LEABHARLANN CHOLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH | TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY DUBLIN
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

Terms and Conditions of Use of Digitised Theses from Trinity College Library Dublin

Copyright statement

All material supplied by Trinity College Library is protected by copyright (under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 as amended) and other relevant Intellectual Property Rights. By accessing and using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in any Works supplied are the sole and exclusive property of the copyright and/or other IPR holder. Specific copyright holders may not be explicitly identified. Use of materials from other sources within a thesis should not be construed as a claim over them.

A non-exclusive, non-transferable licence is hereby granted to those using or reproducing, in whole or in part, the material for valid purposes, providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. Where specific permission to use material is required, this is identified and such permission must be sought from the copyright holder or agency cited.

Liability statement

By using a Digitised Thesis, I accept that Trinity College Dublin bears no legal responsibility for the accuracy, legality or comprehensiveness of materials contained within the thesis, and that Trinity College Dublin accepts no liability for indirect, consequential, or incidental, damages or losses arising from use of the thesis for whatever reason. Information located in a thesis may be subject to specific use constraints, details of which may not be explicitly described. It is the responsibility of potential and actual users to be aware of such constraints and to abide by them. By making use of material from a digitised thesis, you accept these copyright and disclaimer provisions. Where it is brought to the attention of Trinity College Library that there may be a breach of copyright or other restraint, it is the policy to withdraw or take down access to a thesis while the issue is being resolved.

Access Agreement

By using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you are bound by the following Terms & Conditions. Please read them carefully.

I have read and I understand the following statement: All material supplied via a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of a thesis is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Co-producing Development: Participation, Power and Conflict in the Upgrading of Informal Settlements in Nairobi

A thesis submitted for the degree of

PhD (Sociology)

2012

by Andrea Rigon

TRINITY COLLEGE
2 4 MAY 2013
LIBRARY DUBLIN

Thesis 9857

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

I agree to deposit this thesis in the University's open access institutional repository or allow the library to do so on my behalf, subject to Irish Copyright Legislation and Trinity College Library conditions of use and acknowledgement.

Andrea Rigon

Andrea Rigon

Summary

This thesis analyses how social and political conflicts among different social actors shape the implementation of slum-upgrading programmes. The research focuses on the first two years (2008-2010) of the implementation of an internationally-funded slum-upgrading programme in Nairobi. In particular, the thesis explores the internal dynamics of the residents of one slum settlement and how they interact with the development programme and with the complex range of actors involved.

The actor-oriented approach constitutes the main theoretical framework of this research. Mid-level theories from the sociology and anthropology of development are also employed to illuminate specific data. The thesis draws upon the body of work classified under the broad notion of a 'new ethnography of development', a body of work which has so far predominantly focused on rural projects. The perspective offered by these works can also provide useful insights and tools to examine dispersed and multi-level agency in urban development programmes. Adopting an actor-oriented approach, this thesis analyses the 'co-production of development' accomplished through negotiations, renegotiations, alliances, and conflict among different actors at multiple levels, and within a wider historical, political and policy context.

Through a multi-sited ethnography, this thesis demonstrates the everyday interactions among actors at all levels, both horizontally (within 'the community') and vertically (between 'the community', local government actors, foreign donors and the United Nations). The thesis also traces how some of these relationships changed over time. This study offers an original perspective on a slum-upgrading programme by bringing to light the complexity of negotiations, shifting alliances and discourses throughout project implementation, all of which have been observed within different decision-making arenas of the project and particularly in relation to the issue of land titling. The thesis argues that the complexity of these interactions cannot be conceptualised as 'state' vs. 'community' but necessitates a more complex and micro-level analysis of the relationship between various actors.

The study examines the effects of discourses of 'participation' and 'community' and the problematic management of participation in a conflict-ridden context, with a focus on the creation of local structures of governance. Community actors displayed varying forms of agency and were able to substantially reshape the planned intervention. While these findings confirm that development outcomes are a form of *co-production* and move the analysis away from the narrative of a dominant development discourse, they also call for an exploration of

community agency by looking at intra-community dynamics and the distribution of power. Indeed, the analysis presented here suggests the importance of conceptualising development as a negotiated practice, taking place within existing power structures.

The thesis theorises the relationship between 'participation' and 'elite capture', drawing upon the important social division in the settlement between tenants and structure-owners (landlords). This division becomes particularly salient during the process of negotiating land allocation and tenure options. The thesis concludes that the transfer of some power to community actors does not ensure equitable outcomes per se. In the context of established imbalances of power, participation requires *external agency* and *careful management* to avoid exacerbating inequalities and worsening the lives of many residents, particularly in the context of the allocation of key public assets such as land. This thesis also argues that such management of participation is costly and requires both economic resources and political legitimacy. When discourses of community participation are coupled with limited resources to deal with internal community organisation, the likely result is 'elite capture'.

The thesis also discusses the politics of numbers and data collection, including strategies for the manipulation and social construction of 'scientific' data, used as the objective evidence to legitimise development interventions. This study demonstrates how the residents' elite manipulated a participatory enumeration through the deployment of complex strategies in order to counter government policies which might have undermined their position and assets.

The thesis also analyses the complex efforts in place to maintain the representation of the programme as a coherent and successful project. It illuminates the process of the social construction and 'composition' of 'development success' and the key social processes affecting the success or otherwise of slum-upgrading programmes. The thesis reveals the interdependency between development and other political processes. It reveals the delicate, fragile character of planned interventions, which are in need of legitimacy from a wide range of internal and external actors. The participatory spaces of the project were used by residents to challenge the elite. The latter sought to maintain its legitimacy and obtain community support by delivering tangible and visible development. Community support for the project was also crucial in relation to the presentation of the project as 'successful' to other potential donors and Government Ministries. The thesis also explains how infrastructural improvements responded to the needs of many actors and how, consequently, the project was redirected towards such outputs.

Table of Contents

Dedication i
Acknowledgments ii
Glossary and explanation of terms v
Anonymising conventions vii

1 Introduction 1
1.1 'New ethnographies' of development projects 2
1.1.1 The mainstream policy focus on participatory urban development projects 7
1.1.2 Ethnographies of slum-upgrading and local governance 8
1.2 The research project 11
1.2.1 Aims and objectives 11
1.2.2 The Kwa-maji Urban Development Project and its main actors 12
1.3 Originality and contribution to existing knowledge 13
1.3.1 Participation, community, and power 15
1.3.2 Co-produced development and the social construction of 'development success' 16
1.4 Thesis outline 17

2 Theoretical framework and methodology 23
2.1 Theoretical framework: actor-oriented 23
2.1.1 Long's actor-oriented approach 24
2.1.2 Reconciling agency and structure 26
2.1.3 Complex and collective agency 26
2.1.4 Arenas and interface analysis 28
2.1.5 Writing multiple realities 29
2.1.6 Knowledge, power, and discourse 30
2.1.7 Conclusions 31
2.2 Fieldwork 32
2.2.1 Negotiating access and consent 33
2.2.2 Access to information and documents 35
2.2.3 Personal safety 35
2.2.4 The Steering Committee: observing a key programme arena 36
2.2.5 The social and physical space of the Residents' Committee office 36
2.2.6 Attitudes towards my research 37
2.2.7 Building and maintaining rapport 39
2.2.8 The performative nature of fieldwork 42
2.2.9 Language 43
2.2.10 Writing fieldnotes 45
2.2.11 Interpretative authority 47
2.2.12 Multi-sited ethnography 47
2.2.13 Interviews 49
2.3 Ethics 50
2.3.1 Harm after publication 50
2.3.2 Fixing a relationship in writing 54
2.3.3 Researching ethnicity 56
2.4 Analysis 56
2.4.1 Grounded-theory for ethnographers within an actor-oriented perspective 56
2.4.2 Qualitative data analysis software in an actor-oriented perspective 59
2.4.3 Coding 60
2.4.4 Document analysis 62
2.4.5 Methodological triangulation 63
2.4.6 Researcher position 66

3 Slums and slum-upgrading in Nairobi 69
3.1 The slums of Nairobi 70
3.1.1 The origins of Nairobi's informal settlements 70

3.1.2 The failure of urban policies ... 71
3.1.3 Land ... 74
3.1.4 Slums as political patronage ... 78
3.1.5 Commercial rental in Nairobi slums ... 79
3.1.6 Conclusions ... 82
3.2 Kenya's current institutional framework ... 83
3.3 Experiences of slum-upgrading ... 84
3.3.1 The Small Town Development Project ... 85
3.3.2 Mathare 4A ... 88
3.3.3 Kibera ... 89
3.3.4 Cultural and economic adequacy of housing design ... 91
3.3.5 Huruma Slum Upgrading Project ... 93
3.4 Conclusions ... 95

4 Kwa-maji: history, social organisation and the previous upgrading programme ... 97
4.1 History ... 97
4.1.1 The origins of the settlement ... 98
4.1.2 Important violent conflicts in the settlement ... 99
4.1.3 History of the first slum-upgrading ... 102
4.2 Social analysis ... 104
4.2.1 Social organisation ... 105
4.2.2 Multi-layered conflict ... 108
4.2.3 'The state' in Kwa-maji ... 109
4.3 Kwa-maji: the social lab ... 112
4.3.1 Over-researched ... 117
4.3.2 Pilot projects as social experiments ... 119
4.3.3 Conflicting interests and approaches ... 120
4.3.4 Community expectations and relationships towards development agencies ... 121
4.4 Conclusions ... 123

5 Building community governance: the (non)management of Participation ... 125
5.1 Community participation and 'elite capture' in current development discourses and practices ... 126
5.2 The community elections of 2008 ... 128
5.3 Institutionalising pre-existing inequalities ... 133
5.3.1 Governing through community ... 134
5.3.2 Avoiding conflict ... 137
5.3.3 Barriers to participation ... 138
5.3.4 Excluding the target group ... 139
5.3.5 Discourses of 'community' and internal heterogeneity ... 141
5.4 Conclusion ... 142

6 Negotiating the upgrading ... 145
6.1 The Steering Committee as arena ... 146
6.1.1 Consolidation of Lead Government Agency power ... 147
6.1.2 Significance of other arenas in decision-making ... 150
6.1.3 The alliance between the Lead Government Agency and Residents' Committee management ... 151
6.1.4 Community elite in the Steering Committee ... 153
6.2 Weakening the church's position ... 154
6.3 'The community feels', 'the community wants', 'the community fears': elite monopoly of the sentiments of residents. ... 155
6.4 The struggle against UNX ... 161
6.5 Internal struggles in the Kwa-maji leadership ... 165
6.6 The delicate interdependency of social actors around the construction of the road ... 169
6.7 Negotiated community leadership ... 177
6.8 Conclusion ... 179

7 Negotiating land 181
7.1 The power to plan land and the constraints of 'bureaucracy' in the Steering Committee 182
7.1.1 Land titling 184
7.2 The centrality of land and security of tenure 186
7.3 Negotiating land with the 'community' 190
7.3.1 Analysing decision-making in the workshop space 196
7.4 Talking frankly: sharing concerns without 'the community' 199
7.5 Conclusions 204

8 The politics of counting people 207
8.1 Numbers and slums: playing with figures 210
8.2 The Kwa-maji participatory enumeration 213
8.3 Change of implementer 215
8.4 The implementation 217
8.4.1 The socio-economic study 218
8.4.2 The enumeration of residents 219
8.4.3 The enumeration form 221
8.5 Analysing the process: elite capture and social exclusion 223
8.5.1 Enumeration in practice: the exclusion of 'everyday bureaucracy' 223
8.5.2 Structure-owners' strategies 226
8.5.3 Analysis of the strategies 231
8.5.4 Information asymmetry 233
8.6 Conclusion 235

9 Constructing success and enrolling support 241
9.1 Building a successful representation: the KUDP Conference 243
9.1.1 Raising political support 244
9.1.2 Defending the official narrative 246
9.2 The social construction of development success 248
9.2.1 The role of the conference 250
9.2.2 Creating coherence through ambiguity 252
9.2.3 The visibility and proximity of Nairobi informal settlements 255
9.2.4 Avoiding further conflict: state weakness and the support of residents 258
9.2.5 Playing with 'ignorance': rejecting threats to the legitimacy of the structure of local governance 261
9.2.6 Legitimacy through delivery: towards physical development 265
9.3 Conclusion 268

10 Conclusion 271
10.1 Co-producing development 272
10.1.1 Reflections on the use of the actor-oriented approach 273
10.1.2 Researching development 275
10.1.3 Limitations of this study 275
10.2 Community participation 276
10.2.1 New spaces 285
10.2.2 Conclusions on community participation 286
10.3 Considerations on the role of 'the state', 'elite capture' and land 287
10.4 Governmentality in development 292
10.5 The social construction of development success 294
10.6 Assessing the project 297
10.7 Beyond best practices 298
10.8 Beyond the local 300
10.9 Conclusion 301

Bibliography 303

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Grandmother Amelia Cereghini, who died while I was conducting fieldwork. I could not go to greet her for the last time at her funeral.

I owe to her my thirst for knowledge and education. Despite being a smart and promising student, her poor family prioritised male education and she had to leave her village in the mountains, to migrate and work as a domestic servant for a richer family in a big city. After World War II, she married a man who was left blind after the explosion of a German mine. A man who never saw her. He went to university to study philosophy, and my grandmother, with just primary education, was reading Kant and Aristotle to him. When he died, my grandmother, aged 55, went back to school. She has always told me about her pleasure for learning and her lifelong grief for the missed opportunity to study.

However, she was an extraordinary researcher. When she tasted a good dish, she would find a way to break through all the gatekeepers and get straight to the chef. Through genuine praise and demonstration of interest, she would manage to access a chief's secrets. She would then compare that recipe with others, analysing it carefully and doing experiments composing new recipes and so creating new knowledge. Once, she was refused the secret recipe of the best carrot cake made by a particular bakery – the most famous and successful in the town. She triangulated different information, reviewed various available recipes, implemented reverse engineering, listened to the opinions of other people and, finally, designed her cake. Although she was too humble to admit it, I have always thought that her cake was better. Having a genuine interest in your informants, building a rapport, appreciating their company and their time, and perseverance are all important skills for any good researcher. I love to think I learned these skills from her, though I have never been able to master them as she did.

A special thought also goes to my friend Dennis killed in Nairobi in 2006.

Acknowledgments

This research could not have taken place without the support of my supervisor Barbara Bradby. She started mentoring me long before my PhD, inspiring my interest in critical development studies as a visiting undergraduate student in 2004. These four years under her mentoring have been the most intense learning experience of my life.

Unfortunately, to protect the anonymity of my informants, I have anonymised the research location and therefore I cannot acknowledge individually the people I am most indebted to. However, I wish to thank the Government of Kenya, the project donor, the United Nations, and all the community members.

Not every government is willing to allow a foreign researcher to take part in their meetings and avail themselves of the limited time of their civil servants. The Government of Kenya allowed me to follow the work of their civil servants with the residents and learn from their experience – often a lifelong experience – and from their genuine commitment towards citizens. At all levels, I found openness amongst civil servants to discuss the challenges of their work in the informal settlements. I also received honest criticism of my own work, which has helped me a lot. Needless to say, without this openness and availability of project implementers, this work would not have been possible. The same gratitude goes to all the residents, particularly those who shared with me their thoughts and their stories and patiently answered my questions.

Valeria has been very courageous, leaving her job and family to join me and share a piece of this journey. Her love has inspired and motivated me. I locate the origins of my will for looking at ways to analyse, understand and describe the social world back to the time I spent with my mum writing poems when still in primary school. I thank my parents, Roberto and Luciana, who struggled both financially and politically to get their education and made every possible effort to guarantee that I could access education without facing the same difficulties.

In Kenya, I have to thank the lecturers at the Institute of Development Studies in Nairobi, the administrative staff, and the staff of the library who offered me a quiet

place for reflection. In particular, I wish to thank Prof. Winnie Mitullah and Prof. Mohamud Jama and all those who provided feedback on my initial thoughts.

I owe a big thanks to John, Stefano and Paolo. I also wish to thank all my Kutoka Network friends, my visits to their different slums and engaging together with different issues over a period of nearly four years provided me with a deeper understanding of the daily struggles of Nairobi's residents. Magdalene is not only a wonderful friend but her commitment as a reporter from the informal settlements of Nairobi and her knowledge have guided me through all my years in Nairobi. Thanks to Mary, my committed Swahili teacher. Thanks to Anne, her domestic work made possible my life for the four years I spent in Kenya before and during my PhD, and her energy and integrity have been a great example.

Thanks to Margaret and Andrew, who were my extended family in Kenya, mentoring me with their energy. They are such a beautiful couple and enchant whoever meets them. Thanks also to the entire family of Meru Herbs. Thanks to Carla and Diego for being the best neighbours, friends and landlords that one can expect, and to Diego for commenting on an earlier draft featuring my initial thoughts. Thanks also for having shared the joy of life with the birth of Giulia and Matteo, and the growth of Elia.

Thanks to Mike for keeping me fit and smiling. Thanks to Daddy for bringing me down to earth and letting me understand first hand the challenges faced by Kenyan youth. Thanks to Joshua for choosing and servicing my car but also for his philosophy on love and marriage. Thanks to Elena and Daudi. Thanks to Kibigo, my former project manager, who taught me how to deal with the Government, and different Kenyan institutions well before my PhD. Thanks to my sister who visited for a couple of months and wrote her thesis while I was conducting my fieldwork. Thanks to Carla and Ugo, their house was an oasis of peace in which to enjoy friendship and good food. Thanks to the crew of the Cultural Video Foundation. Thanks to Liv, Alex, and Monia who exchanged my hospitality for dinners in nice restaurants. Thanks to Cristina who lived with me for a few months before marrying my good friend Cole. Thanks to Christina and Juan for visiting with their positive energy.

I have benefited from all the conferences and seminars and the feedback received, in particular I want to mention the 5th Symposium of the Ghent Africa Platform, the 2011 DSA conference, and the 2011 ESA conference.

In Ireland, I also want to thank all the staff and graduate students at the Department of Sociology, Trinity College. Among my colleagues, I wish to thank Carla for welcoming me so warmly on my arrival in Dublin, Alessia (who made the brave choice to visit me during fieldwork as her honeymoon), Elena, Katie, and all the people in IIIS. Special thanks goes to Katy and Mick for reading this thesis. In particular, I am very grateful to Mick for his careful reading of and commenting on the final draft. Thanks to Deirdre for her friendship and support.

Comments and support from other lecturers in the Department of Sociology were very important. In particular, I wish to thank Ronit Lentin, Bob Holton, Adam Drazin and Anne Holohan. This thesis is also the result of an open conversation with Fabrizio, which we started many years ago and that I hope will continue in future.

Finally, without the financial support of the Trinity College Postgraduate Scholarship, generous Travel Grants, and the Scholarship of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, this thesis would not have been possible. The freedom to research and the opportunity to dedicate myself full-time to this project were invaluable. I should also thank the IRCHSS for granting me the possibility of conducting fieldwork of considerable length, without which this research would certainly not have the same value.

Glossary and explanation of terms

Actors: the use of this term may recall rational choice theory, however, in this thesis it refers to the understanding of actors' agency and behaviour, conceptualised in the actor-oriented approach (Chapter 2). The term may refer to both individual and collective actors.

Agency: while a more detailed discussion of the understanding of human agency in this thesis is contained in Chapter 2, it is important to clarify that the term may refer either to the 'capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with problematic situations' (Long, 2001: 182) or to an organisation or government department (e.g. development agency).

AIDX: the pseudonym of the bilateral donor agency funding the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project.

AREA 1: refers to one of the seven villages that compose the area of the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project.

AREA 2: a village neighbouring AREA1 but which is not part of the project area, since its land is private.

Chief: in Kenya, the area Chief is an appointed representative of the government in a certain location; chiefs have many powers, and can implement their decisions through the administrative police under their command. This system of local government is referred to as the Provincial Administration.

Enumeration: a census administered door to door to identify the residents of a certain area. It is a key process in identifying the beneficiaries of slum-upgrading interventions.

KUDP: an abbreviation which stands for the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project. KUDP is sometimes referred to simply as 'the programme' or 'the project'.

Lead Government Agency: an anonymised way to refer to the department of the Government of Kenya which had the main responsibility for the implementation of the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project.

Provincial Administration: the Provincial Administration is the most visible arm of the Executive in Kenya, since it reaches the lowest administration units through a hierarchical system. Every location has a Chief, who is helped by Assistant Chiefs assigned to sub-locations. District Officers supervise the work of Chiefs in wider areas and a District Commissioner is responsible for the district. Every province has a Provincial Commissioner. This system of public administration is directly connected to the Ministry of Internal Security. The Provincial Administration was inherited from the British colonial administration and similar systems are in place in other former British colonies.

Slum: in this thesis, the terms 'informal settlement' and 'slum' are used interchangeably. Despite the derogatory connotations that the term may have in certain contexts, *slum* is the term used by residents of informal settlements themselves. It is also used in UN documents, other policy texts, and the majority of academic work, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it does not have a pejorative meaning. While certain academics would discourage the use of this term (Gilbert, 2007) and criticise the increased use of the term in development studies, I think it is possible to employ it without reproducing discredited 'myths' about the urban poor.[1]

Structure-owners: these are people who own the shacks/buildings (structures) in the slums, on land which is not theirs. Sometimes they are called landlords; however the term structure-owner is preferable because it emphasises that they do not own land. They rent their structures to tenants. They may be living within the settlement (resident structure-owners) or outside (absentee structure-owners).

UNX: the pseudonym of the United Nations agency involved in the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project.

---

[1] For a full discussion of the term and its theoretical usefulness in urban development see the following articles published in *City* (Arabindoo, 2011; Gilbert, 2011; Potts, 2011; Simon, 2011).

Anonymising conventions

Some remarks to explain how I have anonymised documents and other quotations from my data.

[Name of the officer]: indicates that in the original interview/document the real name of the officer was used.
[Kwa-maji]: indicates that in the original interview/document the real name of the settlement was used.
[Name of the village]: indicates that in the original interview/document the real name of the village was used.
[AIDX]: indicates that in the original interview/document the real name of the donor agency was used.
'They [Kwa-maji residents] ...': after a pronoun, the contents within square brackets indicate who the speaker was referring to.

1 Introduction

This thesis is an analysis of the first two years of the implementation of an internationally-funded slum-upgrading programme in Nairobi. As the largest and most important city in East Africa, Nairobi is home to a concentration of urban initiatives and policy experiments. It hosts the regional offices of most global donors and, more importantly, is the site of one of the four headquarters of the United Nations. These include the global headquarters of UN-Habitat, whose primary focus is sustainable urban development. Moreover, the informal settlements of Nairobi offer researchers an especially interesting perspective as, unlike many other countries, most of their residents are *not* squatters who built their own shacks; rather, they are tenants, paying rent to a minority of 'structure-owners' on land which is mostly owned by the Government (Amis, 1984; Lee-Smith, 1990; Syagga, Mitullah, & Karirah-Gitau, 2002). This division between tenants and structure-owners has become a fundamental social division, which has a profound effect on slum development programmes.

There are many accounts of urban development programmes in Nairobi, including studies which demonstrate the extent to which state-led projects have failed to achieve their aims, and led to 'gentrification' (Mitullah, 1992; Syagga, Mitullah, & Karirah-Gitau, 2001). Omenya and Huchzermeyer (2006), on the other hand, have emphasised the limitations of projects led by self-organised communities. However, none of these works offer a comprehensive analysis of the complex process of implementation and the difficulties of maintaining actors' cooperation. Even among the studies of community-led initiatives (Hendriks, 2010; Karanja, 2010; Weru, 2004), there is little exploration of the 'black box' of 'community' and its internal conflicts.

This research project was initially conceived during my time working for a foreign NGO in Nairobi. As a project manager, I conducted a comprehensive context analysis, looking at various programmes implemented in the informal settlements and examining their shortcomings in an attempt to design an appropriate urban programme. Through this work, I witnessed how daily negotiations on the ground

were shaping implementation and how local power structures influenced project outcomes in a profound way.

This thesis examines the internal dynamics of one slum settlement and how they interact with a development programme and with the complex range of actors involved. In other words, it studies how development is 'co-produced' through complex negotiations. Through a multi-sited ethnography of the different decision-making arenas of the programme, the dissertation attempts to move beyond the dichotomy 'state'/'citizens' by looking at how certain social actors forge alliances which may be changed and recombined in attempts to achieve their agendas. The thesis also analyses the complex efforts in place to *maintain* the programme as a *coherent* and *successful* project. The actor-oriented approach will constitute the main theoretical framework of this research, but mid-level theories from the sociology and anthropology of development will also be employed to illuminate specific data.

1.1 'New ethnographies' of development projects

Since the 1990s, there has been a growing body of literature analysing development programmes and how they work.[2] These studies have recently been termed 'aidnographies' (Apthorpe, 2011; Gould & Secher Marcussen, 2004). Initial ethnographies of development projects have argued that the failure of large-scale top-down programmes was caused by the ignorance of development agencies, including the state, with regard to local knowledge, history, and practices (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Porter, Allen, & Thompson, 1991; Scott, 1998). Another body of work has articulated a more radical criticism of development as an 'anti-politics machine' (Ferguson, 1990) and a dominating *discourse* (Escobar, 1995). These latter works are often grouped under the heading of 'post-development' theory. Unlike previous criticisms of development interventions, post-development studies do not aim to improve interventions by addressing their shortcomings. Instead, drawing upon Michel Foucault (1979, [1969] 2007) and Edward Said (1978), and using text and discourse analysis, this body of work argues that development is a project of

[2] Arce and Long (2000) explain this growing body, arguing that the 1990s have brought a more intellectually open environment willing to accept analyses of development that 'deal explicitly with the dynamics of cross-cultural practices, meaning and discourses' (1), after decades in which development studies were dominated by development economics, political science, and normative policy debates.

domination, leading to cognitive control and to the extension of the bureaucratic power of the state. Project beneficiaries are portrayed as the (passive and often unaware) victims of this development discourse. According to this reading, the only manner in which people might break free from subjugation is the total rejection of 'development'.

Recent literature has responded to post-development authors, who occlude people's agency in development, by restating the agency of all the actors involved and by analysing the fragmentation of power (Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Mosse, 2005; Williams, 2004). In doing so, moreover, they emphasise that development projects are the outcome of agency and ongoing negotiation (Li, 2005a; Long, 2001). This more recent literature argues that, despite the existence of strong power structures, development is far from being a 'discourse' imposed upon the poor across the world, but rather a negotiated and contested social practice. Mosse (2004: 644) defines this stream of literature as the 'new ethnography of development', noting that it moves beyond the narrative of dominance to recognise that it is not possible to impose development projects, but that they require collaboration and compromise. For Mosse the ethnographer should,

> focus on the social relations underpinning thought work; to show how development's traveling rationalities are never free from social contexts, how they begin in social relations, in institutions and expert communities, travel with undisclosed baggage, get unraveled as they are unpacked into other social/institutional worlds—perhaps through the interests of local collaborators, official counterparts, or brokers—and are recolonized by politics in ways that generate complex and unintended effects (Mosse, 2008: 120-121).

In his recent review of the literature that followed his 'post-development' argument, Escobar (2012) describes the 'new ethnography of development' in the following terms:

> These investigations entail a sort of hyperethnography that allows the ethnographer to see the entire development network, investigating in depth the main sites with their respective actors, cultural backgrounds, and practical appropriation of the interventions by local groups. The result, it is argued, should give theorists and practitioners a more nuanced account of how development operates as a multiscale process that is constantly transformed and contested (Escobar, 2012: xv).

The recognition that development requires collaboration and negotiation emerges from analysis of the local implementation of large-scale development programmes (Li, 1999, 2007) and from acknowledgement that, within development, there are *spaces* for transformative participation (Cornwall, 2002). Whether *claimed* by the poor or *invited*[3] by development agencies, these spaces have the potential to empower and emancipate the poor (Cornwall & Coelho, 2006). While development interventions may have been conceived as projects of rule (Scott, 1998), their consequences were found to be unpredictable (Williams, 2004).

