

# ARPL 3013 Project 2010

## Working and Living in Yeoville

Wits Planning Students – 3<sup>rd</sup> Year – Housing elective

Facilitator: Sarah Charlton

Below are some of the slides used in making the dvd. They give an overview of the project and some of the main findings. This contributes to our aim of producing one composite piece of research from all the individual assignments. However for the full range of interview notes, transcripts, and analysis, all 11 student submissions need to be read.

# Working and living in Yeoville



a production of 3<sup>rd</sup> year  
urban planning students  
University of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg October 2010  
for the course ARPL 3013: Housing theory, law and policy





**This is about housing in Yeoville.**

**But we didn't start with buildings.**

**We started with people  
who earn an income  
in public places  
in Yeoville.**

**They are all**

- **Working**
- **Visible**
- **Easy to identify**
- **Easy to approach**
- **Likely to be poor.**

**We interviewed them  
to learn about their work  
and their housing situation.**



Pavement workers interviewed

Food vendor

Clothing vendor x 2

Vegetable vendor

Newspaper seller x 2

Spaza shop worker x 2

Hairdresser x 2

Car mechanic x 3





Street workers interviewed:

Informal recycler x 2

Car guard x 2

Truck driver x 3





Park workers interviewed:  
Photographers x 2

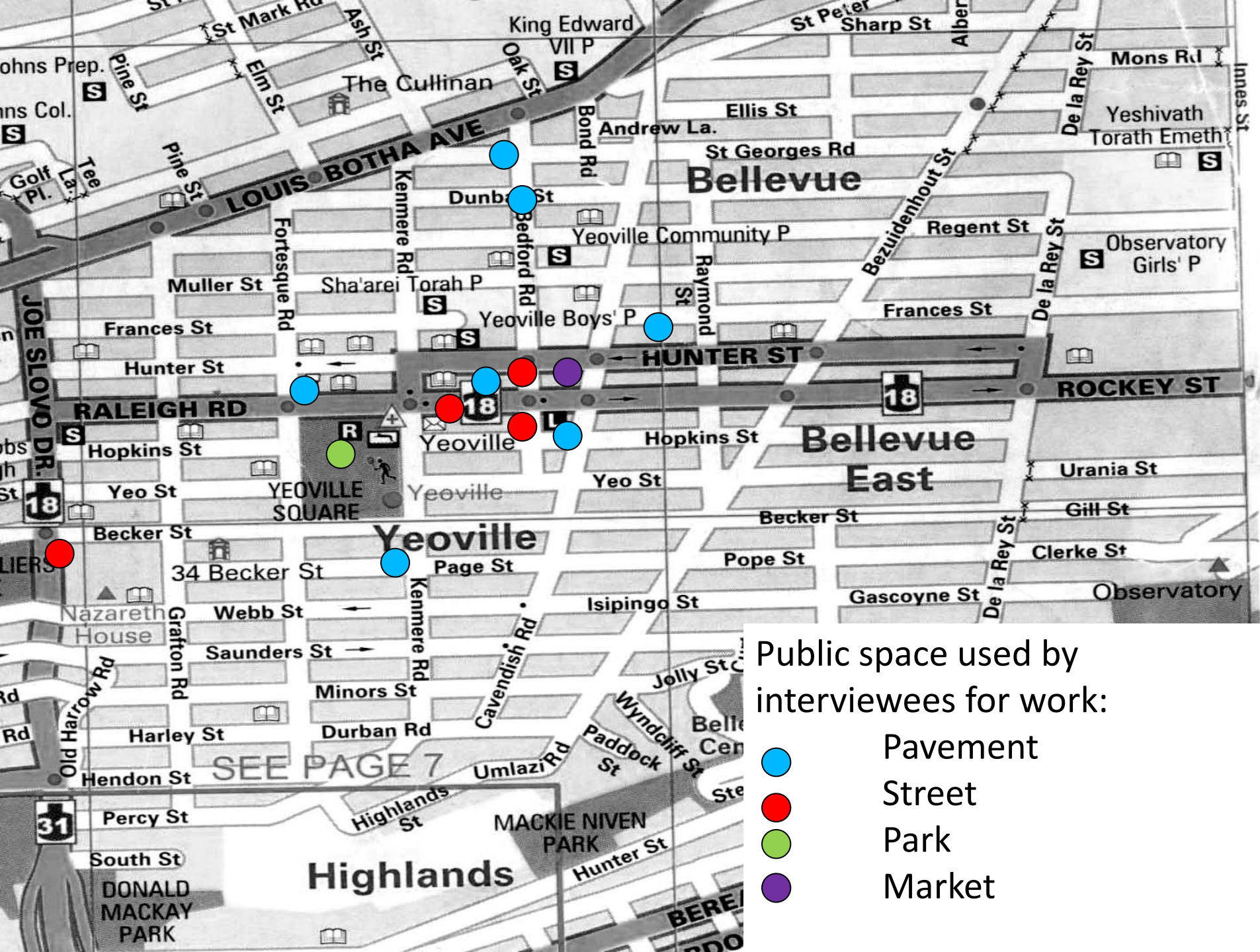




Market workers interviewed:  
Fruit & veg vendor x 2  
Cooked food vendor











Places of origin of interviewees:  
Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nigeria  
KZN, Eastern Cape, Lesotho



# Dependants & 'home': our interviewees

Percentage	Comment
♦ 76%	Have dependants, either from their original home, or staying with them currently.
♦ 4.8%	Saving money to go home one day, have no dependants.
♦ 9.5%	No dependants, spend their money on food and rent, no mention of savings.
♦ 9.5%	No mention of dependants.
♦ 9.5%	Have no aspirations of going home.
♦ 23.8%	Go home occasionally (to see family), or saving money to go back home one day.
♦ 66.7%	Do not know whether they will go home or not, economic circumstances restrict them, since it is very expensive to go home. They prefer to make money in Joburg and then post it to the families.



Some people who live in Yeoville work there.  
But Yeoville is also a destination for work for  
people who live elsewhere:

