

SQUATTING WITHIN THE METROPOLITAN FRINGE OF CAPE TOWN: A STUDY OF OVERCROWDING IN MBEKWENI

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The influx of people to existing Black residential areas generally exacerbates conditions of overcrowding of the existing housing stock, which gives rise to the construction of additional shelter, of dubious standards, to accommodate the family, squatters or both on the properties and in other open areas within the township or adjacent to it. The implications of this are that the social structure and physical conditions of both residents and squatters, are detrimentally affected.

The study indicates the extent of overcrowding and highlights problems related thereto: including inter alia, inadequate sex separation with respect to bedrooms, noise and a lack of privacy between row-housing units. The desire for more privacy, the minimal accom-

modation of row-housing units and the desire for more space to extend the units underly the overwhelming preference for single storey detached housing.

Die instroom van mense na bestaande Swart woongebiede vererger die probleem van oorbewoning van die bestaande behuising en lei tot die bou van addisionele skuilings, volgens twyfelagtige standaarde, op die persele en op

ander oop areas binne die dorpsgebied of aangrensend daartoe, om die gesin of plakkers of albei te huisves. Hierdie situasie het 'n nadelige uitwerking op die bestaande sosiale en fisiese orde en kan tot 'n verbrokkeling van die lewenskwaliteit van die mense in die woongebied lei.

Die omvang van oorbevolking en oorbewoning en probleme wat hiermee verband hou word aangedui: insluitend o.a. gebrekkige geslagskeiding m.b.t. slaapkamers, geraas en 'n gebrek aan privaatheid tussen ryhuis-eenhede. Die begeerte na meer privaatheid, die beknoptheid van ryhuis-eenhede en die behoefte aan meer ruimte ten einde aan te bou, is onderliggende faktore wat lei tot die oorheersende voorkeur om enkel huise te bekom.

"My Man se twee susters het sommer kom plak"
(Resident of Mbekweni)

1. INTRODUCTION

The above statement reflects the nature of the residents' dilemma *vis à vis* squatters: one in which the plight of family, friends and others with respect to poverty, homelessness and unemployment are recognized and accepted, albeit with a degree of reluctance, as there is no other alternative.

The response to squatters varies from real concern tinged with resignation to outright exploitation. Whether the former or the latter, the social structure and physical conditions of overcrowding of the housing stock, gives rise to the construction of additional shelter, of dubious standards, to accommodate the family, squatters or both on the properties and in other open areas within the township or adjacent to it.

Overcrowding and the increased incidence of 'spontaneous' housing tends to compound existing problems and results in a reduction of standards across the board.

From a planning point of view an awareness of the conditions is not enough: it is essential to quantify the extent of the problem.

Although considerable attention has been focused on Crossroads as the phenomenon of squatting is accentuated there, the problem is by no means restricted to areas surrounding the core of Cape Town but is also evident in other areas within the Metropolitan fringe. Mbekweni, the Black residential area serving the Paarl, Wellington areas, which is outside the Peninsula the largest Black residential area in the

Western Cape, was therefore selected for this study.

2. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study, which formed a part of a more comprehensive study (Welch: 1987), was to examine the extent of overcrowding as a consequence of squatting and dwelling size.

It should be noted that whilst information regarding household income and employment may have been of interest, these data were not considered of primary importance to the study: because of the incidence of unemployment and squatting, questions pertaining to earnings and employment may possibly have placed the whole study in jeopardy.

