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**Dissertation Topic:**

**Exploring the use of self-help housing as a tool for community identity construction: A  
case study of Abaqulusi Local Municipality**

By

Nontsikelelo Felicitus Dlamini

Student Number: 209517290

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for admittance to the degree of Master of Housing in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies: University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus.

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## **Declaration**

I, Nontsikelelo Felicitus Dlamini hereby confirm that the information presented in this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously to the School of Built Environment and Development Studies or any other body. The work used in this dissertation that has been adopted from other authors and sources has been rightfully acknowledged. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university. This dissertation does not contain text or graphics that have been copied and pasted directly from the internet unless specifically acknowledged and the source detailed in the reference section of the dissertation.

Signed:  .....

Nontsikelelo Felicitus Dlamini (Candidate)

Date: 15 July 2023

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## **Abstract**

The relationship between housing, identity, social cohesion and community identity is becoming prominent in academic research. The main of this dissertation is to explore self-help housing to promote community identity in neighbourhoods where people use this method to build their own houses. In self-help housing, households plan and build their own houses depending on their sweat and equity contribution. The process is perceived to have a potential to create an environment where residents can identify with their local area due the personal elements that they have assigned on their houses and the neighbourhood. Secondary and primary data have been used to answer the main research question and meet the studies objective. A survey was used to gather primary data that will assist in contextualizing the study locally while secondary data will be used for international context of the study.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) social identity theory and Turner (1976) self-help housing theory were used to guide the study's investigation. The study found out that there is a link between self-help housing and community identity. The activities that are performed during self-help housing construction result in the community creating an environment that they assign their individual personal elements which are linked to their individual identity. The study make a contribution in the existing literature which explore the social dynamics of self-build housing in South Africa and hope to play a role in assisting role players who are interested in finding solutions for the current situation wherein community identity and unity are practically non-existent in most communities.

**Key words:** community identity; identity; self- build; self-help housing; social cohesion

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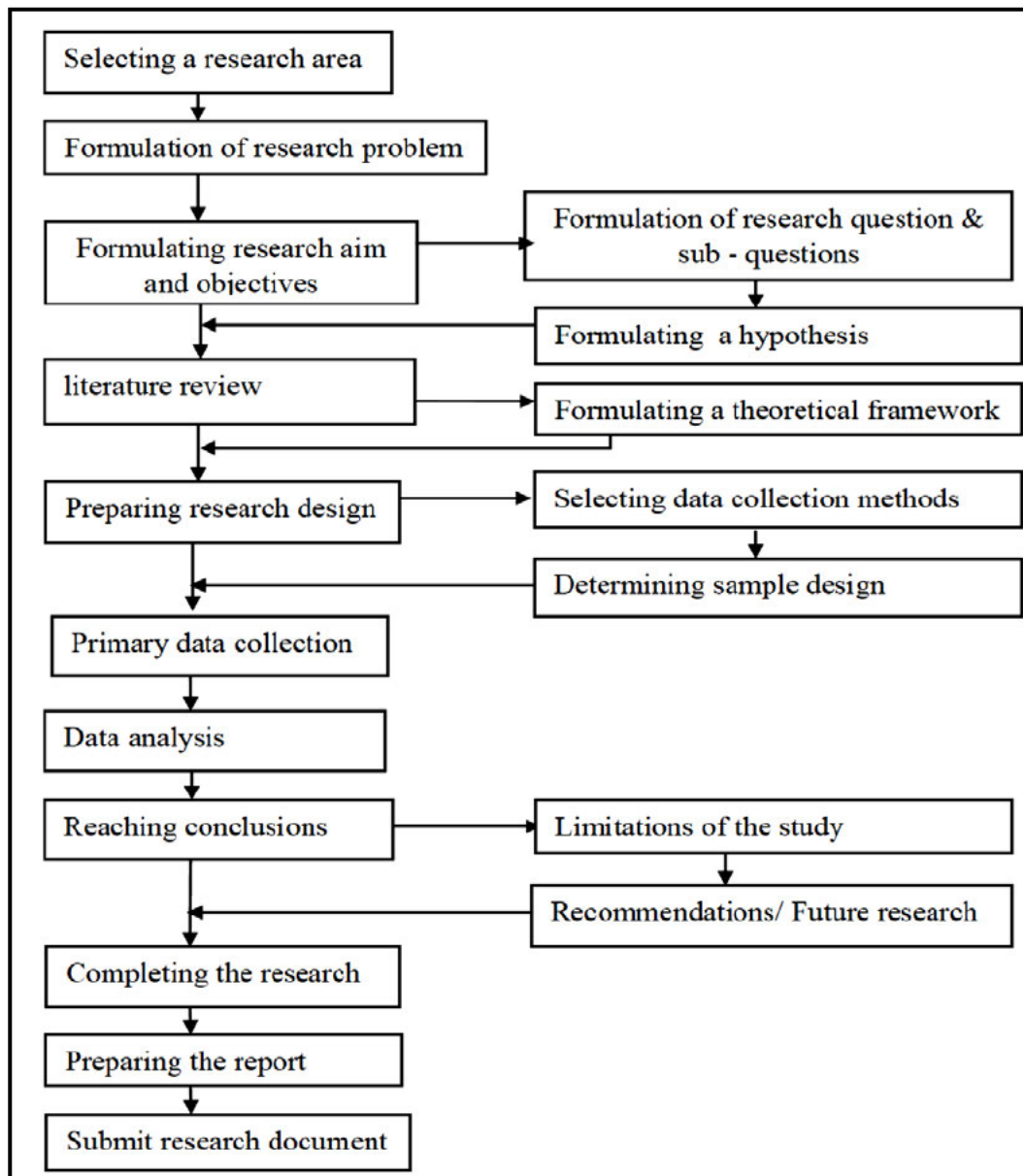
## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Homes are essential in the everyday lives of individuals because they considerably influence the identity of the occupants. Consequently, the physical built environment, the neighbourhood where people reside, significantly influences individual and community identity. Houses (buildings) and the neighbourhood encompass symbols of various social classes, groupings and personal meanings that characterise and preserve identity on several dimensions. No individual or social identity is not place or thing related. Therefore, the place is an influential component of how people organise their being (existence and enables consistent networking and making a living (Salisbury, 2012).

People who engage in self-help housing are constructing not just dwellings (basic shelters that do not have an exact relation to the dwellers or occupants) but homes, which are houses that “carries the psychological meaning which implies the sense of belonging of a person.” A home is “the physical space that affects the emotional and spiritual needs of a person.” (Saruwono, 2012, p. 35). The houses referred to in this dissertation are homes. Therefore, these houses are not only buildings that provide spaces for families to reside in but also physical places that impact the emotional and spiritual needs of the occupants and provide them with a sense of belonging.

The research process followed in this study started with selecting a research area based on the researcher's academic programme, professional and personal interest area. The process entailed identifying, locating, evaluating, and examining the data needed to support or answer the research question. It is a process the researcher uses to gather information to write the document. It highlights the main steps that the researcher took to meet the research aim and to complete a thesis document that meets the standard expected by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research process was broken down into several steps to make it manageable and easier to understand. The steps do not strictly follow each other but provide a constructive practical guideline about the research process adopted in the current research. Figure 1 on the next page provides a chart outlining the research processes.



**Figure 1: The research process**

Source: Author's creation

The current chapter is intended to introduce the research topic and the research processes followed by the researcher. In the second section, self-help housing is briefly explained and defined. The third section states the problem statement and hypothesis, and Section four presents the research's aim and objectives. The research question and sub-questions are outlined in section five. The sixth section outlines the research methodology. The seventh section states the significance of the study. The eighth section presents the study's limitations, and the ninth section outlines the structure of the dissertation as a conclusion of the chapter.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Human beings identify and define themselves with and by the place they inhabit and assign value to the unique features or attributes of a geographical area and the locale (the physical setting for relationships between people and the environment). According to Pauknerova Salisbury & Baumanova (2013, p. 132), “every interaction between humans and the physical environment creates a ‘built’ environment.” Usually, the built environment is connected to houses and other buildings and their surrounding environment (landscape). It is a hybrid between the environment and culture, a space of human activity, and embodies the relationship between humans and their environment (Herrero-Tejedor, Soler & Romero, 2020).

The above reveals a complex interaction between a person and a space or place. The individual defines and gives meaning to the space, and the space defines and gives meaning to the human being. In the housing sector, the government and private sector use various housing development methods to define and give meaning to the environment in which residents live. The built environment is created through the construction of houses and other types of buildings, including infrastructure using different methods, including the self-help housing method. Self-help housing, aided or unaided by the government, has been practised worldwide for decades, driven by rural-to-urban migration (Abd-Elkawy, 2017; Ntema, 2011).

Therefore, housing is a process and product that began in the early development of different types of shelters. It means both the production of houses and the processes associated with the production of houses. Housing is viewed within its political, economic, social, and cultural context, where the word shelter is frequently utilised. It is produced and used worldwide within each country’s political, economic, social, and cultural context. Self-help housing is a highly used and appropriate method of building houses in many developing countries (Mustonen, 2013).

Self-help housing has been used for decades in South Africa. Self-help policies in the country started during the colonial period when owner-built housing was a preferred method for Africans to acquire housing at a lower price. In the post-Union of South Africa period, self-help housing was considered one of the alternatives in constructing a national urban policy for African people. In the late 1970s and 1980s, self-help housing re-emerged as the primary method of constructing houses and was a component of urban restructurings during the failing period of apartheid (Landman & Napier, 2010).

Different types of self-help housing processes or construction include spontaneous, organised, and aided housing. Spontaneous self-help housing, also called unaided self-help housing, is commonly found in poor communities. It is often linked to illegal activities of land invasion, occupying buildings for squatting or trespassing, whereby households build their houses using their hands and skills in the building process (Mustonen, 2013; Dlamini, 2019). In the private sector, especially amongst those who afford to build their own houses, self-help housing is called self-built housing. In this process, households take responsibility and control over planning and building (developing) their own house (Bossuyt, Salet, & Majoor, 2018; Dhlamini, 2019).

When the government engages in self-help housing, it is referred to as government-assisted or aided self-help housing (Ntema, 2011). In contrast, in cases where community members build their own houses without technical support from the government, it is referred to as unaided self-help housing (Landman & Napier, 2010), which can be spontaneous or organised. In unaided self-help housing, households, as mentioned above, plan and build their own houses (Bossuyt et al., 2018; Dhlamini, 2019; Mekoa & Busari, 2018). The method is a bottom-up and household driven method, and in other cases, it includes technical assistance and micro-credit provided by supporting organisations (Arroyo & Astrand, 2013).

This process of constructing houses without aid from the government is initiated and implemented by the people for their benefit, depending on the amount of sweat equity a household can contribute (Ntema, 2011). Bossuyt, Salet, & Majoor (2018, p. 524) define “self-build housing as the practice where people, individually or as a group, commission the production of housing for their own use.” From the description by Ntema (2011) and Bossuyt, Salet, and Majoor (2018), self-help and self-built refer to the same mode of providing housing where the government does not play a prominent role or is not involved. The latter also highlights that self-build housing can be in the form of individual self-building (Bossuyt, Salet, & Majoor 2018, p. 530). Self-help housing can also be referred to as self-provided housing, which is the organisation of building a home by the household that intends to occupy it.

Thus, self-help housing is an initiative in which people build houses that meet their specific needs compared to government-assisted or delivered housing. As a result, people who use self-help housing tend to gain beyond a dwelling and are inclined to acquire knowledge and improved community cohesion and identity whilst developing their houses mutually (Landman & Napier,

2010). This method is one of the methods that people use to create the built environment. It creates a place where individual and social identity is attached, expressed earlier in section 1.1, paragraph 1.

Sense of place plays a role in changing a space into a place with distinct behavioural, viz., residents building their houses, and emotional characteristics for individuals. It is also referred to as place affect, place bonding, place identity, place dependence and place attachment (Bradley, 2017, p. 234). Tournois and Rollero (2020, p. 2) explain place identity as “a sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognition about the physical world in which the individual lives.” Self-help housing, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, is used as one of the methods of creating the built environment, which is part of the physical world in which human beings live. The construction of the place identity through place-making occurs “when the local environment represents uniqueness and individuality and eventually becomes an expression of personal identity” (Tournois & Rollero, 2020, p. 2).

### **1.3 Problem statement**

As more people move to urban areas, housing demand has increased and exceeded the supply capacity of various governments worldwide. In this way, rapid urbanization and technological advances resulted in the standardization of the built environments denying the human settlement and homes of cultural, regional and national identity (Bredenoord, 2010; Miller, 2011). The situation also led to the dominance of aided self-help housing amongst the poor in developing countries, including South Africa. Additionally, the history of South Africa has created unique social spaces to meet economic and social needs. Political territorial divisions in the country usually signify places of social importance, deliberately segregated, resulting in a fragmented society where community identity and unity were mislaid. The situation has intensified the homogeneous low-income settlements depriving the residents of individual, cultural and social identity (Miller, 2011).

With the new democratic South Africa, society can be reconstructed, creating places that evoke a sense of pride and belonging. Since the 1970s, in countries like Peru, Nicaragua and Bolivia, self-help housing has been seen as the most suitable form of housing that can significantly address rapid urban growth (Bredenoord, 2010). Self-help housing is being progressively advocated as a process of providing houses that are more affordable, of better quality and tailored

to the inhabitants' needs (Parvis et al., 2011). However, it continues to be quantitatively and qualitatively underemphasized (Bossuyt, Salet, & Majoor, 2018).

