a drain), and a toilet (sometimes included in the same room as the bathroom), and many of them had a separate kitchen (sometimes just a room where occupants could bring a coal stove when they needed to cook). The exceptions to this were buildings like Donkela, where the services were glaringly lacking, and occupants drew attention to this as something they found very difficult. Other than that, the only other shared areas common to buildings made up of rooms and spaces (which were private or semi-private, depending on the degree of sharing) were the connecting corridors, courtyards or yards. It seems therefore that these are the fundamentals physical components of a building or property containing rooms or spaces.

APPENDIX 6: Peoples' Practices (Complementing Chapter Six)

A6.1 Peoples practices in the three buildings - general

Table A6.1: Peoples' practices regarding rooms and spaces in the three buildings studied

	Donkela	Hillview Mansions	Abney
Ownership	Single owner of the building (for profit company, bought the building in 2008). People see rooms as being 'owned' (see below).	Sectional title scheme for flats: multiple owners, some active within body corporate, some opposed to it. Rooms and spaces within are all rented.	Single ownership: Social Housing Institution (not for profit company). Rooms are all rented.
Management systems	Residents' committee who liaises with external organisations, collects rent, performs lockouts and tries to evict some people for non-payment. Competing committee, with ethnic tensions between the two. Many occupants do not feel the committee is very strong. Informal cleaning and security staff paid by low levies.	Body corporate (dysfunctional and competing with alternate management company). Relatively formal live-in caretaker, cleaning and security staff paid by levies, but many flats do not pay. Individual units managed a mastande (a manager, usually live-in, who can also be the owner) where spaces and rooms exist, or simply owner-occupied with just the owner's household.	Social Housing Institution manages a number of buildings one of which is Abney. Live-in building manager acts as direct liaison between central Client Relations office and tenants. Assists in coordination of management of building staff, maintenance work, rent collection, conflicts, questions. Dedicated security and cleaning staff. Maintenance crew, lift company shared between buildings.
System of exchange, tenure options, example of rentals charged.	Fluctuating system, but at the time of research: purchase a space from corrupt 'member' of management committee to build your own room (agreement within committee is no more spaces to be sold), or	Units rented from individual owners, property company or body corporate for e.g. R3200-R3700 for 1 bedroom or R700-R800 for servants' room incl. services. Varying contracts but mostly written lease	Rooms rented with possibility of sharing between a maximum of two adults and two children. R800-R1100/month + R300-R600/month services per room.

	purchase someone else's room already built: R600-R800. R100/month levy per room supposed to be paid to residents' committee.	agreement with 1-month deposit and minimum term. Rooms/spaces sublet (organised by mastanda) within original units for e.g. R300-R1100 for space and R1400-R1700 for room. Verbal month-by-month contract with rent payable in advance.	
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A6.2 Review of the Literature on Mobility

Researchers have found in studies around the world that people tend to be more mobile as tenants (Cadstedt, 2010). In some cases of rooms and spaces, the flexible terms and absence of a written contract make shifting accommodation particularly easy (Grant, 2007).²² UN-Habitat (2003) claims that ease of mobility should be seen as one of the virtues of rental housing, as long as landlords cannot evict tenants without good reason.

Many households in fact suffer from the opposite: 'excessive stability' (UN-Habitat, 2003:124), where people are not able to move to take advantage of better livelihood opportunities. Examples given include subsidised homeowners in Chile (ibid). Another example from South Africa could be housing beneficiaries legally tied into ownership of an RDP house for a minimum of eight years (Boudreaux, 2008). For many tenants, stability is not the priority (UN-Habitat, 2003). Migrants are able to seek out lodging that meets their needs, aspirations and circumstances at the time (Grant, 2007). When faced with a period of more difficult economic circumstances, some households discussed by Grant (2007:82) 'took advantage of the flexibility within the system' to reduce their expenditures by moving to cheaper accommodation. Some moved elsewhere in Gweru or to other cities, while others moved back to rural areas, which are less cash-based. Some occupants interviewed in

²² This is not always the case in Tanzania, Ghana or Indonesia for instance, where upfront payment of a number of months rent limits movement.

COHRE (2005) had sought out temporary accommodation in Johannesburg while they established the necessary social and economic networks for survival.