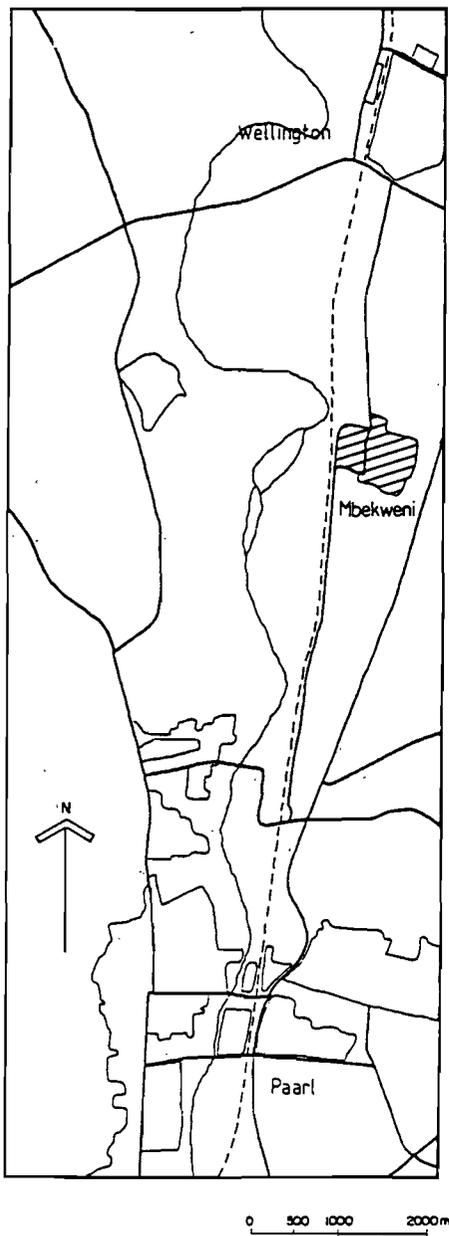


FIGURE 1
LOCALITY PAN: MBEKWENI

The questionnaire was designed to gather information regarding:

- Family size, composition and period of residence
- Number of lodgers and where accommodated
- Preferences regarding the number of bedrooms and the location of the toilet and bathroom
- Motor car ownership and parking
- Incidence of house alterations
- Attitudes towards:
 - their present housing
 - all the houses being similar
 - erf sizes
 - the same or different income groups living next to one another
 - the proximity of neighbours and whether more privacy was desired
- The condition of the house and garden.

4. SAMPLE SIZE

Housing types in Mbekeweni can be broadly divided into four groups:

- (i) Hostel accommodation for single males situated centrally and flanking the sport fields.
- (ii) Row-housing, catering for the bulk of family living. (Marked A in Figure 2)
- (iii) A limited number of older detached houses. (Marked B in Figure 2)
- (iv) Some semi-detached and detached units recently completed or in the process of construction located on the edge of the township to the north and east and a cluster of temporary shacks to the north-west.

As this study was primarily concerned with the quality of family living, only the older row and detached housing units were included in the study.



	AREA	TOTAL UNITS	RESPONDENTS
A	ROW-HOUSING.	622	213
B	DETACHED HOUSING	30	19

FIGURE 2 MBEKWENI: AREAS SURVEYED
(ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH BY FOTOGRAMENSURA)

3. PROCEDURE

3.1. Family, lodgers and housing conditions

To gauge the current conditions a semi-structured questionnaire was used with provision being made for respondents to give reasons for their responses, in their own words (Goodrich, 1974).

In all, the area covered comprised 622 row-housing and 30 detached housing units (Figure 2) of which 213 row-housing and 19 detached housing units were included in the survey. At the time of the study all housing was rented; no ownership schemes were in operation.

The sex of the respondents was not considered critical, although it was anticipated that in practice the majority of respondents would be female; adult respondents of either sex, wherever possible either the husband or wife, were acceptable. As it transpired the sex of respondents with respect to the two groups was: row-housing - 79,8 per cent female and 20,2 per cent male; detached housing - 84,2 per cent female and 15,8 per cent male.

5. SURVEY FINDINGS

5.1 Household structure and housing conditions

5.1.1 Household structure

Data pertaining to the 213 row-housing and 19 detached housing respondents are presented in Table 1.

As regards the number of parents, row-housing respondents indicated that 3,3 per cent had no mother and 23,5 per cent no father. Detached housing respondents indicated that all had mothers and 2 households or 10,5 per cent had no fathers.

Of the dependent children, 77,1 per cent fall into the age groups between 10 and 20+ years; 53,9 per cent, between 15 and 20+ of age with the highest percentage (28,5%) falling into the 15-19 year old group.

Over three quarters of the dependent children can be classed as adolescents or youngsters approaching early adulthood. The remainder are younger than 10 years of age.