In South Africa, household self-help housing methods are currently advocated as a technique that can be used to create places that evoke a sense of pride, belonging and sense of place. A sense of place is an affective bond between people and places. It can be developed in various geographical scales such as house, neighbourhood, city, region, and country, and it evolves (Devine-Wright, 2013). The self-help is supported because it can deliver affordable houses of good quality and more tailored to meet the needs of the inhabitants highlighted by Parvis et al. (2011) above and encourage a sense of place in inhabitants.

Considering the term self in the concept of self-help, the benefits of self-help housing focus on the self, the individual in the sense of self-enhancement, liberation or empowerment and accomplishment that is rooted primarily on a psychological approach leading to “understanding the self – as a form of identity – oriented around the individual” (Benson & Hamiduddin, 2017, p. 2). In line with the above, this study hypothesizes that self-help housing development activities promote community identity amongst people who use the method to build their houses.

If this method encourages community identity, it can help reduce the fragmented society where community identity and unity are non-existent. Several studies have been conducted on self-help housing in South Africa, including studies like Ntema (2011), Landman & Napier (2010), and Dhlamini (2019), to name a few, have highlighted the benefits of self-help housing. Nevertheless, there still needs to be a need for more literature that underlines community identity as a benefit of self-help housing.

#### **1.4 Research aims and objectives.**

This study aims to explore self-help housing to promote community identity in neighbourhoods where people use this method to build their own houses. The specific objectives of the study are:

- 1.4.1 To define self-help housing
- 1.4.2 To explain community identity
- 1.4.3 To explore the relationship between self-help housing and community identity

#### **1.5 Research question**

The specific research questions to address the problem statement are: How can the self-help housing process be used to build community identity? The sub-questions which will assist in answering the main research question are:

1.5.1 What is self-help housing?

1.5.2 What is community identity?

1.5.3 What is the relationship between self-help housing and community identity?

## **1.6 Hypothesis**

The study hypothesizes that self-help housing development activities promote community identity amongst people who use the method to build their houses.

## **1.7 Research methodology**

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The researcher performed a desktop literature review of secondary sources. The desktop literature review was conducted to ascertain existing knowledge about the topic that the study aims to explore and provide a contextual background and theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. The researcher collected empirical data using a questionnaire to obtain responses from participants who provided added information specifically gathered to respond to the study's research question. Data were analysed by the micro-soft excel package reported, summarised, and reported using charts and graphs. The research process is explained in Chapter 4 titled, Research Methodology.

## **1.8 Significance of the study**

The study contributes to the field of housing as part of the continuous academic research required to provide dynamic empirical insights into the different methods of providing housing and its benefits. It has practical value for decision-makers and informs policy development for the ultimate benefit of those still hoping to own decent housing worldwide. The study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge of community identity by looking at the concept from a housing perspective. It also contributes to studying the social dynamics of self-build housing in South Africa. It demonstrates that the interaction in the self-building process results in community identity.

## **1.9 Limitations of the study**

This study is limited to self-help housing as a tool for creating community identity. The study was conducted at a neighbourhood level in a small community; however, the findings can still represent large communities because a small sample is adequate in qualitative research if the saturation point has been reached. The sample size is also biased towards residents aged 18 to 50 years. Obtaining a gatekeeper's permission to conduct the study was a significant challenge due to the ever-changing protocols during the COVID-19 lockdown period. In addition, obtaining permission from the tribal council and the Chief of eNseka was also time-consuming due to the traditional protocols. The study was self-funded by the researcher; therefore, the researcher had to wait for the student data allocation from the university to administer the questionnaire, which caused delays.

## **1.10 Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter introduces and outlines the study's background, states the research problem, presents the aim and objectives, outlines the research question and sub-questions, hypothesis, the methodology used, the significance and limitations of the study, and concludes by outlining the structure of the document. Chapter two grounds the study in the theoretical and conceptual framework. It explains the theories used to support the study and the conceptual framework that works together with the theory in a comprehensively synthesized manner. The third chapter presents the relevant literature review that explores existing literature on self-help housing and community identity construction. This section explores global debates on self-help housing related to the topic.

Chapter four outlines the study's research methodology. It describes the study area, the research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, validity, reliability, and rigour in or of the study. Thus, the chapter details how the primary and secondary data collection methods were used to obtain relevant data used in the study. Chapter five presents the study's findings, restates the research question and outlines the result and discussion of the findings. The analysis and discussion will summarise the research outcomes in conjunction with secondary data sources supporting the research findings. Chapter six summarises the key issues discussed in the dissertation and details the conclusion of the study and recommendations for future studies based on the research findings.



## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter describes how the study will relate to existing theories and discuss how the methodology being used links to the theories by clarifying the two theories that support this study, namely, social identity theory and Turner's theory of self-help housing. The theoretical framework is presented in the second section, and the conceptual framework is in the third section. The conceptual framework supports the theoretical framework and enhances the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The chapter concludes by presenting a summary of the understanding gained from both the theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

### **2.2 Theoretical framework**

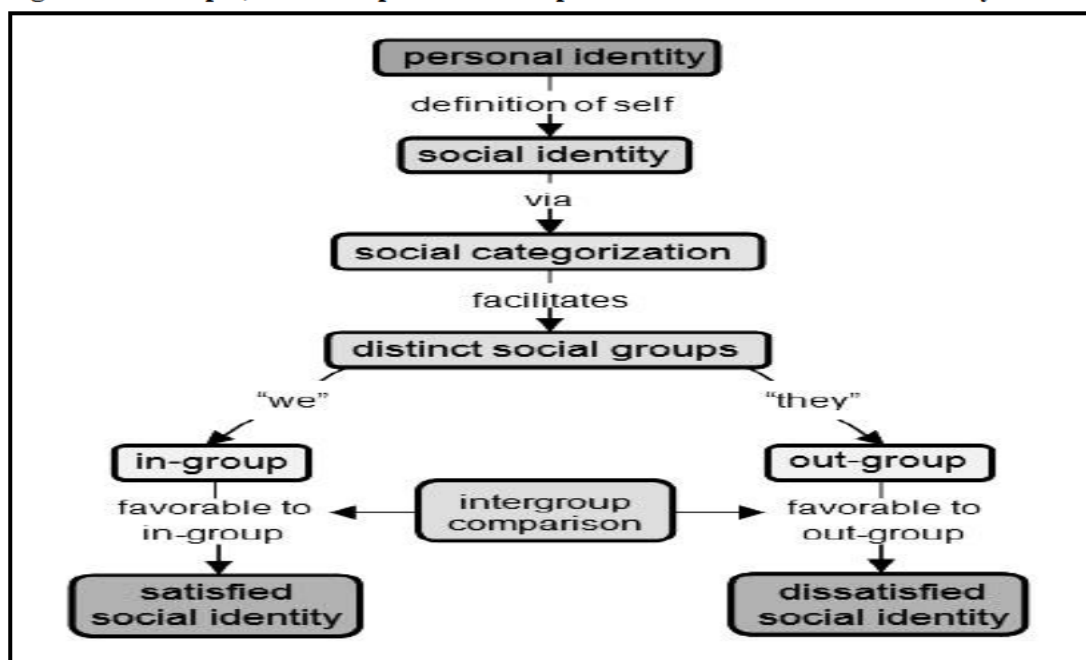
A theoretical framework introduces and describes the theories behind the research problem by describing relevant theoretical aspects drawn from previous or existing research work. The theoretical framework acts as a supporting framework for the research study. It provides an anchor for the literature review and the methods and analysis. In qualitative research design, a theoretical framework is explained before data collection and can be used with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs (Grant & Osanloo, 2015). The theoretical frameworks adopted for this study helped to provide a lens through which self-help housing concerning building community identity was explored. Social Identity Theory and Turner's self-help theory underpin this study and are discussed below.

#### **2.2.1 Social Identity Theory**

Tajfel and Turner developed social identity theory in 1979 based on the view that individuals interact with similar people. In this theory, identity is defined as "self-meanings that describe who one is, which can relate to any group, role or person-based identity that the individual assumes" (Skinner, 2014, p.108). Hence, an individual takes on a particular identity through their social environment. Individuals must be immersed in a particular social setting to such an extent that they identify with their surroundings. Figure 1 below illustrates concepts, values or practices that provide a baseline in social identity formation according to the social identity theory. It

illustrates how part of a person's identity is derived from a sense of who they are in group membership.

**Figure 2: Concepts, values or practices that provide a baseline in social identity formation.**



Source: Age of the sage (2002)

The theory is formed on three principles: social identity is relational- a person's social identity is developed by how the person interacts with others within their social group. Secondly, social identity is built on the individual's experience with others. Therefore, it is a shared or mutual construct. A person's social surrounding plays a pivotal role in creating identity since how they experience their environment is connected to the people they live with within the community. Thirdly, it is a collective experience based on an accumulation of life skills and lessons. Social identity is built upon a series of events that the community encounters and subsequently learn from each other and together (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2017).

According to Hogg (2016, p. 3), "social identity theory is an interactionist social psychological theory of the role of self-conception and associated cognitive processes and social beliefs in group processes and intergroup relations." The theory of being an interactionist means that it thrives when there are relations among people (Hogg, 2016). The theory does not discriminate as to what type of relationship or interaction there must be between people.

The theory describes how people create and describe their social position and maintains that group membership can support individuals to convey meaning in social settings. In the context of this theory, social identity influences how people see themselves and interact with others

around them. The theory is relevant in this study as it relates to the challenges and opportunities people who engage in self-help housing face while building their houses. These challenges and opportunities would originate from their beliefs and social identity. Hence, using a social identity lens will help increase understanding of interpersonal relations, collaboration, and change initiatives in the individuals' house construction process.

### **2.2.2 Self-help housing theory**

The housing process and progressive development, called incremental housing, are critical in Turner's theory (Turner, 1976). The housing process refers to planning and building the house and managing both activities, which are incremental to the process (Bower, 2016). Progressive housing development refers to the development that affords the household the autonomy to make critical decisions related to the planning and building of their house, thus leading to the house meeting the needs of the occupants (Bower, 2016). Turner advocated for these concepts to be linked to housing provision efforts to deliver adequate housing for the community. It creates a relationship between the government and the people, where they collaborate to achieve their objective (the household receives shelter, and the government meets its goal of providing shelter).

The theory proposes three principles: self-governing dweller autonomy and control, appropriate housing technology, and planning or housing through limits (Turner, 1976). According to Arroyo and Astrand (2013), Turner proposed that

“the concept of “housing as a verb” in which he emphasizes the importance of the housing process [,] highlights the importance of “what housing does for people” over its physical characteristics [and] proposes that the value of housing was related to “dweller-control” more than to its physical features; hence, people deserve “freedom to build.” (p. 2)

Therefore, the housing process is determined by households, local institutions and enterprises that can control the requisite variety in the dwelling environment. The households plan the building and construction process becoming key decision-makers and project managers for their house. Turner's theory of self-help housing is centred around low-income communities. The principles it proposes align with making the community's limited resources go as far as possible without compromising the households' needs. The families can choose the building material based on what they can afford and build their houses according to their intended use and

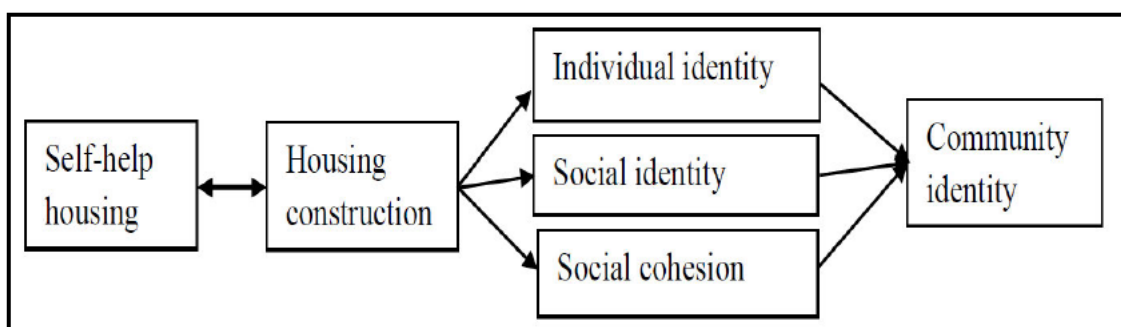
identified needs. Hence, the housing process is controlled by how the family will use the house and what it means to them.

## 2.3 Conceptual framework

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014, p.17), a conceptual framework “offers a logical structure of connected concepts that help provide a picture or visual display of how ideas in a study relate to one another within the theoretical framework.” It presents the researcher with an opportunity to state and define concepts within the problem and provide “a structure of what has been learned to best explain the natural progression of a phenomenon that is being studied”(Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 17). The concepts outlined below are essential in explaining the relationship between self-help housing and community identity and provide a logical way of how ideas are related in this study. Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework for this dissertation research.

**Figure 3: Conceptual framework**

Source: Author’s creation



### 2.3.1 Self-help housing

Self-help housing is described as a concept which involves practices in which low-income groups resolve their housing needs. The low-income accomplish this through their resources such as labour and finance. The process is viewed as an alternative to traditional public housing (Ntema (2011) and the one-size-fits-all approach of mass housing (Heslop, 2016).

### 2.3.2 Housing construction

Housing construction is a process of building houses which runs through the design, construction, and operation phases successively.

### **2.3.3 Individual identity**

Individual/ self/ personal identity is “self-meanings that describe who one is in “any group, role- or person-based identity that the individual assumes ... influenced by the individual’s unique personality traits, characteristics and history, as well as the organisational and social context” in which he/she works (Skinner, 2014, p. 108). It is “something produced through the narratives people use to explain and understand their lives” (Lawler, 2014, p. 30).

