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Place attachment and participation in community-driven development in Gauteng province, South Africa

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Research article

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Abstract

As the world faces unprecedented social, economic, and environmental issues, there is a greater emphasis on participation in community-driven solutions to foster sustainable and inclusive development. More local urban planning studies need to demonstrate the nexus between peoples' emotional bond with a place – place attachment, and participation in community-driven development initiatives. This article aims to add to the body of knowledge in the broad field of environmental design, where the concept of place attachment influences the design of urban spaces. The article explores the nexus between place attachment and community participation in community-driven programmes in Gauteng province, South Africa. This article adopts a quantitative approach and uses the Gauteng City-Region Observatory's Quality of Life (QoL) survey data. The study uses K-means clustering and ordered logistic regression models as the primary data-analysis methods. Four social clusters were identified based on place attachment, participation in community initiatives was evaluated, and a combined participation index was calculated. The identified clusters, namely the discontented advocates, neighbourhood self-doubters, potential community catalysts from afar or non-local influencers and potential neighbourhood champions had different levels of participation in community-driven initiatives. Cluster 'Discontented advocates' is more likely to participate in community development programmes than the cluster 'Neighbourhood self-doubters'. The developed combined participation index shows that nearly half (45.5%) of the residents in Gauteng province have never participated in community-driven development initiatives. The study recommends that various stakeholders should engage in inclusive and robust participatory planning procedures, and experiment with the implementation of universal design features that ensure equitable access to urban amenities, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity. These practical measures foster a sense of identity, place dependence, and social bonding, which are the important dimensions of place attachment that positively influence community-driven development and meet the overall goals of social justice and societal well-being.

Keywords: Community-driven development, participation, place attachment, Gauteng province

PLEKGEHEGTHEID EN DEELNAME AAN GEMEENSKAPSGEDREWE ONTWIKKELING IN GAUTENG-PROVINSIE, SUID-AFRIKA

Aangesien die wêreld ongekende sosiale, ekonomiese en omgewingskwessies in die gesig staar, is daar 'n groter klem op deelname aan gemeenskapsgedrewe oplossings om volhoubare en inklusiewe ontwikkeling te bevorder. Meer plaaslike stadsbeplanningstudies moet die verband tussen mense se emosionele band met 'n plek, plekgehegtheid en deelname aan gemeenskapsgedrewe ontwikkelingsinisiatiewe demonstreer. Hierdie artikel het ten doel om by te dra tot kennis in die breë veld van omgewingsontwerp, waar die konsep van plekgehegtheid die ontwerp van stedelike ruimtes beïnvloed. Die artikel ondersoek die verband tussen plekgehegtheid en gemeenskapsdeelname aan gemeenskapsgedrewe programme in Gauteng-provinsie, Suid-Afrika. Hierdie artikel volg 'n kwantitatiewe benadering en maak gebruik van die Gauteng Stad-Streek Waarneming se Gehalte van Lewens (QoL) opname data. Die studie gebruik K-gemiddelde groepering en geordende logistiese regressie modelle as die primêre data-analise metodes. Vier sosiale klusters is op grond van plekgehegtheid geïdentifiseer, deelname aan gemeenskapsinisiatiewe is geëvalueer en 'n gekombineerde deelname-indeks is bereken. Die geïdentifiseerde klusters, naamlik die ontevrede advokate, buurt-selftwyfelaars, potensiële gemeenskapskatalisators van ver of nie-plaaslike beïnvloeders en potensiële buurtkampioene, het verskillende vlakke van deelname aan gemeenskapsgedrewe inisiatiewe gehad. Kluster 'Ontevrede advokate' is meer geneig om aan gemeenskapsontwikkelingsprogramme deel te neem as die kluster 'Buurt-selftwyfelaars'. Die ontwikkelde gekombineerde deelname-indeks toon dat byna die helfte (45.5%) van die inwoners in Gauteng-provinsie nog nooit aan gemeenskapsgedrewe ontwikkelingsinisiatiewe deelgeneem het nie. Die studie beveel aan dat verskeie belanghebbendes betrokke moet raak by inklusiewe en robuuste deelnemende beplanningsprosedures, en eksperimenteer met die implementering van universele ontwerpkenmerke wat billike toegang tot stedelike

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geriewe, insluiting en kulturele sensitiwiteit verseker. Hierdie praktiese maatreëls bevorder 'n gevoel van identiteit, plekafhanklikheid en sosiale binding, wat die belangrike dimensies van plekgehegtheid is wat gemeenskapsgedrewe ontwikkeling positief beïnvloed en voldoen aan die algehele doelwitte van sosiale geregtigheid en maatskaplike welstand.

KAMANO LIPAKENG TSA BATHO LE LIBAKA LE HO KENYA LETSOHO NTLAFATSONG E TSAMAISOANG KE SECHABA PROFINSENG EA GAUTENG, AFRIKA BOROA

Ha lefats'e le tobane le litaba tsa sechaba, moruo, le tikoloho, thahasello e kholo ke ho nka karolo litharollong tse tsamaisoang ke sechaba ho khotthaletsa nts'etsopele ea moshoelella. Lithuto tse ling tsa lehae tsa thero ea litoropo li hloka ho bonts'a kamano e teng lipakeng tsa maqhama a maikutlo a batho le sebaka, kamano ea sebaka le ho nka karolo mererong ea ntlafatso e tsamaellanang le sechaba. Sengoliloeng sena se ikemiselitse ho eketsa tsebo lefapheng le pharaletseng la moralo oa tikoloho, moo mohopolo oa ho hokela libaka o susumetsang moralo oa libaka tsa litoropo. Sengoliloeng se hlahloba kamano lipakeng tsa batho le sebaka, le ho nka karolo ha sechaba mananeong a khannoang ke sechaba Profinseng ea Gauteng, Afrika Boroa.