An examination of the number of dependent children per family (Table 2) shows the following:

Families with three to seven children inclusive account for 72,8 per cent. Those with one or two children account for 10,4 per cent and those with eight to twelve account for 10,6 per cent. Only 6,2 per cent of the families have no children.

TABLE 2 DEPENDENT CHILDREN PER FAMILY

CHILDREN PER FAMILY	FREQUENCY	%
12	4	1,8
11	4	1,8
10	2	0,9
9	2	0,9
8	11	5,2
7	20	9,4
6	38	17,8
5	26	12,3
4	38	17,8
3	33	15,5
2	13	6,2
1	9	4,2
0	13	6,2
N = 213		

TABLE 1 HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

	MALES	FEMALES	MALE RESPONDENTS	FEMALE RESPONDENTS	DEPENDENT CHILDREN ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPS									
					N _R = 458 BOYS N _D = 44					N _R = 464 GIRLS N _D = 36				
					-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+	-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+
ROW HOUSING (R) N=213	163	206	43	170	29	71	120	126	112	44	68	87	132	133
%	76,5	96,7	20,2	79,8	6,3	15,5	26,6	27,5	24,5	9,5	14,7	18,8	28,4	28,6
DETACHED HOUSING (D) N=19	17	19	3	16	2	5	19	10	8	2	8	6	18	2
%	89,5	100	15,8	84,2	4,5	11,4	43,2	22,7	18,2	5,6	22,2	16,6	50,0	5,6

R + D	31	76	139	136	120	46	76	93	150	135
%	6,2	15,1	27,7	27,1	23,9	9,2	15,2	18,6	30,0	27,0

Total of Boys and Girls per Age Group	77	152	232	286	255
%	2,7	15,2	23,2	28,5	25,4

53,9 %

77,1 %

5.1.2 Years resident in Mbekweni

Data pertaining to the period of residence in Mbekweni reveals that only 9,4 per cent of all residents have lived in the township for less than 10 years and that 81,8 per cent of row-housing respondents have lived there between 10 and 24 years. Two thirds of those in detached housing have been residents for between 25 and 40 years. The population is clearly one which can be described as mature and stable.

5.1.3 Other relatives and working children living with their families

The highest incidence of other relatives living with families is related to grandmothers. The number of other relatives either living in the house or on the property for row-housing and detached housing is small and in the case of the detached housing no family members, except working children, live on the site.

Of the row-housing families 40,8 per cent have at least one or two working children living in the house and 16,9 per cent have working children living on the site. In the case of the detached housing 36,8 per cent and 31,6 per cent have working children living in the house or on the property, respectively.

To a large extent relatives and working children are accommodated in the house.

5.1.4 Lodgers living in the house or elsewhere on the property

Compared to the high incidence of lodgers living on the sites, for both row-housing and detached housing, very few lodgers live in the house with row-housing families and none with the detached housing families.

However, 47,9 per cent of the row-houses surveyed and 63,2 per cent of the detached houses provided accommodation for lodgers. Of the total of 232 households covered in the study 49,14 per cent had lodgers.

On the basis of the 102 row-houses where lodgers were present and the recorded number of 443+ lodgers it would appear that lodgers account for, on average, 4 additional people per site. Lodgers being housed on the detached dwelling properties are of the same order.

5.1.5 Sleeping and ablution requirements

Information regarding the number of

TABLE 3 SLEEPING AND ABLUTION REQUIREMENTS

		NUMBER OF BEDROOMS REQUIRED FOR THE FAMILY					LOCATION OF TOILET		PREFERENCE FOR A BATH OR SHOWER AND THEIR LOCATION			
		1	2	3	4	+	IN	OUT	BATH	SHOW.	IN	OUT
		ROW-HOUSING	N=213	3	35	95	56	24	188	25	189	24
	%	1,4	16,4	44,6	26,3	11,3	88,3	11,7	88,7	11,3	96,7	3,3
DETACHED HOUSING	N=19			7	11	1	19	-	19	-	19	-
	%			36,8	59,9	5,3	100	-	100	-	100	-

dependent children per family (Table 2) showed that those families with between three and five dependent children account for 45,6 per cent of the respondents. If one allows for sex separation of the children and a separate bedroom for the parents, a house with three bedrooms is required.

