THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL URBAN PLANNERS IN UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING THE DYNAMISM OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

By

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Declaration

I, Danielle Hill, declare that the contents of this dissertation/thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the University of Cape Town.

Signed by candidate

Signed   **Date**

Dedication

I remember it was late 2017, while having outstanding UCT debt, I felt strongly that I had to do my PhD. I distinctly remember discussing alternative options with my dad and, his telling me, "Danielle, let me pay that outstanding debt". You need to know that my dad was a pensioner; he was trying to fix the house for him and my mother, as they were approaching their seventies, and he was saving up to fix the roof. Although I refused his offer, he was adamant, saying firmly, "Danielle, see it as a gift from me- I want you to do this PhD". He was a very studious man, but had never had the opportunity to study further. Thus, it was that he sacrificed his last resources to see his children further their studies. He wasn't someone who simply thought it his duty to provide for his family; he wanted to know what my research was about, how far along I was, what my supervisor thought. He wanted to be totally involved. I told him my intention was to finish by the end of last year (2021). The last we spoke was in June 2021. I was busy with my data analysis, and I thought it would only take a month. He told me jokingly that it would take two months, and -he was right. I never had an opportunity to let him know how accurate his prediction was. On July 25th 2021, he passed on due to Covid-19. Because my father will not have the opportunity to read my work nor see me graduate- something he often proudly spoke about, this thesis has been both painful and therapeutic. My father deserves to experience this shared achievement- I am because of him. This PhD is in honour of my father for his unwavering sacrifice, prayer, support, encouragement, and commitment to me as his daughter. I hereby dedicate this PhD Thesis to my beloved father, Adam Jacobus Hill (10/11/1954-25/07/2021).

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Abstract

Informal settlements pose a major developmental challenge for professional urban planners and urban managers and are predicted to continue to do so in years to come. At the heart of this challenge lies the complex relationship between the nature of informality and that of urban planning as a profession and discipline. The greater part of research on informal settlements has focused, and continues to focus, on bottom-up approaches. While these approaches are central to global South oriented research, I argue for more focus on what appears to be the overlooked role of the global South planner. Whereas my approach delves into the intersection between managing informal settlements, utopian ideals of urban planning, and a radical push for decolonial thinking, urban planning in both the global North and global South has long been critiqued for its persistent rigid, colonial-modernist approach to the managing and assessment of urban development. The specific emphasis of my approach is on the mindset and sensibility necessary for built environment professionals to adopt when undertaking processes of urban development a focus which seems so far to have been missing in planning debates. I argue that change cannot fully start from the bottom, that, for several reasons, it needs to start from the top. The modernist colonial origins, influence, and culture of urban planning is critiqued by scholars, particularly in the global South planning field, for 'saving', 'hiding', or 'eradicating', rather than liberating and empowering the 'other' in urban development processes. Central to this liberation, I argue, is a radical reorientation of planners' consciousness toward the kind of mindset and sensibility necessary when managing 'the other', i.e. the urban poor, the marginalised, and those living in informal settlements. Any acknowledgement of the importance of both social organisation and identity in informal place-making lies in the shift in urban planning practitioners' mindsets. The focus of my case study is an exploration of the specific ways in which planning practitioners collaborated with each other, and with informal settlement communities. This included the power relations at play within this collaborative process, and the potential this process has to harness and invigorate the informal upgrading process. I explore these by looking at a pilot (Phase 1) Upgrading of an Informal Settlement Programme (UISP) project in Thembalethu, municipality of George, Western Cape Province. Even though the UISP is a housing policy rather than a planning tool, the UISP is actively designed to address

and upgrade informal settlements by following a four-phased approach to address broader socio-economic challenges. By exploring the Thembalethu UISP, I explore the degree to which planners are able to intervene and manage the complexities and contradictions inherent in informal settlement upgrading processes such as those in Thembalethu, and the specific factors limiting their role in this process.

My study adopted a qualitative case study research design approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the professionals who administered, and were responsible for, the upgrading project, together with field observation. Data were analysed using a system change lens, adjacent to using a deductive thematic analysis technique.

The planners were found to have played a marginal role in the upgrading process, and their agency to have been restricted, both by their employers and by the UISP budget, as their role was limited to technical layouts. Even though planning in this case remained 'powerless', and tended to fall prey to 'institutional victimisation', the role of the planner as revealed by the interviews was seen as imperative in providing spatial direction and balance in upgrading projects. Nevertheless, the interviews revealed that, in spite of their lack of agency and power in upgrading processes in the Thembalethu UISP, the planners were starting to reimagine informal spaces and the function of these, and, in so doing, challenging conventional ideas of design and layout, as well as the role of the planner, and their participation with communities in the planning process. This was all in addition, and at times in resistance to, policy considerations. While this process of incipient reimagining may have been the case in this study, the collaboration of built environment practitioners continues to mirror a disproportion of responsiveness between the state and the UISP implementing agent, and, in so doing, exposes the strength of governance systems continuing to remain in place.

The current study is expected to hold significance both at empirical and theoretical levels. Some of the theoretical significance resides in the move towards an African or de-colonial turn in planning, as well as towards a grounded learning-driven planning approach. While there is a body of research which shows how planning need not overlook power, I suggest specific ways in which ideas of decentralisation have

exposed the strength (i.e. distribution of power) of existing urban governance systems and community participation.

The empirical significance of the study calls for a greater emphasis on how the role of the implementing agent has been discounted in the literature. The findings also suggest the necessity for neighbourhood design and scale of intervention in upgrading projects, and for these projects to be more appropriate to the specific needs of informal communities than are large-scale one-size-fits-all state funded projects. Even though there has been a shift in scale and exploration in layout design, there remains a need for a holistic approach to urban development. On a policy level, the findings point to both a gap in, and a need for, greater alignment between housing and planning legislation and policies. Thus, the study offers a deeper knowledge and understanding of policy considerations, and of how custodianship of policies can become a major stronghold, if not a greater power contender, in the urban development spectrum. Furthermore, existing ideas of 'community empowerment' language in policy documents are interrogated. In the process of understanding the workings of this, I look in detail at management styles and at the kind of leadership necessary for implementing upgrading programmes. Based on the findings, I put forward the importance of ambivalence in any upgrading project. Thus, in the context of urban development as a dynamic 'collective', I consider the inability of planners to hold ambivalence to be a significant hindrance to their ability to envision, or to re-imagine, informal settlements. I argue that this in turn implicates the way planners think and manage the collective needs, together with the dynamism of informal settlements.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACC	African Centre for Cities
BLC	Building Local Communities
BNG	Breaking New Ground
CBO	Community-Based Organisations
CBPP	Community Based Participatory Planning
DoHS	Department of Human Settlements
DoE	Department of Energy
ESS	Enhanced Serviced Sites
ISSP	Informal Settlement Support Programme
IBP	Interim Business Plan
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISMP	Informal Settlement Master Plan
LUPA	Land Use Planning Act No. 16 of 2013
LUPO	Land Use and Planning Ordinance, 1985
MSDF	Municipal Spatial Development Framework
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998
NDHS	National Department of Human Settlements
NUSP	National Upgrading Support Programme
NHBRC	National Home Builders Registration Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAVE	South African Value Education

SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SLA	Service Level Agreements
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013
TRAs	Temporary Residential Areas
UA	User Accessibility
UISP	Upgrading of Informal Settlement Support Programme
UN	United Nations
WEP	World Employment Programme
WCDoHS	Western Cape Department of Human Settlements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

Informal settlements pose a major developmental challenge for professional urban planners and urban managers today and are predicted to continue to do so in years to come (Barry & Rüther, 2005). At the heart of this challenge lies the complex and increasingly contested relationship between the nature of informality and urban planning as a profession. The 19th century proliferation of West European modernist ideologies of urban planning, or 'master' planning, across worldwide urban planning systems persists in developing countries (Kamete, 2013). Master planning has been criticised by urban researchers, and some urban planners, for its disconnect from social realities, resulting in a fractured relationship which adversely affects largely the urban poor. The success, or the appearance, of how 'solid' modernity and its spatial interventions are can be attributed to the centralisation of the institutional power associated with modernity. According to Lee (2005):

> Modernity is solid in the sense that the combined power of these interlocking institutions overwhelms any individual effort to keep tradition in place, and makes 'Western expansion seemingly irresistible' (Giddens, 1990:63) … Modernity is made out to be solid insofar as institutional power is consolidated through a process of seemingly uncompromising changes in social structures (Lee, 2005:63).

Consequently, modernist planners perceived and envisaged a very specific understanding of the ideal human experience, an experience which informed what planners saw as ideal types of spatial forms. These assumptions have been found by contemporary schools of urban planning to have affected the urban poor negatively. The result of this has been that no leeway has been allowed, or space left, for those planners who do not wish to observe, or go beyond, this normative frame. The uncompromising nature and institutional consolidation of this has, in actuality, created for planners a sense of manageable predictability for their amelioratory project to restructure society.

The pluralistic and diverse nature of urban societies in the 21st century has been

acknowledged in recent decades (Pieterse, 2011; Pile, Brook & Mooney, 1999). Furthermore, since the dawn of the 21st century, urban informality has grown in relevance due to the fast-growing urban poor, and has been perceived by this sector of the population as a tool for navigating 'formal' legal institutions, together with evolving forms of poverty (Pasquetti & Picker, 2017). The heterogeneity of the informality discourse has brought about an array of 'inadequate' economic and development conceptualisations, which in turn has resulted in diverse inappropriate policy interventions and policy prescriptions predominantly aimed at reducing and/or regulating or ordering informality (Kanbur, 2011). Kanbur (2011) explains this negative connotation as hindering any comprehensive or flexible policy perspective that brings clarity and progressive direction to the problem of informality. Kamete (2013) concurs with this perception of informality, based on the assumption on the part of urban planners and policy managers, that informal urban development/ informal settlements can be 'handled'/managed like any other urban planning issue. However, research (Huchzermeyer & Karam, 2006; Abbott, 2002a; Smit, 2020) has shown that, even though the parameters within informality are dynamic, interventions and certain upgrading processes appear to be narrowly focused. This view can be seen in terms of future planning and the long-term future of urban or informal communities and their needs.

The UN-Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements (2009) has shown the extent to which informality persists and increases within cities, and the ways in which it mirrors the efficacy – or lack thereof - of urban planning. The urban planning profession is one primarily characterised by, and evaluated according to, how it manages urban growth, and to what extent it is adaptable to different forms of urbanisation. Oranje (2014:2) suggests that historically the early "institution of city planning and the creation of 'a better city' had a connection to a 'higher calling', when the approach, language and metaphors of planning were inspired by religious teaching and belief". This 'higher calling' can be understood as a realm where hope, ideals, and belief exist. Oranje (2014) demonstrates that the ways in which the progressive, humane, and transformative roots of planning are corrupted arise from the profession assuming highly institutionalised societies. Thus, according to Oranje, for the planner to return to his/ her transformative roots or higher calling, requires first, an active choice to be

made by the planner as an individual, secondly an injection of 'life' back into the bureaucratised state of planning, and, lastly, discovering innovative ways to harness trust on the part of those who participate and are recipients of the institution of planning (Oranje, 2014). To take this argument a step further, I argue that the planner requires a different mindset and sensibility in order to bring about transformation.

In this context, the mindset would be the set of attitudes held by the planner, and the sensibility is the ability of the planner to affectively and flexibly respond, relate, and adapt to, and appreciate the multi-layered and complex social environments and influences associated with urban planning. Moreover, transformation in this sense translates to governance transformation processes, and the transformative efforts made, and the mentality held by planners to structurally dismantle internal tensions between socio, economic, cultural and political factors (Coaffee & Healey, 2003). Van Ballegooijen and Rocco (2013) describe and critique informality's relation to institutions, one characterised by hostility, but at the same time, offering no substantial alternative:

> In short, informality is increasingly mystified as an ideal image of anti-authoritarianism, and a flexible, aesthetically desirable and perhaps unavoidable form of urbanisation (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013:1795). Turner's (1960) self-help theories [on informal urbanisation on the peripheries of the Latin American cities], initially developed in a liberal-left mindset, have now become part of the neoliberal agenda [and influenced the discourse of slum upgrading processes]. What both ideologies share is their deep hostility towards institutionalisation and the state and a strong belief in autonomy and individualism, but little else (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013:1807).

Oranje (2014) argues that in the 21st century the planners' identity (role and function) is tainted by institutionalised societies, whereas Van Ballegooijen and Rocco (2013) show the ways in which informality is starkly juxtaposed with hostility towards intuitionalism and the state. The authors of these studies, discussed by Van Ballegooijen and Rocco (2013), share a negative sentiment toward institutionalism. Therefore, from such research, it is unclear under which institutional conditions planning or planners are likely to thrive. In other words, it is not clear what institutional framework is necessary for planners to deal with a phenomenon (informality) which is

characterised by anti-institutionalism and anti-state. Moreover, existing planning literature does not provide clarity on how to bridge this divide.

This points to the necessity for a counter, or substantially different, mindset and sensibility for planners to be able to engage creatively and sustainably with informal urban development and settlements. In South Africa, the institution of urban planning is a tool used by the state to address spatial disparities and achieve sustainable urban development. As a result of this situation, the role of urban planners in the country in managing spatial planning, urbanisation, and the rollout of informal upgrading programmes is essentially institutionalised and politicised. Urban planning and the roll out of planning interventions have been viewed by policy makers and many scholars within an institutional context. Thus, institutional contexts can be said to strongly influence urban planning tools and processes.

Since the end of Apartheid, there has been a shift taking place in the make-up of the South African institution of urban planning. Throughout the 27 years of democratic government, a predominantly white profession has been changing with an influx of black planners. Duminy, Odendaal and Watson (2014:188) refer to this diversity. They see 'planning' in Africa as currently referring to a "wide range of activities, and people who call themselves 'planners' [who] possess very different educational backgrounds, professional ideologies, cultural affinities, types and refinements of skills". Diverse post-colonial and post-independence influences on specific 'context' and 'planners' make simplifying the profession problematic. Moreover, these diverse influences affect planners' engagement with institutional instruments in various ways. They also influence how these institutional instruments manifest within evolving institutional contexts, e.g. the democratisation of local government and institutionalisation of new planning instruments such as integrated development plans (IDPs). Therefore, when discourses of 'slum upgrading' and self-help theories are divorced from institutional realities, institutionalisation of informal settlements become problematic (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013). The reason for this is because the emphasis in these discourses is on the hostility and resistance, and not so much on how local municipalities are currently managing informal settlements despite the resistance and what these conflicting realities emblemise about the strength of existing institutional systems in place. Thus, in a case such as South Africa, the question arises: how do

you bridge the two and what would this mean for the future of planning institutions?

Developing countries tend to be characterised by high levels of informality, thus placing a significant burden on the role of urban planners. In this context, given that there is no single overarching policy intervention, Van Horen (2000:389) was of the view that "international experience indicates that informal settlement upgrading generally has been successful in delivering physical services and infrastructure to the urban poor". Thus, the common response in the global South to informality has tended to be toward design and infrastructure delivery. Even with the various ways in which informality is defined, and the resultant variety of planning approaches, the common approach to intervention remains design-oriented. The design-oriented interventions appear symptomatic of the tendency in dominant conventional planning tools to reinforce formal standards on the informal (Van Horen, 2000). As a result, design-oriented interventions do not equate, or articulate, with formal planning approaches. Instead, the emphasis is on the quality of institutions and institutional capacity. For purposes of my study, I seek to explore why this is the case, and whether what emerges from the data suggests alternative tools or ways to approach and address informality within the institutional domain.

This thesis seeks to unearth the aforementioned dynamics through exploring the Thembalethu Informal Settlement in George, Western Cape Province, South Africa. This chapter serves as an introduction with the intention to highlight the global debates on informality. Based on the literature review I discusses professional planners' conversations or ideologies concerning the strategic role of urban planning in relation to informality. Thereafter I focus specifically on the South African debates on informality, and on the research rationale and research questions of the present study. Lastly, I present the research approach, methodology, and conclusion.

1.2 Literature Review: Summary

The study builds on, and contributes to, debates on the relationship between urban planning practice and urban informality. Although studies in planning practice have examined informality, I have found that insufficient numbers of studies have been done on what kind of mindset or sensibility could or should be required for professional

planners to be both effective and sensitive when dealing with informal settlements, and with the dynamic character of these settlements. This case has, however, been developing in the literature over the last decade (Gotz & Simone, 2009; Kamete, 2013; Gunder, Madanipour & Watson, 2017; Todes & Turok, 2018).

This study is intended to provide an insight into the role professional planners play, or do not play, in the informal settlement upgrading processes as a whole. Van Ballegooijen and Rocco (2013) comment on the lack of this kind of shift on the part of urban planners from the narrow focus of the modernist approach to a wider more affective socio-political context:

> It is fair to assert that, after the supposed 'ending' of the modernist project, [which succeeded at being a part of a larger political project- influencing many lives], planners and urban designers in developing countries have never again been able to formulate a narrative in which urban development has been embedded in a larger socio-political project (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013:1808).

Whilst acknowledging the shortcomings and limitations of the modernist project, in the process of focussing specifically on the South African context, I present an argument for the need for planners to conceptualise informal urban development within the larger socio-economic and socio-political project. I see this as involving the decentralising and politicizing of the housing problem within the broader urban context. The literature reviewed brings into focus two key themes: self-help ideologies of informality, and state-led interventions. The former theme assumes that problems of future cities are remedied within the private realm (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013). The latter assumes that, through providing mass upgrading programmes, the problem of cities can be 'handled' through state-led large-scale projects. I explore both these themes within the context of international and South African debates on informality. The research lens is planning practice. I consider helping constitute answers to, the question, and substantiate why it is important to explore how professional planners, and the broader institution of planning, have responded to informality since 1994.

1.3 Global Debates on Informality

"The slum challenge continues to be one of the faces of poverty, inequality and deprivation in many cities in developing countries" (UN-Habitat, 2016:57). Historically, the term, 'Urban informality' was first employed in the early 1970s by Keith Hart, through the concept of 'informal sector'; a term which has evolved to be more generally understood as labour categorisation, territorial formation, and informal processes that translate spatially into urban development (Oduwaye & Olajide, 2012). Processes of informalisation have deepened over the last few decades within developing countries (Elian, 2018; Roy, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2009). This is attributed to developing countries' planning ideas, which continuously remain engulfed by complex processes or 'best practices' of globalisation, simultaneously reflecting knowledge, approaches, systems and ideas borrowed from the Global North (Watson, 2009a). The implications of this in turn have brought about forms of resistance or informal responses manifest in developing countries. These informal responses have, over the years, shaped debates on informality as scholars attempt to navigate, mitigate, and investigate the root causes of informality.

While there exist several potential theoretical frameworks underpinning an understanding of informality, I intend to explore what I consider to be the two most pertinent to my research. One has been developed by Roy (2009a), who sees informality as being a by-product of the state, and the other developed by Simone (2004), where informality is self-built and self-managed. My research is situated at the interface of these two frameworks. Recognising the existing mechanisms put in place by the state, I seek to interrogate the institutional logic underpinning the particular ways in which the state perceives and incorporates the 'self-constructed', self-managed phenomenon, 'informal'.

Understanding the 'informal' lies at the core of understanding the underpinning mental models (Jenkins, 2001) that gave rise to and drive the use of the term 'informal'. Jenkins (2001) argues that these conceptual models originate from the 'formal' [western] institutional order of late capitalist modernity, which was based on:

> … individualism as the basis of social relations, partially (and possibly decreasingly) mediated by the idea of [the] nuclear family as the elementary unit

of social production; citizenship in a representative democracy administered by a constitutional state as the basis of political relations, and utilitarian rationality in a system of generalised commodity production and market exchange as the basis of economic relations (Jenkins, 2001:3).

This hegemonic form of institutional order has proliferated in former colonial governments[1], which in turn have become, and continue to be, the custodians of this 'mental model'. Consequently, 'informal' would allude to the deviation from the 'formal' way of doing, and from the ordered and formal mental model. This is not to reduce informality to a phenomenon that is non-western. The emphasis lies with a certain school of thought which harnesses a mental model that shapes perceptions of human/social behaviour in the context of both the lived experience and management of informal settlements, and consequently on how it affects planning intervention. In addition, Koster and Nuijten (2016) describe the ways in which a hegemonic understanding of 'formality' portrays informality as the 'other', and places it subsequent or second to the formal. Jenkins (2001) further states that the formal-informal continuum is not conceptually abstract, but manifests daily in concrete and material ways as people unknowingly move between zones of the formal and the informal. Gonzales (2008) argues that debates around informality and formality have been a distraction from the real issue at hand: the misrepresentation and translation of the plight and resistance of the urban poor. de Soto and Diaz's (2002) claims are critical to Gonzales' (2008:239) critique, as she problematizes the reasons and sources of informality, and the advantages of formal/legal land title. de Soto and Diaz (2002) claimed that solving the impasse of poverty and housing problems in developing countries relied on the provision of legal/ formal title to land that was informally occupied by the urban poor. de Soto and Diaz's (2002) work was promoted by the World Bank, and continues to be promoted up to the present. Gonzales (2008) reviews de Soto and Diaz's (2002) best-selling book from three perspectives. First, she argues that informality is not exclusive to the South. Secondly, the provisions of formal titles are problematic as they overlook the risks involved. Lastly, she argues that:

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[1] https://unhabitat.org/global-report-on-human-settlements-2009-planning-sustainable-cities-policy-direction-abridged-edition

> … de Soto's attribution of informality to the failure of law in the global South reinforces the narrative of Latin American's inferiority. Thereby justifying the imposition of disadvantageous market-oriented legal reforms on Latin American nations and discrediting Latin American legal innovations that might better alleviate poverty and address the shortage of affordable housing (Gonzales, 2008:239).

The notion that a formal title can solve the problem of informality reflects the negative perceptions and stigma around informality and/or planning dilemmas (Recio, 2015). The incongruence of 'informality' lies at the heart of the understanding of informality as either being a product of urban modernity (McFarlane, 2012) or encouraging the aestheticism of poverty (Varley, 2013). Thus, the navigation of this interface becomes the challenge for urban planners.

Gonzales (2008) sees informality as being both contextual and socially constructed (Jenkins, 2001). Interestingly, Jenkins (2001) argues that critical to developing countries' contexts (norms, institutions) is their persistence, significantly influenced by pre-colonial and social cultures:

> … the basis for social relations may be based more on kinship and community than the individual or nuclear family; the basis for political relations may be based more on accepted authoritarianism or negotiated patronage than elected representation; and ·the basis for economic relations may be based more on principles of social redistribution or reciprocity than on utilitarian exchange (Jenkins, 2001:4).

Jenkins (2001) goes on to emphasise the recognition, and the growing acceptance of the idea, or of the reality that, in developing countries, informal institutions are based on these forms of social ordering:

> What is not acknowledged is that for many this is the basis of their mental models, customs and institutions, which to a greater or lesser extent are already adapted to the real cultural, social, economic, and political conditions, as well as increasingly adapting to cope with the dominant Western [rationalities] (Jenkins, 2001:4).

This is an indication of how policy makers' and planners' intentions to fix the 'problem'

in a top-down way run parallel with the 'self-managed efforts' of the urban poor, each group proceeding according to its own agenda and needs. Even though informality has become both a concept and a method used to understand the precarious and uncertain future of cities (Wade, 2009), if the 'mental cages' of policy makers and planners are not unlocked by a strong cultural perspective, these groups are bound to fail to understand the complex socio-economic and cultural contexts within which slums or informality are located in the broader matrix of urbanism (Pieterse, 2008). Moreover, Pieterse (2008) argues that, while, within the global South, we may have mastered the art of articulating the key drivers behind urban development problem, the shortcomings are located within the systemic and systematic aspect of addressing these problems. They are also linked to the ways in which the institutional composition of urban management may at times engulf "bottom-up" role players and intentions. This is a process which, in turn, inhibits openness to understanding urban poor realities and the inventive ways in which the poor resist formal systems. Thus, according to Pieterse (2008:115) informality is not a choice; rather, the concept alludes to the urban poor having no choice, having a truncated agency, and, as a result, actively resisting oppressive formal systems or "cannibaliz[ing] formal systems and resources" (Pieterse, 2008:115). In addition, there appears to be an assumption amongst planners and policy managers that the urban poor lack organisation or 'order'.

In many developing countries, informality within cities is partly a result of in-migration from rural areas. It becomes clear that the urban poor lack a 'sense of ownership', within the 'oppressive' formal systems experienced in cities (Dovey, 2012). Therefore, the urban poor can be perceived as encountering the choice to disregard or to be mindful of 'formality' or formal planning systems. However, the problem arises when 'semi-permanent' settlements have grown too big to allow for self-organisation, and state intervention is required. Gonzales (2008:258) emphasises that "informality constitutes a parallel and intersecting system of law developed by the urban poor in the face of daunting economic hardship". Thus, it is clear that scholars of urban informality have various frameworks for observing the formal and informal relation. These frameworks include informality as a mode or urbanisation (Roy, 2005), informality as territorial formation and situated spatiality, informality as a set of

practices (McFarlane, 2012), and informality as forms of organisation (Guha-Khasnobis & Kanbur, 2006). However, what persists in the literature on informality is the binary analysis of informality in relation to formality. Even though scholars' shorthand shows them regarding informality as a binary, conceptually there has been a broader acceptance in recent research that formality-informality is a continuum and not a binary.

While these various frameworks have the potential to usefully inform the ways in which we explain and analyse informal urban realities, crucial to understanding informality is the navigating of the spaces between institutions and lived informal urban realities. Thus, given that the designing of ways to mitigate the oppression by formal institutions of planners tends to overwhelm bottom-up approaches, I, and a number of scholars, argue that a strong cultural lens is necessary to dismantle western institutional order and to understand the evolved adaptation of the urban poor within the broader scope and matrix of urbanism and urban development (Pieterse, 2011; Alsayyad, 2004). Lastly, a greater representation in planning processes, and a recognition of the lived realities of the urban poor is central in order to harness the multi-layered complex socio-spatial relations manifesting in everyday urban spaces.

1.4 The Strategic Role of Urban Planning

Todes (2011) envisages the development of an international quest to revitalise urban and regional planning. This stems from a shift in the past from planning which focussed narrowly on spatial control and order, to urban planning as a profession that manages the growth of cities, promotes integrated development, sustainability, and mainstreaming of gender related issues. The critical issue associated with this new approach is that planning becomes a mechanism to surface and negotiate conflicting rationalities and concomitant priorities. This kind of urban planning, therefore, moves away from a control impulse to one focussed on mediation and facilitation, whilst retaining a strong normative footing.

According to Wade (2009:2), this shift is towards what appears to be a more sensitive, multi-layered and integrated planning approach. Wade (2009) argues that 'informality' runs the risk of becoming another catchphrase like 'participation', which, if used

loosely, can distort the transformational essence necessary to disrupt dominant epistemological frames and thinking around informality. From this, and from other research, the possibility appears to exist of a global South epistemological orientation towards a better and more comprehensive understanding of urban planning challenges, one that can be characterised and associated with everyday practices (Amin, 2014; Cirolia & Scheba, 2019; Pieterse, 2011). However, if urban planning systems are primary institutional entry points to advancing an alternative agenda (Pieterse, 2008:151), there exists a gap in the literature of studies which have the potential to provide passages of interconnection and interaction between everyday practices, their diverse cultural characteristics, and the institutional make-up of planning systems.

Kamete (2013:645) describes how urban planning in sub-Saharan Africa has sought to "cleanse urban spaces [from informal settlements] from spatial pathologies", this attributes and shapes how informality is perceived and constructed by the state and urban planners. The continuous and pervasive nature and 'pathology' of informality and its manifestation within urban space has become the new norm. Kamete's work uses the word 'normal' in his characterising of a lens through which to examine urban planning and informality. To him urban planning is one of many instruments the state uses to reinforce its authority, and spatial/ 'normalising' technologies, standards, and discourse(s) are utilised to correct/ normalise what critics of these practices, and their particular discourse(s) would describe as informal spatial abnormalities. He further argues that addressing informality has reduced itself to technical interventions, as opposed to interventions premised on social factors, economic governance, and political dynamics. More importantly, he argues that it is important for planners to abandon their continuous efforts to find a technical solution to informality, and to recognise the dynamic and multi-layered nature of evolving urban spaces. In this context, planners need to embrace the idea that informality is 'normal', and to "take informality back to the broader political and social sphere and insert it into the broader debates about social justice and economic and political governance" (Kamete, 2013:648). Adding to Kamete's argument, Gonzales (2008) reminds us that:

> Informality is not an exotic transplant from Latin America or a manifestation of legal 'underdevelopment.' Rather, informality is a rational response to poverty and

inequality, and will likely flourish in both the North and the South as long as the underlying economic causes persist (Gonzales, 2008:252).

Kamete (2013), among other scholars, agrees that the modernist planning mentality requires critical examination in terms of its preoccupation with 'order'/ visual order (Pile et al., 1999), and with 'spatial purification' (Koster & Nuijten, 2016). Qadeer (1974) was one of the early scholars to define and rationalise modernisation in terms of its being based on science. Thus, the modernist urban 'planning' vision was summarised by Qadeer (1974) 45 years ago:

> Modernization is visualized as a process for a total transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society with the types of technology and associated social organization that characterize the advanced, economically prosperous and relatively politically stable nations of the western world. Such a society is one characterized by high social differentiation, wider regulative and allocative mechanisms, and complex roles and institutions based on scientific knowledge (Qadeer, 1974:267)

Qadeer's definition from the 1970s conceives of, or envisions, the premise of the social organisation of cities as being founded on scientific knowledge. This scientific knowledge influenced, or was said to influence, how planners envisioned the city at that time, how planning as an institution was institutionalised, and which disciplinary techniques would be legitimated and used in the discipline of urban planning. However, Kamete (2013:648) argues that a re-shifting from this early conception of the modernisation of urban planning is necessary to informing the ways in which planners now normalise disciplinary techniques. These techniques are what became 'soul-numbing day-to-day tasks' (Oranje, 2014), not only negatively affecting the urban poor but also further atrophying the profession of planning. Oranje (2014) argues that the institutionalisation of planning has drained the life out of planning. Both Kamete (2013) and Oranje (2014) are hopeful that a different kind of creative, flexible, and socio-politically conscious planning can play a central role in advancing sustainable cities as well as just and humane living conditions.

In pondering this paradigm shift from fixity to effective management, Pile et al. (1999) highlighted the tension between notions of what "order" and "disorder" within cities are,

and how fundamental these notions are to how cities are conceptualised and managed. Moreover, other scholars in turn have called for a shift in focus toward 'functional' order, as opposed to visual order (Roy, 2005; Scott, 1995; UN-Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements, 2009). The focus on function alludes to moving beyond technocratic, scientific knowledge to incorporating the needs of the urban poor, in other words, how the urban poor and their spatial pathologies fit into the greater socio-political context.

More recently, Gunder and Hillier (2016) went further with their claim that ideas around urban planners' desires for security, harmony, and fulfilment are synonymous with desires for certainty, all of which are fundamental to the ontology of spatial planning, and underpinned by the modernist project. Consequently, if planners fail to deliver on their strategic spatial plans, or master plans fail, the planners are perceived to have failed, and their role as professionals' stands questioned. This means that planners remain caught in what Gunder and Maut (2002) describe as the "symbolic violence and institutional victimisation" of planning practices. In this situation planners become victims of the rules and regulations set out by the institution of planning, and of the institution that they work for i.e. the state, private practice, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or community-based organisations (CBOs). Kamete (2013) makes a strong argument for planners to abandon their continuous efforts to find a technical solution to informality and to multi-layered evolving urban spaces. However, that same technical solution secures and serves the profession's legitimacy and makes it difficult for planners to abandon it. This paradox, or tension, is the basis of my research project in the course of which I intend to explore the limitations and barriers that persist in the planning profession, together with the adaptive nature, the mindset necessary, and sensibilities required for imagining urban planning practice differently.

1.5 South African Debates on Informality

1.5.1 Planning and the 'Post- Apartheid City'

While South Africa has made great strides to address spatial disparity and inequality since the dawn of democracy, according to Harrison, Todes and Watson (2008), South

Africa's post-apartheid spatial planning context continues to adhere to traditional forms of land use management systems. The authors point to the tension between planning policy and traditional practices as influencing the transforming of policy in practice:

> … while policy change is generally directed at changing the 'hard infrastructure' of policy, the effect of historically built-up practices and discourses still plays a role in the way in which policy is implemented and how it is reshaped in practice (Harrison et al., 2008:17).

This suggests both the necessity and an opportunity to re-imagine the ways in which we understand planning processes. Thus, if informal upgrading is seen as the 'product' of planning response to informality, through my research I seek to understand these "historically built-up practices" which are said by Harrison et al. (2008) and others, over the past 25 years, to have shaped, and continue to shape, the process of policy implementation. In addition, according to Huchzermeyer (2004:339), "it has been argued that the [South African] housing policy process from the early 1990s to date has been dominated, not by civil society, critical academic researchers, or even by the thinking in international agencies, but by the dominant local technocratic elite [i.e. through a technocratic approach]…which serves a delivery-driven political agenda." Exploring and researching the dominant local technocratic elite and the ways in which a delivery-driven political agenda functions, is central to understanding how planners manage and understand, or fail to understand, the dynamism of informal settlements.

As with South Africa, global South contexts are in fact generally characterised by stubborn realities, structural inequalities, deep-rooted differences, struggle and conflict (Watson, 2006; Hillier, 2003; Pløger, 2004). For purposes of this research, I look at South Africa, and at the post-apartheid city, with a particular focus on the Western Cape Province, to understand the effects of these inequalities and differences outlined by Watson (2006) on planning in the 21st century. In the process, I hope to contribute to this Southern literature. Even though diverse efforts have been made by scholars to surface, mediate, and negotiate conflicting rationalities (Watson, 2003), one recurring theme in contemporary planning is the uncertain nature of informal settlements and how these continue to be variously conceptualised by, and weaved into, a technocratic approach to urban planning policy, strategy and practice.

1.5.2 Addressing Informal settlements

In recent times, informal settlements have increasingly become a strong focus in the study of cities in the global South (Cirolia, 2017; Parnell & Oldfield, 2014). Planning efforts to address urban informality, or the 'issue' of informal settlements, are highly contested as interventions which entangle both the actual informal settlement reality and the realities of their residents as perceived by planners and policy managers (Nassar & Elsayed, 2018). There is an overarching literature which seeks to rethink the formal and informal dichotomy, through considering ways to include and integrate informal settlements with the formal city (Goerverneur, 2014; Koster & Nujten, 2016; Abbott, 2002b). This literature, and the shifting focus of planning policy, indicates a change in attitude toward informality as well as towards the plight of urban planning researchers in their attempts to address the dynamic nature of informal settlements.

In her discussion of informal settlements in South Africa, Cirolia (2017) situates the discourse of informal settlements upgrading in South Africa within four categories. She discusses the advantages and limitations of each: technological and design discourses, institutional discourses, rights-based discourses, and structural discourses. Technological and design discourses frame the problem of informal settlements as a housing challenge. Such discourses seek to intervene through providing tangible design solutions aimed at improving the quality of life of informal settlement communities.

Institutional discourses present the argument that informal settlements are simply a result of challenges facing institutional 'capacity'. However, according to Cirolia (2017), even though strategic planning processes/ institutional processes and policies embrace informality, those responsible for the implementation of these processes continue to seek to control and inhibit the growth of informal settlements. Healey (2006) presents the institutional argument, detailing the ways in which institutional capacity-building and the exercise of formal "regulatory rules" and control should proceed by seeking to:

> … mobilize and build knowledge resources and relational resources (social
> networks) which not only help to consolidate power and legitimacy around the new
> arena but have the capacity to carry the new ideas, understandings and

recognitions of opportunity and struggle through to a wide range of other arenas in the urban governance landscape where practices shape how resources flow and regulatory rules are exercised (Healey, 2006:307).

Within the rights-based discourses, informal settlements remain framed as a service delivery problem and a problem of equitable provision of housing. The rationale behind this discourse is rooted in a human rights perspective, with the main emphasis on the preservation of dignity through access to basic services and adequate shelter for those who live in informal settlements. This discourse is predominant amongst NGOs and rights-based organisations.

The last category is the structural discourse that frames the problem of informal settlements as being a direct result of the unjust structure of capitalism, and in turn the economy, or "a symptom of the crisis of capitalism" (Cirolia, 2017:452). This approach subsumes and is all encompassing of the other discourses. Thus, this discourse problematizes the state, as the state is seen as being sustained and maintained by capitalistic logic and ideology, and this discourse advocates 'real' democratic practices informed and grounded by an organised civil society (Cirolia, 2017).

Dovey and King (2011) remind us of the importance of the visual impact of informal settlements within cities, especially in a planning dispensation that emphasises beautifying the city with the rationale of attracting investment. Urban planners within the global South are wrestling with the issue of informal settlements, including the visual impact/aesthetics of informal settlements. Some planners view these as presenting an opportunity, others, as a problem, particularly if unregulated. However, significant to these different approaches and ideologies is 'method', considered by researchers and planners to be of particular importance in urban planning. Scholars, such as Abbott (2002a), Brown-Luthango, Reyes and Gubevu (2017), and Barry and Rüther (2005), have explored a range of different urban planning methods and techniques. These different methods seek to address the frequent changes occurring in social and spatial data within informal settlements, and to better understand settlement transformation process through moving away from short term ad hoc interventions. These methods translate into ways of measuring the quality of life in informal settlements, and rethinking the image and perception of 'the formal'. Thus, I

argue that an ideal, all-embracing method would be one that is structurally just, institutionally capacitated, efficient, implementable, spatial, manageable, and dignified (i.e. prioritise the dignity of residents of informal settlements) in its approach, whilst simultaneously beautifying the city.

For purposes of my thesis, I explore institutional ideologies, processes and responses to urban informality in South Africa, with a specific focus on the Western Cape. I argue that an institutional lens contributes to the conversation on how informality connects to urbanisation processes in a wide context. Historically, the post-apartheid government instituted a number of programmes to address the housing problem in South Africa. These included the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (ANC, 1994) and later the Breaking New Ground (BNG) (DoH, 2004) programme. These programmes were legislated by national government housing departments, and have been, and are being, implemented by housing departments in local government. Each sphere of government and its cohorts has its specific institutional designs, culture, and mandate, all of which are nested within the changing dynamic of the political situation of the country (Cirolia, 2017).

The institutional lens provides an entry point through which planning, as an institution, and planning processes can be explored. This is based on the assumption that institutional decision making concerning urban informality becomes critical when addressing future adaptive planning processes. Planning literature is not expansive about the mindset and sensibility required for planning professionals to effectively address the informal settlement challenge, particularly into the future. This is due to the normative and descriptive nature of a section of planning literature that remains geared toward what planners ought to do or should not do, and details planners' experiences and perceptions of certain facets of planning (Healey, 1999; Hamdi, 1991; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009). Therefore, not many place-specific case studies move outside of single prescriptive solutions. Due to certain master planning ideologies, case studies emphasise/focus on the experiences and perceptions of sectoral programmes, and/ or discrete projects (Abbott, 2002b; Gouverneur, 2014). Thirty years ago, Hamdi (1991:179) called for a move toward programs that deal with systems of habitation. Hamdi (1991) argued that built environment professionals were compartmental and sectorial in their ways of thinking, teaching, and approaching

design, design practice, and housing. In addition, he sees them as tending to emphasise centrally administered blanket approaches to housing problems, thus taking away from the dynamism and intricate complexity and needs of local residents. Thus, Hamdi (1991) saw systems of habitation as involving the blurring of the lines between different disciplines to acquire a holistic understanding of housing. I follow Hamdi's (1991) approach in exploring the ways in which conceptualising institutions becomes a key domain to explore and extend planners' 'mindset and sensibilities'.

Other aspects significant to housing and housing programs are participation and participatory design. I and other scholars see the involvement of informal residents as crucial during the decision-making process and to ensuring the efficacy and sustainability of a housing program. Some planning literature has acknowledged the benefits of public participation in planning processes (Creighton, 2005). However, within the literature, guidance on participatory approaches, and on the kind of mindset and sensibility necessary for these, is minimal. Thus, the question arises: can we design institutions that increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making processes? Varley (2013) reports that informal settlement residents' representation is poorly reflected in planning literature and calls for increased representation in order to avoid a trend showing programs continuing to perpetuate stereotypes of informality. Moreover, public participation and informal settlement residents' representation is not only critical for planning processes; central to the process is how planners include and incorporate the question of 'mindset and sensibility' when thinking about housing problems.

1.6 Study Area: Thembalethu, George Municipality

Thembalethu is a historic black township situated in George Municipality, with a total population reported in 2011 by STATSA, of approximately 43000[2]. George municipality is classified as a category B/ district municipality, or as a secondary city (Toerien & Donaldson, 2017), and is, among other things, responsible for basic service delivery to all areas of the city. George is located along the N2 highway between Cape

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[2] http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=4286&id=240 (27 August 2021)

Town and the Eastern Cape[3]. The fundamental challenge for the municipality and local government was to endure that Phase 1 of the Thembalethu Upgrading Informal Settlement Program (UISP) project would be the pilot *in situ* upgrading project in George. The Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project became the precedent for how upgrading is implemented. Moreover, this project becomes emblematic of a pre- and post-apartheid narrative of informal settlements growth management patterns and styles.

During the inception phase, more than a decade ago, the response of the George Municipality to informality was one which entailed *in-situ* development. However, in the case of Thembalethu, an *in situ* upgrading approach to informal settlements was adopted within the area and project managed by Aurecon (an engineering, management, design, planning, project management and consulting company), as detailed by Aurecon (2014):

> This is a seven-year programme of George Municipality; the scope of the Thembalethu project covers the incremental development of 4 350 formal residential sites with full, permanent municipal services and eventually top structures on 10 land parcels, for identified households from the current 22 informal settlement areas. Aurecon is the Implementing Agent responsible for all the multi-disciplinary professional services required for the incremental upgrading and extension of the required bulk and connection services infrastructure as well as the development of the fully serviced sites, and eventually the construction of the top structures for qualifying beneficiaries. The remit also includes the facilitation of all community based participatory planning engagement as well as the management of the relocation processes with minimal inconvenience to the beneficiary households[4].

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[3] http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=4286&id=240 (27 August 2021)

[4] https://www.aurecongroup.com/about/latest-news/2014/jul/george-and-mossel-bay-receive-govan-mbeki-awards (August 2021).

1.6.1 Why Thembalethu?

I chose the Thembalethu project as a case study as it displays the typical traits of the usual process for addressing informality through infrastructural design responses as per the *in-situ* development/ upgrading model adopted at the time as a way of reducing the number of resettlements in a particular urban area. For purposes of this thesis, I explore Phase 1 of the Thembalethu UISP project in depth. Since Phase 1, many other phases have been, and continue to be, implemented to address the challenge of informal settlements in Thembalethu, George. I am interested in the dynamics and interfaces of the institutional landscape as well as in the ways in which these different aspects can contribute to a better understanding of urban upgrading processes as a whole. The Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project is explored through understanding planning practitioners' involvement and perceptions of informality. Due to the planners playing only a small part in the 'upgrading' project, I seek to understand how other professionals/ disciplines involved perceived the role of the planner in this upgrading project. More generally, I aimed to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between planning practice and informality, and the navigating modes of planning required for emerging urban forms in the 21st century.

1.7 Research Rationale

Hillier (2008) and Kunzmann (2013) assert that, although contemporary planning places significant emphasis on integrated development and on flexible strategic spatial planning practices, in practice this planning has failed in terms of implementation. Thus, I return to the experience of the professional planner as an individual, their expected professional role within an institution, their expected role within what is in fact their sphere of influence i.e. private planning companies, NGOs etc., their realities, and their interface with the state. Even though Todes (2011) argues that spatial planning in the 21st century has less hope for redressing social and spatial inequalities than it did in the last century, my research is geared towards how planning practice, as one of many disciplines involved in informal settlement 'upgrading' processes, exhibits an understanding of, and manages, informal settlements. Through a process of exploring and developing an understanding of the processes of conceptualisation and management processes of informality, I hope to understand the institutional

21

conditions impinging on, and limiting, the realization of social and spatial equality. These conceptualisations remain influenced by and through the production and circulation of global knowledge, which in turn has influenced power structures, together with political and economic conditions. Consequently, these conceptualisations, through strong institutions, have filtered into, and affected, different cities of the global South's urban development. As has been mentioned, the prioritisation of, preference for, and favouritism shown towards, western forms of modernity, or 'progress', have long informed the premise upon which urban planning practice, strategies and initiatives have been primarily based. Thus, the infused institutional landscape shapes planning practice and environments.

I argue for the possibility of the mindset and sensibilities of professional planners toward the implementation of 'informal upgrading' projects, coming to be those which provide greater insight into unpacking their imaginings around wider debates on informality and planning practice. Through my research I seek to understand the mindset and sensibility behind redressing informality and poverty of a particular group of planners involved in the *in situ* upgrading of an 'informal settlement' through assessing the case of Thembalethu in George Municipality. I intend to do this by asking what state-led projects such as the one under study seek to achieve under the banner of 'progress'. The Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project is an example of a pilot *in situ* upgrading approach to informal settlements in George Municipality. Even though recent literature on planning and informal settlements focuses on the desirability of, and rationale for, the incremental upgrading of existing structures, the emphasis and focus of my study is on planners' perceptions, the institutional landscape that governs or constrains their conduct, and the conflicting realities of informal settlement intervention.

Several scholars have described how the existing structural conditions of South Africa are influenced by Apartheid modernist structural plans which reinforce unemployment, inequality, spatial disparities, and fragmentation (Harrison et al., 2008; Todes, Karam, Klug & Malaza, 2010; Van Huysteen, Oranje & Meiklejohn, 2010). Thus, according to May and Semetsky (2008:166), if a strategic spatial planning mandate is to imagine and/or design possible planning outcomes of, or futures for, how people may 'live', practitioners and urban planning theorists need to emancipate themselves from the

'traditional conventions governing thought and action'. Thus, the aim of interrogating planning practitioners is to provide an in-depth understanding of the ways in which a sampled group of planning practitioners think about and imagine the 'informal context', rather than simply referring to, and reasoning within, the context of the conventional planning concepts, i.e., activity nodes/corridors, densification, intensification, movement routes, and public participation. These concepts are commonly used in urban planning as indicators to inform urban development and spatial strategies. The importance of both social organisation and identity in informal place-making, I argue, lies in the shift in urban planning practitioners' mindsets. Lastly, I intend to explore the influences and manifestations of this influence, and how, and the extent to which, the collaboration of planning practitioners has, or does not have, the potential to harness and invigorate the informal upgrading process.

The research objective is to make a meaningful contribution to urban planning responses to informality through planners understanding institutional landscapes of planning. The deeper and more comprehensive our understanding is of how practitioners are 'conditioned', adapt, and translate their imaginings of informal space and systems of habitation, the more comprehensive our understanding of the future of informal settlements, institutional dynamics, and place-making. Thus, planners' knowledge production, their training, education, and institutional frameworks are critical to the ways in which they translate and interpret uncertainties, and both manage and implement projects.

1.8 Research Questions

My PhD research project seeks to address the following three research questions in the context of Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project:

1. How do a sampled group of professional planners in South Africa, in the 21st century, think about informality?
2. How do they intervene and manage the complexities and contradictions inherent in informal settlement upgrading processes?
3. How are professional planners potentially able to harness the dynamism of informal settings to achieve better outcomes (e.g. robust institutions, building

bridges/corridors between self-help theories and institutionalised planning practice, systems of habitation led thinking)?

1.9 Research Approach & Method

It is important to note that my study seeks to work within the existing planning system and processes of South Africa. Planning practice in South Africa is state-led and is a legally circumscribed practice. The qualitative research study allows me to unearth layered descriptions of how professional planners experience urban informality. I operationalise 'institutionalism' as a concept for my study and use it as a tool to better understand how certain planners give effect to their ideas of addressing informality. Understanding the mindset and sensibility of a sampled group of planners connects to the fundamental role institutions and institutional contexts play when dealing with, or making choices regarding, informal settlements. North (1996) described the characteristics and beliefs of institutions:

> Institutions are made up of formal rules (constitutions, statute and common laws, regulations), informal constraints (conventions, norms of behaviour, and self-imposed codes of conduct), and their enforcement characteristics…Institutions reflect the beliefs of the players—or at least of those players able to shape the rules. Therefore behind beliefs are language and the cultural heritage of the players. (North, 1996:ii)

Through operationalising institutionalism as a concept for my study, I hope to be able to unpack conceptions of institutionalism, as well as explain how institutional contexts influence choice. Moreover, due to institutions containing certain belief systems, I explore how diverse belief systems (planning, personal, heritage, public /collective) emerge and unfold as these affect informal settlement upgrading processes.

The case study design is focussed on an in-depth analysis of the specific ways in which the Thembalethu informal settlement was upgraded through the utilisation of the Upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme (UISP). I focus on both the context, the way in which the planners and other professionals involved understand informal settlements and the upgrading thereof, and on the ways in which this understanding transforms custodianship of the UISP policy. The method of data generation combines

24

secondary data collection i.e. policy, legislature, document analysis, project reports and primary data collection through semi-structured interviews and observations. As part of the semi-structured interview process, I intended to pose follow-up questions for further clarification, depending on what emerged from the answers from respondents which would be of relevance to the research question. The approach to my data analysis involves providing a detailed description of the multi-layered socio, economic and political context of Thembalethu informal settlement. Furthermore, my approach to analysing the data is intended to unpack the diverse experiences of those individuals who were involved with the Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project, together with their assertions, and the themes which emerged from the data.

My approach to data interpretation, as guided by the research design, is through a thematic analysis. Qualitative data are coded through the use of key phrases, judgment statements, and key words. Categorising, identifying, and describing the emerging themes is intended to provide an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the experiences of the planners involved in this process. This categorising also aims to provide reasons why the Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project is pertinent to a deeper understanding of the contentious and often contradictory relationship between planning and informality. Due to the Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project being an *in situ* upgrading approach, I consider the institutional landscape of this project to be able to provide both a framework for, and ample insights into, the process of answering my research questions.

1.10 Research Significance/ Scholarship Contribution

The case of Thembalethu Informal settlement is intended to emblemise whether or not there is a potential for professional planners to harness the dynamism of informal settings to achieve improved and more sustainable outcomes. More importantly, the case study is intended to provide some answers to whether the sampled group of planners did or did not possess the mindset and or sensibility required to manage the complexities and contradictions inherent in informal settlement 'upgrading' processes. The answers to these questions are in turn intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of the institutional landscape and of the relationship between urban planning practice and informality.

1.11 Conclusion

This PhD thesis aims to put forward the three research questions as these pertain to the role of planning professionals and their sensibilities when dealing with the complexities of informal upgrading processes. In addition, this study is intended to guide my PhD research project and to help to locate South Africa's urban planners' perplexed relationship with South African informal urban settlement communities. chapter 2 delves more deeply into the relevant literature to provide a framework for, and to gain more comprehensive answers to my research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Despite urban planning's shift in the last two decades, from the conventional blue-print, technocratic, modernist inspired models, to more relational flexible models (Albrechts, 2015; Kamete, 2013), the 'resurgence' (Varley, 2013) of informality has proven to impede the 'make-up' and functionality of urban planning. Recent studies are increasingly focusing on, and actively engaging with, the relationship between urban informality and urban planning (Amin & Cirolia, 2018; Dastidar, 2007; Recio, 2015; Roy, 2005; Wade, 2011). This focus is premised on an increasing understanding of the heterogeneous nature of informality, and how it manifests and translates within planning processes, in so doing, exposing the inability of planners to 'handle' the multiple forms of urban life that present themselves. With the hope of exploring and contributing to 'systems change' within urban planning, I situate the relationship between planning and informality within Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) three concepts, Coloniality of Knowledge, Coloniality of Power, and Coloniality of Being. Through using a story, I describe the essence of 'systems change' as a concept:

> A fish is swimming along one day when another fish comes up and says "Hey, how's the water?" The first fish stares back blankly at the second fish and then says "What's water?" (Kania, Kramer & Senge, 2018:2)

Recognising the water i.e. the systemic forces at work, plays a fundamental role in changing a system, in the case of this study, specifically planning systems; I discuss this in more detail later in this chapter. Fundamentally, I use the fusion of systems change and Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) three concepts of coloniality thinking to conceptually frame and help navigate urban planning relevance in 21st century urban development processes.

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the logics that influence and inculcate such planning processes and strategies. Specifically, I am interested in exploring planning responses that engage with informality in both global and South African contexts. This focus feeds into a broader conversation that planning literature has been grappling with for a very long time: the epistemic gap that exists between

planning theory and planning practice. The gap is also between ideas and implementation, or between policy and the translation thereof. Informality as a heterogeneous discourse has thrown a curveball into this critical conversation as it both confirms and suggests an opportunity to address this gap, and in the process serves to legitimize the planning profession and discipline. Another even broader conversation this research ties into is the ways in which we could or should "rethink methods and modes of African research" (Parnell & Pieterse, 2016:236). Informality has become an essential part of African cities. As a result, it is shaping the ways in which planners think and attempt to get to grips with the challenging realities facing African cities.

2.2 The difficulty with Urban Planning

There is a general consensus within urban planning literature that planning was birthed from western/ northern conceptions of power, knowledge, and being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Watson, 2009a; Kamete & Lindell, 2010). These three concepts are seen by these authors to have shaped the ways in which urban form is perceived, understood, and produced. Furthermore, these concepts have become the basis upon which planning norms and institutions are created and established. As a result, these conceptions have in turn shaped how African planners, citizens, and decision-makers conceive of African urbanism. These three conceptions form a fundamental part of the decolonial turn within the global South.

The western/northern traditional forms of planning together constitute what Watson (2009a:2262) calls "a dinosaur in 21st century cities". She argues that "their persistence is not accidental and will not easily be changed". She sees the reason this "persistence is not accidental" as being a result of "conflicting rationalities" (Watson, 2009a:2268). This is a canopy term to denote the embeddedness of the 'logic' of [global South] planners' 'rational' thinking when navigating the tension between the "logic of governing" and the "logic of survival". The 'logic of governing' amongst planners is, Watson argues, currently and persistently steered by ideologies of modernization. In addition, the ways in which notions of modernization manifest in planning and policy translate into the kind of urban development that takes place, and the ways in which this development is regulated and controlled.

The 'logic of survival', on the other hand, has to do with what Watson (2009a) sees and conceptualises as the 'self-organizing', informal, 'unruly' efforts of the urban poor to survive poverty and uncertainty (Amin & Cirolia, 2018:283). In as much as Watson (2009a) uses key insights in identifying and describing the tensions surrounding informality, she also provides insights into the reasons for the tension between these two logics. These insights help to elucidate the reasons for the role of planners within the global South being a complex one. She further reports that conventional planning theory has left little or no guidance for planners to navigate these tensions within planning systems (Watson, 2009b). Jenkins (2001) provides insight into the 'logic of survival' by arguing that, in order for us to understand the "informal", we need to deconstruct the mental models informing the "dominant definition of the formal institutional order of late capitalist modernity" (Jenkins, 2001:3). What is clear within planning literature is that the global South is different to the global North in its socio, economic, and political urban fabric (Watson, 2009a; Recio, 2015; Kamete & Lindell, 2010) and that this is attributed to postcolonial consequences (Porter, 2017).

Moreover, Prah (2001:156) argues that the failure of development planning within the global South, particularly in Africa, is attributed to "culture irrelevance", and calls for a "socio-structural transformation paradigm" of development. In the context of planning ideas this would mean that "western ideas must melt into African culture, and become African adaptations of western or universal modes of thought and practice" (Prah, 2001:102). The process of adaptation relies heavily on how effactually the culture basis of African societies and their institutions are strengthened. For purposes of my thesis I rely on Porter's (2016) ideas of culture, or, as applied to the 'culture of urban planning'. According to Porter (2016:12) the 'culture' of planning is not about analysing the cultural or ethnic makeup of the planning profession, or analysing styles or traditions; instead it is about understanding how the inherent cultural position of planning and of planners creates "structures of feeling/meaning" in indigenous communities. One could say that she interrogates the various ways in which planning and planners, including those in African urban settings, have become "surrogates of western culture/spatial cultures" in the 21st century. Her emphasis is on the failure of planners and planning to acknowledge or introspect their inherent culture basis or bias within the discipline of planning. The longer this bias fails to be addressed the more

the colonial logic in planning practice will persist.