Sengoliloeng sena se sebelisa mokhoa oa ho etsa lipatlisiso oa lipalo, 'se kenyelelitse lintlha tsa tlhahlobo ea Gauteng City-Region Observatory's Quality of Life (QoL). Boithuto bona bo sebelisa likhokahano tsa K-means le mekhoele e meng ea mantlha ea tlhahlobo. Ele ho hlahloba ho kenya letsoho mererong ea Sechaba, lipatlisiso li ile tsa hloaea lihlopha tse 'nè tsa sechaba ho ipapisitsoe le sebaka, 'me index ea karolo e kopaneng ea baloa. Lihlopha tse hloailoeng, e leng babuelli ba sa khotsofalang, bahaelani ba ipelaetsang, batho bao e ka bang bahlohlelletsi ba sechaba ba tsoang hole kapa bao e seng ba lehae le bao e ka bang bahale ba lehae, ba bile le maemo a fapaneng a ho kenya letsoho matsapeng a khannoang ke sechaba. Sehlopha sa 'Babuelli ba sa khotsofalang' se na le monyetla o moholo kaho fetisisa oa ho nka karolo mananeong a ntlafatso ea sechaba ho feta sehlopha sa 'Baahelani ba ipelaetsang'. Lenane la bonkakarolo le kopaneng le bonts'a ha khakanyo e haufi le halofo (45.5%) ea baahi ba Profinseng ea Gauteng ba so kang ba kenya letsoho le ka mohla mererong ea ntlafatso e tsamaisoang ke sechaba.

Boithuto bona bo khotthaletsa hore bankakarolo ba fapaneng ba kenelle mekhoaeng e matla ea meralo ea kopanelo, 'me e kenyeletsang sechaba ka kakaretso, le ho etsa liteko ka ho kenya meralo e netefatsang tekano ea lits'ebeletso tsa litoropo, kenyeletso ea setso. Mehato ena e ka susumetsa boitsebo ba sechaba, ho itsetleha ha sona libakeng, le tlamahano ea Sechaba. Tsena ke lintlha tsa bohlokoa tsa kamano ea sebaka se nang le tšusumetso e ntle ntlafatsoeng e tsamaisoang ke sechaba le ho fihlela lipheo tse akaretsang tsa toka le boiketlo ba sechaba.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the world faces unprecedented social, economic, and environmental issues, there is a growing emphasis on participation in community-driven solutions to foster sustainable and inclusive development (UN, 2013). Community-driven development is increasingly recognised as crucial to addressing complex 21st-century community challenges (Wong & Guggenheim, 2018). Community-driven development allows local communities to identify, plan, and implement projects that directly impact on their well-being in their local context (Arnstein, 2019). Thus, it enables tailored solutions that address communities' unique needs and aspirations. Community-driven development places the community at the centre, ensuring that development efforts are people-focused and responsive to their needs (Giles, 2001; Mnguni, 2010). Central to community-driven development is the community's willingness and ability to actively participate in decision-making, planning, and implementation of development initiatives (Mnguni, 2010). The community members possess valuable insights, knowledge, and expertise about their needs and priorities, resulting in equitable development (Wong & Guggenheim, 2018). However, several factors influence community members' active engagement or participation, namely, the extent to which one feels a sense of ownership over the development process (Giles, 2001); the sufficiency of information they possess concerning the goals, processes, and potential benefits of the initiatives (Mnguni, 2010); how

specific places align with cultural norms and values (Jordaan, 2015); effectiveness of leadership and political conditions (Ngunjiri, 2023), as well as emotional bonds that individuals hold about their specific community (Manzo & Perkins, 2006).

Such bonds that emerge as people get to know a place and endow it with subjective, emotional, and symbolic feelings are defined as place attachment (Raymond, Brown & Webber, 2010; Lu *et al.*, 2023). Manzo and Perkins (2006: 335) critique community planning literature for emphasising participation and empowerment at the expense of the emotional bonds and softer connections to place such as place attachment, yet these attachments influence the effort one puts towards participation in community development. This article argues along the same lines that place attachment can influence one's decision to participate in maintaining, improving, and responding to developmental initiatives in one's community. There is a gap in local urban planning studies that demonstrates the interplay between place attachment and participation in community development initiatives (Jordaan, 2015; Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021). Only a handful of local studies (Hook & Vdoljak, 2002; Puren, Drewes & Roos, 2006; Chigeza, Roos & Puren, 2013; Jordaan, 2015; Marais *et al.*, 2018; Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021) in South Africa have paid attention to place attachment in varying contexts. For example, researchers such as Chigeza, Roos and Puren (2013), Marais *et al.* (2018), and Puren *et al.* (2006) focus on place attachment and cultural and tourist sites; Hook and Vdoljak (2002) on gated communities, while Dlamini and Tesfamichael (2021) pay attention to the influence of socio-demographic factors on place attachment. Dlamini *et al.* (2022: 35) posit a gap regarding studies that analyse place attachment and its determinants in spatially heterogeneous and emerging societies in South Africa.

More local urban planning studies need to demonstrate the nexus between peoples' emotional bond

with a place-place attachment and participation in community-driven development initiatives. The aim of this article is to add to the body of knowledge in the broad field of environmental design, where the concept of place attachment influences the design of urban spaces. The article explores the nexus between place attachment and community participation in community-driven programmes in Gauteng province, the most spatially heterogeneous province in South Africa.

Considering the multicultural character of South African society, putting emphasis on places and public participation creates functional environments that resonate with the aspirations of residents and offer a better quality of life for citizens (Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021; Jordaan, 2015). Research that links place attachment and participation informs planners and policymakers on the importance of prioritising emotional and cognitive bonds to a place that may influence residents' behaviour and response to community engagement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Participation and the global and local policy environment

This article aligns with global, regional, national, and local calls for inclusive development steered by citizen participation at diverse levels (UN, 2013). The notion of participation (citizen participation) emanated in the 20th century, with many countries pursuing it as a mechanism to promote more direct citizen engagement in governance processes (Chambers, 1997; Gaventa, 2002). Participation is defined as giving the public the possibility to influence the policies that affect them through their contributions from the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases (Chambers, 1997). The United Nations (2013) defines participation as the involvement of citizens in a wide range of policymaking activities to orient government programmes towards

community needs, build public support, and encourage a sense of cohesion within neighbourhoods.

The role of participation at both global and local levels is valued highly by policies and legislative frameworks (Ngunjiri, 2023). For example, Target 7 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 explicitly seeks to ensure responsive, inclusive, and representative decision-making levels (UN General Assembly, 2015). Agenda 2063 envisions an Africa where citizens intend to be actively involved in decision-making in all aspects of development. In the South African context, the planning processes also emphasise community participation. For example, section 152(v) of the Constitution (Act no. 108 of 1996) stipulates that local government should encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government matters.

Similarly, good governance is outlined as the fifth fundamental principle of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) 16 of 2013.² This principle states that “the preparation and amendment of spatial plans, policies ... include transparent public participation processes that allow all parties to provide inputs on matters affecting them”. Moreover, Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act 2000 outlines guidelines for participatory governance. The theme of community participation is interwoven in all spheres of government in South Africa, from national, provincial, local, and community levels. Participation builds a stronger sense of ownership and commitment, resulting in emotional bonding or place attachment among citizens (Raymond *et al.*, 2010). In this current study, the focus is on participation at a community level.