Reference to Table 3 indicates that the 44,6 per cent giving a three bedroom preference is therefore consistent with real requirements. Similarly, families with six to seven children account for 27,2 per cent of respondents, which corresponds with the 26,3 per cent who feel they need four bedrooms.

Regarding the number of bedrooms the respondents themselves feel are necessary for their particular families, it appears that these are reasonable and reflect fairly accurately the actual number of rooms that would be required. The commonly held belief that the number of bedrooms desired, with respect to actual needs, is generally exaggerated, is not supported by these findings.

As reflected in Table 3, there is a clear preference for the toilet (WC) and bathrooms to be located inside the house.

5.1.6 Motor car ownership and parking preferences

Approximately one third of the row-housing respondents and one quarter of the detached housing respondents own a motor vehicle.

Of those that indicated that they had a motor vehicle, 56,7 per cent and 80 per cent of row and detached housing respondents respectively, parked the vehicle on the site with 19,4 per cent and 20 per cent parking on the street and only 23,9 per cent of row housing respondents indicating the use of a carport.

The majority of respondents in both groups indicated that every house should have either a garage or carport. The 182 row housing respondents who felt a garage/carport was necessary gave the following reasons:

Safety and protection (including future car ownership), 67,6 per cent; additional storage space, 14,8 per cent; shady sitting area and play space for children, 11,0 per cent and additional living space, 6,6 per cent.

Of the detached housing respondents 79 per cent gave safety and protection of the vehicle as the main reason.

Those of both groups who felt a garage/carport was unnecessary were of the opinion that only those with motor cars needed this facility.

It is reasonable to assume that, given the comparatively low motor vehicle ownership and the high percentage of respondents holding that a garage/carport is essential, the percentages for uses other than parking may be low and that of safety and protection somewhat inflated. Given the generally overcrowded conditions the possibility of at least an additional roofed area holds the promise of additional sheltered living space and may well underly the obvious or given reasons of vehicle protection.

5.1.7 Attitudes towards the house in which they live

Over 55,4 per cent of row-housing respondents did not like their house, whilst on the other hand detached housing respondents (94,7 per cent) clearly liked their houses: firstly because they are detached and private (72,2 per cent) and secondly, because they have built on to the house and it is "nice and big" (27,8 per cent). (The detached house type comprises basically two bedrooms flanking a living/

sleeping area with a kitchen and bathroom attached; the row-housing is as in Figure 3.)

The main reasons for the row-housing respondents liking or disliking their houses are listed as follows:

ROW-HOUSING:

Reasons for liking %

The house is fine	22,7
Have improved the house myself: built-on or added electricity	22,7
Have grown attached and accustomed to the house	
Have worked all my life just for the house – would like to own it	18,7
Have lived here for years	
It is all we have/gives security	10,7
Live on the corner (last house in row)/Private	10,7
Can't do anything about it	10,7
Rental is low	2,6
Better than living in a shack	1,2

ROW-HOUSING:

Reasons for disliking %

The house is too small	44,0
It leaks, is cracked, is damp, too hot/cold	
Has no ceilings, nor electricity nor water/sewage connection inside	24,6
Joined together like railway carriages	17,0
In the middle of row/must walk through the house to reach backyard	7,7
The neighbours make a noise	4,1
Can't build on to the house	2,6

Although it would appear that only a little over half of the row-housing respondents do not like their houses it would be fair to assume that this proportion is in practice higher, as the last six reasons given for liking the house reflect a certain degree of resignation rather than a definite and positive attitude.