### **2.3.4 Social identity**

Social identity is “the part of an individual’s self-image that is determined by the groups to which an individual belongs” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 1). Brown (2020, p.7) states that “people may derive their social identity from the groups they belong to”. Social identity is about how a person identifies themselves with others according to what they share with others. In other words, it is one’s identity with similar group members.

### **2.3.5 Social cohesion**

Social cohesion is the existence of social relations, “that unites the society together and helps to foster an integrated and stable community” (Mekoa & Busari, 2018, p.108) consists of “the quality of social relations, identification with the social entity, and orientation towards the common good” (Schiefer & Van Der Noll, 2017, p.595). In a broad sense, social cohesion includes “civic culture and shared values, social control and social order, a form of social solidarity that helps reduce wealth disparities, social capital and social network, and place identity and attachment” (Mekoa & Busari, 2018, p. 114).

### **2.3.6 Community identity**

Community identity refers to the shared definition of a group derived from members’ common interests and shared experiences, shapes various facets of the social dynamics within it (Zhang, Matsuoka & Huang, 2018), and assists individuals in “associating themselves with a community, as well as deepening community solidarity” (Jayaram, 2012, p.56).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the two major international theories that will assist in understanding self-help housing in this dissertation: the Social Identity Theory and Turner's Self-help theory. Turner's concept of self-help housing is rooted in the freedom to build. In this concept, inhabitant control is critical to the success of any housing development programme to repress bureaucratic and technological hindrances (Ntema, 2011). Social Identity Theory asserts that an individual assumes a particular identity through the local social environment and must be immersed in a specific social setting to the extent that they identify with their surroundings. The central concepts in these two theories are relevant in revealing the relationship between self-help housing and community identity.

## **CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the relevant literature on self-help housing, community identity, and the relationship between self-help housing and community identity. It also explores the literature on self-help housing and factors that result in community identity, namely, self-identity, community cohesion, and social identity. The chapter then concludes with a review of how the various aspects of self-help housing relate to community identity.

### **3.2 Self-help Housing**

Self-help (self-built) is an alternative to the "one-size-fits-all" approach of mass housing solutions, which addresses the challenges of financing homes for low-income groups. It is most beneficial to people who cannot afford to enter the housing market by purchasing a ready-built shelter or structure. Since these individuals cannot afford ready-built structures, they might not be working or have jobs with meagre compensation that they cannot purchase such houses. They might only have enough sweat equity to dedicate to building their houses. The sweat equity dedicated to the building of the house can be by way of building the house themselves or project managing the build (Kessler, 2014).

According to Abd-Elkawy (2017), the definitions and applications of self-help housing are diverse for different contexts depending on the government in power and the planning and design procedures at play. Abd-Elkay's statement is strengthened by Ahmed (2015, p.34), who states that Turner's view that "user-controlled housing is the real definition of self-help housing" has been applied in diverse contexts. The approach demands that the user be given complete control of the entire housing process. Thus, the user is in control of planning their house and sourcing the material they need to construct the desired house. The self-help housing construction process is undertaken solely by the household, and many aspects should be considered since several criteria must be satisfied before a house can be deemed adequate.

However, according to Field (2017), self-help (self-build) housing is not an activity executed wholly by owner-occupant homeowners or individual households acting alone or in isolation from other community members. In addition, Thomas (2019, p. 7) states that "self-help consists of community members working collectively toward a common goal." From this view of self-help housing, it is possible to ascertain that the community must come together and work together to achieve something. The goal that should be achieved relates to something the community is facing simultaneously (the need for housing). The act of working together can take diverse forms. Community members willingly build their houses in self-help housing from the ground up.

Zhang et al. (2017) discovered that neighbourhood problems that incorporated the physical environment's planning issues motivated residents into collective action. Communities involved in self-help housing can modify their houses to reflect the community's status quo by coming together cohesively and creating an identity for themselves through the structures they have built (Ahmed, 2015). Boessen et al. (2018) found that the built environment, especially density, land diversity, uses, and design, are vital for personal network structure regarding the number of social connexions and their location. Residents residing in higher population density localities (communities) have proximity, socialising and direct dialogue connections, regardless of whether they stay in urban or rural environments. However, this density type only affects the number of more spatially dispersed links.

Bergman and Heer (2018), in their analysis of social capital, social inclusion and social mobility, concluded that the above factors exist in different forms when comparing neighbourhoods. The analysis resulted in two distinct manifestations of social cohesion. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the quality of neighbouring in terms of the proximity of land uses and

neighbourhoods. In contrast, in advantaged neighbourhoods, the quality of the neighbourhood holds its inhabitants together.

Bergman and Heer's (2018) findings in disadvantaged neighbourhoods reinforce Boessen et al. (2018) assertion that residents in higher population density localities have proximity socialising and direct dialogue connections because of the situation; therefore, the quality of neighbouring is of great importance. Benson and Hamiduddin (2017) maintain that self-build should be removed from the limits of construction styles and approaches. It should be placed within much broader social limits, where development processes can be vividly seen to serve the higher goal of place shaping, the manifestation of relationships between self and other residents, and self or shared fulfilment.

Furthermore, Benson (2014) suggests that the various ways used in producing self or custom build homes should fall under the umbrella term of self-build since the term self-build needs more conceptual clarity and creates problems when operationalised within research. Therefore, the author suggests that self-procured housing may be a more accurate term for diverse projects, including self-built, self-organised and self-commissioned homes and individual households.

### **3.3 Housing construction**

Self-building starts from the house, the aspiration of home and dwelling (Andreasen et al., 2017), and spills over the neighbourhood through cyclical everyday activities and social and spatial organisations. In self-build (self-help), the first owner-occupants decide on the construction of their own house in various ways, including taking part in the production of that dwelling. The procedure enables households to have greater control over the construction process of their houses (Landman & Napier, 2010).

The inhabitants of self-help housing are involved in the houses' planning, designing, financing, construction and operational stages. In individual self-help, households acquire land to build a house first, while in group self-self-help, residents form an association before acquiring land and building. In both processes, identity is emphasised as a vital component of the design process. The use of construction materials of good quality, such as contemporary ornamental, distinctive artworks and design elements to create a personalised house (building), is a way for the owner to control the character of a house and the surrounding spaces (Shawket, 2016).



In the construction phase, inhabitants (individuals) usually appoint a builder, contractor, or package company or physically build their house. Self-help builders build their homes through various methods and rarely complete them single-handedly. In this process, the inhabitants interact with professionals or those involved in building their houses in the planning, designing, financing, constructing and operational stages. They work with their household members, other households, housing suppliers, practitioners, associations, and banks (Benson & Hamiduddin, 2017). The above indicates that self-help housing cannot be undertaken in isolation; the owner-occupant, an individual self-builder, should engage other people just like in community self-help housing.

In most cases, ordinary people involved in self-help housing need training in the appropriate building techniques and other durability aspects before they can begin the building process since they do not possess such skills. Hence they hire professionals such as architects, house plan drawing technicians, bricklayers, plumbers, and electricians, to mention a few, to assist. In this manner, the self-help builders (property owners and their families) interact with immediate and distant community members and build relationships, as mentioned in the previous paragraph (Mustonen, 2013).

The house the occupants build is more specifically defined as a building that provides living space for a family compared to a dwelling which is a basic shelter with no particular relation to the occupant. It is a social space used for private and communal residences. A house is a sociological concept which notifies the physical structure where people live. The home carries a psychological meaning which implies the sense of belonging of a person (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2015). Benson (2017, p.142), home refers to "the spatial, ideational and imaginary; it infers emotional attachments and affective relations; it is culturally (and temporally) constructed while also being subjectively experienced; and it interplays with home and housing in dynamic and co- constitutive relationships."

Home is created and accomplished through other processes by individual self-help self-building to incorporate a home's spatial, emotional, spiritual, and personal aspects, as highlighted in the definition above. According to Gardezi, Shafiq & Khan (2022), a house's construction should meet the carbon footprint criteria based on the structure's size and the resources used to build the structure. Heffernan and Wilde (2019) contend that self-build homes have the potential to be

more environmentally sustainable than homes built by commercial housing development companies. As mentioned before by Ahmed (2015), user-controlled self-help housing would be beneficial for the community in that they could build houses that are easily adaptable to any societal changes they may encounter.

Tournois and Rollero (2020) argue that the construction of the place identity is through place-making, which the construction of houses is part of, resulting in the local environment displaying uniqueness and individuality, which in the end, becomes an expression of personal identity. Hence, there is a complex link between the environment, society, economic systems, humans, and all other species with whom we share the planet. Space becomes a place when the residents give it a contextual meaning derived from cultural or regional content (Love, 2016). These bonds include all types of connections that range between social or academic connections and interactions, geographic attachment and cultural and economic facets (Salisbury, 2012).

The link between place and community is complex because the essence of a community is expressed by the physical attributes of the place of residence (the house the occupants constructed). The preceding advocates for a community place to bear meaning to its users by expressing its cultural context and allowing ownership for elements of pride and empowerment (Hamiduddin & Gallent, 2015). According to Kadir (2018),

"south African disadvantaged peri-urban communities are plagued with a lack of institutions that encourage a sense of identity. This prompts the need for the built environment to respond with infrastructure that allows for interaction that fosters pride and identity to be easily accessible to all." (p. 35).

A sense of place plays a role in architecture (planning, design and construction) derived from its serving community's influence. In self-help housing as a method of constructing houses, residents create their houses and places. Depending on the context, architecture can refer to any artificial (man-made) structure, building, or building design. This study focuses on architecture produced for the social unit such as individual, family, clan or group and their dependents (human and animal). A place may only be meaningfully shaped if it reflects the needs and values of its community, both in the physical use of materials, the designed public spaces and spiritually, effectively becoming a self-built place which includes the home (house) (Salisbury, 2012).

Therefore, creating community identity begins with selecting and its exploitation in design. The concept of place is comprehensive, as the sites are distributed appropriately but according to the most effective use of resources. The built environment has been described as the product of building activity, introducing alterations to the physical environment. Human use of space stems from the fact that people understand space by associating it with meanings rather than through simple perception. The concept of human-constructed space is an entity given specific properties unconsciously or subconsciously, and these, in turn, tend to influence the human behaviour within it. This approach is based on the principle that human activity has a natural geometry that becomes more pronounced when individuals participate and appreciate the space features, such as houses and streets, as units with primarily functional properties.

Torabi and Brahman (2013) argue that architecture (including houses) is part of the identity of each community and carries the message concept and characteristics attributed to the community where it was born. In their study of the influential factors in shaping the identity of architecture, they concluded that constructing a building impacts its surroundings and that the relationship between a work and its surroundings can lead designers to create architectural space.

Self-help as a method of building homes (homemaking processes) allows for creating homes linked to identity and social relations. It is a process of building homes that blends the physical and psychological aspects of the home, creating a home that is a physical house and a space with emotional attachment formed by emotions and feelings of belonging. Self-help is a method of home (house) building, and the home support individual and collective (social) identity (Benson, 2017). It also offers the home builder (owner-occupant) increased control over the building process allowing the occupants to achieve customised houses at a lower cost. It also gives the builders a feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction, self-expression and identity formation (Bossuyt, 2021).

### **3.4 Individual identity**

Identity is regarded as a complex, disputed and flexible concept, which can be considered as individual and interpersonal, social, and political. It is multidimensional in that it encompasses individual, interpersonal, and social processes rooted within social structures while engaging its distinct and relational, communal, and political appreciation (Carolissen & Rohleder, 2012; Leibowitz et al., 2013). It is who someone is and "something produced through the narratives people use to explain and understand their lives" (Collins, 2017, p. 193; Lawler (2014, p. 30).

Thus, individual identity is not something a person is born innately knowing. Individuals must immerse themselves in the society they find themselves in to find their identity subsequently. Finegan and Buckley (2022, p. 3) state that "identity can be gained through the occupancy of the community's social space and confers a sense of belonging on members, creating social networks and fostering interaction."

Additionally, Kuo and Margalit (2012) assert that individual identity transforms over time and that this constant transformation is due to the social setting that individuals find themselves, as this type of identity is influenced by outside factors. In housing and the built environment, identity is linked to the interaction between humans and the physical environment. Home forms one of the physical structures in that individuals express a sense of self-identity. The characteristics of a house symbolise the owner's identity. In the design stage, losing the culture of traditional houses is ranked lower than the durability of houses (adequate building), which is of greater importance.

Building one's own home may provide people with accomplishment and satisfaction. Self-build/self-help offers increased control over design and layout, allowing people to have low-cost personalised houses and to express their identity through their houses (Bossuyt, 2021). Bossuyt (2021), in his study of the value of self-build, concluded that self-building could be an opportunity for self-expression and for acquiring a personalised house. It also offers a distinctive prospect for achieving homeownership at reduced costs.

### **3.5 Social identity**

The difference between personal and social identity is that personal identity involves what makes a person unique, while social identity is about making a person a part of a social group, focusing on what an individual shares with others. The concept of social identity was first introduced by Tajfel (1972) and defined as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 31). It is defined through shared values, beliefs, ideas, and practices. Brown (2020, p. 7) states that "people may derive their social identity from the groups they belong to". Thus, the social environment within which individuals find themselves plays a vital role in the identity they adopt for themselves - belonging to a group influences how a person behaves and subsequently identifies themselves (Brown, 2020).