2.2 Participation in community-driven development

The work of social scientists and development practitioners in the 1960s and 1970s originated the

idea of community engagement in community-driven development (Chambers, 1997). The idea behind this effort was that local needs and interests should inform development projects instead of being imposed from the outside. The concept of participation in community-driven development originated from the observation that many development programmes needed to catch up to their intended beneficiaries' requirements and goals (Giles, 2001). As a result, community participation became more widely accepted as a means of improving the effectiveness and sustainability of development. Chambers' (1997) participatory rural development (PRA) is among the most important theoretical concepts for community-driven development and involvement. According to Chambers, development must be predicated on a “bottom-up” strategy, in which the community establishes the project's requirements and objectives. Thus, when local people can express their reality, they develop a sense of ownership, identity, and belonging that fosters attachment to the place (Pretty, Chipuer & Bramston, 2003).

Wong and Guggenheim (2018) explain that a community comprises different segments, including individual citizens, small community groups such as civic organisations, and large public interest groups. Often, these groups are identified and managed by residents to address their specific needs. In this study, participation in community developmental activities describes a person's participation in groups that are part of their neighbourhood, both in a formal and informal capacity. These groups, as exemplified in the preceding paragraph, are diverse and address various issues such as community gardens, street maintenance, art festivals, community health programmes, local learning centres or skills development workshops, housing cooperatives, environmental conservation initiatives, community policing and safety initiatives, social entrepreneurship or recreation programmes.

² SPLUMA is the main instrument that guides all spatial planning in South Africa.

The South Los Angeles Community Garden in the United States of America is an example of a locally funded, community-driven initiative that grew out of community concern about their health and well-being in the early 2000s. However, this project stopped after over a decade, due to contestations around land ownership and its relevance as a public good (Lawson, 2007). The garden provided benefits such as food, income, and personal identification with an agrarian culture to beneficiary households and their local networks. NGOs and the various spheres of government fund some of the community-driven projects. For example, Let's Do It, World is also another successful community-driven initiative funded by NGO. Now a global campaign that seeks to address the issue of waste management, the campaign started in Estonia, where volunteers from across the country participated in a clean-up campaign. Communities worldwide have also funded and carried out similar programmes (Let's Do It Foundation, [n.d.]). One example is the World Clean-up Day campaign in Nairobi, Kenya. A group of residents initiated this campaign, which was initially funded entirely by donations from individuals and local businesses.

In South Africa, community-driven development initiatives take many forms, ranging from informal programmes initiated by individual citizens and small community groups to more formal initiatives led by NGOs and the government (Everatt & Gwagwa, 2005; Mnguni, 2010; Jordaan, 2015; Mamokhere, 2022; Kgobe, Mabeba & Mamokhere, 2023). Some of these initiatives include community associations or neighbourhood watch, street committees, school governing bodies, a community policing forum, microfinance, savings projects (such as stokvels), and community gardening projects. For example, the Joe Slovo community in Cape Town has a long history of community activism and community mobilisation, which resulted in government intervention to create a community action plan that

detailed the community's priorities and aspirations (Mnguni, 2010). Ward committees, integrated development plans, and local economic development strategies are examples of government-led initiatives. Local legislation such as the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 and the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 emphasise the importance of local governments in promoting socio-economic growth and community involvement (Meyer, 2014). The socio-economic growth, in the form of local economic development strategies (LEDs), aims to encourage community participation and entrepreneurship, which leads to increased employability, business growth, and community resilience (Meyer, 2014; Kgobe *et al.*, 2023). LEDs strategies include Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) development, skills development, and agriculture-based projects, among others (Meyer, 2014). Place attachment encourages citizens to participate actively in LED projects because they are more willing to support and contribute to the growth of regions to which they feel connected.

These examples reflect communities' immense potential and capacity to identify their needs, drive change, and address their unique challenges through collaborative efforts, fostering place attachment (Raymond *et al.*, 2010). However, community-driven development can empower the people involved, but it also presents some challenges (Giles, 2001; Mnguni, 2010; Wong & Guggenheim, 2018). For example, the poor or marginalised are less likely to speak up or be heard. In some instances, it can be captured by the 'elites' and 'powerful', hence providing hardly any room for the participation of some marginal groups such as women, the disabled, the elderly, and children (Wong & Guggenheim, 2018: 7). The processes can sometimes be slow to implement, due to the need for consensus and buy-in from all the community members. Moreover, it can also be problematic to balance the needs and desires of the community with the available financial resources (Mnguni, 2010).

In most instances, obtaining funds for self-funded community-driven projects is challenging for most of the communities, particularly in low-income urban areas and rural residential areas. On the other hand, the national government and NGOs-funded projects are sometimes imbedded in politics, bureaucratic processes, and other negative externalities (Mnguni, 2010; Ngunjiri, 2023). Given the pros and cons of community-driven development, urban planners can play a crucial role. Planners can engage the community to offer technical expertise and help create structures and processes that are more transparent and inclusive, mainly focusing on marginalised groups.

2.3 Place attachment and participation in community-driven development

People's identity or emotional bonds with a place and their values are informed by places they deem to be socially, culturally, environmentally, and politically significant (Raymond *et al.*, 2010). These emotional bonds, to which people are attached, describe place attachment. Place attachment is generally understood as a multidisciplinary or complex multidimensional construct concept involving person-place relationships (Pretty *et al.*, 2003; Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Anton & Lawrence, 2014). Jordaan (2015: 28) further expands the concept of place attachment by positing that it involves emotional bonds with the natural and built landscape and cultural, communal, and historical aspects of places. There needs to be a general agreement about place attachment's precise dimensions or constructs. Researchers end up creating their own measures of place attachment, depending on the particular components being investigated (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). The three critical dimensions of place attachment applicable in this study are place dependence, place identity, and social bonding. Place dependence refers to an individual's physical connection to a setting; for example, it reflects the degree to which a place meets an

individual's needs and allows him/her to realise his/her goals (Pretty *et al.*, 2003). Place identity relates to those cognitive and affective dimensions of self that define who we are in a place. Social bonding entails feelings of belonging to or membership of a group (Raymond *et al.*, 2010).