5.1.8 Attitudes towards the houses looking the same

As to whether the fact that the houses in Mbekweni are all the same makes any

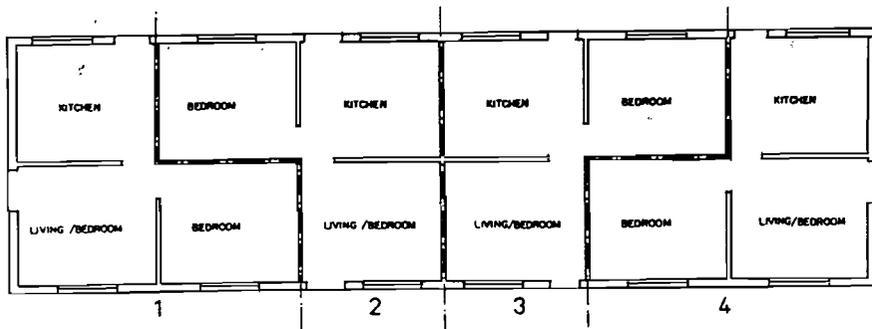


FIGURE 3 PLAN OF ROW-HOUSING

difference; 72,3 per cent of the row-housing group replied in the affirmative and 17,7 per cent, that it did not. Of the detached housing respondents 57,9 per cent replied that it did and 42,1 per cent that it did not.

Of the 129 respondents who clearly articulated their replies, the main reasons as to why the houses should not look the same are listed as follows:

- Does not look attractive 31,0%
- The houses look like railway carriages 20,2%
- The houses are not private and the neighbours are a nuisance 19,4%
- Houses should look different 17,0%
- Row-housing is a fire hazard 12,4%

Some other cogent replies are (original comments in Afrikaans):

- “Lyk nie soos huise, lyk soos 'n hool!”
- “Jou huis is miskien mooi geverf en staan tussen die ander en dan lyk hy sommer ook lelik!”
- “As mense baklei, almal hoor en skinder van mekaar: bledie onbeskof?”
- “Niemand het mooi goed nie, so ek worry ook nie!”

5.1.9 Attitudes towards those with similar incomes or dissimilar incomes living next door to one another

As to whether people with different earnings or the same earnings should live next to one another: 67,1 per cent of the row-housing respondents replied that people with the same earnings should live together; 22,1 per cent, that they should not and 10,8 per cent, that it did not matter. Of the detached housing respondents 63,2 per cent replied that people of the same income group should live next to one another and 36,8 per cent that they should not.

5.1.10 Attitudes towards the close proximity of neighbours

Responses to the questions regarding proximity of neighbours and whether more privacy is desired showed that although only 56,8 per cent of the row-housing respondents felt that proximity of neighbours was a problem, 77,5 per cent nevertheless wanted more privacy.

In the case of detached housing, proximity of neighbours and a need for more privacy are not a problem.

The main reasons given by the row-housing respondents are: noise; can hear what the neighbours are saying; drunken neighbours and children making a noise.

Other reasons for and against are noted here in Afrikaans:

TEEN:

- Bly langs mense wat nie mooi verstaan – praat lelik, ens.
- geraas – daar is slegte invloed op die kinders
- mense reg langsaan is nie altyd ‘alright’ nie
- ons bure is slegte mense
- ons baklei met bure
- bure pla want hulle klim oor die draad
- kinders van bure mors mekaar se erwe vuil; veroorsaak probleme
- wil nog altyd hê my huis moet uitstaan.

VIR:

- Leef in vrede met bure saam
- bied beskerming
- hou van die mense
- bure is 'n hulp

5.1.11 Attitudes towards the size of the erf

With respect to row-housing respondents: 59,6 per cent felt that the erf ($\pm 246m^2$) was too small; 39,4 per cent

considered it to be adequate and 1 per cent indicated that it was too large.

The main reasons as to why the erf was too small were: 50,4 per cent wanted more space for gardening; 41,0 per cent wanted to build onto their houses, and 8,6 per cent wanted more play space for children.

All the detached dwelling respondents considered the erf size (475m²) to be adequate.

5.1.12 Alterations and additions

Alterations and additions refer to any improvements such as additional rooms, the putting in of ceilings, new doors, changing windows, wiring for electricity, the building of a roofed stoep or other changes which alter the structure and are permanent.