There was also a realisation that early 'post-development' criticisms were not grounded in ethnographic evidence and thus not adequate to analyse development (Watts, 2001: 286). Development is more than a policy text to deconstruct; hence empirical analysis is needed. In other words, post-development works were not exploring 'the ways in which multiple discourses intersect in situated social practice' (Long, 2001: 235). Moreover, Cooper and Packard (1997) pointed out that development discourses are plural and we should rather speak of development as a set of discourses. Rather than passive victims of development, as previously described by 'post-development' accounts, project beneficiaries use development discourses promoted by the state or other development agencies in order to frame their own claims (Sivaramakrishnan & Agrawal, 2003), or manipulate projects to fit their needs (Mosse, 2005; Rossi, 2004). Vernacular forms of development and multiple modernities are created in this process (Arce & Long, 2000; Sivaramakrishnan & Agrawal, 2003).

Empirical evidence analysed in a growing number of ethnographic works has underlined the negotiated character of development. These works have examined everyday encounters between project beneficiaries and the different actors representing development agencies. This has also been accompanied by a new reading of Foucault's theorisation of power as fragmented and diffused (Foucault, 2003) and his work on governmentality (Foucault, 1991), contributing to a shift in

[3] The term 'invited spaces' was coined by Brock, Cornwall and Gaventa (2001) to indicate those spaces for participation provided by the Government or other development organisations. Participation in these spaces is framed by those who create them and influenced by the power relations of these institutions (Cornwall, 2002). 'Invited spaces' are differentiated from 'claimed spaces' which are the result of citizens' struggles and demands for participation.

the understanding of development projects by looking more precisely at the rationalities of rule as well as examining specific and contingent practices of government (Hart, 2004: 92). From being considered externally imposed social engineering projects of rule (Scott, 1998), development interventions were recognised by a growing body of literature to be composed of 'dispersed practices of government' (Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava, & Véron, 2005: 5) that have to be analysed anthropologically by looking at the 'everyday state' (Fuller & Harriss, 2001: 26). In this perspective, power always implies 'struggle, negotiation and compromise' (Long, 2001: 185) and the state is conceptualised as 'bundles of everyday institutions and forms of rule' (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 5) to be analysed through the various and complex encounters between state and citizens (Gupta, 1995). This approach reinstated the relevance of Randall Collins' (1981) call to examine the micro-foundations in everyday life of macro sociological concepts such as 'the state'. Such a perspective stresses that 'progress can be achieved by political actions that are small-scale, that sometimes are unintended' (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 248). In their work, Corbridge *et al.* argue that it is through these multiple encounters between the state and the rural poor that development outcomes, much like the state itself, are *co-produced* (2005: 8).

The understanding of development as a collective undertaking generated in the everyday encounters between beneficiaries and development actors emphasises how projects are guided by practice on the ground.

> The ways in which technologies of rule are made flesh will depend on the manner in which they are interpreted and put into play by lower-level government workers, elected representatives and others (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 7).

In other words, 'Bureaucracy is an independent generator of ideas, goals and interests' (Quarles van Ufford 1988: 77 cited in Mosse, 2005: 103). Similarly, Long argues that:

> Lower-level field personnel are more than simply employees or subordinates of government or other agencies. They are also implementers, consciously transforming broad guidelines into specific forms of practice' (2001: 79).

Researching development from this perspective implies moving the focus onto the development workers. It involves exploring how they negotiate the implementation of projects with beneficiaries, contractors, and other social actors on a daily basis, and

acknowledging their creative input in the development process. Indeed, if development is the 'messy' outcome of agency, struggle and negotiations (Li, 2005a), then its study requires focusing on the social actors involved in such processes. The complexity of these interactions cannot be conceptualised as 'state' vs. 'community' but necessitates a more complex and micro-level analysis of the various actors and their shifting alliances in the course of a project.

Since development has been 'the raison d'état of newly independent states' (Sivaramakrishnan & Agrawal, 2003: 2-3), development failures could undermine the legitimacy and reputation of a state as well as of other development agencies operating in a competitive setting (Li, 1999). Development success is a fragile accomplishment that can be overturned by the strategic claims made by project beneficiaries to increase their bargaining power (Doolittle, 2006; Li, 1999). This renders development a very political process.

Placing human agency at the centre, the actor-oriented approach developed by Long (1992, 2001) offers a theoretical framework which is useful in terms of answering some of the questions posed by the 'new ethnography of aid' as well as analysing the vast array of state and community actors involved and their multiple encounters. The concept of agency – individual or collective – refers to the 'capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with problematic situations' (2001: 182). According to Long, '[e]ffective agency, then, requires the generation/manipulation of a network of social relations' (182). Following Latour's work (1987, 1996), Long argues that such networks can include non-humans such as 'telephone calls, farm records, genetic materials and machines that acquire social significance in the process of knowledge dissemination/creation' (2001: 184). Moreover, actors manipulate cultural resources such as value notions, fragments of discourses, organisational ideas, symbols, and ritualised procedures, which form the cultural repertoires deployed in social practice.[4]

Much of this 'new ethnography of development' has focused on the analysis of *rural* projects (e.g. Li, 1999; Mosse, 2005). Furthermore, the body of work analysing internal dynamics of 'communities' and how they affect project outcomes also draws

[4] The actor-oriented approach will be presented in more detail in Chapter 2.

predominantly on rural case studies (Chhotray, 2004; Guijt & Shah, 1998; Mosse, 2001; Platteau, 2004). However, the perspective offered by these works can also provide useful insights and tools to examine dispersed and multi-level agency in *urban* development programmes. This is becoming very important in the context of increasing policy concern around the urban poor. Specifically, this perspective can be employed in the analysis of the increasingly widespread participatory slum-upgrading programmes in the cities of the Global South.

1.1.1 The mainstream policy focus on participatory urban development projects

In 2008, for the first time in history, the world's urban population exceeded the rural population, a major sociological shift. An important element of this process of urbanisation is the large proportion of people living in informal settlements (or 'slums').[5] Despite new, more cautious, estimations, an increasing number of urban dwellers – about 830 million in 2010 – live in slums, including 62% of urban dwellers in Sub-Saharan Africa (UN-Habitat, 2008).[6] UN-Habitat has recognised that urban poverty can be 'as intense, dehumanizing and life-threatening as rural poverty', and that the formation of slums is neither inevitable nor acceptable (UN-Habitat, 2006: v). Therefore, the development and upgrading of informal settlements has become an urgent priority for all those interested in poverty reduction.

In the 1990s, the recognition that previous housing policies had failed to meet the needs of the urban poor (Imparato & Ruster, 2003: viii) and the 'participation turn' in development policy drove the World Bank to adopt a new approach: 'participatory urban upgrading'. This approach focuses on improving slums and providing housing *in situ* with the active engagement of members of the community (Imparato & Ruster, 2003). This 'participatory' approach was at the centre of the global initiative, 'Cities Alliance for Cities Without Slums'. This initiative was launched in 1999 by the World Bank and the United Nations, with Nelson Mandela as its patron. Kofi Annan, at the time UN Secretary-General, put pressure on member states to support the plan. Another big global commitment came the following year: the Millennium

[5] See the glossary for a discussion of this term.

[6] Projections have been recently reduced and new interesting evidence points towards a faster increase of rural population in Sub-Saharan Africa (Potts, 2012). However, even with more prudent figures, all agree on the increasing urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa and the significant percentage living in informal settlements. For a more detailed overview on slum growth see UN-Habitat (2008).

Development Goals included the specific target 'to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020'.

In 2003, a World Bank publication presented the lessons learnt from five case studies of successful participatory slum-upgrading in Latin America (Imparato & Ruster, 2003). In 2008, UN-Habitat launched the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme to contribute to the above-mentioned target; the Programme is now operating in more than thirty countries. This was in addition to other bilateral and multilateral initiatives which aimed at transforming informal settlements with the participation of their residents, as well as other community initiatives led by NGOs and other local actors.

In 2001, an agreement between the Government of Kenya and UN-Habitat created the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP), the first manifestation of which was the upgrading of the slum of Kibera, believed to be the second largest informal settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ten years later, in 2011, the World Bank and other development partners launched the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Programme. In Kenya, several slum-upgrading projects were initiated within and outside these wider frameworks. This thesis will examine one project, located in Nairobi, which belongs to this wave of participatory slum-upgrading programmes.

1.1.2 Ethnographies of slum-upgrading and local governance

Several studies investigating slum-upgrading have attempted to assess project outcomes (Archer, 2012; Flores Fernandez & Calas, 2011; Omenya & Huchzermeyer, 2006), or describe the different steps of project implementation (Boonyabancha, 2005). Much literature on slum-upgrading has been policy-oriented and technical in focus, often commissioned by development agencies (Gulyani & Bassett, 2007; Imparato & Ruster, 2003; Syagga, *et al.*, 2001). While presenting an interesting and useful approach, this literature neglects the political implications of such programmes. It also neglects the social conflicts they create and how these conflicts shape project outcomes. Some works that acknowledge the conflictual character of slum-upgrading present the state as an imposer of forced redevelopment policies, resulting in displacement and gentrification (Bassett, Gulyani, Farvacque-Vitkovic, & Debony, 2003; Ghertner, 2010). Remaining critical of the state, other recent studies

have shown how communities self-organise to demand public services, and have praised the collective action of disadvantaged urban communities in pursuit of their own development (Baptist & Bolnick, 2012; D'Cruz, McGranahan, & Sumithre, 2009; Makau, Dobson, & Samia, 2012; Peattie, 1990; Weru, 2004). Such works have emphasised the role of 'activist NGOs and citizens' movements' in slum-upgrading processes (Appadurai, 2001: 26) and 'the potential of local organizations to reduce urban poverty' (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2004: 5). Diana Mitlin (2008) has adopted the concept of co-production to look at the strategies of residents' organisations and their interactions with state institutions; however, overall there is insufficient exploration of dynamics between residents within informal settlements and *how* such grassroots organisations represent their constituencies. A detailed exploration of projects' everyday implementation, highlighting conflicts, compromises and alliances, is often missing from this literature.

Carole Rakodi (2001) has called for a shift from urban planning policies to a focus on governance that highlights the politics and power relations involved in processes of urban development at local and city-level. Devas *et al.* (2004) explore how the urban poor can influence the agenda of various institutions of city governance and what kinds of formal and informal processes tend to deliver pro-poor outcomes. Their work provides an account of these political and institutional processes in ten cities of the developing world. This thesis further contributes to the understanding of local practices and processes of urban governance but it takes a closer focus on one urban development project. The choice of focusing on one local project is also a response to Pushpa Arabindoo's (2011) invitation to adopt an in-depth ethnographic engagement with the practices of the urban poor and to her questioning of the increased academic concern for 'slum as theory' (636), used as an analytic framework to understand cities of the Global South (e.g. Rao, 2006). However, this thesis will primarily focus on the practices of the urban poor in relation to the implementation of the project rather than a detailed analysis of their livelihood strategies, which have already been widely investigated (e.g. Amis & Rakodi, 1995; Beall, 1995; Rakodi, 1995a). This research analyses the interactions and power relations among the residents of one informal settlement and how these internal dynamics intersect with other actors and processes in the course of slum-upgrading. Some of these formal and informal political, institutional and social processes are scrutinised through a detailed analysis

of how residents' dynamics and agency have played out in the implementation of the project.

The idea of co-production presented in the opening section resonates with the current shift in focus from predefined urban policies to governance. Governance, as noted by Rakodi (2001: 216), entails 'questions of power, resources, accountability and legitimacy – the stuff of politics'. The focus on governance, with its emphasis on the creation of coalitions of actors, implies that to achieve certain outcomes one needs to negotiate the process and concentrate on politics. If '[t]he essence of governance is the interactive relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces' (Stoker, 1998: 38), then an understanding of development as co-produced by various actors and an analysis of their agency can offer a contribution to those looking for ways to improve urban governance. In this vein, Carole Rakodi provides the following suggestions for future research, in a passage which encapsulates many elements of the perspective adopted in this research.

> Thus I would argue that the starting point for much future research should not be the departures from or failings of the modernist project, the state sector and the formal urban management system, but the social institutions (formal and informal social rules) that structure political, social and economic interaction. Such research should, of course, recognise that everyday social relationships are not autonomous of the state. They interact with each other and with the state in contradictory ways to produce varying urban physical, economic and social spaces. Moreover, the evolution of urban spaces is highly path dependent—both social, economic and political organisation and the built environment are rooted in history (Rakodi, 2006a: 316).

In summary, this thesis contends that the concerns raised by the 'new ethnography of development' – particularly recognising the negotiated nature of development and moving beyond narratives of dominance – still need to be fully addressed in the urban context. The opportunities afforded by an actor-oriented perspective to explore the complexity of actors' agency and interactions can enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the social, political and institutional processes that determine the successes and failures of participatory slum-upgrading programmes.

1.2 The research project

1.2.1 Aims and objectives

The overall aim of this thesis is to analyse how social and political conflicts among different social actors shape the implementation of slum-upgrading programmes.

The project will address the following **research questions**:

1. How do competing interests and agendas of different social actors play out in the implementation of slum-upgrading programmes?
2. How does the Kenyan Government render this socially diverse and conflict-ridden population governable for the purpose of implementing its upgrading objectives?
3. What role do discourses and practices of 'community' and 'participation' play in creating local structures of governance?
4. How are the different social actors within the community reshaping the upgrading programme according to their interests?
5. How is this programme allocating resources, given pre-existing patterns of inequality?

These questions focus on achieving the following **aims and objectives**:

1. To reveal the key social processes affecting the success or otherwise of slum-upgrading programmes, specifically the process around the social construction of 'development success'.
2. To gain increased understanding of how a complex network of actors (United Nations, foreign donors, Government, community) has already come together in one project (the KUDP), and how their cooperation is sustained in its implementation.
3. To explore Government/community relationships in development programmes.
4. To explore the role of property ownership and land tenure within slum-upgrading programmes.

1.2.2 The Kwa-maji Urban Development Project and its main actors[7] [8]

The first two years (2008-2010) of the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project (KUDP) were aimed at improving the living conditions of Kwa-maji residents through the provision of security of tenure and the building of infrastructure, with an emphasis on participation and inclusion. The programme aimed to be a comprehensive and holistic process dealing with physical, social, economic, institutional and environmental aspects.

This first phase of the KUDP was funded by an OECD donor (hereafter known as AIDX). The funding formed part of the donor's most important bilateral initiative with the Government of Kenya (GoK) through a Debt-for-Development Programme, within the framework of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.[9] Initially, AIDX

---

[7] Kwa-maji is a pseudonym and the names of the key actors have been anonymised. This choice was made for multiple reasons. Many institutional actors were represented by a limited number of staff who would be easily recognisable if I were to mention the actors and the settlement. To have done so would violate research ethical guidelines, since the anonymity that I committed to grant to my informants and interviewees would not be fully maintained with the disclosure of such details. Moreover, the programme deals with one of the most problematic political issues in Kenya: the distribution of land. This issue generated conflict, and already two community leaders have been violently killed; the second murder in particular reinforced my conviction of the need for unequivocal anonymity. At the same time, the programme is ongoing, and the research itself could create internal conflicts among the actors or, even worse, be used by competing government departments in the upcoming election campaign. (Currently, there is a Government of National Unity, but Ministries are divided among political parties, and projects are used to criticise political enemies). Moreover, there is a risk that misuse of the research, extrapolating parts out of context, could be used to attack the professional reputation of implementing staff and institutions. These risks are very concrete. While many other researchers have anonymised their work (e.g. Platteau, 2004), sometimes even concealing the country (Rossi, 2004), without having affected the relevance of the argument, I am aware of the limitations that such a level of anonymity implies, particularly around facilitating debate and comparative work. A more detailed reflection on this matter is contained in the ethics section of the next chapter.

[8] Kwa-maji is the fictional name of the slum in which the story narrated in the musical, *Mo' Faya. A Ghetto Story*, is set. This Kenyan musical was performed by some of the most important Kenyan singers and written by Eric Wainana, a politically active and very famous singer. The show has been on stage in New York and other international arenas. It tells the story of a land speculation attempt masked by a slum-upgrading programme, which generated many conflicts among the actors. While it is a fictional story, it contains the stereotypical elements of a development programme in a slum. This pseudonym is also particularly relevant because Kwa-maji means 'place with water' and the settlement under study had developed between two rivers which represent its borders. In addition, the settlement does not have a sewarage system, but the depurator of the Nairobi Water and Sewage Company borders the settlement and when it is full, the company opens it, flooding the settlement streets with the dirty water of Nairobi's richer neighbourhoods. The real settlement name has also been substituted in quotations from interviews and project documents.

[9] In 2005, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness represented a major shift in donors' policy. It contained five key principles – Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability – that were supposed to make development assistance more successful. Development assistance was supposed to be disbursed in line with national development plans, in coordination with other donors, following local procedures and aiming at verifiable results, under the leadership of the recipient country. In particular, following the principle of ownership, a donor commits to respect partner country leadership, while the latter takes the lead in coordinating aid 'in dialogue with donors and encouraging the participation of civil society' (OECD, 2005: article 14). Moreover, it was agreed

wanted an organisation of the United Nations (UNX), which AIDX considered expert and neutral, to be the main implementing body for the KUDP. However, the GoK wanted to maintain a prominent role for itself and AIDX agreed to have a GoK Department, hereinafter the Lead Government Agency, as the principal implementing body, thus significantly reducing the role of UNX. While the GoK, through a different Department, had an established collaboration with the United Nations in the field of slum-upgrading, AIDX did not itself have any previous experience of slum-upgrading in the region. Nevertheless it wanted to use this pilot programme as a learning process to determine best practices and develop an approach that it would be possible to replicate elsewhere.

Decisions were taken through a participatory process involving the community, represented by an elected Residents' Committee (Chapter 5), and guided by an inclusive Steering Committee (Chapter 6) chaired by the Lead Government Agency and comprised of representatives of the residents, different Government Ministries, City Council, local missionaries, UNX, AIDX, and occasionally NGOs. The KUDP management claimed to have created an open and democratic process, which could accommodate the various interests at play and mediate between them. A foreign missionary congregation with a mission in Kwa-maji was part of the project's governance, in recognition of the advocacy role they played in convincing AIDX to fund the KUDP (Chapter 6). At the start of the project, the land of Kwa-maji was owned by the GoK and the shacks/dwellings belonged to structure-owners. Some of these owners were living within the settlement and others outside, and they were renting the shacks to tenants, who were the majority of the residents (Chapter 4). Finally, an important local actor was the Chief, an appointed representative of the Government in the smallest administrative unit called a 'location' and with considerable administrative power (discussed further in Chapter 3).

1.3 Originality and contribution to existing knowledge

Part of the originality of this contribution lies in the empirical data analysed as part of the ethnographic narrative to demonstrate the everyday interactions among actors at

---

that 'donor countries should avoid creating dedicated structures for day-to-day management and implementation of aid-financed projects' (article 21). This principle is coupled with mutual accountability, through which the donor can check the receiver's use of the aid.

all levels, both horizontally (within 'the community'), and vertically (between 'the community', local government actors, foreign donors and the United Nations). The thesis also traces how some of these relationships changed over time. This study offers an original perspective on a slum-upgrading programme by bringing to light the complexity of negotiations, shifting alliances and discourses throughout the project implementation. These have been observed within different arenas such as Steering Committee meetings, Residents' Committee meetings, technical site visits, and policy conferences. In her critical engagement with Scott's (1998) work, Tania Li (2005a) emphasises how, by avoiding the simplification of complexity, anthropological analysis complements and clarifies some of the points 'lost or submerged' (383) in Scott's argument. His political science background, Li argues, tends to lead him towards the production of single easily generalisable theories phrased in 'bold and memorable' language (383). The 'new ethnography of aid' is humbly attempting to make sense of local processes by recognising actors' agency while at the same time considering their embeddedness in wider dynamics. Inspired by this approach, this thesis attempts to build mid-level theories that acknowledge the complexity of social processes, rather than claim the universality of its findings.

The in-depth analysis provided in the thesis is the result of my 'multiple' access to the programme gained through extensive fieldwork and previous connections with the location. Data was collected during 16 months of fieldwork (September 2009 – December 2010), preceded by preliminary fieldwork of 4 weeks (October-November 2008) and two years of employment in Nairobi (November 2005 – September 2007) that gave me the opportunity to familiarise myself with the area and establish important relationships.

By analysing the implementation of a project from an actor-oriented perspective, the thesis will provide a contribution to the following inter-related debates:

1. The effects of discourses of 'participation' and 'community' and the problematic management of participation in a conflict-ridden context.
2. Intra-community power structures and the process of 'elite capture'.
3. Co-production of development through negotiations, alliances, and conflict among different actors at multiple levels within a wider political and policy context and a pre-existing history.

4. The politics of numbers and data collection, including the strategies of manipulation and social construction of 'scientific' data, which are used as objective evidence that legitimises development interventions.
5. The social construction and composition of 'development success'.

These topics can be classified into two broad recurring themes that run throughout the thesis, which I have grouped under the headings *Participation, community, and power* and *Co-produced development and the social construction of 'development success'.*

1.3.1 Participation, community, and power

In the last decade, ethnographies of participatory programmes have analysed how programmes interact with local power structures (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2001). On the one hand, it has been argued that community participation responds to development agencies' need for legitimacy and for establishing representatives of the intended beneficiaries in order to facilitate the implementation of projects (Mansuri & Rao, 2004; White, 1996: 10-12). On the other hand, practices of participation may also lead to some genuine transfer of power from the government to members of 'the community': in some cases, this has created new empowering spaces and has been termed 'transformatory participation' (Cornwall, 2002; Hickey & Mohan, 2004). However, based on documented cases (Abraham & Platteau, 2000; Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Dill, 2009; Mansuri & Rao, 2004), the practices of participation have often led, instead, to what has been termed 'elite capture'. While Dasgupta and Beard (2007) argue that elite capture is not necessarily wholly negative, Tania Li points out that elites have 'limited tolerance [...] for interventions that might actually restructure relations in favour of the poor' (Li, 2007: 4). Patronage relationships at the local level have been considered a constant feature of African politics, and not ones which will be easily broken by a single development programme (Platteau, 2004). It is therefore important to study not only how project beneficiaries interact with the state and other development agencies, but also internal social and political dynamics operative among the supposed beneficiaries. Not to do so poses the risk of failing to grasp the mechanisms that reproduce inequality and social exclusion.[10]

[10] A more detailed review of the relevant literature regarding 'participation' and 'community' in development is provided in Chapter 5.

Therefore, it is interesting to examine how internal community dynamics play out in community's relationships with the state and other development actors. The focus is not so much on the exploration of relationships between 'the state' and 'the community' as if they were single actors, but on *how* state actors strategically ally with some community actors and how some community actors interact with and make use of certain state actors. This process may also involve a transformation of heterogeneous residents into a 'governable community'. The effects of this process will be analysed in the course of the thesis.

The fact that 'elite capture' took place in the programme under study is not surprising, particularly in the light of previous research. In Kwa-maji, power was effectively handed by the project to pre-existing elites, extending their power in new directions. What this thesis offers is an explanation of *how* and *why* this happened. The *type* of project investigated here differs from examples within the existing literature on elite capture in participatory projects. When, as in the current case, elites capture a programme involving *land-distribution* intended to favour the residents, and those elites become legitimised to take important decisions on land allocation, worrying outcomes may include not only the exclusion of some residents from their fair share of the benefits, but also the serious risk that the programme will exacerbate previous inequalities, with potentially disastrous results for the livelihoods of the poorest. The thesis documents this process and presents the implications of elite capture and the risks at stake for a significant section of the residents.

1.3.2 Co-produced development and the social construction of 'development success'

The thesis shows that the implementation of the project does not simply involve the linear execution of the original plans as contained in the relevant policy documents; rather it is the outcome of continuous negotiation. Explicit and implicit conflicts, as well as shifting alliances among different actors, determine the results of the project. However, these results can be understood only within the historical and political processes of the locality. To make sense of the implementation of the programme, it is important to look at the actors' position within these processes. The focus of the research lies in the power relations among the different actors and their agency in

shaping the development intervention. Power relations are studied at the interface where different actors meet to negotiate development.

The idea of the 'co-production of development', presented in the opening section, can also be effectively deployed to understand the 'co-production of development success'. On this topic, the thesis draws on David Mosse's work (2005) on the social construction of development success. In his approach, 'success' is not an inherent characteristic of a project resulting from the delivery of planned outputs. Instead, in order to be successful, a project must hold together a heterogeneous array of community, government, and other actors. Implementers also have to be able to maintain 'control over the interpretation of [project's] events' (Mosse, 2004: 646), and this interpretation must in turn be coherent with wider policy discourses. Mosse and other authors show that project success is a fragile achievement that can be easily undermined, and their argument is all the more pertinent in contested and conflict-ridden localities. In such contexts, projects have to maintain a delicate equilibrium between contradictory demands, a process in which *legitimacy* plays an important role. This thesis addresses interwoven layers of legitimacy: community representatives and donor and government officers all require their actions to be validated by other actors within and outside the project (Chapter 9). A project may also need to expand its network of supporters by enrolling other actors in the project: for instance, other donors who can guarantee the flows of resources.

1.4 Thesis outline

The overall structure of this thesis takes the form of ten chapters, including this introductory chapter. *Chapter 2* is concerned with the methodology used for the study. It begins by laying out the main *theoretical approach* of the research, justifying its choice and relevance. Subsequently, the *fieldwork* is presented in some detail, explaining the different phases and methods employed. *Ethical considerations* are also discussed. The final section considers the process of *data analysis* through Grounded Theory and with the support of qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 9).

Chapter 3 provides the necessary information to understand *Nairobi's informal settlements* where slum-upgrading interventions such as the one under study take place. The first section describes the *history* of the slum phenomenon in Kenya and particularly in Nairobi. It underlines its colonial roots and how it is connected with the issue of *land* and *security of tenure*, and intertwined with *local and national politics*. An outline of the policy responses to the phenomenon is presented, explaining why they have been unsatisfactory in tackling slum growth. The chapter finally looks at the chronic lack of low- and middle-income housing in Nairobi. This poses a major drawback for urban programmes, since it facilitates gentrification, which has been acknowledged to be a critical factor undermining the success of most interventions in the city to date. *Four cases of slum-upgrading programmes* are briefly discussed, since they have influenced the KUDP under study, and various actors refer to them often.

A major criticism of participatory programmes, which has also been extended to certain ethnographic analyses of development projects, is that they downplay the role of wider issues and policy frameworks. In this way, they risk depoliticising development by looking at it as a local problem delinked from what happens at national and international levels (Li, 2005a, 2007). While I argue that it is important to examine local dynamics and interactions in order to gain an understanding of the development process, this thesis also considers connecting local events with wider processes to be of the highest importance. By looking at the wider context of Nairobi and its history, national politics, and the policy environment, Chapter 3 attempts to avoid the shortcomings of focusing on local dynamics and ignoring the wider picture. For instance, it would be very difficult to understand slum-upgrading in Kwa-maji without a full appreciation of the political, cultural, and economic role of land in Kenya.

Chapter 4 examines the local context, recognising the importance of *local history* in understanding development programmes. The chapter takes us into Kwa-maji, presenting the history of the settlement as well as the complex socio-economic context and the multi-layered sets of conflicts that characterise it. The *social organisation* of Kwa-maji and the history of a past slum-upgrading intervention, which still deeply influences the current local situation, are outlined. Kwa-maji is

presented as the *perfect locus for planned interventions.* It has become an over-researched settlement where many external actors operate, while local actors try to make the most out of this, displaying a noteworthy knowledge of development agencies.

Chapter 3 and 4 are provided not so much to decorate and contextualise the analysis as to allow a full understanding of the processes and dynamics at play. The lessons learnt from early ethnographies of development projects, which argue that project failure is often due to getting local history wrong (Ferguson, 1990), or not considering it at all (Porter, *et al.*, 1991), remain valid. This thesis argues that history matters; projects do not happen independently from past events, and people understand what happens and react to it on the basis of their interpretation of what happened in the past. For instance, previous attempts at upgrading the slum of Kwa-maji and the narratives derived from them played a strong role in determining what was happening at the time of my fieldwork. Another fundamental aspect was the context of the post election violence of 2007-2008—the worst political crisis in the country's post-independence history. *How* community actors interpreted the events on the basis of their previous experiences of violent outbreaks in Kwa-maji had an impact on their attitudes towards the project and their fellow residents.