Society includes individuals who are changed by their choices and community. Hence, the attributes of a house are chosen to communicate or represent an owner's (individual's) social identity. The observer should be able to identify the social information presented in a house that corresponds to the identity the owners intend to communicate from the interior, which includes intellectual, politeness and reservedness, and exterior, which provides formality, graciousness and cultural sophistication of the house. Additionally, individuals have to be able to identify with a building to create a relationship with it. Social identity affects individual identity and vice versa, as people tend to behave in a manner conducive to the well-being of their relationships with those around them or their social environment (Brown, 2020).

Residents should be able to choose their preferred method of relating to the environment (residential surroundings), which includes a variety of user needs. The link between outside space and the house/home building impacts the homeowner's social status. When the houses' surrounding environment has a welcoming or pleasant design that connects the homeowners to their surroundings, provokes a feeling of neighbourhood and makes them feel united, it creates social identity (Shawket, 2018). Rollero & De Piccoli (2010) compared a group of residents and discovered that the length of residence is an essential predictor of place identity, not essentially of place attachment. The study verified that each concept's predictors of place identity and attachment differ. The education level and residence length influence identification with residents (place identity).

In contrast, "place attachment is predicted by the level of education and the conative and social dimensions, such as participation in local activities and significant relationships in the place" (Bernardo & Palma-Oliveira, 2013, p. 169). In the context of self-help housing, the community members behave in a manner conducive to building adequate houses not only for themselves but for the well-being of the community. Therefore, the process of self-help housing becomes more than building a home that the household needs, but a house that will bring about a positive community identity for the area.

Mustonen (2013, p. 3) states that "better community cohesion is reached in the projects where the community builds together." The community will come together with one purpose of building adequate houses not only for themselves but also for the pride they will feel when they know that their community is identified as one where the houses are of adequate quality. This

interrelatedness of individual, social, and community identity is positive. When one concept in the chain is lacking or missing, the chain will weaken and may break. The breakage in the chain would have detrimental consequences for the community. Chan (2013) points out that individual identity builds the bridge to a collective identity. He argues that we identify ourselves because of the existence of others and based on the recognition of each other. In this way, a collective identity is formed: a sense of recognition, acknowledgement, and attachment to a particular group.

### **3.6 Social cohesion**

Social cohesion ( see section 2.3.5) is "the existence of social relations that unites the society together and help to foster an integrated and stable community" (Mekoa & Busari, 2018, p. 108). It consists of "the quality of social relations, identification with the social entity, and orientation towards the common good" (Schiefer & Van Der Noll, 2017, p. 595). It is inclined to have a profound sense of local space, which is essential in managing local social cohesion. In this situation, residents encounter the built environment of a neighbourhood daily, and its quality directly impacts their everyday lives. Social cohesion is usually measured and investigated at the neighbourhood level as the built environment is crucial in developing and maintaining social relationships among locals (Boessen et al., 2018; Mouratidisa & Poortinga, 2020).

Schiefer and Van Der Noll (2017) assert that social cohesion comprises three notable features: the quality of social relations, identification with the social entity, and orientation towards the common good. These first features of social cohesion demonstrate that it is embedded in how people interact. The second feature highlight that social identity is interlinked with social cohesion. When community members positively identify with the community within which they reside, they are more likely to form a bond with that community. The third feature relates to the fact that social cohesion leads to the community coming together for the greater good of the group, revealed by how the community faces shared challenges.

In their study, Mouratidisa & Poortingab (2020) concluded that small-scale ideas, projects, and interventions capable of enhancing urban vitality could reinforce social cohesion. For example, means of strengthening social cohesion by improving urban vitality include local community programs and small-scale design interventions linked to housing design, public space design, and walkability. Social cohesion intends to achieve a society that functions well and shares

common goals and values where everyone has shared duties and commitment to achieve the goal.

Schiefer and van der Noll (2017) concluded that when social cohesion is viewed as a reflective construct, it manifests itself in different observable characteristics such as trust and identification. In a constructive approach, social cohesion and its components are theoretically derived, and the elements do not have to be interrelated. However, all the elements must be examined to describe the phenomenon altogether.

The role of self-help in enhancing social cohesion within a community is demonstrated in the construction process whereby community members engage in various house-building activities and need each other for diverse reasons. They may need each other for information on where to source quality materials at a reasonable rate for an aspect of a build that a neighbour has completed. The above would open communication channels amongst the community members and build solid relationships where they understand each other and know whom to run to for help.

### **3.7 Community identity**

The concept of community identity is an interdisciplinary concept spanning planning, social psychology, and sociology, among others. Respectively, all the disciplines develop diverse explanations and viewpoints on community identity (Salsbury, 2012). The housing field is concerned with classification matters in the discussion about community identity (Dovey, 2016). A community is comprised of three intertwined aspects, namely, the environment, economy, and society. Community is a very flexible term that can be used to refer to an ethnic group, but it is also used for a settlement or a part thereof. A community's actions generate a process of identity construction (Waine & Chapman, 2022).

Self-help housing plays a role in place-making or community building. Residents participate in planning their immediate neighbourhood through this process and value this aspect of their contribution to the place-making process. It empowers local communities and makes planning more effective in meeting the inhabitants' needs. Relationships are built when people engage in the self-help housing process, resulting in socially cohesive or united communities. The above

implies that bonds forged between neighbours are more robust than in other housing developments (Wallace, Ford & Quilgars, 2013).

This connection between place identity and interpersonal relations has been captured in the concept of community identity. Community identity is a spatially and socially oriented construct that describes emotional connections to the locality and its cultural context. "Community identity has a positive dimension in that it helps individuals associate themselves with a community and reinforces community solidarity" (Jayaram, 2012, p. 56). It is a powerful force that brings a group together and creates community cohesion. It brings about a sense of belonging for the individuals that reside within a particular community. This sense of belonging then rallies the people within that community for the common good of the community. As conveyed above, community identity can also be called collective identity.

According to Richardson (2018, p.1), "Our home, or our quest for home, is inextricably linked to our identity." Viewing a home this way reveals that it is at the heart of a community. During the process of constructing a home, a household is subsequently creating a community identity with the group of people with which they reside. The community identity also influences the type of house that the household builds. The structure that the household erects is influenced by what type of structures their neighbours have built. The above situation occurs because they would communicate with their neighbours to find out where they can source materials, transport them to the construction site, and what materials are suitable for their environment. The above literature demonstrates that a community identity is created, and as the community evolves, so does the adopted identity.

Furthermore, a community comprises people who require shelter and a home. Building the shelter, the self-help housing process, also influences the community's identity. During this process, the community comes together and shares knowledge; hence, some of the houses that has some commonalities. The main reason for the similarities might be that they have used the same service provider (builder) to build their homes. Working together for many months on-site gives households and the community members they hire as service providers a sense of comradeship. Therefore, Communities of identity can "form through kinship, ideology, common occupations and experiences or common community of place, among others" (Salisbury, 2012, p. 207).



Individuals assign symbols to the community and how individuals invoke this symbolism in their construction of community identity. The community can be extrapolated from how task areas are placed, concentric ditches are dug, or sediments are altered. Each house cluster, delimited by small fences of stakes, may be one community, whilst all house clusters at a particular site may form another, larger community. The spatial designs of other material elements also inform us about activities and the use of space. Changes in the texture, colour and thickness of some areas within the landscape can delimit space in a very tangible way (Hauge, Peng, Strijker & Wu, 2020).

Allowing residents to create strong ties with their broader home environment and, possibly, with one another, through secondary social interaction is a significant policy objective, given current concerns about social seclusion and societal divisions. The increase in individual acts of home construction can significantly impact a neighbourhood's overall attitude and culture, even where inhabitants are, to a less extent, directly involved in designing their neighbourhood (Hamiduddin, 2017). Brunsdon (2017), in his study on the #MisconstruedIdentitiesMustFall collective, identity formation in the current South African context (that reflected on the issue of identity formation), concluded that "South Africans engaged in the process of misconstrued identity formation which operates on the principles of generalisation and prejudice".

### **3.8 The relationship between self-help housing and community identity**

The relationship between self-help housing and community identity is constructed during the house construction. In self-help housing, the dwellers construct their houses and, in the process, interact with their neighbours, professionals, and other community members, as mentioned before. The interaction between the community members is what is vital in this regard. This interaction is the key that opens the door of communication, which leads to the community members forming a relationship and, subsequently, a community identity.

Tournois and Rollerob (2020), in their study exploring the influence of individual factors on attachment, identity and commitment in a post-socialist city, concluded that home ownership may influence place attachment, identification, and commitment. Place identity has been defined as a foundation of the individual identity (self-identity) of individuals who have a broad perception and understanding of the physical environment in which they live. It is constructed

when the local environment signifies distinctiveness and individuality and manifests individual identity.

Several communities may work together in the physical sense, in that they help each other to build the houses that the community needs for the households to have shelter. Other communities may work together by openly communicating and sharing information about building houses. In the latter, the community members share information based on what other neighbours have done to complete their buildings or a part of the building. This open communication and sharing of information help to build social cohesion amongst the community members (Thomas, 2019).

Jayaram (2012, p. 56) states that "community identity has a positive dimension in that it helps individuals associate themselves with a community and reinforces community solidarity". The key term to note here is that community identity equals community solidarity (Jayaram, 2012). The solidarity or togetherness formed by the community members assists in creating a community identity linked to the housing found within the community. A community engaged in self-help housing is thrust into interacting with fellow community members.

This interaction, as aforementioned, can take many forms. The main thing to note is that whatever form the interaction takes, it will lead to the community achieving a goal of building shelters that will be adequate to house the community members. While building the houses, the community creates an identity by which they are known. This identity is intricate to the houses they have built. An outsider can make some conclusions about the community by looking at the houses. Now, whether that conclusion is proper or not would be decided by the information gained when one immerses themselves in the lived experiences of the community members.

Ahmed (2015, p. 34) asserts that "self-help housing is an inherent social human activity". This manner of defining self-help housing reveals that it is an activity that requires the community to come together to achieve it effectively. Using the term inherent shows the importance of the community interacting to achieve self-help housing. The community needs to work together in solidarity to build adequate houses effectively. The community's identity relies on experiencing a sense of cohesion and acknowledging that they need each other as community members to achieve adequate shelter.

The physical structure of neighbourhoods offers a range of features that impact their inhabitants' identities and social relations. These features include residential buildings- houses. The neighbourhood is a meaningful location created by, amongst others, self-help housing builders, which are families who dwell in the house or who intend to occupy the house that they have constructed. They afford a sense of place identity for residents, so their sense of belonging (or alienation) will affect how they behave within that space.

The physical environment (including places of residence) is one of several factors that influence how individuals see themselves and others. For instance, people associate a beautiful residential area with wealthy people. The built environment may affect people's social life and psychological reactions through visual impressions, for example, room size, attractiveness and comfort of a house or neighbourhood. Housing is presented as an expression of identity and lifestyle. Improving the housing quality of a neighbourhood may affect the residents' social identity and make a part of the city more attractive to live in, thereby making the group see themselves in a more positive light.

Have personal, social, and cultural meanings attached to them. Place of residence may still reflect information about an individual's identity, both for the resident and others. Surroundings and possessions people have said something about them, even within restricted choices of objects or surroundings. Homeownership may offer better opportunities for self-presentation through housing. Housing influences self-efficacy through how it affects a person's ability to function daily and control one's life.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

Self-help housing, community identity, and community cohesion are closely connected because the concepts have a mutual relationship. When a community engages in self-help housing, it indirectly forms a community identity. Housing is at the core of the formation of a community. Thus, if a community is to actively engage in creating a community identity, they may have to visit or revisit the housing aspect of the community formation. Households cannot work in solitude to achieve this. Hence the community would have to come together in one way or another. The coming together of the community would then create community cohesion. The cohesion experienced by the community will help a great deal in propelling them forward to

achieving the goal of building adequate housing, which they can use for the long term (Kadir, 2018).

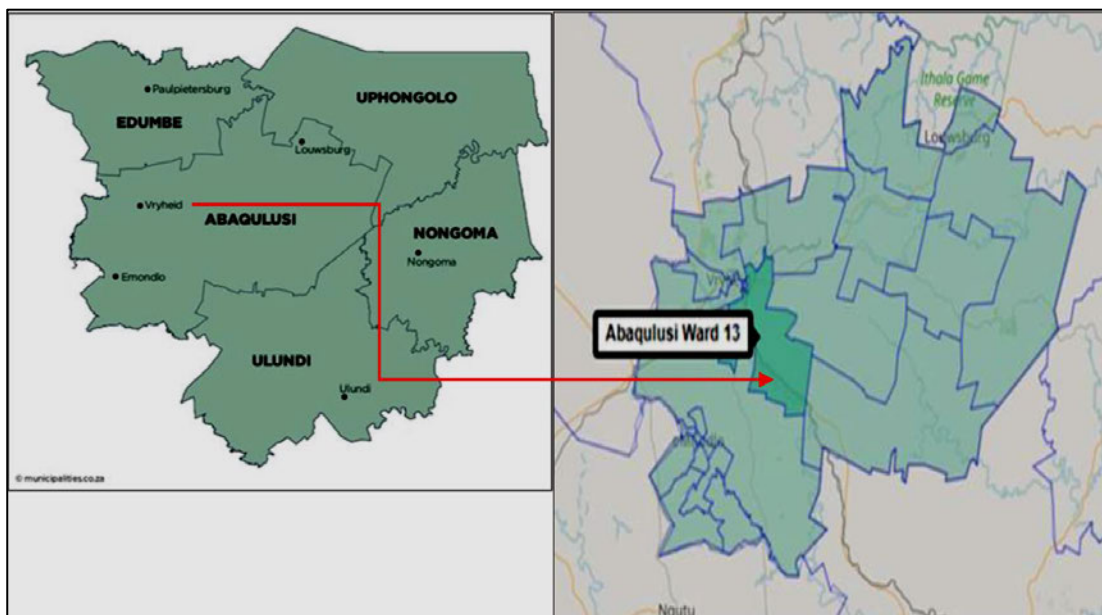
## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

Research methodology describes the procedures followed in "organizing, planning, designing and conducting good research", and its rigour and strength are measured by the research's validity and reliability (Mohajan, 2017, p.4). This chapter focuses on the research methodology used in this study. The first section of the chapter describes the study location, followed by the distinct aspects of the study's research methodology. The research process followed in this study is depicted in

### 4.2 Study area

The study area is in Abaqulusi Local Municipality, located at 27°46'S 30°48'E coordinates in the Northern part of KwaZulu-Natal Province. The municipality is within the Zululand District Municipality. It covers 4185 km<sup>2</sup> and has an estimated population of 243 795 people, and approximately 51 910 households - the specific area where the research was conducted in the



eNseka neighbourhood in Abaqulusi Local Municipality. The neighbourhood is between

eMondlo township and the town of Vryheid in ward 13, as illustrated in Figure 4 below (Abaqulusi Local Municipality, 2015).

