

Sub-theme: Changing Spaces: Towards Transforming Cities as Safe and Liveable Space

How practical knowledge, lived experiences, and the multiplicity of stakeholders can expand, confront and change planning knowledge used in practice, within the context of an African City

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Transformation in a nutshell

Through the process of ethnography within the Planning Department, eThekweni Municipality, the importance, roles and the (re)construction of planning knowledges are uncovered. The social relations and politics involved in the (re)construction of planning knowledges are also revealed. With the aid of in-depth interviews, story-telling and a convenience sample method, the planning knowledges and experiences of ordinary people and specialists - a multiplicity of stakeholders are explored. *This research paper* will focus on the exploration of planning knowledges from a multiplicity of stakeholders and how it can inform theory building for planning practices and the relevance of planning in a current context.

Key Components of the Evidence Based Research

- The actual work and environment of planning is uncovered through institutional ethnography and through the researcher who is also an insider/outsider to the 'study site'.
- Planning knowledges are explored with a multiplicity of stakeholders as construct; for what is often regarded as professional knowledges, policy and decision making for what is in the interest of the public, determined by the professional.
- Multiple data sources and forms, contribute to the qualitative study in understanding practice, theorising from practice and returning to practice.

Expanded Summary

The planning discipline has always been under pressure to transform itself. This is for good reason, given its linkages to the rational movement and colonial planning that was simply imported into Africa. The research delves into land use planning, which straddles strategic and regulatory planning and the planning knowledge in use and (re)constructed for practice. The research confirms the importance of professionals in (re)developing the planning knowledge in use, which is still influenced from the past and from a context that does not consider African urbanisation. The research then turns to what a multiplicity of stakeholders would consider as important planning knowledges that could shape and influence the daily

practice and decision making of the practice in the context of an African society. What emerges are two ideologies at play, one informed by the planning practice, professionals, consultants, academia consulted and organisations that uphold planning knowledges and the alternative ideology from 'a slice of African society' informed by development activists, developers, councillors and members of the general public. Planning practices influenced by this 'alternative ideology' engages with the practical and messy realities of everyday stakeholder experiences, which is valued as critical to developing new planning modes. Whilst the former ideology remains dominant, and the latter waits for recognition, it is in the interplay and negotiations between these formal and, as yet, unwritten ways of knowing and doing planning that opportunities to rethink and confront planning practice can be found.

The research offers theory building from practice and for practice; in addition it uses practice as a lens to construct a process for theory building for African urbanism and planning theory. *The focus of this research paper* will be on findings from the research and theory building for practice, in particular a theoretical framework for land use planning, as a daily and important municipal planning function.

- **Key components**

The importance of planning knowledge is uncovered in the way it directs thinking and planning practice.

- The lack of transformation in the (re)construction of planning knowledges are revealed in a context of social relations, 'professional territory and politics' that gives rise to this form of knowledge that is seen and revered as 'objective' and in the public interest.
- The research presents new ideas of 'practical planning knowledge' that confronts municipal planning and offers new ways of 'seeing' and 'doing' planning and which allows for the transformation of how space is constructed and used, within an African city context.

Benefits to eThekweni Municipality

- This research paper speaks to practice, and challenges how knowledge, policy making and practice in the built environment is in need and can change, through research.
- A theoretical framework for land use planning is offered, which is informed through engaging with a 'slice' of society'.