Chapter 5 looks at the complex interplay of *discourses and practices of 'participation' and 'community'* in the creation of local structures of governance. It draws upon critical analyses of participation, which have thus far primarily been developed in relation to rural projects. Subsequent to a selective review of relevant literature, the chapter provides a detailed account of the process of *electing a Residents' Committee* and deconstructs the official narrative that it was a democratic and socially inclusive process. Powerful actors within the community – the structure-owners – became Kwa-maji official representatives. In other words, a minority elite became the legitimate partner of the Government. The chapter also explores the gap between the official discourse of the democratic election of 'community representatives' – required to fulfil programme policy – and the reality on the ground.

Chapter 6 looks at the *negotiations* and *shifting alliances* between different actors. It also examines how decision-making took place during the implementation of the

programme. The first part looks at the negotiations taking place in the arena of the *Steering Committee*. Following this, the chapter presents an analysis of specific instances of negotiations around the construction of roads in Kwa-maji. These negotiations took place in another arena, the *Office of the Residents' Committee*. Throughout the chapter I examine the delicate power balance that legitimises the different actors and how their role is continuously contested and needs to be constantly renegotiated. In particular, the chapter looks at how community elites strategically deploy discourses of community participation to marginalise those actors that could undermine their interests. At the same time, the chapter shows how the local leadership draws *legitimacy from the implementation of the programme* and how their position is at stake when there are delays in the implementation. The careers of civil servants and donor representatives are also linked to the success of the programme, and this success is highly dependent on the extent to which the structure of community governance (i.e. the Residents' Committee) operates effectively as a channel between government and community. The chapter contains ethnographic evidence that demonstrates how *development is co-produced through 'everyday' negotiations.*

Drawing upon the discussions of Chapter 3, *Chapter 7* focuses on the *negotiation over land* – the key political issue of the programme – and shows the 'frontstage' and 'backstage' of the interaction of the government actors with the 'community' leaders. To understand these negotiations, the text refers to the Kwa-maji context and the social divisions within the settlement – especially between structure-owners and tenants – and how land was allocated through patronage and customary practices by a committee of elders, local politicians, and government representatives (Chapter 4). The chapter describes the negotiations which went on within three different arenas. Firstly, it describes *how decisions regarding land were taken in the context of the Steering Committee* and how community representatives learnt to manipulate this space. Secondly, it provides an account of *one particular planning workshop* where the Government and Residents' Committee members discussed the issue of land tenure. Thirdly, it analyses *a roundtable discussion* in which the institutional actors – Kenyan Government Departments, AIDX, UNX – were able to express their concerns around land and security of tenure without the presence of community representatives. The analysis presented in Chapter 7 demonstrates that development

cannot be imposed from outside. The Lead Government Agency is not able to simply implement its original plan, but instead is obliged to engage in a very delicate process of negotiations with the local elite. Government officials were conscious that this would be a long process made up of many repeated rounds of negotiations. At the same time, this chapter shows the important relationship between local negotiations and wider processes. The chapter shows how these negotiations were shaped by national and international policies, discourses and constraints regarding land and security of tenure.

Chapter 8 examines one of the most sensitive activities of the programme, the *participatory enumeration* of the residents, implemented to identify the intended beneficiaries of the project. The chapter analyses how the power imbalances consolidated through the community elections (Chapter 5) played out in this crucial activity. The chapter also investigates how the structure-owners operated to simplify the process and gain control over its implementation at the expense of 'vulnerable' groups. It looks at the strategies deployed by the structure-owners and how best practices to counter *elite capture* were not followed. The chapter goes on to examine how numbers and data regarding informal settlements are extremely political and are deployed strategically. A body of literature, influenced by Foucault, highlights the role that censuses and surveys play in modern statecraft, particularly in rendering people 'legible' for the purpose of effective government. In contrast, this chapter shows how elites managed to *manipulate this government tool and provide the state with their own 'reading' of the community.*

Chapter 9 deals with the *social construction of 'development success'* and the processes that allowed the project to remain successful. The chapter evaluates to what extent 'success' is connected with the project's implementation, and to what extent it depends upon the capacity to sustain a consistent representation of the project that is accepted by most stakeholders, who can in turn maintain relationships and enrol further support. Mosse's *theoretical formulation of 'development success'* is used to make sense of the Kwa-maji project, although the analysis comes to partially different conclusions.

The first part of Chapter 9 contains an *ethnographic account of a high-profile conference* organised to increase political support and attract new donors. The second part draws upon the entire thesis to show how the need to maintain the programme's success shaped its implementation in particular directions. The *implementation was reoriented towards 'visible' outputs* which fulfilled the needs of residents, implementers and funders. The chapter also looks at how the programme managed *to consistently present the data collected to claim success and enrol the support of other actors.* In the process, previously marginalised actors, such as UNX, became crucial and were called on to play a key role.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis, tying up the various theoretical and empirical strands in order to show how the programme was not a linear implementation of the initial policy but a continuously negotiated and contested process, constantly shaped by actors, and deeply intertwined with political, historical, and economic conditions. Development projects are delicate attainments which need *legitimacy* from a wide range of internal and external actors. This chapter summarises the critique of current discourses and practices of 'participation' and 'community', as developed in the course of the thesis, and shows how their technical implementation has the potential to actually worsen the situation of large sections of intended beneficiaries.

The thesis closes by taking up Booth's call (2011) for the end of the 'best practice' approach and the need for interventions that are context-specific. Development needs to be studied by looking at the interfaces where different actors come together, and by exploring *everyday* processes of development. Academic analysis should aim to generate useful mid-level concepts rather than overarching universal prescriptions.

2 Theoretical framework and methodology

This chapter begins by laying out the main *theoretical framework* of the research, justifying its choice and relevance. Subsequently, the *fieldwork* is presented in some detail, explaining the different phases and the methods employed. *Ethical considerations* are also discussed. The final section considers the process of *data analysis.*

2.1 Theoretical framework: actor-oriented

Despite the fact that the training I received in development studies for my BA was fairly mainstream, I have always been interested in more critical work. However, it was only after undertaking two years of development work in the informal settlements of Nairobi (2005-2007) that I realised the centrality of agency, and the need for an approach that could go beyond structuralist and culturalist approaches. In the urban context in which I worked, I found that the most popular explanations for development failures were unsatisfactory. Most of the literature concluded that failure stemmed from top-down projects which took no account of local knowledge, or that failure was caused by external structural constraints. However, in practice, many development programmes *were* adopting participatory approaches and beneficiaries were involved in shaping the process. At the same time, I was not satisfied with the post-development literature (Escobar, 1995; Ferguson, 1990; Sachs, 1992), which looked at development as a single dominating discourse, drawing on the work of Foucault (Foucault, 1979, 2008; Foucault & Gordon, 1980) and Said (1978). Such literature is adept at deconstructing development policies, but on the ground, policy itself had only a limited role to play in the implementation of development programmes.

The critique of policy, therefore, could only partially explain the development process. The processes of social change that I was witnessing in Kenya were much more complex; every project was the result of continuous negotiations among many actors from inception to completion, and was entangled with other processes at local, national and international levels. In particular, it seemed that what was required was an approach that could reconcile agency and structure. In this regard, I found the literature arising from Long's actor-oriented approach (e.g. Hilhorst, 2003; Mosse,

2005) more promising. I began to focus my research on the analysis of participatory urban development programmes, and the actor-oriented approach seemed to offer the right tools for analysing them. Finding that this approach had not been employed in the study of slum-upgrading programmes, I became interested in understanding how competing interests and agendas relating to a variety of social actors play out in the implementation of such programmes and how these social actors reshape development programmes themselves.

Therefore, I have developed the theoretical framework for my methodology from the actor-oriented approach presented by Long (1977, 1992, 2001, 2004). Long's approach places actors 'at the centre of the stage and rejects linear, determinist and simple empiricist thinking and practice' (Long, 2001: 5). I combined the actor-oriented approach with more recent analyses of power in development projects arising from a new reading of Foucault's concept of governmentality, a reading which recognises multiple sources of power (Chapter 1). This recent literature emphasises the agency of actors, analyses the fragmentation of power (Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Mosse, 2005; Williams, 2004) and sheds light on the way in which projects are the 'messy' outcome of agency and continual negotiation (Li, 2005a). In the context of the sociology of development, this approach has been predominantly used in the study of *rural* development projects. Hence, there is much scope for the application of the actor-oriented approach in urban settings. In the following sub-sections I will present the actor-oriented approach and illustrate its appropriateness for my research.

2.1.1 Long's actor-oriented approach

Before retiring, and with the help of his wife Ann Long, Norman Long (2001) systematised over 30 years of work developing his actor-oriented approach. The result was *Development Sociology: Actor perspectives*, which presents his clearest theoretical formulation. This work has been the reference point for a stream of literature that followed (Hilhorst, 2003; Lewis & Mosse, 2006; Mosse, 2005; Turnbull, Hernandez, & Reyes, 2009). This literature added to the already significant number of contributions, both theoretical (Booth, 1994; Preston, 1996; Schuurman, 1993) and ethnographic (Arce & Long, 1987, 2000; Grammig, 2002; Jackson, 1997; Villarreal, 1994), which had employed an actor-oriented approach. In what follows,

Development Sociology will be my main reference in relation to Long's actor-oriented perspective.

Long begins by stating that actor-oriented theory looks at social change from a constructionist point of view.

> My version of a constructionist perspective focuses upon the making and remaking of society through the ongoing self-transforming actions and perceptions of a diverse and interlocked world of actors. These emergent processes are complex, often ambivalent, and highly contingent upon the evolving conditions of different social arenas. They also entail networks of relations, resources and meanings at different scales of organisation. These range from small-scale interactional contexts, institutional domains in which actions, expectations and values are framed and contested, to more global scenarios that shape human choices and potentialities at a distance but which are themselves the products of the extended chains and repercussions of social action and their impacts on both human and non-human components (2001: 2).

This type of constructionism has direct implications for ethnographers, since it redefines the field in broader terms. It implies that researchers should go beyond everyday social practice in order to include 'large-scale institutional frameworks, resource fields, networks of communication and support, collective ideologies, socio-political arenas of struggle, and the beliefs and cosmologies that may shape actors' improvisations, coping behaviours and planned social actions' (2001: 4). Therefore, a direct methodological consequence of this is that ethnographic research cannot take place in the 'field' as traditionally conceived (i.e. a spatially delineated, specific location) but requires a 'multi-sited ethnography' which allows for the analysis of a variety of arenas (Marcus, 1995).

Long roots his social constructionism in the work of Berger and Luckmann (1967) and Schutz (1967), as well as in Goffman's symbolic interactionism (1959, 1961) and the ethnomethodology of Garfinkel (1967). All these contributions view social phenomena as built of 'a multiplicity of constructed and emergent realities' (Long, 2001: 2). According to Long, the key question of constructionism relates to understanding 'the processes by which specific actors and networks of actors engage with and thus coproduce their own (inter)personal and collective social worlds' (2001: 3). In this framework, an actor-oriented analysis looks at 'how the meanings, purposes and powers associated with differential modes of human agency intersect to shape the outcomes of emergent social forms' (2001: 4).

2.1.2 Reconciling agency and structure

The actor-oriented approach is able to conjugate the agency of the different social actors involved and structural constraints, although Long himself (2001) recognised that more work needed to be done to further develop the integration of social actors, agency and structural dynamics.

On the basis of my own research, it was clear that what was happening at the local level could not be fully understood without looking at the larger dynamics, such as project policy and new donors' frameworks, as well as the post-election violence in Kenya, the national political context, and so forth. But these are not simply external variables as different social actors react differently to the same 'structural conditions'. Thus, there is a need for a theoretical approach that can explain actors' behaviour while recognising their agency. Such external factors enter the lifeworlds of the actors, are interpreted differently, and shape actors' agency in a variety of ways. Therefore, the effects of 'structural constraints' are mediated by social actors (Long, 2001).

A logical consequence of this view is a deconstruction of the concept of 'structure', particularly where it is seen as an external, determined force that regulates specific modes of action (Long, 2001: 62). Long affirms that 'All forms of external intervention necessarily enter the existing lifeworlds of the individuals and social groups affected, and in this way they are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures' (13). Therefore, structure can be understood as 'an extremely fluid set of emergent properties' produced by the intertwining of actors' different projects; at the same time such properties also constrain and enable the actions of the actors, leading to further negotiation' (62).

2.1.3 Complex and collective agency

A particular strength of the actor-oriented approach is its complex and multi-layered understanding of agency that takes into account different types of collective actors and how their agency intersects with other types of human agency. Both individual and collective actors are fundamental to my analysis. In this research, it was necessary to study social actions within a framework that included individual people

with specific roles (e.g. the chair of the Residents' Committee); while at the same time considering such a person's membership of a social group (e.g. structure-owners), or an institution (e.g. the Residents' Committee).

Long identifies three different types of *collective actors* that are studied in actor-oriented analysis. The first is a *coalition of actors* that share similar goals, interests or values and agree to undertake a particular social action. Such a coalition – which can be formal or informal – enjoys the power of agency, that is 'the capacity to process experience, make decisions and to act upon them' (2001: 56). The second is Latour's *collectif*, understood as a network of humans and non-humans, where agency resides in this *collectif* rather than being a property of objects or people (Latour, 1986, 1987). This emphasises the heterogeneous nature of organising practices constituted through enrolment strategies (Long, 2001: 57). The third type of collective actor refers to entities (e.g. the state, the market, the community) that are normally considered to have a generalised agency, with people's understandings of the agency of these entities shaping their orientations and actions (e.g. the actions of individuals are influenced by way they think the community or the market acts) (57).

In order to exemplify how Long's concept of multi-layered actors was used in the analysis of my research, I turn briefly here to an illustration of how I coded my data. In this I was facilitated by Qualitative Data Analysis Software NVivo 8. I was able to create cases in a hierarchical order so that I could code the fieldnotes with reference to a particular individual. That person was categorised under a wider folder and, as such, their agency could be related to the wider social group to which they belonged.

For example, an individual might be coded as the chair of the Residents' Committee. The same individual might also be coded as a member of the Residents' Committee, a village elder, a structure-owner and Kikuyu in ethnicity. As a result, I could examine specific processes and outcomes from the perspective of a variety of collective actors. For instance, I could analyse the code 'attitudes towards the slum-upgrading' through the lens of different social actors, for instance 'structure-owners', 'Kikuyus', 'Residents' Committee members', or 'elders'. It was possible to take a similar approach with regard to the code 'best tenure system' to see how the preference for a specific type of land tenure differed according to social group. I also analysed the

heterogeneous range of views and actions (from radical to more nuanced ones) which coexisted within the same social group in relation to a particular issue, and tried to understand them by looking at the characteristics of individual life histories, roles in the community and so forth.

2.1.4 Arenas and interface analysis

A key concept in actor-oriented theory is the concept of **arena.** According to Long, 'arenas' are:

> social and spatial locations where actors confront each other, mobilise social relations and deploy discursive and other cultural means for the attainment of specific ends, including perhaps remaining in the game. In the process, actors may draw on particular domains to support their interests, aims and dispositions (2001: 59).

The notion of arena helps us in identifying the actors and 'mapping out the issues, resources and discourses entailed in particular situations of disagreement or dispute' (59). This is particularly appropriate for the analysis of development interventions, because they are made up of a 'complex set of interlocking arenas of struggle' (59).

Another key notion in Long's approach is that of **social interfaces**. These are the critical points of 'intersection between lifeworlds, social fields or levels of social organisation where social discontinuities, based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power, are most likely to be located' (243).

> '[Interface analysis] focuses on the linkages and networks that develop between individuals or parties rather than individual or group strategies. Continued interaction encourages the development of boundaries and shared expectations that shape the interaction of the participants so that over time the interface itself becomes an organised entity of interlocking relationships and intentionalities' (69).

Long (2001) argues that preconceived normative frameworks such as 'local participation' or 'state-civil society relation' are incapable of explaining interactions between development agencies, governments and development programme beneficiaries; such interactions have to be understood as part of processes of 'negotiation, adaptation and transformation of meaning' (72). With its focus on 'critical junctures or arenas involving differences of normative value and social

interest', interface analysis reveals the 'dynamics of cultural accommodation that makes it possible for the various worldviews to interact' (72).

Long advocates the need for empirical work to establish the links between representatives and constituencies, rather than assuming that belonging to or representing a group or institution necessarily implies acting in the interest of its members. This type of analysis becomes necessary to avoid oversimplifying social actors' interests and strategies. In my research, for instance, the agency of actors was conditioned by their personal career path and objectives, their institutional belonging, and so on. The actor-oriented approach considers the widest possible range of factors that shape human agency; for instance, Hilhorst and Jansen (2010) in their actor-oriented analysis of the humanitarian arena include 'the banalities of everyday gossiping' (1121). Therefore, it is important to clarify that, while they are also widely used by rational choice theory, in the context of the actor-oriented approach the terms *interest* and *actor* do not assume a reductionist perspective with regard to human agency.

2.1.5 Writing multiple realities

The actor-oriented approach is theoretically grounded in social constructionism, which recognises the existence of 'multiple realities' (Long, 2001: 19). Hence, the different narratives of specific events provided by different actors are legitimate. These narratives matter because they represent varying understandings and interpretations of social worlds that shape actor agency. The researcher must understand these interpretations, but he/she also needs to present a complex narrative – the ethnographic text – that attempts to make sense of and *recompose* the multiple perspectives, including his/her own.

For instance, in my Kenyan research, programme policies and official narratives tended to insist on attempting to adopt a 'win-win solution' in relation to contested issues, whereas residents were aware of the trade-offs in every action that might impact on the equilibrium of a given locality, and would form strategic alliances to achieve their personal or collective projects. In such a context, it is always important to ask 'good for whom?' and to adopt an epistemology that recognises 'multiple

realities'.[11] In a telling episode relating to the issues of public lighting and water scarcity, an informant stated that 'What is a problem for someone is creating an opportunity for someone else' (FN 10/09/2009). She went on to explain how water scarcity provided employment opportunities for many youths, who were buying water from other areas and reselling it for high prices, making a notable profit. She added that well-known thieves had also switched to the less risky and yet profitable water vending business. The same informant commented on the new public lighting installed to reduce crime, describing how thieves were sabotaging them by turning off the power. She concluded by saying that, 'People in slums are smart. You do this, we do that'; any change creates a potential conflict of interest and people adjust their strategies to adapt to new situations.

Not only is it difficult to present a consistent written account of such multiple realities, the reality and attitude of each actor is dynamic and continuously changing. Such attitudes influence actor agency; therefore, the ethnographer has to record changes of attitude and behaviour, sometimes related to 'external' factors,[12] for instance a nationwide drought, or to the specific phase of the programme. For example, actors' attitudes towards the slum-upgrading were very enthusiastic after the installation of a piece of infrastructure, but totally frustrated after delays in implementation or conflicting meetings. Moreover, the relationship between actors keeps evolving, making description and analysis difficult within a static text. This also has ethical implications that I will address later (Section 2.3.2).

2.1.6 Knowledge, power, and discourse

The actor-oriented formulation adopts a view of knowledge as deeply embedded in actors' struggles over the interpretation of reality. 'Knowledge encounters' are conceptualised as the place of contestation in which actors attempt to enrol supporters for their projects, 'getting them to accept particular frames of meaning and winning them over to their points of view. If they succeed, then other parties "delegate" power to them' (Long, 2001: 20). This process of the enrolment of

[11] Long argues that social life is composed of 'multiple realities'. They are 'constructed and confirmed primarily through experience' (2001: 30), 'made up of differing cultural perceptions and social interests, and constituted by the ongoing social and political struggles that take place between the various social actors involved' (2001: 72).

[12] 'External' is placed in apostrophes because Long argues that if we consider the influence of an external factor on an actor's behaviour, we are looking at how the factor has been internalised by different actors in different ways, and therefore the factor is not really external.

networks of actors displays the power of the different actors (Latour, 1994). Power can be understood, then, as the complex outcome of negotiation and struggle over 'authority, status, reputation, and resources' (Long, 2001: 71).

Actors' projects are built upon a particular understanding and interpretation, and legitimised by a specific knowledge. Such knowledge is framed within existing or new discourses, which actors draw on to frame their projects. 'Discourses frame our understanding of life experiences by providing representations of 'reality' (often taken for granted), and shape and constitute what we consider to be the significant or essential objects, persons and events of our world' (Long, 2001: 52).

Local actors may adopt or adapt dominant discourses to support their claims on the state and other institutions, or reject such discourses and build a totally alternative framework; 'interface analysis enables us to comprehend how 'dominant' discourses are endorsed, transformed or challenged' (Long, 2001: 71).

2.1.7 Conclusions

The actor-oriented approach deconstructs linear views of development projects as the implementation of planned actions, with expected outcomes, and views them instead as 'an ongoing, socially-constructed, negotiated, experiential and meaning-creating process' (Long, 2001: 25). Development projects are 'transformational processes' (72), reshaped by an

> internal organisational, cultural and political dynamic and by the specific conditions it encounters or itself creates, including the responses and strategies of local groups who may struggle to define and defend their own social spaces, cultural boundaries and positions within the wider power field (72).

This perspective provides a framework which enables us to analyse the connections between micro/macro processes by examining how small-scale locales are intertwined with wider frameworks and networks of relations (Long, 2001).

What is encouraging is that the actor-oriented perspective and the centrality of agency have been embraced not only by an increasing number of academics and practitioners, but also by institutions such as DFID, Nordic and Dutch aid programmes, the World Bank, UNESCO and many development NGOs (Long, 2001: 2).

To conclude, I will list the main features of the actor-oriented approach, summarised by Long at the end of *Development Sociology*. Our starting point is actor-defined issues or critical events and the recognition of 'social heterogeneity', and therefore the need to understand the multiple interpretations and thus 'multiple realities' at stake (Long, 2001: 90). The ethnographer must select those actors that are relevant to the arenas in which contestation occurs, and document the 'situated social practices of actors, and the ways in which social relationships, technologies, material and other resources, discourses and texts [...] are deployed' (240). The researcher should focus on the organising and ordering processes relevant to the different arenas, and track the sets of relationships, networks, values and meanings negotiated there. Moreover, the researcher must explore social interfaces where discontinuity and contradiction among diverging actors' lifeworlds occur, and unveil the processes of knowledge/power construction at work therein. The actor-oriented analysis looks at how 'structure' shapes actors' practices and how it is itself a product of such practices.[13] Finally, the researcher should look analytically at the discursive and practical foundations of new social forms.

2.2 Fieldwork

The adoption of an actor-oriented perspective and the consequent deconstruction of the linear narrative of planned development programmes also implies the deconstruction of another planned intervention, the research project itself. One of the assumptions in research proposals and dissertations is that the researcher is in full control of the research project and his/her participants. However, the fact that 'fieldwork necessarily dwells in uncertain, risky space, no matter how much we assert our certainties in ethnographic texts and representations' (Castañeda, 2006: 98) should push ethnographers to accept the indeterminacy and contingency of their own research as an inherent characteristic of fieldwork. Moreover, the actor-oriented approach, focusing on the agency of all social actors, has to acknowledge the actor's capacity to influence the research process.

---

[13] In this regard, Long (2001) admits the importance of Giddens' (1987) work. Giddens argues that without acknowledging the important role of human agency, it is not possible to understand the constraining and enabling effects of social structures. However, Long emphasises that 'this embeddedness of action within institutional structures [...] should not, of course, imply that behavioural choice is replaced by an unchanging routine' (2001: 17).

The key method of my ethnographic fieldwork was participant observation; this was accompanied by other methods such as semi-structured interviews and document analysis. My fieldwork took place in two phases: 4-weeks of preliminary fieldwork in October-November 2008; with the bulk of the fieldwork being carried out between September 2009 and December 2010. Despite efforts to participate in as many activities, events and meetings and collect as many voices as I could, the ethnography is the outcome of an inevitable partial collection of data (Clifford, 1986). It was simply not possible to participate in all the arenas and observe all the social interfaces of the programme. Moreover, while some may consider it a long period, my fieldwork allowed me to observe only a very limited period in the life of the Kwa-maji residents and the slum-upgrading project. The events where I conducted participant observation included Steering Committee meetings, meetings at the Residents' Committee office, public meetings involving local politicians or Provincial Administration officials, technical meetings, implementation of different project activities, workshops, meetings among implementers, and conferences of donors or Kenyan policy-makers.

2.2.1 Negotiating access and consent

Access to the field required a series of long negotiations. On the one hand, there was a bureaucratic official process that took several months and, on the other, my request for consent from the individual actors involved. Being a multi-sited ethnography involving several actors, the process had to be repeated for each actor.

I started with the programme donor, which showed interest and provided the support that helped me gain the acceptance of the Government of Kenya. Then I had to apply for affiliation with a national university, apply for a research permit from the Ministry of Education, ask for the permission of local authorities, and finally get the permit to legally reside in Kenya for the duration of my study. The process took seven months and was time-consuming, with many delays resulting from the 'bureaucratic' process.

Besides obtaining legal permission to research and reside in the country, I introduced my proposal to the donor at different levels, and then the donor introduced me to the

partner Ministry and to the Steering Committee governing the project under study. I also introduced myself to all the actors, explaining what my research entailed. Of course, further explanations were given and consent was obtained from individual actors before each interview. While most of my fieldwork consisted of participant observation, during which most of the community leaders and other key actors were aware of my role and of my research, it was certainly not the case that everyone we met on a site visit or at a community meeting was aware of who I was. As Murphy and Dingwall (2001) observe,

> the distinction between covert and overt research is less straight-forward than sometimes imagined. In complex and mobile settings, it may simply be impractical to seek consent from everyone involved. Unlike experimental researchers, ethnographers typically have limited control over who enters their field of observation. All research lies on a continuum between overtness and covertness (342).

While community leaders were fully aware of the purpose of my research, other community members had a less clear understanding of my role; I was introduced by community leaders as the 'Italian student'. Some community members occasionally confused me with other young *wasungu* (white people) who habitually visited the area.

Patai (1991), among others, warns that power imbalances in terms of race, class, nationality, gender and education may expose participants to exploitation. However, the distribution of power between researcher and researched is not predetermined or fixed. Participants can also exert significant power over the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 50). Murphy and Dingwall (2001) provide examples of 'how powerful actors obstructed access to communities and prevented ethnographers from taking full control of their research design' (344). Participants may also attempt to make use of the research to achieve their own objectives (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001: 344). For instance, the donor made it clear that it supported my research because it saw my work as an opportunity to give visibility to the project, and to frame the KUDP approach as a best practice. Our negotiation found a common ground in my interest in disseminating my findings, and the donor commissioned me to write a paper. However, once the donor was confronted by my critical stance, a conflict arose that might have seriously compromised my access to the field and led to my having to totally rewrite the paper.

2.2.2 Access to information and documents

In the early stages of my fieldwork, a key informant provided me with most of the insights and confidential information that I could not obtain in any other way. Specifically, the informant gave me important hints regarding events and personal conflicts, which I otherwise would not have known about. Since a single informant provided several important pieces of information, I conducted further research to verify that information. Often, the initial informant directed me to other informants. With the passage of time, I gained independence and was able to move more autonomously and consciously distance myself from the interpretations of the initial key informant, who I considered to be exerting too much influence on my thinking.

When I was accepted as a researcher by the donor, I was told that I would have full access to all programme documents. However, initially I was provided with only a few official documents. Through another source I was informed of the existence of others, and informally given important documents. I then made an official request to see those specific documents, and was given them. Any programme document was disclosed to me as long as I asked for it, but to ask for it, I needed to know that such a document existed. After my initial request to look at programme documents, I was only given a few general materials; the strategy was to give me summary reports, or minutes of public meetings, rather than more confidential minutes of the Project Management Unit meetings, tender documents, or internal communications between actors.

For the completion of this thesis, over 50 documents have been analysed: they include agreements and memoranda of understanding between different institutions, reports of workshops and public meetings, results of surveys, and minutes of Steering Committee and Programme Management Unit meetings.