**Figure 4: Map of the study area**

Source: Author's creation adapted from google map.

It was established on land belonging to a local church, and residents have been involved in landowner ownership issues. Residents' houses were to be demolished because they were built



on the church's private land. They intervened and ensured that the residents did not lose their homes. The Department of Rural Development & Human Settlements bought the land on behalf of the residents to resolve the matter and avoid evictions (Mandonsela, 2020). Figure 4 below is a picture of the meeting held between the community and the local municipality to solve the land issue.

**Figure 5: Community meeting with the municipality**

Source: Mandonsela (2020)

Members of the community bought land (erven/stands) from an unverified source and had no

knowledge that the land belonged to the church. They feared that they will be forced the vacate the land and their homes will be demolished. The area has a pleasant topography with undulated mountains. Figure 5 present a picture of a section of the study area showing the topography of



the area.

**Figure 6: A section of eNseka study area**

Source: Author

Residents in eNseka used their own money to build their houses. The people normally obtain material and services from local Small Medium Enterprises. Some of the business advertise themselves online and on social media.

**Figure 7: A house under construction in eNseka advertised online by a local builder.**

Source: Omakhi base vryheid nseka/ builder vryheid enseka, n.d.





Figure 7 and 8 shows the houses build by local builders modified according to the owners specifications. As can be seen in Figure 8, the garage is turned into rooms.



**Figure 8: A house in eNseka with a lock-up garage**

Source: Author

**Figure 9: A house in eNseka with garage space replaced with rooms**

Source: Author

Figure 9, 10 and 11 shows the large sizes of the erven. In figure 9, the owners added new buildings to the existing structures as their household grows

**Figure 10: Houses in eNseka on big plots of land**



Source: Author



In figure 10 the owner choose to build a large modern house with a water tank.

**Figure 11: A house in the study area with a water tank**

Source: Author

Figure 11 shows a large modern house still under construction in the same area of eNseka.

**Figure 12: A large house near completion in eNseka**

Source: Author

### 4.3 Research design

In this dissertation, a mixed-method approach was employed. The approach encompasses quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, integrating the two forms of data. According to (Creswell, 2014), qualitative research is a method used in investigating and realising the meaning people ascribe to a social problem. The method incorporates emerging questions,



techniques, data collected in the location or situation of the participant, data analysis inductively constructed from specific and broad themes, and the interpretations of the meaning of the data. The approach is relevant in this research, wherein self-help housing is analysed within the context of individuals who participated in the process in Abaqulusi Municipality. The qualitative



aspect of the design will be aimed at building up from the quantitative data to collect thorough information based on demographic data (Creswell, 2014; Cypress, 2017).



Additionally, (Creswell, 2014) describes quantitative research as testing objective theories by exploring the link between variables so they can be measured, and numerical data is analysed using statistical techniques. This research design helped in collecting demographic data from the current research participants. The demographic data helped to reveal the makeup of the sample in terms of age, education level, household size, employment status, and the total number of years living in that area at the time the research was conducted.

#### **4.4 Sampling method**

A non-probability sampling method (Rukmana, 2014), was used. In this method, participants were purposefully selected based on characteristics representing the more significant demographic from which they emanate (Yang & Banamah, 2014). The method used in this study is a non-probably method in that the researcher consciously chose who should respond to the questionnaire based on the knowledge they possess. The chosen participants were knowledgeable in the sense that they are involved in self-help housing and have firsthand experience of the impact of the self-help housing process on community identity within their community. In this study, the sample/ participants match the aims and objectives of the research because they are deemed to have knowledge about the self-help housing process, even if they do not have technical knowledge about the construction process.

The above means that the researchers subjectively choose the sample (who can participate in the study). Therefore, not all population members had an equal chance of participating which is a characteristic of non-probability sampling method (Kumar, 2011). According to Galloway (2005) some members of the population, have a greater but unknown chance to be chosen in a study compared to other members of the same population. In this study those who are involved in self-help housing have a greater but unknown chance to be included in the study sample.

The participants were selected based on their involvement in self-help housing, their level of knowledge or information to answer questions, and their representation of the population using a non-proportional quota method. Representation in this case means that the participants are representative of the sector of the population in the study area that use self-help housing method. The empirical research was conducted from April to May 2022 and twenty people who met the criteria of the non-probability sampling method explained above participated.

#### **4.5 Data collection method**

The study used a questionnaire survey to collect the data required to respond to the main research question. Survey research methods involve obtaining information directly from participants by posing questions through a questionnaire (Creswell, 2014). The participants were contacted through the tribal council and the induna of the area. The questionnaire was administered through a platform called WhatsForm, facilitated by the researcher, with the participants through a mobile device. WhatsForm is a survey-generating tool that operates through the WhatsApp social media application (Micro, 2022).

When the questionnaire survey was completed, the responses were submitted directly to the researcher's mobile device through WhatsApp. This tool was chosen because it is a fast and convenient way to collect data with minimal costs incurred. Since the scope and time of the research were limited in nature. The researcher accessed the questionnaire survey link when meeting the research participants. The questions were read out to the participants in their preferred language. They were offered a choice between the English and the isiZulu languages. It was done to accommodate all the participants and not discriminate based on level of education, age, and background. The questions in the questionnaire were aimed at exploring the views and thoughts of the participants about how self-help housing can be used to construct or shape a community's identity.

#### **4.6 Data analysis method**

The data collected were analysed to draw conclusions representing the dissertation's primary objective. The data was analysed and reported using the micro-soft excel package. Excel offers a variety of charts, and it was used to calculate descriptive statistics; its output contained numbers that describe the properties of the data collected for this research. Then graphs and statistical output generated from the software were used to maximise understanding of the dissertation's results. The data was analysed and reported using these charts to show response rates for each question asked in the survey questionnaire.

The researcher analysed the data and presented results in bar and pie charts showing the numbers later translated into percentages in the researcher's description and interpretation of the data. The

pie charts show the contribution of each data value to the total value. In contrast, the column charts were used to compare values across groups and categories of data using vertical bars. They helped filter out the unnecessary data and focused on essential data that was useful in concluding the results presented. The results are accompanied by the researcher's remarks and explanations of some features that come out during the data analysis. The descriptive statistics method has been used to organise the data to show the shape of the data, where values are highest and lowest, and d to expose unusual data values.

#### **4.7 Validity, Reliability, and Rigour**

Validity is often viewed in diverse ways depending on the research paradigm. Validity for quantitative studies means that the research accurately measures the phenomenon being studied and that the outcomes are truthful. Qualitative researchers view each context as unique; hence the validity of the research is built on the project's outcomes (Golafshani, 2003). Nonetheless, the validity of qualitative research studies is fluid (Cypress, 2017). Reliability is closely intertwined with validity because the validity of a dissertation's outcomes impacts the reliability thereof. Reliability refers to whether the research can be replicated in a different context and produce the same or closely related (similar) results in other contexts (Golafshani, 2003).

When the results are trusted, they can be generalised to a specific population or other populations. In this way, the researcher has managed to respond to the research question effectively and anticipate other questions that may arise in other contexts and fields. Similarly, the researcher in this dissertation has ensured that the research is valid and reliable. Rigour requires that a set of parameters guide the research; This research was driven by the research paradigm, the theoretical framework that underpins the question to be answered, the conceptual framework, and the basic principles of the researcher's field of study. The above parameters ensured that the researcher stayed within the required tools for the analysis. In addition, it protected the research participants in that the researcher considered their safety and well-being in answering the research question at hand. Thus, the study has been scrutinised in all aspects (Cypress, 2017).

The researcher thoroughly checked every step to reach the end goal, from the planning and implementation to the evaluation phase. The necessary tools have been tested to determine their suitability to respond to the research question. That is, the researcher strictly ensured that the tools accurately measured the aspect of the research. The researcher continually revisited the

dissertation research objectives to ensure that nothing was overlooked or if there was a need to change any parts of the research to ensure that the study did not deviate from the main objective (Noble & Smith, 2015).

This research is valid and dependable as a suitable methodology, and the research design was chosen while considering the different elements of the study. The most suitable sampling and data analysis techniques were selected, discussed in sections 4.2 and 4.4, respectively. The research participants were not coerced to give specific answers as the researcher strictly followed research ethics and protocols as per the Ethical clearance certificate acquired from the University of KwaZulu Natal in the data collection. The researcher introduced participants to the research subject to address all the ethical issues specified by the institution to ensure they understood its objectives. They were given a form that requested them to consent to participate in the investigation.

In addition, the questionnaires were formulated based on the aim and objectives of this dissertation. The Ethical clearance certificate is attached as Annexure A. The above ensured that their responses were as valid as possible and achieved ethical validity (Cypress, 2017). Furthermore, the researcher designed the questionnaire so that the data collected does not deviate from the main research question and is aligned with the research aims and objectives (Golafshani, 2003). Credibility was established using frequent debriefing sessions between the researcher and the supervisor. Therefore, the results and conclusions are valid for the context of this research.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The chapter motivates the selection of the research's approach, design, sampling, data collection and analysis, as well as the other supporting aspect for choosing a particular research methodology and method. A mixed-method approach was adopted whereby descriptive and statistical data was collected to suit the research objective. A quota sampling method was used, which allowed the researcher to select participants from all relevant age groups who used the self-help housing method to build their houses.

The researcher followed the University of KwaZulu-Natal's ethical principles in protecting the participants during the research process described in the chapter. The researcher justified the research design in line with the dissertation's research questions and explored phenomena. The chapter also provided an in-depth justification of the research instruments used, data analysis, validity, reliability, and rigour of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the findings and discussion of the study. The data was collected through a literature review and a questionnaire administered to twenty participants in eNseka, Kwazulu-Natal. The questionnaire was designed to assess the respondents' views on how their involvement in self-help housing development has influenced community identity in their neighbourhood. The questionnaire is included nineteen questions aligned with the aim and objectives of this dissertation. Therefore, the themes from the questionnaire are consistent with the dissertation's research objectives. The research findings are analysed based on past studies under each research objective as outlined in chapter 1.

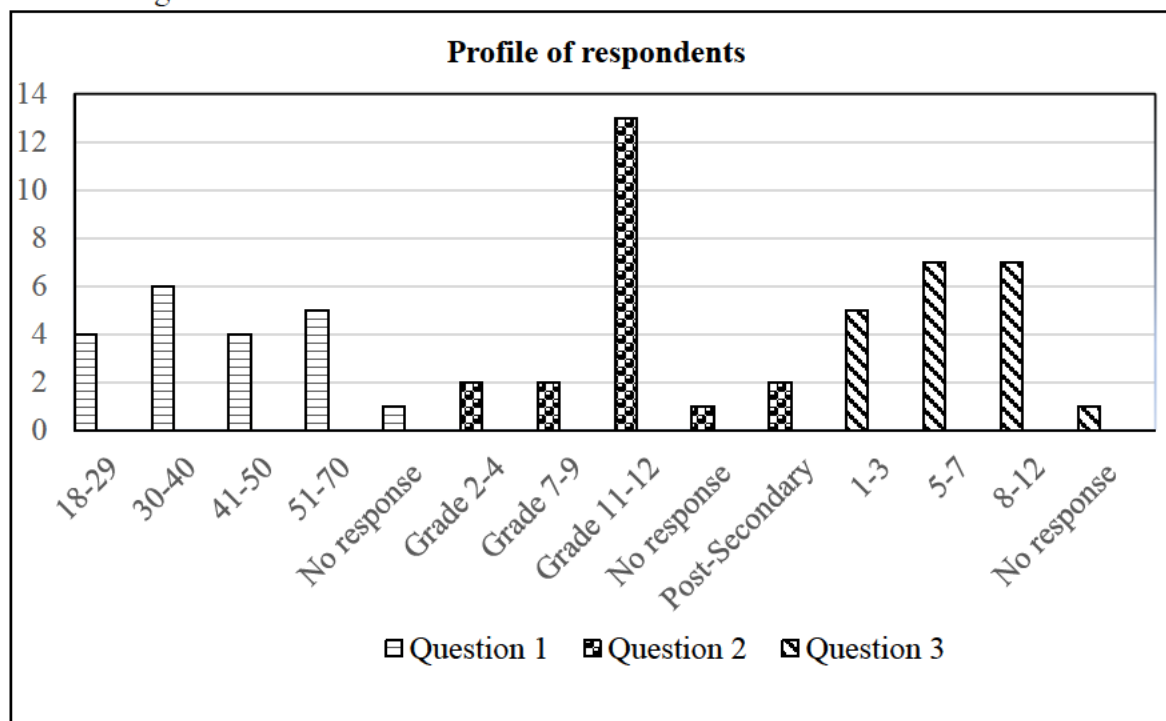
This dissertation's research aims to explore self-help housing as a means of promoting community identity in neighbourhoods where people use the method to build their own houses. The specific objectives that should be met to attain the aim are: (1) to define self-help housing, (2) to explain community identity and (3) to explore the relationship between self-help housing and community identity. The findings will be outlined in line with the various themes as they appear on the questionnaire, and the section on discussion of the findings will be aligned to the objectives of the dissertation's research. The following section presents the findings from the empirical research (questionnaire survey) grouped according to the five emergent themes from the data, the profile of participants, self-help housing, identity and self-help housing, social cohesion, and community identity. The last section, the conclusion, summarises the chapters' content.