Reverting to Prah's (2001) socio-structural paradigm, he argues that a deeper and more mindful engagement with the processes of production and reproduction (Prah, 2001) is required to fathom the multiple forms of urban life. This includes production and reproduction of spatial cultures (Porter, 2016). In addition, Kamete (2009:899) argues that the reason for the lack, or neglect, of deeper engagement with social processes (within urban contexts) by planners and planning is due to the preoccupation planners have with ''preferred spatial (physical) order''. This preoccupation by planners with order in turn is emblematic of modernist 'rationality' at work in how space is conceptualised. Reverting to the story about systems change related at the beginning of this chapter, the 'water' in the context of planning is the modernist 'rationality' and the 'fish' is the planner. Even though the first step in recognising the 'water' has been accomplished in scholarship, the definitive mandate of systems change is about "shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place" (Kania et al., 2018). How to shift these conditions within planning practice is where the challenge lies, and where planning scholarship is required. Moreover shifting the conditions has implications for the 'fish', and thus practical ways to assist planners in dimensions of systems change become necessary in planning scholarship.

In planning literature scholars discuss a number of themes. These are not limited, but are parallel research themes related to urban transformation (Cirolia & Smit, 2017). These themes include dilemmas of diversity: gender, race, and ethnicity (Speak & Kumar, 2017), of 'difference' in cities (Sandercock, 2000), social justice in urban planning (Fainstein, 2017), insurgent planning (Miraftab, 2009), and governance of planning (Mäntysalo & Bäcklund, 2017) or urban governance (Cars, Healey, Madanipour & De Magalhaes, 2017). The literature either identifies the ways in which planners need to be cognisant of 'difference' within global South cities, and/or how traditional forms of planning continue to fail global South cities. Scholars also examine the ways in which neoliberal policies inhibit the role of planning, or how and why institutional transformation is necessary. However, what the literature neglects is the kind of mentality or sensibility the planner, particularly in the global South, needs to have to consciously and sensitively engage with what Watson (2009a) calls the tension between conflicting rationalities within institutions, and the increasing

emergent multiple forms of urban life.

2.3 Deconstructing dominant mental modes of institutional order

According to Quijano (2007), in colonised countries, including in Africa, coloniality and modernity/rationality were birthed by colonial power/countries during the period of colonial domination, and persist in these countries. "Coloniality refers to a logic, metaphysics, ontology, and matrix of power created by massive processes of colonization…that continue existing after formal independence and desegregation" (Maldonado-Torres, 2016:10). These euro-centred processes of colonisation were responsible for creating a "European product and universal paradigm of knowledge" (Quijano, 2007:171-172). Quijano (2007) elaborates on this, explaining that the coming together of coloniality and the expansion of rationality/modernity (European paradigm of rational knowledge) did not happen by coincidence or accident. Thus, to understand urban development decision-making, together with urban and social relations, understanding the role of colonial powers in shaping paradigms of 'rationalities' becomes imperative. We should bear in mind that when scholars blame, or call for the transformation of, the modernity underpinnings of urban planning, they essentially refer to the relationship between coloniality and modernity/rationality, or, as Maldonado-Torres (2016:11) puts it, the ways in which western modernity was instituted by coloniality. In other words, he sees western modernity as an institutional "artifact that promotes colonialism".

Colonialism, in the form of conquest of countries and domination of them by European powers, sought to consolidate in Africa what was seen by these colonial powers as the superior European culture, and to impose this culture on African colonies. Thus, on this basis, and given this history, Prah (2001) argues for the need for development planning in Africa to be measurably different to that informed by coloniality. The difference lies with the link between culture and (urban) development planning, and more so with understanding the cultural dynamism and cultural fluidity of the every-day social life of Africans. In as much as he argues for 'cultural relevancies' in general, and for the recognition and survival of indigenous language(s) within Africa, he calls for a socio-structural transformation paradigm to challenge the way in which those scholars, whose research is focused on 'developing' countries, understand urban

development/development thinking. The socio-structural transformation paradigm provides room for the enhancement of socio-economic life, and for the quality of life of the marginalised and urban poor, because of the productive capacity and economic returns of this kind of transformation (Prah, 2001:156).

A clear understanding of mental models can be difficult to achieve, as these modes are challenging to identify, measure and understand. However, an entry point to understanding and deconstructing mental modes could be via deconstructing paradigms, a process with which Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) can assist. I refer to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) three concepts of decoloniality as a means to deconstruct certain mental models or paradigms that ultimately influence urban development and the management thereof. While I explain below the significance of each concept, I want to note that the order of explanation does not imply the ranking of concepts.
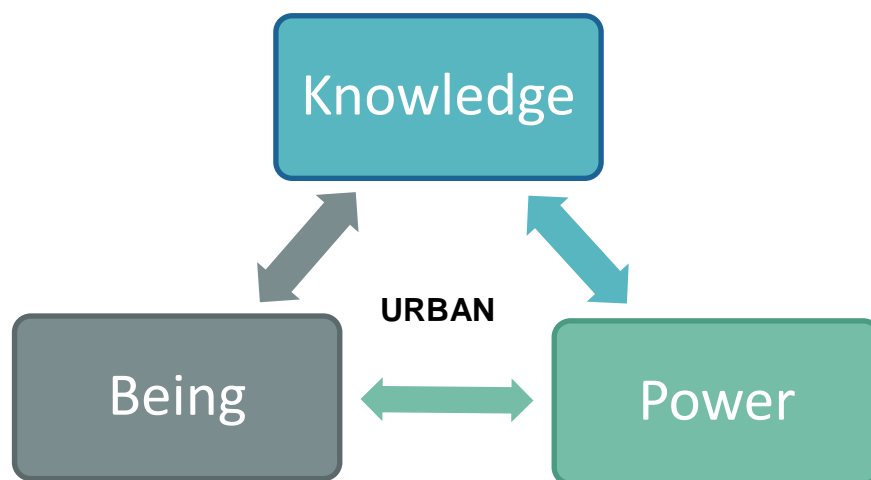
Figure 1: Diagrammatic illustration of paradigms that shape urban development

Source: Inspired by Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) three concepts, Coloniality of Knowledge, Coloniality of Power, and Coloniality of Being.

Knowledge

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argues that Euro-American epistemologies have played a fundamental role in the colonizing and 'developing' of countries, regions, and urban

areas, and that these epistemologies are considered by decolonial scholars (Kapoor, 2002; Kapoor, 2008; Garuba, 2013) to be the backbone of hegemonic western power. Ndlovu (2018:96) states that "the essence of colonial domination (Western-centered modernity) in knowledge production has always been the desire to control the minds and ways of knowing of the 'colonial subalterns' in order to sustain and prolong the very project of colonisation". This control, according to Ndlovu (2018:99), manifests as the "colonisation of the imagination" or "colonisation of the mind". Thus, it is the invisibility of this form of colonisation that makes it pernicious as it "makes it possible for the colonised subjects to participate in activities that sustain the very structure of coloniality within which they exist as victims" (Ndlovu, 2018:99).

This in turn implies that Western-centered modernity continues to be the interpreter of the 'colonised subjects'/ African experiences and realities, while Africans continue to perform their African-ness in ways that can be understood and interpreted by the Western-centred interpreter (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1997).

I draw on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* (1997), originally published in 1986. His work was 'seminal' in informing the thinking of post-colonial (particularly African) scholars in various fields. *Decolonising the Mind* was about the *politics* of language and literature, which arguably informs much of an African subject's thinking, culture, and identity. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2005), whose 'field' is literature and the politics of language and literature, and not urban planning, nevertheless serves to challenge the thinking and ideological position, not only of African writers, but arguably of the thinking of all those who have complained about the neo-colonial economic and political relationship to Euro-America, and yet who cannot do without European languages. He argues that, because many African writers have contributed to English literature, a hybrid/minority tradition, or an 'Afro-European literature' has emerged. While not denying the talents of great writers whom the Afro-European literature tradition has produced, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's concern is that the African writer has not contributed to an essentially African Literature. This, he believes, is because, African literature can only be written in African languages. Thus, according to his argument, the "Afro-European tradition will remain as long as Africa is under the rule of European capital in a neo-colonial set-up" (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005:27). African languages, he argues, are the languages of the African peasantry and working class. Thus, Ngũgĩ

wa Thiong'o charges writers to contribute to African literature, and, in so doing, affirm and strengthen their and their readers' identities and cultures and empower them in their resistance to coloniality:

> [to] reconnect themselves to the revolutionary traditions of the organised peasantry and the working class in Africa in their struggle to defeat imperialism. [Consequently] it is only when writers open out African languages to the real links in the struggles of the peasants and the workers that they will meet their biggest challenge…an awakened peasantry and working class. [Thus the] democratic participation of the people [peasants and working class] in the shaping of their own lives, or in discussing their own language that allows for mutual comprehension, is seen as being dangerous to the good government of a country and its institutions. (Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo, 2005:29-30).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o lays out how imperative the African writers' job is to change the narrative, to produce knowledge that 'awakens' the (peasant and working class) reader, and in so doing throws off the mental and physical shackles of imperialism.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's ideas on African languages, "language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture" (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005:13), point to the importance of 'what' is being communicated and provide critical insight into culture dynamism. His stated intent was not to convey ill intent towards English, or the English 'culture', but was intended as more of a resounding emphasis on English not being an African Language. He calls on African writers to know and value their own language – and culture - because... "every language is like a house full of treasure. Learning that language is like being given a key to that house of treasure. The more keys I have, the more houses of treasure I can open" (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in Gikandi, 2018:21). Thus, empowerment of the African writer lies in knowing his own language or 'house of treasure', which 'house of treasure', he is suggesting, equates to his own culture. Applying Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's concept of 'decolonising the mind', and reconnecting the African with his/her culture, to the context of planning can provide an insightful exposure of the African planner's attitude to his/her context and planning as an overarching discipline's culture and epistemic tradition.

Thus, if planning as a discipline has its own culture (Porter, 2016), and one that is

deeply rooted in colonial ideas of place-making, and if it continues to bring these ideas over from the 20th century into the 21st century, planning practice will continue to create spaces that are unevenly yoked by power dynamics and urban politics. Given the context of neo-liberal- economics and the politics of globalisation, planning efforts from the global South are likely to continue to be informed by a hybrid tradition, i.e. an Afro-planning tradition (inspired by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1997; Porter, 2016). An Afro-planning tradition suggests that African planners who continue to practise Western-centred modernity forms of planning are contributing to, and expanding or infusing ideas of, global North planning traditions into the global South. An Afro-planning tradition also alludes to African planners, who, in the process of appropriating Western-Euro ideas, inadvertently 'silence' fellow African citizen experiences and realities - and ultimately themselves. Therefore, a true – wholly appropriate - global South planning tradition would require a different model that infuses and incorporates an 'awakened' urban poor and the working class into a process of co-producing planning knowledge. This tradition, based on the literature just discussed, would require the necessary 'imaginative infrastructure' in order to build a new global South planning tradition. If this process fails to take place, I would argue, African planners will continue to contribute to the (spatial) negation of themselves.

When it comes to colonial or 'western' planning systems, Porter (2016:40-41) argues that decision-making within these institutionalised planning systems not only values scientific knowledge, but also that this 'knowledge' is instrumental in legitimating and branding decision making i.e. describing this planning approach as an evidence-based policy approach. Porter (2016) develops this argument by describing how this knowledge is premised on the western assumption that the relationship between human and land is governed by individualistic relations of ownership and exchange in terms of property relations. Therefore, when processes are institutionalised within western planning systems, and described as being for the 'public good', or are ensuring the incorporation of stakeholders' interests, implicit bias and inherent assumptions can be said to exist and these should be neither overlooked, nor remain inexplicit. Thus, from the various authors cited above, one could argue that modern planning systems inherently embody western assumptions and intentions, and that these form the basis for 'scientific knowledge', which underpins and legitimises land

use (human relation with place) and land management.

Porter (2016) argues that this western/modern approach contrasts with the relationship of indigenous people with, and attitude to, place. Indigenous people hold an ontological and epistemological understanding of place which is different to the western understanding. This understanding, when expressed, not only 'unsettles' (Porter, 2016) planning, but is described by western/modern planners as organized resistance (Varley, 2013). Thus, indigenous knowledge production, and the expression thereof with place, unsettles and threatens modern conceptions and uses of place. Consequently, due to the elevated and hegemonic standard and status that scientific knowledge has held in planning systems, room for indigenous knowledge, experience, and responses to place, has been neither acknowledged nor catered for in urban planning, in particular in the global South. Increasingly, however, there has in the last two or three decades been more planning literature (Watson, 2009a; Förster & Ammann, 2018) geared to writing from the South, and/or capturing experiences from those directly affected by urban challenges. However, what is less spoken of or discussed are ways to dismantle the knowledge preference/hierarchy within institutionalized processes of planning, together with ways of getting indigenous knowledge and experience of place to interface, and be incorporated with, processes of planning.

Power

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:14), we continue to live under a "colonial matrix of power". This, he argues, is because, even though colonial administrations were removed during the processes of decolonisation, the colonial matrix of power is perpetuated, and thus continues to be felt in the form of socio-economic inequalities that continue to grow and be reproduced in African cities. Central to this matrix of power, or to today's 'global-political,' are strong underpinnings of modernity. These underpinnings, Ndluvo-Gatsheni (2013) reaffirms, as an African (what I have already outlined above), manifest in the processes through which modernity has been deposited: in the ways in which we think about progress, urban development, modernization, and civilization (11). Quijano (2007) amplifies this description of the effects of colonisation and modernity by showing how, historically, race was critical to

36

coloniality of power, and how coloniality of power was founded on, and rationalised according to, a 'scientific' 'racial social classification', or the hegemonic categories of social division of the world. Thus, according to Quijano (2007), during coloniality certain institutions drove segregation, and the reproduction of inequality was intentional.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) uses the 'Coloniality of Power' concept to foreground the 'darkside' and the invisible power structures that underpin modernity. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012:48) argues that coloniality of power "works as a crucial structuring process within global imperial designs, sustaining the superiority of the Global North and ensuring the perpetual subalternity of the global South using colonial matrices of power". According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012:49), there are four matrices of power, "control of economy, control of authority, control of gender and sexuality and control of subjectivity and knowledge". Power as a structuring process manifests itself through the control of the economy, through "dispossessions, land appropriations, the exploitation of labour, and control of African natural resources" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012:49). The control of authority has to do with "the maintenance of military superiority and monopolisation of the means of violence" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012:49). The control of gender and sexuality "involves the re-imagination of 'family' in Western bourgeois terms and the introduction of Western-centric education which displaces indigenous knowledges" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012:49). Lastly the control of subjectivity and knowledge manifests with the "epistemological colonisation and the re-articulation of African subjectivity as inferior and constituted by a series of 'deficits' and a catalogue of 'lacks'" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012:49). Consequently power manifests as an orchestrated process that intentionally penetrates the logics behind these four matrices of power, which process in turn controls the Africa development narrative in both a visible and invisible manner.

The intentionality of power is also discussed in the work of Flyvbjerg (2002). He has contributed significantly to planning, urban policy, and, more particularly, to understanding the relationship between rationality and power. Flyvbjerg asserts that:

> …power defeats rationality, and that power captures rationality, which
> subsequently becomes an instrument of power. In so doing, Francis Bacon's

dictum that knowledge is power is reversed: power is shown to direct the process of knowledge creation; thus, power is knowledge (Flyvbjerg cited in Dowding, 2011:259).

Thus, what Flyvbjerg's (2002) contribution to planning theory makes clear is the existence of a lack of planning theory for planners to understand the realities of power. This is because in planning theory, as Watson (2009b:171) states in relation to the workings of this in the global North, "planning ideas have not progressed far beyond the compact city and new urbanism ideas of the late 1980s". In her paper, *The planned city sweeps the poor away…*, Watson (2009b) narrates the evolution of planning ideas in the global North and South separately. She acknowledges that, even though there are different reasons to explain the spread of planning ideas from the global North to the global South, "the nature of the power relationship between exporting and importing country is a major determining factor, with colonialism and conquest giving rise to the imposition of foreign planning systems" (Watson, 2009b:172).

This underlines the degree to which planning ideas are 'stuck', or atrophied, amidst 21st century urbanisation. Flyvbjerg (2002:8) highlights the specific ways in which planning theorists have become consumed with ideas to create ideal cities that are not affected by power relations and have a strong civil society, and, in so doing, creating an incomplete understanding about the intricacies of communicative rationality (which is based on utopian-rationality and communicative theory). He charges planners to consider 'what actually is done' as opposed to considering 'what should be done'. The intentionality of the latter is premised on utopian conceptions of planning. Considering power realities, the former draws on Foucault's understanding of power as being premised on how instrumental power is in the "shaping and control of discourses, the production of knowledge, and the social construction of spaces" (Flyvbjerg, 2002:10). In other words, power produces knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2002) argues that planning theorists have expressed the view that this approach to power is a 'negative or oppressive' approach when one is engaged in the process of trying to understand how institutions work. However, in response to the utopian rationality of these theorists, Flyvbjerg (2002) further argues:

What Foucault calls his 'political task' is 'to criticise the working of institutions which

appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them' (Chomsky and Foucault 1974, 171)… Foucault (1988, 18) adds: 'The problem is not of trying to dissolve [relations of power] in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give...the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics...which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination (Flyvbjerg, 2002:12).

Thus, according to Flyvbjerg (2002), reclaiming the power to "give…the rules of the law …", or to rewrite those rules, rests on Southern planning theorists and practitioners. In addition, Flyvbjerg (2002:20), with his Foucault inspired approach, calls for a "power-sensitised understanding of knowledge, rationality, spatiality, and inclusivity in planning theory". In addition, Forester (1982:67) recognises that, within the planning process, information is a source of power for planners. Therefore, a key source for planners' power is to be able to control information as a way to "… organize (or disorganize) [sic] public attention: organizing attention to options for action, to particular costs and benefits, to particular arguments for and against proposals" (Forester, 1982: 68). Thus, the (extent or lack of) control of information is the planners' way of problem solving, dealing with overwhelming economic and political power, and exerting their power and influence. In this way, Forester (1982:68) affirms Flyvbjerg (2002) by stating that the planners' ability to fail to recognise political power, or to be able to recognise this power, has significant implications on how technocratic, democratic the planning process is, and the extent to which dominant exerting powers are enabled in shaping this process. If "legitimisation is central to hegemonic forms of power" (Miraftab, 2009:41), planners influence and/or control of information becomes the epicentre of where transformation should be considered. In Miraftab's (2009:41) paper on insurgent planning he argues how insurgent planning is a radical planning approach that sifts through neoliberal governance strategies and/ or promises of inclusive citizenship. He explains how "neoliberalism seeks legitimation through governance that promotes political inclusion, but avoids translating it into redistributive equity"; thus he argues that "radical planning practices that challenge the inequitable specifics of neoliberal governance operating through inclusion" are necessary (Miraftab, 2009:41). In addition, the rationale for Forester's (1982) suggestion for

progressive planners, is that this kind of planner recognises the power of information because it,

> … enables participation of citizens affected by proposed projects, and avoids performing the legitimizing functions… but it also calls attention to the structural, organizational and political barriers that may *unnecessarily* distort the information that citizens have and use to shape their own action (Forester's,1982:69).

The challenge for the progressive planner then becomes how to recognise and anticipate distorted information, or, as Forester (1982) terms it, misinformation, which raises the question: when do planners themselves become sources of misinformation?

Porter (2016), in her work on unlearning colonial cultures of planning, brings to light, not only the deliberately imposed power of the colonisers, but also the continual resistance from the indigenous people within contemporary settler states, and their efforts to reclaim their dispossessed land. Until recently the narrative within western/northern planning, literature seems to elevate and reify the colonial rule and/or consequences: Porter (2016) makes out a strong case for, how during the time of colonialism, there was always strong resistance. However, even though her cases are within the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand, her work can add valuable insights into how we interrogate the dominant 'power' narrative within the global South. Such resistance as there was from the indigenous people appears, and continues to be, particularly silenced, or weakened, within the planning narrative. More importantly for revealing these power dynamics at play in the planning literature narrative, and in planning projects, Porter (2016) shows how indigenous resistance creates complex predicaments for planning. The way in which she uncovers and represents the challenging role of planning in processes of dispossession is also important for the global South. She alludes to indigenous resistance as indigenous people "renegotiating the meanings of place as well as the physical structuring of space in colonial society" (Porter, 2016:26). This highlights the ways in which the agents of colonial power sought not only to dispossess land, but also to erase indigenous knowledge in the name of 'civilisation'. In response to this, indigenous people strive to repossess the colonial space (both mental and physical space), even though the colonial dispossession continues, thus leaving the colonial space,

"continually unsettled" (Porter, 2016:38) due to the ongoing conflict between those who dispossess and those who repossess. Thus, in planning intentions, narratives, and processes, any attempt to understand the indigenous resistance not only challenges planning epistemology, but also opens up a platform or 'negotiated space' for dialogue amongst diverse forms of power.

Being

Many planning scholars agree that urban planning was historically a tool of power and social control in colonial Africa (Njoh, 2009; Kamete & Lindell, 2010; Kamete, 2013; Porter, 2017). The binaries of the 'superior' Europe and the 'inferior' or deficit 'other' were conceived from, and legitimated by, colonialism, together with those binaries of European and Indigenous, white superiority and black inferiority, domination and the oppressed, perpetrator and victim, all under the single banner of racial hierarchy (Quijano, 2007; Porter, 2016). Porter (2016) comments on how the concept of 'difference' exists because of this binary, a binary which becomes problematic as long as the dialogue remains within the parameters of colonial language and discourse. Thus, "colonial hierarchy, like other hierarchies of social order, is at least in part produced through scientific discourses of, and knowledge production about, the body" (Porter, 2016:36). Thus, from this it can be understood that the modern underpinnings of planning have shaped knowledge production about the body. In other words, this discourse has identified which bodies we are 'conditioned' to see in place making and which we do not. This could also explain why resistance from indigenous peoples has not been acknowledged in, or incorporated into, the planning narrative. Which brings me to "the quest for relevance in Africa", referred to by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2005:87) as he explores a "liberating perspective to see ourselves [Africans writing and teaching literature and involved in critical approaches] clearly in relationship to ourselves and to others' selves in the universe". Thus, the ways in which the subaltern, or the urban poor, see themselves or their environment is contingent on their relation to imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial stages (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2005:88). Therefore, according to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1997:2005), colonialism can be seen to have played a significant role in our view of ourselves, a view which has implications for culture and lifestyle. Consequently notions of 'being' were rooted in the European history of a colonial reality which was grounded upon race, class, and culture (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o,

1997:11). Moreover, coloniality of being, knowledge, and power are premised on ideas of humanity (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Maldonado-Torres (2017:433) argues that these ideas of humanity are premised on the distinction between the idea of human as *humanitas*, and the idea of human as *anthropos.* The idea of *humanitas* regards humans as subjects; the idea of humans as *anthropos* regards humans as a sub-set of beings, or lesser beings that create chaotic feelings of anxiety, rage, and fear. This notion of understanding (hu)Man in the Enlightenment period infiltrated the modern method of how knowledge is produced. Based on these concepts and ideas, Maldonado-Torres (2017) critically assesses ideas of method and explores Fanon's ideas and emphasis on attitude over method. Specific to ideas of decolonising the field of psychology, Fanon (2008) argues that,

> … attitudes are both a key object of study in the effort to understand the human being and to offer a prognosis of psychological maladies, as well as a significant dimension in the production of knowledge and in the attention to epistemological problems that plague the modern cognitive and scientific subject (Fanon, 2008 cited in Maldonado-Torres, 2017:434).

Furthermore, according to Maldonado-Torres (2017) in his analysis of Fanon's approach to 'attitude', the definition of attitude surpasses 'subjective intention and purpose [of the conscious] '. Instead attitude refers to the structural environment and power dynamics that play a fundamental role in the "formation of subjectivity as subjects relate to basic aspects of human experience" (Maldonado-Torres, 2017:434). Even though Fanon takes on a more philosophical stance on attitude, his conceptualisation foregrounds how social structures reinforce and mirror collective attitudes and these play a role in the formation of subjectivity and ultimately in how the subject engages with his/her human experience. In the context of planning Fanon's views can provide insights into how structural power dynamics become the means or lens to assess, understand, and forecast the likely outcome of socio-economic and spatial maladies, a process similar to that of understanding psychological illness. This can be seen to apply particularly to the process of planning, where contemporary institutions of planning can be seen to mirror a collective attitude. This collective attitude has influenced and guided the techniques and tools of planning practice, consequently influencing the mental engagement of planner practitioners with their

'planning' subjects i.e. the urban poor and urban challenges. Therefore, based on these ideas, power can be seen as the source and wellspring of the collective attitude which infiltrates the method, which in this case, is planning methodologies and practices. Power in turn becomes the rule of engagement for how the urban poor and/ or other urban challenges are perceived and how they are (to be) addressed.

Mindset and Sensibility

I draw on Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) for investigating and explaining decoloniality as it relates to planning. I see him as providing a deeper understanding of the project of decoloniality than that offered by other planning researchers I have reviewed. Even though he is a professor in development studies, and his work shows what could be seen in the field of planning on the international stage as a narrow emphasis on African history and African politics, I consider him to provide valuable insights into urban planning in the post-colonial period, specifically in the global South. In addition, central to the decolonial debates, is the 'consciousness' dimension, echoed particularly in the work of Frantz Fanon (2001), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1997, 2005), and Steve Biko (2009). 'Consciousness', or mind, becomes the point of reference for investigating and labelling the strategic permanency and depth of injustice done by colonisers. It is also the point of revolt from which we 'remedy' (Biko, 2009) certain mental conditioning, and the point of awakening that calls the colonial subject to true liberation from being a 'thing' to being recognised as human (Fanon, 2001:28). In addition, the 'consciousness' is the cornerstone of coloniality; it is instrumental in the tactics of the coloniser or new forms of domination (Porter, 2016; Varley, 2013). Moreover, the idea, or concept of consciousness or mind, becomes the battleground for the unresolved conflict between true emancipation and 'negotiated' spaces that continue to shadow coloniality. Miraftab (2009) draws from decolonial scholars, such as Steve Biko, in his call for 'historicised consciousness' in inclusive planning practices:

> If colonialism and colonial power seek to suppress memory, anti-colonial struggles teach us to locate politicized historical memory at the very heart of liberating practices (Werbner, 1998), historicizing the notion of inclusion from the vantage point of the ex-colonies allows us to see how the participation of the oppressed in their own conditions of oppression functions to normalize those oppressive

43

relations, in the post-colony as it had in the colony (Miraftab, 2009:45).

Miraftab (2009) is asserting that the decolonisation of planning and planning imaginations, requires a new consciousness. This new consciousness necessitates the ability to understand the urban poor or subaltern on their turf and on their terms, and, in so doing, understand their values. More so, this new consciousness requires a vigilant custodian who is able to identify and expose underlying oppressive participatory functions and patterns. Drawing on these decolonial ideas as applied to planning, what I am interested in is in this 'new/ historicised consciousness ability', which I frame as the mindset and sensibility necessary to decolonising planning imaginations when managing informality. Key to the work of Fanon (2001) is the way in which he conceptualises decolonisation. For him the act of decolonisation is violent; wherever processes of decolonisation take place these disrupt, and are not silent in their disruption. Moreover, these disruptions are both intentional and forceful. Thus, liberating planning imaginations requires a ferocious, tenacious, intentional, and self-aware attitude to disrupt oppressive traditions in planning.

In addition, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) deconstructs the logic of decoloniality, a logic I have used as a way to understand urban development at the present time, with a particular focus on urban informality. I consider these three concepts (knowledge, power, and being) to be of value to helping us understand the thinking processes, or 'logics' of scholars and theorists in the planning literature, and those of planners in practice. The distorting effects of coloniality as a result of the particular ways in which it has been internalized, and consolidated in the minds of Africans, is described by Maldonado-Torres (2016). This internalisation is made particularly evident if taken a step further, in considering the effect of this on the planning approach of African planners:

> … metaphysical catastrophe creates a context where the colonized subject is at war with itself, trying to kill any trace of the black, native, and colonized within and without, while also being at war with each other to achieve the same purpose. All the while, the colonized also face another war in the form of a constant evasion and multiple aggressions by those in the zone of humanity who consider them as sub-humans (Maldonado-Torres, 2016:14).

When I refer to the mindsets and sensibilities which I consider planners, particularly in the global South, need to possess, or consciously begin to acquire, in order to plan appropriately in a post-colonial context, I see the above quote from Maldonado-Torres (2016) as helping to provide planners with some insight into the mental underpinnings of the inner war being waged in the minds of the colonial subject. Thus, I argue that, in the context and process of planning, these planners need to begin to understand, and to empathise with, this inner war, and when they do, they themselves will be faced with this tension.

More broadly speaking, Maldonado-Torres (2016) highlights the ways in which knowledge shapes what we in the 'modern' post-colonial world come to see as 'humane enough', and what kinds of knowledges and processes inform our ideas on place-making. This in turn alters, or has the potential to alter, how and what we 'see', and, as a result, comes to inform the ways in which discriminatory spatial practices are performed. Ideally, this in turn should come to inform the way cities are governed and planned. What is evident (as has been mentioned, and is discussed in more detail later in the chapter) is that the tenets of coloniality/modernity/rationality continue to prevail in 21st century urban planning, and carry with them the thinking/consciousness which informs and drives this. Thus, even though state institutions appear to have diversified, the persistence and consolidation of these rational models in planning institutions has failed the global South in terms of a hoped-for transformation in planning intentions and practices.

I attempt in my research to bring together different streams of knowledges in order to tap into an alternative, more comprehensive, and sensitive/empathetic way of looking at informality. In so doing, I hope to contribute to assisting the post-colonial urban planner towards a more flexible, creative, and appropriate urban planning approach for the global South, in particular one which engages with urban informality in all its complexities. Therefore, for purposes of this chapter I use the following definitions to help bring to light what appears to me to date to have been neglected in planning literature: the kind or type of mindset and sensibility planners need to develop and adopt for engaging with urban informality. I also suggest the mindset and sensibility of planners as the fourth concept, one which subsumes the other three, as illustrated in Figure 2. The fourth concept is the result and product of Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013)

three concepts (knowledge, power, and being) discussed earlier in this chapter. For this purpose, I use a composite of definitions from various dictionaries in my concept of 'mindset' and of 'sensibility': *mindset* as, "a set of attitudes or fixed ideas that somebody has and that are often difficult to change" (Oxford Learners Dictionary, 2020, sv. 'mindset'), a "mental attitude or inclination" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020, sv. 'mindset'). *Sensibility* can be defined as "an awareness of, and responsiveness toward, something" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020, sv. 'sensibility') or "mental susceptibility or responsiveness; quickness and acuteness of apprehension or feeling" (dictionary.com, 2022, sv. 'mental'). However, in my analysis of decolonial literature, power is not simply a stand-alone concept feeding into concepts of knowledge and being; instead, power becomes the sphere, or the funnel, through which knowledge is produced and managed. This process in turn fundamentally impacts notions of being, and influences mindsets and sensibilities. Figure 2 represents my diagrammatical summary of the urban development dynamics.
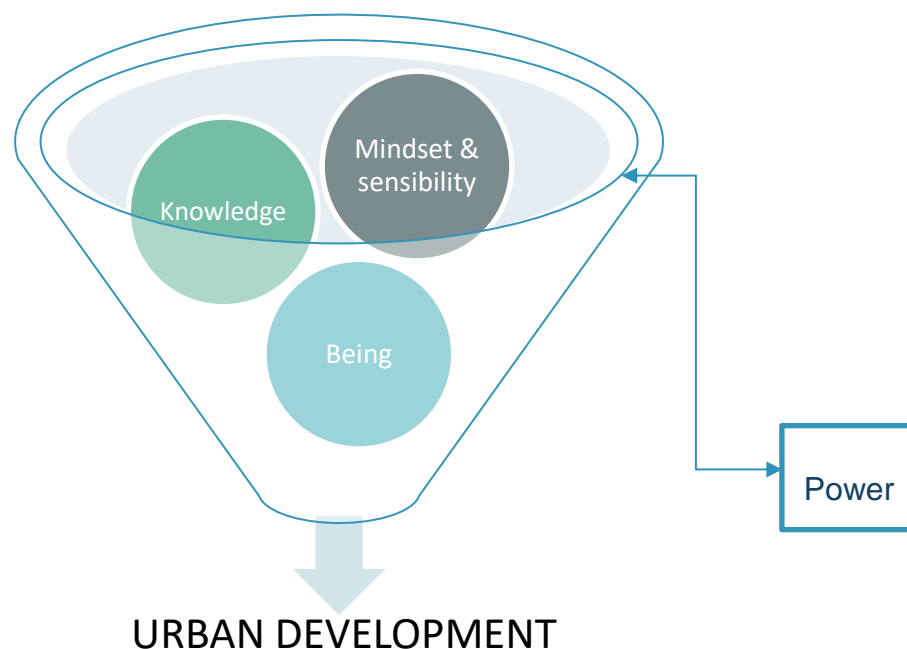
Figure 2: Diagrammatic illustration of paradigms that shape urban development.

Source: Inspired by Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) three concepts, Coloniality of Knowledge, Coloniality of Power, and Coloniality of Being, and how these articulate with my (Danielle Hill) concept of Mindset

and Sensibility.

2.3.1 Paradigms that Shape Urban Development to Systems Change: A Conceptual Frame

According to Kania et al. (2018), as seen in Fig. 3, there are six interdependent conditions that premise systems change. These six conditions consist of both explicit and implicit aspects that not only improve and strengthen systems, but help with implementation and evaluation of strategies at work for systems change. The Kania et al. (2018) diagram takes Fig 1. to a more a practical and operational level. This is because the four concepts of urban development (in Fig 2) oscillate between relational and transformative change, two domains which are more implicit in nature. Even though the oscillation, these two implicit domains are fundamental in achieving structural change, and structural change results in more explicit and tangible change. I now explore each level of change as a way to understand the importance of each of these levels in shifting planning systems.
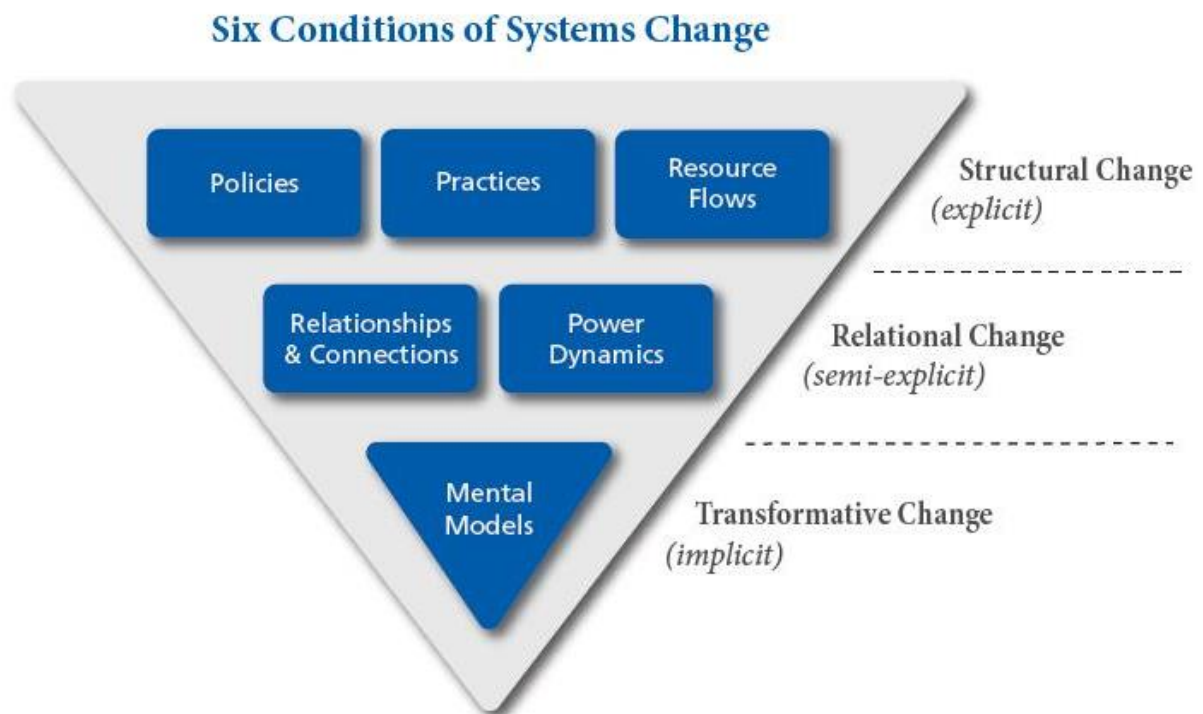
Figure 3: Shifting the conditions that hold the problem together

Source: Kania et al. (2018:4)

2.3.1.1 Structural Change (Explicit)

Table 1: Structural change definitions

Structural Change (Explicit): Definitions	
Policies	Government, institutional and organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide entities own and other's actions.
Practices	Espoused activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other entities targeted at improving social and environmental progress. In addition, within the entity, the procedures, guidelines, or informal shared habits that comprise their work.
Resource flows	How money, people, knowledge, information and other assets, such as infrastructure, are allocated and distributed

Source: Kania et al. (2018: 4)

According to Kania et al. (2018), structural change encompass the practical and tangible elements of change seen in Fig.3 as policies, practices and resource flows. Kania et al. (2018), further mention that reform and change within foundations - i.e. institutions - have primarily rested on this first level of change. In the context of urban planning, the technical blue print approach to change persists, as mentioned in previous sections. However, in planning, the limitation of seeking change only at the structural change level forgoes how social structures reinforce and mirror collective attitudes, and this in turn plays a role in the formation of planning policies, planning practice and how resources are distributed.

2.3.1.2 Relational Change (Semi- explicit)

Table 2: Relational Change Definitions

Relational Change (Semi-explicit): Definitions	
Relationships & Connections	Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those differing in histories and viewpoints
Power Dynamics	The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organisations

The relational level of change is premised on the shifting of power dynamics through building relationships and quality connections among actors in the system and across political divides (Kania et al., 2018). Thus, in order to address systemic issues in a meaningful way, the relationships between main role players i.e. stakeholders needs to be transformed. Kania et al. (2018) give broad examples of how this is achieved, but do not provide what necessitates the groundwork necessary for this level of transformation. Fig. 2 brings attention to the relational dynamics within urban development processes. According to the urban development triad insight into urban planning systems there are three aspects related to power and how it operates in a systemic context: power is shifted through decentralising knowledge, power shapes and narrates the way we 'see' and the collective attitude toward development issues, and power is a 'normal' aspect of the development process that needs reckoning. Moreover, what comes into question is how communities are made major role players in the distribution of power. Even though relational change is pertinent to achieving a shift in power dynamics between stakeholders, the mental strongholds inhibiting change need not be overlooked.

2.3.1.3 Transformative Change (Implicit)

Table 3: Transformative Change Definitions

Transformative Change (Implicit): Definitions	
Mental Models	Habits of thought-deeply held beliefs and assumptions, together with taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk.

According to Kania et al. (2018:8), systems theorists agree that change at the level of mental models is not only critical to ensuring change at both structural and relational levels, but also to the "foundational drivers of activity in any system…that shape the meaning we assign to external data and events and guide our participation in public discourse". In turn, power dynamics happen at an implicit level through shaping the

social narrative in a bi-directional way. Subsequently, "narratives are shaped by mental models, but narratives, overtime, shape the mental models we have" (Kania et al., 2018:9). Therefore, in order to shift power dynamics, reckoning with power structures that have "defined, influenced, and shaped mental models historically and in the present" (Kania et al., 2018:11) is necessary to shift how the narrative is framed and by whom. Kania et al. (2018:10), argues that often times attempts at systems change "neglect the leaders, organisations and groups closest to challenge, resource flows that benefit those with social capital". It is this third level of change that my thesis explores. In the context of planning, the mindset and sensibility dimension I add to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) triad resonates with the call made by Kania et al. (2018) for transforming habits of thought or 'consciousness'. Moreover, these concepts resonate with each other in that there is a recognition that power informs, reproduces and shapes habits of thought and the meaning we assign urban development issues. Thus, the mental attitudes or inclination (mindset) influenced by power affects the awareness or responsiveness (sensibility) of planners and policy makers to urban development issues. Even though Kania et al. (2018) 'confine' power dynamics to the second level of change, due to the interdependent nature of the six conditions (three levels' of change), I argue that conceptually power can be seen to operate as a funnel, and is pliable in its manifestation and contextualisation within the planning system. To contextualise my concept of mindset and sensibility in relation to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) urban development triad, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) triad falls under the second relational change level, and mind- set and sensibility under the transformative level of change. The structural change i.e. policies, practices and resource flows refers to the upgrading policies in place and the role of planning professionals in upgrading processes. Based on the understanding that the three levels of change are interdependent, I use the interdependent and discrete levels of change in chapter 3 as a methodological approach to explore planning mindsets and sensibilities. According to Kania et al. (2018), six conditions provide a conceptual frame to not only navigate the current state and approaches of planning systems i.e. planning institutions, but it also provides six conditions to methodologically see how systems change can be achieved.

2.4 'Logic of Survival': Global Debates on Informality

As has been described, the literature shows the rapid urbanisation of African cities in recent years, as having brought about a disruption in the normative ways urban planners understand social change. The result of this disruption has been a challenge to the efficacy of traditional planning doctrine. This complex challenge confronts built environment specialists with questions relating to how African cities should or could be planned and governed (Förster & Ammann, 2018). This challenge brings with it a desire on the part of recent research and of planners, particularly in the global South, for planning to reinvent itself. However, as has been discussed, this desire is in conflict with the inherent and historically deep-rooted culture of planning, or what Porter (2016) calls the 'colonial cultures of planning'. She explains how culture is linked to privilege. She sees privilege as an ideological formation that has constructed particular subjects, and relations between these subjects. This process alludes to the innate ability of privilege to own and exercise hegemonic power, and, as a result, dominate and oppress these constructed subject relations (Porter, 2016:156). This process is further explained by Kipfer (2007) in his work:

> Colonial spatial relations, as brutal and coercive as they are, produce forms of homogeneity that are embedded in daily spatial practices and infused in the bodily and affective representational spaces of the colonized even as they are strictly separated from the colonizer (Kipfer, 2007:711).

Porter (2016:156), in the context of its daily spatial practices and its ideology, also describes how planning, with its ideological formations, its "silences and formative productions, its practices, expressions, and rationalities" has produced oppressive forms of homogenous spatial cultures, practices and relations even 'outside' formal planned areas. She further asserts how culture "inhabits particular (rather than universal) explanatory schemas, structures of meaning", and thus "planning is an active cultural agent in space" (Porter, 2016:151). Based on this argument, she exposes colonial spatial cultures that exist within planning, and calls for a renegotiation not only of the values, knowledge, meaning, and the agency between planning and indigenous peoples, but also within planning itself (Porter, 2016:152). As Flyvbjerg (2002) argues for planning to actively incorporate ideas of power in how they conceptualise planning, so Porter calls for a 'renegotiation'. This renegotiation is seen

in terms of the identification and addressing of, and working with, corrupt planning foundations as opposed to the internalisation and denial of existing modes of planning. This involves confronting the historical utopian foundations of planning, and embracing conflict, or the constant "critique of the structures we inhabit" (Porter, 2016:155). Thus, taking into consideration the arguments of Flyvbjerg (2002) and of Porter (2016), when attempting to understand a phenomenon like informality, it is necessary to adopt a dual viewpoint, not only between planning and indigenous people, but also within planning itself. Amidst the heterogeneous causes of informality posed by planners and by scholars in the field, is one which largely sees informality as an 'informal dwellers issue'/ indigenous people 'issue'. Porter (2016), however, argues that the unlearning of privilege, or the transformation of colonial cultures of planning, is a non-indigenous 'problem' (Porter, 2016:156). Thus, in light of planning this 'unlearning' essentially means "a focus of work for those inhabiting the existing institutions of contemporary planning: governments, agencies, universities, and consultancies"…implying a refocus of work, and that an "overall attitude [is necessary] to bring the silences of planning under the frame of analysis. In doing so, the work is to expose those silences as forms of ideology: as spatial culture that are productive toward space" (Porter, 2016:156). In other words, not only is it important to expose those 'attitudes') contained within or implied (as Maldonado-Torres [2017] does) by these forms of ideologies, but also to expose the attitudes of the 'non-indigenous' carriers of these forms of ideologies, which ultimately co-produce multiple spatial forms of urban life. In the context of planning, this would mean exposing the attitudes contained within, and implied by, existing institutions of planning.

Förster and Ammann (2018), and Huchzermeyer and Karam (2006) see African urbanism as best mirrored in urban informality, and in the ways in which it challenges African planners. According to Wade (2011:2), "'informality' runs the risk of becoming another catchphrase like 'participation'". This in turn adulterates the transformational essence that can disrupt dominant epistemological frames. This collision between informality as a material reality and dominant epistemological frames has given rise to the informality discourse amongst scholars, which in turn has generated myriad definitions, characteristics, attitudes, and understandings of the causes and consequences of the heterogeneous nature of urban informality (Recio, 2015:19).

Consequently, when we begin to reflect seriously on African futures, Recio's (2015) assertion which underpins the capability of urban planning governance arrangements concerning urban informality becomes a critical conversation, or the trigger for such a conversation. More importantly, his assertion becomes the crux of the role of planning in African cities. More broadly speaking, it becomes highly relevant to appropriate planning practices in and for the 21st century. Recio (2015:19) comments on the importance of reflecting on the complexities of this: "… it is important to examine how urban planning governance arrangements have been unable to deal with the array of collective action initiatives undertaken by the multiple actors in informality". Recio (2015:18) looks at the interaction between "the way the state deals with informality" and "the way those (grassroots) inhabiting [informal dwellers], constructing [self-organisation and construction of informal dwellings] deal with informality". For purposes of my research, I intend to focus on an analysis of the ways in which the state deals with informality, attempting to understand the formal governance mechanisms which are or are not in place for dealing with informality. By means of this analysis, I attempt to establish whether, within the formal institutional landscape, the ability of urban planners to interact with the dynamism of urban informality exists, and to what extent it exists, or does not exist.

2.4.1 Understanding informality

An in-depth understanding of informality lies at the core of understanding how, and to what extent, the concept has diffused through both global and national contexts. In this section, I look at the global context, and explore the ways in which the concept of informality became part of the [urban] development paradigm.

Historically the concept of informal/ informality dates back to the early 1970s, when Hart (1973), an anthropologist conducting research in Ghana, drew a distinction between formal and informal types of employment. Hart (1973) used the term "informal" to describe the "urban poor [who] often engaged in petty capitalism as a substitute for the wage employment to which they were denied access" (Hart, 1973 cited in Alsayyad, 2004:10). At the time, the process of the introduction of this concept into the social sciences and, in particular, into development discourses, was not smooth, as there were many conceptual errors. However, in spite of the concept's

inconsistencies, it was rapidly adopted, by

> …multilateral agencies (such as ILO, UN, and World Bank) and a number of
> city/national governments. These city/ national governments involved [a number
> of developing countries, such as] Colombia, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Philippines, and
> Iran, [and included] the city missions Belo Horinzonte (Brazil), Calcutta (India),
> among others that participated in the ILO's World Employment Programme (WEP)
> as the early adopters/ propagators (Onyebueke, 2018:65).

Onyebueke (2018) further elaborates on the key factors influencing the adoption of
this term:

> Bromley (1978) attributed this unexpected rise [of the concept of informality] more
> to a coincidence of place, time and opportunity, without which the fledging concept
> …might well have sunk without trace" (Bromley,1978:1036). The rapid diffusion of
> the 'informal sector' concept since 1971 is attributed to the appropriateness of the
> time and place of its presentation, the importance of key institutions in the diffusion
> of ideas, the concept's relevance to 'apparently feasible and politically safe' policy
> recommendations for international advisers and organisations.

Thus, the argument Onyebueke (2018) tries to convey should be seen in the context
of the almost 50 years of the initial global diffusion of the concept: informality's diffusion
and adoption cycles vary from global levels, national contexts, and planning schools.
The assumption underpinning his emphasis on planning schools, is that planning
schools have not been, and are, not able to get to grips with the dynamic nature of
informality in Africa and the global South. Even though there is considerable evidence
of upgrading relevant curricula in developing countries, Onyebueke (2018:69) asserts
that a negative attitude persists towards urban informal economy and informality as a
concept and how these are both taught and constructed - in 'deficit', chaotic terms.
Thus, planning students continue to be taught to use their planning techniques and
skills to remove – tidy away - and repress forms of informality. In so doing, they are
affirming the idea of an 'ideal city' promoted by politicians, policy makers, planners,
and academics as not holding space for any trace of informality (Watson, 2011:18;
Onyebueke, 2018). Thus even though there has generally been a rapid global diffusion
of informality as a concept and discourse, "what still remains overlooked, however, is
the way to characterise the rather slow diffusion of this ubiquitous concept in this

particular [Nigerian] planning school and its possible translation into planning pedagogies" (Onyebueke, 2018:73). Onyebueke (2018) does not specify the reasons for this slow diffusion; he refers only to "knowledge barriers". It is these knowledge barriers which, when uncovered as a result of evaluating existing planners, I argue will help to assist not only the design aspect but the understanding of the status quo of upgrading and the intersectionalities of the role of planners in these spaces. However, there is an implication of a lack of sensitivity towards informal settlement residents conveyed in planning curricula, when Onyebueke (2018) mentions how, in relation to urban informality, the education of planners has a fundamental impact on both their values and their understanding, and on their responses and practices (Watson & Agbola, 2013).

Three authors help us unpack some of the reasons for the slow diffusion of this concept in African planning schools. The first is the view Porter (2016) has of the culture of planning as a discipline, in this case carrying a negative attitude towards informality. The second is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's ideas of language being a carrier of culture in both positive (empowering) and negative (oppressive) ways. This can be seen together with Flyvbjerg's (2002) argument that power produces knowledge. Moreover in the inception stages and earlier contexts (1971) in which this concept (informal sector/informality) entered planning and development discourse, even though there were gaps and conceptual errors, the process through which knowledge of informality was diffused held certain power- knowledge dynamics, together with ideas of 'being'. Based on earlier sections of this chapter: Global Debates on Informality, these terms of reference allowed for what seemed to be a more rapid diffusion of this concept. However, as has been mentioned, one should keep in mind that, while Onyebueke (2018) speaks very recently about a general sense of the importance of the diffusion/adoption of the concept of informality in planning curricula, and the ability it has to be received, he does not subsequently address the intricacies of the content of the concept of informality. Nor does he unpack the clash of, or kinds of knowledges within, existing and inhibitive institutional frames and privilege, and how varying interpretations of informal realities impact on how effectively and widely the concept of informality is diffused and understood in all its complexities and power differentials.

Another anchor of the earlier debates of informality was de Soto (1989). A Peruvian economist, he was a member of a legalist group in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, there were a group of structuralist planners and architects who saw informal urbanisation as a practical alternative to the rigid high-rise social housing blocks which were emerging during that time (Rocco & Van Ballegooijen, 2019). Even though in the 1990s housing policy (the push from Latin America) globally was promoting *in situ* upgrading, de Soto's ideas simultaneously persuaded governments globally "that by giving low-income citizens legal ownership of the land on which they reside, they would be empowered to function in the capitalist economy as homeowners" (Lemanski, Charlton & Meth, 2017:4). de Soto (1989) saw informality as a heroic entrepreneurial act and expression that was a result of extreme state regulations rather than of labour market dynamics. In addition, de Soto (1989) regarded informality as a "survival strategy" (de Soto, 1989 cited in Alsayyad, 2004:13). de Soto (1989) further understood the informal sector as separate from the formal capitalist systems; informality was understood by him in the context of labour categorisation. Thus informality insights of both Hart (1973) and de Soto (1989) have contributed to forming the premise for current debates on informality as part of urban development. In these debates informality is seen as a manifestation of heroic, self-managed, and constructive forces against formality (Simone, 2004), and against the reproduction of state prescribed structures (Roy, 2009b). Other contemporary (first decade of the 21st century) interpretations, or a more direct critique of the theoretical approach of de Soto, regard informality as an organisational logic or mode of urbanisation, and as a "system of norms that governs the process of urban transformation itself" (Roy, 2005:148). Roy (2005) warns against the 'seductive' nature of de Soto's work, seeing it as securing wealth legalisation whilst promising wealth transfer (Roy, 2005:152). The result of the adoption of the de Soto view, she argues, creates an assumption that the problems of the urban poor can be solved through legally acknowledging their assets i.e. by policy managers providing title deeds to informal dwellers. Thus, there is a rule of engagement and an organisational logic that is not recognised, or is properly translated, and seems somewhat overruled by power infused ideas of legalisation, as a result exposing power relations when negotiating informality. Lemanski et al. (2017) further argues that, even though a large body of research points to how homeownership and 'provision of title deeds' as a model has not alleviated

urban poverty in the global South, the home ownership model continues to "dominate [and pervade] these mass housing programmes, [which in turn is] rooted in the global neoliberal belief that homeownership is a means for wealth creation" (4). Furthermore, this neoliberal paradigm has shaped the role of the state in housing delivery as landlord, and encouraged partnership- management of upgrading projects through bringing on board private consultancies. Moreover Lemanski et al. (2017) argue how, in the past decade, the emphasis on private-sector delivery of houses has marked the neo-liberal shift in paradigm since the 1960s when housing programmes were public driven. This new role of the state, in many ways has lured governments and mainstream policy agencies to providing this homeowner model to lower income communities. This in turn contributed to the idea that informality is not isolated in its ways of production and reproduction; instead, informality is a series of relations that join spaces and economies together. Roy's (2005) take on de Soto's (1989) theoretical approaches offers a critique without denying the empirical phenomenon that it foregrounds.

Another interpretation of informality is one that sees it as set of practices or territorial formation (McFarlane, 2012:89). This contributes to the understanding that there exists a close relationship between the informal and the formal. By regarding formality and informality as practices, the situated geographical binaries of where 'formal' and 'informal' dwell, or are located, in the city are done away with. Instead, the production of space becomes the field for informal practices and formal practices to co-exist and relate to one another. This fluid movement of practices that are not place bound helps uncover the urban politics, or the urban political dimension of the geographical relational practices, of the informal and formal. This concept in fact highlights the ways in which the state, and different business stakeholders and classes of people living within cities, are interconnected. Informality, according to this conception of it, also alludes to, or assumes that the urban poor have agency (Pieterse, 2008). If one accepts that the urban poor have choice/agency, this brings to light the ways in which informality is expressed through acts of resistance. This more comprehensive view of informality represents a shift in planning research from the formal-informal dichotomy to an understanding of urban informality within the matrix of urban development (Van Ballegooijen & Rocco, 2013; Pieterse, 2008).

Recent research points out that a deeper and more inclusive understanding of informality lies at the heart of making urban informality a site of critical analysis (Banks, Lombard & Mitlin, 2020), with the emphasis on looking at informality across professional domains: spatial, political, and economic. Drawing on scholars, such as McFarlane (2012), Roy (2005), Simon (2011), and Banks et al. (2020:234), I want to contribute to the current debate by looking at urban informality as a site of critical analysis, one that clearly displays the 'winners and losers' in the processes of power-sensitised urban development. The importance of this view is seen in terms of how, and the extent to which, opportunities within these processes are restricted or unrestricted, by and for whom. Understanding urban informality in this way provides us with a closer look at matters of social, economic, and political inequality, and transcends those previously confined understandings of informality to include considerations of how processes underpinning these inequalities develop, materialise, and solidify. This analysis takes into consideration Flyvbjerg's (2002) conception of incorporating power dynamics when conceptualising urban planning challenges. This in turn opens up a multi-scalar perspective that allows for a more comprehensive and efficacious interpretation of the multiple and diverse actors involved in urban informality.

The Banks et al. (2020) conceptualisation observes three developments in the evolving of this comprehensive view. The first development is the changing attitude on part of the states toward informality. In the research undertaken over the past two to three decades, urban informality has hitherto been closely related to the inability of the state to intervene. Haid and Hilbrandt (2019) further explain this perceived hindrance to the transformation of the approach to informality:

> … the (presumed rational) modern institutions of 'developed' states have served as the yardstick against which to define informality as the ungovernable realm outside of institutional reach. In other words, definitions of informality as 'the other of states' build on a particular image of the state located in 'the Northwestern quadrant of the world' (O'Donnell, 2001:7), although the states in which informality research has emerged appeared to lack most of these definitional characteristics (Haid & Hilbrandt, 2019:552).

Banks et al. (2020) note an apparent current shift in this attitude on the part of the

state towards informality and transformation in a process of the state learning from informal service provision, particularly with reference to water provision in sub-Saharan African (Mitlin & Walnycki, 2020). In addition, Rocco and Van Ballegooijen (2019:4) see the *favela* as moving beyond the notion of being the "counter-image of the modernity to an improbable future model for the modern metropolis... [Thus informality i.e. slums, favelas, informal settlements are] increasingly mystified as an ideal image of an anti-authoritarian, flexible, aesthetically desirable, and perhaps unavoidable form of urbanization". Rocco and Van Ballegooijen (2019:4) admit to being troubled by this transition of attitude because if, as Roy (2004) argues, urban informality is aestheticized, it in turn depoliticises the housing problem, together with the real adversity experienced by the urban poor. This could imply that the attitude toward informality is dependent on implicit (possibly political) biases of those engaging with the subject matter or the reality thereof.

