A Successful Slum Upgrade:
A case of formal change and informal continuity

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The Argument

Committee and non-committee resident relations are imperative not just for successful implementation of the process but what happens after:

- Maintenance and upholding of rules on planning and construction
- Approaches to home maintenance
- Self-conceptions of tenure security and well-being

On this basis, upgrade was a success and a particular type of community participation was essential to that success.

Methodology

- Data collected over nine months between 2009-2010
- Three settlements (for wider study) – Zwelisha was post-implementation
- 18 semi-structured interviews with professionals, researchers, local political figures
- 8 respondents in Zwelisha – recurring interviews to document different aspects of change in their lives
- Methods included life histories, community mapping, diaries
- Selected to reflect diversity in the settlement

Policy Context: Upgrades in South Africa

Breaking New Ground (2005)

- *In situ* upgrading preferred approach to slum improvement
- Context of national target to 'eradicate and eliminate' all slums by 2015

Post-Apartheid Constitution (1996)

- Community participation in design and delivery of local development, means to empower

National Housing Code (2009)

- Community engagement reinforced in housing delivery

Theories of community participation

Choguill (1996) 'Ladder of Community Participation
• 'Empowerment' – community members have genuine and specific formal decision making power
• 'Self-Management' – implies self-help, community-level activity results from poor or no state delivery

Choguill (1996:442)
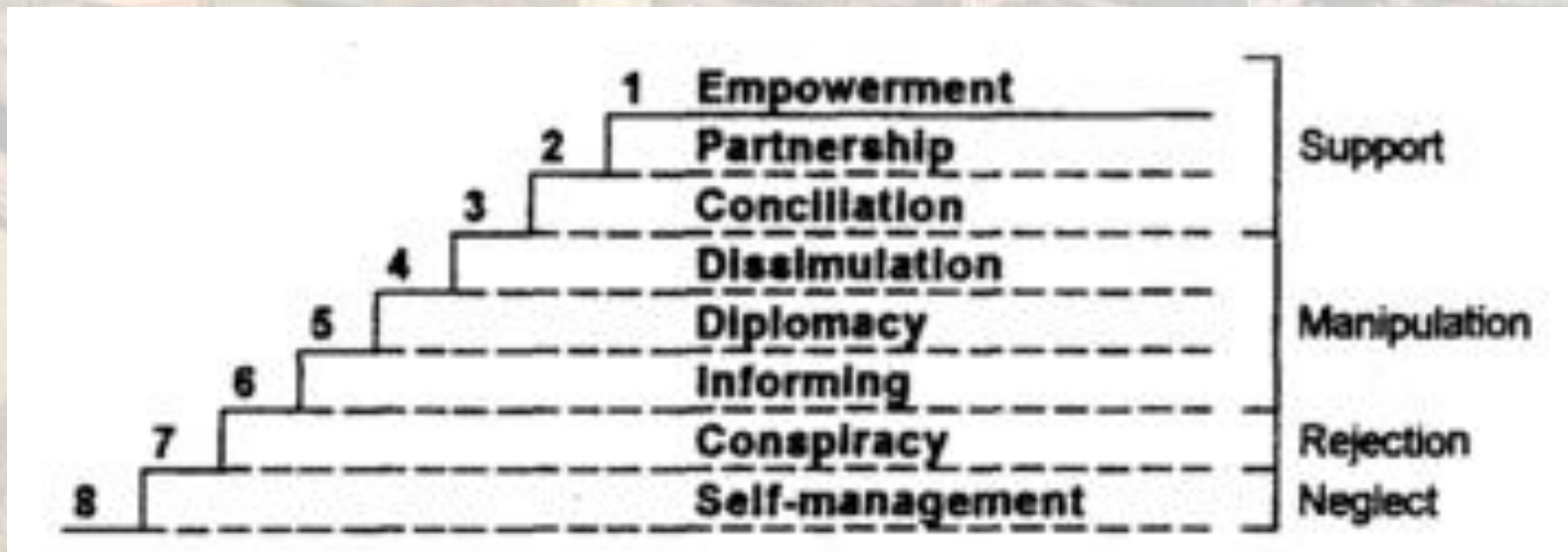
Community participation and slum upgrades in eThekwini Municipality

Level	Primary responsibility in site selection and housing allocation	Criteria for allocation of housing subsidy	Function	Monitoring Mechanism
Department of Human Settlements (Province)	Not directly involved in site selection or housing allocation	Individual eligibility for RDP assistance[25]	Monitor target to eliminate slums by 2014 Release funds from national to municipal at milestones	Municipality report on targets met
Housing Unit (feasibility) (Municipality)	Sites selected on technical ease of upgrade and political considerations; swing wards prime candidates. Housing allocation determined by settlement actors who are responsible for developing a list of eligible people.	Individual eligibility for RDP assistance	*Land acquisition studies *Impact assessment *Land surveys *Full costings *Plans and architectural drawings	Feasibility studies usually outsourced to contractors – monitoring against contract. Little monitoring of how housing list is developed.
Project Manager, Housing Unit (implementation) (Municipality)	PM appoints a community liaison officer (CLO), both work closely with community committees and local councillor to oversee allocation and coordinate upgrade work.	Individual eligibility for RDP assistance	*Implement upgrade *Manage and coordinate contractors and municipal actors *Principal municipal contact for community *Ensure eligibility from benefit area	Internal audit systems, feedback and reporting from contractors, CLO, community communities and councillor
Settlement	Area Committees, Ward Committees, CDC and councillor compiles housing list.	Individuals in settlement prior to a cut off date	*Decide names on the housing list *Facilitates on-site works	No official monitoring or scrutiny of who is on the housing list

Patel, 2012:95

Zwelisha and its Residents

Zwelisha and its Residents

Developed a housing list

"I had no involvement in the plans. We first heard about it at a community meeting... that's [also] when we learnt the house will be two rooms. At the meeting only, before that we knew nothing" (Interview A, 13/05/10)

"They [the CDC] had a map and showed you, 'you must move here' – there was no choice. The numbers were already written" (Interview B, 13/05/10)

Zwelisha and its Residents

Facilitate entry and movement of professionals

"The committee helped us a lot to get these houses. I'm proud of my house. The municipality was not here for long [...] I think because our place was shacks the municipality thought they are not allowed to help us" (Interview C, 14/05/10)

"We had a small Greenfield site just next to the settlement. So we built 50 houses, told the community committee, then 50 families moved in" (Interview D, 11/11/09)

Zwelisha and its Residents

Attend meetings with formal actors

"The committee reported to us what was happening in meetings" (Interview C, 14/05/10)

Effects on CDC – resident relations
1. Instrumentality of CDC in the process
2. Gratitude to CDC, especially among marginal groups
3. Legitimization of CDC power, evident in post-upgrade behaviour

Zwelisha and its Residents

Conclusion: Formal change and informal continuity

Assessed against Choguill's ladder:

CDC-state relations – manipulative, with some elements of partnership as the process unfurls

CDC-resident relations – compound of manipulation

BUT manipulation of this kind has led to housing, improved tenure security and well-being (and political empowerment for some) = success!

… or does it?

References

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