Place attachment studies reveal the multidisciplinary nature of the concept and demonstrate the different actors, social relationships, and places of different contexts, varying scales, and land uses (Altman & Low, 1992). For example, a study by Lu *et al.* (2023) revealed a significant and positive effect of place attachment on respondents' participation attitude and behaviour towards low-carbon community development in Beijing, China. The study established that place attachment factors such as environmental and social bonding significantly affect the application of low-carbon technologies and strategies. Anton and Lawrence (2014) found that many people in rural Australian areas actively choose to live there, despite the threat of bushfires because of physical and cultural bonding with the place, despite the threat of bushfires, and the hardships of being isolated from services and major employment hubs. Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu (2018) also acknowledge place attachment dimensions such as hometown feel, sense of belonging, and ownership as some of the reasons why the distressed neighbourhood of Sunnyslope (State of Arizona, United States of America) has survived since the early 20th century as a distinct place.

South African local studies (Puren *et al.*, 2006; Marais *et al.*, 2018; Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021) also show that people assign value to their places, and disrupting such values may lead to decreased place attachment. Rapid land-use changes within the Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site (in the Free State province, South Africa) changed the historical and cultural significance of the area. According to Puren *et al.* (2006), this negatively affected the residents' place attachment. Marais *et al.* (2018) found that mining activities in Postmasburg (in the Northern Cape

province, South Africa) resulted in the break-up of people and place bonds because of the changing characteristics of the landscape.

Threats to a place not only lead to declining people-place bonds but could also be a motivation for action. Jordaan (2015) established that place attachment is a motivating factor in participants' decisions to participate in a town-planning process in Tlokwe Local Municipality (Northwest province, South Africa). Jordaan also established that place attachment motivated individuals to engage in other types of place-protective behaviour, such as public outcries following a proposal to demolish residential places of historical and cultural significance.

Place attachment and participation in community-driven development are factors that interact in a multifaceted manner. This argument is rooted in the idea that people with strong emotional ties to the community are actively involved in the community-development process. By contrast, effective community participation further reinforces residents' attachment to their locality (Pretty *et al.*, 2003). From the above examples, some lessons can be drawn from the place attachment and community participation nexus. First, we learn that community members are motivated to participate in local development to ensure that the place continues to align with their emotional and social needs (the case of the Sunnyslope neighbourhood, United States of America). Secondly, place attachment gives residents an intrinsic drive to spend time, effort, and resources to influence decisions concerning their neighbourhood's social, physical, and environmental aspects (low-carbon community development in Beijing, China). Place attachment enables residents to share knowledge and thus create a platform for making informed decisions, as illustrated in the case of Tlokwe Local Municipality residents, South Africa (Jordaan, 2015). Through informal networks, community members rallied each other to engage in the public participation process regarding rezoning applications. Their objective

was to resist environmental changes that encroached upon spaces of historical importance to them (Jordaan, 2015). It also creates strong social ties that give residents a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of their community such as how residents in rural Australia improve their homes and local areas, despite the threats of bushfires (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). Moreover, it ensures that proposed development initiatives acknowledge and preserve the cultural values and norms as well as the unique characteristics of their community (Raymond *et al.*, 2010; Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Plunkett *et al.*, 2018; Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021).

Even though the above studies demonstrate the importance of place attachment in various contexts, the influence of place attachment on participation in community-driven development in South African cities and neighbourhoods needs to be further explored. The reason for this is that there are no clearly outlined provisions for the influence of place attachment as a motivating factor in participatory planning intentions in the South African town-planning processes (Jordaan, 2015: 6).

3. CASE STUDY AREA

This study focused on Gauteng province in South Africa. The province comprises three metropolitan cities, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, and Tshwane, and 6 local municipalities: Mogale City, Rand West City, Merafong City, Emfuleni, Midvaal, Lesedi (see Figure 1). According to the census data released in 2023, Johannesburg's annual compound growth trend is 0.7%, while it is 3% in Tshwane. Emfuleni, a historically low-growth municipality, has realised a population growth of 31% since the last census (Götz *et al.*, 2023; StatsSA, 2023). Gauteng has grown by nearly a quarter (23%) of its own previously measured population size of 12.7 million and now houses some 15.1 million people over the past decade (Götz *et al.*, 2023). Although the province only covers 1.5% of South Africa's total land

area, it is considered the country's economic heartland and a gateway to Africa (Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021). There have been marked shifts in the racial composition of the Gauteng population: Black African, 84,6%; Coloured, 2,9%; Indian, 2,2%; White, 10,0%, and other 0,2% (StatsSA, 2023). The percentage of the population born in Gauteng increased from 56% in 2011 to 64.7% in 2022, while Gauteng's migrant population makes up 35.3% of the province's people (Götz *et al.*, 2023).

In the context of South Africa and particularly in Gauteng province, place attachment is influenced by historical, social, economic, and environmental factors, which can present some challenges (Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021) such as urbanisation and migration, cultural diversity, as well as social and spatial inequalities, among many others (Dlamini *et al.*, 2022). As an example, the country's history of forced removals, particularly during the apartheid era, led to the displacement of many people and the disruption of their place attachment (Dlamini *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, rapid urbanisation and migration have resulted in the expansion of urban areas to their rural peripheries, the insurgence of informal settlements, and inadequate infrastructure provision. This has prompted disconnections between residents and their new living environments, consequently affecting positive place attachment (Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021).

4. METHODS

4.1 Research design

This study used secondary data obtained from the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) Quality of Life (QoL) survey. The study is the sixth iteration, conducted biennially in Gauteng province. The research adopts a quantitative approach to explore the nexus between place attachment and community participation in community-driven programmes in Gauteng province, South Africa. From the QoL survey dataset, descriptive and inferential data analysis (Creswell,

2014) was done. This study used socio-psychological data to cluster participants in four 'place-attachment' social groups, after which a combined index of participation was calculated. Inferential analyses were used to show the significant differences in participation in community-driven development among the four social groups.

4.2 Population and sample

The target population for the QoL survey includes all adult residents (aged 18 years and above) in the 529 wards of Gauteng province (Hamann & De Kadt, 2021). From this population, the sample size for the GCRO's QoL survey includes, within each ward, at least five enumerator areas (EA) chosen as the primary sampling units to ensure that the data would be representative at the ward level. This selection process was based on a map displaying all the province's dwelling units (GCRO, 2021). The GCRO QoL surveys consider EAs ideal sub-ward geography because they are delimited around residential settlements (Hamann & De Kadt, 2021: 6). A multistage sampling procedure that included randomisation at the cluster (EA), housing unit, and individual levels was used to choose the sample for this analysis (GCRO, 2021). A

total of 3,075 enumeration areas were sampled, and at least four households per EA were interviewed (Hamann & De Kadt, 2021: 10). The final attained sample size in the QoL survey is $n=13,616$. The current study excluded 3,924 out of the total sample because they either did not have data on their income or population group, resulting in a total of $n=9,692$.