As reported by respondents and through inspection, only 32 per cent and 26 per cent of row-housing and detached housing respondents respectively had made alterations or improvements to their homes. However, 54,4 per cent of the row-housing respondents noted that they had constructed shacks for additional living space and 8 per cent for storage space. Of the detached dwelling respondents 73,7 per cent had erected light weight structures (shacks) as additional living areas.

5.1.13 Condition of house and garden

As part of the study the interviewers evaluated the condition of the house and garden of each respondent. Both house and garden were rated in terms of whether they were in good condition; fair condition; poor condition or neglected.

Although the evaluation was subjective, the fact that all units covered in the survey were for their type and age identical, provided a reasonably consistent datum. In addition, houses/units which were 'as built' and in a reasonable condition were taken to represent the 'fair condition' group. Taking this as the datum the house and property were evaluated as better or worse according to the prescribed categories.

A garden was taken to include 'flower gardens', 'vegetable gardens', stands of mealies, trees, shrubs etc. The criteria for evaluation was based on the condition of the garden and not on the type. The appearance of the gardens of row-houses were evaluated as largely falling

into "poor" and "fair" groups with a slightly higher incidence falling into the former class. The converse applies to the detached housing garden.

Nearly half of both the row- and detached houses were rated as "in fair condition", a fifth of the row-houses and a little over a quarter of the detached houses were rated to be "in good condition", the converse applying for "in poor condition", with approximately 5,5 per cent being classed for both groups as "neglected". Detached houses tended to be marginally better looked after than the row-houses. Few gardens are regarded as either 'good' or 'neglected'.

By and large the gardens are not developed or well cared for. They are rather rudimentary and on reviewing the ratings with the interviewers it seemed that there was a tendency to over-rate those gardens where it appeared that at least some effort had been made, albeit small.

The almost ubiquitous presence of shacks and other dilapidated structures erected in the garden areas certainly contributes to a generally somewhat shabby impression.

As the available garden area is small and as in at least half of the cases covered in the survey, it is occupied by structures used for additional accommodation, these factors tend to contribute to a lack of interest in and a degree of resignation with respect to planting and maintaining a garden.

Accepting that the basic problem is that of providing for basic needs such as additional accommodation, higher order needs, like gardening and beautification of the property generally, are understandably relegated in terms of priorities.

6. DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6.1 Housing conditions and overcrowding

The population of Mbekweni, in terms of years of residence, can be regarded as mature and stable. Approximately three quarters of the families have three to seven dependent children: the majority of which are adolescents or youngsters approaching early adulthood. A family size of seven is reasonably representative.

If one takes into account that approxi-

mately 50 per cent of the households provide accommodation for, in the order of, 4 additional people in the house and on the property, then at least 11 people are housed on each site.

Because the standard row-housing unit and the shanties or temporary structures used by family and lodgers are modest in size, overcrowding is the rule rather than the exception.

Bearing in mind the high incidence of adolescents and young adults the need for some degree of privacy, particularly for school homework, study and the like, is imperative if they are to succeed academically and become equipped to enter an increasingly demanding job market.

As in the study of Hardie and Hard (1984) where 69 per cent of the respondents preferred neighbouring houses to be of similar size and cost, 67,1 per cent of the row-housing and 63,8 per cent of the detached housing respondents in this study felt that people of the same income group should live together. Hardie and Hart are of the opinion that this preference arises from a desire to minimise potential conflict and jealousy and believe that this is also reflected in the preference for individual houses. Responses to the questions regarding proximity of neighbours and the desire for more privacy appear to support this. The problems of noise, in that one can hear what the neighbours are saying (and that they can hear you) is a source of considerable annoyance.

Two aspects with respect to the sources of noise may be noted: Firstly noise emanating from normal family life within the unit and noise from adjacent units. Brebner (1982) notes in this regard that noise emanating from one's own family or group is more acceptable than if the equivalent level is produced by other groups and that this mismatch generates the setting for conflict. Noise generated by family members is generally controllable whilst that generated by neighbours is not. Where aversive stimuli are perceived to be controllable people respond less negatively than if these are perceived to be uncontrollable (Sherrod et al; 1977) and there is a lower tolerance to subsequent occurrences (Glass et al; 1969). Due to the unpredictability and lack of control over the noise made by others, people become more reactive with subsequent expo-

sure, which attenuates the associated stress.