Few et al (2004) notes that occupants saw themselves moving from their current accommodation in the near future (see above) and that 24% stated they would be there only until they found a better place or job. Schlyter (2003:68) describes the habit of tenants moving out of the area of study as soon as they gain sufficient income as an 'exodus of the non-poor'. However, this trend may simply represent that the area was a stepping-stone or 'entry point' (Grant, 2007:81), from which households moved when their economic circumstances improved. The 'young urbanite' households in COHRE (2005:55) were ready to move on as soon as a better option presented itself. The reasons tenants gave for moving from place to place in Cadstedt (2010) included finding better accommodation, reducing rent, needing more space, conflicts with the landlord, needing to change location and that the landlord sold the property or needed the room for other purposes. However, in general, not much is known about the relative importance of the various factors behind tenants' moves (Rakodi, 1995).

Nevertheless, Cadstedt (2010) and Greenburg and Polzer (2008) do not report the flexibility as a positive factor, but instead as a facilitator of volatility. Only one tenant in Mwanza (Cadstedt, 2010) saw the ease of moving from place to place as a good thing. Migrants and refugees in Greenburg and Polzer (2008:1) describe 'histories of continuous displacement from one temporary form of accommodation to the next'. In addition, when occupants are sharing this can result in increased vulnerability as, if one person leaves, the sharing arrangement can disintegrate (ibid). Importantly, Cadstedt (2010) highlights the main cause of insecurity for tenants (who are faced with regular rental payments) as well as landlords (subject to tenants with very insecure incomes) as being poverty.

A6.3 Diagrammatic representations of the management structures in the three buildings

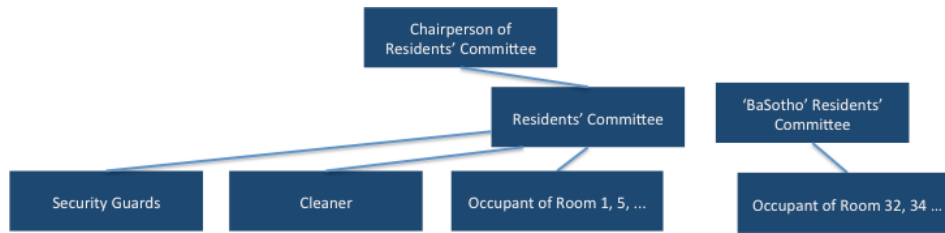


Figure A6.1: Organogram showing the relationships of management and accountability related to the occupants of Donkela

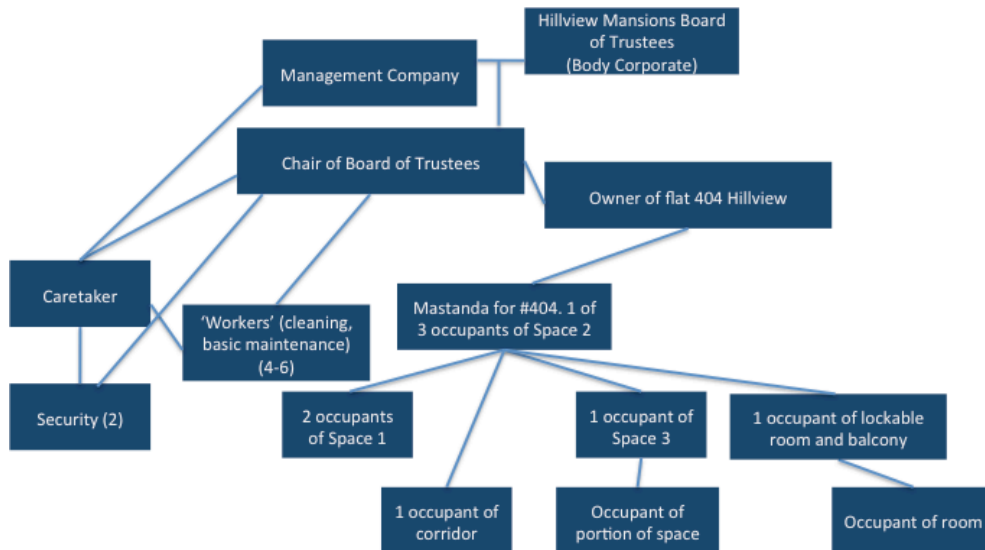


Figure A6.2: Organogram showing the relationships of management and accountability (solid lines) related to the occupants of Hillview Mansions, flat 404. The lines also generally indicate financial flows, aside from the box labelled '1 occupant of corridor' where no money was exchanged.