4.3 Data collection

This secondary data research study uses existing survey data obtained from the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) Quality of Life (QoL) Survey VI (six) of 2020/2021. The researcher did not collect new data but used already existing data from the QoL survey dataset. The dataset of the QoL VI survey is free to use and openly available under a CC-BY attribution-only license. In order to obtain the data, individuals are required to register an account on the DataFirst website and complete a data request form that provides specific information about the research objective for which the data is needed. DataFirst evaluates the data application and authorises access if the purpose of the application is considered suitable. This research acquired authorisation to analyse the pre-existing data by adhering to the

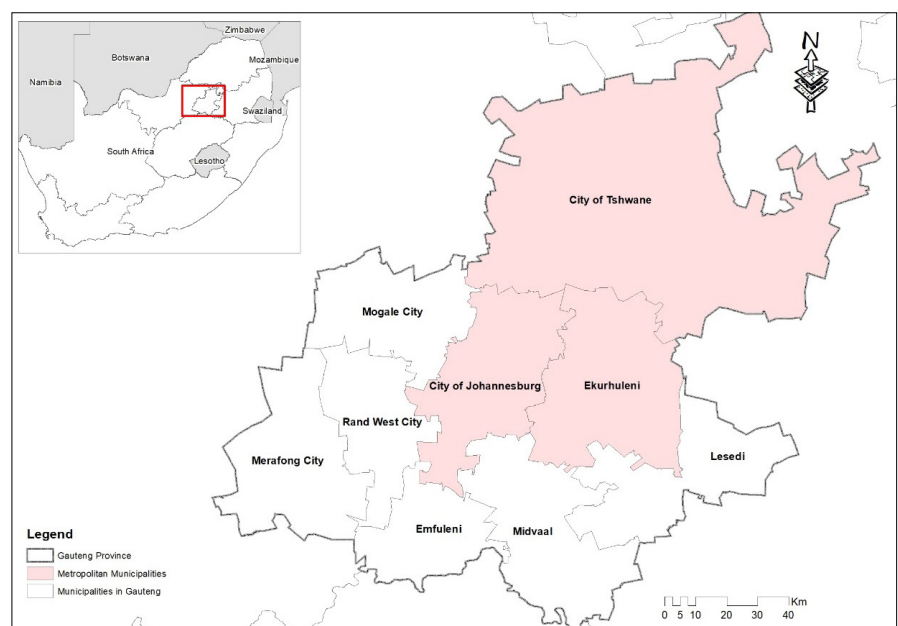


Figure 1: Municipal areas in Gauteng province, South Africa

Source: Author using QGIS software (2024)

specified procedures. Secondary data collection and analysis have the primary benefit of accessing enormous datasets that would otherwise be impossible or prohibitive for an individual to gather (Martins, da Cunha & Fernando, 2018). The GCRO Quality of Life (QoL) survey is essential for measuring various dimensions of quality of life in Gauteng province. The GCRO QoL survey is a household survey conducted biennially in Gauteng province and has a minimum sample of 600 questionnaire interviews per municipality. Within each ward, questionnaire interviews were clustered at the EA level, with four to five interviews per EA. The GCRO QoL questionnaire is administered electronically and has a wide range of closed-ended questions (214 in total), which offer both multiple and single select response options. The questions include sections for demographics, households, access to services, economy, safety, political attitudes, social attitudes, community attitudes, health, and transport to measure the Quality-of-Life Index (GCRO, 2021).

4.4 Dependent and independent variables

In this study, participation in community-driven development is the dependent variable. The proxy variables from the QoL survey for measuring participation in community-driven development are community association or neighbourhood watch; ward meeting; street committee or resident's association meeting; community development forum meeting; school governing body meeting, and community policing forum meeting community. Similar empirical studies informed this selection on community participation (Everatt & Gwagwa, 2005; Mamokhere, 2022; Mnguni, 2010). Five variables were selected from the QoL survey as proxies for place attachment and considered independent (response) variables in this study:

1. When you think of 'home', are you thinking of this neighbourhood, somewhere else in Gauteng, somewhere in

another province, or somewhere in another country?

2. Generally speaking, do you think that most of the people in your neighbourhood or community can be trusted or that you need to be very careful when dealing with people in your neighbourhood?
3. Thinking about people living in your neighbourhood, do you think you are the same as them, worse off or better off than them?
4. People like me cannot influence developments in my community.
5. How satisfied are you with the area or neighbourhood where you live now?

This selection was influenced by comparable empirical studies on place attachment (Manzo & Perkins 2006; Raymond *et al.*, 2010; Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Jordaan, 2015; Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021; Lu *et al.*, 2023). Socio-demographic data from the QoL survey, including the population group, age, sex, income, dwelling type, highest educational level, one's physical ability status, district municipality and length of stay in the neighbourhood, were control factors used to assess the odds of participation.

4.5 Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis was done, by using the statistical package STATA version 18. Data analysis was performed in four different stages. The first stage was the descriptive analysis, while the second to fourth stages employed inferential analysis. First, descriptive statistics (frequency and %) were used to understand the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample.

The second stage used the proxy determinants of place attachment and cluster participants based on their responses. The K-means clustering method was employed to cluster participants in four 'place attachment' social groups. K-means clustering is a method of grouping observations into clusters (Kassambara, 2017). Inferential analyses were used to show the differences in participation in community-driven

development among the four social groups (Kassambara, 2017).

The third stage was to determine the extent of participation in community-driven development initiatives and establish if there are any significant differences in participation in community-driven development among the four sentiment place attachment groups. At this stage, the initial step involved calculating a combined participation index to better understand the extent of residents' participation in community-driven development initiatives. Then the Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed to test if at least one mean from a particular group is significantly different from the other when one community-driven development variable is considered (Almquist, Ashir & Brannstrom, 2014). This study used a significance level of $p = 0.05$ to determine the observed difference's statistical significance. If the p-value is less than 0.05, it indicates that the difference is statistically significant at this level (Fink, 2003; Almquist *et al.*, 2014). This method is the non-parametric alternative to the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (Fink, 2003). The test led to a post-hoc analysis using Dunn's Pairwise Comparison (Bonferroni). This post-hoc test was performed to assess if there are significant differences between the means of two groups, allowing one to tell a story, and if such differences exist between two social clusters (Almquist *et al.*, 2014).