### **5.2 Questionnaire results**

The results of the empirical research provide the participants' views regarding the subject of this dissertation. The results are outlined in this section based on the themes described in the introduction.

#### **5.2.1 Profile of respondents**

The following questions were asked to acquire information regarding the profile of the participants, namely, (1) How old are you? (2) What is your highest level of education? (3) How many household members are in your household? The responses to the above questions are outlined in Figure 13 below:



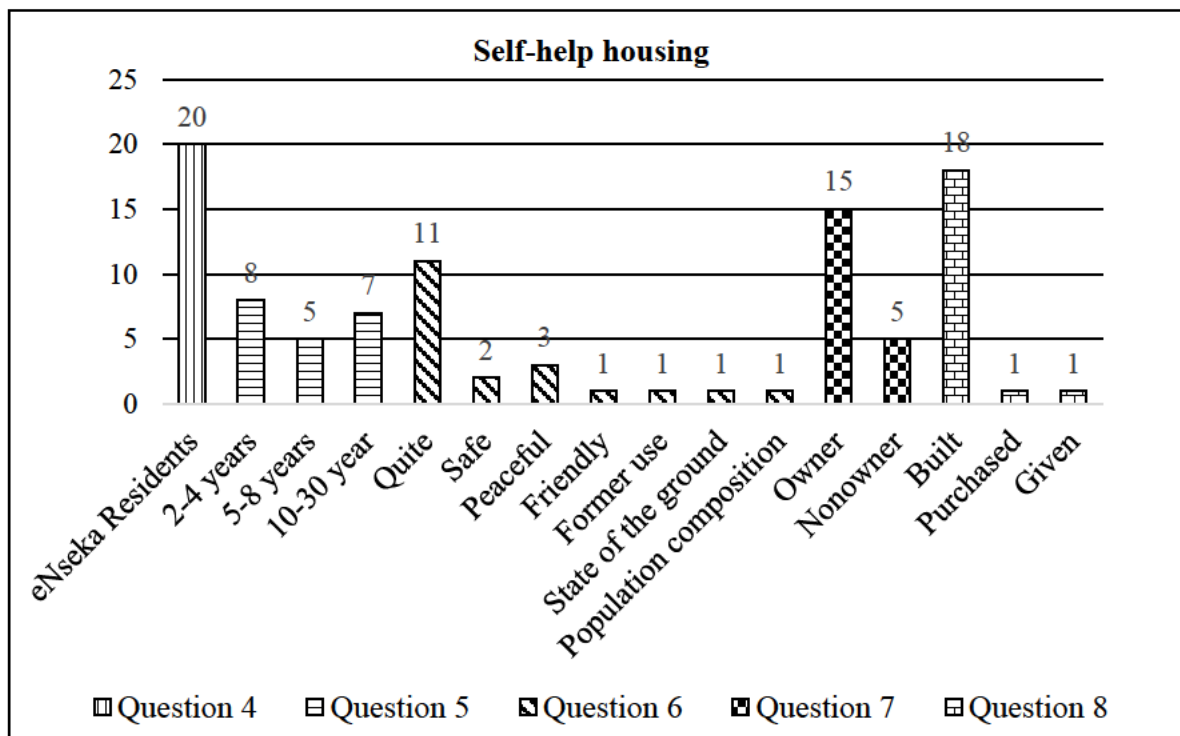
**Figure 13: Question 1- 3 responses**

Source: Author's creation

The results for question 1 show that 20% of the participants were eighteen to twenty-nine years old, 30% between thirty to forty, 20% between the age of forty-one to fifty, 25% between the age of fifty-one to seventy, and 5% did not respond to the question. In Question 2, 10% of the participants had an education level between grades two to four (lower primary education). A further 10% had grade seven to nine education (secondary education), 65% received grade eleven to twelve (High School) education, 10% had post-secondary / tertiary education, and 5% did not respond to the question on the highest education level. Question 3 results reveal that 25% of the participants indicated that they have one to three members (small family), and 35% had five to seven family members. A further 35% had eight to twelve family members, and 5% did not respond to the question on the number of family members.

### 5.2.2 Self-help housing

Questions 4 to 8 relate to information about the self-help housing process within the study area. The questions asked are specified below. (4) Where do you stay? (5) How long have you been staying in the area where you live? (6) Please tell me about the area where you are staying. (7) Do you own the house where you stay? If yes, did you build or buy the house? (8) Please tell me about the process you undertook. In response to question 4, all participants said they reside in eNseka. The answers to questions 5 to 8 are detailed in Figure 14.



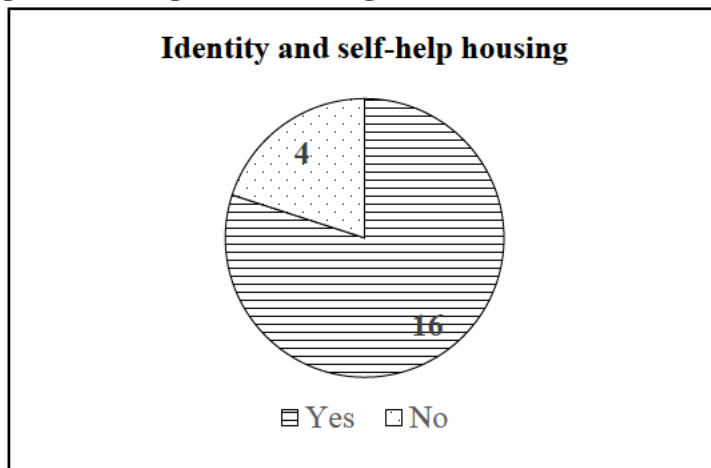
**Figure 14: Questions 4-8 responses**

Source: Author's creation

The responses to question 5 indicate that 40% of the participants have lived in the area for two to four years, 25% for five to eight years, and 35% for ten to thirty years. In question 6, 55% indicated that eNseka is quiet, 10% that it is safe, 15% is peaceful, 5% that people in eNseka are friendly, 5% commented on the former use of the land, 5% on the state of the ground on which the houses are built, and 5% indicated that there are young and older people in the area. In question 7, 75% of participants indicated that they own their houses, and 25% do not own the houses in which they reside. Results in question 8 reveal that 90% of the participants built their houses, 5% purchased the homes, and 5% were given the homes.

### 5.2.3 Individual identity

The questions about individual identity and housing include the following: (9) Do you think a person can build an individual identity through the type of house they live/stay in? Please tell me more about why you think so. (10) Do you think a person can build a certain identity through the area they live/stay in? Please tell me more about why you think so. The responses to the above two questions are presented in Figure 15.



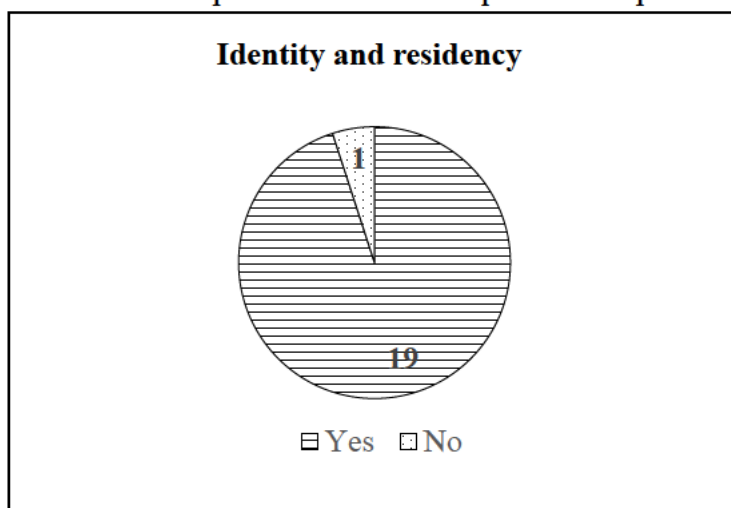
**Figure 15: Question 9 responses**

Source: Author's creation

Responses to question 9 indicate that 80% of the participants think that a person can build a specific (particular) identity through the type of house they live/stay in. 20% of the participants do not believe that a person can build a particular (specific) identity through the type of house they live/stay in.

### 5.2.4. Social identity

Question 10 is linked to social identity. The question asked was: (10) Do you think a person can build a certain identity through the area they live/stay in? Please tell me more about why you think so. The responses to the above question are presented in Figure 16.





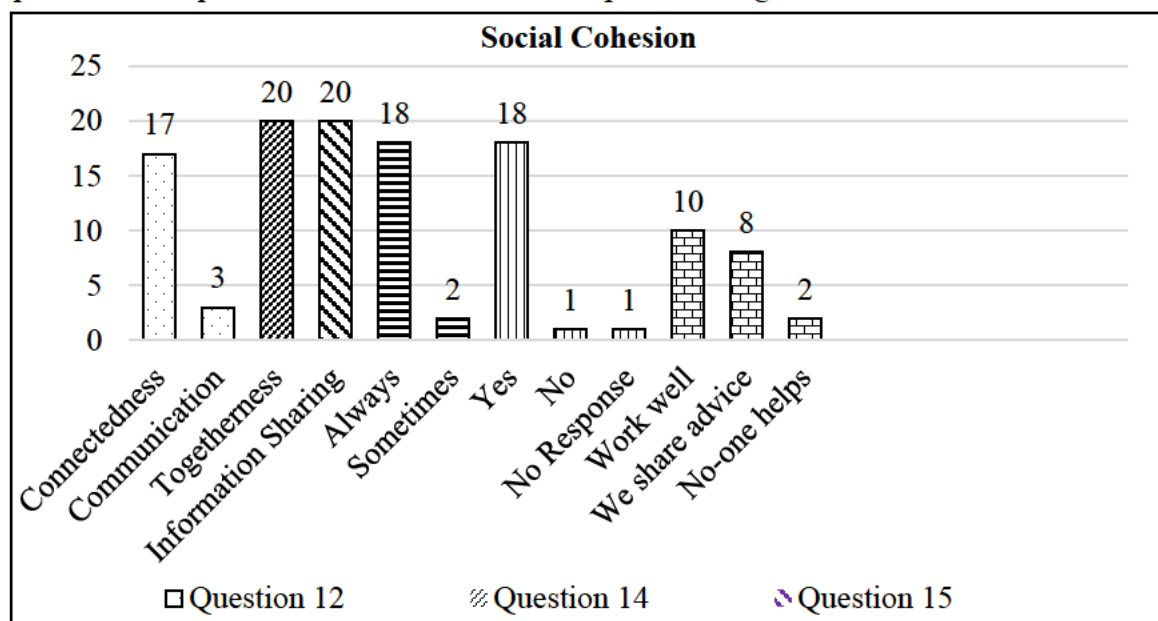
**Figure 16: Question 10 responses**

Source: Author's creation

Answers to question 10 show that 95% of the participants think that a person can build a particular identity through the area they live/stay in, and 5% do not believe that a person can build a specific (particular) identity through the place they live/stay in.

#### 5.2.4 Social cohesion

Questions 12 and 14 to 18 were asked to gain information about the participants' views regarding social cohesion in their community. The questions asked are: (12) Do you feel connected to the people you work with on this project? / Do you personally feel like a member of your community/group? (14) Do you think you have lived well together as people from diverse backgrounds in this project or community? (15) If someone in the group has good knowledge/ideas, do they easily share it with the rest of the group? (16) How do you treat each other / do you think you treat each other with respect and consideration as the group/community? (17) Would you like to do some extra work to help other people in this group/community? (18) How did you work together as a team/community to help each other? (Mention items you shared as community members/neighbours in the construction process, for example, resources). The responses to the question mentioned above are reported in Figure 17 below.