Nearly 1/3 interviewees (8/25) do not live in Yeoville

17 live in Yeoville

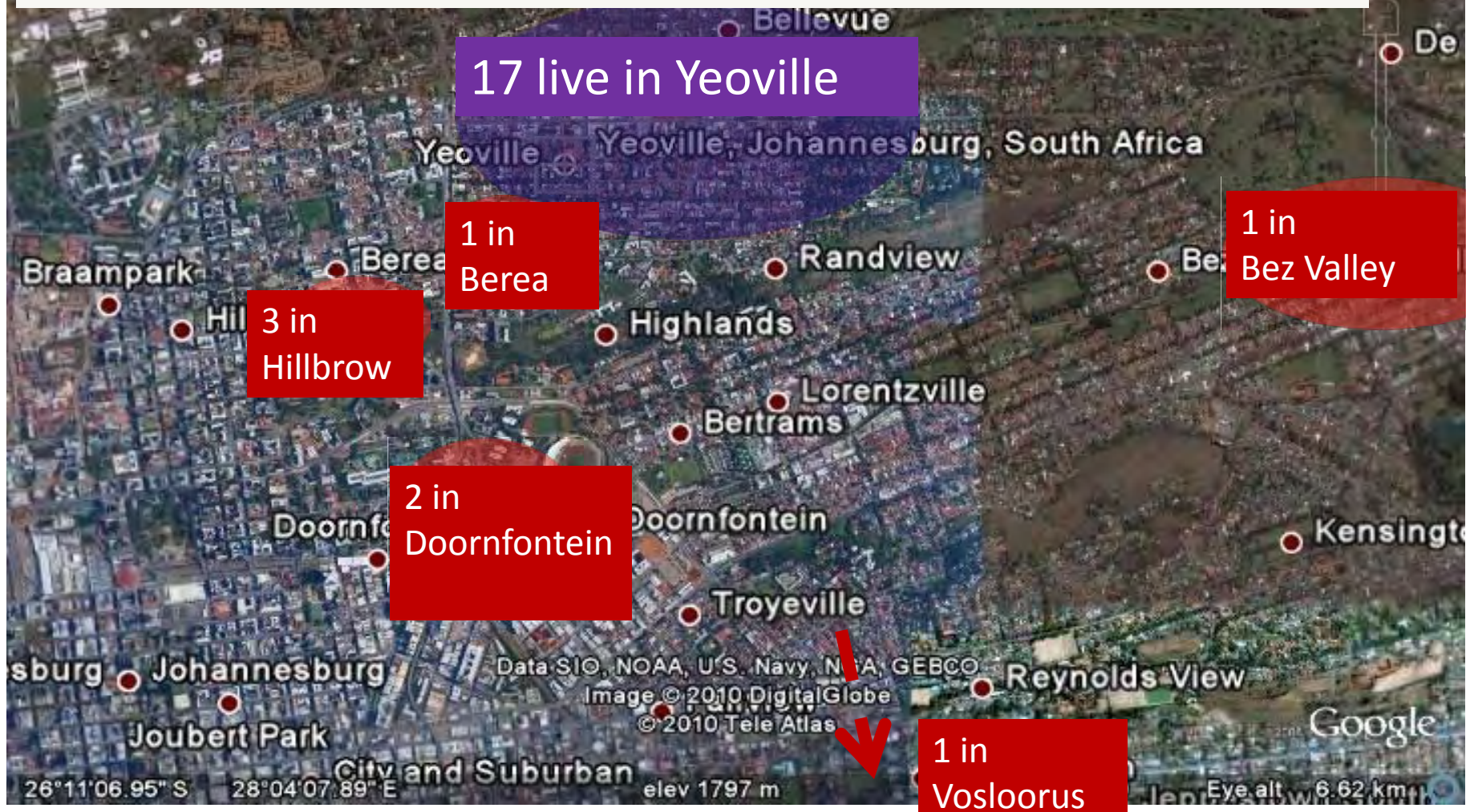
1 in  
Berea

1 in  
Bez Valley

3 in  