The second development in this attitude of transformation shared by planners, policy makers and planning researchers, is the growing agency of those involved in informal processes and practices, including the agency of the urban poor (Banks et al., 2020:234). Amidst this growing recognition of agency, Rocco and Van Ballegooijen (2019) argue that the limited extent of the agency of the urban poor mirrors a democratic deficit. This is because those involved in informal processes and practices remain confined within cycles of poverty. These cycles of poverty restrain the ability of the urban poor to legitimately engage and access 'formal' power relations. Consequently, Banks et al. (2020) concur that, even though there is an increase in agency on the part of the urban poor, powerful stakeholders' interests have more power, even though it is noticeably contested by the urban poor.

The third and newest development marked by Banks et al. (2020) is the various ways in which representations and practices of urban informality are monopolised by the urban elite and subaltern groups. This is where Banks et al. (2020) draw on the concepts of 'winners' and 'losers', based on how representations and practices of urban informality serve and benefit either the elite or subaltern group. The dynamism of informality makes connecting theory and practice difficult, and thus Banks et al. (2020) argue for a more flexible approach which focuses directly and holistically on the informality of a given/particular settlement in any analysis:

> ...most productive theoretical engagements with urban informality will be those
> which take it as a starting point for critical exploration of the relationships, attitudes,
> agency, and strategies which it defines, rather than seeing it as a setting, sector,
> or outcome (Banks et al., 2020:235).

Thus, from the theoretical literature reviewed above [relationships systems], what seems to be overlooked is how to characterise power, and the workings and effects of this power, in the informal and in the formal. An exploration of this involves posing a number of questions: Where do the kinds of power possessed and exercised by the informal and formal intersect? How is the relationship of power between formal and informal exercised? Is there a conceptual hybrid understanding of power that needs to be drawn upon? In addition, a question needs to be posed: how do these different power relations fuel the process of transformation, or what kind of 'outcomes' are produced? Are there similarities, overlaps, intersections, and reproduction between these outcomes?

2.4.2 Handling Informality

"One policy-manager … ask[ed]… 'where do all these people[informal settlers] come from?', pointing at governments' sheer unpreparedness to face the challenges of rapid urbanization in the global South" (Rocco & Van Ballegooijen, 2019:9). Several urban planning scholars have pointed out that this 'unpreparedness' always goes hand in hand with the 'lack of capacity and foresight' of institutions within government. A large body of mainly 21st century planning literature (Albrechts, 2004; Albrechts, 2010; Albrechts, Balducci & Hillier, 2016; Healey, 1997; Healey, 2013; Salet & Woltjer, 2009; Kunzmann, 2013; Kamete, 2013) argues that modernity continues to provide the framework within which urban planning in both the global North and South is executed. I discuss a few cases below to demonstrate the implications of this.

Kamete (2013:897) refers in his work to the planner as the "handmaiden of the state", as he explores and justifies the role and contribution of planners in the "clean-up" of informal settlements in Zimbabwe. However, he problematises the extent to which planners are, or can be described as, the handmaidens of the state. He argues that planning/the planner continues to intervene using modernist normative rationality and scientific knowledge, and that planners cannot escape the context in which they

operate (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Kamete, 2013). Moreover, Kamete (2013) shows how, even though in the tough legalistic planning context of Zimbabwe, planning is legislated in such a way as to not be, or appear to be, tainted by political transformations in the country. In this context planners remain complicit in state projects. Kamete describes the effects at local level of this politicisation of urban planning by national governments:

> … the political nature of urban planning is not confined to the activities of planners and how they relate to local political actors, for urban planning has always been implicated in projects of national governments. Although these are conceived at, and directed from, the centre, it is at the local level that they are effectively actualised (Kamete, 2013:902).

Returning to ideas of diffusion, Kamete (2013), looking at the case of Zimbabwe, describes the ways in which planning becomes the puppet of national party politics. Given the hazardous political landscape of Zimbabwe, planners were ''called to order", or, in other words, called to participate in this political agenda. Keeping in mind the legalistic nature, and tough and problematic history of planning in Zimbabwe, there is no indication in Kamete's (2013) article that Zimbabwean planners fully understood what was to be done with the challenge of informality. Thus, this example reveals the heterogeneous, ubiquitous, and undecided nature of how planning in such a case conceptualises informality. More importantly, it demonstrates the need for planning to engage more critically with the concept of power, including party power politics.

Yiftachel (2009a, 2009b), in an analysis of Israeli/Palestine 'apartheid' urban planning, conceptualises urban informality as 'gray spaces', his intent being to challenge the hierarchical basis of the formal/ informal dichotomy. He argues for understanding the complex historically embedded systems that have created and consolidated informal settlements:

> … [t]he inferior position of marginalized gray spaces [spaces which contain a multitude of groups, bodies, housing, lands, economies and discourses, lying literally 'in the shadow' of the formal, planned city, polity and economy] and groups is not simply a result of 'discrimination' but the consequence of deeply embedded institutional, material and spatial systems (Yiftachel, 2009b:94).

61

In this context gray spaces, as they appear, or are absent, in urban policies are those areas that are silenced, yet tolerated (Yiftachel, 2009a). This policy practice in fact imitates the 'apartheid' spatial order, and displays new forms of colonial relations, as seen in the ways in which the progression of urban civil status is systematically consolidated in institutional systems. Thus, the gray space is "the practice of indefinitely positioning populations between the 'lightness' of legality, safety and full membership and the 'darkness' of eviction, destruction and death" (Yiftachel, 2009a:247). The continuous implementation of urban policy, service delivery, and, to a greater extent, the particular ways in which civil status is crystallised within intuitional processes and systems, in fact deepens inequality and privilege. Yiftachel (2009b) argues that planning constitutes the mediator between the gray space and the state, implying that planning provides the evidence from which the state or authorities can make their judgements, for example, whether to evict, legalise, relocate, criminalise, or incorporate residents in these spaces. Thus, his argument is that planners have the potential to act as significant shapers of urban governance tools within processes of urban development. In light of the aforementioned, the contribution of Yiftachel (2009b) represents a movement toward understanding planning citizenship, "[which] requires professional mobilization and willingness to politicize planning through working with marginalized groups to achieve their rightful stake in the city, as well as opposing the colonization of the city by powerful interests 'from above'" (Yiftachel, 2009b:97).

The description by Yiftachel (2009b) of the Bedouin Arabs' struggles in Israel and Palestine calls on planners to understand the power they have to influence and deconstruct a colonial urban order and the mindsets of authorities, and, by working with marginalised groups who occupy 'dark' spaces, to open up 'whitened spaces'/spaces of privilege and entitlement to all groups. This is also seen in Sandercock's (2004) work: she calls on planners to take up their mandate as political beings through expanding the political horizons of planning. Planners' power, according to Yiftachel's (2009b) description, is open to being critiqued by Kamete (2013), based on his findings from his case study: in Zimbabwe the planners he interviewed felt victimised by the state by being restricted from trying to oppose state-led projects. This kind of outcome from efforts to resist state-led planning projects is

echoed by Gunder and Moaut (2002) in their study conducted in New Zealand. They describe the symbolic violence and institutional victimisation of planning practices. Which harks back to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2012) 'darkside' concept and his iterations of invisible power structures. Gunder and Moaut (2002) show how planners themselves in turn can find themselves numbed or inhibited by state/ formal planning systems, leaving them with no possibility of choice or freedom/agency to resist these institutions and systems. This 'struggle' experienced by spatial planners is seen by some urban planning researchers as the inability of policy and planning research to discuss and elaborate on issues of 'strife', and the 'problem of agony', when inevitably confronting politics, planning processes, and public communication (Pløger, 2004). This is what Yiftachel (1998:2), in an earlier study called the "dark side of planning", which in turn exacerbates the conflict within and between planners, and between planners and the institutional strongholds that inhibit transformative intentions and practices.

The conclusion to be drawn from Yiftachel's (2009b) argument is that urban informality is not simply an economic problem, where those involved in informal practice and processes need to handle economic constraint. Instead, what is significant about urban informality is that it is inextricably interwoven with urban politics. Thus, informality is characterised by both economics and urban politics. Förster and Ammann (2018), in the context of developing African cities, build on Yiftachel's gray zones concept by elevating these to urban grey zones:

> …as an opaque space that the actors not only confront but through their daily social practice incrementally morph into a colourful cityscape. By positioning themselves in interactions with other urbanites, they create the colours that allow them to perceive the city as a lifeworld of their own agency (Förster & Ammann, 2018:13).

The research reviewed is clear that the persisting modernist colonial underpinnings of planning institutions inhibit the transformation necessary to incorporate urban informality in existing institutions, and the ways in which these underpinnings operate to inhibit this transformation. The formal-informal dichotomy continues to preface and influence the way in which urban informality is thought about, and how urban policy and service delivery is implemented. However, there appears now to be a shift

observed in recent research to bring planners and informal actors together in order to create 'a colourful cityscape'. This 'colourful cityscape' (Förster & Ammann, 2018:13) relates to the opening of "white/lightened spaces" in conjunction with the shift of 'gray spaces' to 'colourful spaces', together with a shifting of 'gray perceptions' to 'colourful perceptions'.

However as these grey-zones morph, little is said by urban planning researchers about how the planner him or herself should or ought to morph. More importantly, there exists a silence in terms of how planning citizenship should be practised, and the kind of mindset and sensibility that planners would need to develop to shift from being 'the handmaiden of the state/ market' to practising the kind of planning citizenship and activism that will ultimately achieve social transformation. There appear to be gaps, both in the literature and in reality, in the understanding of how institutions are, or could be, capacitated in terms of ways of opening up 'white/lightened spaces' amidst urban/local government politics.

2.5 'Logic of Survival': Local Debates on Informality

"South Africa, in comparison to most developing countries, in 1994 committed itself to take seriously its constitutional obligation to provide the urban poor with housing, as well as free or affordable water, electricity and sanitation on a private or shared basis" (Amin & Cirolia, 2018:2758).

In this context, South Africa, since the dawn of democracy, has made attempts, with varying success, to address spatial disparity and inequality. The approach to state-led spatial transformation has taken on two main approaches: an institutional reform approach and a project-focussed approach (Cirolia & Smit, 2017). These two approaches encapsulate the South African government's macro level logic when dealing with urban development, more particularly with urban informality. This two-pronged approach to spatial equality forms the foundation for this next section. Each of these respective approaches is premised on different understandings of how transformation could or should take place. For institutional reform, spatial transformation lies within the domain of the state/ government, more specifically that of local government. Thus, along with this approach, for there to be measurable reform, there needs to be a re-engineering of state apparatus. Fundamental and

instrumental to local-led spatial transformation is urban planning. Local government becomes the enabling domain responsible for good governance of urban institutions, resource management, facilitating investments, and the amalgamation of stakeholder and spatial planning to achieve the desired urban transformation.

A project focussed approach is informed by the concept of urban transformation as an immediate material capital investment to effect change within urban (physical spatial) form. This approach, while it assumes an understanding of, or a process which takes into account, institutional barriers, chooses not to restructure institutions. Instead it chooses to temporarily relax existing institutional processes, or to bypass local government. The approach is premised on the idea or belief that mega projects that are focussed and executed efficiently, as well as competitively, will effect measurable change (Cirolia & Smit, 2017:67-68). Even though Cirolia and Smit's (2017) assessment of these two approaches sees them running parallel in trying to achieve the same goal - urban transformation - their question relates to the ways in which urban spatial transformation is understood by government and urban institutions, and how this transformation will be achieved in the future. The response of urban informality, planners and policy managers to this approach to transformation, in other words, to informal settlement upgrading processes, is emblematic of how we think more broadly and inclusively/equitably about urban transformation, more importantly whether and how we understand what we need to do to improve the interface between these two dominant approaches.

In this context Jenkins (2006) argues that the crisis of informality cannot be addressed or resolved through eradication, nor by means of those regulation programmes that are premised on the idea of integrating the informal into the formal. Consequently, it is not so much about institutional or project-based reform (whether they are done simultaneously or separately); as it is about the ideas envisioned, and injected by decision makers into these two reforms. This is because, should the knowledge produced and the knowledge diffused be slow in transpiring, the transformation attempt will not effect the necessary change. It is for this reason, it can be argued by recent planning scholars, that there is a need to deal with the root cause of urban spatial inequality, and to find ways within urban development processes that promote social and economic inclusion. Thus, as this recent literature shows, informality is both

layered and dynamic: it is socially, culturally, economically, and physically intertwined with urban politics. Therefore, how these layers emerge and are identified within, and interpreted by, institutions is fundamental when navigating gateways to alternative approaches to a more equitable and appropriate urban planning project.

2.5.1 Defining Informal Settlements

Informal settlements continue to expand and transform in their dynamic nature across the global South urban landscape. For purposes of my research, I draw on a number of different as well as overlapping definitions of these settlements. These include characteristics of such settlements as being outside of the state's control and/or involving 'tenure insecurity', as well as overcrowding/sufficient urban area and poor living conditions. I start with the official working definition of UN-Habitat (2016)[5]:

> Informal settlements – are residential areas where 1) inhabitants have no security of tenure vis-à-vis the land or dwellings they inhabit, with modalities ranging from squatting to informal rental housing, 2) the neighbourhoods usually lack, or are cut off from, basic services and city infrastructure and 3) the housing may not comply with current planning and building regulations, and is often situated in geographically and environmentally hazardous areas. In: addition, informal settlements can be a form of real estate speculation for all income levels of urban residents, affluent and poor. Slums are the most deprived and excluded form of informal settlements characterized by poverty and large agglomerations of dilapidated housing often located in the most hazardous urban land. In addition to tenure insecurity, slum dwellers lack formal supply of basic infrastructure and services, public space and green areas, and are constantly exposed to eviction, disease and violence.

Dovey and King (2011:11) expand on this UN-Habitat definition, including their characteristically being outside of the control of the state and distinguishing them from 'squatter' and 'slum' settlements: "Informal settlements are urban neighbourhoods or districts that develop and operate without the formal control of the state, co-existing

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[5] https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-22_Informal-Settlements-2.0%20%282%29.pdf (02/21/2022)

but not synonymous with, 'squatter' settlements and slums". Gonzales (2008) also sees an informal settlement as one that operates outside the framework of government regulation (Gonzales, 2008), or as one which exists as an activity outside state regulation. Huchzemeyer (2006) provides a noteworthy definition which emphasises tenure insecurity and living conditions: "… tenure insecurity is the central characteristic of informal settlements, with varying attributes of unhealthy and hazardous living conditions to which overcrowding and lack of basic services may contribute" (Huchzemeyer, 2006:3).

The Nassar and Elsayed (2018) definition of informal settlements is connoted with the formal city's inability to respond to growing housing demand, and also refers to self-constructed shelters/residential areas. Their definition includes influencing factors, such as the "transition from colonialism, the increase in urban poverty, and the impacts of structural adjustment and other neo-liberal programmes on formal welfare for the poor" (Nassar & Elsayed, 2018:2368). These characteristics are echoed and elaborated on by Gourveneur's (2014:31) reference to informal settlements being "dynamic, resilient and adaptable, and by nature escape regulatory planning and design efforts". Articulating a phenomenon as dynamic, and applying this to informal settlements, is challenging to policy makers, planners, researchers. As the conception of informal settlements' contribution to, or effect on, the city, continues to evolve and change, for a researcher who sees these as either an opportunity or a problem, what becomes clearer is the contestation or tension between informal dwellers' desire to self-construct, and their desire for the state to intervene. Put differently, their conflicted desire places a great demand on the extent to which state mechanisms are willing to, or are able to intervene.

The following section seeks to unpack the perceptions linked to the South African perplexity around informal settlements.

2.6 South African response to Informality

2.6.1 Institutional Reform: Better representation

South Africa is an exemplar of a (stated) deliberate move away from the modern/western/science-based eradication of informal settlements, which, as has

been described, was one of the dominant approaches until the 1980s under the apartheid regime (Smit, 2006:2), as it was the emphasis globally (UN-Habitat, 2016). Given the many social inequalities created and exacerbated by apartheid, at the dawn of democracy it was pertinent for the redress approach, as specified in the Constitution's Bill of Rights, to housing delivery to provide dignified and sufficient housing, together with dignified, healthy living conditions. This intent was harnessed late 1990s within the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a programme which materialised through the provision of formal housing on an extensive scale. This programme was critiqued by urban scholars for its design and implementation: it was seen to reinforce apartheid spatial disparities, while at the same time urban informality continued to exist. Even though there had been a global shift in policy reform away from informal eradication to *in-situ* upgrading in the early 1970s (Huchzermeyer, 2011), in 2004 South Africa introduced the Breaking New Ground Policy (DoH, 2004). This policy represented the introduction to informal settlement upgrading with the funding support of Upgrading of Informal Settlement Program (UISP). Urban planning scholars argue that the transition from RDP to BNG has not been smooth, and, moreover, "the minimal embrace of incremental, participatory and *in situ* approaches to informal settlement upgrading is the lack of attention to institutionalisation", [i.e., building of institutional support for scaled change] (Cirolia, Görgens, Van Donk, Smit & Drimie, 2017:8). Furthermore, even though an exploration of upgrading case studies suggests that the best approach to upgrading is an integrated, multi-sectoral engagement with the multi-dimensions of urban poverty, Smit (2006) argues that South African informal settlement interventions have tended to take the form of Roll-Over[6] upgrading projects, the kind of interventions that have focused on, and continue to deliver, housing and infrastructure. Thus, the big difference between South Africa's roll-over upgrading approach and/ or model and the global *in-situ* trend is that South Africa decided to embark on 'formal' housing, infrastructure, and service delivery as their approach to upgrading informal

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[6] Three Different Upgrading approaches: "namely **In situ upgrading**, where the infrastructure is constructed around the existing houses, to minimise the number of households that would need to move or relocate**. Roll-over upgrading**, where residents are required to move temporarily from their current site and return when services had been installed; and **Greenfields**, where residents are required to move to another area". (Del Mistro & Hensher, 2009:342)

settlements.

The historic emphasis on an infrastructure and service delivery model stemmed from John Turner's influence on the World Bank in the early 1970s[7]. Turner was a British architect known for his work in the squatter settlements of Peru from 1957-1965. "Turner's central thesis argued that housing is best provided and managed by those who are to dwell in it rather than being centrally administered by the state"[8]. This approach in turn infiltrated the global *in-situ* upgrading policy agenda. In the case of South Africa, promised institutional reform, urged by urban planning scholars and policy makers, called for better informal settlement representation and/or community participation/consultation within urban governance processes. This urban planning philosophy/approach, accompanied by the foregrounding of the concept of integration, merged the formal with the informal through appropriating the BNG policy. Moreover, these notions of participation have been critiqued for camouflaging informal settlement eradication, as evidenced by the N2 Gateway project[9] (Smit, 2006:2). Thus, just as, during the process of the implementation of the N2 Gate way project (2004-2006), institutional barriers to the translation and transition of new policy paradigms made their appearance, so mismatches between the roll-over approach and roll-over manifestation and outcome emerged. Thus, although the stated intention of the N2 Gate way project was informal settlement upgrading, this project in fact resulted in informal settlement eradication. In commenting on this outcome, I revert to, and draw on Jenkins (2006), who saw the focus on informal settlement upgrading as having been symptomatic of the intention towards transformation rather than actual transformation. This foregrounds the root causes of the inability of planning processes to manage growing informality. These in turn display the 'mechanisms' that inhibit effective institutional communication, in particular any understanding of the reasons

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[7] https://www.spatialagency.net/database/john.turner (08/04/2020)

[8] https://www.spatialagency.net/database/john.turner (08/04/2020)

[9] N2 Gate Way project- N2 Gateway Integrated Human Settlements Development project in the Western Cape was the first pilot project under the Breaking New Ground Policy (BNG). This intervention sought to address historic prevalent problems which were accompanied by poverty, rapid urbanisation, and homelessness. This intervention was intended to be achieved through providing fully subsidised rental and affordable bonded homes in sustainable settlements along the N2 highway in the Western Cape (http://thehda.co.za/index.php/projects/n2-gateway)(17/08/2020).

why the default setting - informal settlement 'eradication'- is preferred by government, planning institutions, and policy managers.

2.6.2 Institutional Capacity: Handling Human Resource Input

Informal settlement upgrading suggests its own institutional, conceptual, and political difficulties and the pressures it exerts on urban governance processes which are particularly related to, and dependent on, planning processes. Charlton and Klug (2017:57) point out that "all forms of upgrading raise the matter of what role residents take in the process, and where power and control relating to the intervention lie". Charlton and Klug (2017) in their study of the role and effects of the RDP model on the upgrading of the Ethekwini Municipality (Durban), KwaZulu-Natal attest to traits similar to those of the N2 Gate Way project in terms of the mismatch between intent and outcome, including the strong infrastructural and technical emphasis, and informal settlement clearance/eradication. Relevant to the N2 Gate Way project case in terms of a mismatch is the fact that informal upgrading was initially cultivated and driven by the Langa community. However, when the state stepped in, accompanied with their budgeted grants, upgrading was narrowly and specifically oriented toward the kind of infrastructural oriented interventions that were oblivious to, and divorced from, contextual/social dynamics (Charlton & Klug, 2017; Smit, 2006). More importantly, RDP projects situated adjacent to informal upgrading roll-over projects are understandably misinterpreted by communities (when it comes to communities expectations about upgrading outcomes and the reality of these outcomes), in addition to not being feasible in the long-term. Such upgradings have not been, and are not, welcomed in the beneficial way RDP is envisaged by the government: as more 'progressive', irrespective of how 'progressive' would be interpreted by planners/ policy managers and/or received by members of the community (Charton & Klug, 2017). Not only is there a gap in policy translation and transition within institutions, but this gap also evident within communities, as, according to Charlton and Klug (2017), transitions of policy tend not to be clearly communicated to and within the community. The Ethekwini Municipality's case, however, displays how policy and the Upgrading of Informal Settlement Program (UISP) on paper invite participation, while minimising relocation, together with the securing of tenure and other matters of concern to the community. However, there has been a major shift away from these intentions to

visible delivery with standardised delivery which marks the shift from in situ to roll-over upgrading approach (Charlton & Klug, 2017). In other words, this translates into the qualitative premise that results in quantitative removed interventions. Charlton and Klug (2017), through their findings, begin to answer the question of why the technical default is preferred by local and national governments and by planners. The Ethekwini Municipality's example suggests that technical physical engineering development and intervention appear easier – less 'untidy' - to urban developers. In addition, there is a lack of state capacity and will to handle the extent and nature of human resource input. Human resource here includes communities' input or engagement with the planning process. I would like to refrain from the word 'participation', as human resource input sees communities as a resource for strengthening the process of urban development. Thus, seen in these terms, the question becomes, how do planners build institutional capacity to accommodate the necessary level of human resource input?

2.6.3 Institutional Tension: Implementation Consideration

Maina (2013) explores the incremental approach to some informal settlements situated within the Johannesburg metropole area. She argues that, even though progressive strides in the planning and upgrading of these have been made within policy discourses, in particular under the BNG policy by national government, implementation of this upgrading has so far shown otherwise. Implementation has been characterised by formalisation, with the goal of consolidation i.e. the goal of formal housing. Significant to the BNG has been the UISP, which is an incremental four-phased approach to informal settlement upgrading: application, project initiation, implementation, and housing consolidation. Even though the UISP was originally envisaged in terms of supporting upgrading and maintaining community networks, as well as minimising disruption, with the noble intention to "secure tenure and access to health and security and the empowerment of settlement residents though participative processes"[10], implementation of the UISP remains a challenge throughout the country. In this context, Maina (2013) argues that, despite the progressive policy discourse,

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[10] http://www.dhs.gov.za/sites/default/files/documents/national_housing_2009/4_Incremental_Interventions/5%20Volume%204%20Upgrading%20Infromal%20Settlement.pdf (08/04/2020:13)

translation of the UISP has in fact replicated the RDP model, a model that provided a rationale for the removal – eradication - of settlements and the redevelopment of cleared sites. This in turn has exacerbated the intra- and inter-institutional and legislative complexities that inhibit policy implementation frameworks, structures, and processes. More importantly, she mentions that city investments are linked to formality, and thus, when settlements remain informal only emergency services are fit for provision. Maina (2013) further highlights the rigid roles within different governmental and institutional spheres, roles which impede flexible incremental progress of informal settlement upgrade; national government legislates the BNG and UISP, together with provincial government, is responsible for housing delivery, and local government is responsible for service delivery and settlement control and maintenance. She uses the case of the Brazil regularisation programme to amplify the complexity that lies between and within spheres of government when introducing a new policy. Maina (2013) argues that regularisation, as with formalisation, seeks to achieve the same outcome: the upgrading of settlements through an incremental process. This process provides tenure security first, followed by the community upgrading their own settlements, and then followed by the intervention of the state. Thus, regularisation would speed up intervention in terms of service delivery and would lie within the domain of local government.

The influence of scale complexities on policy interventions, and how translation is lost, is one of the themes picked up in Simon's (2011) work. He situates 'slums', as he interrogates Alan Gilbert's work in the late 1990s on Latin America's urban development. Regarding the political dimensions of these upgrading processes, the institutional composition is pertinent when thinking about policy implementation. Maina (2013) argues that one should not focus on, or prioritise, the formulation of different or new or alternative approaches, but instead think about how these approaches will translate in practice. Important lessons for researchers and urban planners to learn from Maina's (2013) work is that the RDP model has been shown to have been successfully institutionalised in spite of its being highly problematic. Moreover, Maina's (2013) work points to the disjuncture between the planning department and the Department of Human Settlements, among other disjunctures, together with the parallel functioning of different departments within municipalities as silos. She sees

these as requiring deliberate incentivisation in order to achieve an effective, sustainable incremental upgrading. Thus, the question becomes, how to encourage a deep engagement amongst practitioners amidst the ingrained institutional environments?

2.7 Summary/Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the two dominant approaches to urban spatial transformation run arbitrarily yet parallel in their aims to affect meaningful change. However, what becomes clearer in the process of reviewing the literature is that, regarding informality, both the institutional reform approach and the project-focussed approach are inherently fragmented in nature and implementation. This is because of urban politics and power dynamics that confine debates on informality, and, as a result, limit or prevent conversation amongst stake holders on upgrading approaches. The sensitivity and sensibility required to intervene positively and beneficially in a highly dynamic phenomenon, thus becomes an essential ingredient in this planning process. Even though a degree of sensitivity is convincingly verbalised and celebrated within policy discourse, the cold, detached physical engineering discourse and process continues to be used by government (in planning/housing policy documents) as a blanket antidote to what are perceived by many urban researchers as symptoms of deep-rooted social and economic exclusion. Acknowledging that upgrading processes are extensive, and firmly embedded in a political landscape, the finite role of planning practice, and the engagement of urban planners with the social and economic intricacies and complexities of upgrading of informal settlements, is critical to the ways in which we understand space and place making. More importantly, the literature has shown the many impeding ways institutions adopt. How they translate 'progressive' policies, continues to be at the centre of informal upgrading processes.

Growing global debates have begun to reveal and express the heterogeneous and dynamic nature and character of informality. Even though there are conflicting ideas about moving beyond the informal-formal dichotomy, and the ways in which urban development strategies fluctuate between the informal and formal continuum, the formal-informal dichotomy continues to preface and underpin the frameworks for the

processes of urban development. Conflicting ideas (ideas of intent) continue to exist around the role that planners should play, and the approach they should follow. Thus, what we have seen in the context of both global and local debates is how planners fall into the trap of reverting to 'formal', 'efficient' ways of dealing with the informal, and in the process, depoliticising housing. This could be due to the epistemic gap between theory and practice. This could also be due to the lack of provision of resources, and to shortcomings in the equipping of the planner with ways to navigate, identify, and open up 'whitened spaces'. Added to this is the need to address urban and local government politics, together with the need to begin to regard communities as constituting a significant resource, and to incorporate power into the way we – as a collective - conceptualise planning challenges and practice. Aside from the pervasive technical, fragmented interventions, and rigid planning methods, planning in the 21st century is criticised in the literature as being, and/or continuing to be, 'modernist'. It is also seen, in terms of coloniality, as having been consolidated rather than eradicated in the way in which we engage mentally and ideologically with social and cultural realities. This brings me back to the three concepts of urban development: knowledge, power, and being. If power is understood as the 'funnel', these three concepts highlight the way we 'know' or understand, or what we are conditioned to know, which in turn consolidates or reinforces how and what we see, or perceive, and thus shapes how we govern and plan global South cities. Thus, the question I pose in this research is what kind of mindset and sensibility is required in addition, and complementary, to these three concepts, in order for planners to recognise, affirm, engage with, and creatively utilise the dynamism, power-centred, and fluid nature of informal settlements? In chapter 3, I expand on the systems change lens as a way to methodologically navigate the above-mentioned question.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research problem

In the previous chapter, I discussed and evaluated a range of planning literature, including literature focussing on the global South. I argued that what has been largely neglected to date in this literature is the kind of mindset and sensibility planners in the 21st century need to develop and adopt towards managing and planning for growing urban informality. I argue that much of the global South literature reveals a limited and binary focus on informality. The focus is either on how and why informality characterises global South cities, or how planners are challenged by rigid planning systems and by urban politics, when these inherited planning systems intervene in efforts to address this growing informality. While this literature mentions the hindrance to flexible planning in the form of local politics, it fails to explore the complexities and importance of these as such. What appeared to me to be largely overlooked is the existence and awareness of the mental calluses of coloniality/modernity embedded in the 'being' of a 21st century urban planner. This omission appeared to me to be due to the 'planner' being referred to in a generic way, as being 'singular/universal', and signifying that all planners share a universal experience and approach. This view reverts to the 'coloniality of being', where a certain human experience is consolidated into the everyday experience of all people, and thus becomes standardised.

I argue that the challenge confronting the global South planner in the 21st century is to be open to an additional experience, or an experience which is different in important ways to the 'universal', 'standardised' experience. I found this additional experience in the form of a silenced experience on the part of the global South planner, to have been extensively explored in a small section of planning literature by scholars such as Oranje (2003) and Gunder (2003). This silence becomes problematic and significant when one attempts to understand the specifics of the global South experience (i.e. upgrading discourses). This is due to the disjuncture between the global South experience i.e. people living in informal urban areas in the South, and the continuing reproduction of a top-down approach on the part of the global South planner. This is in spite of the fact that the approach should replicate a co-joined transformed relation within the matrix of urban development. Ironically enough, this study looks at the 'top'

of top-down through a systems change lens which gives the four paradigms of urban development a more practical impression.

In spite of the largely overlooked gap in global South planning literature, recent literature (Amoako, 2018; Dobson, Nyamweru & Dodman, 2015; Campos, Barinaga, Kain, Oloko, & Zapata, 2019) is beginning to deliberately include the voices from the grassroots. These voices are emerging as a result of attempts by urban planning research and policy managers to gain clearer insights into inclusivity and place-making for new forms of urban life. While this implies that the diverse grassroots experience is endorsed from the bottom up, I argue that the decolonial turn, in the context of the move away from modernity/coloniality, described by Moyo and Mutsvairo (2018) indicates that this diverse inclusion of voices should include the voice and experience of the global South planner. When one examines the urban development triad articulated and inspired by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), both the planner and the grassroots are found to be affected by coloniality/modernity. The growing explorative role of grassroots and urban everyday practices in planning literature has exposed the planners' important, yet to date, stagnant, role in the progression of global South urban development issues. Thus, in the process of exploring the mindset and sensibilities of present-day planners, two kinds of conflict emerge.

The first is the conflict between the 'singular/universal' global South planner's experience and the internal war waged within the planner. The second conflict is the result and conclusion of that inner war when the planner encounters state institutions. However, a clear grasp of mental models/ mindsets can be difficult to achieve: these mindsets are challenging both to measure and to understand. In my exploration of the fourth mindset/sensibility concept to supplement and underpin Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) inspired urban development triad under the practical umbrella of systems change, as discussed in chapter 2, I am drawn to Moyo and Mutsvairo's (2018:21) reminder about the multi-layered decolonial context within which a global South planner is always working and upon which she/he should be reflecting: "… to think, therefore, is first and foremost to acknowledge one's locus of enunciation relation to colonial difference, geography, history, culture, race, class, gender and sexuality". I argue that the planner's 'locus of enunciation' relation to colonial difference/ western modernity, as discussed in the previous chapter (section: 'Deconstructing dominant

mental modes of institutional order', under sub-heading: 'Being'), is the foundation of the planners' episteme (their perceived relationship with knowledge) and ontology (what reality is to them/their reality). Thus, the global South urban planning decolonial experience would entail not simply the inclusion of the diverse forms of urban development in everyday social processes in the hegemonic urban development narrative. It would also include the diverse engagement of urban planners with socio-economic and socio-political urban issues with the purpose of contributing to the shift in the role of the 'planner' in the urban development narrative.

According to Abbott (2002a), the issue of hierarchy in decision-making seems to be neglected in community-based planning scholarship. Even though internationally there has been an increase in emphasis on community-based decision-making, Abbott (2003) alludes to how ineffective these approaches are as stand-alone strategies for upgrading. Abbott (2003) further points to the overlooked reality and important role of local authorities in upgrading experiences of developing countries. This overlooked reality underpins my methodological approach as a way to understand and explore decision-making and management models currently in place in the UISP process in George Municipality. The methodological approach through only interviewing professionals, seeks to understand how or in what aspects of the upgrading project, an examination of George municipality, and the planning processes in place for an upgrading project, can be of greater value to processes of planning for informality.

According to Huchzermeyer (2021:51), when it comes to informal settlements, planners need to develop an inquisitiveness in an open-ended way that is "ongoing, engaging both with the process of space creation and with the urban life it enables". How sound a research method is, lies in the method's ability to help planning praxis achieve certain standards[11]. The case study method, through exploring the management team responsible for the upgrading of Thembalethu Phase 1, is intended to assist in uncovering the dimensions power hold within upgrading processes in the particular case the Thembalethu upgrading project.

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[11] https://www.africanplanningschools.org.za/images/downloads/handbooks-and-guides/AAPS-Guidelines-for-Case-Study-Research-and-Teaching.pdf (02/22/2022)

For purposes of my research, the aforementioned gap in existing research is discussed in the domain of urban informality. The research reviewed has suggested that current, state-led informal upgrading interventions and planning processes have failed to achieve the desired equitable spatial and socio-economic outcomes. Thus, it is important to point out that the heterogeneous nature of informal settlements provides a significant platform to explore the capacity, adaptability, and willingness to reflect of the planner, as well as to explore the nature of the role of planners in African futures.

The history of modern South Africa has shown urban planning to have played a significant role in reconstructing South African cities (Robinson, McCarthy & Forster, 2004; Todes, 2009). Post-Apartheid attempts by urban planners were made with the purpose of redressing the past social injustices that informed planning. In conducting a case study, this research aims to provide insights into the relationship between the role of urban planning/ the urban planner and growing informality in the specific socio-economic and political context of Thembalethu, George, South Africa. My case study provides a window through which one can examine this phenomenon which may be helpful to consider and apply to other informal settlements in South Africa. Case study research is an appropriate research design in terms of providing a detailed account of the study area/context, in turn providing an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the empirical contextual dynamics present – or absent - in the approach of a group of urban planners towards the upgrading of a particular informal settlement. Case study research allows for an intensive detailed study of an individual unit (Flyvbjerg, 2011). This case study, through examining an individual encounter between planners and planning processes, and a particular informal settlement, has the potential to contribute to new ways, not only of perceiving this relationship, but also of revealing the gaps and the silences in both the process and the literature. Duminy et al. (2014) summarise the advantages of case studies:

> Case studies always involve investigating particular events or actions in their real-life contexts, which may be local or global, political-economic or social, discursive or physical-environmental. They focus on actors as well as structures, with the intention of showing actors in relation to their context, rather than granting analytical primacy to either structure or agency (Duminy et al., 2014:24).

Acknowledging, as Duminy et al. (2014), and as Moyo and Mutsvairo (2018) and Todes (2009) do, that planning is largely dependent on the specific context in which it functions, the conundrum lies in finding an approach to uncovering and navigating the mindset of the planner (actor) in her/his relation within and towards autonomous state institutions (structures i.e. systems) as well as towards growing urban informality (context). In building on the Duminy et al. (2014) definition of a case study, particularly in an African context, the planner can be seen as the actor, the autonomous state institutions are the structures, and an informal settlement in South Africa would be the context - as in the present case study.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, in the South African context, planning literature has shown local government, particularly since 1994, to play a crucial role in the governing and planning of informal settlements. Thus, local government, and the attendant local politics, is the intended epicentre for my exploration and understanding of the nature and role of both the planning process and the thinking of the planners in the case study. My research provides one case, the Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP Project located in the George Local Municipality in the Western Cape Province. I see this settlement as a valuable site for exploring the relation between planning and informal settlements. Furthermore, I seek to understand the ways in which the planners involved in this particular upgrading initiative think, or do not think, outside of their locus of enunciation. I do this through a systems change lens. Particularly as sampled planners' thinking pertains to 'gray spaces' i.e. urban informality, and whether, or in what ways, planners are aware of, and/or acknowledge the thinking and involvement/contribution of the urban poor/marginalised in the planning process. Can these poor/marginalised 'know'? Are they 'seen' as resource(s) by planners and by local governmental institutions/structures? And are they able to contribute to the 'opening of whitened spaces', and if so, in what specific ways?

The rationale for selecting Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project in George Municipality for my case study is discussed in detail here. As already mentioned, the case study research methodology is intended to assist me in unearthing and interrogating the role planners have in, and the nature of the contribution they make to, the execution of many informal upgrading projects. I explore the systems lens as a methodological frame for this study. This chapter also explores and discusses the different roles of the

situated planners: those situated in the private sector, those in the non-governmental organisation sector, and those within local government, all of whom have played a part in the informal upgrading project over a ten-year period.

3.1.1 Research Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to understand what kind of mindset and sensibility could or should be required by planners in addition, and complementary, to the three concepts (knowledge, power and being) of the urban development triad informed by systems change lens, in order for planners to engage constructively, affectively, and equitably with the dynamism and fluidity of informal settlements.

In order to achieve the aforementioned research purpose, my research project tailors the research questions, listed in chapter 1, to engage with the following three research questions:

1. How does a sampled group of professional planners, in George municipality, think about informality in the 21st century?

2. How do they intervene and manage the complexities and contradictions inherent in Thembalethu UISP project Phase 1?

3. How are the professional planners involved in the Thembalethu UISP Project Phase 1, able to harness the dynamism of informal settings to achieve more equitable and socially just outcomes?

3.1.1.1 The Case Study Methodology

A number of scholars have pointed to what they see as certain misconceptions about the case study as a methodological approach/ tool (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Duminy et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2016). These misconceptions are founded upon what Flyvbjerg (2011:302) calls "the case study paradox". This paradox is due to there being a broad usage of the case study approach, while at the same time the approach not being considered by many researchers as sufficiently credible to serve as a methodology. Despite this paradox, I choose to view this approach as an appropriate and valuable methodology for the purposes of my research.

Case study research is a qualitative method that "…makes it possible to observe and analyze phenomena as a single, integrated whole" (Gagnon, 2010:2). This kind of integrated observation is important to my study, as it is a multi-focused study. My study focuses on the 'planner', and the integrated relational influences (as depicted in Figure 2 in chapter 2) that shape urban development, and which ultimately shape the planning of informal settlements. Situating the aspects of the role of 'the planner' as an integrated whole, as depicted in Figure 3, alludes to how planners respond to, and circumvent, paradigms that shape the kind of urban development inspired by Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) three (interrelated) concepts: Coloniality of Knowledge, Coloniality of Power, and Coloniality of Being. As already explained, I add to these three concepts my concept of Mindset and Sensibility, which I see as combining all of these in an "integrated whole". I also see this as combining planner, planning paradigms, and informality (settlements and residents) – in an integrated urban development model.
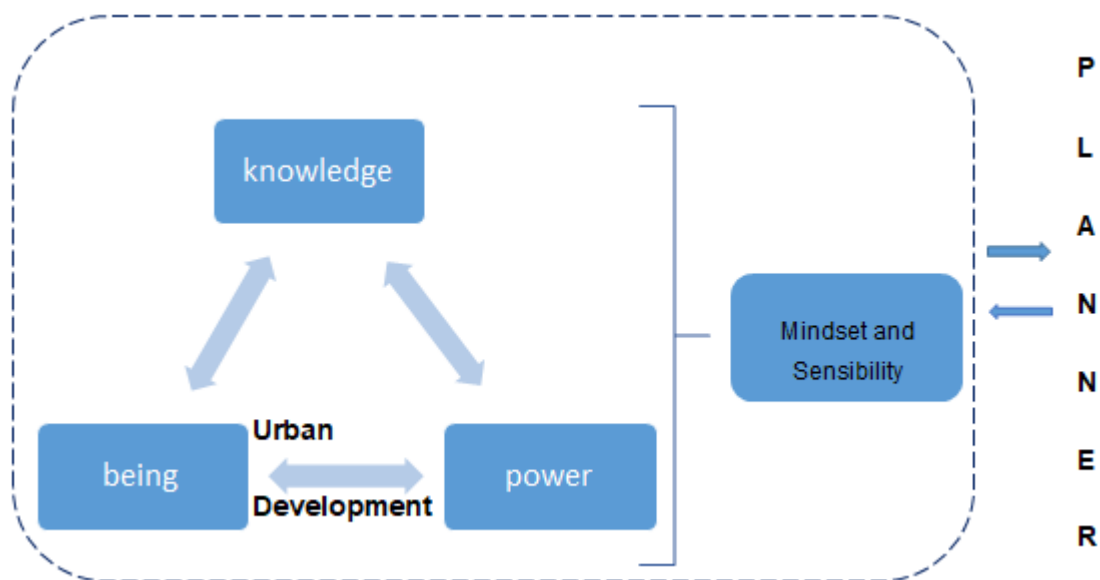
Figure 3: Diagrammatic illustration of the 'planner' as an integrated whole.

The context, which I chose for facilitating my understanding of the planner/planning as a single and integrated whole, is the Thembalethu Informal Upgrading Project. The Thembalethu Informal Upgrading Project provides me with a different perspective to the mainstream urban planning perspective (Lyons, Smuts & Stephens, 2002), as it is an informal settlement situated in a non-metropolitan municipality. More importantly, for purposes of this thesis, I consider this housing (upgrading) policy a planning instrument, which I explain further on in this chapter. In addition, this different

perspective provides insights into the power relations existing between national and provincial government and the local municipality, as well as into the specific ways in which these power relations manifest in the structure of participatory and inclusive development. Lyons et al. (2002:192) assert "that localities, which are culturally, politically or physically isolated from the mainstream urban political process, are unlikely to be able to benefit fully from [mainstream urban] development frameworks [in terms of the impact of change in the policy arena]". Thus, the Thembalethu Upgrading Project provides a unique platform for understanding planners (the way they work and their approach), informal upgrading processes, and the translation of the planning processes in local place-making outside the scope/model of the eight Metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. The Thembalethu case addresses the interface and engagement between local planning processes and informality. To investigate this interface, my research takes on an interpretive explorative perspective. This allows me as the researcher to understand the rhetoric of modernity/coloniality used in planning processes. It also provides me with an opportunity to understand the dialogue existing between the various planners, and between the planners and local government institutions.

3.1.2 Case study Type

There are generally three types of case studies: instrumental, intrinsic, and the collective (Stake, 1995; Zainal, 2007). I focus on the first two. The researcher who uses the intrinsic case study has an intrinsic interest in the case and conducts an in-depth analysis of the case to deepen her/his understanding of the case or phenomenon. The instrumental case study becomes, the basis for an exploration and understanding of other interests the researcher may have. For purposes of my research, I make use of the instrumental case study even though I have an intrinsic interest in understanding urban planners, what particular approaches they subscribe to, and the thinking/approach of urban planners in the context of informal settlements. In conducting an instrumental case study, "the researcher selects a small group of [participants] in order to examine a certain pattern of behaviour…" (Zainal, 2007:4). Thus, instead of choosing planners within the George Municipality to deepen my understanding of the role of planners in this particular project, I choose a ''criterion-reference orientation'' (Stake, 1995:3). This criterion-reference orientation permits an

orientation toward the planners' specific role in managing and conducting the planning of informal settlements in the George Municipality, in particular the Thembalethu UISP Project: Phase 1.

Understanding the planners' role and thinking in the upgrading of this settlement in this way allows for a narrowing down of inquiry, which implies that the planners involved in this upgrading project are studied according to their capacity as planners, and their relation to the particular challenge of this particular informal settlement. In this way, I am able to examine, or obtain access to, a certain pattern of behavior and thinking underpinning the planning processes. Thus, I look at how the planners manage and conduct, or have dealt, with this particular informal settlement and whether or not the encounter these planners have had with this settlement could be generalizable to how this affects, or could affect, urban planning as a profession, discipline and practice, particularly in the global South. In this case study I am also exploring the ways in which the rhetoric of modernity/coloniality underpins this particular planning process in the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project.

3.1.3 Systems Change Lens

Kania et al. (2018) argue, using systems change thinking, that in order to penetrate the transformative level, i.e. mental mode, the other two levels need to be explored in order to gain insights to existing habits of thought with the planning system and how this system is perceived by other built environment professionals within the upgrading informal settlement process. Thus, in order to see systems change in action Kania et al. (2018) are clear on what is necessary at each level in order to achieve the necessary change, in order, ultimately, to achieve systems change. As a reminder, and not forgoing the paradigms of urban development inspired by Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013), I use the three levels of change of the Kania et al. (2018) model as a methodological tool, and as a means to practically reveal various dimensions of the mindsets and sensibilities of planners.

3.1.3.1 Structural level of Change

Change at policy, practice and resource flow levels, is highly dependent on changing relationships and power dynamics on the second level. Kania et al. (2018) use the example of how the product of the relational change enabled and brought together a more inclusive approach to drafting policy papers. Moreover, instead of hiring experts to draft policy, the youth in their California Endowment billion-dollar 10-year initiative "Building Healthy Communities" study were equipped with the essential tools and training to engage innovatively and, in so doing, impact investment and resource flow. Although Kania et al. (2018:13) make a strong case for "grassroots-treetops", this can be confused with making the grassroots try to 'fit-in' in order to engage the dominant political narrative. For purposes of my theses, I look into the UISP policy, and into the existing stakeholders' relational dynamics that 'perform' the UISP, how UISP investment is understood, and how resources are allocated. In the process, I ask two questions: is an inclusive approach to the UISP possible? More importantly, at the structural level of the UISP, in what specific ways do planners and planning policy impact on this level of change?

3.1.3.2 Relational Level of Change

Relational change is about how relationships, connections and power dynamics are facilitated. Kania et al. (2018:12) in their example of The California Endowment billion dollar 10-year initiative "Building Healthy Communities" (BHC) in previously disadvantaged communities struggling with health inequities, as mentioned earlier, the aim was to change the power dynamics throughout, involving diverse stakeholders and communities' policies, practices and procedures. The programme officers were held accountable when community members experienced an uneven power balance in funding decisions. This ultimately led to grantmaking power being given to the community (Kania et al., 2018). According to Kania et al. (2018:14), "plugging the voice of the community into the right kind of political power grid" carries greater transformative weight than would excluding this voice. While this may be true, my concern with the global South literature's emphasis on 'bottom-up' has overlooked the inherent struggles of global South planners and built environment practitioners when faced with growing complex urban development concerns. Within the context of

84

Thembalethu: Phase 1, because this is a program that has already been implemented, I asses the dimensions of decision-making power within the project team, and the perceptions on the part of the project team of the decision making role of the community. Moreover, I explore whether there could be room for accountability within the UISP, together with the ways in which the role and processes of funding has manifested the "political power grid". More importantly, I explore what 'power' the planners in this case study possessed to influence upgrading initiatives.

3.1.3.3 Transformative Level of Change

Mental models have been a significant focus of BHC. In the Kania et al. (2018) example, program officers worked extensively on changing the narrative to expansive health coverage. However, key to this level of change is a more nuanced approach to evaluation, i.e. a shift in an organization's mental model regarding evaluation. Traditional linear evaluation frameworks are premised on 'cause and effect', on the 'measurable', the 'quantifiable', which, together, go against the grain of systems change thinking.

> Foundation staff and boards often hold the same mental models as the public and wider culture. The same ways of thinking about race and equity, or even public services and individual deservingness, that keep progressive policy from capturing public support are at play within foundations themselves—shaping how grant making is done and the types of programs that are pursued (Kania et al., 2018:15).

Therefore, I would argue that, if a progressive policy like the UISP fails to capture public support, this reflects on the government's thinking about informal settlements, particularly in terms of holistic urban development, race and equity, service delivery and individual deservingness. Taking this a step further, progressive policy managers, and their compliance in these progressive policies, is emblematic of the many ways they are accomplices in existing ways of the types of programmes being pursued and prioritised. The project team responsible for the implementation of Thembalethu Phase 1, UISP project become key informants regarding the functioning of UISP policy, practice and resource flow, relationships and power dynamics between stakeholders: in essence the first two levels of systems change. More importantly, they were informants regarding how funds were being managed, distributed, and ways in

which existing evaluation systems in place catered, or did not, cater, to systems change as described by Kania et al. (2018). This information was intended to provide a map of mental models i.e. the mindsets and sensibilities of the planning and other professionals behind the functioning and implementation of the UISP and the role of planning in this case study.

3.1.3.4 Language

I look closely at the language used in the planning process explored in this case study, using Watson's (2009a) criteria she used in urban planning processes involving informal settlements in general. According to Kania et al. (2018), and to various scholars in chapter 2, language transfers planning culture, and it communicates habits of thought within all six conditions that hold a (urban development) problem in place, as indicated in Fig. 3. Watson (2009b:174) provides a list of the characteristics of, and the ways in which, this rhetoric of urban modernism can be identified:

- Prioritisation of the aesthetic appearance of cities: modern cities are spacious, uncluttered, state and civic buildings—are clean, and do not contain poor people or informal activities.

- High-rise buildings, with low plot coverage and large setbacks, releasing large amounts of open 'green' space between them, following the 'superblock' concept.

- Dominance of free-flowing vehicular movement routes (rather than rail), organisation of traffic into a hierarchy of routes, and separation of pedestrian routes from vehicle routes. High car ownership is assumed.

- Routes, particularly higher order ones, are wide, with large road reserves and setbacks (for future expansion); there are limited intersections with lower order routes and limited or no vehicle access to functions located along them.

- Separation of land use functions (using zoning regulations) into areas for residence, community facilities, commerce, retail and industry. Shopping occurs in malls surrounded by parking. It is assumed that most people travel from home to work, shops, etc. by car.

- Spatial organisation of these different functional areas into separate 'cells', taking access off higher order movement routes, and often surrounded by 'buffers' of open green space.

- Different residential densities for different income groups, often organised into 'neighbourhood units'. For wealthier families—low densities, usually organised as one house per plot, with full infrastructural services provided (Watson, 2009b:175).

This list provides a frame for a deeper understanding of the assumptions of professionals when interviewing them, or when reading policy. It can also be useful in providing an indication as to whether the way in which these professionals think and manage informal settlements, particularly in an upgrading process, is situated in the logics of urban modernism or not, and in what specific ways.

What is important to note is that the planners involved in this case were not based only in George Municipality. In fact, George Municipality gave this project over to a private engineering and planning company (described in more detail in the next chapter). Thus, planners involved in this project were, and are, situated in the local municipality, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations. Fundamental to case study research is paying attention to interpretation as well as being careful not to disturb the process of the case taking its organic course (Stake, 1995). An ethic caution is both imperative and a challenge; for me to remain as objective as possible, and not allow my own locus on enunciation to distort interpretation of the case. I take this risk into serious consideration through actively engaging and understanding how the "actors and people being studied see things" (Stake, 1995:12). Fortunately, in the case of the Thembalethu informal settlement, the settlement is a completed project whose 'completion' took place approximately seven years ago, and thus, due to this retrospective dimension, I felt confident that there would be no disturbance to the natural flow and course of the case research.

Common to case studies is the unit of observation or analysis constituting the case itself. However, due to the instrumental nature of the particular case under study, the case becomes the basis from which to understand the engagement of the planners',

or of the planning processes, with the challenge of informal settlements. Thus, in order to understand both the case as basis and the planners and planning processes, it is imperative that information and sources other than, or additional to, those coming directly from interviews with the planners and other UISP stakeholders, are accessed, and analysed. These various different sources become the units of analysis through which the case is holistically and more comprehensively understood (Gerring, 2004). Moreover, case context becomes the context for the data sets analysis and interpretation. The units of analysis used in this research, and which have a direct relation to the methods used, include:

- Local, provincial and national reports and documents utilised in the Thembalethu UISP Upgrading Project, such as:

  o George Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

  o George Municipality Spatial Development Framework (SDF)

  o Upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme (UISP) and all documentation pertaining to this

- The full history of the project management throughout the project cycle(s)

- Respective private planning company reports and documents on the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project

- Non-governmental organisation/Community based organisation reports and documents on the Thembalethu Phase 1 Upgrading Project

- Semi-structured interviews with urban planners involved and other professionals involved in the project (getting their take on/ perceptions of the role of the planners)

- Casual, informal conversations with professionals in the course of the

fieldwork[12]

- Newspaper articles and spatial data.

The table below summarises my research methods and approach in conjunction with each research question:

Table 4: Summary of my research methods and approach in conjunction with each research question

Research Design: Case Study: The role of the planner/ planning process in the Thembalethu Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme, Phase 1	
Research Question	Methods/Approach
1. How do a sampled group of professional planners think about informality in the 21st century?	• Draw on global debates on informality, planning and urban development. • Draw on the responses of interviewees and on observational notes.
2. How do the planners involved in the Thembalethu UISP project Phase 1 intervene, and how do they manage the complexity and contradictions inherent in informal settlement upgrading processes?	• Desktop Analysis, secondary data including Spatial Development Framework, Integrated Development Programme, various policy documents, legislation, project reports, newspaper articles and spatial data. • Primary data i.e. interviews and observations (of the various different planners who were involved in the Thembalethu UISP project, in particular Phase 1) • Draw on second and primary data and South African Debates/literature on urban planning.
3. How are the professional planners involved in the Thembalethu UISP Project able to harness the dynamism of informal settings to achieve more equitable and socially just outcomes?	• Primary data i.e. interviews and observations (not only of planners involved in Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project) • Draw on second and primary data and both global and local debates on Informality/in the literature, and project reports.

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[12] Casual, Informal conversations with professionals in the course of the fieldwork- refers to conversations in the car on our way to visit the site, essentially conversations that was not recorded but gave insights and background to Thembalethu and its informal expansion.

3.2 The role of planner/ planning and sampling

The aim of my methodological approach is to analyse the nature of the relationship between planners, planning processes and informal settlements. Decision-making in planning becomes the entry point through which to begin to navigate, through a systems change lens, how the urban development triad operates. What is important in this approach is to explore that which facilitates and influences decision-making in planning. Both Kamete (2009) and Watson (2009a) argue that planning processes "respond to stimulus beyond local confines" (Kamete, 2009:900-901), whether that stimulus be national government or global influences, thus making planning as a discipline fluid and impressionable. Nadin (in Watson, 2009b:168) sees the goal of planning in the Global North as being to:

> . . .put planning at the centre of the spatial development process, not just as a regulator of land and property uses, but as a proactive and strategic coordinator of all policy and actions that influence spatial development; and to do this in the interests of more sustainable development (Nadin, 2007:43).

As was discussed in the previous chapter (section: 'The difficulty with Urban Planning'), and reiterated by Watson (2009a), two concurrent themes emerge in planning literature to explain the reasons for the failure of planning in the global South. One theme is the extensive reshaping of planning systems in the global South informed by planning ideologies from the global North. The second theme lies in the translation of the Northern ideological imposition onto Southern planning contexts, and how these impositions are either "'abused" or "misused" (Watson, 2009a:172) in planning processes. Key to my argument is its nesting within the translation process, i.e. addressing the question, what do the processes that lead to decision making in planning mirror regarding the relationship between planners and informal settlements?

The Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project does in fact reflect the typical upgrading process characterised by *in situ* upgrading. This project sought to upgrade the informal settlement through following the UISP four-structured process (discussed in chapter 5). The inception of the project nine years ago was the George Municipality's response to the growing informality in the Thembalethu area. The project was completed in 2014, providing me with an opportunity to explore the case in terms of its development

and outcomes over a ten-year period. The next chapter presents a more detailed discussion and analysis of the case of Thembalethu. What is significant to this case at this point is that the jurisdiction of the project of the Upgrading of the Informal Settlement Programme (UISP) was handed over/ outsourced by the George Municipality to a private planning company. The company thus became the custodian of the successful execution of the upgrading project, in turn influencing the role of decision-making in the planning process, and relating to how planning of the informal settlement is managed and conducted.