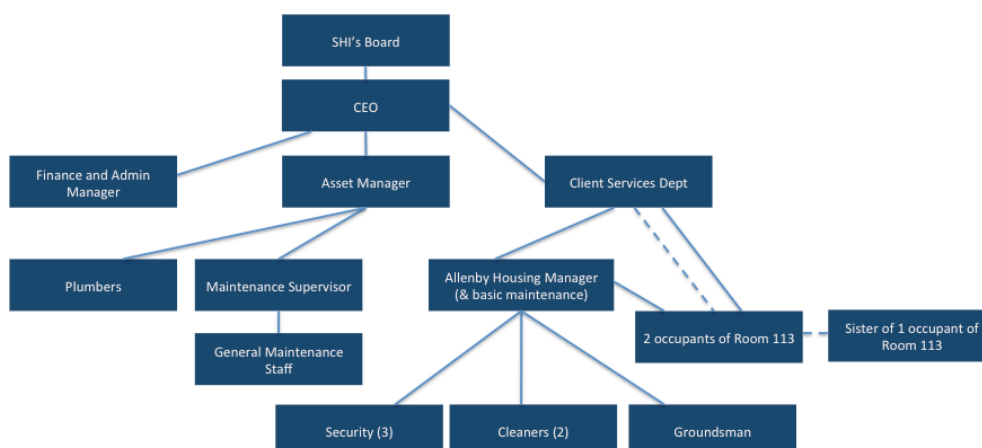


Figure A6.3: Official organogram showing management and accountability structure related to occupants of a room in Abney. Financial flows (dashed line) only shown from occupants to the client services department: everyone else essentially paid by the board, mainly from rental income as well as some social grants from the City of Johannesburg and other funding.

A6.4 Literature Review of Management (in support of Section 6.3)

Most landlords across Africa, Asia and Latin America have no more than a couple of properties, and often live on the same property as their tenants (Rakodi, 1995; Watson & McCarthy, 1998). Despite the wide variations in tenure described above, obvious relationships of exploitation are not common (UN Habitat, 2003), with a number of studies reporting benign arrangements (Gilbert et al, 1997; Gordon & Nell, 2006; Kaitano, 2001), or even positive arrangements (Rakodi, 2002). Often a mutually dependent relationship develops, with the landlord relying on the tenant for their livelihood (Cadstedt, 2010).²³ Interestingly, however, despite what could develop Schlyter (2003) reports that resident owners preferred maintaining commercial relationships with their lodgers, rather than opening their rooms and spaces up to family and friends as in Datta's (1996) study (cited in Schlyter, 2003) of sharing in Botswana.

²³ Few landlords were found to be profit maximisers (Gilbert et al, 1997).

There are mixed findings regarding resident landlords, though most studies confirm that relationships are best where landlords live on the property (Gilbert et al, 1997). Housing with resident landlords is known to be better serviced and maintained, resulting in fewer landlord-tenant tensions (UN-Habitat, 2011). Interestingly, Schlyter (2003) found that owners usually stayed in the same or worse conditions than their lodgers, in order to gain more from the rent. Furthermore, various studies report a mutually beneficial relationship.²⁴ Occupants speak of the benefit of added security (Schlyter, 2003), particularly where there are more people looking out for each other in the case of backyard dwellings (Carey, 2010). Additionally, the landlord may help discover the neighbourhood's 'social infrastructure' (UN-Habitat, 2011:19). However, Cadstedt (2010:49) found that the majority of respondents preferred their landlord not to be resident on the same property, so they could 'avoid conflicts and the feeling of being controlled'. Even so, a sizeable proportion appreciated that they could 'facilitate communication' and 'keep order' amongst the occupants (ibid).