2.2.3 Personal safety

What should a researcher do if the context is not safe? Most manuals say that there is no research important enough to undertake physical risk. However, how does one evaluate the level of risk? During my fieldwork, the level of crime and violence was at an unusual peak due to different reasons that will be analysed in the course of the thesis. One of the people living in the house in which I was hosted during my stay in

Kwa-maji was stabbed in his doorway, and my key informant was mugged a few meters away from his dwelling. I remember thinking a lot about my personal safety, sharing my concerns with my informants and other people. My key question was: how could I do my research if I avoided being where the programme I was studying is located, and where the people who are the intended beneficiaries of the programme live? Already, at that time, the Steering Committee of the programme, one of the main observation points of my research, was meeting in government buildings in the city centre, and official programme workshops were taking place in conference facilities away from the area. I finally concluded that I needed to go about autonomously in Kwa-maji, without being escorted, and that I should take all possible precautions. I decided to take only main roads when I was alone, even when shortcuts would have saved me walking long distances.

2.2.4 The Steering Committee: observing a key programme arena

This programme had a very inclusive Steering Committee, where many social actors or their representatives played out latent conflicts. Conflicts were expressed with much diplomacy, often involving jokes, calculated omissions, or through third parties enrolled for the purpose. The Steering Committee meetings were certainly not the only location in which conflicts were played out; the fact that the Committee was the principal arena did not mean that all the interface interactions happened in that arena. Instead, as noticed by Long (2001), planned interventions involve multiple interlocking arenas. The Steering Committee was nevertheless a key arena for negotiation and for the creation of alliances, since all the parties were represented. When some actors were absent or excluded from this arena, this was also of extreme significance. Before and after Steering Committee meetings, some key actors would remain behind, talking and making decisions, with several meetings taking place at the same time in the corridors, the lift, or the nearby offices of government staff.

2.2.5 The social and physical space of the Residents' Committee office

One of the first activities of the programme was the construction of the office for the newly elected Residents' Committee. This place became a fundamental arena where community and external actors met to discuss different issues. In this office, I attended many activities and conducted interviews with community members. Over time, I gained acceptance in this space, which was revealed to be of fundamental

importance. The construction of a physical locale opened new spaces for residents to legitimately meet their leaders and raise their concerns. It was a space that allowed many of the important conflicts that are examined in this thesis to play out.

2.2.6 Attitudes towards my research

In different ways and at different stages, many actors claimed that I was going to benefit from my research, while they were wasting their time with 'yet another researcher'. The actors pointed out that the informal settlements of Nairobi, particularly the programme area, were over-researched by NGOs, who came and conducted research that was regarded as exclusively for their own benefit (Chapter 4).

This attitude is well expressed by Beynon's informant: 'When you first arrived we thought "Here's another bloke getting a degree on our backs!" We resented the idea that we were just fodder for research' (1983: 47). As Dubisch (1995) points out, the researcher's career and salary are a result of research work that is expropriated from the participants. Even what may look like a modest scholarship was higher than the salary of many of the government officials working on the KUDP, not to mention the incomes of the project's beneficiaries.

When asked about the main challenge encountered in the programme, a key government officer pointed to the scepticism of the people, and continued:

> People have been there before conducting researches, saying they are upgrading but at the end of the day nothing is forthcoming, so they have always thought that the [Kwa-maji] slum-upgrading is also going to use the same method to create employment for people and at the end of the day the [Kwa-maji] people remain the same, that is why the scepticism came (Interview 9, 15/03/2010).

Without saying so directly, the government officer in question made it clear that scepticism – the biggest challenge for those, such as him, who have to do the real work of improving the life of people – is generated by people like me, undertaking research that only creates employment for me, and has no other benefit. A very similar answer to the same question relating to the main challenge faced by the project was given by another government officer working on the ground:

> The residents living there have had various attempts to get themselves allocated this land [...] in the process they have been misused by many NGOs, many researchers. Many people go there to do research, they are doing things for themselves not for the people. So when you go there, people are already sceptical about your intentions, about the success of the whole project, so you are faced with the challenge of convincing them [...] the scepticism from the people is very high, they have come to a point where they don't believe things can change or whoever is coming to help them is sincere. [...] They don't want to give you a lot of information, they want to give you information only if you pay, as long as you pay, they believe the researcher or the person coming in is benefiting more than them, that was one big challenge (Interview 11, 07/04/2010).

Asked why there were no NGOs directly involved in the programme, a key Residents' Committee member took the opportunity to explain how he considered researchers, including me, to be connected with exploitative NGO activities.

> You know slums is a better place for the NGOs because that is where they do carry out their research. Whoever would like to go and do a PhD will come to the slums, just the way you are doing, [...] now they [NGOs] are being pushed out of [Kwa-maji] because after it has been upgraded what study are you going to take? So I think they don't have interest (Interview 12, 09/04/2010).

In this informant's view, NGOs need the slums in order to carry out the projects and research which sustain them, but are not interested in improving the slums because they would then lose their roles. Such observations express an evident frustration derived from uncoordinated research efforts and random NGO interventions judged exploitative by the residents themselves. My analysis in Chapter 4 will look at Kwa-maji as a laboratory, where different research organisations, NGOs, and other development agencies undertake their 'social experiments', and look at the strategies adopted by the beneficiaries in response.

However, such comments on researchers were very often said with an ironic tone and were not a clear-cut judgement on my presence. Rather, they were intended as a constant reminder that I was the one indebted to them for their valuable time, a way to continuously remind me of the local hierarchy, in which I occupied the lowest position. This was also reinforced by my attitude; aware of how easy (and unethical) it is to raise disproportionate expectations, I made it clear from the beginning that I was a student conducting my PhD research, the results of which would not benefit

their programme; and therefore, I was humbly asking for their time, and was open to listen to them and meet with them at their most convenient time.

In a more subtle way, even a donor representative made clear what he thought about research, including mine. He told me how a project from a Nordic country had spent half of a multi-million budget and invested years in a study without anything happening on the ground. According to him, money is wasted on studies that are always out-dated by the time the 'real' project begins, since the context is dynamic. Instead, his agency, or so he argued, immediately starts to get things, in order to save lives.

My role as an ethnographer was, therefore, constantly challenged and disputed. It constantly needed to be renegotiated, including my participation in certain sensitive meetings, where conflicts were played out quite dramatically. The next section looks at the evolution of my acceptance in the field and reflects on the strategies I employed to gain better acceptance in this context of scepticism towards outside research.

2.2.7 Building and maintaining rapport

Initially, I was welcomed in a cold but not hostile manner, as the researcher introduced by the donor. Some actors were more enthusiastic than others in having a researcher interested in what they were doing. Those involved were implementing what they considered to be an innovative project, and were proud that someone was coming all the way from Trinity College Dublin to learn from them. At the beginning, I played the part of the inexperienced student, letting actors tell me what they thought was important and observing as many activities as possible. This was partially a conscious choice because, although I had a relatively deep knowledge of the context, I was ignorant of the project's internal dynamics.

With the passage of time, especially after my presentation in March 2010 at the Hilton Hotel[14] and a round of in-depth interviews that demonstrated my awareness of implementation details and sensitive issues, social actors realised my knowledge of

[14] A roundtable discussion about the KUDP was organised to discuss among key institutional stakeholders about the way forward and lessons learnt in order to bring the experience to the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro. I was invited to give a presentation on how to reduce social inequalities and bridge the urban gap in slum-upgrading programmes, in which I clearly expressed my concerns about gentrification and elite capture (Chapter 7).

the context, and I also assumed the role of 'information broker'. At that stage of the fieldwork, I had gained a comprehensive picture of the project – a picture lacked by many actors, especially those who were working on several projects at the same time or had joined the project when it was already ongoing. Staff members of the UNX, AIDX, and Lead Government Agency, as well as community leaders, all requested information from me at some point or another. Specifically, I provided information on the socio-economic history of Kwa-maji, on the Kenyan legal framework and on policy options, for instance concerning different land tenure systems. Of course, this did not include information coming from other informants or on sensitive issues but, for instance, some government and donor staff could not fully understand what some community members were referring to in certain allegations they were making. In cases such as these I could provide a bit of background on the past events that had generated the current attitudes of the residents. Sometimes certain actors asked what the implications of one type of security of tenure were compared to another, asking what I thought about the issue and what approaches were being used in other countries. Staff, especially the newly hired, and some young community members also asked me for information in relation to postgraduate courses in Europe, or simply general questions relating to Europe. Especially for very junior staff, I was probably the most approachable European to whom to address these types of non-work-related queries.

At this time my presence was contested by certain social actors both in the government and in the community, who would ask, 'Are you still here?', pretending to be surprised, despite my having clarified from the beginning the length of my study. They were probably used to researchers who came, collected the information provided and then left after a short stint, while I was present at most meetings, including those not attended by any donors or UNX personnel, often because these were held mostly in Swahili.

On one occasion in particular, a government officer was surprised to find me there, and expressed unease with my presence. He asked a couple of times what I was doing there, somehow implying that I was not supposed to be there. He also asked 'Is this part of your research?' – a question which seemed related to the sensitive nature of that particular meeting, at which I was the only non-Kenyan, and when, after the local

donor representative left, the meeting degenerated into a tense discussion between the contractor and the government officers. At the end, the government officer came up to me and asked 'Are you recording us?' (I had recorded an interview with him just two weeks earlier); he knew that I was not tape-recording the meeting, but his question emphasised the fact that the meeting was sensitive and should remain confidential.

At this stage, I also faced an indirect boycott in the form of not being invited to meetings, or not being told that meetings had been rescheduled. This was a strategy also used against other actors,[15] but worked particularly well with me, since I was not an official member of the meetings, and thus it was not formally part of the organisers' duty to invite me. Looking objectively at the circumstances, I cannot cast judgement on the actors for attempting to exclude me. Civil servants anywhere would be unhappy at having a foreign national (introduced by their donor) taking part in all meetings, having access to all documents including internal memos, and without anything better to do than ask questions about any contradiction he spots or anything he does not understand.

However, the actors eventually realised that I was there to stay, and for a long time; that I was not dangerous but was willing to listen to their own perspectives; and that I could speak limited but decent Swahili. Community members would meet me eating or walking in Kwa-maji more often than any other programme worker, and certainly more often than any foreign donor. At that point (around May 2010), I began to feel accepted and increasingly comfortable in the field. I could provide useful information and I was the only person able to easily move between all the layers of the project, and speak all the languages used.

I consider my relationship with each of the key actors to be separate and unique, marked by my respect for their professionalism and gratitude for the time they made available to me. Indeed, it was their magnanimity that made this study possible. These 'unique relationships' arose also due to the fact that I was not engaged in the

[15] The meeting convenor often sent out emails to call a meeting just the night before, or cancelled the meeting on the day it was to be held. This resulted in some actors not attending the meetings. This issue was brought up several times in the discussions by actors who felt that the rescheduling of meetings was being used strategically. The response was always that any rescheduling was due to tight schedules and contingencies. This debate will be analysed further in Chapter 6.

study of a 'traditional community' and, therefore, rather than the duality between 'me' and 'them' often encountered in ethnographic accounts, my relationships with informants and actors were nuanced and operated across a variety of sites and arenas.

Despite the specificity of each relationship I experienced in the field, a general trend was observable over the time I spent there. At first, I was accepted with indifference. Later, my long-term presence and the awareness of my knowledge of the context annoyed many actors, who probably felt threatened by someone who knew 'too much' and was also considered to be close to the donor. Finally, however, key social actors became accustomed to my presence and my relationships with some of them became more reciprocal, especially when they discovered they could acquire useful information from me.

In reflecting on my fieldwork, I wonder if I would have been more accepted and invited to more events by community members and government if I had played the part of the naïve, ignorant student throughout my stay. In practice, I was considered more of a peer and a sort of 'expert', which resulted in me being treated differently from other students, allowing me to engage in high-level exchanges with relevant actors. When I was asked to brief a student who wanted to do her PhD on the project, I felt that I was somehow considered different from 'all these students who come with their questions without knowing anything'. These reflections emphasise the need to look at the performative character of fieldwork. As much as other social actors, the ethnographer performs a role in the field. In the next section I offer some relfection on 'performing fieldwork'.

2.2.8 The performative nature of fieldwork

Fieldwork is 'intrinsically a collaborative (interactive, dialogical, collusive) endeavour' (Castañeda, 2006: 84). The ethnographer does not impose him-/herself and his/her project on research participants; instead participants display a certain degree of agency in relation to their involvement with the researcher, and this agency is bound up with their own agendas and interests. Participants can take part in a research project as 'subjects, distant/disengaged observers, active or occasional

participants, collaborators, interpreters, critics, publicly or privately vocal nay-sayers, assistants in or enemies to the research process' (Castañeda, 2006: 84).

In sociology, Goffman's now widely accepted analysis (1959) indicates the ways in which people manage images of themselves in accordance with varying contexts and settings. The objective of social actors is frequently to maintain the coherence of an image; adapting themselves to different settings and selecting their props and costumes according to different audiences. Hammersley and Atkinson explain that 'in their everyday talk, as also in their interview responses, people are *performing* social actions' (2007: 170, Italics in the original). One of the actors in the KUDP, commenting on a previous workshop, said that it resembled a theatre farce where every actor performed his or her already-prepared and well-rehearsed part, indicating that even the actors in the field felt the theatrical metaphor appropriate.

The fieldwork process as a whole can be understood as a *performative* undertaking. The actors perform for other actors and for the ethnographer and the ethnographer him-/herself plays his/her part; the researcher is no different from the other actors, making choices about his/her performance and his/her relations in the field. This requires a reflexive approach. Some of the reflections on my role as a social actor have been reported in previous sections and others will follow. According to Castañeda, performing is a crucial tactic of fieldwork practice, in which, through a process of 'trying out' encounters and interactions, ethnographers learn the most effective way to present themselves, live in the field, and collect data. Such 'tactical staging' is one aspect of identifying the most appropriate way to obtain access to a given event, secure an interview, conduct an interview or negotiate consent for recording (Castañeda, 2006: 94-95).

2.2.9 Language

English and Swahili are the official languages in Kenya. In the slums of Nairobi, a simplified version of Swahili is used by different ethnic groups to communicate; young people use Sheng, a hybrid mixture of Swahili and English, with words from the main tribal languages and many neologisms. However, technical discussions, and in particular written communications, are in English, including all the main newspapers. This created a sort of dualism: during most workshops in informal

settlements, while people would speak Swahili, they also incorporated many English words (especially technical words), with notes on the blackboard always being written in English. This was always the case, not only in the KUDP workshops, but also in many other workshops I attended both as a researcher and as a development worker.

Moreover, while speaking correct Swahili requires good knowledge of the language and of the complex grammar, with many classes of nouns, understanding is easier, especially if the listener knows what type of discussion is taking place and he/she has developed his/her vocabulary to fulfil his/her research needs.[16] Therefore, although my Swahili is far from fluent, I could understand meetings well and communicate by popping English words into a Swahili-structured sentence. This showed a commitment that the other foreign actors in the project (except for missionaries) did not have. Although at times my vocabulary may have been inappropriate because it was closer to the language of the local gangs than the pure Tanzanian Swahili learnt at school by proficient foreigners, my efforts were acknowledged and appreciated throughout my stay.

Initially, my knowledge of Swahili served as an icebreaker; on some occasions I was asked to help translating very short and basic conversations, for instance, when an older resident wanted to have a quick chat with the foreign staff. Remarks about my knowledge of the language were offered more as a critique of the other foreign staff than to compliment me. On one occasion, I was told that I should teach Swahili to a UNX staff member. Since I could speak Swahili, I was told, why couldn't he, especially since he had been there working with them for so long. These remarks somehow placed me somewhere between the community and the foreign staff, a position that I will discuss later. Although Steering Committee meetings were predominantly in English, community representatives often intervened in Swahili and were answered in Swahili by government officials. Aside from the importance of being able to understand most informal communications, as well as community meetings and workshops, my knowledge of the language was critical in gaining the acceptance of most community actors.

---

[16] I took regular classes during my two years of employment in Nairobi (2005-2007). During my fieldwork, I took intensive private classes with the specific purpose of learning vocabulary relevant to issues of land, rent, development, conflict, etc.

In addition to English and Swahili, I could also speak the language of the principal donor, which was an important language in the project since it was also shared by a number of people who had worked on the project in UNX, by some of the missionaries residing in the area, and by some NGO workers willing to take their projects to Kwa-maji. In other words, except for the missionaries, who always played a unique and contested role, I was the only person with an understanding of each of the main languages in which the project was being carried out.[17] This skill helped me to move easily between the different arenas of the project and to develop a more complete picture that many could not see also because of the language barriers in operation.

2.2.10 Writing fieldnotes

All ethnographers have to make choices in relation to what to write in their fieldnotes, and how to write it. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note, it is impossible to capture everything and, as such, fieldnotes are always selective. Thus, the process of writing fieldnotes already entails part of the analysis. Emerson *et al.* (1995) suggest that in the field, the ethnographer adopts a 'participant-in-order-to-write' attitude. I have experienced this because, when observing an event, I was constantly thinking how and what to write. Hammersley and Atkinson remind us that writing fieldnotes requires repeated assessment of purposes and priorities, and of the costs and benefits of different strategies.

A key issue is *when* to write fieldnotes; the ethnographer cannot always take notes in the field. As pointed out by Whyte (1943), in social settings like a bar, he had to leave the field in order to write notes in the toilet or by going back to his room periodically; while during the meetings of a local association, he could write his fieldnotes freely. In my own case, writing was an accepted activity and I had no problem taking very detailed notes during, for example, Steering Committee meetings. However, in other settings, despite my clear and explicit role as a researcher, it would have appeared awkward to take notes: for instance, while walking through the slum, or during informal conversations. Sometimes, there is a trade-off between writing and

[17] At community level, Kikuyu was still very much used when all the people present were Kikuyu and it was the main way for community members to communicate with some of their elders. However, it was not one of the key languages in the programme. It was important to be able to recognise Kikuyu and understand when it was used, but it was not an essential requirement in terms of understanding the programme.

listening: when informants are disclosing sensitive information, bits of gossip, sharing their emotions and their frustrations, or making serious allegations, writing risks bringing the flow of interaction to a halt. At other times, writing is wholly inappropriate, for instance when a local former gangster confessed his past crimes. It may be argued that the act of writing works as a reminder to the informant of one's status as a researcher, especially when, due to the social setting and the empathy of the human interaction, the informant may forget the researcher's role and provide information he/she might have kept private in a formal interview setting. The act of writing may also be seen as a reminder of informed consent; it reminds the informant that what he/she is telling you is data (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Therefore, it can be argued that it is unethical to avoid writing notes for fear that the informant may cease to divulge information. However, personally, I feel uncomfortable writing in certain contexts, and it would have been impossible in others.

Emerson *et al.* (2001) mention the way in which ethnographers create their own systems to make mental and jotted notes. When I could not take proper notes, I tried to write down individual words that would work as props so that later I could remember what to write about a particular issue. Fieldnotes need to be written as quickly as possible after observation, since the quality of information diminishes exponentially with time, 'the detail is quickly lost, and whole episodes can be forgotten or become irreparably muddled' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 142). When I was returning home after fieldwork in the settlement, I used to sit in the car and record all my ideas on a digital recorder before or while driving home. Such vocal notes were very useful in writing rich fieldnotes once I reached home or the day after. When I was staying in Kwa-maji overnight, I had a small laptop (or paper if there was no power) on which I could write my fieldnotes.

It is important to mention that, while all the semi-structured interviews but one were taped, the quotes from meetings and informal conversations were recorded on paper. Therefore, I cannot exclude the possibility that there may be minor differences between the quotations presented here and the exact words of informants in those non-recorded instances. However, since my analysis is not interested in capturing the level of detail required, for instance, by conversation analysis, such discrepancies should not compromise my findings.

2.2.11 Interpretative authority

In this research, I present a different narrative from that which characterises the well-recognised and experienced consultancy companies working for the United Nations and employing local expert researchers. Such companies might argue that I am the one who does not understand the situation – the newcomer who criticises because he misunderstands the reality. I also question the powerful elite who represent the residents of Kwa-maji and whose authority has been recognised as legitimate by the Government and other institutional actors. Members of this elite might simply dismiss my account by describing me as a young and inexperienced outsider researcher with ideological prejudices. Awareness of these potential risks had the effect of pushing me to be extremely rigorous in my work, but at the same time it may have worked as a subconscious mechanism of self-censorship.

The issue of interpretative authority also has ethical implications, and Chase (1996) recommends that the most appropriate strategy is that of acknowledging our interests as researchers and how they differ from those of participants. This becomes crucial in an actor-oriented approach that recognises the presence of 'multiple realities'.

2.2.12 Multi-sited ethnography

A consequence of the actor-oriented approach adopted in this research and of the type of research project undertaken here is the necessity of carrying out a multi-sited ethnography. In multi-sited fieldwork, the emphasis is on multiple connections rather than multiple sites (Robben, 2007: 331). As pointed out by Marcus,

> multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some forms of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (1995: 105).

In multi-sited fieldwork, 'ethnographers are not bounded to one particular location, community, or social group' (Robben, 2007: 335), and therefore are able to follow the wider processes that Long (2001) deems necessary to understand planned interventions: 'large-scale institutional frameworks, resource fields, networks of

communication and support, collective ideologies, socio-political arenas of struggle, and the beliefs and cosmologies that may shape actors' (4).

Throughout my fieldwork, I followed the actors through the multiple connected locations where social action regarding the KUDP took place. I conducted research in the streets of Kwa-maji, the office of the Residents' Committee, the office of the local Chief, the local parish, the offices of local organisations where youths used to hang around, and the houses of different informants. I followed community members in their advocacy activities outside Kwa-maji, for instance at NGO-funded press conferences in luxurious hotels located in the city centre or at the main Police station of the district.

I conducted participant observation during the meetings of the Steering Committee of the KUDP, held in the city-centre headquarters of the Ministry involved, and I also followed the actors in their different offices. One of these was the embassy of the donor and the AIDX offices, where I met with staff at various levels. There, I also attended meetings between AIDX and NGOs from the country where AIDX is based. I participated in meetings at the decentralised offices of the City Council, as well as at the different offices of the Lead Government Agency.

Gaining access to the headquarters of UNX turned out to be highly important. Initially, my access to the premises was limited to scheduled appointments and when conducting interviews. Later, I was able to obtain ongoing access to the library and so I could freely enter the compound and spend time in the cafeteria, which was a significant space in which to have informal meetings and be introduced to other relevant actors.[18] Moreover, UN staff would see me with their colleagues in the cafeteria and this made them more willing to accept my request for an interview. Finally, I also took part in the National Urban Forum and other events in which different government actors met and discussed their policies and projects.

[18] It was very important to gain free access to the UN compound. Before, actors I was meeting had to provide my name a day in advance to the security personnel or else come personally to bring me inside. When I could enter the compound independently, potential participants were more eager to call up and arrange to meet me for a coffee or during the lunch break.

2.2.13 Interviews

While it is true that in the field, 'conversation and interviews are often indistinguishable from other forms of interaction and dialogue' (Atkinson, 2001: 5), my research also involved 24 semi-structured interviews with key actors. These were conducted in a clear, separate and private space, away from other field interactions, where the interviewee could distance him-/herself from the project and reflect upon it. This separation was also marked by my initial comments on the purposes of the interviews, my request for consent, and my guarantee of anonymity. Only seven of these interviews were with women; this reflected the unbalanced gender representation among the institutional actors. A partial explanation lies in the type of professionals working in the programme (e.g. surveyors and engineers), who were predominantly male. One important difference between my and some existing research in which interviews are used is that I was acquainted with almost all the interview participants before the interview took place, and we had already had some interaction. This ensured that most of the respondents opened up quite rapidly to me, without needing to 'break the ice'.

With one exception, I recorded all the interviews and subsequently transcribed them. One of the actors told me that he preferred not to be recorded so that he could tell me more, two people asked me to turn off the microphone to add what they considered very sensitive information, and many added additional opinions once the interview was concluded and the microphone had been turned off. Following a bad experience with a film crew, one interviewee agreed to be recorded but provided very dry answers. In light of Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007) suggestion that sometimes the interviewer may decide that 'such recording will dissuade frankness or increase nervousness to an unacceptable level' (147), after this episode, I considered whether or not I should stop using the microphone in future interviews. But I felt that the loss of information would be too great, and decided that I would record interviews unless I felt that recording would compromise interaction excessively. However, this difficulty did not arise again, and I recorded all the subsequent interviews. What emerged was a clear trade-off between the level of detail that one can obtain from a transcribed interview, and the type of sensitive and 'political' information that one gets when the person feels freer to speak because she/he is not being recorded.

A further element that influenced my decision was that I expected to meet the interviewees again, so that whenever they wanted they would be able to add information without me recording. I, therefore, maintained the interviews as a separate recorded space. In practice, many people were frank and expressed critical opinions, quite different from the representations of the programme's official narrative that I was expecting.

Most interviews were conducted in English, and four in the donor language. Only two interviews were conducted in other languages, one in Swahili, later transcribed and translated, and another in Kikuyu with simultaneous translation. All other community members who participated in semi-structured interviews had a satisfactory level of English.

2.3 Ethics

Ethnographic fieldwork has always been subjected to discussion relating to research ethics, and there is certainly no universally agreed consensus. Even the guidelines of professional associations need to be interpreted according to specific research project conditions. The reflexive turn in the social sciences has had a particularly strong effect on ethnographers, and has led to a growing awareness that 'the ethics and the politics of ethnography are not clearly separable' (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001: 339). My own research work posed several ethical dilemmas. These could not be definitively resolved in advance of the fieldwork, and thus have been subject to ongoing reflection throughout the research process. Some of these are discussed in the next three sections.

2.3.1 Harm after publication

One key principle of ethical research is that of not harming research participants. A key difference between, for instance, medical research and ethnography, is that in the former the risk of potential harm is concentrated during the experimental manipulation under the researcher's control, while most of the risks in ethnography may occur after publication (Cassell, 1978, 1980). The main problem is that the researcher has very little power over the use of their work once it becomes public (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001: 341; Richardson, 1996: 227).

As part of the requirements to obtain a research permit in Kenya – which is a legal requirement for anyone intending to conduct research in the country – I have undertaken to deposit two copies of my final thesis with the National Council for Science and Technology.[19] Moreover, the Kenyan Government Department, as well as the donor working on the programme under analysis, have also asked for a copy of my work. In addition, I intend to publish my thesis as a book and/or as a series of academic articles.

As pointed out by Atkinson (2001), social science researchers are strongly encouraged by funding agencies to disseminate their work beyond the academic community, and this increases 'the likelihood that research will be taken up in ways over which the authors have minimal control or influence' (341). In my own case, neither my funder nor my Department are putting pressure on me to disseminate my findings outside academia, but my own personal desire is that this research can contribute to policy discussions on slum-upgrading, and consequently considerations on the use that external actors may make of my work must be taken into account. Moreover, PhD theses are increasingly being made available online. Since I cannot assume that my research will not end up in the hands of my research participants or other actors operating in the area, preventing future potential harm is a key priority.

My research uncovers the strategies employed by the residents to bypass official policies and promote their own interests. It also shows local dynamics and explains government actions. As already noted by Burgess (1985), ethnographic research increases knowledge of actors' adaptive behaviours, thereby offering tools to those with more power to control those with less.

For example, by reading my work, structure-owners might become aware of high-level policy and political dynamics of which they may not previously have been aware. For instance, they may discover that the government has limited choices, and cannot politically challenge the interests of structure-owners, despite the fact that this may limit 'fair' outcomes with regard to the allocation of programme benefits. Awareness of their strong bargaining power may lead structure-owners to be even less responsive to the demands of tenants. While this is a realistic potential risk, this

[19] The National Council for Science and Technology is part of the Ministry of Higher Education.

particular issue is not a cause of great concern, since thus far, my analysis has been shared only at conferences and roundtable discussions to which structure-owners did not have access. Moreover, by the time the material presented here is published, the struggle around the KUDP between tenants and structure-owners will already have been played out.

As briefly mentioned in the Introduction, the programme under investigation here deals with the very contentious issue of land, in a context characterised by many interwoven conflicts. Two elected community leaders have been brutally killed. One of them was a very important informant. His murder happened during the analysis and write-up of the thesis and further convinced me of the importance of full anonymity.

There are also issues arising from media use of the research. Media organisations may decontextualise specific aspects of research or use it to criticise government interventions, potentially compromising the project or other similar projects.