Based on the aforementioned context, and for purposes of this research, I make use of nonprobability sampling techniques. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016:1), non-probability sampling "is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the participants or units in the population equal chances of being included." Even though the focal purpose of sampling is to avoid bias in the selection of the sample, and to help achieve maximum precision, the non-probability technique is critiqued in terms of being subjective in both its approach, and in the process of obtaining the required sample. However, for the current research, this method of selection of the sample is deliberate as "[participants in sampling process] are selected based on study purpose with the expectation that each participant will provide unique and rich information of value to the study" (Etikan et al., 2016:4). The considered intention is to interview professionals who have worked directly on the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project. This implies that the sample (planners and other professionals) has a (possible) personal bias rather that (impersonal) serving as an objective approach to the case of the Thembalethu Upgrading Project. However in order to balance my own (possible) subjectivity, I apply 'triangulation' by consulting a range of secondary sources/ documents, and by checking these against the views/perceptions of the various participants and their views against each other's views. Moreover, I considered that a range of professionals directly involved in this case would potentially provide valuable insight for an in-depth, rich, and nuanced understanding of the case. This is because participants in a non-probability sample are usually selected because of their accessibility or according to the purposive personal judgment of the researcher. Thus, the sample consisted of professional planners who participated in the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project as

a whole, and particularly in Phase 1 of the Thembalethu UISP project and in a range of capacities.

Two sampling methods fall under the banner of non-probability techniques: convenience sampling and purposive sampling (Etikan et al.*,* 2016). In this research, I set out to infuse both of these sampling methods into my research sampling. The research draws on convenience sampling based on the ease of accessibility of research participants in the population, together with their availability, given the time constraints of the researcher (Etikan et al., 2016:2). Due to the Thembalethu UISP project being a relatively 'old' project, I considered there to be a high probability that those who had worked on the project during its seven to ten-year development would have changed jobs, retired, or moved provinces. Due to the various changes over the past seven years, getting hold of some of the professionals involved in the project has been challenging, thus making convenience sampling appropriate for the research. Purposive sampling

> … is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses…the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Etikan et al., 2016:3).

Thus, unlike random sampling used by a researcher who chooses subjects randomly from the population, purposive sampling is concentrated in its approach on focusing on key participants who have the potential to provide deeper insights into understanding the case study than might be the case with random sampling (Etikan et al.*,* 2016). Purposive sampling manifests itself in my research in the form of concentration on those planning professionals who had a direct relation to, and involvement with, planning the Thembalethu Phase 1 Upgrading Project. The sample included other professionals relevant to the case, such as engineers and housing officers with extensive knowledge and experience with the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project. Central to each of the UISP four stages[13] are specific set out duties for each profession. These require the team (in this case small team) to work closely together.

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[13] UISP stages explained: https://mbuisp.org/homepage/project-overview/uisp-explained/ (14/6/2022)

Each of their duties is related to and has implications for, the other and affects the outcome of the UISP project (whether the project is approved, each stage implemented). It is this feature, which makes Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 a valuable study. The reason for this is of the kind of 'teamwork' required, provides insights into how other professionals experience working with planners, and shows roles their perspective and the expectations of the role planners currently play and could potentially play within UISP projects. Moreover, the professional planners, even though few in number, were able to provide insights into their experiences of the UISP as a tool, and how they see their role in managing informal settlements in George municipality. To ensure validity and efficiency, "sampling must be consistent with the assumptions and objectives essential in the use of either convenience sampling or purposive sampling" (Etikan et al., 2016:4). I considered this to be largely ensured as far as possible through the correlation between the selection of participants and my research questions. Moreover, due to the inevitable urban politics found within urban development processes, this infused sampling method and data collection was intended to engage with political sensitivity to this local informal context.

3.3 Data presentation and data analysis

This research study brings together a combination of primary and secondary data. Both these kinds of data were used to explore the case study of planners and other professionals and their perceptions of the planners, involved in the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project, as well as allowing for 'triangulation' which would enhance the validity and reliability of the study. Thematic analysis is used to analyse primary data. According to Braun and Clarke (2012:57), thematic analysis is a "method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across dataset". A deductive approach to thematic analysis was considered, which involved approaching the data with themes influenced by my literature review and preparatory fieldwork. In addition I allowed space for the data to inform themes (inductive approach). This in turn allowed for a balanced approach to analysing project reports and interview transcripts. This approach also contributed the conceptualising of the overarching themes of chapter 6, The Obvious, The Uncovered, and Moving Forward. The exact number of professionals to be interviewed was to be clarified and specified once the fieldwork was in full operation. A fieldwork preparatory activity took

place in 2018 whose purpose was to obtain a general overview and understanding of the UISP in the Western Cape Province. In addition, I was invited by Aurecon to attend project steering committee meetings for Mossel Bay UISP projects in 2019. These meetings helped me understand the nature of the engagement between the different stakeholders i.e. Aurecon team, the province human settlement representative, Development Action Group (DAG), which is a non-governmental organisation, and community leaders. I intended the fieldwork to commence in 2020. However, due to Covid-19, it commenced in 2021. Gaps relating to George municipality's understanding of planners role, identified by the analysis led to follow-up interviews in 2022. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 professionals[14], which included both professional planners and other professionals involved in the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project. Even though the emphasis of this thesis is on understanding the planners and their role(s), key to the UISP process, as has been mentioned, is teamwork i.e. a process in which planners, engineers, municipal officials, non-governmental organisations are all actively and collaboratively involved in the process. In the case of Thembalethu UISP Phase 1, the project team responsible for the upgrade was small, consisting of planners (Aurecon, outsourced by Aurecon and George municipality), engineers (Aurecon), municipal officials (civil engineering department, department of housing and planning), policy manager (provincial government), and a training provider (responsible for enumerating, setting up and training beneficiary community leaders within informal settlements). Thus, in order to understand the role of plannings in this UISP setting, it was important to not simply elicit from them their first-hand experience with the project, but also to understand the ways in which their role in the process was experienced by other professionals. These semi-structured interviews were then to be transcribed and thematic analysis applied. In this process I considered that thematic analysis would help me to develop an understanding of the shared experiences and meanings derived from the various ways in which the planners and other professionals participating in the current case study understood, viewed, and managed informal settlements in the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project. I considered that this would be a "way of

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[14] Due to the upgrading project being administered by a small team, I do not include a table of the professionals involved and their roles, as this would compromise anonymity.

identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and making sense of those commonalities" (Braun & Clarke, 2012:57).

In conjunction with thematic analysis, content analysis was applied to secondary data sets. Content analysis is another qualitative research technique that "describes a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1277). The aim of this research method is "the [particular] interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). This analysis is both interweaved and discussed broadly over chapters 4 and 5, and contributes to the findings discussed in chapters 6 and 7. As mentioned before, and as depicted in Table 1, I was looking at local and global debates on informality on a broad scale. Thereafter, I intended to home in on, and narrow my research focus to, the George Municipality, exploring sources that would provide me with the history and the overarching context for the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project. As described above, secondary sources informing these contexts would be policy documents, legislative documents, development plans, and documented spatial strategies. Thus, with the intention to describe as fully as possible the nature of the relationship between planners and the challenge of informal settlements, I conducted a content analysis. In examining these secondary sources, I was using the technique of 'triangulation', as the variety of data sources and resources needed to be consistently cross-referenced (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). As mentioned, this technique was also intended to minimise the researcher's possible subjectivity and bias.

After both primary and secondary data had been analysed and coded accordingly, the data were presented and discussed, in chapter six, according to themes identified in the coding process. The purpose of this was to facilitate the synthesising of key themes drawn from my literature review chapter, in addition to the themes which emerged from the raw data. In the course of this, I looked at the ways in which the different data collection components contributed to the body of planning knowledge as identified in the literature.

3.4 Limitations of the research study

It is important to note that the emphasis of qualitative research is on understanding research processes and how they develop and evolve. Key to understanding these qualitative research processes is understanding human beings, their behaviour, and the nature of their involvement in these processes, a phenomenon which is constantly evolving (Ochieng, 2009). This implies focusing on humans as a key focus and instrument in data collection. A researcher, using an instrument that is not scientifically fixed, or does not take into consideration the (social) context and the complexities of the context of the research, or is set out by a machine or survey, as is the case with quantitative research methods, finds this instrument influences research findings. "Human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs; thus one must study that behaviour in situations" (Ochieng, 2009:14). Central to this current research is its focus on the behaviour, experiences, and views of professional planners. However, how planners make sense of or perceive or experience informal settlements, is bound to be subjective, both in terms of their views of their working environment and their work. This subjectivity can be considered both a limitation and a strength of the current research project, as the main focus of the study is the "mindsets and sensibilities" of planners.

Another limitation would be myself as a planner, my locus of enunciation, and the influence of my own implicit biases on the research process, as touched upon earlier. My own implied (possible) subjectivity is intended to be balanced out by the technique of triangulation, also mentioned earlier. Ochieng (2009:14) argues that understanding the framework of perceptions and experiences within participants in such a way as to ''interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions", becomes significant to the qualitative researcher. This is because, "the 'objective' scientist, by coding and standardizing, may destroy valuable data while imposing the researcher's world on the subjects" (Ochieng, 2009:14). I consider that my planning background, in terms of both discipline and practice, offers me paths into understanding the participants' inner framework, which would help to provide a sense of familiarity and trust for participants to openly express their challenges in detail when 'handling' informal settlements. According to Macbeth (2001:35), "positional reflexivity leads the analyst to examine place, biography, self, and other to understand how they shape the analytic exercise". In

following these principles, positional reflexivity proved to be beneficial: my short experience as a former Aurecon employee (intern) helped initially to direct me to the Mossel Bay Informal Settlement Support Programme (ISSP) project as I had assisted with the land use applications for this upgrading project. However, due to the ISSP being a relatively new policy, and the difficulty experienced in tracing and contacting professionals involved in the pilot Mossel Bay UISP project, these initial contacts and my being familiar with how the company works, helped fast-track the process of finding a suitable upgrading project that I could study. Another limitation would be time: the Thembalethu project took place over a decade ago. This could make the process of recalling and recording with accuracy all that happened throughout the duration of the project only too easily influenced by outside factors, including other projects that have been planned and implemented over the past years, thus clouding professionals' judgement.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations constitute one of the most important parts of the overall research and data collection process. Due to the sensitive nature of this study, with the research participants being professionals, ethical considerations were considered fundamental. This involved ensuring respect for both participants and the organisations involved, as well as confidentiality. With a project like this, there are specific ethical risks to consider, especially because I interviewed those specifically involved in the upgrading of informal settlement process. These include George municipality, Zutari (previously Aurecon), and those they outsource. Ethical risks could have implications for future project implementation in terms of whether Aurecon is offered these projects again. Moreover it could generate possible political unrest. Thus, even though a significant amount of the information was made public, it was important to protect the anonymity of those interviewed. This was done through participants signing informed consent forms before doing the interviews. Ethics clearance was applied for through the University of Cape Town to guarantee the research would be conducted in a responsible and ethically accountable manner, and that confidentiality/anonymity would be ensured. This would in turn also help to ensure as far as possible the reliability and validity of the study.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide the rationale for, and methodological detail of, my research study, whose focus is the nature of the role of planners involved in the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project. In addition, this chapter sought to describe the methods of data collections, and how the data collected were to be presented, analysed and synthesised (see chapter six). Due to the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project being seven years old, and situated in a non-metropolitan municipality, research limitations and methodological choices were evaluated, explained, and justified accordingly. The next chapter seeks to provide more detail and context as to the reasons for the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project being significant in terms of an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the role of planning in South Africa.

Chapter 4: How "ideas" about informality circulate …

This chapter is characterised by the relative paucity of academic sources on George, South Africa. This is evident from a heavy reliance on sources such as George Municipality, George Municipal Spatial Development Framework (George Municipality, 2019), Lanegran and Lanegran (2001), Marais, Nel and Donaldson (2016), Smit and Donaldson (2011), and Toerien and Donaldson (2017). The reason for the paucity of sources is related to the insufficient research focus on secondary cities like George (Marais et al., 2016). Urban research in South Africa tends to prioritise research on metropolitan South African cities as opposed to secondary cities, a tendency that applies to other African countries (Freund, 2007).

4.1 Introduction

Deep anxieties on the part of municipalities, town planners, housing policy managers and residents in affluent suburbs animate recent accounts of rapid urbanisation in South African cities. Municipalities are caught between the formal-informal continuum, as described in chapter 2, as they try to navigate the limits of their jurisdiction and decide on the extent to which they should hold the urban poor responsible for illegal settlements. Ever more frequent illegal land invasions become a prime example of how 'tested' the municipal role becomes when attempting to 'handle' or manage informality; moreover it challenges modernist urban planning models. Informality in the 21st century has come to demand a different approach to the binary formal-informal, mentioned in chapter 2.

This demand becomes clear in the case of Thembalethu, George Municipality, in the Western Cape Province. On Thursday 30th May 2019, the George Herald reported two new illegal informal settlements to have mushroomed overnight on provincially owned land. The one illegal 'invasion' took place on land that was used by locals to breed pigs, and as a result birthed its name Bhekela Hagu ("Stand aside, pig!"). The other illegal informal settlement was on a site situated behind Thembalethu (an original formal settlement in George). This site overlooks the ocean, hence the name Robben Island. The 30th May 2019 George Herald reported on the rapid opportunistic development of both informal settlements: **"…** shack builders grabbed the opportunity

when police and local authorities' attention was diverted during the recent taxi stand-off, to start building their shacks"[15]. Even though municipal officers were at the time aware of the invasions, one of the municipal officials reported shack builders as being in the habit of occupying land during the night when there are no officials on guard. The shack builders' vigilance and stealth exercised in the process of illegally invading land, and then settling, can be seen against the background[16] of a history of riots in the area, when the municipality, using the Red Ants[17], intervened with the clear intention of demolishing illegal shacks. This was the case in September 2018[18], when approximately ninety shacks were demolished behind Silver Town, which resulted in retaliatory actions involving several buildings, including the new municipal hall, being set alight, damaged, and vandalised[19]. What becomes focal in the 2019 newspaper article[20] is the question "what is George Municipality going to do about illegal invasions of informal settlements?" versus what happened when the municipality intervened the last time (2018) through mobilising the Red Ants. It is interesting to note that before the Red Ants can start the process of demolition a court order[21] needs to be issued in order for them to follow suit. According to this legislation, the owner of the 'invaded' land, needs to issue the court order. This court order can take anything between 5-7 months, depending on postponements, and on the availability of NGOs or legal teams

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[15] https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/more-illegal-settlements-mushroom-201905300800 (2020/08/30)

[16]https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/more-illegal-settlements-mushroom-201905300800 (2020/08/30)

[17] Red Ants: Red Ant Security Relocation & Eviction Services (a.k.a. Red Ants) is a multi-disciplinary Company offering services in the Agriculture Sector, Built Environment, Farming, Security and Sanitation. The Aim of the Company is to deliver a one stop all encompassing Urban Management Support Services for Human Settlements. In the context of Thembalethu Red Ants were contracted demolition workers. More about Red Ants online: https://red-ants.co.za/about-us/ (07/04/2021)

[18] https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/more-illegal-settlements-mushroom-201905300800 (2020/08/30)

[19]https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/more-illegal-settlements-mushroom-201905300800 (2020/08/30)

[20] https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/more-illegal-settlements-mushroom-201905300800 (2020/08/30)

[21] General Notes and Comments on Unlawful Occupation of Land/Land Invasions and Orderly Settlement, with Reference to the Prevention of Illegal Eviction From and Unlawful Occupation Of Land Act 19 Of 1998 (March 2003): https://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2005/7/notes_pie_acts.pdf (08/-5/2021)

supporting marginalised groups who have invaded the land. The 2019 report[22] does not make it clear when the court order was issued. However, what is clear is that growth of informal settlements increased during the period starting from the day of invasion until the date the court order was issued and the Red Ants were legally commissioned.

The question that I draw from this article is the tension between 'what happened the last time we (as officials) acted' and 'how do we (as officials) act now?' As it stands, at the time the article was published in 2019 Bhekela Hagu and Robben Island were two new informal 'neighborhoods' that had been erected illegally on provincial land. The role of the municipality was painted as indecisive by the article. This was an indication that the municipality was aware of these settlements being established, yet were powerless to stop them, and, for the most part, were being cautious. This caution would seem to be deeply embedded in the municipality's desire to act in a diplomatic way rather than a strictly legal way in order not to 'upset' households (illegal settlers) that would be affected by the consequence of illegally invading provincial land. These inherently difficult and conflictual choices mirror how the legal and policy landscape is characterised by a general lack of understanding of informality in a way that enables municipalities to act both swiftly and developmentally at the same time.

At this stage, 2021, it remains unclear whether it is within the local municipality's ability to stop the continuous erecting of shacks in the area. This ongoing, and to date seemingly inexorable, predicament facing George municipality calls for an exploration of the various ways in which municipal instruments (historical and contemporary) have responded to informality. Even though Thembalethu UISP Phase1 project took place, between 2009-2014, the following sections attempt to explore in detail this present-day response on the part of the George municipality by contextualising the national housing policy and, from this analysis, to suggest what this could mean for George municipality currently and into the future. More broadly, this chapter provides a contextual timeline, on which the Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project can be situated

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[22] https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/more-illegal-settlements-mushroom-201905300800 (2020/08/30)

in both dialogue and perspective within broader spatial considerations for George municipality that directly affected Thembalethu over this period. Moreover, to provide insights into, and draw conclusions as to, whether or not the success of Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project can be said to have contributed to the various different ways in which George municipality think through Thembalethu's role in the greater urban development of George.

4.2 George Municipality

The local George Municipality is situated in the Western Cape Province, South Africa, with a municipal area of 51911 km2 (George Municipality, 2019:14). The greater George area administered by the George Municipality forms part of the greater Garden Route District Municipality Jurisdiction. The greater George area consists of George the city, Wilderness, Uniondale, and Haarlem. George the city houses 84% of the area's population; the remainder of the urban population is dispersed within Wilderness, Uniondale, and Haarlem (George Municipality, 2019:14). According to figures quoted from StatsSA, 2016, "The rural population (9% of the municipal area) is declining, evidenced by a negative population growth rate per annum of -4% between 2011 and 2016" (George Municipality, 2019:14). George is renowned for its economic and employment contribution to the region, and its role in the regional economy and district. George is also in the fortunate position to sustainably absorb settlement growth from neighbouring municipalities in the region due to its robust infrastructural systems, a fact which contributes to its high growth potential (George Municipality, 2019:17). Even though George has considerable growth potential, and is strategically located in a flourishing touristic region, it has urban development issues that have both spatial and social dimensions. One of the spatial implications is the rapid growth of informal settlements, which, based on the available evidence, I regard as being symptomatic of larger urban development issues within George Municipality. Thus, to gain an understanding of informality I discuss contextual urban development issues in order to explicate the intrinsic relationship between growing informal settlements and urban development.

A key spatial implication highlighted in the recent Municipal Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) (George Municipality, 2019) is the ability of a municipality to

sustainably manage the development and growth of urban settlements whilst at the same time attending to, and balancing the needs of, the community (urban and rural). This process involves both the delivery of services and the developing and growing of the economy of the area (George Municipality, 2019:25). Other spatial implications the MSDF (George Municipality, 2019) mentions are the spatial disparities inherited from apartheid planning. Amidst the spatial consequences of this legacy, and the implications of these for the equitable distribution of resources, urbanisation continues to exacerbate inequitable resource distribution, ultimately affecting the quality of life of all people in the greater George area.

In addition to resource insecurity, climate change impacts have unsettled the agricultural sector, resulting in many farmworkers being displaced and re-settling in urban areas. This increase in rural-urban migration has had a detrimental impact on the maintenance of the urban edge (George Municipality, 2019:25), and has called for a radical transformation of the public transport system (Ribbonaar & Van der Berg, 2008). In December 2014, the city of George launched the 'Go George' bus system. This bus system serves the majority of the George population, with the exception of Thembalethu[23].

In as much as George is renowned for its contribution to the economy and to employment in the region, there remains the need to integrate the larger space economy within the George city areas with the peripheral areas of the George city. More so, there is a need to locate people from peripheral areas to areas closer to opportunities, given that "just over half of George's households earn below R50,000 per annum" (George Municipality, 2019:26). This becomes difficult due to the task of providing houses being a convoluted one due to imprecise databases (George Municipality, 2019). The George Municipality (2019) points out that this imprecision arises out of the inconsistencies in housing backlog data between the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements databases, that account for 17,000 houses, and the George municipality, which accounts for 22,000 (George Municipality, 2019:26). Thus, using these databases as a means to understand the co-dependency of

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[23] 'Go George' bus system: https://www.gogeorge.org.za/,
https://www.gogeorge.org.za/routes/current-routes/. (21/12/2020)

intergovernmental affairs and funding provision when it comes to housing provision, is not a straightforward process. It becomes clear that, because both these databases are not verified, contextual housing planning suitable for a specific locality, and for catering to the needs of the people in that locality, becomes both arbitrary and difficult. The issue with current housing implementation strategies arises from the fact that they take the form of large-scale capital projects injected into peripheral areas of the George city area. Due to the peripheral injection of investment, steadily increasing population densities cannot sustain the thresholds for economic investment (George Municipality, 2019).

The last spatial implication is the current disparate spatial condition of George the city area. The MSDF (George Municipality, 2019:26) depicts the triangulated space economy in the map below.
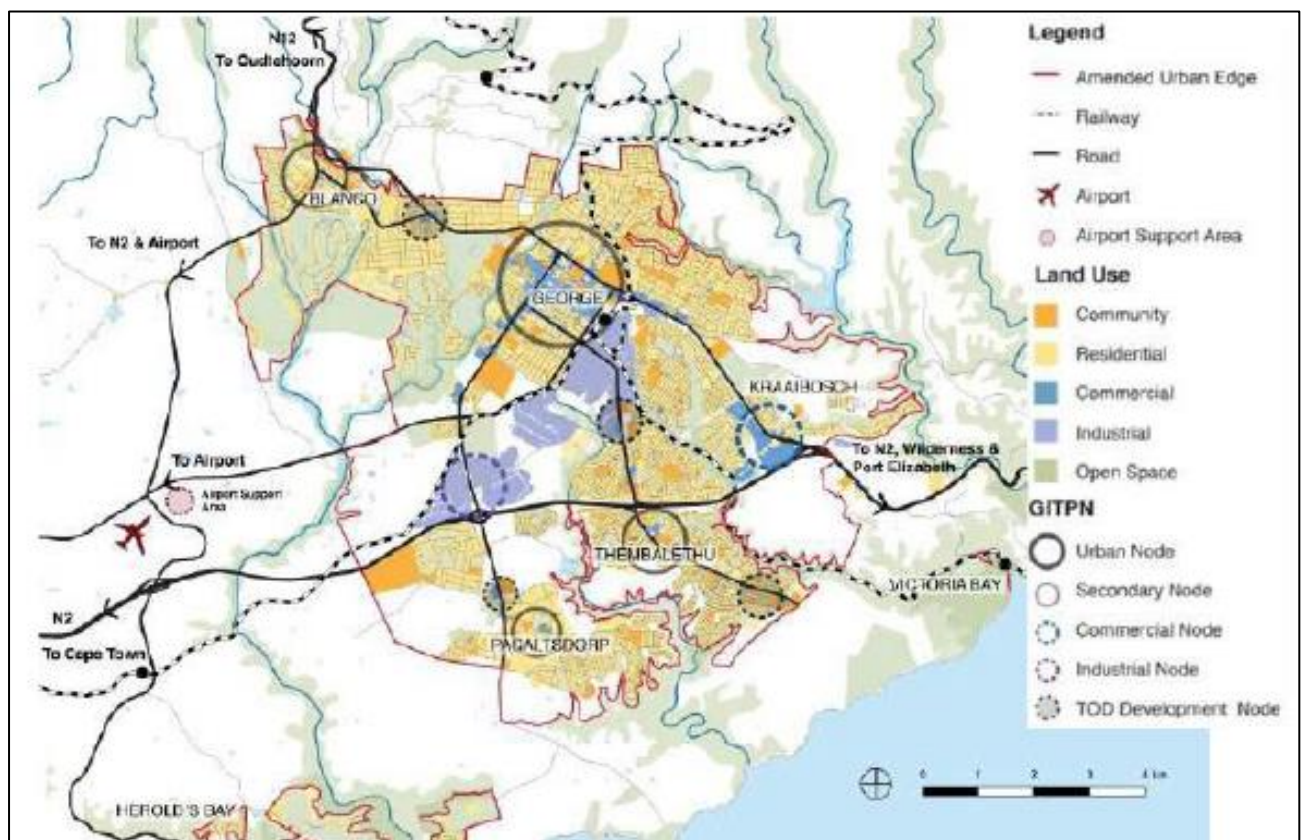
Map1: Existing nodal layout of the city of George (George Municipality, 2019:27)

The old George CBD node has been compromised by mall type commercial developments emerging in the Kraaibosch/ Blue Mountain commercial node and the

Pacaltsdorp Industrial Node. This suggests a shift in the concentration of socio-economic opportunities. This is confirmed by Smit and Donaldson (2011): even though there has been a drastic shift in the George space economy since 1995, the interface and networking between formal sector businesses and home-based businesses (more informal) remains a policy and implementation challenge. Amidst this space economy dynamic there continues to exist a divide between the poorer and the better off communities, a divide exacerbated by this shift in the space economy. One could argue that this is in spite of all the connective infrastructure that has been provided to connect Thembalethu to the wealthier parts of George, infrastructure which is intended to facilitate access to opportunities. The MSDF (George Municipality, 2019) is clear as to how the N2 becomes a literal impediment to this access: it exacerbates this spatial and economic divide, creating a barrier to economic improvement and economic opportunities for the poorer parts and populations of George. This is seen by the way in which the N2 separates the poorer communities, or less well-off areas in the south and southeast of the George CBD, from the well-off 'estate like' and well-resourced developments in the North, such as Kraaibosch, Kingswood, and Herold's Bay (George Municipality, 2019:26). The shift in economic concentration has created dormant neighbourhoods with relatively few economic opportunities. These neighbourhoods are the older settlements of Blanco and Pacaltsdorp, George Southeast (North of the N2), and the newer area of Thembalethu (George Municipality, 2019:26).

What is further evident in Map1 above, is that these dormant neighbourhoods are urban nodes that have been drained of both the necessary economic opportunities and investment. Thus, the composite challenge for the MSDF is for the George urban areas to be transformed in ways that integrate the various areas of the city. An additional challenge is for these areas to be rooted in a thriving service economy where all residents of George are able to access what the city has to offer in the way of economic opportunities (George Municipality, 2019:26). Thembalethu, whose newer area is of an informal nature, can be seen as an example of what is hindering this integration. The 'general' drivers of informality within George municipality, such as unemployment, in-migration etc., are juxtaposed with the lack of formal economic activity and business growth in certain areas. Moreover, the lack of access to these

areas, along with the continuous increase in urbanisation, leave 'formal' urban systems without the necessary capacity to retain informal expansion. Consequently, even though informality is both an irreversible fact and an issue in George, there is a broader urban development dialogue required in order to halt the perpetuation of disparate spatial patterns, and to encourage better spatial integration.

Now that we have a sense of the development issues and the spatial implications of this for George it mirrors urban development priorities and inventions thus far. In the next section, I go on to discuss housing policy responses to informality and the layered historic, comparative and contextual lens these provides into understanding Thembalethu and the wider George in more depth.

4.3 Policy responses to Informality

With the intention of understanding the drivers of policy change, many scholars review the South African Housing Policy journey from the pre-apartheid segregation era to the post-apartheid redress era (Tomlinson, 1999; Harrison & Huchzermeyer, 2003; Cross, 2008). For purposes of this chapter, I make use of Smit (2017) in reviewing this journey. He reviews the evolution of housing policy approaches to informal settlement upgrading in South Africa under three broad categories, which succinctly contextualise historically the shifts in South African housing provision through an informality lens. I use Smit's (2017) three categories as an entry point to a journey towards an understanding of the various ways in which ideas of informality have circulated in housing policy and informal settlement upgrading, since the Apartheid era, and continue to circulate, and what this means for the case of George.

4.3.1 Forced removals and relocation under the Apartheid regime.

The first historical category is the era of demolition and forced removals under the Apartheid (Nationalist Party) regime. Before 1948 (the date of the coming to power of the Nationalist Party), during the 1920s, under the South African Party, a coalition of the all-white Smuts Party and an early version of the Nationalist Party, housing policy directly targeted the demolition of informal settlements. The intent was not simply to demolish the informal settlements, but, as was to be later formally legislated, to forcibly remove people of colour to designated racial areas. This approach was ad hoc in

nature and happened on a small scale until the 1950s, when Apartheid legislation formalised these 'forced removals'. The introduction of the Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950) brought about a radical shift in scale during the 1950s and 1960s. As government funding increased the approach grew in ambition and was directed towards constructing racially segregated residential townships on the urban periphery and that served as reservoirs of cheap labour (Smit, 2017:37). Toward the end of the 1960s housing provision directed specifically toward segregated townships decreased, sparking the growth of informal settlements in the 1970s. Even though funding for establishing segregated townships declined during this period, the demolition and forced removals of these settlements to peripheral townships, such as Khayelitsha, continued into the 1980s (Smit, 2017:37).

4.3.2 The adoption of the capital housing subsidy programme

The second phase was the adoption of the capital housing subsidy programme established in the 1980s. The adoption of this programme is variously critiqued by scholars, some of whom assert that the South African government at the time was 'authentic' in that they created their own approach (Gilbert, 2002), while others argue that this approach was almost identical to that used by the World Bank during the 1980s (Smit, 2017; Jones & Datta, 2000). To provide some background, during the 1980s there was a transitional shift in housing thinking in South Africa. A key role player in this process was a think tank, the Urban Foundation. It was established after the Soweto protests in 1976 by the Anglo-American Corporation, the largest private corporation in South Africa (Smit, 2017:37). The Urban Foundation played a critical role in conceptualising a new approach to housing in South Africa, one which took into consideration the problem of informal settlements. Several scholars (Smit, 2017; Huchzermeyer, 2001; Wilkinson, 1998) argue that the Urban Foundation was both the think tank and the curator of early research done on informal settlements. In achieving their aim of designing a new housing policy, the Urban Foundation's ideas about informal settlements were influenced by the ideas of the World Bank and de Soto (explained in Bromley, 1990 and in chapter 2).

The research conducted by the Urban Foundation led to a housing policy recommendation in the 1990s, a "proposal [sic] based on the principle of a

standardised, household-based capital subsidy, defining the individual plot size, service level and form of tenure" (Smit, 2017:37). This capital subsidy and freehold title approach in the early 1990s ultimately led to a pilot initiative in 1991, headed by the Independent Development Trust (IDT) and providing 100 000-serviced sites in three years. This initiative was led by a former chairperson of the Urban Foundation (Smit, 2017:37; Gilbert, 2002). This capital housing subsidy pilot project laid down the building blocks for what was to be the ANC's housing manifesto, which emerged after the first election in 1994, to deliver one million houses in five years. This goal was subsequently incorporated into the National Housing Policy. This resulted in the roll-out of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing programme (ANC, 1994).

In reverting to the critique on whether the housing policy South Africa adopted with this capital subsidy scheme approach was or was not 'authentic', one needs to look at the World Bank's strong emphasis on *in situ* upgrading at the time. The emphasis of the World Bank in this context was on capital subsidies injected into infrastructure only, whereas South Africa was focusing on 'start-up' houses as opposed to *in situ* upgrading (Smit, 2017:38). Even though the South African government's approach had its own particular focus, specific minimum standards and requirements for these starter houses were not in place at this time. Toward the end of the 1990s, the delivery process of completed houses acquired a more political agenda, and these minimum standards were authorised in line with this agenda. The political agenda could be described as meaning both an ideological/redress/ equity policy approach to housing and/or electioneering ('vote-buying'). In this context, both of these imperatives were implied, and in this way the politicised housing agenda was realised by the increased subsidies arising out of the initial success of the RDP implementation. "In 1999 the national department set $32m^2$ as the minimum size of subsidised houses, and some provinces introduced even larger minimum house sizes as well as minimum sizes for plots" (Smit, 2017:38). In addition the first red book produced by CSIR to define

minimum standards for RDP houses, was in 2000[24].

As these minimum standards grew to be more formally and uniformly standardised, and prevalent in their implementation, the notion of *in situ* upgrading dissipated. The reason for this was that *in situ* upgrading requires a level of flexibility, as serviced sites are tailored to the existing grid within informal settlements. The political overtone of this focus resulted in a model which was more standardised, and appeared more equitable/inclusive:, the implication was that everyone would receive 'the same', which at the time spoke to the greater ideological themes of equality and democracy as enshrined in the 1996 Constitution. One could infer that this push for the idea of 'sameness' and uniformity with the RDP housing model in the interests of equity not only overshadowed the organic nature of informal settlements, but also clouded and impeded the innovativeness that informality presented or could present.

Thus, the RDP housing model was also directed at, and applied to, informal settlements, and involved the relocation of the residents of those informal settlements situated within urban areas to peripheral, 'peri-urban' areas of the cities. More importantly, this made South Africa's approach at the time to informal settlements one of roll-over upgrading as opposed to *in-situ* upgrading (Smit, 2017). Roll-over development or upgrading follows the conventional way of housing delivery, characterised by standardised services and housing units, and is similar to the RDP housing delivery model.

The focus on RDP housing was problematic as a long-term, sustainable solution to informality because it was not embedded in a broader urbanisation policy, as argued by Crankshaw and Parnell (1996). Crankshaw and Parnell (1996) saw the irony of the RDP policy seeking to improve housing conditions, while 'forgetting' that Apartheid urbanisation policies sought to create a distinct divide between rural and urban. Understanding the divide between rural and urban becomes important because it has to do with understanding the role of migrant labour and the reasons for people's

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[24] https://www.csir.co.za/comprehensive-guide-on-neighbourhood-planning-and-design-now-available#:~:text=The%20Minister%20of%20Human%20Settlements,Red%20Book%2C%20published%20in%202000. (2/28/2022)

movement between rural and urban areas. Crankshaw and Parnell (1996) argue that this movement has implications for the understanding of poverty as something brought about by a lack of access to urban employment. This causal driver was omitted in the housing policy of the ANC government as they failed to understand that migrant labour was not temporary, nor was it confined to the Apartheid era.

Crankshaw and Parnell's argument for an urbanisation policy stems from what they perceived at the time as an illusion on the part of the ANC government that, with the dawn of democracy, the problems apartheid policies brought could be remedied by the provision of formal housing in designated peripheral urban areas. The idea of the provision of formal housing was driven by a 'new' housing policy instead of an urbanisation policy that takes into consideration various aspects of the ways in which gradual urbanisation would affect the apartheid planned cities and resources, and how these apartheid planned cities would now proceed to accommodate both urban growth and equal opportunities. The result of this was that housing provision was 'narrowly' located due to the fact that the aim of the RDP was to specifically address, or provide redress to, those affected by the former regime. This resulted in the perpetuation of the existing segregated Apartheid structural spatial layout. To counter this, a broader urbanisation policy was thus necessary, one which would not only be based on an understanding of urbanisation patterns, but would be based on a more comprehensive understanding of rural and urban networks, as well as one which would be characterised by an understanding of, and would address, the matrix of urban development.

Ten years later Boraine et al. (2006), in reviewing urban development in South African cities, confirmed that forward-looking urban policies like those contained in the State of Cities Report (Gotz & Boraine, 2004)[25] amounted to more than the achievement of the reconstruction and development agenda on a national scale. Instead, such policies

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[25] The South African Cities Network (SACN) was responsible for the State of cities report (2004). This report was the first report in South Africa to review and 'state' the degree of effectiveness of the first ten years of democracy in achieving transformation.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334520313_State_of_the_Cities_Report_2004_South_African_Cities_Network_SACN (20/05/2021).

would be guided by a vision of sustainable human settlements. They argued that, even though, at the time there was a greater emphasis on issues like urban economic development, urban growth, and social exclusion, the deeper every-day issues of inequality and spatial fragmentation seemed to be subsumed by global conversations, such as those around global urban exclusion and unsustainability (Boraine et al., 2006:282). As a result of this persisting erasure or exclusion of local issues, the matrix of urban development remains fractured, as housing policy seems to remain 'stuck', while simultaneously being burdened with the obligation to 'fix' the apartheid city. Based on Smit's (2017) assertions, during the first housing policy shift, the housing agenda was politicised, or based on a redress agenda, and as a result became more standardized (as seen in Figure 4). By 'politicised' I mean that the whole process of standardising minimum standards of housing delivery as an activity and how it is interpreted, quantified, driven, was premised on a democratic ideological policy of redress and equity, as espoused by the ANC and enshrined in both the Freedom Charter and in the 1996 Constitution.

Furthermore, because the housing agenda was politicised in this way, funding was directed with the purpose of carrying out the ruling party's housing agenda. Thus, an unsustainable political housing agenda, backed by the power structures and budget allocations of the ruling party, became a well-oiled machine that initially operated smoothly. The moment the funding from the fiscus became significantly less the redress housing agenda slowed down, resulting in a spike in informal settlements. One could say the same about the second housing policy shift, the adoption of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (ANC, 1994) (South Africa's version of the capital housing subsidy scheme), which developed into a nationally accepted political housing agenda. Huchzermeyer (2003 cited in Smit, 2017:39) asserts that the structured and standardised process of the RDP "has shaped not only the formal low-cost environment, but also the informal/illegal environment". The RDP politicised housing agenda requirement was that informal settlements be replaced by what were in fact "standardised products [which] discourages gradual popular investment in permanent structures" (Huchzermeyer, 2003:592–591). These 'standardised products' have been shown to inhibit flexibility. It is important to understand how this pattern, as highlighted in Figure 4 below, becomes instructive when thinking about

flexibility in housing policy, and about disrupting the kind of standardisation that comes with politicising housing agendas.

1920s

Forced removals and relocation under Apartheid regime

1990s

The adoption of the capital housing subsidy programme

2004

Introduction of the Upgrading of Informal Settlement Support Programme (UISP) in 2004 as part of the Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy

(Smit, 2017)

1920s

Informality associated with 'otherness', eradicating otherness

Politisized-standardised till funding runs dry- informality sparks

1990s

RDP sort to deal with informal settlements-informality addressed with formal housing

Politisized- standardised till funding runs dry- informality sparks

2004

Informality persists- Recognition but no policy addressing informality- lets integrate and use UISP structured approach to ultimately eradicate informal settlements

(Hill, 2020; Smit, 2017)

Figure 4: Reflection/summary on three major shifts in South African housing policy

Many housing policy makers and approaches, i.e. the RDP/roll-over approach towards addressing informality, show a bias towards doing away with, to the extent of eradicating, informal settlements, seeing informality as disrupting the way cities 'ought' (form and function) to be (Huchzermeyer, 2009; Abbott, 2004). From the perspective and experience of informal settlers themselves, there is a basic demand for both services and housing delivery. What the RDP/ roll-over approach fails to do is to capture 'difference' present in the dynamic social processes, informal economies, existing safety networks, and the priorities of those living in a range of different informal settlements (Brown-Luthango et al., 2017; Massey, 2013). Instead, this approach continues to impose 'politicised sameness'.

As informal settlements in urban areas in South Africa continued to grow by the end of the 20th Century, and with the capital subsidy / RDP approach being unable to cater for this growth, and the national housing policy not directly speaking to the deeper and more complex issue of informal settlement, a 're-group moment' was called for at the dawn of the new millennium. This leads into Smit's (2017) third phase in an evolving South African housing policy.

4.3.3 The introduction of the Upgrading of Informal Settlement Support Programme (UISP) in 2004 as part of the Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy

The third and final phase of Smit's (2017) review of South African housing policy is the introduction of the Upgrading of Informal Settlement Support Programme (UISP) in 2004 as part of the Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy. On the global front, the unrelenting growth of informal settlements had by this time led to a global housing agenda that in turn led to countries, including South Africa, adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, and ultimately a written Global Report by the UN-Habitat, *The Challenge of Slums*, in 2003 (Smit, 2017). South African policy-makers and researchers reviewing the housing policy at the time realised that there was no specific or detailed policy directly addressing the issue of informal settlements. This led to a refocus on, and review of, the existing housing policy regarding the upgrading of informal settlements (Smit, 2017:41). This shift was approved through the introduction of the BNG policy on 1 September 2004 (DoH, 2004), which resulted

114

in a housing plan with a specific focus on informal settlements, as stipulated by the Department of Human Settlements (DoHS):

> Informal settlements must urgently be integrated into the broader urban fabric to overcome spatial, social, and economic exclusion… the plan supports the eradication of informal settlements through in-situ upgrading in desired locations, coupled to the relocation of households where development is not possible or desirable (DoH, 2004: 12).

Smit (2017) is unclear as to whether this shift of focus on informal settlements was an add-on, or was integrated into the larger landscape of housing policy. What made this new housing policy 'different' from previous housing policies was the UISP. Although the UISP was a support programme put in place in 2004 to support *in situ* upgrading, it only really came into effect in 2009 with the introduction of the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP)[26] driven by the National Department of Human Settlements. It was seen as a way to assist municipalities with the upgrading of informal settlements in their localities. At the time – in 2004 - the focus of the UISP was to provide tenure security, promote a secure and healthy environment, and to redress social and economic exclusion (DoHS, 2009). Moreover, the UISP acknowledged that a community has "deep routed [sic] knowledge of its development needs and preferences", and that this knowledge should be "harnessed to ensure that township design, and project management […] is targeted at satisfying the actual needs and preferences" (DoHS, 2009:30 cited in Hot, Iels & Lus, 2015:63).

In chapter 2, the critique of the BNG/UISP in the literature suggests a dysfunction that continues to exist as the RDP housing provision model became the default model

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[26] Huchzermeyer (2010) refers to the reason for this significant delay. Huchzermeyer (2010) explains how the disjuncture between housing policy and housing politics resulted in the BNG 'indirectly' addressing informal settlements through an incremental approach, whereas from a political stance informal settlements were to be forcefully eradicated by 2014. This misplaced political support resulted in the decision to establish the N2 upgrading project as a pilot project of the BNG being questioned in court, the reason being that the eradication of informal settlements is not supported under the BNG. Consequently, in 2008 the forceful clearing of informal settlements in Joe Slovo to make room for the N2 Gateway Project faced significant resistance by Joe Slovo residents. This court proceeding called for a relook at the BNG policy and for the provision of institutional mechanisms necessary to accomplish the upgrading and relocation stipulated in the BNG policy.

when informal settlements were being upgraded. In fact, the struggle to make this paradigm shift on the part of the those involved in the professional 'handling' of informal settlements to an *in-situ* approach continues up to the present. Smit (2017) affirms this failure on the part of policy makers to effect this paradigm shift by describing how, in 2004, roll-over projects continued to be the way to 'handle' informality in South African cities up until the introduction of the NUSP six years later. One of the main reasons for this was the political incentive of the relatively newly formed democratic government to eradicate informal settlements. Smit (2017) also mentions that the adoption of the NUSP in 2009 assisted municipalities with the incremental upgrading of their informal settlements through the assistance of the UISP. Smit (2017) describes the strong emphasis the UISP placed on participation and incremental upgrading, an initiative which has unfortunately been overshadowed by the continuation of roll-over project incentives. He describes how this is further exacerbated by the cemented attitude of certain policy managers who remain opposed to informal settlements. In this context, Hot et al. (2015:65) raise three key concerns about the UISP in practice: "(1) housing projects are 'repackaged' as upgrading projects, (2) there is definitional uncertainty, and (3) the lack of independent impact assessments obscures project level issues".

What this means is that the RDP model is repackaged in the form of upgrading projects, even though the UISP represents a structural approach to upgrading. In addition, there is still no clear definitional stance in terms of what an incremental approach is, or what it could mean in the context of South African cities. Moreover, there is no insight on the part of planners into the precise nature of the difficulties and challenges at project level. What becomes even more apparent is the lack of clear monitoring of the extent to which the UISP upgrading process is implementable, effective, and sustainable (Hot et al., 2015). Thus, a successful outcome in dealing with the problem becomes associated with the provision of completed houses. This could be due to the lack of definition of what the policy means specifically in terms of upgrading, together with a lack of a clear political vision of how informal settlements could or should be incorporated in the urban fabric. Figure 4 illustrates my inference from Smit's (2017) argument that, if upgrading projects are a repackaged version of the RDP model, there is an even greater possibility that, when funding for these

116

upgrading projects runs dry, informality will spike and continue to grow. Thus, from the literature, in particular that based on Smit's (2017) categories, it becomes clear that the problem of informal settlements has not been, and continues to fail to be, effectively managed. Another collective and key role player in the upgrading processes has been the group of those non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which have been assisting communities in prioritising their needs through strengthening participatory processes (Smit, 2017).

4.3.4 The Introduction of the Informal Settlement Support Programme (ISSP)

The Western Cape Department of Human Settlements (WCDoHS) has acknowledged the active role of NGOs in these upgrading processes, and in 2016 created the Informal Settlement Support Programme (ISSP). One of the WCDoHS policy managers involved in the development of this strategy made the intention of the ISSP clear. According to Policy Manager A, the intention behind the ISSP was to understand informal settlements as human settlements rather than in terms of requiring an efficient top-down planning approach or policy:

> So the ISSP started off being the vision, was an informal settlements strategy, then as we looked at, you know, the context of doing a little bit more research, we realised what we really need is something which is a support plan rather than something which says this is how; you know, you want to have a vision; but we realise what was really necessary to address informality, and the role that the province could play with the right support both to municipality and to the communities that actually constitute those informal settlements (Policy Manager A, 2018).

Policy Manager A goes on to attempt to explain the 'why' of the ISSP, and the reciprocal relationship between policy and 'strategy', and that strategy needs to precede and inform policy, particularly in the social/human context:

> Because the UISP is a policy; it is not a strategy for human settlements. Uhm … there's some overlapping [between] policies and strategy but it's quite.. quite a big difference because the policy will be the tools that you can use to sort of give life to the strategy, but so we had the policy, but we were lacking the strategy. So in that saying for us as the Western Cape [Department of Human Settlements]', uhm

117

[the question became], how are we going to address informality? And it's not the strategy that is like a silver bullet or anything; it was really about saying, uhm, firstly we need to understand like what's happening in informal settlements, the social context, the context with relation to services… (Policy Manager A, 2018).

The Western Cape Department of Human Settlements (WCDoHS) contracted the Isandla Institute as the main service provider, and the Palmer Development Group, to provide support to develop a strategic guiding document that would outline a sector-wide approach to informal settlement upgrading and settlement formation. The intention, as explained above by Policy Manager A, was to get all role players on board and consensus on a strategic approach directed towards understanding informal settlements both from the bottom-up, and from the top-down. They intended to find the most suitable way to do the upgrading, while at the same time understanding that the Housing Code, comprising of guidelines for who qualifies for a RDP or BNG house, and other human settlement strands (described in detail in the following section), is a concurrent function, meaning that all three spheres of government are involved. Since the BNG (policy) is a strategy document, and the UISP sits within National government, there was a need to translate the UISP in a way that would filter through to local government (Policy Manager A, 2018). In addition, the primary aim of the ISSP was to move away from the government-as-service-provider model, a model prevalent during the roll-out of the RDP, to a more comprehensive model, where government plays a more explicit and central role, becoming the enabler and facilitator of development and consultation with residents of informal settlements (Policy Manager A, 2018). The Informal Settlement Support Programme (ISSP) currently offers guidance to Western Cape provincial departments and local municipalities (key implementers of settlement upgrading initiatives); it also acts as a reminder of the national mandate regarding upgrading of informal settlements (Habitat for Humanity, 2018; WCDoHS, 2016).

The ISSP was formally adopted by the Western Cape government early in 2017. Thereafter the WCDoHS initiated a process to roll-out the ISSP in 60 informal settlements in the non-metro municipalities within the Western Cape Province. Additionally, the WCDoHS put out a call to all interested Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the region to register on the provincial services database to

enable their participation in the roll-out of the ISSP. In response to this call a number of municipalities took the necessary steps to register (those needing assistance or lack capacity), and a top eight of the NGOs[27] were chosen. The eight NGOs with their respective municipalities are listed below:

> CORC (Community Organisation Resource Centre) in the Swartland Municipality; DAG (Development Action Group) in the Witzenberg, Knysna, and Mossel Bay Municipalities; ESST (Educational Support Services Trust) in Saldanha Bay Municipality; Habitat-SA in Langeberg Municipality; PEP (People's Environmental Planning)in the Cape Agulhas and Bitou Municipalities; SAWIC (South African Women in Construction) in George Municipality; VPUU (Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading) in Theewaterskloof, Swellendam and Overstrand Municipalities.[28]

These were formally accepted to act as the WCDoHS's service providers in the roll-out of the ISSP early in 2018. The eight NGOs have entered into a three-year agreement with the non-metro municipality, based on their history with a certain municipality, and on their in-house capacity as NGOs (WCDoHS, 2016).

The stated objective of the ISSP is to improve the quality of life of people in informal settlements through improving access to land, finance, and incremental housing opportunities, providing secure tenure, providing basic services and social infrastructure, and stimulating economic opportunities, etc. The ISSP is focussed on the implementation of these, and is both progressive (as explained in chapter 2) and transformative in its approach to upgrading informal settlements in the Western Cape.

Given the vision and motivation of the ISSP, this strategy is likely to have a direct positive impact on people's housing and living conditions. The reason for the Western Cape DoHS choosing the ISSP as a support to upgrade housing in informal settlements has largely to do with both the implementation focus of the ISSP, and the

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[27] https://provincialgovernment.co.za/department_annual/728/2018-western-cape-human-settlements-annual-report.pdf (29/04/2021)

[28] https://www.gov.za/speeches/western-cape-human-settlements-supporting-informal-settlements-20-jan-2021-0000# (29/04/2021)

platform it provides to explore the relationship it is hoped will exist between municipalities, private planning companies, NGOs and the residents themselves. Prior to the ISSP provincial initiative, when it came to UISP projects, municipalities made use of private planning companies as sole housing policy implementing agents. The ISSP now becomes this platform for collaboration between all three agents (municipalities, private planning companies, and NGOs) at the heart of the upgrading of informal settlements implementation process.

The unfolding or development of tensions between the three agents in the upgrading process, engendered by the different skill sets, knowledge production approaches, and thinking around informal settlement intervention is interesting to explore and to understand. Researching the various tensions/potential conflicts included the intricate ways in which the professional planner relational dynamics (between the three agents) have spoken, and continue to speak, to the overarching mandate of the town and regional planning profession. This research included investigating the ability of the town planners in the Thembalethu study to adapt to new policies and programmes, and the extent to which flexibility was attainable when it came to policy, plans, and implementation. However, because the ISSP is still in the process of being rolled out, the UISP remains the dominant term used rather than the ISSP within Project Steering Committees (PSC) meetings and departmental (WCDoHS) meetings. This was the main reason I chose not to explore the ISSP further. I considered there to be insufficient data to analyse, and upon which to base a conclusion as to whether or not the implementation of the ISSP could be determined to be successful and aligned with its original intention. Not enough time had elapsed since the creation of the ISSP by the WCDoHS in 2016. The reason for my referring to the ISSP here, is to demonstrate what policy makers and researchers have attempted, and continue to attempt, in their efforts to come to grips with informality. These efforts are directed towards designing policy that is more attuned to the realties facing informal communities, and to the needs and desires of the people who make up these communities.

4.4 What is really happening with South African Housing policy?

I now revert to my conversation with Policy Manager A in the light of these different policy shifts, and the National Housing Code/ 'Housing Bible', which stipulates

stringent guidelines for who qualifies for a RDP or BNG house, and other kinds of formal housing. The Housing Code consists of different policies/programmes, including the UISP. Policy manager A confirmed that policy does not evolve at the same time as, nor keep pace with, the growth of informality. More importantly, government funds are not sufficient to provide everyone with a BNG house. Even though there have been gradual changes in housing policy, housing policy specifically in South Africa seems to have been essentially 'stuck' for almost three decades. The reason for this is the persistence of institutional dysfunctionalities. Thus, there remains a need for innovative ways to creatively address these various dysfunctionalities. In particular, those which are a result of a persisting rigid, bureaucratic, and top-down approach, and a mismatch between government housing policy and the real needs of residents in settlements, as Policy Manager A describes:

> So, in principle there has been some talk of change, but it's really been hard to change the actual machinery, uhm, and I think especially when it comes to informal settlements. So what government thinks that people in informal settlements need is not necessarily what people in informal settlements need. So that what I mean when I say the policy hasn't [changed] it's not a flexible policy framework, it's not very dynamic, but uhm that doesn't mean that you can't have a strategy which accommodates that (Policy Manager A, 2018).

This means that the current tool, the UISP, only permits a certain scope to upgrading. However, Policy Manager A calls for government to think outside of the current UISP tool, or to think about alternative ways to address the current gaps and limitations within the UISP. This process would include thinking about ways in which government can collaborate with civil society organisations to offer more substantial and ongoing support to communities living in informal settlements (Policy Manager A, 2018). While Policy Manager A (2018) points to the rigidity of the UISP, she also hints at the importance of a strategy document and how this could circumvent rigid policy frameworks. The machinery that Policy Manager A refers to in terms of how it is wired, and its ability to enable or inhibit flexible thinking about informal settlements, becomes the crux of the housing policy transformation conversation. More importantly, I would term it a ''machinery'' (to use Policy A Manager's word) impasse. Drawing from previous sections in this chapter, I would argue that this machinery impasse has

political or ideological roots, and continues to be cemented by a redress political agenda, and the drive to provide, or be seen to provide, completed formal houses. For this reason, the Good Governance Learning Network (2013:15), whose vision is "to create a strong civil society network that harnesses and builds the collective expertise and energy of its members to contribute meaningfully to building and sustaining a system of participatory and developmental local government in South Africa", calls for a "clear political vision of development and participation" that addresses the dysfunctional spatial implications attached to the informal settlement issue.

4.5 Why the emphasis on housing policy when we are trying to understand the role of planners?

The UISP tool is the most recent approved practical housing policy tool put in place by national government to address the problem of informal settlements. I use the UISP as an entry point to better understand the specific ways in which planners are currently involved in the four-phased structured UISP process, and what informs their thinking. In this way, I consider the UISP as a planning instrument, and Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project as a planning exercise. The reason for this, central to the UISP and in order for a UISP project to be approved by provincial government to be implemented on a municipal level, the project needs to strategically align to the various planning frameworks of the municipality (Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Housing Development Plan, Spatial Development Framework (SDF) etc). Moreover the project needs to also adhere to community based participatory planning facilitation structures and processes[29]. I discuss the four-phased UISP approach in greater detail in the next chapter. The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013 (SPLUMA) (SA, 2013) is a legislated urban planning tool that provides a legal framework that governs and regulates spatial planning and land use management processes nationally. SPLUMA (SA, 2013) mentions flexible land use and how land use management regulations should allow for informal use. In addition, SPLUMA (SA, 2013, 12(h):15) indicates that spatial development frameworks should "include… informal settlements… through addressing their inclusion and integration into spatial,

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[29] https://mbuisp.org/homepage/project-overview/uisp-explained/(20/02/2023)

economic, social and environmental objectives of the relevant sphere". In spite of the intention of this legislation, and of the recommendation by SPLUMA (SA, 2013), the tool actively being used by municipalities to address the problem of informal settlements through upgrading continues to be the UISP tool. For this reason I focus my research on the UISP tool.

As mentioned earlier, the first two shifts in housing were both characterised by a certain pattern, one that sought to promote patterns of standardisation and politicisation of a housing agenda. These patterns resulted in flexibility being lost and housing being funding dependent. These characteristics make a critical analysis necessary. Moreover, a further reflection on Smit's (2017) descriptions of the three major shifts in South African housing policy shows the policy to be echoing the global policy evolution during the 1990s and early 2000s.

This evolution is seen in the Second United Nations Conference for Human Settlements, Habitat II, held in Istanbul in June 1996. The aim of this conference was to set a new development agenda for the coming millennium, one which would have a strong emphasis on the goal of 'shelter for all' and 'sustainable human development amidst growing urbanisation' (Beall, 1996). Underpinning the conference was the agreed-upon confirmation that the world is officially transitioning to an urbanising world. Delegates agreed that this transition was being experienced most intensely by developing countries. Thus, due to rapid urbanisation and growth in the urban areas of these developing countries, urban planners and policy makers were seen to be amongst those most challenged by the problems brought by this, and continue to be so.

The Habitat II conference acknowledged the existing structural limitations through recognising a necessary shift from government as provider (housing, basic services, and infrastructure) to government as enabler of sustainable and consultative urban development. Moreover, it was agreed that the structural (planning processes and urban policies concerned with social and economic development of cities) limitations required a push toward encouraging the participatory mechanisms advocated at the time by Beall (1996). Beall (1996:136) argued that understanding urbanisation lies at the heart of understanding the intersection between space and power: as cities grow,

there is an increasingly intense competition amongst people and organisations for space. To resolve this contest of power, it was suggested at the Habitat II conference that governments be held accountable, for governments to accept that this contest exists, and for them "to find creative responses to see how bottom up and top-down initiatives can meet in the middle on more equal terms" (Beall, 1996:139). In order for governments to accept the contest of power between different groups with different access to power and resources, their needs to be an acceptance that true equity in these partnerships may never exist. This in turn requires an awareness and the courage to 'sit' in the discomfort of power imbalances, a willingness to listen to those different groups with different access to power and resources, in order to achieve 'good' urban and social development (Beall, 1996).