**Figure 17: Questions 12, 14-18 responses**

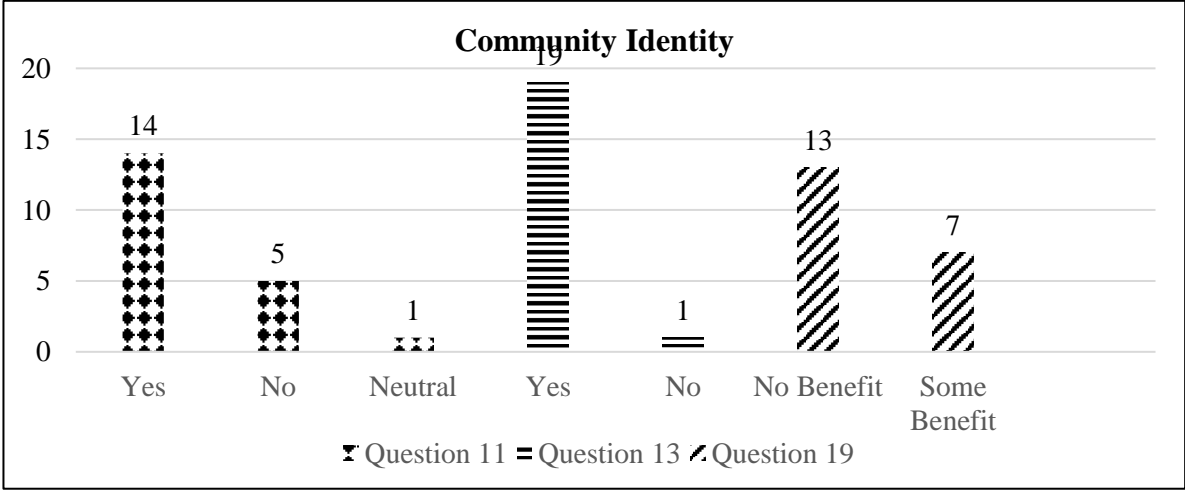
Source: Author's creation

Question 12 responses reported in the figure above indicate that 85% of the participants feel connected to their community. Furthermore, 15% indicated open communication among the community members. Replies for Question 14 show that all participants believe they have lived well together as people from diverse backgrounds in the community. Question 15 answers show that all participants feel that information is easily shared in the community. Responses to question 16 show that 90% of the participants think the community members treat each other with respect and consideration.

Additionally, 10% of the participants feel that community members sometimes treat each other with respect and care. Question 17 answers reveal that 90% of the participants feel they like doing extra work to help others in the community. 5% reported that they would not want to do some extra work to help other people in the community, and 5% have yet to respond to the question. The responses to question 18 reflect that 50% of the participants feel that they work well with others in the community, and 40% of the participants reported sharing advice with others when building their homes. In contrast, 10% reported that the community members could be more helpful.

### 5.2.6 Community identity

Questions 11, 13, and 19 helped obtain information about community identity in eNseka. The questions were asked as follows. (11) Do you think a community can build a certain identity through the type of housing they live in? Please tell me more on why you think so (13) Do you think there is a keen sense of community identity among the people who participate in this project or who live here? (19) From an individual and group/community perspective, what do you think were the success/benefits of the housing project in your area? The responses to these questions are summarised in Figure 18 below.



### **Figure 18: Question 11, 13, and 19 responses**

Source: Author's creation

Responses to question 11 illustrate that 70% of the participants think a community can build a specific identity in their housing types. Twenty-five percent of the participants do not believe a community can create a specific identity in their housing type. Furthermore, 5% of the participants were neutral in their responses. Answers to Question 13 reveal that 95% of the participants feel a strong sense of community identity among the people who live in eNseka. Five percent of the participants do not think there is a keen sense of community identity among the people living in eNseka. Replies to Question 19 show that 65% of the participants feel there are no benefits to self-help housing, while 35% think there are benefits to self-help housing.

## **5.3 Discussion**

In this section, the findings presented in the previous section are discussed in connection with the existing studies highlighted in the background and literature review (chapter 3) stages. This section interprets and highlights the meaning of the results, puts them in the context of the dissertation's study and the existing literature, and explains their significance.

### **5.3.1 Profile of participants**

The majority of participants were within the mature working age group age (i.e. 75% in the age category 30 to 70 years, have a grade 11 education, are from a medium to large family size, and have lived in the area for five years and above. The profile of these participants indicates that they were qualified to provide relevant information. The participants met the requirement set in section 4.4 sampling procedure. In this dissertation, participants were selected based on their involvement in self-help housing, their level of knowledge or information to answer questions, and their representation of the population.

The participants have lived more than five years in eNseka, which means they associate themselves with the neighbourhood of eNseka; a fact supported by Rollero & De Piccoli (2010), who discovered that the length of residence in an area is an essential predictor of place identity. The participants are suitable candidates to provide information about place identity, which is

essential because it is a critical factor in this dissertation. The participants' age and level of education are also essential because of place attachment, according to Bernardo and Palma-Oliveira (2013). The residents' level of education, effort and social attributes (like participation in local activities and vital relationships) are vital in estimating the residents' place attachment.

The age of the participants (30-70 years) shows that most of them are owners or co-owners of the houses, and they make decisions in the household. They are in charge of the building process and financing of the house-building projects, and as such, they are responsible for defining and giving meaning to the space (the house and the neighbourhood). In return, the space defines and gives meaning to these individuals. To a certain level, they are qualified to build their houses using their hands and skills (sweat and equity). The above discussion is supported by (Abd-Elkawy (2017), Mustonen (2013), and Ntema (2011).

### **5.3.2 Objective 1: To define self-help housing**

Questions 4 to 8 relate to information about the self-help housing process within the study area. The survey found that the majority built their houses and are owner-occupants. The results highlight two main elements of self-help housing: the occupant should be an owner of the property and build or have built it. The elements are integral to Bossuyt, Salet, & Majoor's (2018) and Ntema's (2011) definitions of self-help housing. Bossuyt, Salet, & Majoor (2018) define self-help as a self-build housing practice where owner-occupants commission housing production for their own use.

Ntema (2011) describes it as a practice where low-income people meet their housing needs by building their own houses using labour and finance. The above assertion describes the process that is taking place in eNseka. Therefore, self-help housing in this area can be defined in agreement with Bossuyt, Salet, & Majoor (2018) and Ntema's (2011) definitions. Furthermore, the housing construction process in the area agrees with Turner's theory that property owners should build their own houses.

### **5.3.3 Objective 2: To explain community identity**

The findings in this section show that residents in eNseka ascribe to the view that a person can build a specific identity through the type of house they occupy and their neighbourhood. The

view agrees with the assertion in the existing literature that homes/ houses and the built environment (neighbourhood) significantly influence the house occupants' identity (individual and community identity) (Salisbury, 2012). Furthermore, Tournois and Rollero (2020) state that place identity results in the local environment displaying uniqueness and individuality, ultimately expressing personal identity. Richardson (2018) argue that homes are linked to the occupants' identity so that they cannot be separated from their identity.

The majority feel connected to the community, communicate well, share information or advice easily, treat each other with respect and consideration, and are willing to help each other. However, the residents need help finding a benefit in self-help housing. All these aspects relate to social cohesion, social identity, and place identity. Generally, proper communication and information sharing lead to mutual respect, consideration, and willingness to help one another. eNseka residents' views align with Mekoa and Busari's (2018) definition that social cohesion refers to the existence of social relations that keeps the society together and encourage integrated and balanced communities.

Schiefer and van der Noll (2017) concluded that social cohesion manifests itself in different observable characteristics such as trust, and identification which links to the fact that eNseka residents share information, have mutual respect and are considerate of each other. People share help and are thoughtful to those they can identify with and trust. The results reported in Figure 11 shows that the people in the community of eNseka are willing to take the initiative and help each other within the community. eNseka residents are, therefore, willing to come together and use the community capacity they already have, which insinuates that it is embedded in how people within the community treat each other and how they best use the resources they have at their disposal.

Bergman and Heer (2018) and Boessen et al. (2018) revealed that higher population density localities have close socializing and direct dialogue connections. The above applies in eNseka (see Figure 5). eNseka has a high population with erven that are close to each other, allowing for the connectedness and the characteristics mentioned above that foster social individual, social identity and social cohesion within the community. A community is tied to the meaning people give to community symbols and how people invoke this symbolism in their construction of community identity.

That interactions and shared characteristics other than geographical location bound by intra-group social, emotional ties, and relations of interdependency architecture serve to control contact between individuals, households and communities, primarily through the creation of public and private space. Communities are collective actors, transforming their world and society. They are relational entities composed of networks of people and the environment functioning at multiple spatial and temporal scales and typically includes an idea of the locality as well as the identity. A sense of community can be deduced from how land uses are placed, soil excavated or residues are modified.

#### **5.3.4 Objective 3: To explore the relationship between self-help housing and community identity**

People's identities are always socially located, meaning people are identified and identify with a particular location (a community). In this case, the community is defined by a geographic location. Housing design represents aesthetic, environmental and social characteristics of both the interior and exterior space of a home/ house, assigned by the occupants/ residents to the home and surrounding environment. The majority in eNseka believe that the houses/homes they built create a specific identity for them and that they have an identity linked to their community. The household or individual home-builder's interaction with the community they are building their houses helps them to form a community identity.

When building houses, the community comes together and shares knowledge. They engraved unique features or attributes on the houses, geographical areas, and neighbourhoods as they interacted with each other and with the environment. In eNseka the residents engage with each other during the land acquisition. They bought land from a person who was not the rightful owner of the land. Then they co-operated with the municipality, which helped them acquire the land legally, as stated in section 4.2. They sourced out service providers locally, which is stated in section 4.2. The activities drew them together as a community. The process is supported by Pauknerova, Salisbury and Baumanova (2013); Hauge, Peng, Strijker & Wu (2020); Herrero-Tejedor, Soler & Romero (2020); and Thomas (2019) in the literature.

The majority indicated that they share knowledge and are willing to help each other (5.2.4). Knowledge sharing brought the community together and resulted in them building houses with some commonalities, to the extent that a person viewing them from outside the community may

be led to believe that they may have used the same service provider to build their homes. The residents identify with the neighbourhood with similar house features they created during the construction processes and as they modify the neighbourhood daily. These features include, but are not limited to, big houses with one or two car garages, aluminum windows, water tanks and the houses are built on big plots of land. When community members positively identify with the community within which they reside, they are more likely to form a bond with that community.

The position is backed by Richardson (2018) and Finegan and Buckley (2022), who claim that identity can be acquired by inhabiting a community's social space. It grants a sense of belonging to residents by building social links and encouraging collaboration. It is further supported by Benson & Hamiduddin (2017) who argue that the process of building cannot be undertaken in isolation, households will interact with their household members, other households, housing suppliers, practitioners, associations, and banks. The interaction creates a relationship between them that in the end supports collective identity.

Social cohesion leads to the community coming together for the greater good of the group (Schiefer & Van der Noll, 2017). It is most evident when the community faces common challenges. In eNseka the community worked with the municipality to secure the land rights of the land they occupied, illegally revealed by Mandonsela (2020). This aspect demonstrates how self-help housing is vital in enhancing social cohesion and identity within a community. Community identity is influenced by factors such as the atmosphere within the community, how the area is laid out, and the type of houses commonly built in the community. The atmosphere within the community refers to how the community members interact with each other and non-members, whether they are friendly or hostile. It is about the social interactions and the community's daily life.

Community cohesion plays itself out through the open communication lines within the community, the generosity with information on self-help housing activities, the willingness to do extra work to help each other, and being able to live alongside each other even if they come from different backgrounds. In summary the relationship is created during the process of self-help housing development when community members engrave their personal identity on the environment and adapt to such an environment to make it their own. The activities that they engage in during the process directly or indirectly encourages them to form a common identity which is called community identity.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the survey results and gave an informative discussion. The survey results were analysed in conjunction with the findings from different published sources examined in the literature review. The results reported above have revealed valuable findings that can be useful in different settings. The evidence suggests that the houses that households and individual self-help builders build directly affect the identity they acquire individually and as a community. How the households proceed with building the houses is to some extent influenced by their neighbours. Thus the interaction between the neighbours - communicating with each other and sharing knowledge on how to build the house - fosters community identity. The community indirectly adopts a particular identity based on the type of houses commonly built in the area. Further discussion of the findings, limitations and recommendations will be discussed in the following chapter, chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, a detailed analysis of the findings was provided. This chapter follows what should happen to the findings. Recommendations from findings and other observations discussed in the dissertation are presented, that is, suggestions on solving the research problem and future studies. The last section of the chapter will provide concluding remarks and close the dissertation discussions.

### **6.2 Conclusion**

This dissertation aimed to explore self-help housing to promote community identity in neighbourhoods where people use this method to build their own houses. The study's objectives were to define self-help housing, explain community identity, and explore the relationship between self-help housing and community identity. From the results and discussion in the previous chapter, there is evidence that the self-help housing method of building houses by the owner-occupant encourages social cohesion and community, collective or shared identity. The



identity is created during the planning, design, and construction. Then as the owners continue to reside in the houses and relate to the community members and the surrounding environment, they develop a community identity (Mekoa & Busari, 2018; Mustonen, 2013).

This dissertation has provided new insights into the relationship between self-help housing and community identity in South Africa. It is among the few empirical investigations to explore how self-help housing is essential in constructing community identity amongst people involved in self-help (self-build) housing in the country. Factors like individual and social identity and social cohesion are building stones to community identity, which contribute significantly to establishing socially cohesive neighbourhoods.

The dissertation applied Social Identity Theory and Turner's Self-Help Housing Theory. The dissertation affirmed that the two theories are still relevant in understanding the phenomenon of self-help individual household building for community identity. The outcomes of this dissertation suggest that when a community is involved in self-help (build) housing, they subsequently build a community identity which echoes the core of both theories.

The residents' engagement in building their houses encourage communication and information sharing within the community. Their involvement in community issues, self and community identity enable them not to judge one another based on their academic literacy. Sharing information and knowledge breaks the barrier between the educated and the illiterate as they respect each other based on their interaction and not social class. Again those who are less educated or illiterate demonstrate that they have acquired knowledge without a formal education which enables them to engage with their fellow community members as equals.

The community's participation in self-help housing result in community cohesion and community identity which lessen and work against the political territorial divisions in the country which deliberately segregated the community based on their racial, tribal and social standing, resulting in a fragmented society where community identity and unity were mislaid. Engaging in self-help housing can assist in eradicating the above ills in the society due to the fact that the community members develop a bond that discourage division but promote community cohesion and identity.