However, some authors have found exploitation in specific cases. Schlyter (2003) found a big distinction between the quality of life of owners and lodgers.²⁵ Gilbert (1993) contends that exploitative relationships between landlords and occupants Latin America generally occur only in some cases of large-scale landlords. In Johannesburg's inner city, Carey (2010) found that arrangements in buildings originally built for other purposes were generally exploitative, while many others featured relationships of significant mutual support. Hungwe (2013) found that in the *mastanda*²⁶ informal sub-leasing arrangements (see Glossary of Terms), 52% of Zimbabwean migrants found their *mastandas* to be indifferent, while up to 20% had a positive relationship with their subletters. Greenburg and Polzer (2008), on the other hand, reported that, in the case of foreign migrants, the main leaseholder often extracts surplus from other occupants and constantly threatens them with displacement.

²⁴ Particularly when the landlord was resident on the property, landlords and tenants often helped each other out in various ways, including supporting each other with food, child-minding and cleaning (Finmark Trust et al, 2006).

²⁵ Female respondents in a study of lodging in Harare had an 'overwhelmingly negative experience' (Schlyter, 1989, as cited in Rakodi, 1995: 801). Although owners were mostly poorer, they were empowered by the ownership, allowing them 'permanence' and 'security' and thus Schlyter (2003: 67) concludes that lodgers were 'exploited' by the 'housing system' (as opposed to the owners themselves); owners were not faced with divided households due to lack of space (ibid).

²⁶ See Glossary of Terms.

In conclusion, in many cases occupants of rooms and spaces have positive relationships with their landlords, sometimes with mutually beneficial relationships developing, especially with resident landlords, which was a common arrangement (although some did not like having the landlords on the premises, and felt constrained). However, some authors found exploitation in specific cases. The following sub-section looks further at aspects of subletting mentioned here.

A6.5 Eviction and non-payment: further discussion

As mentioned in the main body of this report, not one occupant feared eviction by management, as long as they abided by the agreed rules and made the rental payment on time. In some cases they did not fear eviction even if they did not pay. In Donkela after the residents committee chairperson died there was a general sentiment that evictions would not happen and most people stopped paying their rent (resulting in the committee being unable to pay for security any longer). Most participants felt that no one had the right to evict them, and those who said that the committee had the right to evict, felt it did not have the power to. Many participants had some kind of idea that they had rights when it came to resisting eviction, but in Donkela and Hillview, no one except some Donkela residence committee members knew their rights in more detail. The systems in these two buildings also functioned largely outside of any regulatory body or association.

Importantly, similarly to the conclusions in Section 6.3, 'Management, owners and leaseholders', in Hillview the *mastandas* and at Donkela the members of the residents committee had similar livelihoods, assets and vulnerabilities as the other occupants (that they collected rent or levies from). Many *mastandas* relied on the rental income to subsidise their own accommodation, which they would otherwise not be able to cover. It was thus not possible for them to absorb the additional proportion of rent they would have to cover themselves if other occupants did not pay. Replacing the occupant with another that could pay was perhaps the only option. The evicted occupant would easily be able to find another, cheaper room or space in another building, depending on how much income or assets they had that could be liquidated to cover rent.

In Donkela, occasional evictions were carried out by the residents' committee as a result of repeated non-payment of the R100 monthly levy, although they did not seem uniform in their application: it seemed only the 'easy targets' were evicted as examples to others. When the number of people defaulting started growing, the committee began locking people out if they did not pay. Some participants did not feel this was a good practice. I3 (14 September 2012) felt it was unfair on some people: 'I see the situation of these people...no one is earning a good salary, just working in fruit stalls and these things.'

There was also no case that respondents could think of where people were evicted from their room/space without a month's notice, unless they had not paid. At Hillview Mansions, the relationship between non-payment and eviction was strong, and there seemed a clear understanding between *mastanda* and lessee in this regard. Most would allow until the seventh day of the month for payment to be received without any consequence for the lessee, even though it was expected that the lessee pays before the start of the month to secure their room/space for the next. After that, *mastandas* approached non-payment in different ways. Many were empathetic if the lessee made it clear that it was not her own fault she had defaulted. A few participants told stories of *mastandas* removing all their belongings while they were out and leaving them outside the flat if they had not paid and refused to move out. In other cases, *mastandas* took the defaulting lessee's belongings in lieu of rent. Generally, it was almost definite that the *mastanda* would attempt an eviction if payment had not been received at the end of that month.