Since the 1996 Habitat II conference 25 years ago, policy makers and planners have continued to be challenged by the rapid increase of informal settlements. Policy makers and planners continue to find themselves caught in the intersection between space and power whilst trying to implement meaningful participatory processes.

4.6 Back to George …

Understanding how these three waves of housing policy, influenced by global trends, have shaped informality in South Africa provides the basis for understanding how these ideas have circulated in the country and what they mean for George Municipality. Lanegran and Lanegran (2001) interrogate the ability of the housing subsidy legislation and local government reform to improve spatial integration in the city of George. I discuss their contribution using the lens of Smit's (2017) three major shifts in housing policy, with a view to exploring the ways in which South African housing policy has, or has not, translated in the context of George Municipality. Marais et al. (2016) add another significant element: George as a secondary city[30] is overlooked in South African urban research. The reason for this is that the urban research in South Africa has largely been shaped and characterised by the

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[30] Secondary city is a classification term used by city planners to regulate and monitor urban policy and settlement types. 'Secondary' refers to both the size and position (location and function) in relation to metropolitan areas (Marais et al., 2016).

metropolitan context. Moreover, because governments are decentralizing the implementation of urban development, a process which is a result of changes experienced in the political economy, Marais et al. (2016) suggest that the ways in which these global changes impact on secondary cities and regions need to be more comprehensively represented in urban research. One can infer that the hierarchy that exists within how settlement type classification is represented in urban research and South African urban policy has implications not only for the importance of metropoles but also for which narrative sets the agenda when it comes to urban development, and how this agenda, as discussed in chapter 2, mirrors power relations. Marais et al. (2016) argue that secondary cities, in terms of their relevance and contribution to city building, have been 'ignored' and overshadowed by metropoles for the past two decades; they address this gap in their book. However, what becomes important for my research is not only the history of informal settlements in George, but the specific ways in which George's settlement type size, location, function, and strategies have responded to the global political economy, and to global city systems, and their ramifications for sustainable urban development in George.

While I put forward a disclaimer that the South African Cities network[31] (SACN) has taken some marginal steps toward advising government on the role of secondary cities, there remains a lack of extensive academic literature and/or in-depth urban research on George. This limitation is the premise for the next section.

4.6.1 Toward the end of Apartheid

According to Lanegran and Lanegran (2001), an understanding of the spatial dynamics of South African urban areas during the last years of the Apartheid regime is at the heart of understanding the present apartheid urban structure, in the sense of this structure being 'political' in nature, and an Apartheid legacy. The key piece of

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[31] South African Cities network (SACN): "The SACN is a network of South African cities and partners that encourages the exchange of information, experience and best practices on urban development and city management" (SACN, 2004:4) Find online:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334520313_State_of_the_Cities_Report_2004_South_African_Cities_Network_SACN (20/05/2021)

Apartheid legislation that set the precedent for this spatial legacy, and the psychological, socio–economic, and racial damage it wrought, was the Native (Urban areas) Land Act of 1913 which "established the racial character of land-ownership as 93% of the territory was reserved for Whites' ownership" (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:673). Those officially classified as Non-whites, and who did not work for Whites, did not have permission to live in, or have access to, the urban areas. In other words, their movement was controlled, and the result of this was that political rights and privileges came to be monopolised by the white population and their local and institutional authorities. This act essentially laid the foundation for the racial division of power, and for how urban areas were to be demarcated and governed.

In the case of George, as a result of this apartheid legislation, three separate municipalities were demarcated according to three of the four official racial categories: George municipality for the white population, Pacaltsdorp municipality for the coloured population, and Thembalethu municipality for the African population (Toerien & Donaldson, 2016). The introduction of the Group Areas Act in 1950 consolidated the demarcation and racial segregation codified in the Native Land Act 1913 (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001). Non-white resistance, and the continuous demand on the part of white-owned businesses and companies, in particular mining companies, for exploitable migrant labour in the 1970s, meant that the Group Areas Act 1950 was not fully or consistently implemented. Toerien and Donaldson (2016:4) refer to the 1970s being marked by two kinds of in-migration, signposted by the George airport that was built in 1977 and the completion of Mossgas (now Petro SA), a gas-to liquid fuel facility completed in 1987 in Mossel Bay. The airport was followed by the completion of the Fancourt golf resort built in 1996, which became an attraction for wealthier foreigners and for the white local population. The airport and golf resort drew the wealthy, while Mossgas drew members of the rural poor black population from the Eastern Cape province, some of whom settled in George (Toerien & Donaldson, 2016). Consequently, these two strands of in-migration and natural urban growth from the existing black population in George impacted on urban governance systems, and this was particularly evident in the black townships. As urbanisation became increasingly acknowledged and accepted by Black local authorities, so squatting policies and legislation that 'ordered' or 'controlled' informal settlements were formulated and

implemented in place of racially based policies (Cameron, 1999).

In addition to the explanation provided by Toerien and Donaldson (2016), Lanegran and Lanegran (2001) provide some historical background to the racial segregation demographics of George:

> … the town of George was founded in 1811 when the British Cape Colony authorities separated the new Drostdy (or district) of George from the larger Swellendam Drostdy. [The] Colored community began in the same decades six kilometres south of George Town based at a missionary station of the London Missionary Society (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:677).

The 'Coloured' community settled in a place called Pacaltsdorp, which continued from 1811 on to be politically autonomous in terms of municipal governance (Toerien & Donaldson, 2016; Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001). In the 1960s expansion in the manufacturing sector sparked a growth in population in the areas occupied only by the 'Coloured' population, and from which the 'Black' population were excluded (segregation originally consolidated/ legislated by the 1950 Group Areas Act). In the 19th and 20th centuries significant resources were invested in the building of the road networks, bridges and infrastructure necessary to link George to markets and make George widely accessible. It could be argued that George's importance as a key economic role player in the Garden Route region was attributable to this infrastructure (Toerien & Donaldson, 2016; Smit & Donaldson, 2011).

Segregation /separation of 'Black African' from 'Coloureds'[32] was further supported and consolidated in 1955 by the Coloured Labour Preference Area Policy for the Western Cape. This policy penalised companies which hired Blacks over Coloureds, and resulted in a reduction in the growth of the Black population in the area (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001). In 1975, Pacaltsdorp held a distinctive status as South Africa's only municipality for Coloureds due to the rapid growth of the Coloured population in this municipality. By the mid-1980s houses were constructed southeast of the George

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[32] I use the official StatsSA South African population group classification categories since my data draw on their sources: Black African, Coloured, Indian and White.

industrial area with the purpose of accommodating the growing Coloured population. A Coloured Management Committee governed these neighbourhoods from 1987. The Black population, however, experienced a marginal growth of about 5000 by 1985. The Black population initially settled informally and organically within the Coloured community of Blikkiesdorp (Rosemoor). However, in 1976 the Black population was forcibly moved and those classified 'Black' proceeded to erect informal houses in a small area south of the industrial area (Lawaaikamp). White residents were comfortably located in the area west of the industrial area, and north of Courtenay Street (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:678).

Lawaaikamp was initially intended for temporary housing for the Black African population, as the Municipality was planning for a new formal township to be called Sandkraal (now Thembalethu) to be established by 1982. This intended location is 3km further away from the town of George. Many Black residents from Lawaaikamp were initially open to the relocation, being given the prospect of formal housing. However, "the material and political rights of Blacks became the subject of often violent conflict between Lawaaikampers and White authorities" (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:678-679). This was because established Lawaaikampers did not want to be removed from proximity to employment opportunities. Amidst this unrest, Sandkraal continued during the 1980s to be built as a 'formal' black township. Lanegran (1997 cited in Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001) describe the rationale for the establishment of Sandkraal as a formal township for Blacks as well as the context for decisions by authorities regarding economic and political developments during this decade. There was an aesthetic reason for not establishing a Black African settlement too near to the N2. This prompted the establishment of the township in an area concealed by a hill some distance from the N2. Secondly, there was an influx of Black migrants, mainly from the Eastern Cape rural areas prompted by the rescinding of the Coloured Preference Labour Act in 1984, and the repeal of the Pass Laws and Influx Control Act in 1986, together with the growth as a result of George's service industry. While many long-standing Lawaaikamp residents resisted relocation, recently arrived Black African people were willing to move to the new township. At the same time, authorities wanted more strict alignment with Group Areas legislation and to replace the informal Lawaaikamp with a formal Black township. In 1987 the Western Cape provincial

government designated Sandkraal as a Black township, proclaimed a Black authority, and relieved George Municipality of its responsibility for the township. Lawaaikamp came under the jurisdiction of the Coloured Management Committee, and although pressure on remaining Black residents in the form of intimidation and police violence was increased, sustained resistance led to the George municipality agreeing in 1989 to use a loan from national government to upgrade Lawaaikamp (Lanegran, 1997 cited in Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:679).

One can infer from this account that the aesthetic (as described in chapter 2) and organic nature of informal settlements was demonised through a racialized lens by white authorities, as informal settlements came to be connected to, and associated with, Black African people in terms of 'the other'- as 'those who don't belong' or 'those who contaminate the urban fabric'. The other reason for establishing a formal Blacks only township in the area, as pointed out by Toerien and Donaldson (2016), was the desire on the part of the provincial and local governments to make George more desirable to wealthy foreigners, local tourists, and white retirees, and to increase both their presence and their investments. Thus, it was important not to 'taint' George's image by the visibility of the black township.

The quality of life and standard of living across the different neighbourhoods was strikingly unequal. The reason for this was that informal settlements were established based on the notion of temporality, and this was driven by the Apartheid policies in place during the 1980s, and the political attitudes and actions of white authorities. Lawaaikamp thus becomes the epitome of what we see today in terms of how informal settlements are 'upgraded', by the forced removal of settlements that are not seen to be 'aesthetically pleasing' to decision managers, policy managers, and planners. As discussed in chapter 2, aesthetically pleasing, suggests that, while planners and decision makers may now tend to acknowledge the complexity and richness of informal settlements, they do not necessarily regard these communities as aesthetically agreeable. Moreover, the 'aesthetics' of informal settlements challenge planners' 'picturesque' visions of competitive urban development (as discussed in chapter 2). Interestingly, in this specific context and period the tone of interventions in, and upgrading of, informal settlements stems from the question, 'what is wrong with them' rather than 'what has happened to (befallen) them/their residents?' The latter

question acknowledges the trauma of their residents and communities, and the real impact of adverse dehumanising experiences. It opens avenues for what Perry and Winfrey (2021) call a shift in perspective that brings about healing and disarms the weapon of blame and of the shunting of responsibility. This shift in perspective suggests the need for decision makers to confront and to unpack the shame and stigma acquired by informality. It requires both accountability and empathy on their part, and the ability to be sufficiently open to listening to the uncomfortable truth of how urban development systems still in place continue to inflict adverse realities on residents of informal settlements.

The consequence of such urban development systems, as happened during Apartheid, is a group or community of people who continue to be seen in dehumanised terms according to the old Apartheid racial classifications, being relocated to the periphery of the city, far from socio-economic opportunities, thus perpetuating historical spatial socio-economic inequalities and dysfunctionalities. Even though during this period (1980s) this relocation was done with a racially biased intent, the perpetuation of this process into the 21st century affirms what Varley (2013) calls new forms of colonial relations, which challenge the formal/informal binary. Map 2. is a map showing the segregated spatial layout of George during Apartheid.
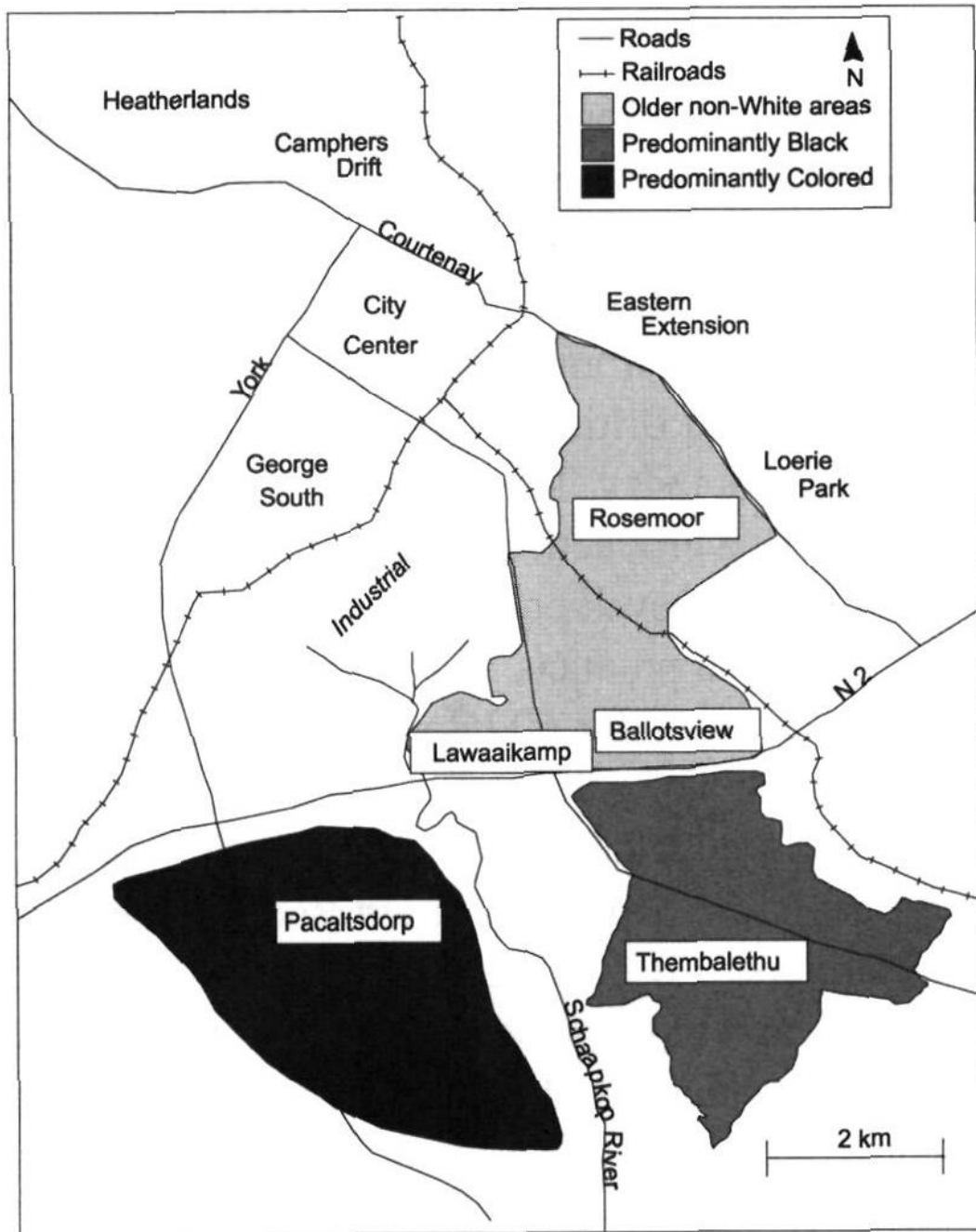
Map 2: George spatial layout of non-whites under the apartheid regime (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:678)

4.6.2 Post 1994: The capital subsidy programme

According to Lanegran and Lanegran (2001), the dawn of democracy brought hope for the non-white population of George with the merging of the city into one municipality. However, this period highlighted the unequal quality of housing provision in George neighbourhoods. White neighbourhoods to the north and west of Camphers

Drift were at this time 95% characterised by aesthetically planned neighbourhoods, in contrast to neighbourhoods like Thembalethu, which remained 75% characterised by informal squatter settlements (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:679). According to Toerien and Donaldson (2016), in 1995 George was recognised as a desirable retirement destination by prospective retirees. More importantly, urban development catering to the population growth during the transition to democracy, and directly after apartheid, was managed and controlled by the private sector. As a result three key developments curated urban development during this time. The first was an increase in the building of retirement villages, the second came about as a result of the retirement villages in the form of high calibre medical facilities, and lastly the creation of a safer, more secure lifestyle which was specific to George and did not imitate bigger cities like Cape Town (Toerien & Donaldson, 2016:7). These safer lifestyle induced developments arrived with developments such as Eskom Park, Loerie Park, and various golf estates. The affluent, safe lifestyle driven urban development initiatives, design and vision set the tone for urban planning, the type of urban development and investment during this time.

What Lanegran and Lanegran (2001:680) bring to the fore is that, even though in 1996 informal settlements were situated in the George urban area, they could not necessarily be described as urban. This was due to their 'rural' attributes': there were no basic services (water and sanitation), residents had to fetch water, and animals (goats and milk cows) roamed around the settlements. As mentioned earlier by Smit (2017), the capital housing subsidy pilot project in the form of the RDP would be the ANC's manifesto during their first election in 1994 (one million houses in five years) and was incorporated into the national housing policy. The way the national housing policy translated into the context of George was significant when compared to the way in which this happened in the rest of the country: in 1999 George Municipality was nationally praised for the 1996 sizeable housing backlog in George being completely eradicated by 1999 due to the provision of 7000 houses (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:681). This, however, does not mean that people did not continue to live in informal settlements. What contributed to the renowned success George experienced in the roll-out of these subsidy 'start-up houses' was the lessons learned from the early 1990s when the former Nationalist administration had provided basic services to

Lawaaikamp. Even though there was a change of administration with the ANC coming into power in 1994, political will, in the sense of ensuring equity and improvement in people's quality of life, was generated by involving the officials, the private sector, residents, and politicians, to ensure that the subsidy programme benefitted those who needed it most (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:681).

Three aspects of the George Municipality story make their collaborative and innovative approach both significant and enlightened. The first is the local authority's ability to 'listen' to residents when they complained about what they saw as the limits to what the subsidy programme could enable residents to afford (financially). As a result, and in response to residents' requests, the local authority provided more housing finance options that allowed residents to draw from a range of resource pools, such as loans from employers, or from saving clubs, to ensure that the subsidy could enable residents to afford bigger homes. This approach was adopted in areas such as Thembalethu, where the municipality provided 1000 houses (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001:681).

 The second aspect of the approach was the local nature of the ways in which labour was utilised by building contractors. This not only capacitated the community with new skills, but empowered them economically in the process. Lastly, there was a ramping up of services directed to the poorest communities, such as Thembalethu. As reported earlier, Thembalethu was predominantly informal in 1996, and due to the municipality's strategic and enlightened housing policy, Thembalethu was prioritised and received two-thirds of the new subsidised housing (Lanegran & Lanegran, 2001).

Despite these well-thought out and collaborative efforts to provide houses to the most needy communities in George, Lanegran and Lanegran (2001) assert that in reality housing provision patterns perpetuated spatial inequalities as these houses were provided and built only within the periphery of urban areas. This could be because two different urban development visions for George were running parallel, one vision strictly for the affluent and the other for the marginalised. This was a pattern which mirrored the disconnect implicit in what urban development means for planners and George Municipality (as discussed in chapter 2). As a result, although people now had houses, they were situated far from socio-economic opportunities and transport

systems/ infrastructure. The other issue with these subsidised houses was the 'burden' of home ownership the policy brought with it for the owners: people now had to pay water, sewage, and electricity bills. In addition, the spatial location of these houses, together with the history of debt in communities like Thembalethu and Pacaltsdorp, not only posed fiscal problems for the municipality but also presented an unsustainable model for the residents of these subsidy houses.

In assessing the 'success' of the George awarded subsidy housing provision, Lanegran and Lanegran (2001) demonstrate how the provision of the houses was not the issue, nor was it a question of political will. Instead, it was the inability of the city of George to absorb the rapid influx of people, together with the city's inability to generate an economy to service and absorb the resultant urban growth, and, most important, its inability to redress the apartheid influenced and created spatial layout of George. This lack of capacity to handle growing urbanisation on the part of the city echoes Crankshaw and Parnell (1996) in their reference to a general lack of an urbanisation policy in South Africa at the time of the election of the first democratic government. The government lacked a policy which was able to begin to radically transform the Apartheid spatial planning in such a way as to provide meaningful redress.

Toerien and Donaldson (2016) agree to some extent with Lanegran and Lanegran (2001) that that the in-migration of both the affluent and the poor into George placed a heavy demand on provision of basic infrastructure, housing, and land use management. Toerien and Donaldson (2016:18) propose a different argument from that of Lanegran and Lanegran (2001), based on the fact that George's economy is diverse and that the tourism, agricultural, financial, educational, and medical sectors are well developed. In addition, George being at the heart of the Garden Route region, further amplifies its potential in tourism. More importantly, the construction industry contributes significantly to George's economy, while keeping in mind that the 2009 recession did have some impact on the economy. Smit and Donaldson (2011) also mention how the in-migration impacted on the growing number of home-based businesses in poorer townships in George. A common theme, approximately from 2010 onwards becomes the need for alignment between the different drivers of urban development. One can infer, based on Toerien and Donaldson (2016), that on part of

George municipality there seems to be a tension with the 'tunnel implementation' for different juristicated areas of George together with a common urban development vision. This is because despite the common vision it is communicated differently to those responsible for the implementation. However, what is not clear, in light of the George municipality's ability to provide houses, is the extent to which political will has influenced or steered the urban development process of George, and whether the political will is being overlooked, and to a significant degree oversimplified, by Lanegran and Lanegran (2001). I hope to shed light on this in a subsequent chapter (chapter 6) when discussing and unpacking the interviews of the professionals involved and responsible for the implementation of the UISP Thembalethu Project: Phase 1.

4.6.3 BNG and the UISP in the context of George

Reverting to Smit's (2017) timeline of the South African housing policy and its phases/shifts, it was only in 2009, with the introduction of the NUSP, that the UISP came into full swing in George. Based on the performances of these two municipalities, in 2014 the Govan Mbeki[33] awards were bestowed on the George and Mossel Bay Municipalities as reported in chapter 3. The George Municipality's award was for its diligence in the implementation of the human settlement project. The gist and scope of the Thembalethu UISP project is explained below in the 2014 newsletter of Aurecon (advisory consultant company commissioned by George Municipality), an international private engineering management and specialist technical service company, two of whose clients at the time were these respective municipalities:

> Thembalethu project covers the incremental development of 4 350 formal residential sites with full, permanent municipal services and eventually top structures on 10 land parcels, for identified households from the current 22 informal settlement areas[34].

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[33] https://www.aurecongroup.com/about/latest-news/2014/jul/george-and-mossel-bay-receive-govan-mbeki-awards (25/10/2020)

[34] https://www.aurecongroup.com/about/latest-news/2014/jul/george-and-mossel-bay-receive-govan-mbeki-awards (25/10/2020)

Aurecon as an implementing agent was responsible for the entire upgrading project. Their mandate included the "multi-disciplinary professional services necessary for the upgrading process, the required bulk and connection services infrastructure as well as the development of the fully serviced sites and eventually the construction of the top structures for qualifying beneficiaries"[35]. Included in this list of services was their responsibility for the management and facilitation of community participation and relocation processes.

Thembalethu had been a housing provision priority since the 1980s, and, even though, as described above, the George Municipality's initial intent was for Thembalethu to be a formal township for Black residents, informality increased steadily over two decades, and addressing the issue of informal settlements remained a challenge. Commenting on the above quoted Aurecon mandate, Hot et al. (2015) argue that, even though George Municipality achieved this seeming 'success' by means of the *in situ* upgrading approach through the UISP 'structured approach', there seemed, at the time of the commissioning of Aurecon, to be a consensus amongst provincial and local government that the 'turnkey' procurement[36] strategy was the most efficient way to get the job done. However, the question still remains as to the role of community participation in the provision of formal housing, and how meaningfully and sympathetically this was and is elicited by local authorities or by the outsourced private advisory consultant companies local authorities enlist to achieve this. With an emphasis on community participation, Hot et al. (2015) call for an interrogation of what researchers, policy makers, and planners deem a 'successful' informal settlement-upgrading programme. The rationale for this interrogation stems from two imperative concerns regarding the private sector (Aurecon) being in complete control of community participation processes during the upgrading process, and the absence from the process of a responsive government.

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[35] https://www.aurecongroup.com/about/latest-news/2014/jul/george-and-mossel-bay-receive-govan-mbeki-awards (25/10/2020)

[36] Turnkey Procurement strategy: Turnkey is a traditional public sector procurement model for infrastructure facilities. Generally, a private contractor is selected through a bidding process. The contractor is responsible for the project for the duration of the project until the project is completed. https://www.unescap.org/ttdw/ppp/ppp_primer/223_turnkey.html (16/01/21)

The first reason for such an interrogation would be that, because Aurecon is an implementation agent, and a private profit-making concern, the duration of community participation is limited to the budgeted time frame of the project; thereafter the capacity building and participation processes cease to operate or exist (Hot et al., 2015). In addition, because the participation and capacity building were outsourced, the second rationale, the necessity for a collaborative and sustained relationship between the community and municipality, is not as active as it is supposed, or envisioned (by policy-makers and researchers), to be. This implies that the ability of the municipality to thoroughly understand the needs of the community is invariably filtered, diffused, and detached, as the emphasis on the part of the municipality is on an outcome of accelerated, efficient service delivery. This is not to detract from the role or the benefits of accelerated service delivery, nor from the role of the private sector. The process brings to light whether or not the government is, or should be, constantly both responsive and responsible to communities during upgrading processes.

"Responsibility, in this case implies accountability to communities, consistency across time and communities, efficiency and effectiveness, whereas responsive refers to the degree to which government listens to communities, responds to their needs and upholds their rights" (Hot et al., 2015:66). Hot et al. (2015) problematize the technical support of an initiative such as the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP) provides to municipalities. They see the focus of these national initiatives as being on advancing the private sector, while neglecting participatory mechanisms and capacity programmes that can assist with, and "articulate demand-side dynamics in designing, planning and implementing projects" (Hot et al., 2015:66). Again, while not discounting or undervaluing the role of the private sector, the aforementioned brings into perspective the persisting narrow technicist approach, and the rigid attitude of planners of government programmes toward the issue of informal settlements. This applies particularly to the way in which the upgrading of informal settlements is, or should be, managed. The approach seems to be a perpetuation of the one Smit (2017) referred to as being adopted by local and provincial governments in 1994, when the political incentive for redress behind delivering completed houses drove the approach to addressing the problem of growing urbanisation. What would seem to be a participatory process among professionals in the case of Aurecon being

commissioned to complete the upgrading of Thembalethu, comes with the potential dangers of beneficiary voices being excluded and discounted.

This approach and policy has serious implications for such non-inclusive urban development decisions, and ultimately for these urban populations. Abbott (2002a:312), in his review of informal settlement upgrading approaches, argues that the emphasis on community-based planning as an approach has neglected the 'issue of hierarchy in decision-making'. It is for this reason that NGOs argue strongly for communities to create and play a significant role in upgrading process. However, because NGOs, like private consultants, are also restricted to project cycles, they too have their limitations. Moreover, Abbott (2002a) states that the hard drive for NGOs to facilitate the voices and needs of communities, or to assist communities in deciding the outcome of the upgrading of their neighbourhood, can negatively impact the outcome of the matrix of urban development. Thus, the issue of control exercised in decision making in upgrading processes needs more unpacking in urban research in terms of understanding the power hierarchy in such processes.

Shifting the housing policy lens away from George to the broader context of spatial transformation in South Africa, a recent policy resource captures many of the contradictions and complexities of our housing policy framework in relation to the challenges of spatial transformation. McKenna (2020) reports that, even though spatial disparity in South African cities remains, there are three domains now working concurrently to achieve spatial transformation: planning, housing, and land reform. Each of these domains has specific policies and tools that guide the ways in which each seeks to achieve spatial transformation. However, in McKenna's (2020) critique she describes how all three domains, because they all manifest on a local governmental level, become competitors for one budget. She argues for planning's "need to build functional, high density, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly and public transport orientated urban systems" (McKenna, 2020:7). This would ideally be done through planning instruments and guided infrastructure investments. However, presently housing is premised on the provision of Breaking New Ground Housing programmes which encompass subsidy support programmes. This kind of housing approach takes on a more project management focus, which in turn is influenced by developers, availability of land, and availability of finance. Housing projects are

financed through human settlement grants and delivered through development partners, which McKenna (2020:7) argues, is the reason for the disjuncture between housing and planning frameworks.

Moreover, the overriding political agenda tends to ignore the planning rationale of integration. Land reform emphasis is on land distribution or re-distribution, especially to those previously affected by forced removals. This politically driven agenda of redress in turn has an impact on urban development processes, although it has so far only manifested in payment of claimants (McKenna, 2020). Thus, the challenge for the spatial transformation process and for planners becomes the alignment of priorities between these three domains. McKenna (2020:17) points out that the reason for this lies with the lack of capacity on the part of a government, whether national or local, as it "takes on the role of developer, property owner, infrastructure investor and financer with little capacity and experience of managing mixed developments". Moreover, housing projects are included (via a 'copy-paste' approach from the municipal housing department) in the Spatial Development Frameworks (SDF). This is instead of SDFs being the planning tool to specify areas suitable for housing. As a result the SDF does not set the agenda for housing as part of the matrix for urban development; instead it seems to 'follow' and incorporate the agenda of the municipal housing department. The misalignment stems from local departments of housing being in a cohort relationship with provincial and national departments of human settlements, instead of horizontally aligning with a local planning department. According to McKenna (2020), this lack of alignment comes about due to the primary focus of a local department of housing tending to be on securing funding.

What remains unclear is the role of the planners, and whether there is any determination and persistence on their part to influence and adapt this current way of 'copy and paste' housing projects in the SDF. Moreover, McKenna (2020) argues that the role of planning in urban land markets is understated and misunderstood by planning departments. Thus urban property markets are not stimulated to promote a more compact and sustainable city form. McKenna's (2020) work demonstrates the gaps in policy implementation, more so as it illuminates planners/planning potential 'power' alongside their inability to use it. However, what she omits to mention is the reasons why planners/planning are 'complacent'. She does not pick up on or analyse

the institutional dynamics that drive policy implementation, while Abbott (2002b) on the other hand mentions that policy underpins development but does not drive it. What she also omits, but which Abbott (2002b) points to, is that the emphasis on addressing development needs that are linked to vulnerability i.e. social exclusion and sustainability on the part of planning. This omission has resulted in narrow approaches that overshadow both the long-term sustainability of the matrix of urban development in the city (Abbott, 2002b:323) and the relationship between formality and urban informality in the city (Kamalipour, 2016).

In 2019, as mentioned in the introduction, we see another case reported where a new section in Thembalethu had been 'invaded'[37]. Also mentioned was that the municipality seems to be aware of "land invaders" tactics yet, at the same time, appears helpless. I would argue that this passivity or lack of agency is due to the 'fate' of the upgrading process not really being in the hands of the municipality. As we saw in the above sections, the municipality in these cases of 'invasion' waits for the bureaucratic administration of the upgrading 'structured UISP process' to be initiated and completed, assisted by the private sector, before dealing with the issue of informal settlements. Thus, from the available evidence I have cited in this chapter, in George the UISP process appears to by default to have become the 'baby' of Aurecon. It is unclear why the municipality is not moving towards becoming the agent to find innovative ways to deal with informality, working collaboratively with local residents. Thus, one is left to wonder if a turnkey procurement strategy is the result of the municipality's being insufficiently capacitated, or if the municipality is unwilling to get their hands dirty politically, or whether it is a case of the municipality taking precautions to ensure good governance. I discuss this in more depth in chapter 6. Whatever the reason, ultimately this lack of agency permits policy managers, planners, and private sector professionals assigned within George municipality, to remain 'neutral', by not taking a position vis-à-vis the residents of these settlements, nor acknowledging/entertaining their right to be listened to.

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[37] https://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/more-illegal-settlements-mushroom-201905300800 (2020/08/30)

4.7 Conclusion

The literature has shown the South African housing provision endeavour, from the mid-1980s to the present, to have been a deeply politicised one. Moreover, South African housing provision is yoked both to the racial and spatial inequity aftermath of the former Apartheid government, and to the redress agenda of the new democratic government. While Smit's (2017) three significant historical shifts in South African housing policy from the 1920s to the present show that those responsible for formal housing provision have sought, particularly during the 1980s and after 1994, to deal with the issue of informal settlements. However, what 'formal' housing provision in fact has done since 1994 is to perpetuate the Apartheid legacy of spatial segregated patterns of urban areas, including in George. The urban areas were clearly designed by Apartheid era planners to serve the interests of the White minority. At the same time the majority of South Africa's population has over the years, including during the Apartheid era, migrated from rural to urban areas driven by the desire for better opportunities, and have increasingly exercised their agency by being proactive in finding or creating their own housing. Given the reality that urban areas have not been able to seamlessly absorb this migration, together with population growth, the wide-scale provision of housing by local and provincial government would make sense. However, houses that have been provided have ended up being built on the periphery of urban areas, thus perpetuating ever-greater spatial and socio-economic inequalities. This has happened in spite of the acknowledgement of informal settlements in housing policy in 2004, with the introduction of the BNG, and the well-intentioned attempt on the part of the ANC government to integrate informal settlements with the greater urban fabric. The government still seems to lack a clear (socio-political) vision of the role informal settlements could and should play in, and ways in which they could become part of, the greater urban development landscape. While the UISP provides a 'structured approach' to informal settlement upgrading, with the hope of incrementally upgrading these settlements to a phase four consolidation phase, this programme has so far fallen short. Housing policy, one can argue, is coded, and scholars have highlighted the ways in which policy managers are uncomfortable with, and have a negative attitude towards, the idea of informality as an integral part of the urban fabric. A persistent rigid and contentious attitude toward

141

the idea of informality on the part of policy managers and planners, together with internal dis-alignment, has allowed housing policy implementation to perpetuate spatial inequalities, and the inevitable socio-economic inequalities. This is exacerbated by an emphasis on housing provision, often together with relocation to ever more peripheral areas, rather than settlement upgrading, as the only way to deal with the rapid growth of informal settlements. While planners are called to action by local and national government, it is not clear from studies in the literature and other 'primary' sources what stops these planners from using their legislative and policy tools to foster measurable and sustainable spatial transformation. Also what is not clear is the reasons why planners appear to be 'powerless' in the upgrading process, and, as in the case of George, seem to be unaware of the ways in which informal settlements form an integral part of George as a whole. I unravel this dilemma further in chapter 6.

Increasingly private sector agents appear to be the ones to 'figure' out approaches to making housing policy workable in urban settings, and thus they end up being the ones to actively 'handle'/manage informality, including deciding the forms consultation with an affected community will take. Thus I, and other researchers, argue that, to remedy this situation there is a need for a municipality which is both responsive and responsible in the sense of becoming more actively aware of, and willing to directly address, the social needs and articulated desires within communities. This process would go hand in hand with fostering spatial transformation. Moreover, the Municipal Spatial Development Framework (2019) discussed in this chapter indicates a shift in the space economy, and an increasing lack of capacity of the George space economy to absorb both the influx of people and the growth of informalisation in the city. This brings to light the need for ideas for how we could or should think about the relationship between densities and economic investment, and how these inform patterns of urbanisation. Moreover, the question arises: how can municipalities be convinced to refrain from fragmented, asymmetrical and persistently inequitable spatial visions, and come to embrace urban development more holistically? In the case of Thembalethu, the settlement is growing rapidly, and informality continues to be an urgent challenge for the George municipality to address these issues.

The next chapter concentrates the focus of the study on the case of Thembalethu in

the form of a more detailed discussion of the UISP project Phase 1.

Chapter 5: Unpacking Thembalethu UISP Project: Phase 1

5.1 Introduction

In 2010, the George Municipality Informal Settlement Master Plan (ISMP) prioritized Thembalethu as a vital start off location for upgrading. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Thembalethu has always been significant to the municipal housing agenda, and continues to be, as it continues to grow informally. In 2021 the George municipality, through the help of Aurecon (since 2020 known as Zutari), rolled out Phase four of the Upgrading Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) structured approach in Thembalethu. According to interviewees, there are more phases in the pipeline as informal settlements are continually increasing in Thembalethu. My focus in this chapter is on Phase 1, which took place from 2010 to 2014. Phase 1, as with the other phases, consists of all four stages of the UISP in a specific area of Thembalethu and provides a clear progression from start to finish of the UISP approach for that phase. Thus each phase needs to go through the four-stage cycle of the UISP, which are; Stage 1-Initiation of UISP, Stage 2: Interim access to shared basic services & Feasibility Assessment and Planning & Construction Readiness, Stage 3: Construction of Enhanced Serviced Sites and TRA Facilities, Stage 4: Housing consolidation[38]. This approach helps to put into perspective how informal settlements were being managed and understood at this time. I was able to obtain all of the project reports for Phase 1, together with the necessary documentation. These became the source from which I unpack the Thembalethu UISP project Phase 1. Since Aurecon was appointed to be 'in charge' of the UISP implementation in George, I start off by explaining their approach or philosophy as implementing agents, especially as it pertains to Human Settlement Transformation and Development (Aurecon, 2020). Thereafter I delve into the details of the project.

5.2 Aurecon's Approach

It is clear that Aurecon has made a significant mark both internationally and nationally

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[38] UISP stages explained: https://mbuisp.org/homepage/project-overview/uisp-explained/ (14/6/2022)

when it comes to design and management in the engineering world. In 2019 the Engineering News Record acknowledged Aurecon to be one of the top 225 International design firms[39]. Aurecon has a reputable name in South Africa as being one of the top 500 well managed engineering companies in South Africa[40]. This reputation has a lot to do with the way in which they engage their clients, and with stakeholder management processes. Aurecon's stated aim is to work alongside their clients, ensuring that they understand the clients' goal, and in so doing, co-create solutions that are innovative, and that adds value to the project. Critical to the stakeholder management process, and what the firm promises in its promotional advertising, is Aurecon's ability to be attentive to the stakeholders' needs, fears, ideas, and concerns. Taken together, this capability, approach, and process is what they call 'effective engagement'. Thus, what, for them, in their stated aims, becomes central to the process is not only the ability of the stakeholder and client to articulate their problem clearly, but also the ability of Aurecon to listen carefully, interpret, and understand the client and stakeholder in order for outcomes to be successfully achieved for both parties. This further affirms Aurecon's user-design centred approach, where they claim that the client is seen and related to as a co-designer instead of simply being on the receiving end of design solutions.

There are several desired outcomes seen to be achieved from this relationship and process when effective engagement is employed. One of these is the establishment of trust between stakeholders and client, a trust which is cemented in the facilitation and continuous involvement of these relationships in the project process. Another outcome is the kind of access the project team acquires to local knowledge, together with the expertise gained as a result of effective stakeholder engagement. This then, in turn, leads to the last promoted benefit, which is the ownership and greater stakeholder buy-in of the project's solutions and decisions. A further anchor of Aurecon's stated effective engagement is community based participatory planning (CBPP). What we need to remember is that Aurecon is an international company with

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[39] https://www.aurecongroup.com/about/latest-news/2019/september/top-international-design-firms (14/04/2021)

[40] https://www.aurecongroup.com/about/latest-news/2013/oct/aurecon-ranked-number-one-company-in-south-africa-in-the-engineering-groups-sector (14/04/2021)

South African presence, this includes branches in Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, George and other towns and cities across South Africa. It would be interesting to delve into how Aurecon (now Zutari), global institutional culture penetrates their local offices, however this is not the focus of my thesis instead it takes their global approach as informing Georges informal settlement approach as a given. Thus, this section explains what ideally should inform, their upgrading approaches at a local level. It is in later chapters when I discuss the findings, when we start to see actually what occurred in the process of their rolling out the upgrading of Thembalethu Phase 1 and whether this affirms this approach.

CBPP plays a fundamental role in building resilient communities, and linking long- and short term multi-sectoral interventions in the human settlement process, while simultaneously keeping the process community centred. Aurecon as implementing agent and project manager in the human settlement sphere plays a fundamental role as facilitator, and if you take this further, you could infer that Aurecon's expertise resides in harnessing stakeholder and client relationships to ever stronger and useful sustainable deliverables and outcomes. George municipal officials quoted and discussed in chapter 6 affirm this role, or multiple roles played by Aurecon's in the upgrading process. In addition, because Aurecon has been able to identify the gap, and have become experts at fostering, and harnessing, the dynamics between stakeholders (in this case communities) and client (in this case George municipality), based on the previous chapter's concluding remarks, one can infer that governments have become indefensible i.e. Aurecon is filling the gap left by governments. Governments have become unreliable meaning government/State interventions, in comparison with participatory private sector interventions, such as that offered by Aurecon, have shown themselves to be both ineffective and indefensible in terms of forging links with, and increasing the resilience of, communities. More importantly, they have shown themselves to be ineffective and ineffectual in managing upgrading projects. In order to determine the viable relational dynamics that have in practice existed between them, in chapter 6 I discuss the implications of the nature of the relationship between the implementing agent and George municipality.

Through a detailed understanding of the complex effects that rapid urbanisation has had, and continues to have, on planning integrated cities and facilitating urban

146

development, Aurecon have come up with their own integrated planning approach. This approach aligns itself with the New Urban Agenda (United Nations, 2016) through incorporating safety, inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability in human settlement processes and city making. Aurecon's planning approach to human settlement transformation and development includes four aspects: feasibility, concept development, and master plan design and implementation. These four aspects are premised on the idea of integrated planning, as depicted in Figure 5. With Aurecon's diverse technical teams and development experience, integrated planning plays a quintessential role in strategic thinking, project development, and the achievement of quality and sustainable policy and design outcomes. Over the years, Aurecon has cultivated its own approach to getting a 'handle' on human settlements (as discussed later in chapter 6). This applies especially to upgrading programmes. As implementing agent Aurecon's professional employees have equipped themselves with, cultivated, and continue to harness, the necessary skills to meet their clients' expectations. Even though this is Aurecon's general approach to human settlement intervention, it is important to verify contextually how the George Aurecon office, given their approach, managed Thembalethu UISP Phase 1. More important is verification of the specific ways in which this approach governed their management style, and how this management approach was experienced when interfaced with municipal management styles and their collective relational dynamics with the community of Thembalethu. In the next chapter I discuss in more detail what some of these professionals involved in the upgrading process had to say about the project development process, and their experience as part of the implementing agent in upgrading projects specifically. However, within the scope of this chapter, I discuss and unpack various reports i.e. secondary data on the project.

Figure 5: Integrated Planning Approach Diagram - Human Settlement Transformation and Development (Aurecon, 2020)

5.3 Thembalethu UISP Project: Overview and Timeline

The Thembalethu UISP project is complex in nature, due to its being massive, clustered and ongoing. While the upgrading has been taking place, there have been more land 'invasions' which have both contributed to, and been instrumental in, the creation of an additional Phase 7 in the upgrading process of the settlement. The four stages of each phase in the UISP explained earlier involve a process during which different informal areas (seen in images below) within Thembalethu are targeted for a specific phase, after which the UISP process is followed through within that specific area. During my fieldwork it became clear that a UISP project is seen by government and the private sector as 'completed' after the three (3) designated UISP stages are completed, at which stage the sites are deemed to be fully serviced. Stage 4, the consolidation phase, is considered separate from the other phases, as projects rarely

reach this stage due to the complicated practical realities of securing land, assessing land suitability, and the complex nature of installing interim services[41]. My focus is on Phase 1, the first upgrading programme which was being implemented under the banner of the UISP within Thembalethu, George. The reason for this is because Phase 1 was approached as an *in situ* upgrading project, and the phases were well documented allowing me to follow through all three of the stages of the UISP. Stage 4 started in February 2017 and is to date ongoing.

Image A: Depicts the dense nature of Informal structures prioritized for Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP Project (Aurecon, 17/07/2012).

Image B: Depicts the steep gradients on which some of the Informal structures were erected and which were prioritized for Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP Project (Aurecon, 17/07/2012).

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[41]Informal Settlement Upgrading: An Institutional Map For NGOs. Find online:
https://isandla.org.za/en/resources/item/download/121_5228c2c0de1099ad6e2bd91e1185b908

Image C: Depicts steep slopes as well as the environmentally hazardous conditions of the Informal structures prioritized for Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP Project (Aurecon, 17/07/2012).

During my fieldwork there was consensus amongst employees of Aurecon, whom I interviewed, and from whom I obtained project reports, that talks about the upgrading of Thembalethu dated back to 2004. The upgrading of Thembalethu was seen as a risk project for Aurecon, and the number of informal settlements in Thembalethu were categorised and phased by Aurecon accordingly. Such projects are usually an attempt on the part of a consulting company to do work for 'free' (which is the risk) with the hope of gaining more projects from the client, which is not always the case. Understanding that Housing is a provincial government mandate, and provision of basic services is a municipal one, Aurecon as an implementing agent plays a catalytic role between the two spheres in the process of achieving housing and/or upgrading deliverables.

Aurecon was contracted (through a tendering process) by Western Cape Department of Human Settlements and George Municipality to carry out the mammoth task of upgrading informal settlements in Thembalethu, George. Consequently, Aurecon became the collective project manager of the upgrading of Thembalethu (Phase 1). Before the upgrading process can begin, certain legal authorisations are necessary (discussed later in this chapter), and the approvals of certain Provincial and National departments are required. Even though a rough estimate of the duration of the Phase 1 project period was between 2010-2014, groundwork was done before the project was able to commence. According to the environmental impact assessment, by the 4th December 2009 Aurecon had already compiled an engineering services report, which stated that most of the bulk service infrastructure for the proposed upgrading

project was authorised. This is a further indication of how difficult it is to put an exact date on when this project actually started. In 2014 this project was referred to as a seven-year programme[42] in a news outlet which applauded George Municipality for 'a job well done' for winning the Mbeki award as described in chapter 4. The Western Cape Government's Govan Mbeki Award seeks to acknowledge municipalities and key role players who play a critical role in the delivery of quality human settlements. In addition, where quantifying becomes more tangible, this is when funding (discussed later in the chapter) is in the process of being released for the roll out of the different stages of the UISP. Funding for stages 1-3 of the UISP was granted for the 2012/2013 financial year. The amount was premised on the 2011/2012 subsidy quantum. Soon after this, in May 2014, the Phase 1 UISP project won the Mbeki Award. This award was directly associated with the completion of stages 1-3 of the UISP.

Areas prioritised for Phase 1 of the UISP Thembalethu Project, were areas 4A, 4C, and 4B. The construction in Area 4C, a Greenfield site, commenced in June 2012. At this point people were moved from Area 4A onto service sites/ temporary accommodation sites to clear the area 4A for construction. The completion of Phase 1 construction was around May 2015. The entire Phase 1 took approximately three years to complete. This means that, when the UISP stages 1-3 were completed, people re-erected their shacks/ informal structures on the serviced sites.

5.4 Thembalethu UISP Project: Phase 1 Overview

In July 2010 Aurecon drew up a project feasibility report and implementation plan whose objective was to eradicate all informal settlements in Thembalethu. Twenty-eight (28) informal settlements, and approximately 4350 geotagged (surveyed) households, were identified and prioritised to kick start Phase 1 (Areas 4A, 4C, and 4B) of the Thembalethu UISP project as seen in Figure 6.

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[42] https://concretetrends.co.za/news/george-and-mossel-bay-receive-govan-mbeki-awards/#.YF-nia8zbIU

Figure 6: Thembalethu Phase 1, site location

Source: Aurecon (2017)

Stage one (1) of the UISP structured process is the application phase. This process involves the municipality responsible for that area having to apply for funding from either national or provincial government, depending on the specificities of the grant directive. In the case of the Thembalethu UISP project, Aurecon was appointed as a multi-disciplinary implementing agent for the multi-year/phased UISP implementation, and was specifically responsible for the application process. In the application stage, Aurecon drafted an upgrading plan, also known as the Interim Business Plan (IBP). The aim of the IBP is to gauge the feasibility of a project. The IBP requirements in this case included[43]:

- Number and scope of informal settlements in George Municipality

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[43] Informal Settlement Upgrading: An Institutional Map For Ngos. Find online:
https://isandla.org.za/en/resources/item/download/121_5228c2c0de1099ad6e2bd91e1185b908

- Reasoning for selecting Areas 4A, 4 B, 4C
- A structured plan that attends to and ensures that informal settlement growth is contained
- Pre- feasibility details-
  - age and history of Thembalethu;
  - ownership status of the land within the greater Thembalethu;
  - initial scoping of the geotechnical suitability of the land within Thembalethu;
  - desktop scoping [of areas 4A, 4B, 4 C] of the environmental suitability of the area for upgrading;
  - location of the settlement in relation to transportation nodes, employment, and social amenities;
  - estimated number of households within Areas 4A, 4B, and 4C;
  - estimated number of households to be relocated;
  - identification of illegal immigrants;
  - preliminary work plan for the project implementation; and
  - preliminary budget for the project.

Combined with the IBP there are other services that are generally provided, such as participation, survey, geotechnical investigation, land acquisition, interim engineering services, and pre-planning.

Stage 2 is the project initiation phase. This phase is normally the set-up phase during which municipalities organise and make the necessary arrangements for Stage 3, which is the implementation phase. Stage 2 also solidifies and finalises the IBP. This process includes identifying and acquiring vacant/public/municipal owned land, profiling the settlement, installing the necessary interim services, determining geotechnical conditions, and doing an environmental assessment. According to the UISP policy, this stage should take 8-12 months. However, this is rarely the case due to the complex nature of securing land, assessing land suitability, and the practical realities of providing interim services[44].

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[44] Informal Settlement Upgrading: An Institutional Map For NGOs. Find online: https://isandla.org.za/en/resources/item/download/121_5228c2c0de1099ad6e2bd91e1185b908

In the case of Thembalethu, a comprehensive land audit was set out to provide a detailed description of land ownership and availability within the area. Consequently 10 'brownfield' *in situ* development areas, and 4 'greenfield' development parcels were identified, which in turn had to house the 28 informal settlement communities. The ten (10) 'brownfield' *in situ* development areas are: Mdongwe, Asazani, Silvertown, Ramaphosa, Zama Zama, Zabalaza, a portion of Mdywadini, a portion of Allbrick, France, and a portion of Tsunami Park. The four (4) 'greenfield' development areas are Area 4C, Area 5, Area 6A, and area 6B. The remaining informal settlements (where *in situ* upgrading is not possible) would be relocated to both the green-and brownfield development areas. These settlements include all those in the area north of Sandkraal Road: Nyama Land, Telkom, Blondie, Sityebtyeb, Edongweni, Absa, Kwanorhuse, those in Sandkraal road reserve, a portion of Allbrick, and a portion of Tsunami Park. The land availability was resolved by the 2010 Council, and as a result a phased upgrading of bulk and link services was made to correspond to development parcels. Province decided upon 100m2 sites, and, given the identified development areas, the estimated provisional residential 100m2 sites were 4939, 4350, which constituted the UISP, and the remaining 589 were for backyarders. In this process, *in situ* basic services were provided on a shared basis for all of the 28 informal settlements. More importantly, informal settlement Building Local Communities (BLCs) were established by Aurecon working collaboratively with SAVE, thus Aurecon undertook this responsibility and George municipality was not involved in this process.

A BLC is also an organisational tool used to help facilitate more inclusive participation within and during the upgrading process. Beneficiaries are established on the basis of qualifying (as outlined by the UISP) and identified (by the IBS) 'households' within the informal area designated for upgrading. The BLCs consist of elected members from the informal settlement beneficiary community who are trained by the organisation responsible for the upgrading; they also sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to ensure that both the community and the engineering company are fully aware of each other's expectations. In the case of Thembalethu, the South African Value Education (SAVE) company was responsible for training those BLCs within areas 4A - C in Phase 1 of the Thembalethu UISP project. SAVE is a training provider whose members work with Aurecon on UISP projects; their role involves stakeholder

engagement, facilitation, and acting as the link between the community, Aurecon and the client. SAVE was outsourced by Aurecon to take on the role of community liaison. These BLCs are well equipped and informed and kept up to date with the different stages and the progress of each stage of the UISP. They are also responsible for reporting back to their communities on the progress of the project. These different BLCs representing members of the communities in the different areas in Phase 1 formed, and continue to form, part of an Informal Settlement Forum (ISF). Representatives are elected from the ISF to sit on the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The purpose of this is to ensure that the BLC represents the needs of their respective informal settlements to the professionals steering the UISP project[45]. Furthermore, a comprehensive and robust strategy and action plan for management and control of further in-migration and invasions had been employed. This had taken place together with a relocation strategy to include Temporary Relocation Accommodation facilities (TRAs), as well as strategy to assist with the relocation and included the necessary materials.

Stage 3 is premised on the approval of the final IBP by the National Department of Human Settlements (NDHS). This approval was being finalised in stage 2. The approval of the IBP releases funding for the following activities in preparation for Stage 4[46]:

- Project management capacity;

- Housing Support Centres to support households in the construction of housing typologies in accordance with their needs, means, and aspirations;

- Acquisition of land;

- Initiation of the planning process;

- Resolution of any disputes;

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[45] https://mbuisp.org/2020/10/07/1st-workshop-for-phase-1-blcs-of-uisp-mossel-bay/ (03/03/2021)

[46] Informal Settlement Upgrading: An Institutional Map For Ngos.
https://isandla.org.za/en/resources/item/download/121_5228c2c0de1099ad6e2bd91e1185b908

- Land rehabilitation;

- Installation of permanent municipal engineering infrastructure, such as water, sanitation and toilet structures, roads, storm water, and street lighting

- Acquisition of full project enrolment status from the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC); and

- Construction of social amenities, economic, and community facilities.

Furthermore, specific to the case of Thembalethu, Enhanced Serviced Sites (ESS), and electrification through formal township development and permanent upgrading were deployed from east to west of Phase 1, as well as temporary electrification. In addition secure tenure was established through a 'Commodatum Agreement'. This agreement means that transfers of tenure went only to subsidised beneficiaries during the UISP stage four (4), the housing consolidation stage. The Thembalethu UISP Project Stages 1-3 Report, 10 January 2018, compiled by Aurecon, expressed the current status at the time, and the challenges experienced up to that date. Out of the initial 4350 prospective beneficiaries geo-tagged, and the full process of township establishment being followed, which includes National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA) processes and Land Use Planning Act No. 16 of 2013 (LUPA) processes, only a percentage of the beneficiaries benefited from this project. In addition, 1746 enhanced serviced sites were developed and 1696 beneficiary households were relocated to sites with 'Commodatum' secure tenure. Fifty (50) sites were retained for the construction of temporary residential areas (TRAs). Also all historical informal settlements north of Sandkraal Rd and Asazani, Mdongwe, Silver Town, and Zabalaza were eradicated and 'consolidated/formalised' in this phase. However, the extensive challenge was 'backyarders' and how to 'deal' with, or remove, them once houses are built on these sites. Moreover, the existence of substantial numbers of 'backyarders' was increasing the housing demands from formal areas. In addition, what was envisaged as a robust plan to manage and control in-migration and land invasion remained a challenge. Another issue was that the survey that the layouts were originally based on now no longer correlated with the rapid increase in informal living.

The next section presents a more detailed discussion of Phase 1.