Concealing the real name of the settlement and the development project under investigation in this research does not necessarily ensure anonymity, since the Government of Kenya knows exactly which area I requested the research permit for (it was a requirement that the permission be granted by both the National Council for Science and Technology and the local authorities, i.e. the District Commissioner). By underlining the problematic issues in the project, the researcher's work may be used in internal government struggles to accuse a political contender of inefficiency. It may also be taken out of context and used by a government department to criticise another department run by another political party, particularly as the elections come closer. Moreover, as Morgan (1972) found, avoiding revealing his field did not stop journalists from uncovering and publishing the name of the factory where he was conducting fieldwork. Similarly, a newspaper named the anonymised community where Stein (2010) researched local conflicts around a campaign opposing gay/lesbian civil rights. Shortly after, a copy of her book, in which someone had substituted the pseudonyms with real names, circulated across the community. Many people were upset and the violation of anonymity raised substantial ethical issues (Stein, 2010). Many years earlier, informants recognised themselves in Whyte's

(1943) ethnography of an Italian slum in Chicago, reacting angrily and asking him to avoid disseminating his book in the area.

As anticipated in the Introduction, in order to protect the research participants, I decided to anonymise the settlement and the actors as thoroughly as possible. In coming to this decision, I looked at some alternative courses of action. For instance, David Mosse (2005), in writing about a rural development project in India, where he worked as a consultant for over 10 years, did not anonymise the location of the project or the names of the organisations involved. His colleagues felt the book had harmed their professional reputations and Mosse admitted that many friendly professional relationships had been broken.[20] However, arguably his reputation allowed him to withstand the consequences of his work, while I do not have a reputation that would enable me to confront harsh attacks. Moreover, Mosse's analysis refers mainly to the period 1990-1997 and the book in question was published 8 years after the reported events. In addition, Mosse examined a project scattered over a large area with many villages where it would be impossible to recognise individual actors. By contrast, my own case study analyses an ongoing project in a small area and with a relatively small number of staff working on it. Therefore, not to have fully anonymised the project would have meant violating my commitment towards my research participants. This presents several limitations, but I have found myself sharing the reflection of Rossi:

> The contribution of anthropological theory and methods to the analysis of development reveals background knowledge of negotiations and decision making, which is concealed by official documents and reports. This enquiry contributes in important ways to our understanding of the informal and moral criteria underpinning development work, but in the process it must avoid harming the privacy and interests of the people involved. While my choice to anonymise was induced primarily by ethical considerations, I feel that it did not compromise the general argument, which is based on an assessment of the categorical and institutional roles of the actors, rather than their individual identity (Rossi, 2004: 8).

---

[20] It is important to note that official representations of development practice deny 'context, contingency, compromise, [...] [the] agency [of development professionals], and [...] suppress the relational - all those things from which ethnography is necessarily composed' (Mosse, 2011a: 21). Mosse continues, 'Little surprise, then, that the parts of the ethnography that my colleagues regarded as 'defamatory and potentially damaging to professional reputations' were precisely those that mentioned unscripted roles, relationships, events or interests; those parts that concerned the real-life connections of consultant work, that alluded to competing rationalities (of donors, clients, staff and beneficiaries) or provided unofficial interpretations' (2011a: 21). Mosse has discussed widely the reaction of his colleagues, the professional challenges he faced, and the ethical questions raised by his book (2005: x-xii; 2006; 2011a: 22-24).

In her research, Rossi anonymised both the project and the institutions involved and I have followed her strategy of identifying a relevant UN agency as UNX and a donor agency as AID (which I revised to AIDX). However, Rossi does mention the roles of the actors interviewed. This means that a quick Google search reveals not only the identity of her project, but also the identities of the actual people mentioned in her work, even though she used pseudonyms. It can, nevertheless, be argued that these people are not particularly vulnerable, since they were principally high-level donor officials who would not be affected by an academic paper and probably have anyway retired a long time ago. By contrast, my own research involves more professionally vulnerable, low- to middle-level civil servants, and necessitates protecting their identities. To achieve this, in writing up my material I have had to further conceal the specific role of the actor interviewed, often referring to him/her simply as a generic 'programme officer'. Once again, I am aware of the limitations of this choice; it involves a minor loss of clarity and transparency in the use of data, and sometimes the withholding of important evidence that would add value to my analysis.[21] Nevertheless, in the trade-off between clarity and detail, on the one hand and, on the other, the ethical concerns regarding the protection of participants and their professional reputation, I am undoubtedly coming down on the side of the latter.

2.3.2 Fixing a relationship in writing

A number of ethical issues emerge when we consider the issues at stake in writing about research participants. Josselson summarised them quite powerfully:

> I worry intensely about how people will feel about what I write about them. I worry about the experience of being "writ down", fixed in print, formulated, summed up, encapsulated in language, reduced in some way to what the words contain. Language can never contain a whole person, so every act of writing a person's life is inevitably a violation (Josselson, 1996: 62, cited in Murphy & Dingwall, 2001: 341).

While ethnographic writing should avoid objectifying people and attempt to represent their complexity, this is often very difficult. In my research, my main concern in this regard has been that the attitudes of different actors and their

[21] In his work, mentioned already, David Morgan (1972) explains this dilemma clearly: 'On the one hand the investigator feels required to present as much detail about his workshop or community as possible so that his research can be subjected to the critical scrutiny of his colleagues; at the same time the presentation of such detail can only make it more likely that the precise location of the community under investigation (and perhaps even some of the key actors) can be discovered and named' (185).

relationships with other actors were continuously evolving. Therefore, 'fixing in writing' such conflictual relationships, representing a specific moment in their relationship or an opinion expressed at a particular stage, may be perceived as reductive. It also permanently freezes on paper a conflict that may have been fully resolved or an attitude that was only temporary. The written text may serve as a constant reminder of a conflict that may no longer be there. This is particularly important in relation to sensitive issues such as ethnicity.

Of course, data must be analysed in relation to the time and situation in which it was collected; an actor may respond differently to the same question posed at different times. For instance, there was a lot of enthusiasm for the project when the contractor started to build the road, but when the works were delayed and conflicts erupted within the community leadership, attitudes were quite different. However, as noticed by Hammersley and Atkinson, it may not be possible to interview all actors in different phases (2007: 179).

The relationship between the local Chief (the government representative) and the Residents' Committee – which will remain a crucial relationship for years to come – has experienced different phases, each one characterised by varying degrees of tension. The same applies, for instance, to the relationship between the GoK and the UNX. In the early months of the project, the Kenyan government cut back the role and functions of UNX (see Chapter 6). Later, due to a range of reasons explored in Chapter 9, the two actors cooperated more fruitfully. A detailed account that formalises on paper the conflict that the parties have gone through runs the risk of impacting negatively on what may now be a good working partnership.

I cannot avoid describing a relationship at a particular point in time, but such relationships may change, and therefore people may feel unfairly portrayed in my description, which freezes them forever in a role that may have already changed. Therefore, in my writing I attempt to make explicit what stage of the relationship and of the project the data refers to, and to demonstrate as far as possible the dynamic nature of such relations.

2.3.3 Researching ethnicity

My fieldwork took place at a time when the memories of the post-election ethnic violence of 2007-2008 were still fresh in the minds of the residents. Avoiding harm also implies not exacerbating local conflict. To raise the question of ethnicity directly with community members would have risked reinforcing and exaggerating the significance of ethnic identities. A more useful strategy, then, was to follow the research approach of studying 'everyday ethnicity' developed by Rogers Brubaker (2006). This approach takes as its starting point Eriksen's reflection: 'If one goes out to look for ethnicity, one will 'find' it and thereby contribute to constructing it' (2002: 177). Given that ethnicity is a social construction, asking about ethnicity in the context of an interview or participant observation is in fact one mechanism of generating ethnic identification. Therefore, following Brubaker, I researched ethnicity on the basis of its spontaneous manifestation in interviews, informal group discussion and participant observation, without asking or signalling a specific interest in ethnicity.

2.4 Analysis

According to Hammerlsey and Atkinson (2007), analysis is not limited to 'managing and manipulating data' (159). They describe analysis as 'an iterative process in which ideas are used to make sense of data, and data are used to change our ideas' (159); a process where the ethnographer moves from data to ideas and back. This view implies 'a commitment to dialectical interaction between data collection and analysis' (161) that is difficult to maintain in practice. Grounded theory, discussed in further detail below, provides the tools to conduct analysis concomitantly with data collection. However, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) also suggest that the ethnographer should employ multiple theories as a framework to analyse data and refer to Denzin's idea (1989) of 'theoretical triangulation'; in other words, approaching data with multiple theoretical perspectives and hypotheses.

2.4.1 Grounded-theory for ethnographers within an actor-oriented perspective

This section discusses why grounded theory (GT) provides a useful framework for this research, and what GT approach I employ, since there is a range of different GT methods whose proponents engage in fierce debate on their use. It is not necessary to reproduce the full debate, but I shall justify the use of GT in my analysis and data

collection. Finally, I show how this approach is consistent with the gradual analysis undertaken using software for qualitative data analysis.

Grounded theory methods offer ethnographers 'flexible strategies for collecting and analysing data' and lead to 'efficient fieldwork' and 'astute analysis' (Charmaz & Mitchel, 2001: 160). GT methods were proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to discover social processes within data and build middle-range theories. These methods involve 'inductive construction of abstract categories that explain and synthesise these processes, [and] integration of categories into a theoretical framework that specifies causes, conditions and consequences of the process' (Charmaz & Mitchel, 2001: 160).

Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) argue that the new and increasingly popular interpretations of grounded theory by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) or Creswell (1998) have taken a mechanistic turn, resulting in the adoption of rigid analytical methods. This shift, they warn, 'may make our work more scientistic but not more significant' (161). The growing formalisation of fixed procedures in GT methods detailed in the recent contributions, which increasingly take the form of step by step guides to theory building, have become fashionable because they respond to the demand for what some consider a more 'rigorous' method. The understanding of GT as a fixed array of methodological tools is also due to its growing use by non-sociologists who require qualitative analytic methods, for instance in the fields of nursing and education studies. In these more mechanistic approaches, GT methods are a fixed template to apply to any research project, with rigid divisions between the different coding phases, and which aims at discovering a single core category that encompasses all the cases, allowing generalisation and theory building.

Glaser (1998) distanced himself from his colleague and co-inventor Strauss, and restated the importance of GT as a flexible set of principles to generate theory from data. Similarly, Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) advocate the use of the original Glaser and Strauss formulation of GT. First and foremost, this supports ethnographic analysis that maintains its character of a 'craft-making' art rather than a mechanical and formal application of coding procedures.

With its comparative emphasis, GT leads 'ethnographers to (1) compare data with data from the beginning of the research, not after all the data are in; (2) compare data with emerging categories; and (3) demonstrate relations between concepts and categories' (Charmaz & Mitchel, 2001: 161). GT is useful in terms of many of the challenges that frequently beset ethnographic fieldwork: going native and becoming uncritical of research subjects; long and unfocused stays in the field; random data collection; and reliance on pre-established categories (2001: 162). Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) argue that both ethnographers and grounded theorists focus on the direct study of social processes, and base their theoretical formulation on the analysis of primary data. Therefore, they invite ethnographers to see GT as a set of useful guidelines that can be applied and adapted 'to increase control over and clarity within their work', and not as a rigid set of constraints (171). Like Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 166-167), I share this interpretation of GT in ethnographic work. I also agree with their rejection of interpretations of GT that view it as a set of formulae and protocols.

Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original formulation of GT represented a reaction to the dominance of approaches relying on pre-existing theory or wholly disconnected from empirical evidence. At the same time, they were concerned to move away from descriptive research which eschewed the development of theory. This initial orientation towards the development of mid-level theories through close analysis of data remains one of GT's most significant contributions. Facing a complex context, GT methods helped me to set aside preconceived ideas and obtain a more open approach to the data I progressively collected. My preliminary GT-based analysis was useful in redirecting and narrowing the focus of my research interests. Adopting open coding and starting early with my analysis made it possible to come to some preliminary conclusions during the fieldwork.

These aspects of my research have been facilitated by the use of NVivo qualitative data analysis software, which has been programmed with GT in mind. Not only does it provide extremely flexible coding options, it also allows for the linking of any piece of data to a continuously evolving set of memos, thus allowing the analytical process of theory building to be tracked. NVivo software not only turned out to be compatible with the major theoretical framework employed – the actor-oriented approach – but

also became key to carrying out the actor-oriented analysis. This is elaborated in the next section.

2.4.2 Qualitative data analysis software in an actor-oriented perspective

NVivo allows users to view fieldnotes classified by date and by case, allowing the researcher to quickly identify which informant provided certain information or performed a certain action, and at what point in the research process. This allowed me to track the information an informant provided over time, and thus to track changes and inconsistencies in actions and opinions. Moreover, if most of the data regarding a situation were coming from the same source, or sources belonging to the same institution or social group, I was able to be more sceptical and look for more data in order to verify the information through wider triangulation. Furthermore, I was able to identify patterns in the information provided by the same informant or group of informants. Finally, the use of NVivo software facilitated the identification of contradictions that needed to be explained or raised issues regarding the reliability of information.

The major benefit of the use of qualitative data analysis software, particularly NVivo 8, with its user-friendly interface, are the possibility of coding and recoding data freely at a fast pace, and being able to generate various complex queries. Thus, the ethnographer is free to follow new leads and experiment with new codes, moving away, if needed, from initial ideas and categories.

One potential limitation of NVivo is the danger that, having coded the data, researchers tend to visualise their data in fragmented arbitrary codes, which risks obscuring the wider picture. To counter this fragmentation and keep a 'sense of integrity', Emerson *et al.* (1995) suggest that, following the completion of fieldwork, the researcher read all the data within a short time span. While, in my case, this was time-consuming and at times laborious, the process of reviewing the data proved particularly important. It was only by examining months of fieldwork within a few days that I was able to notice changes in the relationships among actors and in their attitudes, but also in my own understanding of the process and my own relationship with the actors.

2.4.3 Coding

The incorporation of secondary sources and literature review within my NVivo database proved useful. Sometimes I imported entire papers, coding relevant excerpts and writing annotations and links to my fieldnotes and memos. At other times, I only imported my own notes on a particular article. I found the NVivo database a more flexible tool than a word processor in terms of linking literature, data, and memos in the drafting of my ethnographic text.

The concentration of data and sources in a single location, and more importantly a digital location (one computer file), was particularly beneficial. This meant that material was available in a manner which made possible the speedy retrieval of relevant data, the location of relevant extracts, the taking of notes in the library, and so forth. In the past, reliance on MS Word files had meant that I was not always able to remember that I had jotted down useful thoughts on a particular issue.[22]

At an advanced stage of my analysis, I had 253 tree nodes and 60 cases. The cases refer to the different actors, and, as explained in Section 2.1.3, they include collective actors such as UNX, AIDX, etc. Due to the flexibility of the tree nodes in NVivo, I regrouped some nodes under others in a hierarchical tree structure to reduce the number of categories. However, I maintained the original coding so that I could find specific information more easily if needed. I have already noted the usefulness of being able to search the data to identify different patterns of behaviours or views according to individual or collective actors (Section 2.1.3). While going through the nodes and coding, I found it useful to follow Di Gregorio's suggestion (2000) of creating an extra node that I called 'quotes'. This node contained what I felt were the most representative or telling extracts in each category, so that they could be effectively used in the writing process.

In relation to NVIvo, it is important to emphasise that there are no major drawbacks in 'overcoding' data. It is always possible to inspect only selected nodes. Therefore, having 'too many' nodes does not affect the analysis nor increase the fragmentation of

[22] Another important element is portability, particularly relevant considering that I undertook 16-months of fieldwork and returned with only 23 kilos of luggage. In addition, as a researcher based outside his home country and researching another country, travelling with a lot of books and printed material was simply not feasible.

data. This freedom and flexibility allowed me to create new nodes to explore themes and promising leads in the data. I will now provide a few examples of the ways I coded data to facilitate my analysis.

The interviews were coded on the basis of the same nodes developed in the fieldnotes. In addition, I developed specific nodes connected to the different interview questions. These were practical in comparing different answers to the same question. Moreover, divergences between the responses of residents and staff of the Lead Government Agency were easily identifiable.

Nodes were established for key themes such as 'community', 'participation', 'legitimacy', 'leadership', 'land titles'. Under each of these, I operated with a variety of levels of 'sub-nodes'. For instance, under 'community', I developed the following nodes: 'community leader as fulltime job (allowances)'; 'communication & info dissemination'; 'community governance'; 'conflict residents' committee'; 'constructing community'; 'governing through community'; 'institutionalising power imbalances'; 'legitimacy of community leaders'; ' "natural" community'; 'respecting authority of community leaders'; 'role of community'; 'community participation to save money'; and 'support to the community'.

Another layer of coding was composed of simple nodes referring to specific events/processes. These allowed for the grouping together of the spectrum of data concerning a given event. For example, the nodes 'community elections' and 'participatory enumeration' contained all the data connected to these events (documents, interviews, fieldnotes, etc.). It was then possible to identify all the instances related to a particular event and any other node, such as 'legitimacy of community leaders'. Furthermore, this was particularly useful given my decision to structure the narrative of the thesis around certain key events/processes.

The actor-oriented approach focuses on the analysis of continuous interaction among actors and the development of this interaction over time (Long, 2001: 69). The use of nodes corresponding to all the relationships between actors facilitated the analysis of such interactions, e.g. 'Residents' Committee-Area MP', 'Residents' Committee-Chief', 'Residents' Committee-Missionaries', 'Residents' Committee-contractor', 'Residents'

Committee-UNX', 'UNX-Lead Government Agency', 'UNX-AIDX', etc. I coded all the references in the data to the interaction between the actors, including comments made by others on these relationships. The analytical process then drew on all the references contained in one node and examined the changes and contradictions in the relationships between two particular actors. These excerpts, grouped together, provided hints for further questions and analysis.

In addition, I developed nodes for each slum-upgrading project that was mentioned by the actors. Again, this was useful to see how different groups of actors had different views on other projects and used references to those projects to build their arguments in the discussions regarding the KUDP.

To conclude, I want to stress that, despite this systematic description, my process of coding and analysis was a process of craft-making. The use of software did not make this process more mechanical. On the contrary, the crafting character of the ethnography was fostered by a faster tool that enabled me to interrogate data in different ways, experimenting with different queries. This craft-making is consistent with the approach presented above in the section 'Grounded-theory for ethnographers', in which I outlined my rejection of rigid, step-by-step instructions for coding, data analysis, and theory building.

2.4.4 Document analysis

An important element of analysis concerned the programme documents obtained during the research process. They were all imported into NVivo (except for a few reports that contained overly-complex formatting, rich in pictures and tables). Discourse analysis revealed the shifting discourse on key issues. For instance, while the initial documents spoke clearly of 'Community Land Trust' and 'community title deeds' as project objectives, later documents shifted towards objectives such as 'appropriate title deeds'. This subtle shift was indicative of the pressure towards individual allocation and its impact on the goals of the project (discussed further in Chapter 7).

Word-processing software was used to identify changes, such as that mentioned above, as they were manifest in different drafts of the same document throughout the

negotiation process. I tracked shifts of this nature, for instance, through different drafts of the KUDP Concept Paper. The Concept Paper was the project's key guiding document. Changes between drafts contributed to my understanding of the initial negotiations behind the text. Finally, NVivo allowed annotations to be added to documents, and links to be made to memos and other types of data.

2.4.5 Methodological triangulation

During my fieldwork, I became aware of the fact that 'over-researched' informants frequently provide routine, preconceived answers to researchers, the latter often perceived as exploiters, as mentioned above. There is also a danger that my research may have been affected by the tendency for informants to provide the kinds of responses they perceive the researcher to be seeking.

For instance, one community leader told me that he was asked by the consultant of a German international NGO supporting some community projects to stay in the car with her and translate while she interviewed some randomly selected local youths. The leader told me that the young people spoke English and his presence as a translator was not necessary. However, the interviewees had been answering, not according to the facts or providing their own interpretation of the reality, but according to what they thought the lady wanted to hear about gender, violence, unemployment and so forth. People know the words researchers want to hear, and they are over-researched to the point that answering is a routine. Similarly, Mosse (2001: 20-21) argues that during participatory rural appraisals (PRA) technically designed to extract 'local knowledge' and improve the project, participants' answers are based upon their expectations of what that development agency can deliver.

On the one hand, commitment to an actor-oriented approach implies the acceptance of multiple realities, but this does not mean taking at face value every word told to the ethnographer. Two strategies were employed to overcome this issue and to obtain meaningful data. The first was to remain in the field for a long period of time. I was a participant observer at many events where the social status of the ethnographer compared to other actors was so low that it is unlikely that people would act purposively with the ethnographer in mind as their audience (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 177-178). In addition, while informants and other residents

initially felt that my presence was as exploitative as that of other researchers, some actors changed their attitude when they saw that I was staying for a long period of time, and that I was doing my best to speak Swahili.

The second strategy was triangulation. This was not limited to the triangulation of responses garnered in different interviews, but included data collected through different methods. Moreover, I triangulated people's words with my fieldnotes based on participant observation. When contradictory accounts emerged, I collected further data to explain what was happening, but I also tried to understand why I had been provided with a potentially misleading account. These contradictions were quite revealing and were part of the discontinuities that characterise interfaces and help the ethnographer make sense of social processes (Long, 2001: 172). For instance, an official from the Residents' Committee told me that in Kwa-maji 'there were no permanent tenants' (FN 09/04/2010), which was obviously not true and of which he was aware, since it is a widely-known issue that had been documented and discussed in previous meetings. But from his point of view as a structure-owner, he did not want me to consider the interests of long-term tenants, and, as such, sought to convince me that tenants are temporary residents devoid of any legitimate claim in Kwa-maji. After some time, I began to recognise how accounts provided by informants were deeply influenced by their role in the community, their ethnicity, their understanding of my role as researcher, and what they thought would interest me. I reached a point where I was able to predict quite well how different people would present their version of certain events.

A further issue of methodological importance relates to the ways in which informants accounts of a given event may differ to a greater or lesser extent. There is, of course, nothing out of the ordinary in this. However, even objective facts that would normally help the ethnographer to recognise that people are referring to the same event are not always portrayed in ways that allow the researcher to understand that what different people describe is the same episode. For instance, dates were not valued as important by my informants, who did not feel that they were lying by providing incorrect information with regard to the date of an event or the year in which it took place. Normally, the research participants did not volunteer a date, but in my attempt to reconstruct the history of the settlement, I asked directly for dates,

and found variations in the information given to me. Another piece of information that is not always remembered is the full name of the key actors identified in informants' accounts. Often, by recalling other events happening at the same time, for instance, which Chief, MP or President was in power, research participants were able to locate the year of an event correctly. Accurate recall of dates and names was more evident with elderly people. I discovered that I was not the first to encounter this issue in the study of Kwa-maji, and the academic theses that I found contained different histories of the settlement. Probably, the authors had relied on different accounts without triangulating information.[23]

In terms of the epistemology of my theoretical framework, the various ways in which people narrate events and experiences have their own value. Nevertheless, such concerns must be balanced with the need to produce a coherent text. For instance, it is important to be clear with regard to the dates, names and organisations referenced in participants' accounts. Therefore, I spent a lot of time triangulating information and accounts, especially in my attempt to reconstruct the history of Kwa-maji. Triangulating information and spotting inconsistencies do not necessarily mean that I was looking for the 'true story', ruling out as 'false' certain accounts, but that I was trying to differentiate mistakes of memory from different perspectives and points of view on the same historical events.

The process of triangulation with regard to the above concerns was once again facilitated by the use of qualitative data analysis software. One example relates to accounts of the way in which land was temporarily distributed to new settlers at the origins of Kwa-maji in the 1970s (Chapter 4). Some accounts presented this as an equitable process of distribution to people evicted from other areas of the city, while other accounts emphasised how the distribution was influenced by ethnic patronage. I have used the same code for different types of data (fieldnotes, interviews, academic theses, documents) referring to the same process. Therefore when looking at all the materials categorised under a particular code, it is possible to see the range of sources supporting a certain version of the story.[24]

---

[23] I have to acknowledge that the history of Kwa-maji history was of secondary importance in all of these theses, which focused on specific contemporary issues.

[24] Another revealing issue concerning varying accounts of the same event referred to the contents of the speech of President Moi during his visit to Kwa-maji. In his speech, he promised to give the land to the residents (Chapter 4). Some argued that he meant giving the land to the structure-owners, while

2.4.6 Researcher position

One consequence of the adoption of the actor-oriented approach which was insufficiently developed by Long, is the necessity to consider the researcher as an actor, particularly if his or her presence is active. It is therefore necessary to incorporate a reflexive approach on the role of the researcher.

Actors perform a particular role, depending on the presence of other actors who compose the audience, with the ethnographer being one of those actors. However, as mentioned before, a strength of participant observation is that 'in 'natural' settings other audiences are generally much more powerful and significant for participants than the ethnographer, and their effects are likely to swamp those of the researcher' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 178). The researcher may be able to remain in the background until the situation becomes embarrassing or conflictual to such an extent that the actors feel their behaviour is influenced and constrained by the presence of the ethnographer. For instance, in the example mentioned previously, a government officer was concerned about my witnessing verbal conflicts between government officials, community representatives and the contractor, to the point that he personally approached me to discuss my presence.

As briefly mentioned before, Chase (1996) explains that often the interest of the researcher differs from those of research participants and suggests that we need to acknowledge the interests of the researcher more openly. This is arguably even more significant within an actor-oriented perspective, where the researcher is conceptualised as an actor negotiating his or her role in the multiple arenas of the social process she/he is analysing.

To spell out my perspective, I include here a brief note on my biography and on the choice of this research topic. During my B.A. in Development Studies, I cultivated a specific interest in the process of development of informal settlements. Therefore, at the end of my B.A., I applied for a position in Nairobi as project manager for an NGO. I worked for two years on a project that aimed to address the needs of slum workers, and took part in lobbying and advocacy activities for the official allocation of land to

---

others argued that he meant redistributing land to *all* the residents. Unfortunately, I have never been able to find any recording of the original speech.

slum dwellers. This wider advocacy process directly generated the institutional conditions for the slum-upgrading programme under study.

Facing the incredible complexity of the informal settlements and the failure of most policies regarding the urban poor, I decided to embark on a Ph.D. to further explore such issues. My perspective owes a lot to my previous position, and therefore I continue to maintain a specific interest in issues of gentrification and poor urban tenants, and, although this research does not focus on social policy, I have an interest in making an impact on processes of urban development.

While I am not comfortable in defining this research as action-research, there is certainly an intention to open a discussion wherever possible, and to constructively engage with the actors involved in the process. Although it was not a central part of my research, my interventions in the field – especially the first critical draft paper I submitted to the donor (see Section 2.2.1) and my presentation at the roundtable on the programme (Chapter 7) – had specific effects and created responses that went on to become data in the research presented here. In this and other chapters, I provide further critical reflection on my interventions and the impacts they generated, including how some actors have told me that they have benefited from my work and how they are making use of it.

Another aspect worth mentioning in a section on researcher position is the uneasiness that I felt all along when faced with extreme poverty which I could not do much about. Sometimes, these feelings caused me to strongly question my presence in Nairobi. Although the situation was less extreme, I found myself sharing similar ethical concerns to those expressed by Alex De Waal about his research on the Darfur famine. He wrote: 'It is distasteful in some ways to build a career on the suffering of other people, but this is true of almost all the professions in which non-poor people work with poor people' (1989: 2).

One of the conflicts ongoing in the programme was between the government's way of working and that of the 'locals', as opposed to what UNX and AIDX considered their 'more effective' way. Given my identity as a white expatriate and former European development worker, I was perceived by UNX and AIDX as 'one of them', one who

knows and has an understanding of 'how it is difficult to work with an African government'.

On the other hand, from the residents' perspective, I knew the language, took part in meetings where other 'expats' were not present, and walked through Kwa-maji as opposed to driving through it in a big car. As such, it was possible for residents to meet me in the streets. Most importantly, I was a student with little power. These factors positioned me somewhat more as 'one of them'. I was told by a community member: 'You understand, not like them; you know how difficult this is in Kenya, but the donor would not understand it'. So, on the one hand, some Government officials considered me as 'one of the educated' trying to work in an 'uneducated community' with whom 'at times it is difficult to work'. On the other hand, in the eyes of the community, I was granted local status – 'You have been here, you eat here, you know how tough it is' – in contrast to those who only enter Kwa-maji for meetings. In reality, I did not belong to any of these groups. My interlocutors were aware of this, but the ambiguity of my position as researcher amongst the different actors was helpful in terms of creating such alliances of empathic concern with different actors. Of course, as Latour (1996) and Long (2001) both notice, the strategy of social actors is to enrol other actors; their inclusion of me was part of their strategy to enrol the researcher in their lifeworlds, and to encourage me to adopt their point of view.