In the fourth and last stage of the analysis, an ordinal logistic regression model was employed to assess the odds of participating in more community-driven development for each social group. The odds ratio (OR) quantifies the impact of a one-unit change in the predictor variable on the outcome while keeping other variables constant. It is a valuable tool for understanding the relationship between variables (Almquist *et al.*, 2014). If the p-value is less than 0.05, it indicates a statistically significant association. A value greater than 1 suggests that, as the predictor variable increases, the likelihood of the outcome also increases. For example, a value of 1.5 for the OR

indicates that, with each one-unit increase in the social group category, the likelihood of participation in community development increases by 1.5 times or by 50%. A value less than 1 indicates that, as the predictor variable increases, the probability of the outcome happening decreases. An OR of 1 means no association between the predictor variable and the odds of the outcome (Fink, 2003; Kassambara, 2017). For example, an OR of 0.77 for an income range of R12,801-R25,600 indicates that, with each increase of one unit in the predictor variable (income), the likelihood of the outcome happening is reduced by 23% compared to the reference.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Socio-demographic profile of respondents and the place attachment proxies

Table 1 provides a general overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample and quantifies the responses obtained from the proxy indicators of place attachment. Table 1 shows that, nearly 50% of the sampled respondents are indifferent or feel that they cannot influence community developments; this may reflect poor place identity (Raymond *et al.*, 2010). The findings also show that there are more females (54%) than males (46%) in the sample. This shows the need for further exploration of the gendered dimensions of place attachment and participation in community-driven development, in order to promote inclusive decision-making processes in communities. Additional socio-demographic variables such as age, income, and education offer a more nuanced comprehension of the various ways in which different elements impact on individuals' involvement in community development. However, the descriptive statistics alone cannot tell the whole story.

Table 1: Place attachment proxies and respondents' socio-demographic profile

Variable	Category	F (n=9692)	%
Where is home?	This neighbourhood	6523	67.3
	Another neighbourhood in Gauteng	732	7.6
	Another province	1913	19.7
	Another country	524	5.4
Should one trust people in your neighbourhood or community?	Most people can be trusted	3634	37.5
	You need to be very careful	5668	58.5
	Don't know	390	4.0
Do you think you are the same as people living in your neighbourhood?	Worse off	822	8.5
	Same	6600	68.1
	Better off	2270	23.4
People like me cannot influence developments in my community	Strongly agree	655	6.8
	Agree	2500	25.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	1665	17.2
	Disagree	3796	39.2
	Strongly disagree	1076	11.1
How satisfied are you with the area or neighbourhood where you live now?	Very satisfied	1307	13.5
	Satisfied	5380	55.5
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	851	8.8
	Dissatisfied	1597	16.5
	Very dissatisfied	557	5.8
Population group	Black African	8151	84.1
	Coloured	262	2.7
	Indian/Asian	116	1.2
	White	1163	12.0
Gender	Male	4456	46.0
	Female	5236	54.0
Dwelling type	Formal	8062	83.2
	Informal	1491	15.4
	Other	139	1.4
Education	No education	124	1.3
	Primary only	831	8.6
	Secondary incomplete	3149	32.5
	Matric	3115	32.1
	More	2434	25.1
	Unspecified	39	0.4
Disability	No	9478	97.8
	Yes	214	2.2
Age (years)	18-29	2446	25.2
	30-64	6369	65.7
	65+	877	9.1
Household income	R1-R800	1568	16.2
	R801-R3 200	3523	36.4
	R3,201-R12,800	2681	27.7
	R12,801-R25,600	922	9.5
	R25,601-R51,200	648	6.7
	R51,201 and more	350	3.6
District municipality	City of Ekurhuleni	2 038	21.0
	City of Johannesburg	2 459	25.4
	City of Tshwane	1 958	20.2
	Sedibeng	1 560	16.1
	West Rand	1 677	17.3
Length of stay in the neighbourhood	Always lived there	2 837	29.3
	More than 10 years	3 922	40.5
	5-10 years	1 150	11.9
	3-4 years	617	6.4
	1-2 years	701	7.2
	Less than 1 year	465	4.8

5.2 The emerging community social groups

Based on K-means clustering, the statistical indicators and descriptions show four critical social clusters or 'place attachment' social groups based on the sentiments of each group's characteristics that emerged from the study. Table 2 shows that just over half (52.4%) of the participants belong to group four, representing the 'Potential neighbourhood champions'. These participants deeply connect with their community and are committed to its success. They have a sense of pride and ownership (Lu *et al.*, 2023). The participants are firmly grounded in their community, have a strong sense of belonging, and have the potential to participate in community-driven development projects (Jordaan, 2015). From the four clusters, 20.6% of the participants belong to group one, the 'Discontented advocates' social group (Mnguni; 2010; Raymond *et al.*, 2010; Jordaan, 2015). This refers to the participants' low trust in their neighbours

and dissatisfaction with their neighbourhood, suggesting a lack of engagement and connection within the community. However, this group may be characterised by individuals who can voice their concerns through participation in decision-making, as they also firmly believe that they can influence development.

The various groups identified in measuring the place attachment proxies confirm that communities are made up of heterogeneous groups (Altman & Low, 1992; Pretty *et al.*, 2003; Raymond *et al.*, 2020). It is important for urban planners to identify these groups and assess how the various needs and goals of each group can be met (Jordaan, 2015).

5.3 Social groups and participation in community-driven development

Table 3 shows that nearly half (45.5%) of the residents in Gauteng province have never participated in community-driven development initiatives. An operational definition of community-driven development

initiatives in the study includes locally or grassroots-generated programmes that mostly seek to improve the local social or physical environment (see Section 4.4). The findings in Table 3 reveal that community engagement is generally low/poor in Gauteng province; this suggests that there seems to be low place attachment among the residents in Gauteng. Similar findings were confirmed by Anton and Lawrence (2014), who found that city dwellers in Western Australia have lower place dependence than their rural counterparts who live in bushfire-prone environments. Low place attachment can result from barriers to public participation (Jordaan, 2015). Various methods can be employed to overcome these barriers, such as using social media platforms, radio stations, arts or music festivals, and interactive online platforms (Mnguni, 2010; Mamokhere, 2022). These mechanisms can help spread awareness about the significance of public participation in ongoing development initiatives to a wider audience. Moreover, low place