There was also the possibility that a landlord or *mastanda* could ask someone to move out due to the space being needed for a family member, or the flat being used for other purposes. This was difficult for the occupant, involving additional costs of moving (unless simply moving within the same building), and the occupant would have to begin again working out the social dynamics in the new place and building new relationships. In one case where the *mastanda* was trying to remove occupants to put in other people he liked better, he was halted by the occupants threatening him with getting the police involved: legal protection or recourse through appeal to government authorities, regarding issues unrelated to non-payment does seem to exist to those occupants who are prepared to seek it. Nevertheless, even if forced to move

out, the nature of the market meant he or she could find alternative accommodation at the same price and move to another room or space in the area at low cost.

While I did not hear stories of outright force having to be used to evict people, for example that used by the 'Red Ants',²⁷ some *mastandas* were wary of resistance. In 404 Hillview, a plan was devised to let the unruly occupants believe everyone in the unit was moving out because of imminent renovations, and, in this way, the occupants were convinced that they had no choice but to move somewhere else, so did so without complaint.

In Hillview, there were some cases where participants had been cheated. This was mostly where people had paid a *mastanda* or even someone posing as the *mastanda* to occupy a room or space alone, only to find when they arrived with their belongings that other people had also paid to occupy the same space, resulting sometimes in these people sharing the room or space for the month, or if they were unable to get the *mastanda* to return the money, having to forfeit it and try find money for new accommodation for that month, even if it was far below that which they desired, before moving to better accommodation when they had collected the income to do so in the following month.

In Abney, no participants could recount an example of where people were actually evicted for any reason. One of the building manager's functions was to work with the client services department at head office to ensure tenants paid rent on time, and participants indicated that he could be on their case at all hours if they were late. However, I18 (23 September 2012) said, 'if you don't pay your rent on time, yoh – he's cheeky', but at the same time, 'they'll give you a chance – they'll ask when you can pay. They don't just tell you to go out or something – they will talk with you and agree what day the rent will come'.

Management of the company had periods of heightened problems with non-payment in some of their buildings over the period of research, including soon after the interviews at Abney. In my consultations with the chief financial officer (Oct 2011, Feb 2012, Sep 2012), he indicated that people were grouping together in response to

²⁷ The 'Red Ants' are an eviction unit of a private security company nicknamed as such because of their red overalls and helmets. They are notorious for the mass evictions they carry out, which sometimes result in violent clashes with occupants.

the sharply rising cost of services due to price increases by national and municipal providers, which escalated the cumulative cost of accommodation, even when rent was not increasing. If tenants refused (or were unable) to pay, management indicated that they would not be able to cover the costs of providing the accommodation: as a non-profit organisation they already strived to keep overheads at a minimum. However, management stressed that it was very difficult to evict tenants due to strict legislation in the form of the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (1998) (PIE Act) as well as legal precedent.²⁸ Evictions involved exorbitant legal fees to get court orders, and possible further challenges, after which a sheriff of the court would be instructed to proceed with the eviction. During this time, rent would not be collected from these tenants who continued to occupy rooms. The company resorted to following through with legal action in some cases, but this essentially meant that rent would have to be increased for all tenants in order to subsume these additional costs on an on-going basis. Management also planned to be even more careful with whom they allowed to rent, giving considerable preference to people with an extensive record on TPN.²⁹

²⁸ The 'Olivia Road' (2008) and 'Blue Moonlight' verdicts (2012) were two of the most definitive rulings on evictions in South Africa, and hold particular relevance to the Johannesburg inner city, given their context. They deal with the obligation of the municipality to provide temporary accommodation to those who are left homeless by state- and private-led evictions.

²⁹ TPN maintains a database of tenant payment profiles, creditworthiness and other checks across most large property companies in South Africa.