I tried to adopt a 'neutral' position in the field and to represent fairly different perspectives and claims in this thesis. However, I have to acknowledge that, along with my research questions, I always had a concern regarding the fact that the project would not benefit *all* residents. I was worried that the project might worsen the living conditions of a large section of the population of Kwa-maji, specifically poor tenants. This was for me a long-term concern arising from my advocacy activities well before commencing my doctoral research.

Before moving on to discuss the history and social organisation of Kwa-maji itsef, the next chapter introduces the social context of the informal settlements of Nairobi and discusses several attempts that had aimed at improving the living conditions of their residents.

3 Slums and slum-upgrading in Nairobi

> The inequality and segregation of Nairobi is so strong that if you tell me where you live, I'll tell you your socio-economic status. (Dr. Tom Anyamba, National Urban Forum 2010, FN 27/01/27).

Development agencies have been attempting to improve living conditions in informal settlements for a long time. In Sub-Saharan Africa, large-scale programmes have been taking place since the 1970s. Over the last decade, international concerns around the urban poor and their living conditions have been growing in tandem with the shift towards an *urban world*, a tendency marked by the symbolic milestone in 2008 that saw over half of the world's population living in cities (UNFPA, 2007). The Millennium Development Goals, the main framework for international development commitments, directly refer to the improvement of slum-dwellers' living conditions. It is in this context of increasing global attention to the urban poor that the project under study is taking place. The project builds upon the current policy context in development as well as upon specific previous experiences that have influenced actors' ideas regarding slum-upgrading.

For reasons of space, this chapter will not provide a comprehensive review of the literature on slums and slum-upgrading. Instead, it focuses on understanding the *phenomenon and context of slums,* with specific reference to Nairobi and Kenya. It starts with a brief section on the *history of the 'slum phenomenon'* in Nairobi underlining: (a) its *colonial roots*; (b) *its connections with the issue of land* and security of tenure (further explored in Chapter 7); (c) its links with the housing market; and (d) the ways in which it is intertwined with local and national politics.

Interventions to address informal settlements undertaken thus far in Nairobi and their rationale are presented in order to facilitate an understanding of the assumptions behind the programme under study. Drawbacks and explanations of their limited success in tackling slum growth in Nairobi will be briefly addressed. A short section on the current Kenyan institutional context provides some basic foundations to understand the wider framework in which the programme under analysis is taking place.

Four cases of slum-upgrading programmes will be introduced, as they have influenced the KUDP under study and were often referred to by various actors relevant to this research. They will be presented selectively, focusing on the aspects that are relevant to the analysis of Kwa-maji, rather than providing a comprehensive account of each programme.

A selection of policy and academic debates around different approaches, problems and solutions will be presented to clarify the policy environment – in other words, the considerations, the assumptions and the knowledge – which influenced the negotiation process that led to the creation of the project under study.

3.1 The slums of Nairobi

3.1.1 The origins of Nairobi's informal settlements

Informal settlements have been growing in Nairobi since the beginning of the twentieth century, when the city was founded by the colonial Government (K'Akumu & Olima, 2007; Syagga, *et al.*, 2001). Colonial policies discouraged the large-scale provision of public housing in order to contain the influx of Africans (K'Akumu & Olima, 2007) and unemployed Africans were repatriated to their place of origin. Moreover, access to the city was restricted by the colonial Government, which provided accommodation solely for individual workers, excluding their families. According to Stern (1978), the policy was aimed at keeping the number of Africans low in order to ensure adequate public health and prevent the diffusion of infectious diseases. Other historians argue that the containment of the size of the urban population was purposely designed in order to maintain a subsidised living standard for those living in the city and avoid rebellions in the capital, the most vulnerable location of the colonial administration. This was possible only if the number of people attracted by the benefits of such subsidies did not continually increase (Berman, 1990).

Before the 1920s, all Africans in Nairobi were living in informal settlements; some of these were demolished and people were forced to move into an area of the city specifically designed for the native population: the "African Location". The urban population also increased as the rural population was displaced as a result of white

settlers' occupation of the best land around Nairobi (K'Akumu & Olima, 2007). The British colonial State implemented a policy of racial segregation. This policy was fully formalised in the 1948 Master Plan, which divided the city into different racial residential areas for Africans, Asians and Europeans. From the 1920s onwards, in some areas of Nairobi, the colonial administration granted Temporary Occupancy Licenses. This was a way to prevent Africans from owning land permanently. Licensees were allowed to build temporary housing, which contributed to the development of informal settlements. One of these was the area of Kibera allocated to Nubian veterans who had served in the King's African Rifles. From the 1940s, the Dagoretti area developed unauthorised rental housing on privately owned land. However, demolitions and entry control limited the pace of growth of informal settlements. After 1963, when Kenya became independent and movement restrictions within the country were removed, migrants in search of employment in the capital accelerated the growth of informal settlements. The racial residential segregation of the colonial state was transformed into socio-economic residential segregation (K'Akumu & Olima, 2007).

K'Akumu & Olima (2007) conclude that informal settlements are,

> neither a natural and inconsequential phenomenon of modernization, nor the inevitable outcome of indigenous peasants leaving a rural agrarian subsistence sector in which their marginal productivity was zero and migrating to Nairobi in expectation of economic and social betterment. Rather, they are the consequence of the colonial capitalist development imposed by the British who alienated the local people from control over their land in order to provide surplus labour for the settler farms and emerging urban centres (92).

In other words, the origins of informal settlements are traceable to the dispossession of Africans from their land and colonial policies. There is a wide range of scholars that see Nairobi slums as a product of both the colonial and post-colonial economic structure and the economic relationships on which it was based (K'Akumu & Olima, 2007; Syagga, *et al.*, 2001), arguing that the wave of urbanisation which commenced after independence took place on the basis of, and often exacerbated, pre-existing patterns of exclusion and segregation.

3.1.2 The failure of urban policies

K'Akumu and Olima (2007: 92) report Ngau's (1995) estimations of the size and growth of the informal settlements. In 1952, there were only 500 dwellings in the

informal settlements of Nairobi. By 1972, the population in them was estimated to have increased to 22,000 people and in 1979 it had grown to 111,000. The official government policy was to eradicate slums; however, since the Government was unable to offer an alternative, slums were tolerated and some were protected through links with powerful politicians. Currently, in Nairobi, government policy makers and the United Nations claim that slums host 55-60% of the city's population and occupy less than 5% of its land (Syagga, *et al.*, 2001). This data was constantly referred to by all the actors in the development agencies in the programme, including all government departments. However, the most recent, and to a certain extent questionable, census estimated a somewhat lower percentage of slum-dwellers (Chapter 4 & 8).

The Government of Kenya's response to informal settlements has changed over time and has followed the path of many other developing countries. In the 1960s and 1970s, the policy was one of *slum clearance* through demolitions and evictions, which only led to a proliferation of new slums. The introduction of *site and services* schemes, principally funded by the World Bank, represented a new response to the issue of slums (Bassett & Jacobs, 1997). These schemes were intended to relocate slum-dwellers to different areas and provide them with basic urban services such as roads, water, and electricity. They also provided financing for housing construction. Construction was started by the site and services project, but often the housing units had to be completed by the beneficiaries. These projects succeeded in partially addressing the demand for housing; however the target groups were generally not consulted in the planning process and corruption occurred during allocation of plots (Syagga, *et al.*, 2001). As a consequence, many programmes were conceived according to middle class standards and were not economically sustainable for the target group, leading to gentrification (Campbell, 1990; Huchzermeyer, 2008; Mayo & Gross, 1987; Rakodi, 2001: 213; Syagga, *et al.*, 2001).[25]

More recently, following international policies and the favourable international context mentioned in the Introduction, the Government of Kenya has recognised that, in cooperation with their residents, slums can be upgraded *in situ*. This acknowledgement was also the result of campaigning for urban land rights and

[25] For a detailed discussion of the impact of these projects, see Rakodi (1991) and Campbell (1990).

activism led by NGOs in the housing rights sector (Huchzermeyer, 2008), and of Government awareness that urbanisation is irreversible and that only appropriate policies targeting the slums can make urbanisation sustainable. Despite a current debate on urbanisation in Africa (Potts, 2012a),[26] including lower projections for urbanisation levels in Kenya, Kenyan cities are growing at a fast pace, emphasising the need for adequate urban policies.

However, Huchzermeyer (2008) argues that targeted slum-upgrading projects in the context of Nairobi's distorted urban housing market are unlikely to achieve their objectives. A Government Paper (Government of Kenya, 2004b) underlines the chronic shortage of housing units, calculating that during the 1974-1978 planning period only half of the 50,000 housing units required in Kenya were built, while in the 1997-2001 period 112,000 units were supplied to meet a demand of 560,000. The 2004 Government Paper estimated that the urban housing demand in Kenya would be in the region of 150,000 housing units per year for the following 10 years. These figures do not take into consideration the 300,000 housing units a year needed in rural Kenya.

The Government argues that the cause of this shortage lies in the low level of public and private investment that, combined, can barely supply the funding for 20% of the housing units needed by new urban households. The Government also recognises the magnitude of the urbanisation process, the constraints connected with 'obtaining the land, funding and the unpractical planning regulations and building standards' (Government of Kenya, 2004b: i).

The fact that housing demand has continually outstripped supply has been a major cause of the middle-class appropriation of housing projects that supposedly target the urban poor. Moreover, the building codes inherited from colonial times forced such projects to plan for housing with middle-class standards rather than those

[26] After years of questionable projections of urbanisation in Africa, new census data are forcing policy-makers to rethink the process. Some new evidence seems to suggest that, although the urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa is growing rapidly, the rural population is growing faster, therefore reversing the urbanisation indicators. The latest review of the figures from UN-Habitat shows some degree of inconsistency in the change from one year to the next. For instance, during my fieldwork the government frequently quoted UN-Habitat figures of 38% of the population living in towns (Ministry of housing 2009), which UN-Habitat, after reconsidering census data, suddenly reduced to 22%. There is a more detailed analysis of this debate in Potts (2012a).

tailored specifically for the target group and its ability to pay. Kenyan construction by-laws were inherited from the British, who exported their regulations without adapting them to Kenya's culture, climate, resources and level of economic development (Tuts, 1996: 608). The allocation of housing units has also been used in the politics of patronage. In practice, units have often been bought by more affluent individuals capable of completing payments in the case of the tenant/purchasing scheme, or of financing house construction in the case of site and services schemes. Policies of cost recovery from beneficiaries, which began in the 1970s, coupled with high building standards, have favoured gentrification.

The application of relatively high building standards not only in site and services schemes but also in *in situ* upgrading projects led to higher rents following the upgrading programmes, forcing slum-dwellers to relinquish the area to richer people. This has been described by Mitullah (1992) in the case study of the Umoja Tenant Purchase Scheme, Huchzermeyer (2008) in relation to the Kibera High Rise project of the early 1990s, and Ochieng (2007) in Pumwani, among other examples. Dafe (2009) concludes that, through slum-upgrading projects, the Government has subsidised groups with a higher income rather than the intended beneficiaries. In conclusion, gentrification seems to have accompanied the history of Nairobi from the first demolitions and relocations in the 1920s, and throughout the years of independence.

3.1.3 Land

> Land retains a focal point in Kenya's history. It was the basis upon which the struggle for independence was waged. It has traditionally dictated the pulse of our nationhood. It continues to command a pivotal position in the country's social, economic, political and legal relations. (Ndungu Commission Report, 2004: xvii)
>
> The land belonged to the government or was in trust for the people but the trustees, particularly the presidents, behaved as if they were estate owners. They handed out individual titles to parts of national parks and gave trust land as political favours. (Odenda Lumumba, Ndungu Commission member, 2008)

The importance of land in Kenyan culture and history, from colonialism to independence, and the inequality of its distribution, have made it the most important political issue in Kenya (Porter, *et al.*, 1991: 25; Southall, 2005: 144). Land policy has been at the centre of the political agenda and of the debates on the recently passed constitution. Contextualising land within Kenya's history is necessary in order to understand the origins of current institutional and policy frameworks as well as the actual situation on the ground in the informal settlements. In particular, it is important to appreciate the implications of colonial land dispossession and policies on post-colonial Nairobi.

In 1930, the Native Land Ordinance reallocated some land from the Crown to the 'Native Reserves'. Land for white settlers in the highlands was administered separately by an *ad hoc* board following English Law, while native land was administered by a Native Land Trust Board, which left some degree of autonomy in land management to locals through customary law, creating a dual system of customary and statutory tenure in the country. In 1953, concerns over increasing pressure on Reserve Land led to the Swynnerton Plan, which aimed to privatise land through issuing individual or group title deeds. The rationale was to give farmers incentives to invest in the development of their farms and enable them to use the titles to access credit. The land reform plan largely failed as, although some individualism was fostered, there was no change in the perception of land rights and traditional rights of access and inheritance continued to prevail (Odhiambo & Nyangito, 2002). A similar process created dual land systems in other Sub-Saharan countries in which statutory and customary land laws coexist (Hendriks, 2010). According to African tradition, land allocation was often been decided communally. More recently in Kenya, local political leaders or the Chief have taken over the traditional roles. [27] These systems continue to operate alongside modern, bureaucratic systems of land allocation (Lee-Smith, 1990: 186).

[27] In Kenya, the area Chief is an appointed representative of the government in a certain location; he/she has many powers, and can implement his/her decisions through the administrative police under his/her command. This system of local government is referred to as Provincial Administration. Provincial Administration is the most visible arm of the Executive in Kenya since it reaches the lowest administration units through a hierarchical system (Office of the President, Provincial Administration and Internal Security 2005).

Outside the lands reserved for Africans and regulated by versions of customary tenure, until the 1940s the remaining land was publicly auctioned up. At that time, the control of wealthy cartels over the auctions forced the Government to change the allocation system towards direct grant by the Commissioner of Land with the support of a local committee. This was meant to ensure that allocation decisions were in the public interest and that adequate land development would take place (Southall, 2005). This administrative change in land allocation had a profound effect on independent Kenya, as the Ndungu report underlines, 'what appears to have succeeded in the colonial period (i.e. allocation by direct grant) is what later facilitated the massive illegal and irregular abandonment of public land by the Government after independence' (2004: 6-7).

As explained in the second of the quotes which begin this section, in independent Kenya, land has been treated as an asset that directly belongs to the President and senior politicians and used for political patronage. At the end of 2004, the Report of the *Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal/Irregular Allocation of Public Land*, also called the Ndungu Report, was released to the public. The report demonstrates the many ways in which so-called land grabbing had occurred and emphasises how, particularly from the end of the 1980s onwards, 'Land was no longer allocated for development purposes but as political reward and for speculation purposes' (Ndungu, 2004: 8).[28] 'Most illegal allocations of public land took place before or soon after the multiparty general elections of 1992, 1997 and 2002 [...] as political reward or patronage' (Ndungu, 2004: 83). This illegal land-allocation took place just after the end of the single-party era. The report provides details of the illegality of over 200,000 title deeds and recommends revoking many of them. Specifically, it suggests the creation of a Land Titles Tribunal in charge of reviewing every case of a suspect land title and revoking those found to be illegal or irregular. For Southall (2005), the report reveals the extent to which illegal land allocation has been a central pillar of the Kenyan political system.

Informal settlements are directly linked to the issue of land. K'akumu and Olima (2007) show how besides explicit mechanisms for creating residential segregation,

[28] A detailed review of the different methods employed for land grabbing exposed by the Ndungu report is provided by Southall (2005).

more nuanced methods have been employed to enforce such spatial segregation. For instance, by establishing land use standards that low-income groups cannot meet, the Government forces them towards the informal areas of the city. Despite the fact that Hendricks (2010) shows some successful (although small-scale and with severe limitations) examples of how poor households can collectively gain access to land, access to land remains one of the fundamental challenges affecting slum-dwellers in Kenya (Pamoja Trust & Slum Dwellers International, 2008).

In Kwa-maji, the Chief – the local representative of the Government in every location – provided only Temporary Occupancy Licenses (Chapter 4), a tool created by the colonial government but maintained in independent Kenya. In other settlements (e.g. Huruma, see Section 3.3.5), the City Council authorised land allocation for certain specific uses. However, the actions of these authorities can be challenged by the Land Commissioner in the Ministry of Land. There is therefore an overlapping of different land tenure regimes and authorities claiming jurisdiction over land, which is part of Kenyan institutional practice regarding land (Leach, 2000: 205). This tends to make the situation unintelligible, facilitating land grabbing processes and political patronage (although it also grants a certain degree of flexibility.) In Kenya, informal settlements are predominantly located upon government land that has not been officially allocated to individuals. Most residents are tenants renting rooms from landlords who have built housing structures, but only have temporary, quasi-legal tenure (Bassett & Jacobs, 1997). In Nairobi, half of the informal settlements are built on public land (Syagga, et al., 2001); in most of these, structure-owners have obtained Temporary Occupancy Licences or other informal permits from local authorities. The remaining slums are located either on privately owned land with the owner directly involved in the informal rent business or, to a minor extent, on private land illegally occupied by squatters (e.g. encroaching land owned by the railway company).

The lack of an effective land management system, costly bureaucratic procedures, and unrealistic regulations, as well as patronage and corruption in land allocation, have represented some of the major constraints on people's formal access to land. Chapter 7 will discuss the implications for the Kwa-maji project of dealing with such a political issue given these institutional constraints, and will explore the negotiations in place around land titling with some reference to relevant policy debates.

3.1.4 Slums as political patronage

The slums of Nairobi have for a long time been used by politicians to establish reservoirs of votes through political patronage. Local as well as national political leaders have used the slums to get elected. It can thus be said that informal settlements in Kenya play an important part in the political life of the country. Since independence some informal settlements have enjoyed political protection connected to the dominant ethnic group residing in the area. Land allocation, often through temporary occupancy licenses without official provision of a title deed, was undertaken according to political patronage, often operating along ethnic lines. Land was allocated by the Chief – the central Government representative in every location – who worked together with the local representative of the KANU party, sometimes helped by a group of local 'village elders' (Chapter 4).[29] KANU ruled Kenya for almost 40 years from independence (1963) until its electoral defeat in 2002, and was the only party in the single-party system in place between 1982 and 1991.

Kibera, the biggest informal settlement in Kenya is the constituency of the current Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, who was a major contestant for the presidency in the 2007 elections that led the country to the brink of a civil war, with more than 1,100 deaths and several hundred thousand displaced.[30] Raila frequently made populist promises in search of votes, and the youth of Kibera were one of the major groups responsible for destabilising the Capital in the aftermath of the elections, disputing the results when Raila did not get elected. Political violence in the slums around election times was a constant feature in previous elections, although it had never reached the levels witnessed in 2007-2008. The Government considers slums to be sensitive areas; for instance, NGOs working in urban slums have to undergo deeper scrutiny from the NGO regulator (the NGO Board), than those operating in less sensitive areas and sectors.

Slum-upgrading programmes in Nairobi have often been part of political promises and thus strongly influenced by politicians. Just before the 2007 elections, Raila

---

[29] The system of Provincial Administration of which the Chief and his/her staff are part (see footnote 27) was established by the colonial administration as a way of ensuring control in every location. The principle of 'indirect rule' adopted by the British colonial administration appointed local Chiefs supported by village elders to make the exercise of power more effective and accepted by locals. The independent Kenyan government maintained such structures, which allowed for the strict control of central government.

[30] Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV), Final Report, 2008.

promised to give the inhabitants of Kibera a proper house for the same rent they were paying for their shacks. Likewise, in 2000, in a desperate attempt to be re-elected, the incumbent President Moi went to Kwa-maji and promised to give the land to its residents (Chapter 4). Local politics are subject to the same type of patronage. Service provision from the City Council is portrayed as a gift from the elected councillor. City Council elections take place at the same time as national elections and there is often a direct patronage relationship between local and national politicians (Hendriks, 2010). Political interference is a common feature of any development taking place in informal settlements, as politicians seek to capitalise on any improvements to increase their support.

3.1.5 Commercial rental in Nairobi slums

The extent of rental housing in the Global South varies greatly, depending on a high number of variables and complex economic, social, political and legal dynamics (Rakodi, 1995c). Some of the literature on informal housing in developing countries has identified the large presence and role of rental housing (Amis, 1996). This literature counters Turner's (1967, 1977; Turner & Fichter, 1972) model of 'self-help building' based on an assumption that slum residents are 'genuine squatters'.[31] Statistics relating to housing tenure are problematic. However, it is clear that in some of the cities where rapid urbanisation has led to increasing constraints on access to land, particularly for low-income residents, there has been an increase in the proportion of people renting accommodation, in formal as well as informal settlements. Many authors (Gilbert, 2008; Kumar, 2011) argue that most national housing policies in the global south continue to pursue home ownership as their main objective, generally considering renting to be exploitative, despite the fact that extensive research over the past two decades has underlined the importance of rental housing for low-income urban households and their livelihoods. Landlords, it is suggested, provide a necessary service, granting more flexibility in the livelihoods of urban low-income households, and often enjoy living standards similar to those of their tenants (Kumar, 2011: 665). However, there are also more exploitative situations in which large-scale landlordship produces huge profits, and Nairobi is one

[31] Turner argued that housing construction is central to self-realisation and human dignity and thus advocates that urban dwellers should manage the process of housing design and construction, which should be tailored to their needs.

of those situations (Amis, 1984). Nevertheless, even within Nairobi there are varying situations with different degrees of exploitation (Syagga, *et al.*, 2001).

Despite some acknowledgement from international organisations (e.g. UN-Habitat, 2011; World Bank, 1993), very few policy interventions have fully appreciated the role of rental housing and the need for interventions beyond individual home ownership, for instance, ways of enhancing urban rental markets (Kumar, 2011; Payne, Durand-Lasserve, & Rakodi, 2009).[32] Nairobi is a useful example in terms of examining the role of informal rental housing because most of the residents of informal settlements are in fact tenants. Analysing the growth of investment in rental housing in the city, Huchzermeyer (2007) argues that Nairobi can be defined as a 'tenement city' and that the slum phenomenon can only be understood if the 'dominance of private landlordism' is analysed (729).

In other contexts, most residents of informal settlements have built the shack where they live rather than paying rent, obtaining land by squatting or purchase of an informally subdivided plot. However, as far back as 30 years ago, Amis (1984) argued that conventional squatting was no longer happening in Nairobi and that it was more appropriate to speak of 'unauthorized commercial housing development' in the informal settlements (89). In this sector, Amis found 'extremely high profitability' and 'a well-developed system of informal ownership and landlord-tenant relations' (87). In the 1990s, there was an important debate in Kenya around renaming "landlords" as "structure-owners". This terminological shift was in part to clarify that "structure-owners' do not own the land, as well as being part of an attempt to push an agenda of tenants' rights (Huchzermeyer, 2008; Syagga, *et al.*, 2001). The informal rental situation was a result of some of the issues mentioned in previous sections, such as constraints in land access, inappropriate housing standards and housing demand constantly outstripping supply. Political connections were fundamental to accessing land and investing in the lucrative informal housing business.

More recent studies confirmed Amis' picture. A report commissioned by UN-Habitat and the Government of Kenya found out that in Kibera it took less than 10 months for

[32] There are, however, some signs of change. For instance, during the last World Urban Forum in Naples (2012), there were panels on the importance of rental housing in urban policy. For instance, this was the title of a networking event, 'Tenants make cities: cities need affordable rental housing!'.

an investor to recover the initial capital used to build a room, while in other slums it may have taken slightly longer (Syagga, *et al.*, 2002). They conclude: 'It would seem quite possible that unauthorised housing is the most lucrative investment in Kenya' (2). According to the same report, of the structure-owners in Kibera, 41% were government officers and 16% were politicians. However, the report's authors, who have also conducted a more extensive Nairobi Situational Analysis (2001), recognised that there is a diversity of situations across settlements and that in other settlements a large number of investors were residents who 'lived at a level fairly similar to their tenants and demonstrated a keen interest in maintaining the community and improving it' (Syagga, *et al.*, 2002: 6). As emerged from my interviews, such small-scale resident landlords have often invested in structures as an alternative to a pension scheme and consider themselves to be legitimate owners. From their perspective, slum-upgrading programmes, which deem structure-owners to be illegitimate and place them on the same level as their tenants, are unacceptably expropriating their investment and they do not understand how they are supposed to pay rent for a government-provided house when their source of income has been seized.

In a more recent study, Gulyani and Talukdar (2008) found continuing high returns from investments in slum structures in Nairobi but estimate the period required for the full return of the initial investment to be about 20 months. According to the data they present, 92% of the households in Nairobi's informal settlements are rent-paying tenants, and only 5% are structure-owners (1921). They also emphasise how the predominance of renting in Nairobi (82% of residents) indicates the difficulty for would-be owners in accessing property which also explains the tendency of the better-off to try to buy plots of dwellings in programmes supposedly targeting low-income groups.

Majale (1998: 6) argues that orthodox international policies for the upgrading of informal settlements assume widespread owner-occupation. However, the Kenyan example, with the large number of tenant-residents, challenges slum-upgrading programmes which continue to draw on Turner's idea of *self-help*. Majale argues that the Kenyan context calls for a 'reconceptualization in the fields of applied research, policy formulation and future planning for urban low-income housing development'

(1998: 5). The case of Nairobi shows the importance of Rakodi's (1995c) recommendation that the scope of housing policies be widened from a focus on home-ownership to incorporate the safeguarding of low-income tenants through, for instance, the supply of adequate dwellings at an affordable rent.

3.1.6 Conclusions

The outcome of the different phenomena and policies described so far is the existence of over two hundred slums[33] that are continuing to grow but occupying a very small proportion of the land in Nairobi. This section has shown how the slums are connected to both policy failure and wider social processes, including urban population growth. Inequality in access to land and services within the city is a clear indication that, unless there is a city-level policy with strong support from the central government, localised programmes can achieve little in changing what must be considered a chronic situation.

One of the issues which emerges from this analysis, on which there is a wide ranging consensus amongst scholars coming from very different perspectives – whether working for mainstream organisations such as the World Bank (Gulyani & Talukdar, 2008), involved with more grassroots organisations such as COHRE (Huchzermeyer, 2008), or who have worked for the Kenyan Government and the United Nations (Syagga, *et al.*, 2001) – is that limited slum-upgrading interventions based on titling and infrastructure may, in the context of Nairobi's distorted housing market, not be able to benefit the target group and may instead foster gentrification and capture by other groups. The embeddedness of slums in the way in which Nairobi is organised may imply that slum-upgrading requires deep changes in the entire society and economy, not only to slum dwellers' lives. This section has examined how the social position of slum-dwellers is deeply entwined with wider economic and political relationships in the city. This suggests that solutions may lie in addressing such relationships rather than in localised interventions.

[33] A slum inventory of Nairobi undertaken by Pamoja Trust identified more than 190 informal settlements (2008).

3.2 Kenya's current institutional framework

This brief section introduces the minimum level of information a reader unfamiliar with the Kenyan institutional framework needs to understand this study. More explanations of specific issues are provided where necessary in the analysis. Hendricks (2010: 141-142) argues that local authorities in Kenya are generally thought to possess low autonomy and capacity; it is typically through the support of the top political level in the relevant ministry – for instance a very supportive Permanent Secretary – that development actors are able to implement substantial projects at the local level. But the situation has become more complicated since 2007.

The crisis that emerged after the 2007 general elections led, as noted above, to the killing of more than 1,100 people and the displacement of more than 350,000. International pressure and the intervention of foreign mediators – in particular Kofi Annan – contributed to reaching a National Accord to reinstate stability, and brought together the two main candidates contending the presidency, Kibaki and Odinga, and their supporting coalitions. The agreement established the appointment of Odinga as Prime Minister with powers supposedly equal to President Kibaki, and the distribution of government positions to all the political parties. It created the biggest and most expensive Government in the history of Kenya: 42 cabinet ministries with a total of 92 people in the Government, including ministers and assistant ministers. Since only MPs could be nominated to the government, 92 out of 222 MPs were part of the executive, creating a paralysed Government unable to take any significant decisions.[34] This oversized Government involved all the political parties and therefore it is difficult to conceive of it as a single coherent actor.