5.5 Thembalethu Phase 1- the project in more detail

On 16th July 2015 Aurecon reported on the progress of the Thembalethu UISP project. It is important to keep in mind that Thembalethu and all its phases were and are considered as one major project. For this reason, you will see that other areas and phases of the Thembalethu UISP project are referred to in the maps included in this chapter. Phase 1 consists of three areas for upgrading, 4A, 4B, 4 C. As indicated in the map below, these three areas were categorised for different types of upgrading. Area 4A was categorised as being suitable for *in situ* upgrading. While other parts of Area 4A, as seen in Figure 6, were categorised as not suitable for development, Area 4B was categorised as suited for *in situ* upgrading. Area 4 C was categorised as a development 'greenfield' site suitable for decanting[47]. Each area prioritised for Phase 1 had specific planning layouts designed for stage 3 of the UISP.
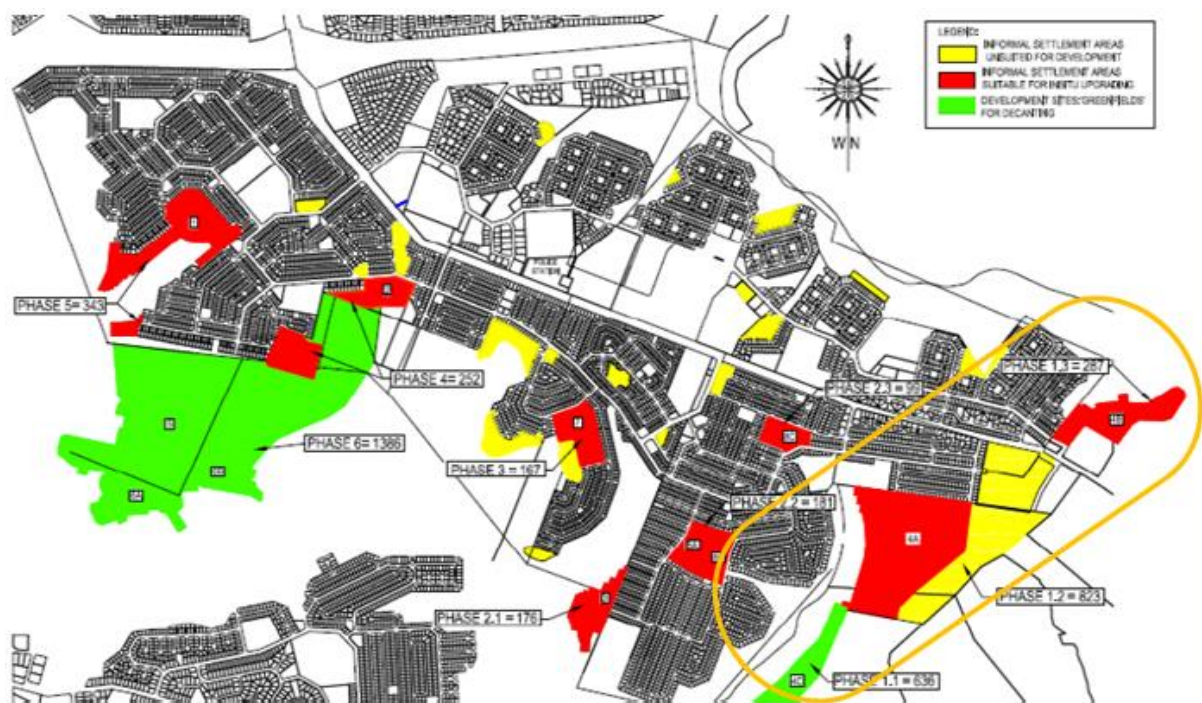
Figure 7: Map Depicting Type of Upgrading prioritised for Thembalethu UISP Project Phase 1 (Aurecon, 2015)

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[47] Decanting less contested term for 're-settlement', which is a de-densification strategy.

In Phase 1, circled in Fig. 7, 29 pockets of informal structures were identified. These are referred to as 29 informal settlements. Of the cumulative 4350 households that were counted when the site analysis was done, only 1746 serviced sites were constructed in Phase 1: 4A= 823, 4B=287, 4C= 636. As a result, only 1746 households of the 4350 could be accommodated in Phase 1. The reason for this I explain later in the chapter. Below I first discuss the necessary project approvals, the project appointees, and the construction contracts. I then go on to discuss each area individually.

5.5.1 Necessary Project Approvals

In order for the Phase 1 UISP project to commence, certain entities approvals were necessary. These included the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC), environmental authorisation, Land Use and Planning Ordinance, 1985 (LUPO) authorisation, and funding approval. Below are details of the various approvals, together with the dates when these were granted. These are briefly depicted in table 5 and explained below.

Table 5: Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project: Project Approvals

Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project: Project Approvals		
Type of approval	**Summited to:**	**Date approval secured**
NHBRC Project Enrolment	National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC)	30 May 2011.
Environmental Authorisation	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP)	3 January 2012.
LUPO Authorisation	George Municipality and (DEA&DP)	27 March 2012
Funding Approval	Western Cape Department of Human Settlements (WCDoHS)	10 October 2012

NHBRC Project Enrolment

The NHBRC project enrolment is a legal pre-requisite laid down by the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC), a regulatory body of the South African home building industry that ensures the construction process of any project complies with the suggested building industry standards[48].

The NHBRC Project Enrolment for Phase 1 of Thembalethu UISP project was approved on 30 May 2011.

Environmental Authorisation

Environment authorisation is another regulatory tool that is necessary before commencing with an upgrading project. The reason for this is to ensure that the development complies with national environmental regulations.

The Environmental Authorisation (EA) for Phase 1 was granted by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) on 3 January 2012.

LUPO Authorisation

LUPO Authorisation is another regulatory pre-requisite that has to do with the land use management aspect of the development.

The LUPO Authorisation was granted on 27 March 2012.

Funding Approval

Funding is an essential part of the development process; without funding the uninterrupted sustenance of the project can be put at risk:

The funding approval provided by the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements (WCDoHS) for the Professional Fees and Services was signed off on 10 October 2012.

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[48] About the NHBRC: https://www.nhbrc.org.za/about/ (23/03/2021)

5.6 Project Appointees

Aurecon SA (Pty) Ltd was appointed as the implementing agent, and was responsible for all professional services. As it pertains to the Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project, even though Aurecon SA (Pty) Ltd was responsible for all professional services, some of the services were sub-contracted The allocation of professional services necessary for Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project are listed below:

Table 6: Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 Project Appointees

Thembalethu UISP Project Phase 1: Project Appointees	
Project Manager	Aurecon SA (Pty) Ltd.
Civil Engineer	Aurecon SA (Pty) Ltd.
Town Planning	Delplan.
Land Surveyors	GS Savage and Associates (Area 4A), GLC Land Surveyors (Area 4A), VPM Land Surveyors (Area 4B), Bailey & Le Roux Land Surveyors (Area 4C).
Environmental Management Practitioner	Cape EAPrac and Ecobound.
Occupational Health and Safety Practitioner	FL Nightingale OHS Services
Community Liaison	SAVE

From this list we can conclude that Aurecon (Pty) Ltd played a significant role in the management of the project, as well as in the engineering contribution to the project.

5.7 Project Construction Contracts

General: Level of Municipal Services

The WCDoHS stipulates that A grade engineering services be deployed for upgrading of informal settlements.

Below is a brief description of each area of the Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project, and the engineering company responsible for implementing the A grade engineering

services. In addition, each section stipulates the dates of commencement and completion for each contract. Lastly, a section is dedicated to the provision of electricity for *in situ* upgrading, i.e. serviced informal structures.

Area 4C

The construction of the civil engineering services for Area 4C was awarded to ACV Civils cc. The project contract with this civil engineering company for area 4C commenced on the 24th May 2012. On the 22nd November 2013 the Practical Completion certificate, followed in 2014 by construction completion on 6th March 2014, were finalised. The Final Approval Certificate was issued on the 14th May 2015. In addition to all of these, George municipality appointed local contractors to complete additional constructing of retaining walls and platforms.

Area 4B

The construction of the civil engineering services for area 4 B was awarded to Constructive Civils Engineers (PTY) Ltd. Constructive Civils Engineers (PTY) Ltd commenced with the contracted work on the 22nd October 2013. On the 21st August 2014 the Practical Completion, followed by Completion on 30th August 2014 were finalised. On the 19th August 2015 the Final Approval Certificate was released.

Area 4A

The construction of the civil engineering services for Area 4A was awarded to ACV Civils cc, as was area 4C. The contract commenced on the 9th October 2012. On the 4th March 2015 the Practical Completion, followed by Completion on 14 May 2015, were finalised. The final Approval Certificate was issued on the 14th June 2016. As in the case of Area 4C, George municipality appointed additional local contractors for the construction of retaining walls and platforms.

Electricity Provision

The provision of electricity for areas 4A-C funding was received from the Department of Energy (DoE) and electricity was received under a different project, reasons for this was not disclosed. This means that, for budget purposes, the Phase 1 budget did not

include electricity provision costs. Each of the informal structures was provided with a prepaid electricity meter and a 'ready board' as per agreed specifications stipulated by the DoE.

5.8 Areas 4A-C

What follows is a discussion of each area in detail. A reminder: stages 1-3 of the UISP process occurs when a project is considered complete. Even though Phase 1 was able to reach stage 4 of the UISP, I only discuss stages 1-3, in order to lead to a discussion of the different development outcomes during stages 1-3, including budget implications and relocations.

5.8.1 Area 4C

The 5th May 2014 marks the practical completion of the design layouts, and the final approval of these layouts was endorsed on the 14th May 2015. The practical completion, according to the usual protocols, was issued by the engineers and signed off by the municipality after the construction had been completed according to the building specifications. With specific relevance to Phase 1, this meant the completion of serviced sites of stages 1-3 of the UISP. According to these protocols, once practical completion is attained, the beneficiaries can be relocated from their temporary accommodation onto the serviced sites. This means that all households are moved off-site into temporary accommodation, and then relocated to a fully serviced site after the construction process is finished. In this case, the beneficiaries of area 4 C were relocated from temporary accommodation back to serviced area 4C, where the original structure they had erected had been demolished before the infrastructural provision commenced. Images D – S, later in this section, depict the process, from the construction of the service sites to temporary accommodation. It should be noted that all of the layouts were formally designed, and the rezoning and subdivision applications approved, by the George municipality's town planning department. The general plans were then registered with the Surveyor General. Each area 4A, 4B, and 4C, had their own contract and contractor, and practical completion was issued per separate contract.

The following zonings, depicted in Table 1, were designated for the proposed planning

layout for area 4C:

Table 7: Development outcomes for Area 4C

Proposed planning Layout/ Approved Zonings for Area 4C	
Outcomes based on Progress report 2015 (Aurecon, 2015)	**Outcomes based on Close Out report 2017** (Aurecon, 2017)
• 15 x Open Space Zone I (Public Open Space)	Public Open Space: 16
• 2 x Institutional Zone II (house of worship)	Church: 2
• 2 x Business Zone II (Shop with consent for flats, supermarket, and restaurant)	Business: 2
• 2 x Institutional Zone I (place of instruction (crèche and/or community facilities) with consent for place of assembly)	Community: 1 Crèche: 1
• 637 x Informal Residential Zone	Informal Residential: 637
• 1 x Remainder Road	N/A

In terms of infrastructure:

As part of serviced sites:

- A total of 636 toilet structures in Area 4C have been connected.

Development outcomes in terms of Stage 3 of the UISP:

- General Plan: Residential Sites : 637
- Fully serviced : 636/636
- Pegged but not serviced : 1
- Allocated to households : 636
- Occupied by households : 636

- Secure Tenure: 'Commodatum Agreements[49]': 636

Image D: Depicts Area C, a 'greenfield site', before construction of serviced sites (Aurecon, 6/7/2012).

Image E: Depicts construction of area 4 C in preparation for infrastructural provision (Aurecon, 6/7/2012).

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[49] Commodatum Agreements: A tenure type that legitimatises the informal use of land i.e. fully serviced sites.

Image F: Depicts machinery used to dig ditches in preparation for infrastructural provision (Aurecon, 06/07/2012).

Image G: Depicts the serviced site and the informal structure that is in the process of being built around and on the serviced site (Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image H: Depicts the kind of machinery used in the process of infrastructural provision (Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image I: Depicts construction of informal wooden structure being built on the serviced site (Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image J: Depicts how steep green field site had to be elevated in order to provide for an area for infrastructural intervention, i.e. serviced sites (Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image K: Depicts the width of road provision planned for serviced sites (Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image L: Machinery used in preparation for infrastructural provision (Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image M: Row of enhanced serviced sites, i.e. provision of each household of a toilet and standpipe
(Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image N: Closer view of enhanced serviced sites. Residents either built over these serviced sites, or, as this picture shows, how the toilet - standpipe unit is outside, and the informal structure is built in front of it.
(Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image O: Drainage systems put in place for area 4C (Aurecon, 11/28/2013).

Image P: Greater area of 4 C. It also shows the extensive work done by engineers to fix and level steep slopes (Aurecon, 11/28/2013)

Image Q: Greater area of 4 C, the collective serviced sites which would be ready for beneficiaries to come and erect their informal structures. (Aurecon, 11/28/2013)

Image R: This Map indicates the progress of services during the construction (service sites) phase of Area 4 B on or by a specific date. This helps the team navigate, and, more importantly, visualise what has been already done and what is still needing to be done (Aurecon, 3/20/2014)
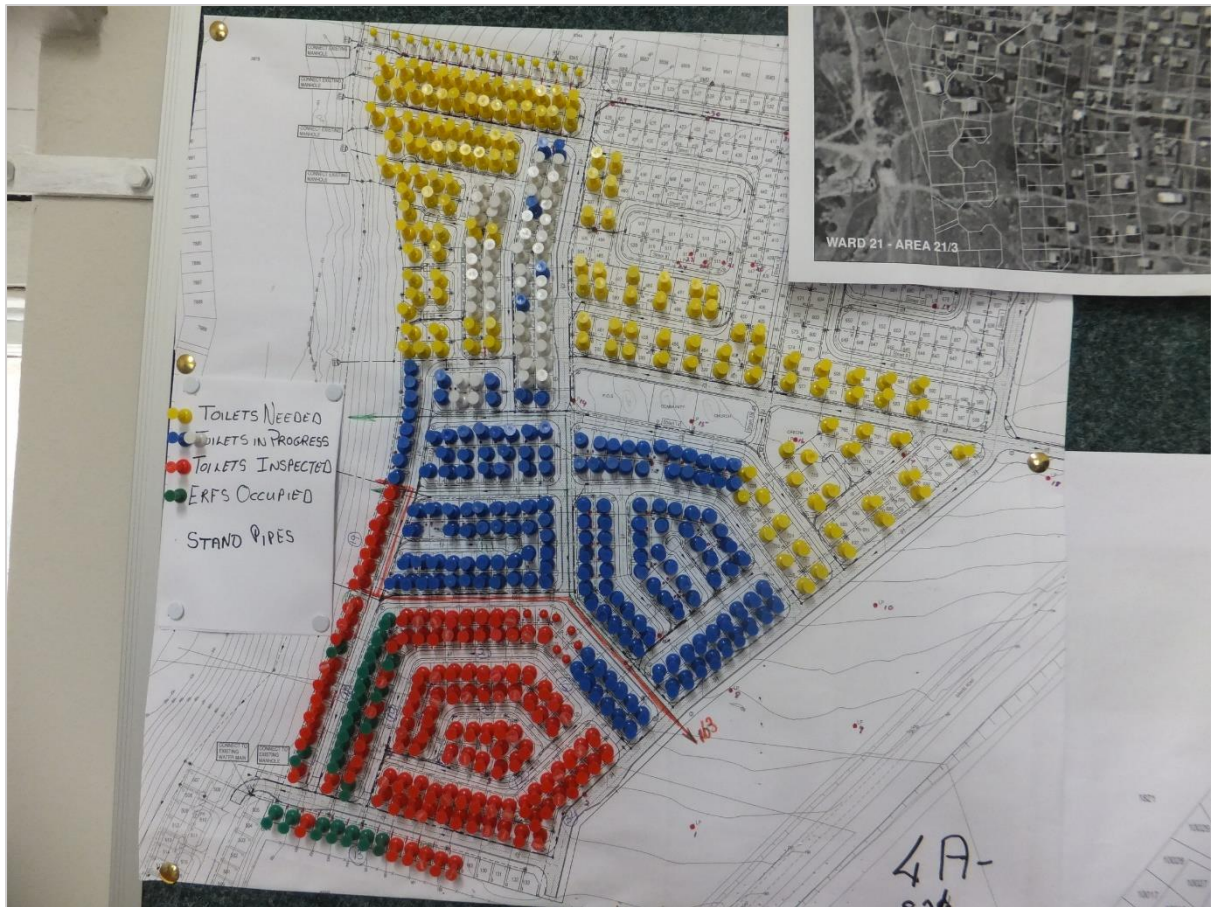
Image S: This Map indicates the progress of services during the construction (service sites) phase of Area 4 A on or by a specific date. This helps the team navigate and, more importantly, visualise what has been done and what is still needing to be done in area 4A (Aurecon, 3/20/2014).

5.8.2 Area 4A

The Completion Certificates for the design planning layouts were issued on the 14th May 2015. This was to ensure the quality of the construction, and to ensure that there were no defects. There was a liability period of one year, which terminated on the 14th May 2016. The zoning and development outcomes for area 4A are categorised in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Development outcomes for Area 4A

Proposed planning Layout/ Approved Zonings Area 4A	
Outcomes based on Progress Report 2015 (Aurecon, 2015)	**Outcomes based on Close Out Report 2017** (Aurecon, 2017)
• 2 x Open Space Zone I (Public Open Space)	Public Open Space: 2
• 1 x Institutional Zone II (house of worship)	Church: 1
• 2 x Business Zone II (shop with consent for flats, supermarket, and restaurant)	Business: -
• 2 x Institutional Zone I (place of instruction (crèche and/or community facilities) with consent for place of assembly)	Community: 1 Crèche: 1
• 824 x Informal Residential Zone	Informal Residential: 823
• 1 x Remainder Road	N/A
• 50 residential sites reserved for a 100-unit TRA for use till completion of the programme	N/A

In terms of infrastructure

As part of serviced sites:

- To date a total of 823 toilet structures in Area 4A have been connected, which correlates with stage 3 development outcomes

Development outcomes in terms of Stage 3 of the UISP:

- General Plan Residential Sites : 824
- Fully serviced : 823/824
- Pegged but not serviced : 1
- Reserved for TRA : 50
- Allocated to households : 773
- Occupied by households : 773
- Secure Tenure: 'Commodatum Agreements': 773

5.8.3 Area 4B

Area 4 B's completion certificate for the design upgrading layout of Area 4B was provided on 1st December 2014. This certificate was legal assurance that the buildings were constructed in line with construction norms. The zoning and development outcomes for area 4B are as follows:

- 287 x Informal Residential Zone
- 1 x Remainder Road
- Labour intensive road construction
- Approximately 31,160m² of paved roads
- Classroom and practical training and assessments were conducted in 5 days to a group of 18 learners

In terms of infrastructure

As part of serviced sites:

- A total of 287 toilet structures in Area 4B were connected.

Development outcomes in terms of Stage 3 of the UISP:

- General Plan Residential Sites : 288

- Fully serviced : 287/288

- Pegged but not serviced : 1

- Allocated to households : 287

- Occupied by households : 287

- Secure Tenure: 'Commodatum Agreements': 287

In summary, Phase 1 of the Thembalethu project did not follow an alphabetical order; instead, area 4 C was first approved, then area 4 B, and then area 4A. The number of sites receiving serviced sites totalled 1748 and were together zoned as an informal residential zone. This zoning is the zoning that George municipality preferred in terms of their town planning scheme. It is similar to Residential 1 zoning in their town planning scheme, but it is more relaxed in terms of building lines etc. Interestingly

enough, the zoning did not change to accommodate the housing consolidation phase (Phase 4) of UISP, the phase which represents the construction of formal, permanent houses. The houses that were subsequently constructed as stage 4 of the UISP were formal 40m2 BNG houses, as per the subsidised housing specifications, and together zoned as an informal residential zone. During Stage 1-3 of the UISP, as part of the construction of a serviced site, is seen as an "enhanced serviced site". This involves ensuring each serviced site gets a toilet structure and water point. This is standard for each serviced site created through the UISP. Those temporary toilets are removed when formal houses are constructed. Stage 4, the consolidation phase of the UISP, started in February 2017 and is to date ongoing.

5.8.4 Relocation

Even though this upgrading project was *in situ* in nature, relocation to temporary accommodation sites was necessary in order for the engineers to construct service sites. For the relocation of residents of Phase 1, the necessary material assistance was provided to each beneficiary in the form of roof sheets, poles, nails, and rafters. This form of relocation assistance was granted to 1696 households.

5.9 Budget Aspects

Government funding for upgrading programmes is meticulous in nature. As mentioned earlier, a comprehensive business plan is required by the Department of Human Settlements (DoHS), specifying every detail of the upgrading of the informal settlements. The business plan is then approved by the Provincial Government for funds to be released so that the project can commence. After going through the financials of the upgrading process it became clear to me that, in stage 1 and 2 of the UISP, the fees that were highest were those of the pre-planning and interim engineering services. The interim engineering services fee outweighed the pre-planning fees significantly. It is interesting to note that these interim engineering services, worth approximately R11 million, are high, particularly as these services were to be disposed at the end of stage 2, in preparation for stage 3 of the UISP. In stage 3 of the UISP the finances followed a similar pattern, where planning and engineering fees were the most weighty of the total fees. However, when looking at

the spreadsheet, it was evident to me that detailed planning per site costs (approximately R414 per site) were significantly lower than those of the composite permanent engineering services (approximately R32 000 per site). This indicated that the tangible aspect of the upgrading process was not only important for beneficiaries; it also carried the most financial weight that manifests itself in engineering fees.

5.10 Participation

As mentioned earlier, it is critical to obtain the environmental authorisation prior to embarking on the upgrading process. The environmental authorisation was granted on the 3rd January 2012. This process usually takes about two years. Participation of all stakeholders is an important part of this process. Even though I prefer the term 'human resource input' (as discussed in chapter 2) over the often loosely used 'participation' which is in a habit of excluding the communities/residents (BLCs) of the informal settlements being upgraded, I use 'participation' to mitigate any confusion as it is a familiar term. It involves the participation of strategic professionals and government departments, for example, the Department of Health, Department of Water and Sanitation, Heritage Western Cape, George municipality, and the Department of Human Settlements.

As part of the process an advertisement needs to be placed with the local newspaper, in this case it appeared in the "George Herald" on 25th March 2010. Interestingly the public lodged no complaints, and the process was able to commence. The environmental authorisation included the argument that existing informal structures represent a negative visual/aesthetic impact, and how upgrading was likely to impact on the uniformity of the existing low-cost housing expansion. Thus, the negative visual impact would be counteracted, yet limited to a lower visual impact i.e. would be more 'formal looking', due to the fact that the area is a low-cost housing area. The authors of the environmental authorisation admit to the reason for Thembalethu's characterisation of informal settlements being one of a lack of formal housing provision and basic infrastructure. Moreover, their argument is that the proposed upgrading would be likely to contribute to the socio-economic opportunities of the area, especially during the construction phase of the project, and would also contribute to a better quality of life. Furthermore, even though these areas are located on the urban edge,

175

according to the George spatial development framework (SDF), areas prioritised for Phase 1 were assigned for mixed land use, i.e. business, institutional, and housing land use. This is turn is in line with the Western Cape Provincial Development Framework. Moreover, from a biophysical perspective, these areas of Phase 1 are characterised by communal farming practices, with a rapid growing rate of informal settlements. On the west of these areas is a watercourse, which was and is impacted negatively by these farming practices and by the growing informal settlements. These three areas of Phase 1 were initially earmarked for agricultural activities, but an amendment was soon made by the George and Environs Urban Structure to township development.

Another way in which participation is exercised and mirrored is within 'the NGOs engagement with the community and the collective role of these organisations in the upgrading process. SAVE and their contribution is not mentioned within Aurecon progress reports. However, the South African Value Education (SAVE) contribution is documented in the TRA (temporary relocation area) report. SAVE has played a critical role in the relocation process through their facilitating and guiding the affected communities through this process. When, in mid-September 2012, the process commenced, SAVE was responsible for informing the community of the purpose of the TRA, and for explaining the reasons for its need. The whole process of informing the community was done through the BLC structures, as explained earlier in the chapter.

In November 2012, SAVE was responsible for TRA activities as part of a social treaty and to approve these activities via beneficiary structures. In early December 2012 it was SAVE's role to inform community structures, such as the Building Local Committees (BLCs), that the TRA had been approved (i.e. that funding for the TRA had been granted) by Province, and to inform the community about the TRA location. In early January 2012, after the beneficiaries were notified, SAVE was responsible for facilitating and managing all communication from the George Municipality. This included information about who needed to move into enhanced serviced sites, by when, and where exactly within the TRA. In addition, SAVE provided constant support to residents/community members in the re-location process. What becomes clear is that, whenever information about the project, and its implications for the community,

had to be communicated to the community, SAVE had to step in and utilise the community structures the organisation had put in place, and manage and facilitate this dynamic and or relationship. A key and recurring word to describe SAVE's role in the TRA report is the word 'inform', indicating their key role in informing the community about different aspects of the upgrading project, and the implications of these for the community. I explore this process in more detail in the next chapter when giving feedback from interviews and on what SAVE was able to share regarding their role in the upgrading process.

5.11 Conclusion

The Thembalethu UISP project, Phase 1, is complex in nature in terms of the scale of the project, and intricate in terms of its timeline. In addition, this project articulates or balances the participation/welfare of the residents in this informal settlement with the financial and other constraints the company responsible for the upgrading programme had. Stages 1- 3 of Phase 1 took approximately three years to complete due to the authorisations delaying the process. These various authorisations were necessary to clear the way for the commencement date of the implementation of the project. Due to the dynamic, changing practical realities of burgeoning informal settlements, the layout plans, together with the number of households prioritised in that initial business plan, and the actual households existing when the project started, once the legal authorisations were finalised (two years later), are poles apart. This means, in the case of Phase 1, that the original number of households geo-tagged was 4350, and only 1746 were serviced. The actual number of households that were there when the project finally commenced (taking into consideration the legal authorisation delay), increased. This carries the implication that there were more people who were not serviced by the programme than were initially planned for. Thus, based on the case of the upgrading of Thembalethu, ideas of doing *in situ* upgrading which are intended to involve minimal relocation and expenditure, become contested when observing the kind of infrastructure necessary to provide adequate services for the actual number of households, or to do some kind of projection/ estimate of the actual number before the commencement, and the number by the end, of the process. The images included in this chapter also show how hazardous the equipment for effecting this, was to the residents, especially when planning 'with' the community through an *in situ* upgrading

approach (findings in next chapter point to this). The reason for this is that A-grade engineering services are required as per UISP. While this helps the municipality with maintenance, it is not 'practical' during installation when communities are present, thus contradicting the purpose of the *in situ* upgrading approach. Municipal Official B points to the intricacies of this,

> …especially working in between houses, there was a crèche, and they were doing construction, and the kids were going to the construction site while the kids fell into a sewer manhole. So it's stuff like that, that it's very difficult to work in amongst shacks. (Municipal Official B)

Thus, those ideas of the *in situ* approach of providing services amidst the informal settlement grid, and while residents are present, become highly problematic. The disjuncture of the timeframe for releasing the funding, together with the rate at which informality grows, or could be estimated to grow, during this time, was not made clear, nor was it in fact included, in the case of this project. Aurecon professionals were aware of this dynamic, however, once the numbers were calculated, and the legal authorisation process completed, there was no amending of this, as this would require an already tedious process to start again. This would result in an unending cycle of UISP delivery being prolonged, at the same time as informal settlements continued to grow. While the project was consistent with the usage of 4350 geo-tagged households, it did not show whether there was any growth of informality during the period of waiting for the legal authorisations, neither did the planners and managers of the project indicate how they intended to mitigate this. Thus, according to interviews and reports, the legal authorisation waiting period was the reason why numbers were kept fixed in order to accelerate delivery, and for budgetary considerations. The motivation for upgrading of informal settlement as a means to elevate visual impact, in the context of the environmental authorisation, does suggest a certain outlook on the part of both planners and policy managers, on informal settlements more generally. However, planning imagination and/or innovation becomes silenced due to the restricted budgets allotted for each site, and, in this budgetary sense, these planning ideas are drowned by engineering costs. In this case there seems to be an emphasis of 'how many people can we house (through upgrading)' as opposed to the obsession with order (as discussed in chapter 2).

While participation increasingly becomes to be seen as a key component, it is alarming that, in none of the progress reports and close out reports, was the role and voice of the community, nor of SAVE, mentioned. In fact the engagement between community and the other stake holders was documented, but in a separate document, showing the different links between different stakeholders as these pertain to the Temporary Relocation Areas (TRAs). Thus, there is a mismatch between Aurecon's fine sounding vision (consulting with, and ensuring participation of, the people and communities affected) and their actual approach to their upgrading planning and management, specifically in relation to how the 'softer', more social, aspects are represented in measuring progress in reports. The general tone and register used in these reports is one of efficient implementation, delivery, and the meeting of various deadlines. One could infer that this could be due to the business model of private consulting companies, one that is based on the assumption that 'time is money', and that every hour needs to be accounted for. At the same time as these reports are being written, the actual implementation, management and delivery of the upgrading project also needs to be done. Failure to synchronise these two processes could be the reason for the specific tone, or why the 'efficiency' discourse predominates in their reports. This would affirm and fit into the various approaches to this kind of planning outlined in chapter two.

In the previous chapter (4), I mentioned approaching the Red Ants and the George Herald to find out about how informal settlement evictions work in the area. They reported that a formal eviction is a lengthy process. The Red Ants can only start evictions upon receiving a court order. The court order needs to be filed by the owners of the land themselves, whether province or municipality or private owners, and this process can take up to seven months. In other words, in the period from the initial land invasion to the actual court order being issued, an increase of informal structures would have taken place. Interestingly enough, even though the municipality has an Anti-Land Invasion Unit, they make use of the Red Ants because this body has more capacity. This kind of reliance could be said to be similar to that discussed in this chapter regarding the municipality's reliance on Aurecon to deal with the upgrading issue and/or informal households. This leaves me to question the actual role of the municipality and its stated 'mandate' to the public. Yes, the private sector shows a lack

regarding the ways participation is managed and represented; however, having previously worked for Aurecon, I observed that the teams are small, time is money, and the completion of a project is about being efficient. Thus, it leaves me to question whether province/ municipality is shifting too much, or putting all of their social responsibility onto a private company that is not in fact designed for such purposes.

While the inclusivity of the voices of the communities involved and affected, along with the presence of an NGO (SAVE) was implied, these voices were not clearly represented nor expressed in the reports. What is important to remember is that this was the first upgrading project done under the UISP within Thembalethu. It was also a pilot for Aurecon, which could explain the lessons learned by Aurecon and George Municipality. I discuss this in more detail in the next chapter. This discussion includes, and is supported by, conclusions from interviews with the various stakeholders.

Chapter 6: Unpacking the Professionals' Perspective

As was mentioned in chapter 1, land 'invasions' and the burgeoning of informal settlements flood South African news outlets. This future disaster scenario narrative is further amplified by the reality of a lack of service delivery due both to corruption within municipalities and to the lack of financial capacity of these bodies. The other narrative is one of new homeowners blaming municipalities, together with City of Cape Town, for their inability to 'stop' the increased mushrooming of informal settlements that these homeowners see as having an effect on their investments[50]. Increasingly, as exemplified in both a report on George Municipality's informal settlements (George Municipality, 2019) and one in City of Cape Town (26 May 2021), a poignant question being asked is, ""What is the City of Cape Town doing? When we wake up we find 20 more shacks built"; this was posed by a homeowner"[51]. Not only homeowners, but informal settlement residents and backyard dwellers, are looking to municipalities for answers to this question. Exacerbating this situation has been the Covid-19 pandemic which has put greater pressure on municipalities for more effective and efficient management in 'handling' rapid informalisation. This concern, 'what [exactly] are municipalities doing?' is the thrust of my research, and one into which I hope to provide insight in this chapter.

The previous chapter unpacked the Thembalethu Phase 1: Upgraded Informal Settlement Project (UISP). It provided an explanation of those details of the project gleaned from the project reports and other secondary information received from Aurecon, the implementing agent. In this chapter, I delve into primary data to discuss and unpack the perspectives of the professionals who were, and continue to be, involved in the Thembalethu UISP project in George. As mentioned before, the Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project was a pilot upgrading project and was project-managed by Aurecon more than a decade ago. It should be noted that only a handful of professionals were involved in the implementation of this project, most of whom

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[50] https://www.groundup.org.za/article/homeowners-blame-city-cape-town-mushrooming-shacks-near-their-houses/

[51] https://www.groundup.org.za/article/homeowners-blame-city-cape-town-mushrooming-shacks-near-their-houses/

were men (and a few of these wore a number of professional hats). The reasons for the small number of participants in the project are explained later in this chapter.

In the wider urban planning, upgrading of informal settlements context, I restate my three research questions: How do professional planners in the 21st century think about informality? How do they intervene in, and how do they manage, the complexities and contradictions inherent in informal settlement upgrading processes? How can professional planners harness the dynamism of informal settings to achieve more socially equitable/ just, and sustainable outcomes? These questions can be interrogated in further case study research in the global South. As has been mentioned, due to the fact that the UISP is currently the only legislated policy tool to 'handle' informality, the UISP becomes the lens through which I engaged with planners and other professionals in their collective and individual experiences of the use of this policy tool. I organise the discussion in this chapter under three main headings: The Obvious, The Uncovered, and Moving Forward. These categorisations narrates a progression in analysis from what seemed 'obvious' (the interest in the relationship between the UISP and planning) for myself the researcher, to what was 'uncovered' (dimensions, frustrations and complexities within the UISP process) to me about the UISP process by professionals. These helped provide, from both planners and other professionals, perspective on what would contribute to the success of a UISP project, what role the planners ought to and can play and ways in 'moving forward. Even though positionality is underscored due to my admission for having worked at Aurecon (in another city), my having studied planning and worked within a planning environment, helped me to understand the jargon and decipher through the complex layered nature of such a large project, which in turn equipped me to better share professionals experiences.

Under the heading The Obvious, I attempt to capture the general impressions of the professionals of the UISP in which they were involved at the time of this study, their expectations before and after the implementation of the UISP, their general perceptions of the role and / or influence of the planner, and their perceptions and experiences of the challenges involved in the use of the UISP tool. Thereafter, under the heading The Uncovered, I discuss the various themes that emerged from the interviews conducted, together with the reflective themes that can be inferred from

these interviews. Lastly, under the heading, Moving Forward, I discuss ideas of evaluation and a key challenge that leads to the exploration and re-imagining of a possible more grounded learning-driven planning approach. The aim is to attempt to derive the kind of mindset and sensibility considered by these professionals to be necessary, both positive aspects and limitations, when it comes to 'dealing' with the challenge of informal settlements, specifically as it relates to the Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP Project.

6.1 The Obvious …

According to Huchzermeyer (2021:45), in her assessment of UISP deliberations involving all three spheres of government in South Africa, she gives emphasis to the 'displaced' role of planning within the UISP as she refers to planning's role within the UISP as an "additional obstacle, despite the supportive clauses in SPLUMA [Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013]". Moreover, Huchzermeyer (2021), Misselhorn (2017), and other scholars focussing on UISPs in South Africa, attribute UISP's modest implementation progress to the lack of effective budget allocation, political will, and institutional support, as well as to the setting of unrealistic targets. This section speaks to the degree of practicality in 'planning with' informal settlements, when the UISP is determined, or estimated, to engender minimal disruption of these settlements. Moreover, even though SPLUMA was legislated a decade after the UISP, the aim of this section is to explore how accommodative the UISP is of the role of the planner, how transformative and relevant planning in the upgrading process is, and lastly, whether the planner's role needs to be radically redefined.

6.1.1 General Impressions of the UISP

The majority of those professionals interviewed shared a negative sentiment towards the UISP tool:

> Personally, I'm .. I'm not a big fan of UISP to be honest. Uh.. I think it's a… ya I
> think it's a… it's a quick fix. And like any quick fix, it's not the best fix. (Planner A).

One of the project managers outlined his perspective from within the municipal

structures:

> … you see I know from a municipality side. From the planning side not the housing department. They are against the UISP policy; they saying it's not ... not sustainable you know, low density sprawling type development, low, low, low income, there's no chance of that people to sort of better themselves. (Project Manager A).

Project Manager A offered an additional perspective. He mentioned the failure of the UISP to create room for flexibility, which he seemed to think inhibits the implementation process. He was of the opinion that this needs to change:

> Yeah, the implementation of the [UISP] process. Yeah for sure. And they should … somehow there should be different set of different set of rules that must be applied… (Project Manager A).

Another policy manager indicated how, from a Provincial perspective, the UISP is situational in that it addresses only the informal situation:

> The UISP is the most accessible, acceptable, or you know, influenceable… This is direct to the people with certain disadvantages… Not necessarily…uh…race, colour or whatever…just the situation they're in, informal situation (Policy Manager B).

Community Liaison Officer A shared a different sentiment, seeing the UISP as being in and of itself conflicted. As a result, this inherent policy conflict caused significant problems when community liaison officers were conducting public participation, and attempting to explain the UISP policy to the Thembalethu community:

> … remember you have a policy…a national policy that's saying who can get RDP houses, for example now people start to think in that direction but then you get a UISP policy which is talking totally something else, that yes, you can get assisted again, irrespective if you got previous assistance. Now you sit with a national policy saying – if you got assistance from government, you won't get assistance again. So … so that is where the whole dilemmas and who is a beneficiary and that type of problems actually started for me. Because people were saying that if you look at who is a household. Remember in the policy of the UISP we talk about

households. They are the beneficiaries of the project. Now who is a household? Child headed households, you must be 18 years and above. So …so the[UISP] policy was one of the biggest problems to …to explain to the people. (Community Liaison A)

The 'common' expectation on the part of informal residents that formal structures will be erected for those who qualify as UISP beneficiaries, is affirmed by Policy Manager B:

I've been involved in it [UISP processes] I mean just now for 10 years, and the UISP project, more or less the same [amount of time]. Uhm…you must just remember, we've got other programmes as well, like your IRDP, uh and so on. Uhm and always the main focus for, for people not involved is, is the end product, which is the top structures. And they[community] all forget about everything in the middle.(Policy Manager B).

Policy Manager B continues to echo Community Liaison Officer A's frustration with 'who is a beneficiary?' and describes how funding has contributed to this frustration and to a shifting of the goalposts:

Especially with UISP. So, but that communication, at least, was done… uhm .. to the beneficiaries, you know, don't expect houses and… uhm… as soon as the end product over a set period of time, and so on. And so many factors involved...uhm… the current problems with this specific one [the greater Thembalethu UISP Project], because we haven't done anything for a while now, is …uhm …uh… the goalposts gets… uh… gets changed a lot, even the latest one [latest phase of UISP in Thembalethu], you know, the beneficiaries who … who .. who qualifies for a top structure or not, and that it was now down to not only qualifiers, but down to a certain age. You know, those preferences, and that has even changed now to the really old 'bout 60 Plus, And so on, even those. Because our funding is depleted. And then the problem in Thembalethu is the… the sheer volume of everything. (Policy Manager B).

What surfaced from the interviews was that the UISP was one amongst several housing programmes provided by the National Housing Code. However, this particular programme was targeting informal settlements or the informal situation present in Thembalethu. The UISP being a 'targeted' policy instrument, inevitably forgoes

sustainable principles. Moreover, inferences point to how, even though the UISP's target is informal dwellers, the qualifying standards make it difficult to integrate different housing policies in a context such as Thembalethu. A reminder, Thembalethu is originally, and strictly speaking, a formal black township that has significantly extended, but informally. Thus, even though it is relevant, how the UISP interfaces with other housing policies, or clearly distinguishes which people are beneficiaries from other programmes, is not specified in the UISP.

Moreover, the 'formal structure' expectation on the part of informal settlement residents makes the four-phased UISP process challenging to explain to the community. It seemed that there was also a sense amongst the professionals participating in the study that the UISP is presented to residents as an *in situ* upgrading project, but the RDP housing product is expected by them.

Furthermore, the conflating of policy expectations was not only difficult to explain to the community, but also difficult for professionals to navigate. In addition, the UISP is critiqued amongst some of the professionals participating in the study, as well as by scholars in chapter 2, as being purely a housing quick fix, and one that does not take into consideration the broader scope of urban development. Then there is the issue of the UISP continuing to rely heavily on formal legislative processes, which explains Project Manager A's requests for 'different rules', and which further delays implementation. I discuss the lack of flexibility of the planning and implementation process in more detail in later sections, along with the issue of funding, and with the 'sheer volume' and scale of rapid informalisation in Thembalethu.

6.1.2 Thembalethu Phase 1: Were UISP Project expectations met?

Even though each had their own reservations, all of the professionals interviewed, agreed that the Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project met all the necessary requirements according to the specifications. Below I mention a few of the perspectives of the professionals involved.

Planner B, from a planning perspective, while appearing to be reasonably satisfied with the upgrading, reflects on the possible shortcomings of the process, in particular a lack of ongoing consultation with the community:

… I think at the end, we … we kind of achieved from an urban design layout point of view what we wanted to do there. We always… we'll see afterwards we should have done this, or we could've done this better, and so forth. So it's always a learning … learning curve. But yeah, that area is now formalised. And I think it's kind of … it's kind of staying formalized in the scenes, and there's not a lot of new incomers there and so forth. What I … and maybe what … what was lacking is maybe going back afterwards to the community [to] say what are your problems etc. Because you're so tied up in this next project and these deadlines and stuff, so that's probably what's lacking and to see if this is working, is this town functioning ? (Planner B).

Thus, from a planning perspective, while outcomes were seen by these professionals to have been met, there remained a level of maintenance and protection of the formal area. However, now that the project is completed, what is lacking is the necessary feedback from the community, the kind of feedback which would provide the professional planners with useful information on how this project served the community. This would include details of their experience of the upgrading programme, and how, from their perspective, they think the professional team can improve the process in the future. I, and other scholars, argue that this step is essential to foster iterative learning throughout the planning process.

Engineer B from both a community liaison and engineer perspective gives his evaluation of the success of the project in terms of meeting its objectives:

I think…I definitely… it met. But we did not manage to eradicate informal settlements. If you look, you clearly see, if you go back there now, for instance, yes, a lot of people got a plot, they are formalized. That is wonderful to know, that person has a toilet, he has water. There is a kind of transport or accessibility. It is it is good to see that, alright. (Engineer B).

Engineer C, from a more senior engineering perspective, explains that expectations of residents were met in terms of 'a difference made':

I think the .. the simple answer…if you took a picture of someone's shack standing in a mud pool and there's no proper roads and people is using every bush behind their house as a toilet. And you taking a picture of that same period [in] two years'

time of a nicely paved road with someone's new [dwelling], although it's a still a shack, but it's got a toilet at the back. We put up a little fence around. Uhm The children can … can …can play around. Uh…there's no…uhm stormwater or rainwater damming…stormwater is of these no sewage problems. Uhm…people washing their washing in the wash trough next to the toilet, then you can see. Listen here, although this person is not staying in a brick-and-mortar house, at least he's got his own toilet. He doesn't have to walk 20 or 50 meters to a one and five toilet. Getting there, the stuff is all been messed up by the previous oke. Uhm…he's got his own toilet on his site. He's got his own wash trough onto it. He's got electrical connection in each unit. He's got lights out there; I think that is … that is you can look … you look through past all the outside. I would say that is the … the … the … the one thing that say to me yes, we made a difference. It was success. (Engineer C).

Policy Manager B, speaking from a provincial perspective, explains his criteria for objectives met:

Oh absolutely, I think so. Even without the building of top structures [referring to phase 1-3 of UISP]. At … at the time it … that was, was such a nice project [referring to Phase 1]. While the first people moved, relocated they were [with] their shacks and so on; you must have seen the structures that went up and how the people obviously accepted what they got. Their own for the toilet and the… uhm… *findingrykheid*[52] of the informal structures they built. And you would .. you … obviously, you saw the pride of the people that, you know… uhm… tar roads in front of them, own an erf, potential ownership they'll get waiting for a house, but it was the … the impression that you got and I took many directors of us there. Uh… and then … then we were all in agreement that *yessi* they actually don't need a house! (Policy Manager B).

Policy Manager B goes on to explain his impression of how the pride of the community was derived from these serviced sites alone, and manifested in the type of structures that were originally built individually by the residents themselves. He goes on to explain how the intended stage 4 of the UISP, when communicated to them,

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[52] English meaning: 'richness of discovery'

disheartened communities and diminished the efforts they themselves had made to build their own houses:

> Obviously, the house is only a 40 square. And what they built there[on the serviced site] is bigger, and it's … it's … it's got an atmosphere of, you know, a settlement that's going… uhm… and it was actually sad to see some of those structures being broken down to build a 40 square house. Cause the people already took ownership. Ya that was then. I can't say the same now because it's just overcrowded. It's just overcrowded. And the influx of…has now extended to the back as well. (Policy Manager B).

One can infer from this that the push for formal structures (as an expectation mentioned by Community Liaison A and Policy Manager B) is juxtaposed with the existing original structures in this UISP project. The reason for this is that in this project the imposition of a 40 square dwelling oversteps the sense of ownership that has already been acquired by the community with the provision of serviced sites. From the accounts and explanations of the professionals it is not clear what the community sentiments were. It was difficult to establish whether the hope and expectation of formal, project-built houses solidified the sense of ownership of residents taken at Stage 3 of the UISP process, or if the building of formal houses in Stage 4 of the UISP process eroded this sense of ownership that had already been established in Stage 3. However, Policy Manager B mentioned this was the impression he had, that residents' sense of ownership acquired during Stage 3 was eroded with the building of formal houses in stage 4.

Community Liaison Officer A, a professional, who worked, and still works, with the Thembalethu community, was of the view that the outcome set by the UISP was met, and that the hope of formal houses makes for 'happy' community members:

> The objective was accomplished. There's a lot of people that are happy. So … so, although there's still minor few things, issues that is popping up here and there, but ya. People are happy. Especially, with the stage four currently going on, the top structures. People are very happy that they moving into their own brick houses to put it that way. So also I would say they did accomplish what they planned. (Community Liaison Officer A).

189

The professionals were in agreement that the Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project was able to make a positive impact on the lives of those who occupied Areas A, B and C informally. They saw the beneficial impact as being characterised by the provision of storm water systems, toilets, and water pipelines, all of which form part of the serviced sites, and the difference that these services brought to the community and their quality of life. Moreover, the success of the project is also implied by the follow through of the programme set out by Aurecon. This mirrors the rigid standards of the UISP tool, and the, possibly to some degree subjective, claims made of the difference that it made in the lives of the residents of Thembalethu. According to most of the professionals, the 'happiness' of beneficiaries seems to be derived from the 'benefits' to them of the programme, whether in the form of serviced sites or formal houses. I discuss the perceptions of the professionals of this community dynamic in the UISP process in more detail later in this chapter.

6.1.3 General Perceptions of the Role/ Influence of the Planner

While there was consensus among the professionals themselves that the planners play a measurable role in the upgrading process, there were mixed responses in terms of the degree of their significance and value to the process. One of the planners involved considered that they were undervalued:

> …yah I think there [in the Thembalethu Phase 1- UISP process] our input could be valued more. (Planner B).

However, one of the project managers was of the opinion that planners had played, and tend to play, a marginal role in the upgrading process. One of the engineers expressed his categorical view that

> Town planning, that is the, in my opinion, the success or downfall of a housing project. (Engineer A).

He pointed out that they as engineers felt that planners needed to be made aware that the only concerns of engineers are storm water management and systems. He went on to present his view of what the planners' role in this respect should include, a "need to look more carefully at what the storm water does" (Engineer A).

190

Since the experience of the Thembalethu Phase 1: USP project the engineers have taken it upon themselves to enlighten planners about the vital importance of storm water systems, and planners have shown themselves open to this information. I explain why storm water needs to be an important consideration later in the chapter when I discuss design and layout. Engineer B, who plays the role of a community liaison besides that of engineer, recognises that planners are limited by the information given to them: "… the planners are planning with information they have." He also mentioned that:

> They [planners] think different than engineers, and their thinking can bring the difference in the UISP process." (Engineer B).

However, from a professional engineering perspective, Engineer B admitted that engineers have the tendency to make the development process work by being efficient, and that, given the limited budget, the social and bigger picture gets eroded. However, this is where the planners, or those from the built environment, can make the difference. Engineer B referred to Project Manager A, who was the first planner to be part of the recent team, and made mention that, even though the project manager who was involved in Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project was not an engineer:

> … he had a different spin on everything. So that was good to have and the planners as well. Looking more social. Looking at the bigger picture. Don't look at brick and mortar and that kind of stuff [as engineers]. So, you must understand this is a project. We need to get pipes and roads in, and that's our aim. Get it in. If there's money we can make out of you [think of more social issues]. And you [as engineers and technical team] need to think much, much more than that. And I think the planners think different in that sense. (Engineer B).

Engineer B further draws a comparison between the substantially more active role of the planners now compared to their more marginal role back in Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project:

> Previously, it was a … a … a … uhm… specially with Thembalethu, it was an additional person, who a planner who they appointed. So, he was not really involved. Here and there and a bit meeting. But that's all. It's not like in part of the project management. And that's what Project Manager A was doing. He's a

planner but he's doing actually project management. And then that's … that's, I
think, in my mind, is good. (Engineer B).

Thus, from the contribution planners make, and can potentially make, is significant
when they are actively and consistently engaging in the project. Planners could
together be seen as a compass in the journey to the completion of a project. However,
Policy Manager B shares his experience and view of the lack of ability and agency of
planners to provide direction and to be ahead of the wave:

> … my experience are, and it unfortunately won't be very good towards planners.
> 'Cause I think it's a case of the tail wagging the dog, regarding planning. Because
> people invade, people informally do whatever, and we formalize where they going.
> And not to say sorry, you can't go there. {You have to} go there. If that was the
> case, then it would have been a perfect planning world to say. (Policy Manager
> B).

Policy Manager B, looking at the process through a provincial lens, makes an
interesting remark about the location of informal settlements in towns, and how
informal settlements are 'normalised' in Thembalethu due to its particular location:

> … ya, but integrate, integration and you won't, you would never, never get the
> informal settlements within a town you know, with open field or whatever. They
> always be on the outskirts. And remember the history of town development.
> Thembalethu's there because of old planning ways. You know, so that's why all
> the informal areas are there. you know and the poor guys in Pakkaltsdorp also
> want to settle informally because they can't even get one field for themselves; then
> it's this *heng se lawaai* in this land and that land. But in Thembalethu it's that's
> how that's how that's unfortunately how things goes. My example for why I'm
> saying they wagging the dog. (Policy Manager B).

Policy Manager B cited another town as an example of how planners lack the ability
to 'be ahead' of informal settlement expansion, and how this ultimately forces the
establishment of housing or upgrading projects on the most unsuitable land. He
explains how, when driving through Robertson, you see an instance of a municipality's
lack of foresight and of forward planning with regard to an inevitable informal
settlement:

… When you look through the circle on your left-hand side, you see the BNG houses all ASLA built. And then up on the … the *koppie* there is a cell phone tower. There's a reservoir, you see now up until where past that reservoir, the shacks are now. And then obviously up to a point below that where the houses, the formal houses ends. I'm telling you that was never supposed to be a housing project. So far, so high up there. There's no way! *Op die berg*. It's because why did they (municipality) build there? Because the people settled there informally. So we need to upgrade informally there. That's not how it's supposed to work… uhm from for what I require from a planner is to set out the boundaries. (Policy Manager B)

He returns to the case of Thembalethu and admits that, while there are not many planning issues, his ten years' experience of working for the Provincial Department of Human Settlement, and his involvement in informal upgrading programmes, provides the "perfect example" of planners' inability to assert their role in meeting the challenge of informal settlements:

This is Thembalethu. This is flat, ya it's urban edge, blah, blah, blah. But there's Greenfield; we can lekker work there. So there's no planning, too much planning problems in terms of implementation. But the things like a place like Robertson is for me the perfect example. I mean, Robertson. There's Yonkers [plenty] of space. But they [informal settlers] need to crawl up the mountain. Why? So yeah, you [informal settlers] can plak there. But we [municipality] will formalize, it's fine. That's why I'm saying that they wagging the dog. Especially, from a planner's point of view, where they need to be more assertive to say no, no and stick to their guns. This is not what [we] planned. What was planned. We planned for whatever extensions to be there. (Policy Manager B).

Planner A, however, contradicts this view, by avoiding, yet, at the same time emphasising, that informal settlements are not the only pressing development issue to plan for. In turn, Planner A takes pride in the fact that, from the municipal side, they have the power to say no, and to refuse to approve certain UISP project layouts, especially when these do not comply with town planning principles. According to Planner A, planners possess the necessary assertiveness and power:

No, we're the decision makers. So the consultancies do align. So we, we .. we evaluate that [UISP] application very much as we would an estate development

submitted by a private developer. We apply the same principles, the same criteria. I would not want to apply any different standard of quality to that layout than I would to any other state development. So the same design principles and the criteria that that we use, we would apply to that. And in actual fact, we've turned down a human settlement development once. It wasn't met with …with joy. They need to start aligning the layout with … the with the red book. There's, there's … there's proper standards for human settlement developments and we want them to apply it. If we are not going to hold it to them, hold them to it, nobody's going to. And for that reason, we turned down the application, obviously, then we see appeal, but ya. (Planner A).

Planner A goes on to make the point that the reason for their assertiveness is what they consider to be the mandate to 'take care of the community':

And even if we, if they, are an agent, developing with … within our municipal area. This is our community; we need to take care of them. And once these developers are out of the way, we need to … we need to face that community, we need to be able to, to stand proud with that community, over the heritage we basically given them. (Planner A).

The reality of this 'facing of the community' is questionable, as Project Manager A explains how people come to their (Aurecon's) offices when they need help. Moreover, Planner B explains that planners are having to deal with the information given to them by community liaisons, thus forcing them to make use of secondary data only when attempting to deal directly with community related issues.

In addition, this 'wagging of the dog' analogy demonstrates how planners and municipal officials are normalising/ 'okaying' 'informal occupancy', or are ignorant of what is really happening in their towns. In the eyes of Policy Manager B the municipal planners show complacency toward the process of managing informal settlements. These views about municipal planners' lack of assertiveness are set against the mentioning by other interviewees that, their view, planners play a very important role. They see these planners adding a 'different' contribution: while they could have more influence, the impression they give is that they still lack agency and play a minimal role in the UISP process. This real or imagined conflicting dynamic of planners, and their role in upgrading of informal settlements, is not something different or new to

what happens elsewhere in planning processes, as described in chapter 2. Moreover, this conflicted stance within the planning discipline and profession, with planners appearing, or attempting to be, both 'caring' and to perform agency by being assertive, has been a key issue in planning debates in the last two to three decades (Åström, 2020; Kamete, 2012).

6.1.4 Challenges of the UISP Tool

The UISP in the Thembalethu Phase 1 project posed different challenges for the different professionals involved.

One of the project managers described the frustrations experienced by both project managers and by the community as a result of delays in the process:

> …it's [UISP] a frustration for us as well. I mean, we can control the process, we suppose [to] manage it, but we also in the hands of the municipality; sometimes it delays it that take so long, so …so long in the community on the ground, they can't understand. It's impossible for them to understand why it takes two years to get the plans approved you know. (Project Manager A).

Engineer B echoed this frustration:

> There's always challenges. Actually … uhm … the biggest challenge of these projects is the long term, the duration of these projects.

Policy Manager B makes mention of an additional challenge posed in the planning of a large-scale upgrading project: it is not only the UISP tool, but the scale of needing to be implemented, and the importance of speed in the implementation to keep up with the rate of influx of settlers:

> … the problem in Thembalethu is the … the sheer volume of everything and the speed, it happens. And … and I fear that, from a [general] planning perspective, it takes it [UISP] … takes too long. UISP and informal settlements is a thing that needs quick intervention. It's not much time for planning and processes unfortunately. That's what I see now… uh … in Thembalethu busy happening. The influx is just too much, too big, you know, too soon. And the services and everything else can't cope. It can't cope. Sorry. That's … that's a bubble wait

195

happening going to burst. Why didn't … haven't so far yet … but still it's … I mean, just for instance, the electricity. How many, how many … uhm power cuts, they have in Thembalethu itself because of informal connections, and so on. And how many people die monthly, because of those connections and stuff. Uhm … and you just give, you can't, *jy kan net nie by hou nie*. You can't keep up. So …so … the planning is done. And the [UISP] programme provides for all that planning in the different stages and so on. Uhm … but it can't, it [implementation] just can't happen … uh … soon enough. (Policy Manager B).

Engineer C explains how the reliance of the UISP on funding processes inhibits developments and progression of projects, and how in turn these delays influence land availability. Thus, in other words, the challenge becomes containing informal settlements or, if a settlement is growing on a green field site, protecting the land so that the UISP project can proceed as planned. In this context, the finger is pointed at the municipality and its inability to 'stop land invasions':

I think it's …it's the biggest thing. I think it's availability of funding to quickly imple… implement the stuff and obviously your … your … uhm … your LUPA and environmental processes that takes you out the… it takes you 12 months plus. … once you don't [ensure] that these … these … uhm … approvals in place, you won't get a funding approval. So, for example, you must first get [approvals] in place to apply for the funding to do the implementation. So, everything has a .. a … some sort of a time lag with … You can't uh … uh … uh … have that approvals in place, they won't commit fun … uh … funding towards that project until that's in place. They say no, you taking a year to get a RoD[53] approval. Then we do the application. There's no funding available. There's already areas been earmarked somewhere else within the municipality. So, you've got all these different scenarios that does have an impact … uhm … on it [implementation of UISP]. (Engineer C).

Engineer C explains how, whilst trying to do their job as implementing agents, land earmarked for upgrading has not been protected in line with environmental legislation, which results in reports that have already taken long to be approved having to be

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[53] RoD- Record of Decision. Letter conveying the decision of the authorities in terms of NEMA. Also known as Environmental Authorisation.

restarted:

> That was our second green fields area. This whole bit was green fields area, it's area five. And while we busy with the basic Assessment Report, I meant for approval, people start squatting here so then the environmental guys say, listen here, we can't go on here with the basic assessment report. This must now change over to a section … to a … uhm … 24G application. So now you have to restart the whole process cause of the invasion … can't cause … you can't, you won't get a approval for a basic assessment report. Cause they would sê, but there's people staying on that piece of land…. uhm … Now you do a …a 24G application [24G application to Department of Environmental Affairs]. All these type of things hampers you from the top from both sides. (Engineer C).