It is evident that the overcrowded conditions and the attendant problem of noise are for the majority of row-housing respondents a source of annoyance. That approximately 60 per cent of row-housing respondents felt that the site was too small is an aspect which warrants attention as dissatisfaction is clearly related to perceived rather than actual area.

By way of illustration: Figure 4 shows a number of alternatives based on a typical row-housing group of four units having a common rear boundary. Firstly it should be noted (Figure 4A) that

each unit comprises a bedroom; sleeping/livingroom and a kitchen in a "L" configuration and that this determines the narrow frontage of the two central units of the row. Secondly, access to the rear garden of these two central units can only be gained through the house. It is not surprising therefore that the narrow frontage (less than 4 metres), and that family and lodgers must traipse through the house to move from one side to the other, influence the inhabitants' perceptions of the site being small. This is compounded by the erection of structures in the rear, the well trodden paths to connect these and the toilet at the end of the property. In consequence the usable garden area is

rather fragmentary even though the total site area is approximately three times larger than for example the 90m² site size proposed by the Office for Community Services of the Western Cape for a portion of Khayelitsha (Plan Associates, 1987)*. Figure 4B illustrates how the eight row-housing sites in Figure 4A could be subdivided in accordance with the 90m² standard and with provision for pedestrian access to all sites. On this basis eight additional sites could be created within the same area.

**It should be noted that the consultants, in their in depth analysis of site sizes proposed a minimum site area of 112 m² and recommended 150 m² for self-help schemes.*

