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

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Introduction

1. The argument and methodology
2. Policy context: upgrades in South Africa
3. Theories of community participation in housing literature
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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


• ‘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)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Primary responsibility in site selection and housing allocation</th>
<th>Criteria for allocation of housing subsidy</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Monitoring Mechanism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Human Settlements (Province)</td>
<td>Not directly involved in site selection or housing allocation</td>
<td>Individual eligibility for RDP assistance</td>
<td>Monitor target to eliminate slums by 2014</td>
<td>Municipality report on targets met</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 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 councilor 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
Zwelishasha 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
Zwelishia 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

• Lizarralde, G. and M. Massyn (2008), ‘Unexpected negative outcomes of community participation in low-cost housing projects in South Africa’, *Habitat International* 32:1–14