Hillbrow

2 in  
Doornfontein

1 in  
Vosloorus





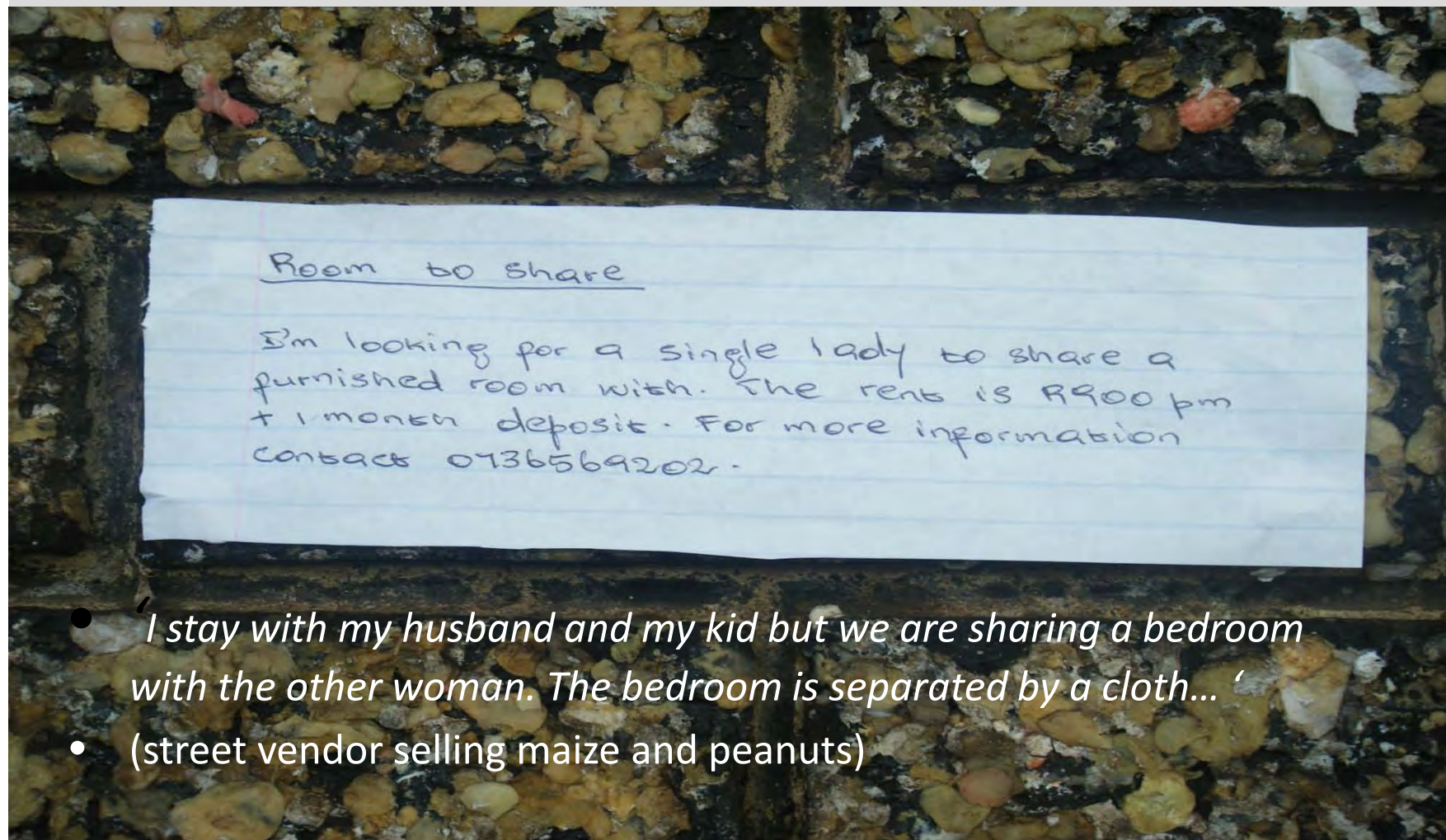
# Most interviewees are renting accommodation But 3 are paying no rent