Table 2: The four key clusters of social groups

Social groups	Freq.	%	Home	Trust ²	Status ³	Influ ⁴	Nbhd sat ⁵
1	1999	20.6	1,49525	1,8439'	2,2551*	3,0430	4,1871'
2	1134	11.7	2,46825	1,6243	2,0820	1,5547	2,0238
3	1483	15.3	3,16723	1,7074	2,1686	3,9043*	2,3945
4	5076	52.4	1,05142	1,5918	2,1172	3,4630	1,8867
Total	9692	100	1.63248	1.6653	2.1494	3.2206	2.4549
Mean							
Discontented advocates (1)				Participants with the least trust for people in their neighbourhood	Participants who mainly consider themselves better than people living in their neighbourhood		Participants who have the least neighbourhood satisfaction
Neighbourhood self-doubters (2)					Participants who least consider themselves better than people living in their neighbourhood	Participants who perceive themselves to have the most minor influence on development in their community	
Potential community catalysts from afar/ Non-local influencers (3)			Participants who are farther from home than other groups			Participants who perceive themselves to have the most influence on development in their community	
Potential neighbourhood champions (4)			Participants who are closest to home than other groups	Participants with the most trust for people in their neighbourhood			Participants who have the most neighbourhood satisfaction

2 Community trust.

3 Social status.

4 Influence on development.

5 Neighbourhood satisfaction.

* The higher the figure, the lesser the community trust, the higher the social status perception, the greater the perception of influence in decision-making and the more dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood.

attachment can be overcome by addressing some of the factors that promote place attachment such as engaging in robust participatory planning; improving service delivery to address inequalities; implementing co-design interventions to increase neighbourhood satisfaction, and promoting sports and recreation programmes to foster social cohesion and trust (Raymond *et al.*, 2010; Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Jordaan, 2015; Lu *et al.* 2023).

Table 3: A combined participation index

Number of activities	Number of participants	%
0	4410	45.50
1	1726	17.81
2	1284	13.25
3	1018	10.50
4	696	7.18
5	430	4.44
6	128	1.32

The Kruskal-Wallis tests results in Table 4 yielded a significant result ($p=0.0001$), suggesting significant differences in community development participation among different social groups. Social group 4 had a higher mean of 13.26%, with a statistically significant difference ($p=0.0001$) in participating in community associations or

neighbourhood watch. However, in other community development programmes, Group 1 had the highest participation means, with a statistically significant difference ($p=0.0001$). This shows an intriguing dynamic where residents actively engage in decision-making, while experiencing discontent and distrust within the neighbourhood (Mnguni, 2010; Jordaan, 2015).

Pairwise comparisons using Dunn's test in Table 5 revealed that Group 4 scores on participation in community association/neighbourhood watch differed significantly from those of Group 1 ($p=0.021$) and Group 2 ($p=0.000$). There were no other statistically significant variations in community association/neighbourhood watch involvement among the other groups. Group 4 members are content with their neighbourhoods and are more likely to be concerned about their neighbourhood's safety, as Plunkett *et al.* (2018) confirmed. In terms of ward meeting participation, Group 1 scores were significantly different from Group 2 ($p=0.000$), Group 3 ($p=0.000$), and Group 4 ($p=0.000$). Participation in ward meetings differed significantly between Groups 4 and 3 ($p=0.000$). In addition,

there were notable variations in the scores between Group 1 and Group 2 ($p=0.000$), Group 3 ($p=0.000$), and Group 4 ($p=0.000$) regarding their involvement in the community development forum, street committee, and residence association. There were also significant differences in attendance at school governing body meetings between group 1 and group 2 ($p=0.036$) and Group 3 and Group 4 ($p=0.000$). In the same participation category, Group 3 scores differed considerably from Group 2 ($p=0.000$) and Group 4 ($p=0.000$). The lower participation scores in the school governing body for Group 3 members deemed that non-local 'influencers from afar' could be attributed to the fact that this group does not regard Gauteng province as their home. Their family or children may live somewhere other than where they consider home (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). As a result, there was hardly any attendance at the school's governing board meeting. The Dunns test also revealed significant differences in Group 1 and Group 2 ($p=0,000$), Group 3 ($p=0,000$), and Group 4 ($p=0,010$) involvement in community policing forum meetings. People's motivations for participating in community development can vary

Table 4: Kruskal-Wallis equality-of-populations rank test

Groups	Community association/ neighbourhood watch		Ward meetings		Street committee/ residence association		Community development forum		School governing body meeting		Community policing forum meeting	
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD
1	10.96	0,312	41.37	0,493	40.27	0,491	24.11	0,428	30.87	0,462	14.36	0,351
2	8.91	0,285	29.54	0,456	29.81	0,458	16.40	0,370	26.81	0,443	9.35	0,291
3	9.31	0,291	27.51	0,447	32.03	0,467	15.91	0,366	19.02	0,393	10.11	0,302
4	13.24	0,339	32.82	0,470	32.43	0,468	18.01	0,384	24.70	0,431	11.86	0,323
(p-value)	0,0001*		0,0001*		0,0001*		0,0001*		0,0001*		0,0001*	

* $p<0.05$ is considered statistically significant

Table 5: Association between groups and community participation

Pairwise comparison of means by groups	Community association/ neighbourhood watch		Ward meetings		Street committee/ residence association		Community development forum		School governing body meeting		Community policing forum meeting	
	Absolute % points diff	p-value	Absolute % points diff	p-value	Absolute % points diff	p-value	Absolute % points diff	p-value	Absolute % points diff	p-value	Absolute % points diff	p-value
1 & 2	2.05	0,258	11.83	0,000*	10.46	0,000*	7.71	0,000*	4.06	0,036	5.01	0,000*
1 & 3	1.65	0,401	13.86	0,000*	8.24	0,000*	8.20	0,000*	11.85	0,000*	4.24	0,000*
1 & 4	2.28	0,021*	8.55	0,000*	7.84	0,000*	6.11	0,000*	6,6	0,000*	2.50	0,010*
2 & 3	0.40	1,000	2.03	0,826	2.22	0,699	0.49	1,000	7.79	0,000*	0.77	1,000
2 & 4	4.33	0,000*	3.28	0,103	2.62	0,274	1.60	0,633	2.10	0,423	2.51	0,053
3 & 4	3.93	1,000	5.31	0,000*	0.40	1,000	2.09	0,208	5.69	0,000*	1.75	0,201

* $p<0.05$ is considered statistically significant

greatly; some of the reasons why social Group 1, or 'Discontented advocates', participate in community-driven development more than the other groups may be due to their dissatisfaction with the status quo, which drives individuals to seek changes in their community. Participating in several community development platforms allows people to express their concerns and advocate for the changes they want to see in their communities. For example, inhabitants of Tlokwe Local Municipality (Northwest province) used place-protective behaviour to voice their concerns (Jordaan, 2015)