Moreover, since the rivalry between the President and the Prime Minister was still strong, there were long periods in which the Cabinet did not meet at all. To make space for all the political parties and factions, Ministries were duplicated, leading to overlapping powers and blurred borders between the competences of different Ministries.[35] In relation to the development of informal settlements in Nairobi, we

[34] For more detailed information on this process, see Rigon (2010).

[35] For instance, what was the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology until 2007 was divided into the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The Ministry of Health was split into the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Medical Services under the new Coalition Government.

find a number of relevant departments, including the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, and the Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development. In addition, other ministries are involved in specific issues, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Such Ministries and other institutions are often led by competing political parties, which – far from coordinating efforts – are rather fighting for resources and development projects to bolster their support in the forthcoming elections. Not only does the Government operate through different Ministries, it is also structured in different levels and layers. This creates the need to coordinate a large number of actors to achieve effective implementation of a project on the ground. In addition to the above mentioned Government Ministries, there are also the different departments of the City Council and the Provincial Administration,[36] which also play an important role at local level.

This fragmentation, along with the internal competition and duplication of Ministries, multiplies the possible entry-points for development actors, who may be able to enter into an agreement with a particular Government Department and implement a project, without other relevant stakeholders knowing of the initiative or being able to coordinate it with their own programmes or contribute. This generates a chaotically wide range of interventions in places like slum communities, and has implications for the implementation of activities at the local level. The next chapter shows how, in Kwa-maji, several different actors represent the Government in the eyes of the community, and convey different and contradictory messages. The Kwa-maji Urban Development Project is trying to coordinate such efforts and present a consistent image of the Government to the community, but the next chapter will show how this is more of an aspiration than a reality.

3.3 Experiences of slum-upgrading

During my research on the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project, all the actors constantly referred to other slum-upgrading programmes: ideas were taken from other projects, and other programmes were talked about as tremendous failures to avoid or positive examples to follow. References to other programmes were regularly

[36] See footnote 27.

present in the discourses of the residents and staff. Some programmes were discussed frequently because of their proximity to Kwa-maji; others because they were often debated in the media; and others because the staff, many of whom had previously worked on other programmes, organised learning visits for the Kwa-maji leadership. A selective introduction to some of the key aspects of such programmes is helpful for the following reasons:

- It provides information on other types of interventions happening in the country;
- It puts the case study presented here within a comparative perspective. What is interesting is that residents and programme staff were the first to constantly make comparative analyses in their daily discussions of the programme;
- It helps our understanding of the rationale of programme policies.

It is important to point out that actors made reference to other programmes in a strategic manner, often to support a particular perspective or argument, so that their accounts of other projects may not be entirely based on what 'really' happened and are certainly not based on the official representation of these programmes. Rather, residents' references were based on their perceptions of other programmes, often moulded to support their claims. A failed attempt at a slum-upgrading programme that took place in Kwa-maji in 2001 also has an important place in the narratives and discourses of the different actors in the programme, but it will be presented in the next chapter as part of the historical account of Kwa-maji's development.

3.3.1 The Small Town Development Project

In 1988, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Government of Kenya started the Small Town Development Project (STDP) with the intention of upgrading informal settlements in towns, providing security of tenure that would, as they saw it, unleash the imprisoned development potential. The thinking was very much along the lines of de Soto's work (1989): with security of tenure residents would develop their housing, get access to credit, etc. The long-term objective was that local authorities would be able to raise resources to be used in developing local services and in sustaining themselves by taxing formally owned properties. The idea was that local authorities, with a *minimum* intervention in order to legalise land ownership, could boost the development of the areas through efforts of the residents themselves. The initial project covered four areas, but in this section I will focus only on Voi and Kilifi.

When the programme started, it was recognised that one of the major problems faced by previous site and services schemes was *gentrification* (Campbell, 1990; Syagga, *et al.*, 2001). For instance, in the World-Bank-funded Dandora Sites and Services Scheme, only 25% of the original beneficiaries remained in the allocated houses and most property had been sold (Ogero, Omwando, & Bassett, 1992 in Bassett & Jacobs, 1997: 217). In the search for a solution that could avoid problems such as the immediate reselling of upgraded properties, the high cost of individual titling procedures, and legal constraints on the minimum plot size, the STDP programme looked with interest at the US experience of Community Land Trusts and how these could be adapted to the complex legal framework in Kenya (Bassett & Jacobs, 1997). A Community Land Trust, briefly, is a community-based, democratically controlled organisation formed to hold and acquire land for the use of its members. Its defining characteristic is the splitting of ownership: individuals own houses, while the Community Land Trust owns the land upon which the houses sit. Community Land Trusts are formed to hold land in perpetuity, thereby removing it from the open market (Bassett, 2007: 6-7).

The Community Land Trust offered a model which was thought to make sense in the context of African customary land management and could be adapted to the contemporary Kenyan legal context. The model aims to ensure that increases in property value are enjoyed by the community, and that low-income residents are protected from gentrification. In short, the objective of a Trust is to make sure that the original poor residents can get and remain in better housing (Bassett, 2007). Moreover, a Trust is intended to reduce the costs of acquiring land and facilitate the payment of taxes.[37] In Voi, residents chose to adopt this method (although Bassett challenges the transparency of this decision-making), while in Kilifi residents decided they preferred individual title deeds that were granted with a five-year restriction on resale.

[37] The Community Land Trust works with a single title deed for the entire community. Processing only one title reduces the legal and administrative costs for the members of the trust compared to the costs that each individual would incur by getting his/her own title. It also drastically reduces the administrative costs to local authorities because most of the work to divide land and change owners is done by the Trust. According to the model, the Trust would also collect small payments from members and pay taxes owed directly to local authorities.

The use of a Community Land Trust, or other mechanisms that put restrictions on resale, aims at preventing beneficiaries from reselling the land and resettling in another slum, so preventing 'gentrification'. However, these mechanisms deliver security of tenure different from that enjoyed by other titleholders. Bassett (2005) reports that some planners have argued that such mechanisms create second-class citizens with second-class private property, as they do not enjoy the same rights to manage their property as richer citizens. For example, property cannot be freely sold, therefore it does not have the same value as collateral, and owners do not have the flexibility to plan their livelihoods and make choices to sell, migrate, and invest elsewhere. Despite the cautious findings of Bassett and Jacobs (1997), the Voi project was considered by some to be very successful. In 1997, at the Istanbul Habitat II conference, the project was listed as one of the 100 'best practices' worldwide (Bassett, 2005). The 'success' was achieved in a relatively small settlement in a small area of a small town where there was little conflict over the land.

GTZ and the Government of Kenya produced a manual containing guidelines to facilitate the work of local authorities seeking to implement a similar approach. The approach was called Minimum Intervention Approach (MINA), and the manual guided the work of some important staff members of the Lead Government Agency involved in the Kwa-maji programme, who had previously worked in the STDP. The conception of the Kwa-maji programme was strongly influenced by the Voi Community Land Trust experience. AIDX was also guided by the idea of *collective security of tenure* inspired by the Voi project and strongly advocated by the local missionaries. 'Collective security of tenure' was inserted in the initial Concept Paper of the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project, even though it later became contested (Chapter 7).

Representatives of residents and Programme staff from Kwa-maji went to visit the Kilifi project, which had adopted individual title deeds. By the end of the fieldwork, the Voi project had not been visited, although there were vague plans to make a visit if the money was found.

In the Voi project, the right to vote on the selection of a tenure option was given only to structure-owners and not to tenants (Bassett & Jacobs, 1997). However, a majority

of residents were resident structure-owners, who rented some rooms to newcomers and the implementers of the project recognised that the structure-owners had a more legitimate right to the land than their tenants. This meant that in Kwa-maji, while there was a focus on considering the needs of all residents, government staff carried over their belief that structure-owners' claims have greater legitimacy, resulting in them receiving greater benefits than tenants.

3.3.2 Mathare 4A

Mathare is the second biggest informal settlement in Nairobi and one of the oldest; it is also not far away from Kwa-maji. The Mathare 4A project was carried out in one of its sections. The first phase started in 1992, followed by a second larger phase in 1997. A German public donor provided funds for the housing project. The Government of Kenya provided land that was assigned to a trust managed by the Archdiocese of Nairobi, and allowed a relaxation of the Building Code in order to achieve higher population densities through permitting smaller rooms.

In the public discourse of the local residents in Mathare 4A, this project is perceived as not having fulfilled the initial promises used to secure the support of residents. The main implementing agency was the Catholic Church and the project's purpose was to improve the living conditions of residents through the construction of better housing units and the provision of infrastructure. The initial aim was to push the residents to purchase a unit through a Tenant-Purchasing Scheme; however, the project became a Tenancy Agreement, frustrating intended beneficiaries, who perceived the Catholic Church as an illegitimate landlord. In addition, pre-existing structure-owners felt that the compensation they received was very limited and those who used to have a significant regular income from rent found themselves on the same economic level as their former tenants once they had spent the one-off cash compensation. This generated conflict in the area, with tenants of the new units refusing to pay rent to the Church and former landlords engaging in violent reactions.

For the Kwa-maji elected leadership, the Mathare Project represented the betrayal of local residents by the Church and NGOs. During a learning visit to the Project, the fears of Kwa-maji leaders were confirmed when a Mathare resident told the Kwa-maji visitors that they should get the Church out of the Kwa-maji project altogether. He

pointed directly at the white missionary who was part of the visiting group, and advised Kwa-maji residents to get rid of him if they wanted to achieve success in their project. For the Kwa-maji leadership, predominantly composed, as we shall see in the next chapters, of structure-owners, Mathare 4A exemplified their biggest fear, a project that would expropriate their land, turning them into tenants of 'their' own land for the benefit of someone else, in this case, the Church.

3.3.3 Kibera

Kibera is the largest informal settlement in Kenya and international development agencies claim that it could be one of the largest in Sub-Saharan Africa. As mentioned above, it is the constituency of Raila Odinga, the current Prime Minister, who has been the elected Member of Parliament for the area since 1992. The settlement has always been at the centre of the politics of the city.

In 2001, the Government of Kenya and UN-Habitat started a joint initiative: the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP), to develop a nationwide slum-upgrading and management framework. In 2004, the programme was officially launched and, soon after, a fifteen-year strategy, aimed at improving the livelihoods of at least 5.3 million urban slum dwellers, was drafted. Kibera was chosen as the first settlement. Plans for redevelopment through the construction of high-rise blocks of flats were considered a necessity due to existing population densities (Government of Kenya, 2004a).

The upgrading project in Kibera seems to have been considered an 'open laboratory' by its implementers. In 2004, the village of Soweto East, one of the 12 villages that comprise Kibera, was chosen for the pilot phase. The Government started with a comprehensive enumeration of the village. Some sanitation projects and the paving of a key street were started in the settlement, while in a nearby area the construction of a 'decanting site' began. The village, hosting about 20,000 residents, was divided into four areas. The idea was simple in theory. Residents would be transferred to the decanting site where they would get a flat or room per household at a subsidised rent that would include water and electricity. The vacated area would be demolished and shacks would be replaced by high-rise buildings containing flats that residents could buy through tenant-purchasing schemes. Conflict amongst the political authorities

and between different groups of residents (including legal action), as well as slow progress in the construction of the decanting site, considerably delayed the implementation plans, with severe consequences for the credibility of the project. Finally, in September 2009, the first 100 flats were ready and the first households were relocated to the decanting site during a launch event at which Prime Minister Raila Odinga was present and which was well covered in the media.

The initial Social and Economic Mapping found that 93% of Kibera residents were tenants; only 5% lived in owner-occupied houses, while 2% were provided housing by their families free of charge (Government of Kenya & UN-Habitat, 2005: 7). This meant that through the application of a large degree of political will (i.e. the direct involvement of the Prime Minster and the President, who is the Patron of the programme), and substantial investment in the project, the Kibera programme was able to deal with resistance from the tiny minority of structure-owners. Economic compensation for the loss of structure-property was still under negotiation at the time of my fieldwork, but the Government had made it clear that the residents who had been enumerated in the census and received a special ID from the Ministry of Housing *would* become project beneficiaries.

The Kibera Programme falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing, while the KUDP in Kwa-maji is led by another Government agency without, at least for the duration of my fieldwork, any relevant involvement on the part of the Ministry of Housing. This is part of the overlapping of roles and responsibilities in the Kenyan Government (see Section 3.2), both between different levels of governance and among agencies of a similar level, such as different Ministries.

Unlike the MINA approach developed in the Small Town Development Project (Section 3.3.1), in Kibera the Government chose to undertake heavy intervention, with people being relocated and the Government constructing new housing. However, despite notable differences, the Kibera Programme and the Small Town Development Project share some guiding principles: inclusive participation; capacity building; partnerships; provision of basic infrastructure; and sustainability. It is in this policy context that the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project (KUDP) is located.

3.3.4 Cultural and economic adequacy of housing design

It is important to note that the design of housing has been a significant issue in the implementation of slum-upgrading projects. In the Kibera decanting site, households were allowed either to rent a three-room flat or to take a single room and pay one-third of the rent. In practice, households refused to share a flat with two more families and there were complaints about intense crowding (Flores Fernandez & Calas, 2011). The rent of a full flat was Ksh 3,000, which is a lot compared to the Ksh 500 that people had formerly been paying in Kibera. As a result, Flores Fernandez and Calas (2011) found that 'gentrification' had already taken place during this initial phase. They mention that the Ministry of Housing had admitted that flats were occupied by middle-class people and students of the University of Nairobi, who found the government-subsidised rent very convenient for a flat close to the university. Many intended beneficiaries had returned to live in slums after sub-letting the housing they had been allocated.

In the slums, some aspects of a 'rural' way of life partially coexist with the urban context; the one-floor structures built alongside each other allow the neighbourhood relations typical of a rural village.[38] Most activities, such as washing and cooking, are done in the street; often the house is multi-purpose and fulfils the role of a shop or workshop for the household. Fertility rates are still very high and the type of relations among neighbours made possible by the way physical space is arranged allows residents to work while a neighbour minds the children or to sell goods from a house's entrance while taking care of the children. In other words, the design of dwellings influences the ways in which they are used. Slum-upgrading programmes generally have difficulty integrating informal sector economic activities into the design of housing. In Kibera too, after the upgrading, many relocated residents lamented the loss of livelihoods that were connected with the previous housing and working arrangements in the settlement.

---

[38] It is important to stress that this is an acknowledgment of the complex construction of urban life. I am describing some shared aspects in the use of dwellings in villages and in the informal settlements which are useful in terms of understanding the implications and changes required in the process of slum-upgrading. I do not imply that slums are inhabited by 'the rural poor, whose way of life and cultural framework are antithetical to urbanity', as argued by Brillembourg and Klumpner (2005: 21). I agree with Varley (2012) who argues that such perspectives are reminiscent of theories of a 'culture' of poverty which have already been dismissed a long time ago. I simply argue that dwellings in the informal settlements fulfil more complex social functions than providing a shelter (see below).

Another way to conceptualise a dwelling that helps to understand the issue of the cultural adequacy of slum-upgrading is Rapoport's definition of a dwelling as a 'system of settings' (2003 in Frediani, French, & Ferrera, 2011). Frediani *et al.* (2011) used this approach to analyse dwellings in Nairobi slums. In practice, the dwelling is much more than the small room (generally no larger than $9m^2$) where most people live because most daily activities – e.g. washing, cooking, playing, socialising – take place outdoors in public spaces. As a result, the generally larger private space provided by in a new or upgraded structure may not compensate for the loss of the multiple interwoven settings where daily life took place before. If slum-upgrading destroys this 'system of settings', it has to be rebuilt differently in new spaces which may not be as suitable for the organisation of relationships and livelihoods as the previous arrangements. Therefore, as argued by Payne (2002: 157), shelter policies should consider the role that shelter plays in people's livelihood strategies.

With limited space and high population density, the creation of multi-storey buildings is often considered inevitable but they do not allow the way of life described above. One of the stories reported by several actors in Kwa-maji, expressing their critical view of the Kibera programme, was that, in the relocation to the five-storey buildings of the decanting site, a woman who had previously had a shop in her house was allocated a room inside an apartment on the fifth floor of a building, thereby destroying her source of livelihood. Some interventions to cushion the transition, such as the creation of small vending stalls between the new buildings, were put in place but only partially worked (Flores Fernandez & Calas, 2011). Depending on the approach adopted, slum-upgrading may require a change to a whole different pattern of domestic and economic life; and some of the resistance to upgrading programmes is connected to the cultural change required, particularly when it affects the slum arrangements that make urban livelihoods viable.

Reports on the Kibera Programme featured heavily in the media. In Kwa-maji, residents often discussed the Kibera upgrading approach and had a negative opinion about it. The rejection of the Kibera Programme and everything associated with it was very strong, especially among the Kwa-maji residents' leaders. They did not want a house to rent and subsequently buy through a tenant-purchasing scheme, since structure-owners already possessed structures. What they wanted was a plot

and the legal title for it. The fear of a programme such as Kibera, that in their eyes constituted an expropriation of legitimate property, generated diffidence towards the involvement of the United Nations, perceived as the main implementer in Kibera.

3.3.5 Huruma Slum Upgrading Project

This programme is a small-scale project involving self-construction of housing. It is of interest due to its Savings Scheme, approach to housing design and self-construction, and its approach to the conflict between structure-owners and tenants. The programme targeted five of the six villages that compose Huruma, organising the residents into separate Savings Groups. This section refers to the activities in one of the villages, Kambi Moto. In 2001, the total population of the five villages was 6,564 or 2,309 households (Weru, 2004).[39] Kambi Moto village has a relatively homogeneous population of 1,241 forming 539 households and a consolidated history of residents' cooperation. The name Kambi Moto means 'site of fire' and recalls the big fires that destroyed large areas of the settlement in the past. In the aftermath of a fire, the local Chief often redistributed the land at his discretion, rather than reallocating it to the previous structure-owner. Residents managed to get permission signed by the Nairobi Mayor to develop the land. This was not a formal title deed, nor was it a full recognition from the city assembly, but it was deemed enough for them to build new houses.

With major external help and the key role of a local NGO with strong international links, residents managed to design cheap three-storey housing blocks. Experts from South Africa and India provided support to the process. Every building is composed of four flats distributed on three floors, so that each house has a kitchen/living room on the ground floor, permitting the village-type interactions that were lost in the five-storey Kibera buildings, but at the same time improving the living conditions by offering a bathroom and two bedrooms on the second and third floors. By sharing two walls with other flats, the costs were noticeably reduced. Moreover, the house was habitable before completion, with the second and third floors to be completed at a later stage. The house design was very successful and was copied by other small-scale projects. The technology used was very simple, making it possible to use a large amount of unskilled, local labour in the construction process. Costs were further

[39] Data for this section are based on the work of the NGO Pamoja Trust in the area, which has been described by Weru (2004).

reduced by group negotiation with the cement company, the electricity supplier, and the water company, all of which agreed to provide their goods and services at discounted prices.

Through the help of the local NGO, the residents started a Savings Scheme to build up capital for housing construction. The development was gradual: after having saved a minimum amount, residents would be put on a waiting list and allocated houses as they became ready. An important role was played by the local Chief who convinced structure-owners to accept one 'stone house' for every 10 structures built from iron sheets or mud-walls they previously owned. The Chief told structure-owners that they could be evicted anyway, since the land was not theirs, and that the Residents' Association had only received permission to build from the Mayor: if a fire were to break out, he stressed, they would lose everything. Under this pressure, many accepted a permanent house in exchange for their temporary structures.

From many perspectives, the Project was considered to be very successful and was presented as a 'flagship project' by many different NGOs. One of the reasons for its success was the heavy funding from different NGOs. The local residents allowed multiple NGOs to claim success for the Project, but in a nonexclusive manner. I visited the Project many times and on each visit I encountered a different organisation claiming to have been a key partner of the community. The residents successfully attracted different donors and permitted each of them to present themselves as key partners and to take credit for the wider developments as long as they also funded a part of the project.[40]

Skilful local leaders managed to contain internal conflict and deal with development agencies. The project was also successful due to the relatively small number of people: approximately 500 households. More importantly, the saving scheme had begun in 2000, almost three years before the beginning of the construction process and almost five years before the delivery of the first 34 houses. To be part of a savings scheme implies the building of a high level of trust amongst community members. A long process of this nature made the group more cohesive and able to

[40] When residents asked me to produce a short documentary to share their experience with other slum dwellers during the World Social Forum 2007, they deliberately chose not to mention any donor so that the video could be used in different contexts without displeasing any donor.

deal with the challenges encountered during it. Nevertheless, in their review of slum-upgrading programmes in Nairobi, while Omenya and Huchzermeyer (2006) agree that the Huruma approach appears interesting, it is too early to reach a final judgement, particularly considering the limited results in terms of the outputs and scale of the Programme. A similar model of promoting Savings Schemes, carrying out of an enumeration and house planning was proposed in Kwa-maji in 2000-2001, but generated conflict and failed. A detailed account will be given in the next chapter.

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter has presented the origins of Nairobi's informal settlements, their current situation, and their role in the politics of the city. The chapter has also provided an account of the wider political situation and a brief and selective presentation of policies and programmes targeting informal settlements in Kenya. Many of the considerations, assumptions, and knowledge that shaped the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project are based on the experiences presented in this chapter.

In particular, this chapter has shown the relevance of the issue of land, and the fact that the provision of housing for slum dwellers has been an established and profitable commercial activity for a considerable period of time. The chapter reviewed previous programmes, investigating how most have been unable to cater for the poorest and have generated 'gentrification'. As a result, new programmes have attempted to rethink the security of tenure options, opening interesting policy debates that constituted the starting point of the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project.

Approaches to slum-upgrading in Kenya have had a variety of objectives and strategies which inspired some of the discussions in the team that designed the KUDP and enabled them to draw on previous experiences. For instance, the MINA approach of the Small Town Development Project was clearly aimed at recognising the *status quo* in order to enable development and, in the long term, generating new revenue streams for local authorities. By contrast, in Kibera, with very high public investment, the Programme was intended to change previous tenure relations by transforming tenants into owners of a permanent house through a tenant-purchasing scheme. The next chapter introduces the settlement of Kwa-maji, its history (in particular a past

failed slum-upgrading attempt), and its social organisation. It then analyses Kwamaji as a 'laboratory' for development agencies and looks at how local actors perceive both these agencies and the state.

4 Kwa-maji: history, social organisation and the previous upgrading programme

This chapter takes us into Kwa-maji, presenting its history, as well as the complex socio-economic context and multi-layered sets of social and political conflicts in the settlement. The social organisation of Kwa-maji is presented and its political relevance is illustrated through the history of a past slum-upgrading intervention, which continues to deeply influence the current local situation. The chapter also shows how Kwa-maji is the perfect locus for planned interventions. Over the years it has become an over-researched settlement where many external actors have implemented various projects, while local actors try to make the most out of their efforts, displaying a noteworthy 'knowledge' of development agencies. This is the context in which the pilot slum-upgrading intervention KUDP is being undertaken. It is the first attempt at a project of this nature by AIDX, which sought to develop its capacity in a new sector. The KUDP intervention intersected with the existing actors on the ground and had to deal with the social structure already in place.

4.1 History

At the outset of this research project, my sense was that the history of Kwa-maji was not very important in terms of the analysis of the KUDP. I was aware that a certain degree of background information was needed in order to contextualise my research, but I thought that Kwa-maji had originated in the same way as other informal settlements in the city, and as such a brief historical overview of Nairobi's informal settlements would suffice. As I got further into my research, I realised how the specificity of Kwa-maji's history was *fundamental* to understanding residents' claims and social dynamics in the area. Having recognised the importance of this local history, I assumed that researching it would be a straightforward task that could be based on existing literature. However, once I started to collect different academic theses and context analyses on the location, I began to perceive *contradictory narratives*. Following the example of the Nairobi Slum Inventory (Pamoja Trust & Slum Dwellers International, 2008), an NGO report that collected the oral history of the different informal settlements of Nairobi, I decided to interview some residents. I needed to clarify my doubts about the contradictions which, initially, I had attributed

to the inaccurate work of students or consultants writing their theses or reports too quickly. Rather than resolving my doubts, the narratives emerging from interviews added new complexities. The narratives were apparently contradictory; it was only once I triangulated the narratives and contextualised them from the perspective of the narrator that I managed to understand that the coexistence of different historical narratives was, in fact, consistent with the actor-oriented approach that I had adopted. I had to acknowledge the different ways of making sense of history but, at the same time, I faced the challenge of presenting a single coherent narrative that would outline the key elements of Kwa-maji history. The first section of this chapter attempts to do this. In this attempt at composing the history of the area, I have taken into account what has been argued widely in academic analyses of development interventions regarding the importance of local history and how it has been possible for development agencies to get history wrong and how that can contribute to project failure (e.g. Porter, *et al.*, 1991).

4.1.1 The origins of the settlement

Kwa-maji is a relatively recent slum:[41] the first settlers were probably workers from a nearby quarry who built temporary structures in the area in the early 1970s. The population of the slum remained low until 1977, when the Nairobi Mayor invested significant resources to clear up shanties in more central areas of the city in order to promote what he considered a healthier environment. As a result, more than 10,000 people were rendered homeless. Local Councillors relocated some of them to Kwa-maji. New demolitions led to other waves of migration, which created new villages within Kwa-maji: in 1978, in 1984 and in 1987. These villages were named after the various places from which newcomers had been evicted. In 1988, City Planning Department estimates considered Kwa-maji to be one of the fastest growing slums in Nairobi, with a population of 35,000 people.

Residents were allocated government owned land by City Councillors and local Chiefs in exchange for money and political support. The growth of the slum was enabled by temporary licences distributed to occupants on the basis of purely subjective criteria. The allocation of plots of land to new settlers was managed by a Committee composed of the area Chief, sub-Chiefs, local elders, and local representatives of the

[41] For instance, Kibera started after World War I when the British allocated the land to the Nubians to acknowledge their contribution during the war.

KANU party. The allocation of plots often operated along ethnic lines, reflecting systems of political patronage. Since the first evictions in 1977, the resettlement process has favoured Kikuyus; members of this ethnic group still own the majority of structures in the settlement. Other villages that were created later had a different ethnic composition, but ethnicity strongly influenced the settlement patterns in Kwa-maji. Those who obtained licences built structures, which they rented out to newcomers arriving from rural areas. This situation created *tenants* who rent the structure they live in, and *structure-owners* who own the structures but not the land.

The creation of a committee of elders by the local Chief to assist in local administration is normal practice in Kenya, dating back to colonial times (Section 3.1.4). In Kwa-maji, the influence of the elders was such that one of the villages (the settlement is currently composed of eight smaller neighbourhoods called villages) was originally named after a prominent elder on the allocation committee.

From the outset, village committees, working closely with the Chief, dealt with housing problems, village administration, and the settlement of disputes. They also worked to contain congestion and overcrowding by preventing individual plot-owners from extending their houses and controlled the informal market in structures (buildings). Moreover, the elders hired local youth gangs to police the community. The youth gangs were often implicated in violent activities. However, hiring those responsible for insecurity as security guards made the area safer. It also gave the elders the capacity to enforce their decisions, which further strengthened their position. Residents generally accepted paying a fee for the security service, thereby accepting stronger control in exchange for living in a safer place. However, the following account demonstrates that this has been problematic.

4.1.2 Important violent conflicts in the settlement

Avoiding conflict with the residents was a priority of the KUDP, which started just after the post-election violence of the beginning of 2008. Security was highlighted by the residents themselves as their main concern in the socio-economic studies and other participatory exercises connected to the slum-upgrading programme. In addition, the lack of reciprocal trust amongst residents and their scepticism towards development agencies were highlighted by KUDP staff as major constraints on

implementation. Therefore, it is important to understand the nature of the violence and conflicts in Kwa-maji prior to the KUDP. I will start with a brief account of some of the violent episodes in Kwa-maji's recent history. This account was created by triangulating newspaper articles, previous research, and the perspectives of residents who lived through the events. The following account is an attempt to integrate the multiple narratives, without claiming to portray an objective or 'true' history.