This protection of earmarked land, Engineer C explains, is their client's responsibility. However, their requests to ensure protection of the land are received with excuses from their client -the George Municipality, driven by what seems to be fear for their own lives. He explains this situation using the example of illegal electricity connections:

> See… the fact that we working for the Department of Human Settlements. The land decision must be handled by protection services, which means my client as Human Settlements, can request protection services. [we request to] Please protect that piece of land and they say, Ya, but we protect the whole of George. We must protect Wildernis. So they say, but we short of staff. With a simple scenario. We had problems, still problems with illegal Eskom connections, and then the electrical department asked listen here, you guys must please assist us with this. And they say but they can't cause the people shoot on it. And they can't get their own people life into jeopardy by trying to disconn…or trying to … to … to … uhm … stop people from illegal connection because their lives in danger. Uhm … So … so they need to try to stop people from illegal connections and stop people from … uhm … invading land. (Engineer C).

Engineer A agrees with Engineer C on the need to speed up the UISP process. Engineer A explains that, while, as implementing agent they are cognisant of the nature of informal settlements, and they make a great effort to speed up their professional team, their speed effort is not reciprocated by the municipality and Department of Human Settlements:

You know it's a very good tool, but we sometimes, well not sometimes, we always struggle with … uh … uhm… We as a professional team you know, us, town planners, architects, everything like that we come to a decision quite quickly, or not quickly you know, and we get to an end product, and then it's the internal paperwork at the municipality and at the housing department which takes very, very long. That needs to somehow be streamlined more quicker because we've gone through this whole exercise of getting the town planner, the contractor, the architect, the project manager, everyone together and we've come up with this, let's call it a super-duper design, which can work within the budget; then it goes to someone in Cape Town or wherever in what province you working. Now all of a sudden their town planners say no …no this is not gonna work. Why then appoint us? (Engineer A).

Engineer A's frustration stems from a deep understanding of informal settlements and their upgrading, and of the consequences delays can have for the upgrading process. This understanding does not seem to have carried over to how municipalities and the Department of Human Settlements manage their teams when it comes to approvals for UISP projects. Engineer A speculates on the failure of municipalities, after more than 10 years, to keep pace with the understanding of, and the approach of engineers to, the upgrading process:

So sometimes I believe on the client and the end client's side there is not always the …they haven't made the change over yet. Like what we've done on our side. You know our town planners, our engineers, you know our way of thinking has changed drastically from what it was [in] 2009. (Engineer A).

The 'change' Engineer A refers to, and the implied question, 'why then appoint us?' has largely to do with the fact that they as consultants have 'mastered' this UISP tool, and thus, even when it comes to design, they have a better understanding than the municipalities of what 'works'. Thus, one could infer an insensibility toward informal settlement upgrading design on the part of planners in municipalities. This results in a misunderstanding of suitable design and layout for informal settlements, which in turn, implicates approvals. I discuss design and layout in more detail further on in this chapter. Engineer A explains how, since the Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project, thinking around design and doing upgrading programmes have changed significantly:

If I would do that [Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP Project] now again, that layout would look completely different, even with the same erf sizes. And I tell you, if I get Planner B in here, he'll tell you exactly the same story. If we have to, with the knowledge and experience that we have picked up in the past 10, 11 years, that would look completely different now and it would be a more neighbourhood friendly design and maybe even cost less. (Engineer A).

Project Manager A adds another and different slant to the theme of speed. For him, complying with the 'tedious' UISP process whilst managing communities' expectations of the UISP, makes the implementation process more difficult:

…they've [community/ies] got this hope because, I've heard on the UISP, and they've got this hope that they're gonna get a better, better service, and then they get involved we register the beneficiaries have these committees, and you know, beneficiaries get captured and that and that. That creates an expectation …they're gonna get something and then immediately they start putting pressure on it because when are they gonna have it. And if it's not happening quick enough, you know, they complain about that; then they march to the municipality and it's big disruptions and whatever. (Project Manager A).

For Project Manager A, the greatest challenge is facilitating a clear understanding and an agreement between the municipality and the community. The disruption caused by communities can cause further delay to the already protracted, 'tedious' UISP process, together with delayed responses from both province and the George municipality. For this reason, the implementing agent role as facilitator becomes critical, as Project Manager A explains:

But … uhm, but I would think the biggest challenge is to get to that agreement, or to facilitate that agreement between the municipality and the community, and because all of those things of the erf sizes, you know, all of that, and exactly what is … what is … what they are gonna get and they must agree to that and accept this is what they're going to get. And often with these communities, they're not so well informed of the policies. So they, they got inside their heads . They want such big stands, and they want all the material and a new material to be able to build a whole structure. And that's not realistic. So it's so … to try and manage those expectations is quite a big challenge. And, and, and you get difficult characters,

you know, they … they like strong leaders within the community and [these leaders are] difficult and they disrupt the whole process. And it makes it difficult, because it makes it difficult for us to deliver and provide the deliverables to the province and municipality. (Project Manager A).

This quote hints at a further complexity, namely, even if you adopt a participatory process, this does not guarantee the desired result nor stability, since the beneficiary communities are not homogenous and their leaders can have a disproportionate power to gate-keep and disrupt. Community Liaison A, added that the great challenge of the UISP itself has sparked growing informality:

So that was one of the challenges is this: that people see the upgrading of the informal settlement programmes as an opportunity to get housing assistance. And that is for me why everyone is flocking into the informal settlements these days…. You can, let me show you a picture of how Thembalethu looked three years back. And how its looking now. It's just that they are flocking into the informal settlements because of their [UISP] education programmes and those things that is happening which government's setting aside. So … so … ja, that is one of the challenges, and the other challenge that I have experienced is now because of the education in the informal settlement programmes. Now our law-abiding citizens as I like to call them, our backyard dwellers. (Community Liaison Officer A).

Community Liaison A, explains that this growing 'hunger' for assistance has sparked a revolt within the backyard dwellers (law abiding citizens) group to start setting up their own informal settlements so they can get assistance by acting 'illegally', making them, the Municipality, feel that their hands are forced. Community Liaison A explains the backyarders' stance, and/or strategy:

They now feeling ja, but what about us? And that is also another challenge that we sitting with. Maybe if they look at informal settlements in a local municipality, wherever, they [Municipality] must look at ways to also to accommodate the backyard dwellers because they think, ja, what they [informal settlement dwellers] doing is illegal. Because they invading land, for example; here we sit, paying rent and waiting our turn. (Community Liaison Officer A).

Community Liaison A and Project Manager A agree that, when it comes to the UISP, clear communication is both a challenge and critical to the success of the UISP

process. The nature and details of this challenge are discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Another challenge, one pointed out by Policy Manager B, from a provincial perspective, is the UISP tool being called the 'UISP funding calculator'. This too is elaborated later in the chapter.

It is interesting to note the different ways in which the varying contributions from the different professionals involved add to the success of the UISP process. However, what we see reflected in these challenges is the discord between the implementing agent and local government. This discord shows up in what seems to be a form of reluctance on the part of local government to participate in the project/process. This form of reluctance shows up in their degree of responsiveness to the community and in their sense of urgency, or lack thereof, to mobilise their team to get on board with the speed necessary to manage informal settlements.

6.1.5 The Obvious Through a Systems Change Lens

The UISP is described by professionals as, a 'quick fix', 'not flexible', 'not sustainable' and in many ways a source of conflict when it comes to the participation component. This section discusses the structural level of systems change by looking at the policy, i.e. the UISP tool, professionals' general impressions, practices - i.e. whether the UISP met the project expectations, the role of planners, and resource flow i.e. challenges with the scale and longevity UISP. Critical to systems change at the structural level is the ability to change power dynamics on the relational level. However what we see transpire within the Thembalethu UISP phase 1 project is a 'rigid' UISP policy tool that is 'permanent' but the [mental] attitude toward this tool on part of professionals, especially planners, is indefinite. Engineers want to find the best way to 'make it work', whereas planners are reluctant and evasive and as a result are less pro-active in addressing the challenges or spatial visions of informal settlements in George. The mental attitude of the professionals toward the UISP policy influences relational power dynamics amongst the team responsible for the implementation of the UISP. This is where power sits or how it is distributed. More importantly the [mental] attitude toward the UISP implicates the sensibilities of professionals in their responsiveness to a heterogeneous community and the way they manage upgrading programmes.

6.2 The Uncovered …

The next section deals with themes that emerged from the data collection phase. These themes are premised on, and speak to, the relational level of change, which is semi-explicit. They include an exploration of relationships, connections (communication among actors in the system), and power dynamics (distribution of decision-making power) within the Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP project.

6.2.1 Mobilisation

It was clear from the interviews that what makes the UISP process different from a normal housing development process is that it was understood that 'everyone' needed to be on board from the onset so the necessary and timeous preparation and organization, i.e. mobilisation, could take place for effective upgrading outcomes. This 'everyone' includes both the implementing agent team and the local government team, as Engineer A explains:

> But on a UISP or these programmes, from day one the whole team talks together. That's the difference between this [UISP] and a normal development over here. Cause if you don't do that [whole team on board] you gonna end up not being able to do it [UISP]… But even with our other projects, where we work with …uh … ASLA Construction where they the project manager, we only the engineers. They've also realized because that's their core business. That if they don't involve the engineer and the town planner together from day one, its gonna cost them. (Engineer A).

Project Manager A explains that mobilization, or having a 'multiteam', is key to tailoring the respective professions and disciplines to the unique nature of upgrading informal settlements. This provides an environment for 'bigger picture' professions. Engineer D, who is both an engineer and a community Liaison officer, mentions that there is this tendency on the part of engineers and the project team to focus narrowly on the UISP, rather than seeing it in the wider social context:

> … you just focus on the UISP, just look at it, don't look at the bigger picture. How do we resolve these kind of… kind of housing problems?... It's a social issue, definitely it is. So we are trying to … to … to resolve some of these things, and

there is now people that don't have plots. It's better now for them. But … uhm … yoh, I'm not sure if we are addressing the bigger pic… bigger issue.(Engineer D).

Thus, because the UISP is such an exhaustive exercise, it is easy to get lost in what you as a professional are assigned to do, and lose sight of the "bigger picture". Even though there is an awareness that the project and process is a social as well as a practical planning issue, the bigger picture seems to be neglected. Engineer D further asserts that planners can play a significant role in interfacing the UISP with the bigger picture. This is due to their thinking differently in their contributive way to, for example, engineers.

The idea of mobilizing becomes challenging when trying to navigate the point at which the work of a strong implementing agent like Aurecon begins and ends. The mobilising process discussed above represents the context of the implementing agent, which is an outcome driven one, whose aim is to get the best solution for the client. However, viewed by Planner A from a Municipal perspective, addressing informal settlements should be a social or socio-economic, even an equity issue:

> We don't really look at the neighbourhoods, but we look at the people. So it's a social, it's socio-economic argument. The objectives being … uhm … in our planning approach throughout is obviously, firstly, redress. And when we talk about redress, there's, there's a number a number of aspects that come into play. So the one is, is … is access to land tenure. The other is employment, access to employment. Uhm … and then just dignity overall. So, there's different ways in which you, we can deal with that. And so, the strategy involves more than just focusing on Thembalethu itself. (Planner A).

Planner A provides insight into the very different ways in which the municipal planning, and the municipal human settlement departments mobilise when it comes to Thembalethu. From a planning perspective, she explains that the mobilization process is about, or influenced by, neighbourhood quality, even though she previously said that the approach is not neighbourhood led (a planning approach informed by the kind and quality of the neighbourhood espoused by these planners' understanding of the data they receive regarding the community):

> While we did a … an urban design framework for Thembalethu, I think it was about

four years, five years back. Uhm … where we looked at a complete framework for restructuring … uhm … and the urban design within Thembalethu itself. So, improving the neighbourhood quality. So, our … our experience with the … the human settlement areas, and those were historically established in terms of the Black Communities Development Act. (Planner A).

She further describes how, from a human settlement perspective, they mobilise, in other words, prepare and organize their team and projects premised on accelerated delivery:

And most of the human settlement developments today also, it's not … it's not as much about neighbourhood design. But it's really more just about delivery; it's about how many houses can we put into a space. And there's very little regard for the functionality, for the quality of the neighbourhood. (Planner A).

The planners seeking for their plight, their dilemma, to be heard is not something new; neither is the human settlements approach, which emphasises accelerating delivery of houses, a new phenomenon in the history of housing policy in South Africa, as explained in chapter 4. However, Policy Manager B offers interesting insights into the reasons for the heavy reliance of the municipality and/or provincial government on the implementing agents and how the role of government has become one of observation and monitoring the progress or quality of the consultants rather than a practical, design and project management one:

It's when the municipality don't have the manpower, the province don't have the people to do it anymore. And that is out works in government these days. That's why we do have the consultants. It's for [provincial] government and local government; it is a monitoring exercise more than anything else. That's basically what we in government are doing, scrutinize other people's plan to see that it conforms with your policies and ultimately make sure that the money is .. are spended on what it's supposed to [in order to] be able to be accountable. But to get practically involved into design and implementation, contract management, a project. We don't have the manpower on a provincial or … uh … local level to do it. (Policy Manager B).

One can infer from this that mobilisation is seen by this policy manager from a

government level to be the domain and responsibility of the implementing agent. This response illuminates what Engineer A said earlier in this section on mobilisation. He indicated the difficulty the engineers experienced with what he saw as the lack of involvement, commitment, and support on the part local government in the mobilising and implementation process, the need for local government 'to get on board'. The lack of involvement on local government's part, and this role of 'observation and checking' consultants as a result of a lack of manpower could be one of the reasons for the disconnect experienced by such participants in both this research and in the UISP as Policy Manager B and Engineer A describe. What becomes important to understand is the role that province plays, and what Policy Manger B calls the 'unfunded mandate'. Simply put, province gets funds from national government, and these funds are premised on the National Housing Code and programme. In other words, there is a programme and funding that needs to be utilised, for which, in this case, George Municipality needs to apply by means of a business plan. In the case of Thembalethu, the business plan is prepared by Aurecon. Policy Manager B reminds us that the municipality is an agent of province, and this he calls the 'unfunded mandate'. He explains the workings and implications of this, particularly for the residents:

> And we call it an unfunded mandate. I've got specific things around that. Uh … because it's, it's all about to do with the cost to the municipality. And then I will say, but yeah, okay, you don't fund people. The salary of the people involved in housing, you know, where's the unfunded mandate there? But the local government has got a … uh … responsibility on a local level, to make sure that their people is sought after in terms of housing and services and, and so on; it's still the services belongs to the municipality… (Policy Manager B).

The unfunded mandate is when a sphere of government (usually local government) is expecting to provide a service for which it does not get funding, nor revenue from service fees or taxes. This often arises when a function is a shared responsibility across spheres of government. Thus an unfunded mandate infers a responsibility on the part of municipalities to 'act' as the extension of the three spheres of government in order to 'reach' the local community's needs.

6.2.2 Communication over/ or Participation (Human Resource Input)

It is clear that in the UISP process communication takes place not only amongst the professionals - between the Aurecon team and George municipality - but also with the Thembalethu community. However, it was clear from the interviews that communication with the community is in fact more of a 'top-down' than a consultative/engaged approach. By 'top-down' I mean the ways in which the community Liaison officers were equipped for exercising their role by the implementing agent to 'inform' the community of the details of what the UISP policy tool seeks to achieve. There was common consensus amongst interviewees that this kind of information is crucial when communicating UISP outcomes to the community. The professionals agreed that keeping the community thoroughly, regularly and clearly informed was key to preventing protests, and that the communication process should help the community 'feel part' of the process. It is important to note that the implementing agent is appointed by the Municipality to be responsible for the participation of various housing developments, including UISP.

Community Liaison officers first got involved in Thembalethu: Phase 1 community participation in 2010. At that time this involvement was in the form of "mass meetings, information meetings, informing the whole of Thembalethu what's coming" (Community Liaison A). Community Liaison Officer A elaborates on their role in beginning to facilitate 'on the ground' participation:

> That was our role. And then, in order to make participation more active, more actively, is that we started then establishing sort of community liaison officers, BLCs - Beneficiary Liaison Committees. So basically in every area we established these committees so that we could better participate with them, and then their role would have been to give all the information through to people on the ground. That's now to all the affected beneficiaries. (Community Liaison Officer A).

Chapter 5 (Thembalethu UISP Project: Phase 1 Overview) shows that, essential to authentic community participation is the ability to get community members, in the form of BLCs, to be 'carriers' to all members of the community of what is to come with every UISP stage, i.e. the UISP policy deliverables. Thus, if we measure what participation

means in Thembalethu Phase 1, against what Citizenlab[54] describes as the difference between citizen engagement and citizen participation, there is a stark difference. According to Citizenlab, the "difference is that citizen engagement requires an active, intentional dialogue between citizens and public decision makers, whereas citizen participation can come from citizens only"[55]. Thus, what becomes key from a citizen engagement perspective are the ways in which governments identify what information is important for citizens to know, in order to persuade them to engage with local authorities or planners, and in so doing providing them with the necessary information and space to assist them in making an informed decision[56].

Citizen participation on the other hand requires citizens to mobilise sufficient support and awareness to hold larger policy domains accountable[57]. In the context of the UISP tool, Thembalethu Phase 1, citizen engagement, what citizens needs were, and how they were to be met, or what made Thembalethu community UISP ready, was in theory ('consulting' residents through BLC processes) outlined by the informal settlement business plan. However, in essence, this business plan is in fact an enumeration of the number of households and an identification of the lack of basic needs. In addition to the already tight administrative deadlines to secure funding, the angst to 'hurry' and be ahead of the process from a professional stance, essentially left 'no time' in the UISP process to use Thembalethu community as a human resource as described in chapter 2. Moreover, because the UISP is a structured regimented approach, the objective of the policy, Tenure Security, Health, and Security and Empowerment[58] is reduced to technical regimes to deliver houses as soon as possible.

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[54] Citizenlab: https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-engagement/what-is-the-difference-between-citizen-engagement-and-participation/ (26/05/2021)

[55] https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-engagement/what-is-the-difference-between-citizen-engagement-and-participation/ (26/05/2021)

[56] https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-engagement/what-is-the-difference-between-citizen-engagement-and-participation/ (26/05/2021)

[57] https://www.citizenlab.co/blog/civic-engagement/what-is-the-difference-between-citizen-engagement-and-participation/ (26/05/2021)

[58] https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/ibp-south-africa-budget-brief-upgrades-informal-settlements-2017.pdf (12/07/2021)

The Empowerment policy objective is simply to "establish participatory processes and addressing the broader social needs of the community"[59]. The case of Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project, like the Ethekwini Municipality and the N2 Gateway projects, reduce the immediate default to intervening in a more 'top-down' manner. In the process of interviewing the professionals responsible for the Thembalethu Phase 1, you 'hear' their 'truth. A reminder: the idea of the present research is not to vilify professionals, but to attempt to put forward professionals' truth, a 'truth' which reveals the genuine concerns and constraints of those who deal with these kinds of projects on a daily basis.

Thus, what becomes clearer is why 'Empowerment' 'remains an UISP policy objective, if the UISP track record (as discussed in chapters 2 and 4) has demonstrated that this is not attainable. It could be that policy language needs to change to the third objective, Communication: establishing communicative processes that ensure communities are fully and actively aware of UISP development process. This, however, would call for a responsive government. In this context, the degree to which local government is or is not responsive is discussed and critiqued in chapter 4. It also brings up the concern that 'fluid' participation in the context of upgrading informal settlements has not been sufficiently explored, because this kind of participation would have to be well-organized, and take place in a very short space of time which in a way would be counter-intuitive. It should also be possible for this kind of participation to be accommodated by an informal settlement upgrading policy. If one looks at the way the in which the UISP is set-up, one realizes that the necessary space to take into account and to accommodate the fluid and temporary nature of the influx of informalisation is almost non-existent. Exploring the implications of the constraints for the 'human resource input', or participation, as set out in chapter 2, together with the CitizenLab perspective, we see how these dynamics are endemic to the extent that we may need to reconsider what constitutes empowering participation processes in deeply fractured and contradictory "beneficiary" communities. Thus, a rooted and responsive planner

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[59] https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/ibp-south-africa-budget-brief-upgrades-informal-settlements-2017.pdf (12/07/2021)

would need to find the means, and adopt a particular sensibility, to be willing and able to navigate these unavoidable complexities and improve the relations between the community and the municipality. This in turn supports Forester's (1982) claim described in chapter 2, that the ways in which information is used in the planning process, or the way information is controlled, mirror the level of alliance toward neoliberal forms of governance.

6.2.3 A Strong Team: Good Leadership

There was a shared consensus among the professionals in the implementing agent team that the municipality is the client, and when dealing with an implementing agent like Aurecon, the client needs, through good leadership and professionalism to be assertive in terms of what they want. Engineer B aptly sums up the various difficulties of managing implementing agents, including personality factors:

> But the management and … uhm … leaders from municipality, plays a very, very important role. Uhm … the director … uhm, while we were doing the Thembalethu project … uh … had a total different approach to this project, and his … his personality and aspects, had certain influence on the project. And where in Mossel Bay, it was totally, totally different….Uh … that person need to … need to … uhm … keep certain political figures also happy. So, it was definitely difficult in that sense. [if] We, we had, for instance, another … uh … kind of director or leader perhaps it would have been much easier. Uhm… but now, on the other hand, then you get a counter position. And I need to say that….that person went then to another department after the five years' appointments of … of these directors. And then another one was appointed who is too weak, who actually can't make decisions. Then we've actually has a position that yes, they are there, but they can't actually … uhm … manage large consultants like Aurecon. You must understand that it's a huge company. And, and, and it's difficult, even sometimes, if you were a client, if I were a client, is difficult to manage a company like Aurecon, especially such a big, big appointment. They can sometimes be …be a bit too dominant. (Engineer B).

Engineer B continues to compare the strength and quality of the George municipality management during the time of Thembalethu Phase 1, to that of the Mossel Bay municipality management of UISP projects that were being implemented there. He

compares the two to show the different ways in which different management styles can contribute to the quality of upgrading outcomes:

> Strong and open minded, professional and all that kind of stuff. And that's what we have in Mossel Bay. It's a strong team. And they know what they want, but they give … uh … freedom for the consultants and there's a good relationship. But … uhm … it [Thembalethu: Phase 1] was very treacherous. In some cases, we didn't know what was going on. You actually run the situations, and then … then suddenly, they want us to do something else. And obviously, that wasn't/was the right decision, we as consultants can't make it, especially in riots, then we actually, we managing. (Engineer B).

The consequences of 'weak' leadership municipality and management (on the part of George) of Aurecon in Thembalethu: Phase 1, resulted in the project team being exposed to violent and uncontrolled public behaviour, having to engage the 'rioting' community and having to make involuntary decisions. Engineer B reiterates that "it's not actually our role… it should be the municipality informing the community. They didn't so … so it's all political playing games and so on". Engineer B further describes what, in his view, characterises 'strong' leadership :

> Uhm …but yeah... you need a strong client and a strong … uhm … uh leadership with the community in that department. To understand a project like this is a multi-million Rand project. You need a project leader who understands and run it. And need to …to make the shots and …and dictate and be able to manage his consultant. The consultant should not manage him.   (Engineer B).

Listening to these different professionals it was clear that they wanted to deliver the project to the best of their abilities and through a process rooted in professionalism, and that they were invested in this project because they were the ones managing the implementation of this UISP project. Thus, even though the professionals were saying that they had a good 'walk-in' relationship with George municipality, the Thembalethu: Phase 1 UISP project implementing agents did not feel as supported by the kind of leadership and management of George municipality as did their equivalents in the Mossel Bay municipality. In their view the George municipality management style was characterized by a lack of clarity and decisiveness, by an absence of taking responsibility for their mandate to the community. The

implementing agents also saw the municipality as being politically swayed and thus, there was a situation in which the consultant was both managing the project and trying to navigate the inconsistent management style of the municipality. The municipality's perspective was different:

> Often the municipality is told that their standards are too high or too expensive and 'forced' to accept something they do not want and then we have excessive maintenance burden and we are told it is our responsibility because we have signed off on plans. (Municipal Officer B).

Municipal Official B continues by stating (his view being specifically directed to planning) that a holistic approach to projects is lacking (link roads that do not show actual links to existing roads) as in the case of Thembalethu Phase 1 the spatial layout did not link to the greater existing George urban development layout. This would result in partially completed Traffic Impact Assessments (TIAs) that become the municipality's problem. Often the TIA focusses on the immediate vicinity, but UISP is adding 4939 erven (as discussed in chapter 5), which impedes the functionality of the space. This Municipal Official A alludes to where planning and their spatial layouts do not consider greater George urban development links. Municipal Official A is concerned with whether planners from the onset were not paying attention and/ or considering the TIA and the impact on Nelson Mandela Boulevard / Tabata Street intersection (this key intersection in Thembalethu is now (July 2020) considered to establish a CBD[60])? Because of this lack of considering this link, it was not included in TIAs as the TIAs focussed only on physical links into the community, and sometimes these are not even completed (Area 5 &6 roads are a good example of this). Moreover social issues are ignored, as are User Accessibility (UA) compliance, and pedestrian movement studies (sidewalks are mostly ignored).

This hands-off approach is described in chapter 4, where I question whether the turnkey procurement strategy is the result of the municipality's being insufficiently

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[60] https://documentportal.george.gov.za/storage/local-frameworks/July2020/3pme7YU3NNotLu6Hd3N0.pdf

capacitated, or if the municipality is unwilling to get their hands dirty politically. It could also be a case of the municipality taking precautions to ensure good governance and orderliness. In light of Policy Manager B's view that municipalities are there to hold consultants accountable to the policy, Policy Manager B also mentions that:

> … the officials in the human settlements department are mostly administrative kind of officials with an administrative [academic] background, not the technical kind of background, for instance,[that of an] engineer or town planner. (Policy Manager B).

What we see play out in the roll out of UISP projects within Thembalethu is not so much the lack of leadership on the part of the municipality but what seems to be the misalignment within the municipality, as described by Municipal Officer B:

> I want to put my double disclaimer. We had a situation where we... Municipal Official A alluded to where we (Engineering) make comments, and then another section maybe the municipality (DoHS or Planning) accepts the plans that overrules our (functional) decisions. And then they say no, but the municipalities made the decision.

However, Municipal Officer A responds by stating:

> I don't think it's ever the intention for municipalities not to work together; that is the implementing agent's responsibility, it over well plays together to make sure that everybody is on board and understands what the requirements are. That is their facilitation role. That is what they should be doing. That is why they appointed not just to deal with community and political, or you know the entire implementation, they should be doing that, they should be coordinating the entire process, and they didn't! They tried to leave it to the municipality to try and do that. And it just didn't work. (Municipal Officer A).

This foregrounds a few issues, firstly the municipality has put the 'whip' in the hands of the implementing agent to hold them accountable, and secondly, to coordinate differing opinions of municipal departments thus bypassing and facilitating interdepartmental conflict. This level of responsibility of the implementing agent shows the great level of trust on the part of the municipality in an implementing agent when they have no guarantee s/he will produce sustained outcomes. Even when

implementing agents do produce 'successful' outcomes, these are not necessarily sustained as implementing agents change. This would however also have implications for the kind of mindset and sensibilities of the planners and the project team, and for the ways we think about evaluation, public participation, and how municipalities can determine the quality of upgrading, or a sustained quality output. The fact that the municipality's reputation is at the mercy of who is assigned implementing agent is deeply problematic, because do we know how good governance is sustained and maintained, cooperative governance achieved, community trust established, urban development monitored and evaluated, or an implementing agent held accountable? Moreover, this is asking the implementing agent, who technically does not necessarily owe the municipality or community loyalty to 'care' for the community.

In the case of Thembalethu: Phase 1, the hands-off approach is due to a lack of technical background on the part of the municipality for it to gauge the quality of the consultant. In addition, the view of Policy Manager B is an indication of how this municipal role is interpreted by that specific official and how this determines the type of engagement with the consultant. Another issue raised by Planner B was that something as simple as getting street names approved kept on being delayed, and officials were reluctant from their end to sign off the necessary approvals. Engineer A describes the frustration felt by the engineers with the delays occasioned by the bureaucratic municipality processes in mobilising the project:

> We come to a decision quite quickly or not quickly, you know, and we get to an end product, and then it's the internal paperwork at the municipality and at the housing department which takes very, very long. That needs to somehow be streamlined more quicker because we've gone through this whole exercise of getting the town planner, the contractor, the architect, the project manager, everyone together, and we've come up with this, let's call it a super-duper design, which can work. (Engineer A).

This urgency is not felt by the municipality: according to them, the UISP is not the only housing programme; there are many projects needing to be attended to. This brings to light how informal settlements are still being seen as similar in nature and in planning approach to a formal housing development. The difference between the two kinds of residential developments seems not yet to have been fully grasped by

municipalities. This lack of awareness and/or distinction has emerged as a shortcoming in management in the George Municipality. This awareness and sensitivity of approach can only be obtained through a greater level of engagement with communities in such settlements. The necessity for understanding that informal settlements are very different from formal housing in demarcated areas, and require a different approach, was expressed earlier by Engineer A, and others. However, they also note that, since 2009, Thembalethu Phase 1, Aurecon's ideas on managing such large-scale projects has significantly changed, although the municipal bureaucracy has not been sufficiently streamlined to align with the pace required by the consultants. In addition, as Engineer A commented, it is necessary for municipalities to be able to identify competent consultants who are experienced and able to do housing projects of this scale:

> My comment is – give the housing development with their codes and standards to engineers or companies that can do it. (Engineer A).

He acknowledged that, as a company, they have acquired extensive specialised knowledge in implementing such projects over the years, and are willing to share this knowledge with those companies which get these upgrading projects. However, what he found was that, on most occasions, these other companies want to re-invent the wheel each time they embark on a project. His attitude was an indication that the focus of his company was on upgrading in the best and most appropriate way possible, which involved helping the communities, and building on existing knowledge and experience, and so 'perfecting' an efficient and appropriate way in managing upgrading of informal settlements as opposed to hogging such information. More importantly, according to him, a strong team is essential to effectively manage large upgrading projects, one which shows equal commitment to the nature and dynamic informal settlements present.

6.2.4 Dignified Design and Dignified Input

Depending on the type of land available, design is an extremely important part of the UISP process. This section looks closely at the differing perspectives of the engineer and planner to tease out these differences and implications of the following three aspects. The first is, the limitations of the UISP method or priority of planning

objectives. The method fails to take into account the existing and undeniable reality of informal settlements. It does not learn from that reality and use this knowledge as a starting source of information for planning the area that is due to undergo upgrading. The second aspect is the neighbourhood scale of planning being best suited for upgrading, to ensure that learning from existing practices can be incorporated, and to ensure a more holistic approach that does not fixate on engineering standards of a basket of services. Thirdly, the fact that, in the implementation of these UISP projects, there is no space for these considerations to be addressed, making the implementation process which does not take the two aspects into account a recipe for failure.

As pointed out in chapter 4, the land provided for the upgrading of Thembalethu Phase 1 was one of the green field sites whose gradients were very steep. It was clear from the onset of the interviews that planners who were more spatially inclined, and/or knowledgeable, commented on the UISP in terms of not providing 'dignified' neighbourhood designs. The engineers, who are more functionally driven, acknowledged the importance of neighbourhood design, but, more importantly, could not stress enough that their only concern was storm water management and the need for planners to be aware of this, especially in relation to gradients. Even though the planner and engineer's emphases were different, at the core of their concerns was land suitability, or lack thereof, and how to reconcile this with design. Moreover, they were concerned about the degree of awareness and responsiveness of the UISP to the kind of land that is 'normally' selected for upgrades. Engineer C expressed a sentiment, one shared by others in the engineering team, about of the condition and features of the land that needed to be designed for and upgraded:

> See the … the problem is … is … the … your informal … your … your areas that you formalize is normally not your best pieces of land within a … in a town or in a … in a … cause it's normally, with people normally start squatting on the outskirts of … of where originally the town planners thought or design for this … is not suitable for living conditions. So that is also part of the problem … is if where you want to upgrade informal areas you're working with the … the worst of the worst of the town… I think it's something that's quite difficult for a town planner to incorporate into the design. It's more a question of work with what I've got.

215

(Engineer C).

Moreover, one needs to understand that officially Thembalethu is a formal black township, and that the areas that have been illegally occupied were areas that, according to planning standards, were not suitable for development. Planners from the municipal side assert that the UISP does not take into consideration land availability, its suitability for settlement or upgrading, nor the related design aspects. Planner A and other professionals agree that the scale of the UISP does not allow for quality design:

> Ideally, one would want to see … uhm something [an upgrading policy] that really considers or gives more consideration to … to design aspects of …of the development and .. and, again, we .. we [George Municipality] don't have land. We have to be creative in optimizing our land. Squeezing them in closer to one another is not optimizing it. It compromises the quality of the neighbourhoods. So personally, I … I feel UISPs don't contribute to good quality neighbourhoods. If a scale is kept small, uhm … I think there's space for it. But it also needs to … to go along with some sort of a programme to facilitate upgrade within … within that neighbourhood or that space. But … but if that layer becomes too big, you … you are clustering, to a large extent … uhm … poverty. (Planner A).

Planner A is arguing for the preferred scale for the UISP as agreed by the professionals: the neighbourhood scale. Her reason for this is that this scale is easier to manage, to design, and regulate. Planner B, however, mentions that there is a 'method to the madness' which appears to characterise informal settlements and to be counter to neighbourhood design. He argues that it is important to recognize the existing 'informal' design, and more importantly, to understand the 'business sense' – the economic/livelihood considerations - behind [informal] housing provision by the urban poor. Moreover, how these implicit reasons for the particular ways in which informal settlements function has implications for the broader municipality fiscal and the type and quality of design:

> These people organize themselves. This is good. Economic systems going where .. we … shops are situated, where social gatherings are ,where meeting places are, and I think in by upgrading it we are kind of forced to, to mess up that situation, so I feel there should be more, maybe initial meeting … uhr …with this, let call it

216

the dwellers in that area, but some, in the other end, we are driven by economic, haha, forces, and engineering forces try to keep costs down to optimize services etc. And it's not the private development, where … where … the private developer must make money out of a development by selling plots. So, he must, the services must, be cheap, or the services must be optimized. Yeah, we're looking at more social housing for poor people that will probably not even have the money to pay their own taxes in the future. And so I think there, the urban designs in that case, in those cases of kind of neglected, and … and not in the end result is not what it used to be. So people are actually worse off. (Planner B).

Even though Planner A refers to neighbourhood design and Planner B refers to understanding the inner networks within informal settlements, Municipal official A argues that planners fail to consider urban development in its entirety. Municipal official A refers to the failure of planners to connect and understand Thembalethu's needs within informal expansion areas as well as within the greater George area. This failure continues to perpetuate an isolated and narrow perspective of Thembalethu. This further cements Apartheid segregated spatial thinking and in many ways shows how neighbourhood design thinking, in the name of better manageability, can lead to rigid sensibilities and management styles, for which planning is already criticised in planning literature.

Planner A suggests that the same urban design principles and criteria used for formal housing developments should be applied in the case of informal settlement upgrade layouts. The George urban design framework (George Municipality, 2011) was issued in 2011, which was within the time frame of Thembalethu Phase 1. The guiding urban design principles for George are: Green Theme: George as the Garden City; Hierarchy of the Public Realm; Public and Private Interface; Architectural Expression, Relationship between Building and Context; Promoting the Conservation of Heritage. Furthermore, the urban design of Thembalethu precinct is described as having a road system that is not legible, further characterised by dead-ends and cul-de-sacs. Thembalethu is described in the guidelines as having a lack of landmarks, as most buildings are single story. Interestingly enough it is characterised as an informal settlement. The list of what is lacking includes, community facilities, services,

amenities, green recreational spaces and vegetation[61]. According to the urban design principles as set out by Farr (2007), sustainable urban design is about bringing into dialogue normative (spatial) vision with the local context. This implies a shift in understanding from what Thembalethu should be to what Thembalethu can be (described by Flyvbjerg in chapter 2), through urban design principles. However, based on a comparison between the design principles and the actual intervention with Thembalethu Phase 1 UISP, these design principles did not translate within the upgraded area.

In her response to Planner B, Planner A sees the aspects of the urban design that are neglected in the implementation of the UISP are the 'formal' standardized principles and criteria she is talking about. It was clear from this private sector planner that there were attempts to incorporate urban design principles that have worked successfully in informal settlement upgrading contexts, principles such as the 'eyes on the street' design, open space system. However, this is not always the case, nor possible to do, due to budget constraints, and attempts on the part of planners or municipalities to house the maximum number of people: the UISP beneficiaries. Moreover, as Project manager A stated, the UISP is strict about A-grade engineering services needing to be provided per stand. This also has implications for the amount of stands you can fit into the designated area. Moreover, in Thembalethu Phase 1, Engineer A said that, even though this design or approach was *in situ*- upgrading, it was difficult to accomplish, as the machinery required to do the A-grade services is hazardous for those living in the informal settlements. According to Pojani (2019), these concerns are emblematic of how [urban] 'form' is understood, within design professions like urban design and planning, as fixed. An informal settlement requires a dynamic and adaptive understanding of [urban] 'form' (Pojani, 2019). However, for this to be true, informal settlements need to be regarded as an integral part of urban space. For informal settlements to be considered in this way, an informal settlement needs to be considered as a "permanent part of housing supply" (Pojani, 2019:294) without romanticising poverty and the ethical challenges that come with this consideration. As

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[61] https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/42596301/urban-design-and-architecture-guidelines-for-george (29/03/2022)

discussed in chapter 2, this continues to be debated and deeply contested.

Planner A continued to comment on the UISP, arguing that going into the community, and adopting an approach to the upgrading based on the way community members are living there, or how they move or circulate within an area, should be an indication of what should inform the layout. Interesting enough, Municipal Official A points to how planners are defensive and not open to constructive criticism. Moreover, they are not particularly considerate with their layouts failing to consider, or to fully consider, a number of aspects which impact on general quality of life:

- The impact on services (houses situated lower than roads, on drainage channels, etc)

- Road Reserve width – [layout] does not allow adequate space for services, inadequate sidewalk width (must accommodate UA [user accessibility] requirements, street furniture, signage and electricity poles, electricity kiosks, etc), transport routes and future connectivity

- No provision for commercial, social, education, religious, community needs

- Very little consideration to erf access, for example, steep gradient

- Drainage one of the biggest challenges, for example, erven being lower than roads, or being situated in natural or artificial drainage routes

- Belief that low-income households do not own motor vehicles and thus on-site parking, or vehicular access is not required. This forces the roads to be reserved for parking purposes (negative impact)

- Poor town layout leads to very high infrastructure costs. Costing of services (bulk, link and internal) should inform layout

- Layouts often done in isolation and without consideration of future planning for the greater area, or practical linkages with existing areas

- Safety of residents requires greater planning consideration. (Municipal Official A)

Even though layouts are outsourced to private planners (as discussed in chapter 5), and in that way have their own financial limitations, and municipal planners are in fact able to authorise certain plans, we see how the current mindset, and planners' spatial imagination is project bound. This narrow lens used for upgrading projects hampers the sensibilities of these planners with regard to urban development in the greater George as a whole. This further illuminates how flexible the planner may seem to be, or imagine themselves (subjectively) to be, versus how rigid and narrowly focused the planner is in the case of Thembalethu in fact is. The result of this mindset is to change their interpretations of flexibility and how they reflect the changing dynamics of urban development and institutional relations in urban planning. Thus, flexibility is not just a policy objective to be achieved, but also a mindset and sensibility to 'digest' and 'make sense' of flexible policies and their necessity. As we see in chapter 2, while planning is critiqued for being rigid, the attitudes adopted by planners and decision makers toward flexibility have been relatively under researched. We see in this case how planners although they are rethinking neighbourhood design they continue to fail to come to terms with informal settlements as part of the greater urban development landscape.

Illustrating the complexity and contradictions of conventional planning and design, Planner A makes a very interesting – and culturally sensitive - remark concerning the inclusion of empty spaces in the layout, particularly those related to children's play areas:

> You don't want to create void spaces because those only become spaces where the next squatter is going to put his illegal unit. So … uhm … so we … we … we definitely want to move purely to functional spaces, but there needs to be room to play, and we consider with … within the culture that … that we're dealing with, and also within that income groups. Your streetscape also becomes a play area. (Planner A).

This remark alludes to the George Municipality planning department considering the 'culture' of informal settlement residents, or 'occupiers', in other words the general practices and behaviour of those residents illegally occupying open spaces. Moreover 'culture' directly relates to urban interfaces within informal settlements and the ways in which the threshold between public and private spaces is transformed through

upgrading programmes (Kamalipour, 2017). This means that planners require a deeper engagement with the community in order to understand and manage these interfaces and the inner workings of function and community life within informal settlements. Furthermore, it is interesting that Planner A should mention 'going into the community', since much of the groundwork was done by the BLCs or by Community Liaison officers, and the planning aspect of the budget is usually so limited that it feeds off the information that it receives from the Community Liaison officer and the project manager.

Despite the lack of direct engagement with the community, Planner A makes mention of the uncomfortable truth concerning open spaces having been found to signal opportunities for illegal occupancy. This links with the role that planners can play in changing the informal settlement upgrading planning, i.e. the spatial narrative, in considering spatial alternatives. This narrative alludes to the perception that this is how illegal occupiers tend to behave or proceed with their occupying. Consequently, this suggests the existence of a 'culture' of illegal/chaotic occupying. This narrative would tell engineers not to provide 10/13meters tarred streets, but to provide streets with different surfaces (e.g. paved streets) tailored to different uses other than for driving on, for example, play areas, areas to set up market stalls, areas personalized and tailored to the particular community and their needs. Even although this was not the case for Thembalethu Phase 1, after reflection on the part of planners and engineers after completion, the Thembalethu Phase 1 project helped inform these types of decisions.

Earlier Planner A wanted housing developments to be mixed so that informal settlement residents would be able to see their way out of an undignified and squalid living situation and have some hope that it is possible to progress to a 'better' living situation. Now what is being suggested is that the confinement and containment of a neighbourhood where you do not provide people with backyards because you consider it likely that, according to a 'culture' of illegal occupancy, they will have a backyard dweller, or dwellers, stay there. This shows a shift in mindset around the dynamism of informal settlements. According to Municipal Officers A and B, design should consider infrastructural provisions for a possible backyard dweller/s. Planner A and Municipal officers A and B acknowledge that back yard dwelling represents a

legitimate form of income, and the way we design a neighbourhood needs to cater for that. Therefore, in a way this represents a shift in the traditional planning design, in urban interfaces, and in the 'narrative' of open space systems, where streets are taking on this functional and communal role in an informal setting. However, more broadly, it contests how neighbourhood design speaks to urban development on a secondary town level, i.e. holistic urban development thinking, or whether it is simply cementing the apartheid design layout more broadly. The issue of backyard rental dwellings is a telling example to illustrate the complexity and contradictions of conventional planning as covered in chapter 2. Municipal Official B explains how back yard dwelling shifts the status quo when it comes to the design of UISP stage 4:

> And then a big issue that's come up the last few years is encroachments, that even for servitudes, they get people expand their properties because they tried to have backyard dwellers and I know other communities that are…other municipalities we've heard on our planning for this. So they give a double water connection and double electrical meter because they know it's going to happen, that indirectly that overloads our systems. We got a lot more people staying on the properties than we expected. (Municipal Official B).

As has been mentioned, the reason for the engineers' emphasis on storm water is that many of these informal settlements have come to be situated on the steepest parts of urban land. If storm water is not considered, the design will fail. This means that implementation costs more and, contrary to normal housing developments, informal settlements' funding is fixed. Municipal officers A and B mentioned that the planners', yes the planners' role, is marginal, but if the layout is wrong it has significant implications on the infrastructural cost. This has largely to do with the planners' ability to work together and cooperatively with the engineers. This requires a particular sensibility, in other words, the quality of being able to take into account, and respond to, complexity. According to Municipal officials A and B this was not the case for Thembalethu Phase 1. Municipal Officer B describes this case in more detail:

> We had a terrible example, we handed over project [Thembalethu Phase 1] and the first beneficiary was a lady in a wheelchair and there's a site was three meters under the road. So that is embarrassing for everybody because she couldn't get to property. They weren't even steps; she needed a ramp but even three meters,

but you got an old lady trying to get three meters up a step, just was a disaster (Municipal Official B, 2022).

Managing design in a way that anticipates future risks can in fact 'save' money over time, and potentially help the project. Moreover, the recent report by Municipal Official B illustrates how, being aware of, and considering, the beneficiaries' physical conditions/disabilities and needs when designing is crucial from a financial and practical, besides a humanitarian/dignity point of view. This in turn confirms the rigidity and short-sightedness of the blanket 'one-size-fits-all' view many planners and implementers have of beneficiaries. Engineer A explains why a shift in planning orientation is needed, particularly in terms of managing stormwater:

> You know they've [planners] got this...they've got this idea [planning/ spatial layout], but remember storm water, if you've got contours. Water runs 90 degrees off contours. So that water will run that way, that way, that way, so it will carry on. Now if you go and do a road like that... it's gonna be completely expensive. What you know, it's not gonna work for now. Let's just do it this way. You build that road over like that. Now you build an erf up here. Look where that water's gonna go to. Let's say this is a meter contour. So that's 41, 2 meters over 10 meters. Which is 1 in 5. Which is you know 1 in 5. That's very, very steep. But if you apply your mind and just change the layout. We need to get away from, you know the blocks, and you do the road with the contour. Then all of a sudden you've only got 1 meter fall over of property. (Engineer A).

Engineer A provides another reason for this shift in orientation:

> It's just shifting a bit of orientation. And what this does, if you do it this way, it gets away from the … what do you call it, I'll recall the word now. Forgive me for the word. You taping now. The apartheid design. (Engineer A).

Engineer A's reflection on Thembalethu Phase 1 shows the design looking completely different in terms of storm water. He offers a reason for this:

> A big problem. You don't have sufficient funding to do a normal storm water system like in town. Uhm…because there's not enough…there's not sufficient funding. [The Department of Human Settlements is giving a fixed amount.] So your uhm…biggest thing on a layout is how do you deal with the storm water. Because

if we swop this around, and we had those single row of urban here. Because remember, when you design a road, I've always been told, you slope the road into the mountain. (Engineer A).

What he was trying to explain is that the contours and the steep gradient of the site for the Thembalethu Phase 1 project had a bearing on the fixed funding that the UISP process/ Department of Human Settlements provides. This points not only to the UISP's inability to take into account different context and location needs, but also the UISP's need to take into more serious consideration the storm water drainage factor. Municipal Officers A and B argue that this kind of assessment helps when the upgrade takes place on a green field site as opposed to a brown field site. Because of the difficulties experienced with brown field sites, they are considering not doing this kind of upgrade. This has implications for the planners attitude towards *in situ* upgrading, which, in the case of George, seems not to be feasible.

The design of Thembalethu Phase 1 did not take into account the infrastructural implications for dealing effectively with storm water flows through the site, and, as a result, a cul-de-sac with two erven was designed into a space that, in hindsight, could have been a catchment pit. Consequently, during rainy seasons, those two erven now constitute a catchment pit for the downstream flow of water, making the houses uninhabitable for the residents. Another issue Engineer A and Project Manager A raised was the fact that, after the building of the houses by the contractors in a straight line, you could look through the window of one house and see through all the houses due to the houses being built identically next to each other. With the benefit of hindsight this has become a learning opportunity for them to know to avoid this in future. Instead, they have realized that they should talk with the contractors and planners and persuade them to consider building a row of houses using the '2 to the front, 2 to the back' principle. This would be a move towards a holistic design, together with an understanding that the people will be living there for the rest of their lives. Engineer A was frank in his explanation, that a typical more formal, spatially appropriate design would only cater for 1200 people, and would not accommodate 4 000 residents. This speaks to an important tension as well as preference on the part of the municipality, which is quality over quantity when it comes to infrastructure provision. He elaborates on the technical limitations, and, by implication, the financial

constraints, in particular the limitation on the size of the area for building houses to accommodate the appropriate number of residents adequately and permanently:

> And I can get a better design, and I can only cater for 1000 people, a more environmental friendly, user friendly, uh…neighbourhood friendly…uh…in my opinion, the municipality has got to look for more land. Because remember, that guy that's staying in that long little houses, he's gonna stay there for the rest of his life. So I think…don't try and solve the immediate, start looking at the bigger picture, and do the right thing from day one. (Engineer A)

Thus, from the views expressed by various professionals, but not all of them such as Engineer A, in these interviews and urban planning literature one can infer from them that, for informal settlers, if we want to create quality neighbourhoods in terms of formal, linear, standardised designs, which align with what is legislatively considered adequate space and drainage in small pockets, social cohesion and networks will likely have to be broken, and people, as happened in many instances during apartheid, will have to be relocated. Thus, in order not to break these fragile networks, planners, municipalities and engineers would need to rethink the ways in which they approach the upgrading of informal settlements. Thus, one can infer that the political drive for more built houses undermines the sense of quality neighbourhood design, not to mention design networks with wider urban development within George. Even though, as highlighted in chapter 4, the UISP four phase structured approach barely makes it to Stage 2 of the UISP process in various upgrading projects, Thembalethu Phase 1 was able to make it through most of the four stages.

Thembalethu Phase 1 was a pilot project that followed the UISP minimum specifications and was able to deliver according to specifications, although not necessarily the ideal residential project. Project Manager A provides some of the details of the limitations imposed by the UISP specifications:

> As we said, this minimum specifications, you [as project manager, as stipulated by the UISP] have to set the rules, and you have to comply with, so there is very, very, very [little room for planning/ design perspective], that is now my honest opinion; there's very little room for the town planner. So we tell the town planner look, we've got this area, they have to do a layout plan that … and they have to do

that. And the standard design for the layout plan, and is it 10 meters street fund, no 9-meter street by 10 meter to extend, and that how the designer. So there's very little…. (Project Manager A).

From these interviews, one can see that, while the dedication by the professional team to deliver to the best of their ability is commendable, they bumped up against a situation where the UISP policy, with its linear approach, set the agenda for a design to deal efficiently and within budget with informal settlements while disregarding spatial redress. Chapter 4 presents a discussion by Smit (2017) of the three shifts in housing policy. He shows how housing delivery remains politicised, and continues to disregard other drivers of urban development and their implication for housing provision. Moreover, in light of the specifications of the design, the UISP structured process provides little to no room for negotiation on part of professionals implementing with the policy in this regard. This leaves implementing agents at the mercy of this UISP policy that silences them as professionals who may have a wider, possibly more holistic, knowledge and experience of housing provision.

This then takes us back to chapter 2, to Ndlovu's (2018) conceptions of knowledge, how rigid and standardised planning norms and construction standards are emblematic of modernist simplification and an extension of colonial ways of doing. The different dynamics in Mossel Bay allowed for greater interaction between the professionals and the officials, a comparison which further suggests that in George it was more about silencing. In the case of Thembalethu Phase 1, where professionals who 'know' better were 'silenced' through the ways in which they were obliged to comply with the UISP process. The professionals were clear about the reasons for this 'silencing': because of the pandemic the National Department of Human Settlements has prioritised the UISP, which gives informal settlement upgrading priority status, and which makes the discussion of the UISP model under study, and the ways in which we can better this tool, particularly pertinent.

6.2.5 The Funding Ultimatum

Interviewees all agreed that if there is no funding there is no upgrading, or there is a delay in the process. This is also one of the reasons why implementing agents mobilise with no delay. Engineer C explains how their original appointment to participate in

Thembalethu: Phase 1, was on a risk basis:

> So we received an risk appointment from the municipality in 2004 already. Way
> back, hey. And that was basically to start with the business plan to come to get
> hold of …of planning funding. So the actual appointment was in 2004; that's a, if
> you can say, that's a actual start date of our appoint… So then 2006 were probably
> the time when we got the funding and started the planning that 2010 will be the
> implementation of physical …uhm … services on site. So that's why different
> people will give you different start dates things. (Engineer C).

Because this project was a risk appointment, it was important for funding to receive all
the required approvals so that the consultant could be paid for their services, and more
importantly to get informal settlements upgraded as soon as possible. With risk
appointments it is imperative that Aurecon make the project work, as their resources
are at risk in the process and therefore the project needed to work. Engineer C
explains the logic and conditionality of this approval process:

> …I think it's …it's the biggest thing. I think it's availability of funding to quickly
> imple…implement the stuff and obviously your …your …your …uhm …your LUPA
> [Cape Land Use Planning Act], and environmental processes that takes you out
> …the…it takes you 12 months plus. Also have a… and… once you don't that
> these… these …uhm standard approvals in place, you won't get a funding
> approval. So, for example, you must first get [these approvals] in place to apply
> for the funding to do the implementation. So everything has a… some sort of a
> time lag with… You can't … uh … uh … uh … have that approvals in place, they
> won't commit fun … uh… funding towards that project until that's in place. They
> say no, you taking a year to get a ROD [Record of Decision environmental
> authorisation] approval. Then we do the application. There's no funding available.
> There's already areas been earmarked somewhere else within the municipality.
> So you've got all these different scenarios that does have an impact …uhm …on
> it. (Engineer C).

In the case of Thembalethu: Phase 1, even though interviewees agreed that the
project sought to reach its objectives, one of the key challenges emerging from the
research was this series of legislative processes: the Land Use Planning Act (LUPA)
and the National Environment Management Act (NEMA). Because these processes

take time, this waiting period is onerous for frustrated community members, which they may see as the municipalities' apparent inability to 'contain' illegal occupancy during this waiting period, and consequent delays in UISP implementation. These legislative processes happen within the municipal domain. As noted above, implementation only happened in 2010, six years after the original appointment of the implementing agent. Due to such delays, Project Manager A calls for 'different rules', as do the other professionals involved. It was felt that this would help speed up the process for funding to be approved. One can infer from this unwieldy approval process that those who have instituted the funding mechanisms on the part of National and Provincial government, and in many ways, local government, together with these other legislative processes, have, after all this time, failed to fully understand the 'difference' in terms of criteria and conditions, informality presents.

Taking this further, the upgrading policy drafters may not have fully understood the complex nature of policy implementation when prescribing this rigid structured approach, as discussed under the *Institutional Tension: Implementation Consideration* heading in chapter 2. This matter is also connected to the ways in which upgrading projects are evaluated (which I discuss in later in the chapter). This whole funding dilemma, and the urgency and crucial necessity of getting the project implemented, demonstrates the tensions between the complexities of informality and the inflexibility of the legal processes. It also leaves one with the question: when there is no funding, how pro-active can municipalities be in this waiting period? This links back to the nature and extent of George municipal, and more broadly provincial, and national responsiveness and will.

6.2.6 There will always be Politics….

In chapter 2 I showed how scholars remind planners to think not only about political, state, and economic power, but also about the urban and local politics that informal settlements generate and represent, and the ways in which upgrading programmes are embedded in the political landscape. It was interesting to note in the interviews that understandings of politics, and the role and influence of politics in the UISP design and implementation, were conceptualised differently by different professionals.

From a community liaison perspective, politics being situated in the UISP process meant that everyone (Thembalethu community residents) wanted, and had a right, to have a say in the process, and that the BLCs were there to listen to the community's voice(s), to manage the communities' 'say', and to defuse the politics (Community Liaison Officer A). The perception of Engineer C, who is also now in the role of a community Liaison officer, was that, instead of the municipality's showing non-partisan responsibility in their role of informing the communities, it is all 'political games'. Engineer C asserted that, because there were so many political components and local political tensions/contestations due to the community's expectation of the high stakes housing component of the UISP, Aurecon had to appoint another – non-partisan - contractor. The reason for this is usually that a private company/consultant like Aurecon has a sub-contractor which then appoints community Liaison officers. The reason for this political component, Engineer C explained, is, as happened in Thembalethu Phase 1, to address the fact that a project can take 5 - 10 years to complete. This has to be communicated to a community that is in dire need and invariably raises political tensions between perceived political/power groupings, and can spill over into unrest. He describes the counter and more rewarding side of engaging directly with internal community politics, and trying to balance dire need with the opportunism of those possibly taking advantage of the fluidity of informality to make money:

> I was [at] one of these [community] meetings there. It's wonderful even in these conditions that you still have … uh … humility, still have people that that are willing to work. And everyone think now those people are so political driven. Yes, there's sometimes is, but …but after our first meeting, we had approximately 9,3,4,500 people in the meeting. Then we asked questions and many times these people can be … can be … can be difficult, because it's just another opportunity. But… but it's wonderful then at the end of that meeting one lady stood up and say, "thank you for coming here and then bringing this project". And then another one stand up, "we just want to thank you". That is rewarding to see that kind of things. A person come to me after another meetings and says, "I just need a toilet. I need to go two kilometres to get into a toilet." And then that's hard, and sorry to see that. And …uhm …so it's necessary to get the people involved, but how I'm not a hundred percent sure because of the volatility, and the uncertainty and the things

are changing in their minds on a daily basis. They live from day to day. If there's an opportunity tomorrow, they are not there anymore. (Engineer C).