- *'No-one is in charge of the room that's why they don't pay rent'*
  - (two informal recyclers share a room at the top of an apartment block in Doornfontein)
- *'She sleeps on the floor with her baby and pays no rent'*
  - (street vendor and baby share a room with her sister and her sister's husband, who pay the rent)





9 interviewees are occupying a **portion of a room in a house or flat (more than 1/3 of interviewees)**. The other portion of the room may be occupied by someone unrelated.



Room to share

I'm looking for a single lady to share a furnished room with. The rent is R900 pm + 1 month deposit. For more information contact 0736569202.

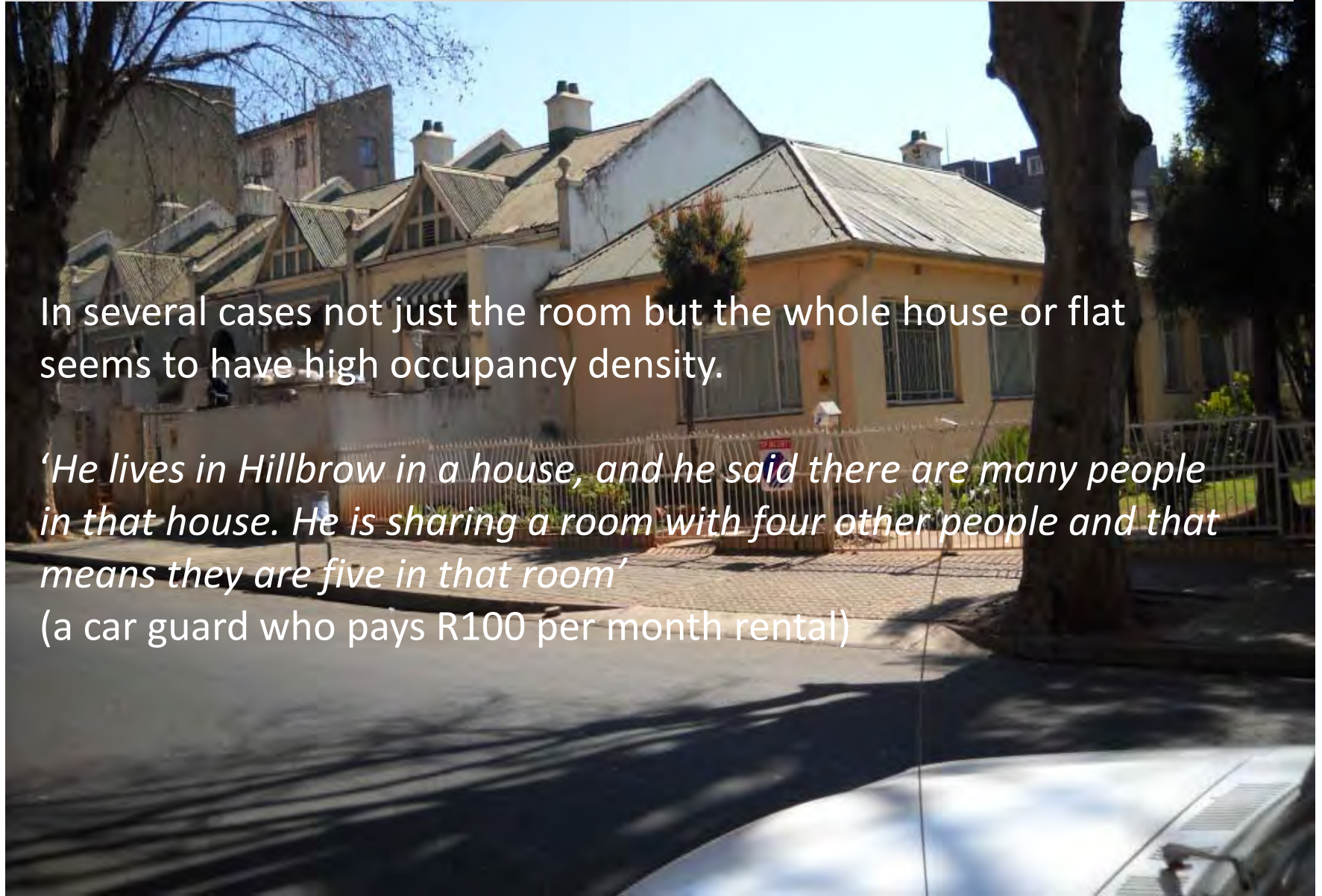
- *'I stay with my husband and my kid but we are sharing a bedroom with the other woman. The bedroom is separated by a cloth...'*
- (street vendor selling maize and peanuts)