5.4 The odds of participating in more community-driven development initiatives

The ordinal logistic regression model in Table 6 presents the changes in place attachment which social groups and other social demographic factors associated with changes in the odds of participating in more community-driven development initiatives. Analysing the effects of socio-demographic factors on community development provides valuable insights into the community dynamics and the socio-demographic disparities within a community that influences place attachment (Dlamini & Tesfamichael, 2021). The findings reveal that, if the neighbourhood self-doubters (2) is the reference category, there are statistically significant differences in the participation of the social groups 'discontented advocates' (OR=1,509; p=0.000) and 'potential neighbourhood champions' (OR=1,266; p=0.000). The 'discontented advocates' and 'potential neighbourhood champions' are 51% and 27%, respectively, more likely to participate in more community-driven initiatives than the 'self-doubters'. This may be because the self-doubters least consider themselves as better than people living in their neighbourhood and perceive themselves to have the most minor influence on development in their community. In other words, they have low social bonding and place identity, which negatively affects their

community engagement level, as confirmed by Hesari *et al.* (2020).

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents also reveals significant differences (p=0.016) by gender. Females are more likely to participate in community-driven developments than males by 10%. It also shows significant differences in participation by race, where other race groups (Coloured, p=0.002, Indian/Asian, p=0.000, Whites, p=0,000) are less likely to participate in community-driven projects than Black Africans. Moreover, the findings show a statistically significant difference (OR=0.773; p=0.003) in the participation between lowest income earners (R1-R800) and average income earners (R12,801-R25,600), where average income earners are 23% less likely to participate in more community-driven projects than lowest income earners. In Gauteng province, service

delivery has become a challenge in all municipalities. It is interesting to note that low-income earners are more likely to engage in community activities, in order to actively enhance their neighbourhood environments (Dlamini *et al.*, 2022). On the other hand, high-income earners, who have greater access to private services, may not participate as much (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002).

Significant differences were also observed between participation in community-driven development and education level when no education is the reference category. Those with incomplete secondary education and those with a post-matric qualification are 57% more likely to participate than those without education (OR=1,571; p=0.007), those with matric are 66% more likely to participate than those without education (OR=1,657; p=0.003). Significant differences in

Table 6: Ordinal logistic regression model

Predictor variable	Category (reference)	Odds Ratio (OR)	% of the OR	P>z
Social groups	Group 2 (reference)			
1	1	1,509	50.9	0,000*
3	3	1,116	11.6	0,143
4	4	1,266	26.6	0,000*
Gender	Male (reference)			
	Female	1,098	9.8	0,016*
Population group	Black African (reference)			
	Coloured	0,690	31	0,002*
	Indian/Asian	0,456	54.4	0,000*
	White	0,443	55.7	0,000*
Age group in years	18-29 (reference)			
	30-64	1,351	35	0,000*
	65+	0,829	17.1	0,025
Physical disability	No (reference)			
	Yes	0,876	13.3	0,308
Household monthly income	R1-R800 (reference)			
	R801-R3,200	1,033	3.3	0,562
	R3,201-R12,800	0,803	19.7	0,000*
	R12,801-R25,600	0,773	22.7	0,003*
	R25,601-R51,200	0,823	17.7	0,058
	R51,201 and more	0,979	12.1	0,868
Length of stay	I have always lived here (reference)			
	More than 10 years	1,076	7.6	0,126
	5-10 years	0,821	17.8	0,004*
	3-4 years	0,631	16.9	0,000*
	1-2 years	0,498	50.2	0,000*
	Less than 1 year	0,337	62.3	0,000*
Education	No education (reference)			
	Primary only	1,325	32.5	0,107
	Secondary incomplete	1,571	57.1	0,007*
	Matric	1,657	65.7	0,003*
	More	1,571	57.1	0,009*
	Unspecified	1,662	66.2	0,159

*p<0.05 is considered statistically significant

participation were also observed between participation in community-driven development and length of stay. For example, those who have stayed for shorter periods such as less than 1 year or between 1 to 2 years are 62% (OR=0,337; p=0.000) and 50% (OR=0.495; p=0.000) less likely to participate than those who have always lived in an area. This is also confirmed by Anton and Lawrence (2014). Different socio-demographic groups have various levels of participation in community-driven initiatives, and this shows that these people perceive and connect with their community differently (Raymond *et al.*, 2010).

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The article offers valuable insights into the intricate connections between people, their unique identities, and the extent of their participation in community-driven development in the places where they live. The article provides a theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge in the broad field of environmental design, where the concept of place attachment influences the design of urban spaces. Different emotional and cognitive ties drive community members' participation in development. Understanding these existential differences helps tailor solutions targeted at addressing the specific needs of the various social groups. Ignoring these ties frequently leads to discontentment, conflicts, waste of time and resources, as well as the degradation of the physical, natural, and cultural environments. This study, therefore, can help planners improve community-driven development in the socio-economically varied Gauteng province, by encouraging individuals to feel more attached to their communities.

This article proposes three critical recommendations to the neighbourhood champions, community leaders, urban planners, and policymakers who steer participation in community-driven development. First, there is a need for a strategic approach

backed by sufficient research, time and resources, and political commitment to understand further and develop models demonstrating how emotional bonds influence and can be influenced by community development among different social groups. The status quo seems to reflect place attachment as a cosmetic principle or an idle concept in the South African town-planning processes. The local Integrated Development Plans should explicitly state the importance of prioritising emotional and cognitive ties in spatial planning.

Secondly, there is a need for the above-mentioned key actors and other important stakeholders to identify the actual development needs in which communities aspire to participate, by engaging in charrettes (collaborative design sessions) and other co-design interventions. These actors can experiment with implementing universal design features that ensure equitable access to urban amenities, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity.

Thirdly, there is a need to identify and address barriers to public participation that may hinder effective community engagement in development. This entails using communication strategies that are not only tokenistic, but also effective and robust. One such strategy includes the blending of traditional and digital online participation platforms. This should translate to policy decisions and actions that reflect communities' spatial needs and environmental aspirations. These practical measures foster a sense of place identity, place dependence, and social and environmental bonding, which are the important dimensions of place attachment that positively influence community-driven development and meet the overall goals of social justice and societal well-being. Future studies in this field can explore the influence of other socio-technological factors, such as pandemics or intelligent technology, on place attachment and participation.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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