This understanding on the part of this professional shows that politics, in the sense that he describes them within communities, are fluid, and how difficult it is to navigate this fluid, and at times volatile, political space as a professional who is not even directly 'responsible' for informing the communities. Interestingly, he further mentioned that, as new informal areas have been popping up in Thembalethu, driven by political groupings, the UISP project under study has become part of the greater Thembalethu UISP operation:

There was nothing, and within six months, driven by the EFF and other political parties, 3400, 4000, 3400 [informal settlers] moved in there. (Engineer C).

Community Liaison officer A confirms Engineer C's experience of navigating the internal politics of a community. He was of the view that politics will always be there, and that, in order to contain the whole political dynamic, or political party/parties, rife or dominant within communities, he needs to remind himself and the community that an upgrading project is primarily about the people on the ground, rather than the quality or type of design. However, he contradicts himself by stating later that equating informal settlements with poverty is not an entirely accurate description:

There's policemen staying there. There's wardens staying there. There's officials that's earning a good salary that's staying in the informal settlements". (Community Liaison Officer A).

He attempts to explain how people understand the opportunity that informal settlement presents, and some take maximum financial advantage of the situation:

… it's so difficult to explain, but now currently it's all about from my side, people see it as an opportunity: mostly. And then there's those, for example, people that is exploiting it in the sense that I'm staying in the formal area in Thembalethu. We have a house, everything. What am I doing now? I invade land and build 10 shacks there and rent it out to people that is coming in. It becomes a business model.(Community Liaison Officer A).

He was describing the way in which the pendulum which swings between those in

need and those being opportunistic, becomes the basis and trigger for the type of politics that manifest within Thembalethu, and the degree of agency exhibited by residents.

From the provincial side it was clear that everything concerning housing is 'political' in the sense of being for political gain and influence. According to Policy Manager B, this is not racially instigated per se, but has directly to do with those who are, and/or perceive themselves to be, disadvantaged by the 'informal situation'.

According to Planner A, from a planner's point of view, politics should not be part of any housing provision project:

> … in any funding or financial decisions … uhm … apart from approving a budget .. uhm …so that that budget is approved and it's … it's rationalized at that point. Uhm …but from implementing it from there … uh … I don't see any … any politics in that. (Planner A).

In her diplomatic way of suggesting political involvement, Planner A does not explicitly mention political influence as transpiring in the implementation process. She asserts that if there is political influence it is at Province level in terms of determining where these funds obtained by national grants will be directed, and which districts will benefit. Planner B, however, was of the view that the local Human Settlement Department was driven by the fear and influence of politicians. This view was expressed in conjunction with his statement that the majority of human settlement officials do not have a technical background to provide them with technical insight into the upgrading location and implementation.

It was due to this political influence that the project implementation ended up having larger plots far away from town and from business opportunities for residents. This was the case in Thembalethu: Phase 1, where private sector Planner B, and from the perspective of the project team from Aurecon's side, complained that this political influence made their role challenging because they were caught between the municipal planning department (following the Spatial Development Framework - SDF - understanding of spatial redress) and the Human Settlement Department (following political expediency). He explained that while, in both 'practice and theory', politicians

should work via the municipal manager, in reality this is not the case as political influence and contestation interferes in the process on a regular basis. This claim is also affirmed by Engineer C. Some studies discussed in the literature review in chapter 2 showed planners being criticised for being far removed from social-economic and cultural realities, and, because of their tendencies to rely too heavily on the technical aspects of planning, their approach to housing is depoliticised. In addition, from previous sections of this chapter which describe and discuss how unresponsive municipalities are to the community, you can see how the municipal planner conceptualises politics as something (undefined) she is not aware of. Even Municipal Officials A and B (2022) affirm that "on a project level, what constitutes consensus that we don't have to deal with it [politics] with statutory services".

If politics, as she understands these, do manifest, it is within the Province domain which is the domain which influences where and to whom the funding should go. Therefore, at a municipal level, on paper does not take the influence of politics into account and decision-making omits the influence of politics. From the private planners' perspective, politics happens on a local municipal scale, thus challenging their role as private planners. What Municipal Official B illuminates is how the municipality is portrayed institutionally as a united front, while at the same time there are preferences in decision-making, which ultimately have detrimental consequences for the municipality. He attributes this to lack of coordination, rather than to bias or self-interest. Municipal Official A concurs with this point, but also states that this is the reason they get the implementing agent in to facilitate municipal dynamics, community dynamics and possible political dynamics. Municipal Official A describes how this process should work in theory:

> Just from my side, I think it's either the intention for municipalities to work together that tension implementing agents' responsibility; it overall plays together in to make sure that everybody is on board and understands what the requirements are. That is the facilitation role. That is what they should be doing. That is why they appointed not just to deal with community and political, you know, the type of mutation they should be doing that they should be alternating the type process, and they didn't try to do that to the municipality to try and do that. And it just doesn't work. (Municipal Official A)

Engineers on the other hand describe politics, as they understand the term, as playing a fundamental role in how housing projects are conceptualised:

> Unfortunately. I would like to say yes, but unfortunately the politics play a huge part, of trying to enforce stuff that's not viable. So unfortunately UISP, or any housing project, you must accept it from day one, it's a political agenda. And sometimes politics wins over sense. (Engineer A).

In this context, Engineer A makes an example of how it helps if you have an ally within the housing department. He mentions that there is a local housing official within the housing department who has tried to accommodate the team representing the implementing agent. Because this official had an engineering background he was able to understand where the consultant was coming from. Engineer A explains the systemic difficulties this official experienced in trying to be an ally:

> He tries his utmost best to accommodate, not [simply to] accommodate us, but to …because he's also an engineer, so he sees things from a different perspective to what a normal person with a…let's call it an academic background in a position would see it. But he's also hampered and bogged down by rules, regulations, and politics. So he some…most of the times he you know he understands and he tries to assist and have policies changed and that, but then he just gets squashed down… this housing is a political agenda and it's never gonna change. (Engineer A).

I would like to provide some clarification that, in chapter 2, I problematize technical aspects, and then, in this chapter, I 'valorise' the technical aspects and contributions. I am not opposed to technical skills, and what we gather from the interviewees' descriptions of, and views about, the managing of housing projects, technical skill is essential to fully understand the gravity of implementation. However, what does become problematic is the inability of policies to make room for the fluid, human, political nature of informal settlements, as was the case of the Thembalethu UISP. Engineer A shifts the restrictive dynamic from planners to municipal and provincial in-house political affiliations, to 'rules, regulations and politics'. Moreover, what is not looked at is the specific ways in which the environment created by the rules, regulations, and political affiliations within that local space safeguards, or shores up,

the socially decontextualised, 'modernist' outlook on urban development as outlined in chapter 2. In addition, these 'rules, regulations and politics' inhibit any mindset and sensibility that attempts to bring about change in policy.

In this section I have shared different views and interpretation of what politics is, or the various ways in which it could be understood by stakeholders in an upgrading process/implementation, depending on context and perspectives – or party-political affiliations. What becomes clearer is that there is a common understanding that politics in some form is definitely at play in the planning and implementation of a housing programme, and in the case of the current study, a UISP. Moreover, implementing agents who directly dealt with the Thembalethu community were uniquely positioned to experience various political tensions from both the community and the government. In Aurecon's attempt to deliver a job well done on time and within budget, as outlined in their vision as a company, and in chapter 4, as an implementing agent, they become the ones to be most exposed to risk, and have to navigate the consequences of this 'politics'. Government officials/professionals seem not to have recognized how the Thembalethu community is a contributor to the narrative and to the landscape of urban and local politics. Understanding that the community plays an intrinsic role in politics, and in the power dynamics, and in the outcome of UISP projects, means that a community, in this and other upgrading projects, have the potential to become a 'human resource' (as described in chapter 2) to be tapped in the urban development process.

This shifts the dialogue from 'we need to help the needy and provide dignified spaces?' to 'how can we journey with the community through the urban development process to achieve this?' (Community Liaison Officer B). However, Community Liaison Officer A mentioned that the community landscape continues to change, and specified what, in his view, made Thembalethu Phase 1 partly successful:

> We had project implementation update meetings with the councillors so on a weekly, two weekly basis. Councillors were constantly called to meetings where we would update the councillors on progress, where we stand. That is why in each area we established the Beneficiary Liaison Committee. These committees were the representatives of the beneficiaries on the ground. Even when we had meeting

with the BLC, as we would call them, the councillors were constantly involved so that whenever we went to the beneficiaries, we talked one language. In 2010 we started with the participation process and those meetings. In 2012 we did a survey of the whole Thembalethu… there's usually what we would did, we would go to the client, which is the municipality or the developer in this sense. And with all the ward councillors we would explain the whole layout to them. Then that layout would then go to the BLCs or to the community in the next meeting where that will be projected and everyone will be explained this is the idea and this is the plans that we having. (Community Liaison Officer A).

Engineer C, who is also a community liaison officer, describes how the current way in which communication with the community is structured. It was created by a joint effort between Aurecon and them as sub-consultants:

…you have your housing code. But it doesn't give you the perspective or specific tasks and information what to do. So we …we actually just started the whole thing and played this community … uhm… engagement, uh … stakeholder engagement, facilitation, link between the community and the… the consultants and the client. We actually start off playing that role. (Engineer C).

This success of this communication process, as explained in earlier sections of this chapter, was a structured informing approach, and even though residents had requests, for example, for a crèche, the UISP agenda was clear and set by Aurecon and the sub-consultant in terms of the requirements and outcomes per UISP stage. Furthermore, when it came to community engagement, while there was an expectation on part of the UISP, the knowledge, expertise and how it was supposed to be achieved was not stipulated by the UISP. Aurecon and the sub-consultant had not only to 'figure' out what engagement with the community would look like, but to make it work in light of the larger parameters of the UISP. They were also the ones taking the initiative and ultimately setting the agenda, as the UISP and housing code was not clear as to the process and community requirements/needs, and did not give the necessary guidance. Community anger and resistance towards them was experienced by the professionals and the planners when there was a delay in the UISP process, and updates were not being communicated properly. This resistance took the form of illegal occupation as a result of back yarders being fed-up with being 'law- abiding citizens',

or was the result of illegal occupation driven by political contestation. As a result, the way of navigating community politics was to 'avoid' actively involving backyard dwellers, UISP beneficiaries, and other informal residents of Thembalethu, and simply to communicate to them the UISP agenda.

6.2.7 The Uncovered Through a Systems Change Lens

Reverting back to the ideas of Kania et al. (2018:14) on relational change, understanding power relations and dynamics has a lot to do with traditionally 'key' stakeholders' "orientation to power because how a [stakeholder] approaches power affects its role as a change agent". Critical to the themes in this section: Mobility, Communication/Participation, Strong Leadership, Dignified Design and Dignified Input, and The Funding Ultimatum, there will always be Politics, a key term for summing up or encapsulating these themes, is the word 'Coordination'. According to Municipal Officials A and B, 'Coordination' between the various professional spheres is the crux of the UISP upgrading process. This section uncovered the orientation to power within the UISP process of the different professional sphere's (implementing agent, George Municipality). According to Rahman (2015:330), "promoting better coordination is the major task to ensure social justice through planning…. [Moreover] coordination of urban planning organizations is a process of achieving good urban governance for promoting social justice". According to Rahman (2015), this perspective on the place of coordination in planning processes stems from the assumption (which was not empirically tested by developing countries) within developing countries that decentralisation and delegated planning organisation will ensure improved coordination for promoting good governance (Rahman, 2015).

The assumption that good governance is a product of democratic decentralisation in the case of Thembalethu UISP Phase 1 project, is deeply problematic as the 'weight' of coordination and facilitating coordination rests on the implementing agent, who does not owe the municipality loyalty. A common phenomenon observed during the current study was the practice of shifting the blame within *in situ* upgrading, especially on the part of the planners, and the other built environment professionals in the case of Thembalethu UISP Phase 1, and other brown field developments. The reason for this, according to Municipal Official B, was "You cannot, cannot, cannot logically within

[UISP] timeframes systematically implement services in Brownfield area; those areas are relocated [already have informal structures on] before you can even begin the construction activities." This lack of coordination, and the frustration experienced by both the implementing agent and the municipality, has resulted in a recent push for service level agreements (SLAs) to clearly set out the specific roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders, as these upgrading projects need input from all sectors, be it DoHS (Province and Municipality), the Implementing Agent, Electricity, Civil Engineering Services (CES), Planning, George Integrated Public Transport Network, Community Services, Consultant Team, Provincial Team, etc. This further stemmed from George Municipality's need for clarity on who manages each aspect. These aspects relate to the various responsible agents: Who certifies each payment? Who is responsible for resolving encroachments (reporting lines and responsibility for management and resolution? Timelines?) Who signs off on drawings? (Planning drawings need CES input, all of which requirements should be non-negotiable. Civil drawings may not be signed off by Planning). What are the bulk services required and who is responsible for these? Who does project co-ordination? (Roles and responsibilities to be set-out in a SLA, and should include adequate representation throughout, with clear actions and timelines) What is the process when layouts are "unsuitable" or impractical layouts are observed? (This project had an example of an impractical intersection, which was rejected by CES). Moreover, dispute resolution processes are also to be set-out in the SLA between parties. Despite the move towards a SLA, the problem remains that 'coordinated' good governance is project dependent, as implementing agents differ per project, thus good governance is temporal and not sustained.

6.3 Moving Forward

6.3.1 Ideas of Evaluation in Systems Change

A key assertion made by Municipal Official B, albeit indirectly, was that there was the need for and lack of evaluation of the UISP; "And then … start to settle experiences learned. That we understand and learn what went wrong and develop that you don't have the same situation occurring". Reverting to the core of Kania et al. (2018), the third level of systems change is the transformative level that involves a shift in key

stakeholders' mental models concerning evaluation which is implicit. Kania et al. (2018), explain the shift in evaluation thinking as discussed in chapter 3, as not so much about a linear traditional approach to evaluation that looks at cause and effect. Instead, the approach to evaluation requires recognising patterns and allowing for longitudinal analyses. Even though there is no evaluation approach in place for UISP projects in George Municipality, the previous section of the thesis titled 'uncovered', provides recurring patterns we see unfold in relational dynamics during the execution of upgrading projects, especially within brown field developments. These patterns are deeply embedded in, and intertwined with, power dynamics, perceptions of community, perceptions of good governance, and perceptions of design and effective upgrading and project management.

6.3.2 The Bigger Challenge

These findings as put forward represent a greater (urban planning) challenge regarding urban planning's approach. In this section I recognise normative ideals that should ideally orient planners in their approach; secondly, I confront and describe the debilitating complex and politically fraught policy processes that stem from the UISP provisions; thirdly, I explore what a more grounded and learning-driven planning approach might involve if these two conditions are fully admitted to and adopted. Global South literature generally has two foci: commenting on planning for superimposing modernist ideals, and promoting the need for inclusive bottom-up approaches. These emphases, exclude the realities of developing countries, where a technocratic elite remain at the forefront of urban development outcomes. These are realities which require a grounded and learning-driven planning approach tailored for the global South planner.

6.3.3 Normative ideals

In light of chapter 2, normative ideals that should orient the global South planner include an ideal that incorporates an 'awakened' urban poor and the working class into a process of co-producing planning knowledge. This requires an enquiry into systems that are in place that inhibit a process of co-production of knowledge being included into decision-making processes. Watson (2002) in her quest to understand whether

238

the normative planning theories are useful to planners, insists that, before planners plan, they should strive for a deeper understanding and engagement with the socio-spatial and political processes which shape the contexts. This requires a power-sensitised understanding of knowledge, rationality, spatiality, and inclusivity. Moreover, this necessitates introspection of the collective attitude towards the challenge of informal settlements in order for planners to see how this informs the method for addressing this challenge. Thus, she is advocating for normative planning ideas and attitudes to be inevitably shaped by the context, and for planners not to impose planning for de-contextualised, idealistic spatial visions. In order for this to happen, a new consciousness (that is ferocious, tenacious, intentional and forceful) is required by a vigilant custodian to identify and expose underlying oppressive participatory functions and patterns within policy provisions. This will require institutional 'betrayal' of systemic regimented patterns whether implicit or explicit within the urban development process.

6.3.4 The UISP Context

What the data collection for, and analysis of, Thembalethu UISP phase 1 has shown is that the UISP tool provided debilitatingly complex and politically fraught policy processes. These processes proved to be time strenuous on professionals, and the consequence impeded the ''social side of things''. More importantly, what we see is how the UISP is heavily influenced by management style, in turn suggesting that systems may be weak. The reason for this is UISP provisions being task orientated instead of system oriented. System thinking requires a collective vision (as we saw in chapter 2). What we see emerging from this study is how a UISP is a project to project, and, management to management affair. The question the process of the UISP, in the case of Thembalethu, omits to ask is what all UISP present and future projects are seeking to achieve in the greater scheme of urban development in George. What are the governing pillars outside of the UISP requirements? The lack of governing socio-spatial pillars and leadership that inspires a collective vision, prevents amenable and constructive input. However, when enforcing regulations the process becomes more personal, because power then becomes attached to it, and, in this case, enforcing UISP regulations reward or success is task oriented. Thus, this is one centre or anchor of power, and on the other side is also a weakness, because, if regulations are not

followed 'to the letter', everything ends up being a shambles. The repercussion of this is regurgitation, complying increasingly rigidly with the UISP, and leaving no room for digression or innovation.

In this municipal setting, these conditions tend to fuel politics and generate blaming. Contrary to these dynamics, power relayed in this context tokens and/or means 'the one (department, management etc.) who is responsible for' i.e. matters cannot be done without this person's approval. In contrast, the implementing agent (private sector) is rewarded for finding the most efficient and cost-effective way, even if it means collating some of the details of the regulations to achieve the stated goal. However, in this context, there is still room for discourse and innovation, because power is dispersed and not solely in the hands of the implementing agent. Both systems run very differently and this could be because municipalities do not chase profits, whereas the private sector does. However, we cannot make the assumption that, because the private sector chases profits, it does not make a meaningful, if mainly technical, contribution, or vice versa when it comes to municipalities. The supremacy of following rules and regulations has completely incapacitated professionals, and in so doing, replicates apartheid type urban development issues that as a country we are trying to overcome and/or move beyond. In this sense, normative planning ideals, should prioritise governing socio-spatial pillars. This would mean seeing the UISP not simply as a means to an end; instead it could be re-imagined as a tool to speak to larger socio- and eco-spatial, and environmental issues of redress, equity and sustainability. Interestingly, Harrison (2006) mentions how the introduction of Breaking New Ground (DoH, 2004) bringing with it the shift in policy focus from housing to sustainable human settlements, demonstrated how catalytic housing through the BNG is in addressing larger socio-economic goals. Therefore, this idea is not new, but elucidates the need for radical implicit, semi-explicit change within, and coordination of, management styles.

6.3.5 A More Grounded and Learning-Driven Planning Approach

The role of the planner and planning in shaping urban space is highlighted by Harrison and Williamson (2001):

> … [p]lanning refers to deliberate and formal processes directed at influencing the development of urban and rural areas, rather than development processes that are shaped by laissez-fair, undirected and unrestricted actions.

Historically, the intention of planning has been deliberate and intentional in the way it has influenced urban development. In the 1950s-60s period modernity's 'rational' (Howe, 1980) influence on, and guidance provision to, spatial development cemented in bureaucratic and technocratic environments was heavily criticised by urbanists for providing over rigid environments, by Neo-Marxists for cementing and supporting capitalism, by neo-liberals as being unnecessary, and by communities on the ground as not being relevant and trustworthy (Harrison & Williamson, 2001). The shift to more contemporary understandings of cities as being complex, chaotic and uncertain, driven by globalisation, birthed new ideas of planning which saw social deliberate agents as not being necessary. It was only in the 1990s, when the increase in *ad hoc* developments as a result of the neoliberal approaches of the 1980s, that a need for strong planning systems re-emerged. Even though this brought about new forms of planning in the 2000s, traditional regulative planning has continued to play a significant role (as specified in Table 9) in shaping urban form and space (Harrison & Williamson, 2001).

Harrison and Williamson (2001:241) argue that planning theory has reached an impasse in "negotiating the role" of planning in ever-changing forms of urban life and environments and connecting this to more 'healthier' forms of planning. This brings in Watson's (2009b) argument showing how conventional theory has left little or no guidance for planners to navigate tensions of informality within planning systems. Moreover, according to Howe (1980), planning's ideological footing presents the planner with three major role choices, one being technical, the other being political and the third hybrid. The technical role grounds itself in traditional ideas of planning as highlighted by Harrison and Williamson (2001), with the planner acting as a "value-neutral advisor" in decision making around urban development for the benefit of the community, without promoting a certain policy position (Howe, 1980:398). Whereas the political position is politically oriented and premised on favouring specific policies and positions, and on ensuring their implementation (Howe, 1980:398), the hybrid position is a hybrid mix of both the technical and the political aspects.

In the context of South Africa, planning, if not only for the legislative footing of planning tools, which touch on both contemporary and traditional functions of planners (see Table 9), has provided planning the necessary institutional legitimacy. The findings of the present study, as regards the role of the planners in the Thembalethu case, illustrate a greater need than some of the 'normative' planning models and studies in the literature show, to address the social element, in other words, to fully, and in a non-top-down way, to engage with the community, as well as a need for openness to constructive criticism, an ability to foresee informal growth and trends, together with an ability to view and design informal settlements as part of the larger urban development landscape. What we also see is a re-shift from planners in the 1950s setting the tone for urban development to (neo-liberal) projects in the late 1990s setting the tone for planners. Thus, what we also see in the Thembalethu: Phase 1: UISP project, is the tone and agenda being set by the UISP policy for planners, where planners as orchestrated by UISP policy are put in the position (with no choice) of being both political and technical simultaneously. This hybrid model poses challenges for the planner: fundamentally this position is conflictual in nature because it "involves a logical and internally consistent set of assumptions about planning and politics" (Howe, 1980:407) that are compromised. Thus, the negotiated (between politics and technical) role on the continuum of technical and/or political role, alludes to the choices and inherent assumptions planners make during the process of informal settlement upgrading processes. In the context of Thembalethu, the assumptions the municipal made regarding 'politics' were repudiated by municipal officials, whereas private sector planners and professionals were able to see the reality of politics.

The role of planners in this context is decentralised, as summarised in Table 9, each planner orienting themselves differently on the continuum. Thus, the planners' role within the context of managing and understanding informal settlements has been limited from project to project, and this limitation is fundamentally politically motivated and influenced, even though planning is characteristically technical. The ability of planners to envision informal settlements in all their complexity has been hampered by the institutional inconclusiveness of informal settlements' permanence in South Africa's urban landscape (chapters 2 & 4). This envisioning is in turn intrinsically an implicit activity requiring a mental shift from 'overlooking' informal settlements that can

be eradicated, to incorporating and recognising something as complex and fluid as an informal settlement in the process of reinventing global South planning's relevance and strength as a system. Therefore, the issue formal-informal dichotomy is not simply an abstract concept, but an implicit anchor in urban development management.

Reverting to ideas of understanding informality as a critical site of analysis, one can argue that this concept elevates the existing urban informality literature that focuses on "urban informality within sectors (for example housing or labour markets); as a setting in which certain groups secure livelihoods or commodities; or as an outcome related to legal status" (Banks et al., 2020:223). Urban informality within existing literature is seen to be confined to the urban poor. However, by understanding informality as a critical site of analysis we come to understand how "social and political relationships within and between the state and multiple sets of actors across these spaces (and across economic, spatial, and political domains within them) helps us to understand how resources are distributed and power secured and consolidated" (Banks et al., 2020:223).

Returning to understanding informality as a critical site of analysis, three assertions (outline in chapter 2) underpin, or legitimate, this understanding. The first is the State's inability to intervene, in other words informal settlements are seen as ungovernable. The second is the growing agency of those involved in informal processes and practices, including the urban poor. The third is the monopolisation of urban informality by the urban elite and subaltern groups. These three assertions help us uncover how the underlying processes of economic, social, and political inequality emerge and consolidate within the critical site i.e. my study Thembalethu UISP: Phase 1. In the case of Thembalethu, informal settlements have been perceived through history (chapter 4), and by the professionals involved in this upgrading process as a setting, sector, or outcome. However, through analysis, the operational management dynamics of Thembalethu UISP: Phase 1 show how management styles emulate power shifts and consolidation between different role players, including a shift in attitude on the part of professionals in terms of agency in the processes of upgrading. In the context of Thembalethu, there seems not to be a monopolisation by the urban elite, instead a more predominant decision-making role taken by the urban elite technocrats within the operation of the UISP. At the same time there is an increasing

degree of monopolisation on the part of subaltern groups, in particular the rise of politically instigated illegal occupation, and the presence of nomadic foreign nationals who move once a settlement has been upgraded and/or become back yard dwellers. In light of winners and losers in the upgrading process, even though the Thembalethu community is heterogeneous, and community participation is in part neglected, on an explicit level (See chapter 3, three levels of systems change) both the community and municipality have experienced a win. On a semi-explicit level the community has experienced a loss and the municipality has experienced a win. On an implicit level it is a lose-lose situation.

Table 9: Traditional, Contemporary roles of Planners.

Traditional roles	Contemporary role	Thembalethu UISP: Phase 1
The layout of settlements and subdivision of land	Provide broad structuring frameworks for urban development	Role of planning decentralised to include implementing agent, planners that are outsourced by the implementing agent, and municipal planners
The ordering and separation of land uses	Mediating the relationship between different interest groups in the urban development process	Mediating the relationship between different interest groups in the urban development process (Implementing agent)
Making decisions regarding application for development at a local and provincial level	Facilitating inter-sectoral coordination	Making decisions regarding application for development at a local and provincial level (municipal planning)
The preparation of statutory and non-statutory plans to guide decision-making regarding development and land use control	Promoting local economic development	The layout of settlements (planners outsourced by the implementing agent)

Source: Derived from Harrison and Williamson (2001:247) and from the role of planners involved in Thembalethu UISP: Phase 1.

When exploring a more grounded and learning driven planning approach, I return to Prah's (2001) call for a socio-structural transformation paradigm, where there is a deeper engagement with production and re-production of spatial cultures and urban life. The core of this paradigm is the reinjection of the social agenda into the planning profession. Moreover, it is about building strong systems at all three levels of systems change, structural, relational, and transformative. In so doing this promotes a hybrid negotiated or 'third' space between mindsets and sensibilities that in turn promotes relevance, adaptation and resilience when engaging and participating in urban development processes. Driven by socio-structural transformative pillars, stronger systems mean a reorientation toward an attitude of learning and inclusivity on the part

of planners, one whose purpose is to recalibrate various urban form realities with urban development management realities.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter sought to engage with the experiences, perceptions, and views of those involved in the Thembalethu: Phase 1 UISP project. An understanding of the different levels of systems change (explicit-implicit) that underlie the Thembalethu UISP: Phase 1 project provides the researcher with greater insight into the ways in which we attain a comprehensive understanding of the weight of policies, and of urban management, and the impact these have on the beneficiaries of upgrading programmes. In addition, the discussion in this chapter presents complex and intricate answers to the research questions listed in chapter 3. On a simply, unnuanced level, responses from the planners show their perception of any approach to planning informal settlements as needing to be different to previous approaches, while at the same time they see this innovation of approach as equal in importance to other planning issues within George. Even though there is a recognition of the intricacies that informal settlements represent, these complexities do not filter through to the practical level of integrated development planning approaches for the George area. Secondly, the planners involved in the Thembalethu UISP Phase1 project did in fact intervene, based on where professionally (Aurecon, private sector outsourced by Aurecon and municipality) they were situated and how their role was outlined at the request of the implementing agent. Thus, and in addition to research question 3, the role of these planners necessitated compliance with the specifications of the project. Even though, in recent years, planners have been able to start thinking about informal settlements differently, concerning land use and the projects they approve in terms of design in these informal or upgraded spaces, within the project itself the planners' role was limited to a technical one. All of the interviewees in the present study were in agreement that the UISP in the case of Thembalethu: Phase 1 had achieved its aim in terms of being completed on time and within budget, according to their (UISP) criteria. They agreed that its success, according to these criteria, to have been due to the project having a strong implementing agent who was able to mobilise and ensure that targets and deadlines were met.

Even though this UISP project was perceived by the interviewees to be successful in terms of being completed on time and within budget, and regimentally having followed the UISP, it can be argued to be characterised by, and to be emblematic of, many of the issues raised in the literature discussed in chapters 2 and 4. Key issues raised were the contested role of planning, South Africa's housing emphasis in, and evolution of approaches to addressing informal settlements. In the specific context of planning, there exists a disjuncture between the way planners are perceived and how planners perceive and understand their role in 'handling' informal settlements. The role of planners in the context of Thembalethu, even though the various roles of the planners were decentralised, was seen to reside mostly within the traditional role. However, while some design imaginations proved otherwise they nevertheless failed to connect to broader urban development visions. The case study showed the attitude of the planners towards constructive criticism from engineers in terms of functional aspects of the upgrade, that, while they possessed a relatively open/flexible mindset, they had restricted sensibilities in design and layout, they showed assertiveness yet lacked comprehension and consideration of larger urban development outcomes; they expressed concern and care for the community yet were disconnected from their needs. All of this mirrored how planning as a system, in the case of Thembalethu and likely elsewhere, still shows the desires of planners to assert their influence on the urban development process. Interestingly enough the design of planning as a system is to provide direction and not be directed (Harrison & Williamson, 2001), which makes active, and/or pro-active, managing of informal settlements and the upgrading thereof fundamentally challenging.

Housing delivery in South Africa has a deep political history, and the logics and approaches which are a feature of this history have infiltrated present informal settlement upgrading approaches. The decentralisation of duties in the interests of optimising 'good governance' lacks evaluation and sustainable-long term governance, as actors, i.e. implementing agents, change project to project. The implications of this large-scale project intervention are that planners are working on the premise that responding with a UISP to informality at a certain scale would address the broader scale socio-economic needs of lower income communities. Thus, what we see is how these projects are designed and implemented in isolation from the rest of the larger

247

urban development landscape, that governance is in fact short lived, and community participation is lacking. What we see in these project cycles is how heterogeneous communities are and how management styles vary. More importantly, in this model of governance, coordination between actors and management styles play a significant role in the successful implementation of a project. The key role players in the execution of the UISP process are the implementing agent and the municipal engineering department. The outsourcing of the 'coordinating and management role' to the implementing agent is the cornerstone of governance and community engagement within the project cycle.

In light of systems change, the success of Thembalethu UISP phase 1 is experienced on a structural level which is explicit, in other words, the level of policies, practice and resource flows. While we see how the mindset of professionals has evolved in terms of their thinking about informal settlements, their sensibilities seem to be disjointed and/or inhibited. However, when it comes to the relational (semi-explicit) and transformative level (implicit), there is an obvious shortfall. This is due to an imbalance of power relational dynamics, where UISP beneficiaries are marginalised in these dynamics, and a lack of an implicit approach to evaluation becomes apparent. In order for systems change to happen all three levels need to operate in conjunction, which was not the case in Thembalethu UISP Phase 1.

The implication of this lack of conjunction of the three levels for the upgrading is not so much an issue of flexibility on the part of the professionals, as it is about exploring and evaluating management styles, and examining how indicative they are of what we deem sustained good governance and a process of building resilient systems that are socially relevant and context specific.

Chapter 7: Wrapping Up/Summary

In chapter 1, Lee (2005) asserts that modernist planners had a particular understanding of the ideal human experience, and this understanding informed, and resulted in, spatial forms and spatial visions. The reason for this is their belief in the promise of unshakeable and enduring order guaranteed by institutional power: "[m]odernity is made out to be solid insofar as institutional power is consolidated through a process of seemingly uncompromising changes in social structures" (Lee, 2005:63). According to this argument, the institutional context plays a critical role in establishing, facilitating, and consolidating imaginings of the human experience, and ultimately in how planning is executed. As has been described, in South Africa the institution of urban planning is an instrumental tool used by the state. What we see in the case study at the heart of this inquiry into the workings of this power is the institution of urban planning in the context of local government and its intersection with the private sector. The case study unpacked their collective efforts to manage informal settlement expansion in Thembalethu, George in the course of carrying out their collaborative roles in the UISP process. The Thembalethu: Phase 1 UISP project uncovers the institutional realities that exist within the four-phased structured upgrading process. As explained in earlier chapters, the UISP is the only policy tool to date instituted by the South African national government to address the challenge of informal settlements. Even though planners play a marginal role in this process, as described in chapters 4 and 5, research which seeks to understand their role in the project team, their own perception of their role, and how other professionals on the team perceive them, allows for a deeper understanding of how planners are positioned to manage the complex challenge of informal settlements. Thus, key to this research was an exploration of the mindset and sensibilities of planners in the Thembalethu upgrading process. More importantly it is an examination of the drivers influencing the mindset and sensibilities of these planners through a systems-change lens. In this context mindset refers to a set of attitudes held by the planner, indicating some planners holding a more appropriate, constructive, flexible mindset than others in terms of addressing informality, but being constrained by the UISP process. More importantly, it further alludes to the differentiation between individual planners and those playing more than one role, their mindsets e.g. Project Manager A. Sensibility

denotes the ability of the planner to sensitively and flexibly relate to, adapt and appreciate the multi-layered and complex social environments and influences that shape and structure informality.

Interestingly, Thembalethu: Phase 1 UISP project is not the first attempt at addressing the challenge of informal settlements in Thembalethu, George. The history of informal settlements in George, including Thembalethu, paints a picture of informal settlement upgrading management styles both prior to, and post 1994. Thembalethu, and its phases of upgrading, arguably, epitomise some form of evolution of housing policy in South Africa. Thembalethu: Phase 1 UISP project as a pilot UISP project in George can be said to uniquely mark the most recent, third shift in South African housing policy described by Smit (2017) (discussed in chapter 4).

The literature exposes the ways in which the ability of those subscribing to, and involved in, the modernist project to understand the ways in which urban development is part of the larger socio-political project, is juxtaposed with the inability of those involved in informal urban development to regard this as situated in the larger socio-political project. Thus, this primary understanding of the process of decentralising and politicising housing within the broader context of urban development can be said to have been lacking since the end of the 'modernist' project (around the end of twentieth century). State-led large-scale projects are testament to this tension or contradiction, as seen in my study area, the Thembalethu UISP project.

Debates on informality and upgrading discourses focus on how informal settlements are acts of resistance by the urban poor, and/or are a result of in-migration from rural areas. Some scholars discuss how the urban poor 'lack a sense of ownership' in 'oppressive' formal systems in cities, while other scholars focus on the ways in which 'semi-permanent' settlements have grown too large to accommodate for self-organisation. The Thembalethu project can be seen as an example of an informal settlement to be a result of steady ongoing in-migration, especially from the Eastern Cape. Due to the scope of my study being limited to interviews with professionals involved in the project, and excluded residents of Thembalethu, I was not able to establish with any certainty whether these informal residents experienced a lack of ownership. However, what did surface from the data was the 'semi-permanent' nature

of the Thembalethu settlements. This was particularly the case with un-documented foreign nationals who would move from one informal settlement to the next the moment upgrading was about to take place. On the other hand, in the case of informal residents, specifically those who were in-migrating, Community Liaison Officer A mentioned that many of these residents see George as a mid-way point to ultimately settling informally in Cape Town.

I found that self-organisation continues to take place (as discussed in chapter 6), as some have seen this as a business opportunity. For example, building 10 shacks and renting them out, what Engineer C called 'shack farming'. Another form of self-organisation reported by interviewees was represented by cases of a particular political party mobilising a group of urban poor and settling them on a piece of municipal land for the party's own political agenda and benefit. While this could be seen as a form of resistance, it was reported by Engineer C more likely to be a deliberate strategy on the part of political parties to monopolise and/or exploit the urban poor. This is an example of political parties cynically capitalising on votes at the expense of vulnerable informal communities, in the knowledge that this creates an unwavering 'problem', one that municipalities need, or will be pressurised into, attending. The diverse and contingent intentions (livelihood imperatives) of residents were difficult for the professionals to fully grasp and navigate. Professionals work within the professional codes of conduct of their profession (albeit engineering, planning) and the parameters of prescribed project management steps. Thus, the focus of the professionals was to achieve the upgrading of the settlement according to official specifications, and to manage the challenges that accompany the UISP process. These are examples of some of the challenges associated with managing the informal - formal continuum.

The findings from the examination of the Thembalethu upgrading together provide an example of the gap between practice and that body of academic literature that foregrounds the potential of planning to provide passages of interconnection and interaction between everyday informal settlement practices, their diverse socio-political cultural characteristics, and the institutional make-up of planning systems. Addressing this gap involves deliberately bringing together global South thinking around informality and urban planning. The Thembalethu: Phase 1 UISP project was

the first of many projects that continue to be implemented in Thembalethu, George Municipality.

A detailed look at Thembalethu Phase 1 reveals how dynamic informal settlements are, and thus serves to debunk ideas that informal settlements are homogenous or lack self-organisation. Instead, I argue that Thembalethu: Phase 1 represents a window into how state-led projects drive state-led thinking about informal settlements. More so, how state-led responsiveness has been inappropriate when those in authority seek to apply a standardised housing agenda. Thus, in the context of the use by the state of the UISP tool, there is an understanding that, in order for the UISP to be successful, the dynamic nature of informal representation and expression needs to be 'tamed' through professionals communicating the UISP outcomes to residents in a top-down, not consultative manner. This understanding is informed by a perception that professionals are burdened with pressing funding and project deadlines and this communication is seen as the role of the implementing agent. More importantly, even if community/residents participation, as it is understood by the implementing agent, is assumed, or thought to be desirable, the implications of this are not fully grasped or taken into consideration in the principles of the UISP. To date the USIP embodies a rigid bureaucratic approach, especially in how it functions within the formal planning context. It involves techniques that become 'soul-numbing day-to-day tasks' (Oranje, 2014), which negatively affect the urban poor and atrophy the planning profession. This further affirms what both Kamete (2013) and Oranje (2014) call for: the need for a different kind of creative, flexible, and socio-politically conscious planning, one that is central to advancing just and sustainable cities. The case of Thembalethu also demonstrates the extent to which the role of planning and the planner is marginal, yet essential. It has the potential be more influential in the upgrading process, especially on a project management level.

As was described in chapter 2, since the 1990s urban planning scholars have been calling for a shift in focus toward 'functional' order, as opposed to visual order (Roy, 2005; Scott, 1995). This shift to function is evident in the conceptualisations of planners' ideas of public open space design in informal settlements, broader urban design principles, and how urban form is understood, as discussed in chapter 6. This idea of function is juxtaposed with planners' secondary engagement with the areas

252

they plan for. In the case of the Thembalethu: Phase 1 UISP project, function was characterised and both narrowly and linearly defined by the different sequential stages of the four-phased UISP policy. Consequently, function was, within the confines of Phase 1, earmarked for areas in Thembalethu, and not within the broader scope of urban development in George as a whole. Thembalethu Phase 1 also reflects Kamete's (2013) argument that planners prioritise finding technical solutions for informality and evolving urban, and in the process hope to affirm the profession's legitimacy. However, this focus fails to take into consideration the profession's role as a social and human agent. Within the confines of the current UISP model, planners do not necessarily have a 'say' in what their role is, or could be, thus suggesting a need for stronger planning systems. Thus, within the confines of Thembalethu: Phase 1, the technical solution is imposed on the planner by both the UISP policy and time/budget constraints. Furthermore, this technical solution approach implies extending the debates around planners' identity to encompass the ways in which planning as a discipline is understood, translated, and assigned responsibility in housing programmes/policy and what this would look like.

Key to my research is understanding the institutional conditions impinging on, and limiting, the realization of social and spatial equality. What emerged clearly from the data collection process was that there were four key role players in the Thembalethu UISP Phase1 project: - the Aurecon implementing agent, George municipality, which includes both the housing, engineering and the planning departments, and the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements. Each of these four counter parts operated in a substantially different institutional environment, yet each part was at the same time bound by the UISP policy requirements. In chapter 2 I explored Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) three concepts of decoloniality: *Coloniality of knowledge, coloniality of power, and coloniality of being,* as a way to deconstruct certain mental models or paradigms that ultimately influence urban development and the management thereof. I then translated these three concepts into a more pragmatic methodological systems change lens. The three levels of systems change: structural, relational and transformative levels explored the explicit (policies, institutional environments, power relations) to implicit (attitudes) drivers behind the management of Thembalethu UISP Phase 1. In so doing the mindset and sensibilities of the planners' role in upgrading of

informal settlements in Thembalethu was explored.

On a structural level, despite the three or four decades of radical and critical planning theory that has foregrounded the importance of participatory techniques, of the need for co-production of spatial knowledge, and for the co-management of development processes, one could argue that participatory slum upgrading discourses (going back a good three decades now) is one manifestation of planning ideas being 'stuck'. Thus, one could argue that the current UISP is a policy agenda that is the child of such mainstreaming. Moreover, planning scholars, such as Flyvbjerg (2002), have critiqued idealised ideas of participatory techniques which omit accounting for power dynamics is.

On a relational level, power has been argued to play a central role in urban development processes: Flyvbjerg's (2002) critique that power captures rationality, in other words, rationality becomes an instrument of power, and Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) critique that power is an orchestrated process that intentionally penetrates logic. From this one could argue that South African upgrading discourses together represent one manifestation of these critiques achieving traction. The UISP has bureaucratised and stultified process, including the way in which it is managed, who benefits, and that this is emblematic of a highly historic politicised logic of housing delivery penetrating the logics of upgrading informal settlements. Another dimension of this is the role of sustained urban governance, and how it almost is entirely project and management style dependent.

On a transformative level, social structures mirror collective attitudes (Kania et al., 2018 and as discussed in chapter 2). These attitudes become patterns and or biases that in turn affect implicit underpinnings of planning and upgrading discourses. This level becomes the domain where normative ideals that should orient planners is confronted with debilitating complex and politically fraught policy processes that stem from the UISP provisions. This implicit normative dimension is to some degree overlooked in planning theory and upgrading discourses, but is a cornerstone of a decolonial perspective. In light of my thesis, a decolonial perspective hinges on Miraftab's (2009) ideas about the decolonising of planning and planning imaginations. For me this new consciousness Miraftab (2009) calls for surpasses the confines of an

inclusive ability to understand the urban poor; it extends itself to understanding the global South planner. My argument is that global South planners are to a substantial degree 'holders' of ideas of knowledge, power and being, even though geographically located in the South. They are critiqued (as discussed in chapter 2) whilst simultaneously expected to 'handle' growing complex urban realities, thus underlining the limitations of decolonising planning imaginations. For that reason, the decolonial emphasis on consciousness becomes imperative to global South planners gaining insight into the kind of mindset and sensibilities necessary when engaging with informal settlements. In this way, the decolonial perspective, when taken on by, and seen as part of the role of, the urban planner, does not discount all aspects of modernity; in fact it takes on certain aspects of rationality that stem from scientific method as seen in Table 9. In this context, as noted in chapter 6, planning has been seen by the profession and by governments as inherently a formal approach that is designed to direct and design urban futures; it is also a technical design socio-spatial oriented profession. Thus the prerogative of planning is to direct, forecast and design accordingly. However, informal upgrading contests the core of this notion. The contemporary shift from planning's prerogative to plan 'for' 'to planning 'with' communities destabilises an already not particularly strong or sustainable planning system, which we see in the context of Thembalethu: UISP Phase 1. This shift echoes a form of an Afro-planning tradition (chapter 2), and this gives rise to the need to reimagine a more grounded learning driven planning approach. The lack of this kind of approach in the form of evaluation of George upgrading projects is another element lacking at the transformative level of change.

A critical factor in these different anchors of a decolonial approach in the context of Thembalethu, is the inability of the planners involved in the Thembalethu project to see the challenge of informal settlements as part of the urban development of greater George, and to imagine what this vision would look like. For my study, I focused on the UISP because it is currently the tool used by South African planners to address informal settlements in the country. On the other hand, planners in South Africa have a legislated tool called a Spatial Development Framework (SDF), and the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) (SA, 2013). However, during the time of the Thembalethu: Phase 1 upgrading process, SPLUMA had not yet been

implemented, and neither were informal settlements part of the George SDF. What emerged from my research was a perception of some of the ways in which planners were starting to rethink 'function' within these UISP layouts, as well as in the Project Steering Committees and in-house municipal meetings. However, the latest George municipal SDF, informal settlements, or potential areas for informal growth, had yet to be spatialized or spatially included. Furthermore, from a planning perspective, the SPLUMA has the potential to be a more effective planning tool in terms of its potential to assist those attempting to govern and steer land use management and, linked to this, urban development.

However, from the case of Thembalethu it becomes clear that the factors which inhibit the spatial imaginations of the greater George's urban development include the existing institutional infrastructure in place, together with the social and environmental context, and the mindsets and sensibilities of the planners, and the marginal role they play in the upgrading programmes. Moreover, I would argue that the SPLUMA does not explicitly speak to the national tool used to address informal settlements, the UISP tool. Instead the SPLUMA states, under a development principle of spatial justice within spatial planning, that development planning and land use management systems should promote the inclusion of informal settlements, flexible management provisions for informal settlements, and land development procedures to include and make provision for incremental upgrading of informal areas (SA, 2013, 7 (a)(ii,iv,v)). Moreover, the act provides directives as to how spatial development frameworks at all levels must include and integrate informal settlements into spatial, economic, social, and environmental objectives (SA, 2013, 12 (h)). On the other hand, while the UISP tool describes and provides guidelines for the four-staged upgrading process, there is no direct descriptive link within policy and legislation between the UISP/ National Housing Code, and SDF/ SPLUMA.

In other words, taken together, these separate, individual pieces of legislation do not yet constitute a coherent process for facilitating both informal settlement planning/upgrading and urban planning. While the National Development Plan (NDP), SPLUMA, and the various SDFs are there, the know-how of, or practical steps involved in, the envisioning of informal settlements within the greater urban development landscape is not clear. More importantly, both the spatial and social (making use of

communities as a resource and a partner in the development process) gravitas of the UISP tool are lacking. Reverting to the two dominant approaches to state-led spatial transformation, an institutional reform approach and a project-focussed approach (Cirolia & Smit, 2017), we take into consideration how Cirolia (2017) situates informal settlements within South Africa. In other words, we situate the discourse of informal settlements upgrading in South Africa within four categories or discourses: technological and design discourses, institutional discourses, rights-based discourses, and structural discourses. In this context, and using this integrated lens, what emerges from the case of Thembalethu is the discord/tension and dysfunction between municipal planning and housing/ human settlement department's vision and the management of informal settlement upgrading.

What also emerges are the ways in which, in this case, implementing agents are taking on a more progressive and responsive role, and explicitly challenging the adverse narrative regarding implementing agents in turn-key procurement strategy approach (Hot et al., 2015 discussed in chapter 4) when it comes to upgrading. This progressive understanding and experience of implementing agents' roles becomes necessary when drafting/ upgrading/ transforming informal settlement policy. In other words, this is an understanding that upgrading is a human/ community, spatial, technical/ design issue in equal measure, not simply a technical and design issue. What we see is how the confines of state-led institutional spaces, i.e. municipalities, act as gatekeepers in the name of custodianship, and how the potential to bring about institutional reform through implementing agents or allies is negated. Urban governance and community engagement is as a result short lived, outsourced, and project and implementing agent dependent. More importantly, the indispensable role that implementing agents are playing in shaping upgrading debates is not accounted for in the discourse of upgrading informal settlements. Therefore, an alternative institutional model would have to consider, how decentralisation both exposes and grows weak systems, how decentralisation requires a management style that is system rather than task oriented. In this way power is dispersed and there is a shared understanding of how relational and transformative levels within systems need strengthening along with a radical shift in how evaluation is approached.

It was clear from the research that informal settlements in Thembalethu were seen by

some planners involved in the upgrading to be polluting water resources and agricultural land. Policy Manager B's assertion of where informal settlements are situated is an indication that planners continue to hold idealised ideas of space. The reason for this could be that planners are yet to rethink green areas, environmentally sensitive areas, landfill sites, and steep hazardous areas, as these are the areas in which in-migrants could, in unregulated ways or patterns, potentially settle. Taking all of these factors into consideration, planners would need a different attunement to informality, and a moving out of the 'darkside of planning' (Yiftachel, 1998) towards finding creative ways to shift informal development drivers, whilst still preserving water resources and the environment. I see this as requiring a letting go of the traditional design logic of place-making and form, and a beginning to take hold of an alternative way of thinking which has to do with opening up, engaging with, and reimagining 'taboo' spaces in the city.

Therefore, taking into account all of the above decolonial and global South urban planning issues, a grounded and learning-driven planning approach necessitates a strong planning system, a learning-driven, open yet sensitised attitude when working with other professionals. This would involve a return to the social core of planning, a synergy between mindset and sensibilities on the part of planners, ultimately to reimagine a place-making and urban design that is encompassing and integration of all aspects of urban development.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to take a close look at Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project with the intention of seeing how the planners in this case study not only managed the project, but how they understood, the challenge of an informal settlement. An examination of the Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project offers a nuanced understanding of the role of planners in the project, and how marginal yet pertinent they are to the management of upgrading programmes. This investigation is based on the assumption that understanding the mindset and sensibility of planners lies at the heart of the de-colonial turn in planning. A review of the literature has shown that the formal-informal dichotomy, infused with persisting modernist colonial underpinnings and the culture of planning institutions, has continued to play a significant role in global and local debates on informality, including those about the global South. My research has revealed, in the case of Thembalethu, some of the ways in which these factors inhibit the urban development transformation necessary for urban informality to be incorporated in existing institutions and in the larger landscape of urban development. Even though informality is heterogeneous, and the understanding of informality continues to evolve, the primary focus of this study was to unpack an existing informal settlement-upgrading programme in order to explore the various links between urban planning and the way in which informal settlements are managed, between theory and practice, between policy and implementation, and between private and public sectors. I used thematic analysis through a systems change frame to analyse my case study which focused on a sample of professionals, in particular those involved with, and managing, Thembalethu Phase 1: UISP project.

Global and local debates around informality point to a hegemonic housing model, in other words a homeowner model, one that has long pervaded policy thinking and management. Birthed out of a neo-liberal paradigm, the only shift in the upgrading and/ or housing delivery model has been amongst those who manage it. The state as landlord has now rented out management and community engagement roles to the private sector, subjecting planners to having to navigate these conditions (an issue which is at the core of addressing my research questions). The state's hitherto narrow lens has caused government to see housing delivery as able to remedy larger socio-economic issues and has resulted in the inability of planners to realize that, in a

decentralised planning role, informal settlements would be seen by urban planning projects as, and become part of, the larger urban development narrative.

All of this points to the fundamental complexities that infuse upgrading discourses. My research has brought forward a greater challenge, and one which I consider to be my scholarly contribution. This challenge is to discover the ways in which normative ideals of planning are met with debilitating complex politically fraught policy processes that stem from the existing UISP provisions. Through fully admitting to these two constraints to more decentralised, holistic, and sustainable planning model I explore a more grounded and learning- driven planning approach. Initially, the birth of the neo liberal agenda was the 'fall' of planning, and it was only during the 1980s and 1990s, with the introduction of mass development projects, that the role of planning/planners resurfaced. Thus, this connection became the root of an overlooked co-dependent relationship between planning and mass large scale projects. During that time, these projects signalled planners' legitimacy and re-birthed their relevance. Thus, 30 years later, I call for a grounded learning driven planning approach that is driven by systems change-led thinking, and is established as a strong system in this evolutionary process, in order for there to be a de-colonial turn in planning, we need to rethink planning as a system despite neoliberal driven policy fraught processes.

A key take away of the study is that, in order for there to exist a positive paradox of urban development that embodies both the dynamic nature of the informal and the complex deep-rooted nature of the formal, ambivalence is necessary. While the informal - formal planning relationship has been described in the literature as a binary one, in fact it is in essence a paradox in the sense of a tension being held between two polar but linked opposites, the informal and the formal. The ambivalence implied by this tension necessitates the ability of planners to hold both negative and positive attitudes towards a kind of urban development that holds both ideas of the informal and formal in a dynamic and dialectic tension. This attitude of ambivalence is premised upon the extent to which formal and informal are polar opposites. For these two polarities to be in a positive dialectic relationship, their tight distinctness needs to be 'loosened' to allow for these polarities to be positively intertwined. This involves loosening the ideas and rigid categories of formal and informal for the purpose of seeing urban development alternatives, as opposed to moving, or forcing something

260

as dynamic as informality into a rigid formal mould.

Even though the Thembalethu UISP project is a large state-funded project in terms of scale, informality in this context has been dealt with as a polarity; it was not regarded as an integral part of the holistic George urban development vision. This is because the institutional dysfunctionalities, as described in previous chapters, are circumscribed in relation to funding, perceived and actual community unrest, and continuous informalisation. From the private sector/ implementing agent team side there appeared to be a degree of 'loosening' of attitude toward informality. This was not necessarily the case from the municipal side, as the housing department held tightly to their particular conception of, and attitude towards, informality, as did the planning department.

I argue for a deeper understanding of context in order for this tension between two polar opposites to be eased, and the informal - formal polarised relationship, or paradox, to be reconciled. How and by whom the story of informal settlements is narrated strengthens the context within which we come to understand the role informal settlements play in the greater story of urban development. Thus, depending on who is telling the story, the emphasis would be on either the heroes or the victims, those who survive or those who are irreparably wounded. In the case of informal settlements the survivors are those who received formal houses and the victims are those who continue to be without water and sanitation. It is those who provided the urban poor with formal housing, and governments which lack the capacity to do so. Seen through this lens, the ambivalence, or dynamic tension, splits, and this results in the enforcing roles narrative, and the roles become rigid and atrophied. Informal settlements per se, and those who reside in these, have been given neither role nor agency. This takes place in a socio-economic context where the roles of those who first establish informal settlements constitute an interdependent part of the greater role in the overarching story of urban development.

The informal settlement narrative in South Africa has been one of shame, of 'othering', eradication, and incrementalism, and this can be interpreted as a kind of formalisation and as the gradual and ultimate outcome of upgrading programmes. Taking this process a step further, if power is central to the paradox of urban development, the

question becomes whose stories of power matter or are considered, and how are these stories reconciled in ways which minimise the degree of domination in political and spatial power games? What emerged from the current study was the ways in which community members were described in the stories, or discourse, of planners and implementing agents as 'rebelling' or 'retaliating' against the state funded project when they protest, vandalise, or simply continue to informally expand. The community in the case of Thembalethu is seen as demanding state services, yet at the same time resisting these, or resisting the way in which these are offered or implemented. However, an issue worth considering in relation to informality is the possibility that it is not so much about learning how informal settlements expand, but about acknowledging the integral power they have in shaping the urban development narrative. Even though their power has been disavowed in the paradox or binary, or attempts been made by government institutions to deny their power, this power in fact continues to expand and manifest. The deliberate silencing or suppression of the urban poor's power and/or of informality in urban development strategies or management is not so much about capacity as it is about protecting institutions or even certain political power groupings. We see this protection as being both constructed and reproduced in the name of UISP custodianship. Thus, the certainty - fluidity ambivalence being held in a positive dialectical relationship is discomforting, or unsettling for the way in which planning/ policy tools are designed, a process which is central to the relationship between planning and informality. The seeming inability of professionals to engage with the discomfort of the ambivalence inhibits their ability to envision or re-imagine, or to fully engage with the role that informal settlements can play in the general landscape of urban development. More so, this inability manifests in the professionals need to pull toward one polarity, i.e. towards formal development (in many cases formal BNG houses on the periphery of the city). Policies, development frameworks, and legislation are all impacted by this.

The role politics plays in the roll-out of upgrading programmes should not be underestimated. Most of interviewees agreed that politics and power dynamics together play an inevitable role in urban planning, particularly in any approach to informality. However, the main argument underpinning the current study is that any exploration or understanding of informal settlements as part of the greater urban

262

development, involves the ability to operate from a place of ambivalence. Thus, the idea of African planning lies at the core of embodying ambivalence, and holding space for the polarities: these form part of the 'whole' urban development story.

The research themes and this study's contribution is a window and can offer insight into future research on the role of global South planning/planners, the role of heterogeneous communities in urban development processes, upgrading discourse - how to evaluate upgrading projects, sustained urban governance, urban design, urban development management styles, and into decolonising planning and planning practice.

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Planner A. 2021. Personal communication, 02 February

Planner B. 2021. Personal communication, 03 February

Engineer A. 2021. Personal communication,04 February

Engineer C. 2021. Personal Communication, 03 February

Community Liaison A. 2021. Personal Communication, 02 February

Community Liason B and Engineer B (Same person played both roles in the project). 2021. Personal Communication, 02 February

Project Manager A. 2021. Personal Communication, 03 February

Municipal Official A. 2022. Personal Communication. 23 March

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