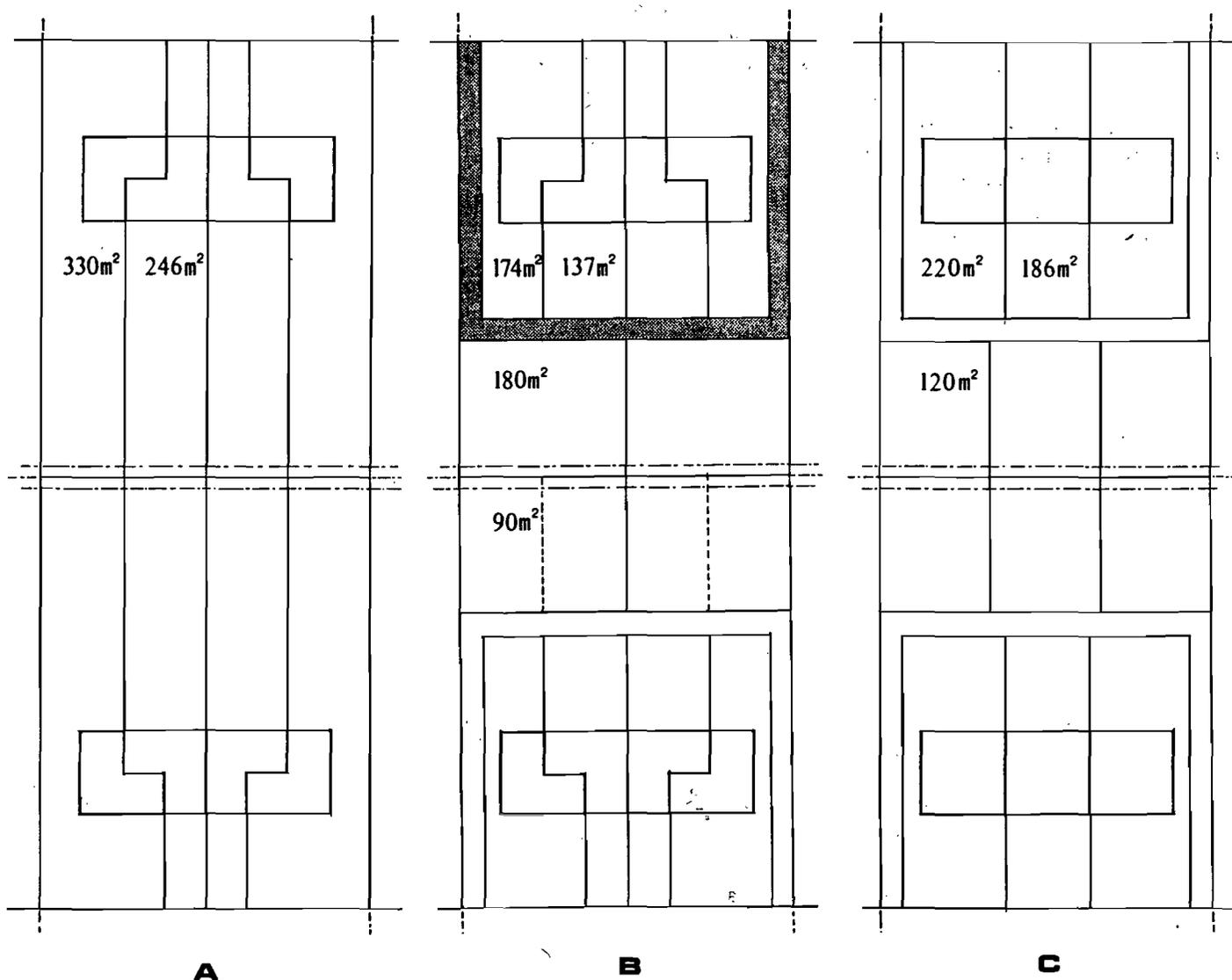


FIGURE 4 COMPARISON OF SITE AREAS BASED ON A TYPICAL ROW-HOUSING GROUP OF FOUR UNITS WITH A COMMON REAR BOUNDARY

Assuming that one were to upgrade the existing structures by adjusting the internal arrangement of each block to provide three units of four rooms each instead of the four units of three rooms and that the rear area were subdivided as previously, it is possible to gain eight 90 m² sites, or four 180 m² sites or as illustrated in Figure 4C, six sites of 120 m².

Clearly physical area is not the sole determinant of the individual's perception of size. The narrowness (7,6 m), inconvenience caused by lack of access to the rear of the properties, except through the unit itself, additional structures and paths and the resultant narrow unusable areas all contribute to the perception of these sites being too small. A description frequently used was "too in the middle", which reflects a sense of feeling cramped, hemmed in and crowded.

Accepting that attitudes of the row-housing respondents to this type of dwelling type are negative it is also clear that this form cannot, often because of building cost and affordability, be totally excluded. However much greater attention is needed in the provision of adequate sound insulation between units: for example, building 220 mm partly walls plastered on both sides or locating storage areas or garages or, failing this, similar uses such as the living areas of adjoining areas adjacent to one another rather than different uses such as living and bedrooms. This latter point is also noted by Hardie and Hart (1984:24).

7. CONCLUSIONS

Although there is a high incidence of squatting evident in Mbekweni, with its own attendant problems, the erection of shacks by the residents for additional accommodation, either for their own use or to house lodgers, is ubiquitous. This is particularly high amongst those living in row-housing where units, comprising a bedroom, a living/sleeping area and a kitchen, are occupied by families of in the order of seven members. To a large extent therefore these families are obliged to erect alternative accommodation on the properties to meet their housing requirements. The difficulty of physically altering these units, lack of necessary building skills and costs involved makes the construction of shacks the easiest option.

The perceived need for larger erven for gardening, extensions to the house and play space for children as expressed by row-housing respondents is understandable as apart from the physical layout of units, which renders the construction of additions extremely difficult, the space available, although comparatively large is narrow and restricted. The difficulty of structurally altering the units themselves and the costs involved account for the high incidence of shack construction for additional living space – even excluding those constructed for lodgers. The overall picture of cramped living conditions, shacks on the properties and other dilapidated structures contribute largely to the overall impression of a somewhat shabby and demoralizing urban environment.

Overcrowding is the rule rather than the exception. Cramped living conditions and poor acoustic insulation between adjacent units and of the shacks underscore the lack of privacy and resultant intense aversion to row-housing. Lack of privacy, noise and resultant annoyance are counterproductive to study and homework and set the scene for friction and conflict.

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