APPENDIX 7: Interview Schedule

Table A7.1: Interview schedule used for semi-structured in-depth interviews

Were you born in Johannesburg? The inner city? If not, what brought you here? Where you were born originally?
What keeps you here? Why don't you return to where your family lives/ place of birth?
Tell me the story of how you came to live in this room/ space. (follow up if not forthcoming through the question above: How did you find out about this space? What (specifically) did you have to do to occupy this place? How long have you been staying here?
Where were you living before? Why did you leave there? And before that?
Have you stayed here in the same space the whole time? Tell me about any moves you have made in-between? Have you moved around in the same building? In the same flat and different spaces?
Where will you go next? Why? When?
What dreams/ plans do you have for the future? Is living here now helping you/ hindering you with these plans? (eg saving money by living cheaply, enabling someone elsewhere to be financially supported) In what way?
Tell me about the space you live in/ occupy. What furniture do you have? How much space do you have? What demarcates/ forms the edges of your space? (eg curtains) How do you get to your space? What do you mainly use your space for? (eg just sleeping, watching TV, homework) How do you protect your space?
Tell me about the room or flat that your space is in. what people, furniture, activities are around you? And in the rest of the building - what spaces or activities in the building do you like most, what do you not like?
How do you feel about your own space? What do you like about it, what don't like about it? What would you have in your room/ space if you could? What other possessions would you have around you if you could? And the room/ flat? And the building?

<p>What impacts you negatively in your space? How do your neighbours and those in your direct surrounds make your space better/ worse to live in?</p>
<p>Are there nights of the week/ month/ year that you are not staying here? Where do you go instead? Why?</p>
<p>Where do you call home? When do you go there? (how often, for what purposes). Who is there?</p>
<p>What provides light in your space? And warmth/ heating? Fresh air? Power for appliances? What about these are you satisfied/ dissatisfied with?</p>
<p>Where do you do personal washing? Clothes washing, and drying? Which toilet do you use? Where do you store food, prepare food, cook, wash up? What is difficult/ good about this? What frustrates you about this?</p>
<p>Does anything about these infrastructure and facility arrangements impact on your health/ safety/ well-being? Which? How?</p>
<p>Who manages/ controls this room/ flat that your space is in? what are the rules for this space? and the floor? who manages/ controls? The building? Who do you pay rent to? How much? Weekly, monthly? How must you pay? What happens if you don't pay on time? Do you think this accommodation offers value for money? in what way?</p>
<p>What do you think of management in this building? Do they make it a better or a worse space? How do they help, and how do they hinder your abilities? What do they do right? What do they do wrong?</p>
<p>Do you share your meals with anyone ('eat from the same pot')? Who?</p>

Who would you like to live with that is not with you here? Where are they living? Why there? Why not with you here? When do you see them? What contact do you have with them? (eg including sending money)
Can you have visitors here in your space? And overnight? What rules/ procedures must they/ you follow? How do you feel about this? How does this impact on your life?
Tell me about your immediate neighbours in this room/ flat. Who lives around you? Which do you get on with? Which is there friction with? Why, about what issues? How are these managed or addressed? do you do any activities together? which?
Who can you turn to for help or support, in the flat, in the building? Elsewhere?
When did you last need help? What help did you need? Who did you approach for help? where did you find help? Why?
Who has come to you for help recently? What sort of help? What did you do?
Where would you go to if you had to leave here? Who would help you?
What do you do about frustrations or problems with anything to do with where you live (eg rent, behaviour of fellow tenants etc)? Where can you raise these issues? Who do you talk to about these? Who do you negotiate with? Have you tried to raise anything? what? when? What has been/ can be done about these problems?
Do you have a say/ a voice in what happens in the room/ flat? Who does?
Who gives you permission to be here? Who can chase you out? Under what circumstances? What about if you want to leave, what would you need to do?
Where do you feel most safe? Where do you feel unsafe? Why? What experiences have you had?
Is the space you occupy safe? For you? For your child/ relative? For your goods and possessions? In what way? What makes it safe/ unsafe?

<p>What is safe/ unsafe in the building? For whom? Why? How do you manage this?</p>
<p>Tell me about this area. What is good about it? What is not good?</p>
<p>What can you find here that you need/ want? (eg shops, play spaces, clinic) what do you need that is not in the area? Where do you go in the neighbourhood - to relax, to socialise, to participate in activities?</p>
<p>How do you bring in money? (eg social grant, earnings, supported by other) If earning, where is this? How do you get there? What are your working hours/ days? What tasks do you do? How does the place you live in help/ hinder this activity? What other place/ space apart from where you live is connected to your work activity (eg for storage, preparation, selling, sourcing stock etc)</p>
<p>What organisations/ churches/ clubs do you belong to? When do you meet? Where? How do you get there? How does this accommodation help/ hinder you with these activities? (eg can't host a session because space too small/ visitors not allowed)</p>
<p>What other places do you go to in the city (eg hospital, library, home affairs) When/ how often? How do you get there? How does living in this place help/ hinder you in accessing these?</p>

APPENDIX 8: Participant Information Sheet

1. Research Project Title:

What the 'spaces for rent' and 'rooms for rent' housing typologies offer to occupants, in Johannesburg's inner city.