In 4 cases interviewees live in a room where there are a total of 5 people living in the room.

In several cases not just the room but the whole house or flat seems to have high occupancy density.

*'He lives in Hillbrow in a house, and he said there are many people in that house. He is sharing a room with four other people and that means they are five in that room'*  
(a car guard who pays R100 per month rental)





9 interviewees (some with families) are occupying a **whole room, in a house or flat.**





7 interviewees are occupying a whole flat.





9 interviewees (more than 1/3) are paying R650 per month or less (9/25)

Rent per month (R)	Accommodation
0	Shared room in a block in Doornfontein
0	Shared room in a block in Doornfontein
0	Floorspace in someone's rented room in a flat in Yeoville
100	Part of a room in a house in Hillbrow shared amongst 5
110	Room in a hostel in Vosloorus
300	Part of a room in a house in Yeoville shared amongst 5
450	shared room in Yeoville shared between 2
600	Balcony of a flat in Yeoville
650	Part of a room in Yeoville shared with a women and 3 kids
650	part of a room in Yeoville shared with brother (2 in total)



Another 6 interviewees are paying between R700 & R1000 per month

Rent per month	Accommodation
700	part of a room in dilapidated house in Yeoville shared with one other
700	for a flat in Hillbrow costing R2100 per month but in which he has sublet one room for R1400
800	for part of a room in Yeoville
800	for a maid's room in a block of flats
800	for part of a shared flat in Yeoville
1000	a room in a house

So a total of 3/5 of interviewees are paying less than R1000 per month rental(15/25 or 60%)



## Income and rental

Monthly income is not always an indication of the rental people pay.

Some people with 'good' incomes pay a small component of it on rent.

Others pay a considerable portion of their income on rent.

The highlighted sections on the next slide show these differences.