It can also be concluded that self-help housing promote delivery of bigger houses to the community at an affordable price. The houses delivered are also customised to suit the needs of the owners. The above conclusion is supported by (Bossuyt, 2021) assertion that the method offers the home builder (owner-occupant) increased control over the building process allowing the occupants to achieve customised houses at a lower cost while giving the builders a feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction, self-expression and identity formation. The claim has been proven correct by evidence in eNseka where residence employed the self-help housing method to build their houses.

The findings of this study are useful in that they provide the local government with relevant information that can be used in promoting integration within communities. The local municipalities can benefit from self-help housing in that they will be able to deliver bigger houses and homes that meet the needs of the occupants since the houses are designed and build by the occupants to suit their individual needs. The municipalities will be able to involve residents who are in need of housing in constructing their own houses and gain skills in the construction industry. This processes in a way play a role in skills development, community engagement and development. The local municipalities will be able to reduce wastage caused in the housing provision since there will be no houses that will not be occupied due to poor construction and the beneficiaries dissatisfied by the size and design of the houses.

Municipalities that are faced with division within the communities can benefit from self-help housing since in the process of building the houses the community members would enforce community cohesion and respect for each other. The aforementioned will lessen incidences where community member illegally occupy houses because they were not involved in the allocation of houses or the beneficiary list was altered; which is a problem in the current housing delivery where beneficiaries are provided with a standardised complete housing unit.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

The dissertation shed light on the relationship between self-help housing and community identity at a local level. However, more can still be unearthed by doing further studies on this subject. The findings in this dissertation supported the following recommendations for future research. Firstly, the socioeconomic status of households building their own houses in peri-urban areas needs to be researched further about its role in creating community identity. The second aspect

revolves around the role of family structure in decision-making, as it impacts household control of the self-help housing processes.

Thirdly, the relationship between self-help housing and the attitudinal changes and behaviours of households involved in self-help housing projects provides an understanding of how people from diverse backgrounds come together to build community identity. The fourth aspect is socio-cultural identity; further research is required to probe how it can be addressed in the delivery of self-help housing since it facilitates the harmonisation of religious, cultural and social aspects vital in sustainable human settlements. The subject needs to be adequately addressed in future studies since it was not addressed fully in the current research due to the limited scope and time frame.

#### **6.4 Concluding remarks**

The empirical data results in this dissertation show evidence that self-build housing is a phenomenon continuously occurring in diverse communities and can create social cohesion and community identity. Self-help housing may be particularly relevant in countries where the residents' identity has suffered intense and complex changes. In the South African context, self-help housing can significantly eradicate the fragmented society where community identity and unity are non-existent. The dissertation contributes to the existing knowledge of community identity from a housing field perspective by demonstrating that the interaction in the self-help housing process develops community identity.

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## Annexures

### Annexure A – Ethical Clearance Letter



25 November 2021

Nontsikelelo Felicitus Dlamini (209517290)  
School Of Built Env & Dev Stud  
Howard College

Dear NF Dlamini,

**Protocol reference number:** HSSREC/00003499/2021

**Project title:** Exploring the use of self-help housing as a tool for community identity construction: A case study of Abaqulusi Local Municipality

**Degree:** Masters

#### **Approval Notification – Expedited Application**

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 04 October 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.**

This approval is valid until 25 November 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

**All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.**

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)**

/dd

#### **Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

**Postal Address:** Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

**Telephone:** +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**

## Annexure B – Gatekeeper Permission Letter

### Othaka Traditional Council

Enseka Area

Road R34

Vryheid

3100

21 October 2021

To whom it may concern

#### Permission to conduct research

This letter serves to confirm that Nontsikelelo Dlamini, student number 209517290, has been given a permission to conduct research for her university studies. This permission is given by Othaka Traditional Council under Chief L.P Mdlalose. She is allowed to approach some household in the Area of Enseka at Vryheid, as she requested.

Sincerely,

Inkosi LP Mdlalose

  
060 379 6719  
lwazimdl@gmail.com



## **Annexure C – Interview Schedule (English)**



### **Interview schedule**

1. How old are you?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. How many household members are in your household?
4. Where do you stay?
5. How long have you been staying in the area where you live?
6. Please tell me about the area where you stay?
7. Do you own the house where you stay?
8. If yes, did you build or buy the house? Please tell me about the process you undertook.
9. Do you think a person can build a certain identity through the type of house they live/stay in? Please tell me more on why you think so
10. Do you think a person can build a certain identity through the area they live/stay in? Please tell me more on why you think so
11. Do you think a community can build a certain identity through the type of housing they live in? Please tell me more on why you think so.
12. Do you feel connected to the people you work with on this project? / Do you personally feel like a member of your community/group?
13. Do you think there is a keen sense of community identity among the people who are involved in this project or who live here?
14. Do you think you have lived well together as people from diverse backgrounds in this project or community?
15. If someone in the group has good knowledge/ideas, do they easily share it with the rest of the group?

16. How do you treat each other / do you think you treat each other with respect and consideration as the group/community?
17. Would you like to do some extra work to help other people in this group/community?
18. How did you work together as a team/community to help each other? (Count the items you shared as community members/neighbours in the construction process, for example., Resources,)
19. From an individual and group/community perspective, what do you think the success/benefits of the housing project in your area were?

## **Annexure D – Interview Schedule (IsiZulu)**



### **Uhlu lwemibuzo**

Uneminyaka emingaki?

Yiliphi izinga lakho lemfundo eliphakeme kakhulu?

Mangaki amalunga omndeni asekhaya lakho?

Uhlala kuphi?

Unesikhathi esingakanani uhlala endaweni ohlala kuyo?

Ngicela ungitshele ngendawo ohlala kuyo?

Ingabe ungumnikazi wendlu lapho uhlala khona?

Uma kunjalo, uyakhile noma uyithengile indlu? Ngicela ungitshele ngenqubo oyithathile

Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi umuntu angazakhela ubunikazi obuthile ngohlobo lwendlu ahlala kuyo / aphila kuyo? Ngicela ungitshele kabanzi ukuthi kungani ucabanga kunjalo

Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi umuntu angazakhela ubunikazi obuthile ngendawo ahlala kuyo/aphila kuyo? Ngicela ungitshele kabanzi ukuthi kungani ucabanga kunjalo

Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi umphakathi ungazakhela ubunikazi obuthile ngohlobo lwezindlu abahlala kuzo? Ngicela ungitshele kabanzi ukuthi kungani ucabanga kunjalo

Ngabe uzizwa uxhumene nabantu osebenzisana nabo kule phrojekthi? / Ngabe wena uqobo uzizwa uyilunga lomphakathi / leqembu lakho

Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi kunomqondo oqinile womphakathi phakathi kwabantu ababambe iqhaza kule phrojekthi noma abahlala lapha?

Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi nihlalisene kahle njengabantu abavela ezizindeni ezahlukahlukeni kule phrojekthi noma emphakathini?



Uma othile eqenjini enolwazi / imibono emihle ingabe kwabelwana ngayo kalula neqembu lonke?

Ngabe niphathana kanjani / nicabanga ukuthi niphathana ngenhlonipho nongokucabangelana eqenjini / emphakathini?

Ungathanda ukwenza omunye umsebenzi owengeziwe ukusiza abanye abantu kuleli qembu / umphakathi?

Nisebenzisane kanjani njengeqembu / umphakathi nisizana? (Bala izinto enabelane ngazo njengamalungu omphakathi/ omakhelwane kwinqubo yokwakha, isbonelo., izinsizakusebenza,)

Ngokombono womuntu ngamunye kanye neqembu / womphakathi, ngabe ucabanga ukuthi impumelelo / izinzuzo zephrojekthi yokwakhiwa kwezindlu endaweni yangakini beziyini?

## Annexure E – Consent Form (IsiZulu)



### IMVUME ENOLWAZI

Mhlanganyeli othandekayo,

Igama lami nginguNontsikelelo Dlamini (Inombolo yomfundi: 209517290). Ngifundela i-Master's Degree in Housing e-Nyuvesi ya-KwaZulu-Natal, e-Howard College Campus. Isihloko socwaningo lami sithi: **Exploring the use of self-help housing as a tool for community identity construction: A case study of Abaqulusi Local Municipality**. Injongo yesifundo ukuhlola ukuthi izindlu zokuzisiza zingasetshenziswa yini njengethuluzi lokwakha ubunikazi bomphakathi e-Nseka e-Abaqulusi Local Municipality.

Ngicela imvume yakho yokubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni ngokuphendula uhlu lwemibuzo oluthunyelwe kuwe.

Sicela wazi ukuthi:

- Imininingwane oyinikezayo izosetshenziselwa ucwaningo lwezifundo kuphela.
- Ukubamba iqhaza kwakho kungokuzithandela ngokuphelele. Ungakhetha ukubamba iqhaza, ukungalibambi iqhaza noma uyeke ukubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni.
- Ngeke ujeziswe ngokuthatha isenzo esinjalo.
- Imininingwane eqoqwe kuhlu lwemibuzo izosetshenziswa kwi-dissertation ezosiza ekwenzeni izincomo ngenqubomgomo yezindlu ezweni.
- Imibono yakho ohlwini lwemibuzo ngeke idalulwe, okungukuthi, imininingwane yakho efaka igama lakho kanye nobunikazi bakho ngeke kudalulwe nganoma yiluphi uhlobo ocwaningweni.
- Uhlu lwemibuzo kanye nolwazi oluhambisana nayo nezinto eziphathelelelelelekelele zizogcinwa kufayela elivikelwe ngephasiwedi efinyeleleka kimi kuphela

futhi nonsumpa wami uzonikezwa imininingwane uma ecelela izinjongo zemfundo kuphela.

- Ngemuva kwesikhathi seminyaka emihlanu, ngokuhambisana nemithetho yeyunivesithi, ifayela lizobhujiswa ngokushiswa.

Uma uvuma ukubamba iqhaza sicela usayine isimemezelo esifakwe kulesi sitatimende (uzonikezwa ishidi elihlukile lamasiginesha).

Ngiyabonga ngesikhathi sakho.

Ukuzimisela kwakho ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kuyabongeka kakhulu.

Imininingwane yami yokuxhumana imi kanje:

Igama lomcwaningi: Nontsikelelo Dlamini Unsumpa wephrojekthi: Dr Daphne Ntlhe

Imininingwane yokuxhumana: 064 855 2554 Imininingwane yokuxhumana: 072 856 4831/031 260 2193

Imeyili: [209517290@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:209517290@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Imeyili: [ntlhed@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ntlhed@ukzn.ac.za)

Iziqu zeprojekthi: Master of Housing

Isikhungu: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Ngiyabonga ngeqhaza lakho kulolu cwaningo.

Isikole: Built Environment and Development Studies

- ☐ Mina ..... (Igama eligcwele lomhlanganyeli) ngalokhu ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe yilo mbhalo kanye nohlobo lwephrojekthi yocwaningo, futhi ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza kwiphrojekthi yocwaningo.
- ☐ Ngiyakuqonda ukuthi nginelungelo lokucela ukuthi imininingwane ethile edalulwe ngesikhathi sezingxoxo zenhlolokhono ihlale iyimfihlo.
- ☐ Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngiqinisekisiwe ngemfihlo.

Sicela usayine ngokulandelayo kulayini onamachashazi usho ukuthi uyafuna yini ukusebenzisa igama lakho langempela noma amagama angamanga (Ungasayina ngokungeza iziqalo nesibongo sakho):

Umcwaningi engasebenzisa igama lami langempela .....

Ngicela ukuthi igama lami langempela lifihlwe .....

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuhoxa kuphrojekthi nganoma yisiphi isikhathi, uma ngifisa ukukwenza njalo.

.....

ISIGINESHA YOMHLANGANYELI (Ungasayina ngokungeza iziqalo nesibongo sakho)

.....

Usuku

Annexure F – Consent Form (English)



**INFORMED CONSENT**

Dear Participant

My name is Nontsikelelo Dlamini, I am conducting a study entitled:

**‘Exploring the use of self-help housing as a tool for community identity construction: A case study of Abaqulusi Local Municipality’.**

Your participation in this study involves consenting to contributing to the interview. The in-depth interview will run for approximately 30 minutes and will be documented using WhatsForm. Contribution in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any stage and no negative penalties will be experienced. Apart from facilitating the discussion during the interview, I will also take down notes which at a later stage will be transcribed and made available for data analysis. Your participation will entail identifying and interpreting and giving your understanding of self-help housing and how it can be used as a tool for community identity construction. Your participation in this study will contribute to understanding self-help housing and community identity. Data collection will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. The data collected will be stored in a safe location for a period specified by the university and pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. Should you request, an electronic copy of the final project it will be sent to you on completion.

Thank you for your time.

Your willingness to participate in this study will be appreciated.

Name of researcher: Nontsikelelo Dlamini    Project Supervisor: Dr. Daphne Nthle

Contact Details: 064 855 2554

Contact Details: 072 856 4831/031 260 2193

Email: [209517290@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:209517290@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Email: [nthled@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:nthled@ukzn.ac.za)

Qualification for Project: Master of Housing

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

School: Built Environment and Development Studies

- ☐ I ..... (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to request that certain information disclosed during the interview discussions remain confidential.
- ☐ I understand that I am assured of confidentiality.

Please sign next on the dotted line stating whether you want to use your real name or false names:

The investigator may use my real name .....

I request that my real name be hidden .....

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I desire to.

.....

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....

DATE