2. Invitation paragraph

I am a Masters student at the School of Architecture and Planning, Wits University. I am also working for the non profit organisation, Planact, but this project forms a part of my studies.

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?

The project forms part of Masters studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in Braamfontien. The study is interested in 'rooms for rent' / 'spaces for rent' and communal rental housing, and how people live in it. The research involves talking to people who are living in this type of housing. These discussions with people will take 2 -3 months. Then there is a period of thinking about what people have said, and writing it up. The research will then be examined, and the work will be finished by November.

4. Why have I been chosen?

I am interested in hearing about your experiences of living in a room/ space in Joburg, and what it means for you, how it helps you, and how it doesn't. I am focusing on three different buildings, of which yours is one. I am wanting to interview seven people living in different spaces in each building. I am trying to talk to a range of different people – old, young, South African and not, women and men. I chose you because I'm talking to anyone I find who is willing to talk to me!

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. You don't have to answer any question if you do not want to. You can still withdraw at any time during the interview without it affecting in any way any of your rights. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing and there will be no consequences for you. You will not be identified to anyone and no information you have provided will be given to anyone.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

You are being asked to participate in an interview. The interview will take the form of a discussion and will take between 1 hour and 2 hours. The interview will take place at the place where you live, or if you prefer, we can agree on another place. I will be present in the interview and also, if necessary, a research assistant who will translate and interpret as necessary. I would like to use a tape recorder during the interview and I will also take notes during the discussion. This will help me be accurate about what you've said, but you can tell me if you'd prefer me not to record you. After the interview is finished I will write up the information provided. About 2 – 3 weeks after the interview I may contact you again to check anything I'm not sure about, and to check that I've understood your points correctly and maybe ask you a few more questions. This should not more than 1 hour of your time.

7. What do I have to do?

What I'm asking you to do is spend a little time thinking about your life and telling me about it in response to the questions I ask. I will ask a set of questions which I think will provide useful information, and for each one I would like you to tell me your response or how things are in your life. I am just interested in understanding better what peoples' lives are like, and how that relates to where they live.

8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There is no risk that anything you tell me will be communicated to government, to councillors, or to anyone in authority. It will also not be communicated to any other research participants. I will write about it in the document I produce for Wits University but I will not use your real name in the document.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help in understanding daily life in Johannesburg, why informal affordable housing helps some people and not others, and how we can have new ideas about housing in SA.

10. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

If the research stops earlier than expected the reasons for this will be explained to you.

11. What if something goes wrong?

If you are not happy with the process or with anything during the interview or after the interview you are welcome to contact my supervisor Sarah Charlton. She can be contacted by telephone on 011 717 7717 or by e-mail on sarah.charlton@wits.ac.za. You could also contact my Acting Head of School at Wits, Prof Marie Huchzermeyer, on 011 717 7688.

12. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

13. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the research project will be contained in the Masters document which I will submit for examination for my studies. I may also present the findings at conferences, and write an article to be published in a journal. In all of these the names of the participants will not be used and they will not be able to be identified. If you would like a copy of the section of the Masters document where the interview findings are discussed, I can provide you with one. This will only be available in November.

14. Recording of interview material

If you agree, the discussion during the interview will be tape recorded to help the researcher capture accurately what has been said. This recording will be used only for analysis and possibly for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. If any of the recorded material is used in a lecture or conference you will not be identified in any way.

15. Who is organising and funding the research?

I have been given money from Wits University to cover my course fees. All other costs for interviews, etc I am paying out of my own pocket.

16. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The project has been ethically reviewed by the School of Architecture and Planning, Wits University.

17. Contact for further information

Simon Sizwe Mayson, School of Architecture and Planning, John Moffat Building, University of the Witwatersrand. Ph: 071 117 6522. Email: ssmayson@gmail.com.

Thank you very much for taking part in the project. Please feel free to contact me at any point if you have questions or anything extra you'd like to say!

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