	RENTAL – INCOME RELATIONSHIP		
	RENT PER MONTH	TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION	INCOME PER MONTH
	R0	a shared room	R5600 (R1200 per week)
	R0	floorspace in a room	
	R0	a room	R4800 (estimated)
	R100	part of a room	R1400 (estimated)
	R110	a room in a hostel	
	R300	part of a room	
	R450	a shared room	R300 (girlfriend assists with rent)
	R600	a flat	
	R650	part of a room	R500 - R800
	R650	part of a room	R2000 (estimated)
	R700	most of a flat	R12000
	R700	part of a room	
	R800	a shared flat	R1000
	R800	half a room	under R1000 (husband's contributes)
	R800	a room	R520
	No info		R690 per day (turnover)
	R1000	a room	
	R1100	a cottage	R1400
	R1200	a flat	
	R1300	a room	
	R1400	a room in a flat	
	R1500	a flat	
	R1500 + R800	a room + a workshop	
	R1700	a room	R16000 (estimated)
	R2500	a flat	R5000-R7000



## Some key points from our research

- People predominantly live in rental accommodation (but 3 interviewees pay no rent).
- There are diverse types of accommodation – flats, rooms in flats, rooms in houses, 'maid's' rooms, a balcony etc.
- Not all interviewees lived in Yeoville – 8 live elsewhere and commute in to work. One interviewee moved to Yeoville after the xenophobic violence Alex.
- Rental amounts in Yeoville are comparatively high (for the amount of space).
- People save costs/ afford the location by sharing space.
- Sharing including rooms or portions of rooms. More than 1/3 of interviewees are sharing a room, sometimes with strangers.
- In some accommodation occupation density appears high
- From the description of some accommodation it is overcrowded and of poor quality (suggesting potential problems with privacy, safety, health)
- But there were few explicit complaints about accommodation

## Some key points from our research

- Not all those earning a living in public space earn very low incomes: a number of interviewees earn R5000 or above.
- There is not always a direct correlation between earnings and rentals paid: some comparatively high income earners choose to live in low-cost accommodation. This suggest other spending priorities.
- Amongst other priorities is sending money to family members elsewhere.
- But this doesn't necessary mean people are not invested in Yeoville - some interviewees have been in Yeoville for a long time – eg 20 years – and are attached to the area.
- Some people see their nightly accommodation merely as a place to sleep – not space to spend time in.
- Note: For those with poor quality accommodation conditions Yeoville offers relatively good public amenity – such as trees, parks, swimming pool, generally low-rise built environment etc



## Some key points from our research

- More than 1/3 of interviewees are paying R650 per month or less for accommodation.
- Some interviewees are paying a considerable proportion of their income on rent – but are saving on transport costs.
- Several interviewees make use of their accommodation for work: eg to prepare cooked food in, to store goods and equipment.
- Accommodation is sourced through
  - Word of mouth
  - Family or kinship links
  - ‘The Wall’ (Shoprite)

# Some key points from our research

- In peoples' work and their accommodation issues of 'formality' and 'informality' can be found.
  - Some seemingly 'informal' work has apparently formal aspects: eg car guards register with the police station; truck drivers seeking casual work at the Shoprite wall also have contract transport work with companies.
  - Formal buildings are used in ways not planned for which contravene regulations
  - 'Formal' and 'informal' as labels have limitations.
- South African low-income housing policy has little to offer by way of response to the situation in Yeoville: the policy does not address the need for cheap rental accommodation; social housing is too costly and targets higher income earners than many of our interviewees; the policy is largely directed at SA citizens (many interviewees would not qualify)
- A limitation of our research is that it did not explore who the suppliers of accommodation are and get more detail on terms and conditions of living in the accommodation



# The voices of Yeoville

Yeoville is a nice place, although business is not the same everyday I'm happy I can put food on the table  
(Anonymous).

My husband and I help each other pay rent because it is too expensive (Anonymous).

I know how to plait hair very well so since I have one day off here (at the spaza shop that she works at) I am able to earn extra money doing that  
(Anonymous).

I love Yeoville, this is the heart of Africa, you can see it yourself, its full of life! (Mr Billgates).

- I hope to someday open up my own workshop, I know my networks will expand (Mandlenkosi).

South Africa is a free country, you can come here without a visa so who doesn't want to come to South Africa (by stander from Mr Billgates spot)

- Project and dvd participants:
- Danny Flax
- Mamokete Devon Matjomane
- Kgosietsile Moleta
- Sithandiwe Ndaba
- Ayabulela Ngcaku
- Gugu Ngonyama
- Lorraine Nzimande
- Caryn Vukea
- Nozipho Zungu
- Soehla Moremoholo
- Khumo Sello
- Behind the scenes: Sarah Charlton



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