Ethnic tensions emerged in 1992, and were considered to be connected with gangs of thieves from AREA 1,[42] a specific village in Kwa-maji, who were accused of robbing properties of Luo[43] residents in the neighbouring AREA 2.[44] AREA 2 is part of Kwa-maji but not part of the KUDP, since the land on which it is built is privately owned. The Luos acquired a sense of unity and became politically encouraged by a visit by the prominent Luo leader, Odinga Odinga (father of the current Prime Minister), just before the elections. Some of them reacted by organising themselves into armed gangs. The level of conflict became high, with AREA 2 Luo residents threatening to burn down the entire AREA 1 village. In 1994 and 1997, similar episodes happened. The conflict reached a peak in 2001, when an innocent Kikuyu from AREA 1 was burned alive by Luos from AREA 2, who erroneously thought he was a thief. Another episode that raised conflict was when a gang from AREA 1 organised a robbery in AREA 2 during the day; one of the thieves was recognised, and the Luo destroyed his parents' properties.

At that time, the Mungiki,[45] an ethnically based criminal movement, were also consolidating their presence in Kwa-maji. Two of them were killed by Luos in Motomoto,[46] adjacent to Kwa-maji, and their bodies tied up with wire; Luos at that time were patrolling Motomoto and becoming better organised. Later on, the same group of Luo became known as the 'Talibans'. The Mungiki planned revenge, and one evening in March 2002 they killed over 20 Luos. Although the killings happened in

---

[42] Pseudonym.
[43] The second largest ethnic group in Kwa-maji.
[44] Pseudonym.
45 The Mungiki movement is characterised by a complex combination of ethnic, class, age, religious, and political dimensions that has attracted many disaffected urban youth (Frederiksen, 2010). Inspired by the Mau Mau movement and by anti-Western, anti-colonialist discourses, the Mungiki run a well-organised business of extortions in Nairobi's public transport system and they control protection rackets in many informal settlements. The Mungiki have engaged with politicians, providing them with security services and supporters (UN-Habitat, 2007).
[46] Pseudonym.

Motomoto, they were allegedly planned in Kwa-maji. After that, the Mungiki also took control of the protection racket of bus routes[47] in Motomoto, previously under the control of Luos.

If initially the security patrols in Kwa-maji were undertaken by a mixed group of youth, under the leadership of the elders and the Chief, from 2004 onwards the Mungiki took full control. People in Kwa-maji initially welcomed them and felt that they brought order and security at a time when weapons were easily available and the crime rate was extraordinarily high. They killed 'small guys' who were committing petty crimes, including people aged 13-14, forcing many of these young criminals to leave Kwa-maji, which was the base for their activities. Effectively, the Mungiki affiliates were engaging in community policing with the support of the Provincial Administration. What residents initially felt was a necessary service needed to re-establish safety and supported by government representatives soon turned into organised extortion, when the Mungiki began to act independently of any other local authority. For the security service they provided, they collected KSH 20 (0.20 euro in 2004) a week from every tenant household and KSH 50 (0.50 euro) from the owner of every structure.

From 2004 up to 2006, the Mungiki were in control of Kwa-maji. With the passage of time, however, they lost support and in 2006 they were expelled from the settlement. Not only was their security service increasingly being perceived as extortion, but they were also accused of gathering information on valuable properties (e.g. those with televisions) when they entered the homes to collect payments, and using this information to organise targeted robberies. One particular event is believed to have negatively affected the support of the local elders and the Chief: the Mungiki killed a structure-owner from AREA 1 who did not have (or did not want to pay) the money for the security fee.

The national context also changed, and the tacit political support the Mungiki had enjoyed before the 2002 elections – when they supported some political candidates[48]

---

[47] This is one of the most lucrative illegal activities of criminal youth gangs in Nairobi. It consists of asking protection fees from all public transport drivers on a certain route. Drivers comply under the threat of death.

[48] More information on Mungiki political support is available in the UN-Habitat 2007 Global Report on Human Settlements, p. 79.

– shifted to an open war against all Mungiki members. Another element that influenced the disappearance of the Mungiki was that the criminals forced into exile by the Mungiki began to come back on punitive expeditions, aimed at killing whoever was believed to belong to the Mungiki sect. At that point, after a general *baraza* (public meeting), the District Officer and the Chief stopped all youth patrols until proper training and reorganisation of community policing had been undertaken. Since then, and up until the end of my fieldwork (December 2010), community policing had not been reintroduced and the residents – despite facing increasing levels of crime – continue to be very sceptical of the idea deeming the Police better security providers than local gangs.

In 2007-2008, the violence that followed the general elections led to serious ethnic clashes in Kwa-maji. The socio-economic study undertaken for the KUDP estimated that in Kwa-maji at least 3,000 people were directly affected and 15 men died during the clashes.[49] Residents recognised acquaintances among the people who were looting their properties. The consequences were still being felt at the time of my fieldwork; some residents would not walk through certain areas populated predominantly by an ethnic group other than their own. Another significant event linked to the post election violence was that Luo tenants in AREA 2 expelled their landlords and refused to pay rent, allegedly killing one structure-owner who attempted to collect rent. Structure-owners in Kwa-maji became worried that their position could be undermined, a concern that was strengthened by their perception that Luo tenants had received political support.

4.1.3 History of the first slum-upgrading

In 2000, President Arap Moi made an unsuccessful attempt to be re-elected. During the election campaign, increasing pressure was mounted by civil society organisations, and, in particular, an urban land rights campaign, demanding that the government allocate land in the slums to squatters.[50] In this context, in November

[49] The KUDP conducted a socio-economic study based on a sample in December 2009 and later an enumeration of all residents. The implementation of these two processes is analysed in Chapter 8.

[50] In July 2000, different civil society organisations launched an urban land rights campaign; more than a thousand people from many different slums met in the same location for a day, bringing with them jars filled with earth from their respective slum lands. Recognising the injustice and even immorality of the Nairobi land distribution situation – where, they argued, 55% of the population of Nairobi occupies 1.5% of the land, and live as refugees in their own country – the campaigners asked for official recognition of the right to the land on which the urban poor live, and that this land issue be

that year, President Arap Moi visited Kwa-maji and publicly declared plans to hand over the land to the residents. At the same time, some residents – including some structure-owners – began working with an NGO to carry out an enumeration, in order to understand the existing situation and plan a process of slum-upgrading. A supportive Town Clerk promoted the enumeration of Kwa-maji residents as a first step towards the slum-upgrading effort. In 2001, some members of the community were even flown to India in order to learn from other slum communities, while in turn Indian and South African experts came to Kwa-maji to advise on the process.

Although the enumeration was an initial intervention and had no direct implications for the allocation of land, a group of structure-owners felt threatened by the process and used every available means to stop it. They established their own association, the Kwa-maji Owners Organisation[51] (KOO), which claimed to represent over 2,500 structure-owners (both resident and absentee).[52]

During the enumeration that took place in July 2001, the NGO in question wrote that 'there is a serious threat of violence from structure-owners who do not wish the enumeration to recognize the tenants'.[53] The Provincial Commissioner, despite being very supportive of the project, was compelled to recognise the presence of powerful structure-owners. Tensions arose between KOO members and the Police. The enumerators had to be protected by armed policemen while they performed their duties. Nevertheless, the ground work for the enumeration exercise was eventually completed. KOO collected money from its members, with the promise that title deeds would be given to them, and hired one of the top law firms in the country to file a civil suit against the Provincial Commissioner[54] and the Commissioner of Lands to oblige them to grant title deeds to its members. The tribunal involved in the civil suit against the Provincial Commissioner accepted the case and began the trial; this was considered to be a major victory for KOO. The planning of the slum-upgrading came to a halt shortly after the end of the enumeration, when the government withdrew its

---

included in the constitutional reform process (Weru, 2004). In August 2000, Anglican Bishop David Gitari joined the land campaign and, with the support of numerous spiritual leaders, the campaign became prominent on the political agenda.

[51] Pseudonym.

[52] Absentee structure-owners are people who own structures in Kwa-maji as investments, but do not live in Kwa-maji itself.

[53] Reference to the report has been omitted to maintain the anonymity of the location.

[54] See footnote 27.

support because of the court case against government institutions. The first hearing took place in October 2001 and the trial concluded in 2010 with the defeat of the applicants. Also, reciprocal accusations of mismanagement destroyed trust between the NGO and the residents involved and contributed to the failure of the project. At the time of my fieldwork, despite the death of their charismatic chairperson and their defeat in court, a weaker KOO continued to boycott the current KUDP by refusing to be enumerated and by making defamation claims against the implementers, with unfounded allegations of corruption and mismanagement of project resources.

The influence of these events was still being felt during my fieldwork and was recognised by the official KUDP report, which states, 'The structure-owners believe that they are the rightful owners of Kwa-maji slums through a presidential declaration by the former president, Daniel Moi' (KUDP 2008a: 2). The GoK is very aware of the centrality of the land issue in the programme. For example, one of the KUDP documents compiled by the Lead Government Agency clearly states:

> The success or otherwise of the upgrading exercise may well lie on how the issue of land ownership and security of tenure is handled. Land 'lords/owners' on the one hand are extremely sensitive about any moves that could jeopardise their ownership claims (KUDP 2008b: 4).

After this short historical introduction to Kwa-maji, the next section will provide a detailed social analysis of the settlement.

4.2 Social analysis

The slum of Kwa-maji is one of the largest informal settlements in Nairobi and at the beginning of the KUDP was believed to house approximately 120,000 people[55] and about 30 ethnic groups (Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya were among the major ones) on land owned by the government. Most of the households are considered poor, living without basic services in structures made out of temporary and recycled materials such as timber, mud walling and roofing made of polythene, cardboard and sometimes corrugated iron. KUDP documents state that 70% of the Kwa-maji population are under 30 years old, and at least 50% are aged less than 18.

[55] This figure was subsequently reduced to 34,000 following the enumeration. The next section will discuss this considerable gap.

One of the main problems is the high level of unemployment and underemployment, especially among young people. In Kwa-maji, there are no significant productive activities. The main economic activities are based on trade: small-scale grocery shops, food kiosks, second-hand clothing stands, barber shops and hair salons, illegal brewing, small enterprises and the sale of recycled goods collected from the dumping site. These are insufficient to fulfil the income generation needs of Kwa-maji inhabitants, leading to high unemployment and, according to the KUDP documents, high levels of crime and violence—illegal firearms are widely present in the settlement. Other major social problems include prostitution, HIV-Aids, drug addiction, alcoholism, sexual violence, criminality, and domestic violence. There is also a massive presence of street children who escape from the violence of the police in the city by finding a hiding place in the slums.

4.2.1 Social organisation

As already mentioned, the first settlers in Kwa-maji were allocated land on which they built structures to rent to newcomers from rural areas, creating tenants and structure-owners. Today, while the land in Kwa-maji belongs to the government, the structures belong to 4,300 structure-owners, over half of them living outside Kwa-maji (absentee structure-owners). According to the figures from the enumeration carried out by the KUDP in 2010 (these figures are problematic, see Chapter 8), there were 34,000 residents in Kwa-maji. This figure differs substantially from the figure of 100,000-120,000 people estimated in the initial KUDP documents. Of these 34,000, 19% are households of resident structure-owners and 81% are tenant households. The tenants have been further classified into long-term tenants (those who had lived in Kwa-maji for more than 10 years), making up 36% of the residents, and short-term tenants (those who have lived in Kwa-maji for less than 10 years), making up 45% of the population. The importance of this distinction will become clearer later on, when we turn to the negotiations to establish who should be considered a beneficiary of the land allocation process. These figures exclude the 2,300 absentee structure-owners who own 55% of Kwa-maji structures (a more detailed analysis of the enumeration process and its results is contained in Chapter 8).

In some of the discourses around the rights of slum dwellers, structure-owners are seen as illegitimate exploiters with political connections. In Kwa-maji, however, a significant proportion of structure-owners are people who invested their savings in structures, or people who moved to Kwa-maji more than 30 years ago and erected structures on the land allocated to them at the time. The team of the University of Nairobi that conducted the *Nairobi Situation Analysis* (Syagga, *et al.*, 2001) on behalf of UN-Habitat found it difficult not to define Kwa-maji structure-owners as landlords, since many of them were moved there more than 30 years ago by the local authorities who granted them permission to settle. Although they have never received official title deeds, they have always conceived of themselves as the owners of Kwa-maji. The specific history of Kwa-maji makes their claims more legitimate than those of many structure-owners in Nairobi's other informal settlements.

Members of the initial group of structure-owners have formed an elite group within Kwa-maji. However, the group that became dominant in the Residents' Committee created for the KUDP contains people with multiple identities, and its members are hard to define under a single term. Almost all are *structure-owners.* Indeed, property ownership is considered a prerequisite for joining the elite group because, as explained by an experienced development worker, 'when you own something you have an interest in the area, you are a shareholder of [Kwa-maji], and therefore you have the legitimacy to participate in the decision-making process' (Interview 7, 3/3/2010). They are also normally considered *wazee,* elders, which does not necessarily mean that they are 'old'; *wazee* is more a title of respect.[56] It means that they are called on to settle personal matters and small conflicts, or to help the Chief in doing so. They are also *gatekeepers,* who manage the access of external actors wanting to operate in Kwa-maji. Moreover, they are considered the *community representatives,* a role which is legitimated and formalised by the community elections (Chapter 5).

While this gives the general picture, it is important to acknowledge heterogeneity amongst the structure-owners. For instance, there are cases of powerful structure-owners who belong to a new generation becoming prominent in the community. Conversely, one structure-owner, previously one of the most prominent elders, owns

[56] In Kwa-maji, where over 50% of the residents are aged below 18, and 70% below 30; anyone aged above 40 is a potential elder.

a single poor structure in a dangerous area. An indication of his limited economic conditions was provided by his request to the local missionary for money to buy some new clothes. Despite this, he was invited to local meetings regarding the upgrading programme, more for his symbolic presence than for his actual contribution.

So far, this account of Kwa-maji has shown that there is an existing, consolidated and hierarchical social organisation in place. Community structures such as the elders of the village, have been used by the government through its representative – the Chief – to manage the settlement. The next chapter will examine how these pre-existing local institutions have been incorporated by the new governance structures created by the participatory policy of the KUDP.

Another important element in the social structure of Kwa-maji is the large presence of female-headed households, often composed of single mothers and their children. According to the KUDP socio-economic study, 45% of women interviewed said they were heads of household.[57] Several studies agree on the impotance of this household type, which, they argue, is often the most vulnerable. According to one study of Kwa-maji, domestic violence is a major factor in the formation of female-headed households, but not the only one. Some women heads were domestic workers who had become pregnant, and either had no money to go home or were afraid to, while others were runaways who had quarrelled with their parents. While there were significant numbers of women occupying leadership positions – both in the Residents' Committee and, significantly, in the Provincial Administration, (i.e. the Chief was a woman) – equality in the decision-making process was still far from being a reality. Gender inequality was particularly visible in how much men spoke in Residents' Committee meetings compared to women, but also when examining the greater weight of men's speeches in decision-making.

This short account demonstrates that although Kwa-maji has been a conflict-ridden settlement, it also has a consolidated social structure and organisation in place, as well as previous contested experiences of slum-upgrading. Social organisation in the

[57] One academic study reports that more than half of all households are female-headed. Tangaza College estimates that about 60% of homes in Kwa-maji are headed by women alone. I cannot reference these studies regarding Kwa-maji as they would reveal the real name of the location.

area has been constructed primarily around patterns of property ownership, shaped historically through the politics of patronage and ethnicity. Ethnic tensions around elections were connected with national politics but were also influenced by local patterns of property ownership.

4.2.2 Multi-layered conflict

Some aspects of the conflicts in Kwa-maji have been discussed in Section 4.1.2. However, conflict in the area is multi-layered: there is a low level of trust among community members; ethnicity can be easily manipulated to mobilise people; the youth are perceived as a threat by the rest of society; there is conflict between youth and elders, especially when youth activities may undermine the latters' leadership; youth from different areas are involved in conflicts that date back to the post-election violence; there are important gender issues, including intra-household gender violence; and the division between tenants and structure-owners is a substantial source of social conflict. The KUDP socio-economic study revealed that 72% of residents interviewed felt insecure in Kwa-maji; robberies and muggings were indicated as the most frequent crimes, while rape and kidnapping were also widespread.

Project documents often refer to Kwa-maji as a 'community', which may give the impression that residents represent a homogeneous community characterised by reciprocal trust. Mutual organisations such as 'merry-go-rounds' and funeral societies (self-help groups to contribute towards funeral expenses) are present in Kwa-maji, but they play a minor role in fostering social cohesion. Insecurity also generates coping mechanisms that unite people in facing a given situation. Many casual workers need to leave Kwa-maji very early in the morning to be at work on time. The hours before dawn are among the most dangerous and wary residents organise to meet close to their dwellings and walk together out of Kwa-maji. However, overall high levels of insecurity tend to divide people and increase distrust among residents.

A major conflict in Kwa-maji is that between tenants and structure-owners. It is important to underline how, following the 2007 post-elections violence, the refusal of AREA 2 tenants to pay rent, resulting in a *de facto* expropriation of properties,

increased such conflict, as described in Section 4.1.2. It is also useful to mention again the conflict between a group of structure-owners (KOO) and other residents working towards a slum-upgrading programme in 2001, which needed the constant intervention of the police (see Section 4.1.3). The conflict later moved to court, but after having lost the case in 2010, KOO members restarted the conflict through allegations of corruption and other forms of boycotting the new Kwa-maji Urban Development Project.

The socio-economic study conducted in 2009 (Chapter 8) also mentions rent and land issues as the cause of almost one-third of the conflicts in Kwa-maji; these were more important than insecurity (27%) and tribal animosity (13%). The Concept Paper of the KUDP notes that structure-owners assert their right to evict their tenants abruptly and without reason. Structure-owners can do so because of the informal character of rent agreements, and their close personal connections with the Provincial Administration. The unregulated nature of structure-owners' power in this regard creates relationships of patronage with their tenants.

Finally, it is important to consider the role of ethnicity within Kwa-maji. The socio-economic study, which is based on residents' perceptions, indicated that ethnicity is the third most important source of conflict in Kwa-maji, way below rent/land issues and insecurity. However, while a lot of violence is connected to crime, such activities have an ethnic dimension, since gangs are often formed on ethnic and kinship lines and commit their crimes in villages with different ethnic majorities. Moreover, the findings of an academic study show that even episodes of 'mob justice' are linked to ethnic interests, with members of an ethnically-based group lynching suspected criminals from another ethnicity, while sparing thieves from the same ethnic group.[58] The influence of ethnicity was lamented in the government report on the KUDP community elections, in which ethnic tension is described as latent and easily mobilised in order to achieve political goals.

4.2.3 'The state' in Kwa-maji

Kenya's existing fragmentation of governance was exacerbated following the national agreement to stop the post-election violence, when all the political parties became

[58] Reference to the study has been omitted to maintain the anonymity of the location.

part of an oversized government administration (Section 3.3). It is therefore difficult to conceive of the central government as a single coherent actor, and this is even truer for 'the state' as a whole, which operates at different levels and layers. In Kwa-maji, several actors represent the state in the eyes of the community and convey differing and contradictory messages.

The local Chief is often evaluated on the basis of his or her personality rather than the institution itself, with people recalling which Chief was good or bad, wise or only interested in money, and so on. Improvements in the security of Kwa-maji are highly reliant on the personal skills and behaviour of the Chief, and often also on the commitment of the District Officer and the District Commissioner, who can sometimes play significant parts. However, while the Provincial Administration can play a significant administrative role, for example organising important community meetings, residents are generally dissatisfied with the policing service it provides. The Police are the other government actor residents frequently interact with. However, residents consider the police patrols ineffective and have advocated for a proper police station. They complain that Police do not patrol enough in Kwa-maji and are unable to maintain security. While residents are also generally supportive of common 'on-the-spot executions' of alleged young thieves by the Police, which are common, they become quite critical of police action when they deem it to be taken to extremes – e.g. the killing of several youths at the same time – especially if some of the victims are considered to be innocent or are the children of what is considered a decent family in the community.

Theoretically, the City Council is the service-providing body of the state which is closest to the community. The reality is quite different, however. In Kwa-maji, residents sent away the Councillor, who was responsible for advocating for adequate services for his ward, and told him not to come back. In Kwa-maji, people do not expect much from the City Council; but at the same time, City Council officials do not bother residents too much with business licences, taxes and bribes. We could say that in Kwa-maji, the City Council is absent and this is demonstrated by the complete absence of the local Councillor who was 'banished'. Under the KUDP upgrading programme, the City Council has returned to Kwa-maji in the form of a technical office, which is providing the design of the roads and supervising the work of the

contractor. Residents' leaders do not have a good relationship with this office and one of the City Council officers told me openly about his difficulties working with Kwa-maji residents (FN 11/02/10).

In the eyes of the residents, 'the state' is also the national census, which is conducted by external enumerators and boycotted by many; the broken promise of the retired President to give the land of Kwa-maji to its residents; and the Lead Government Agency. The latter has built a good working relationship with community leaders in the context of the KUDP, but also represents the many other Ministries involved at different levels in the project. 'The state' is also the perceived inefficiency of the public Nairobi Water and Sewage Company, which completed the implementation of urgent anti-drought measures only *after* the rainy season. And finally, 'the state' is the daily conflicts amongst the country's political leadership about which residents read in the newspapers and other media.

This section has shown the multiplicity and heterogeneity of residents' encounters with the state. In order to understand the relationship between residents and the state in relation to the implementation of the KUDP, it is important to consider Akhil Gupta's (1995) point regarding the need to acknowledge the richness and complexity of encounters between the poor and 'the state', as well as the discourses of residents around the state and state actors. In other words, it is necessary to appreciate the multiple ways in which the 'everyday state' and its interventions are experienced (Fuller & Harriss, 2001: 26), and especially the ways in which development interventions and the state itself are co-produced by the poor in and through such everyday encounters (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005). The next section will explore Kwa-maji as a locus for development interventions, adding further details in relation to how residents perceive external actors, particularly the government.

4.3 Kwa-maji: the social lab

> The slum area is a very complicated area, it is an area that you can get everything you want. If you are a politician, you can get the followers, you can get the youth to manipulate. If you are a churchman, you can get the followers. It is so dynamic so people tend to misuse whatever it is to manipulate people down there into the place. So it is very very tricky and that is why you cannot find one form of system [to develop a slum] being used into another area (Former civil servant and UN employee, Interview 16, 15/04/2010)

Kwa-maji is generally considered to be one of the most dangerous areas of the city. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, Kwa-maji is widely known, in conjunction with some other large informal settlements such as Kibera, Mathare, Korogocho and Kawangware, as a slum that has reached mythological dimensions in the imaginations of richer Nairobi residents and development workers. Any respectable development agency wanting to showcase their new sensitivity to the 'urban problem' of slums – an issue that is now central in development policy (Chapter 1) – has to have a flag in one of these settlements. Nairobi hosts the headquarters of UN-Habitat, which deals with urban development, and it is therefore the ideal 'showroom' for development agencies. Along with other, similar areas, Kwa-maji is an ideal settlement in which to place a project and has thus attracted several. Nairobi also hosts the regional headquarters of most donor agencies and large NGOs, giving local organisations relatively easy access to different types of grants to implement small projects (e.g. Huruma Slum-Upgrading Programme, section 3.5.5). NGOs need 'communities' in which to implement their projects, and 'communities' which know how to properly welcome foreign agencies are able to attract a significant quantity of projects.

Next to the Residents' Committee office in Kwa-maji is the *Maendeleo Afya Kwa Wote Kwa-maji*, a private community health clinic run by a number of residents. When the Steering Committee of the KUDP asked the government intervention to 'show' *maendeleo* (development/progress) to the community, the Ministry of Health began directly supporting the clinic. Opposite is the office of *Kwa-Maji Beauty,*[59] an NGO run by a section of the local youth that organises a popular beauty contest every year in which the winners receive scholarships. These young people also run a community

[59] Pseudonym.

radio, *Kwa-maji FM*. Not too far away, the flag of a donor country waves from a community school where the wife of the Ambassador personally implemented sanitation improvements. Nearby, there are the community toilets funded by another OECD donor, where faeces are used to create gas for cooking. On the road that passes these projects, you can read the signs of past and present development projects, including signs for Scouts' organisations, community-based organisations, and the logos of different donor organisations. There are also private schools, clinics and social projects run by Muslim and Christian religious institutions.

One of Nairobi's urban legends is of particular significance. The story relates that in Kwa-maji there are more churches than toilets. New churches sprout in the area on a regular basis, often working as small individual 'businesses'. To set up a new church, it is sufficient to rent a structure, choose a name for the church and an impressive title for the preacher, and commence giving sermons. As a result, there are many religious denominations and a large number of Popes and Bishops.

The KUDP considers itself a holistic and comprehensive project. It has created structures of community governance and tried to reduce the fragmentation of development interventions by saying that everyone who wants to work in Kwa-maji should present a proposal to the programme's Steering Committee, then to the Residents' Committee and, if approved, implement it within the framework of the wider upgrading programme. But since the entry points into the community are many, and even the government authorities are fragmented, other development organisations can continue to access Kwa-maji in different ways.

Organisations typically require gatekeepers to provide an entry point to a community. Since Kwa-maji is divided into seven different villages, any of the recognised elders of these villages can provide the implementing agencies with beneficiaries for their projects. Any action requires the informal approval of the government-nominated Chief but rather than insisting that potential project implementers report to the Steering Committee of the KUDP, the Chief frequently approves the project him or herself – usually in exchange for a fee – if it is considered to be of benefit to the community. In addition, church institutions and schools can provide easy access to beneficiaries, enabling donors to bypass the 'community

bureaucracy' of the upgrading project.[60] Moreover, some organisations have been working in the area for many years, and feel that they have a right to continue to do so with their local partners, without needing to coordinate with the more recent upgrading programme. One result is that no one is aware of the exact number and nature of the different development initiatives underway at any one time. This has some paradoxical effects; with the policies of the different interventions often being inconsistent and offering contradictory incentives. For example, one project gives a loan only after someone has saved a certain amount, another gives people start-up capital or a cash transfer, while yet another provides a cash allowance if people attend a training course, enabling participants to acquire savings that may allow them to access credit.

Smart gatekeepers have been making a living from development for a long time. In particular, community leaders, who are often village elders (section 4.2.2), are paid to provide services to development organisations, such as calling meetings, ensuring participation, mediating with the community, identifying beneficiaries and so on. While community leaders live off development by working as gatekeepers, a number of beneficiaries are also able to make a living from development. In particular, some clever youths can live off this system by moving strategically between different training sessions, earning 'sitting allowances' (i.e. cash payments for attending meetings/trainings) plus an inordinate number of certificates to add to their long CVs. Some study what different NGOs have to offer and carefully select how to maximise their benefits, although in a more casual fashion than established gatekeepers. Often they complement their income from this source with occasional employment.[61]

There is a sort of next stage, which is represented by those young people who, through church organisations or foundations, have obtained scholarships and

---

[60] For instance, development agencies can implement different types of educational initiatives, such as HIV/Aids prevention, through the parents' group of a specific school. The Catholic Church has also provided access to Women and Youth Groups or Small Christian Communities (groups of believers living in the same area upon which the church is structured). Even infrastructure improvements can be implemented bypassing the community structures. For example, an NGO improved school toilets and a UN agency provided a brand new football pitch inside the Catholic Church compound, providing a community facility but bypassing the community gatekeepers and bureaucracy.

[61] A recent policy shift towards youth has pushed development organisations to increasingly target young people. Some of these organisations hire local youths to do community work in Kwa-maji as part of youth projects.

obtained university degrees up to masters level, sometimes even abroad. Because, they still enjoy living where they were born and have a full understanding of how the NGO business works, they are able to set up Community-Based Organisations, self-help groups or even NGOs and are able to attract funding. Some of these young people had gained status through their involvement in development activities, including the KUDP (Chapter 6); they also enjoy a higher level of education than 'traditional' community leaders such as the elders. Sometimes this can create conflict because the elders perceive their position as established development-brokers to be challenged by this younger generation, as illustrated in an example in Chapter 6.

An important entry point is a local Roman Catholic Church which, besides being actively involved in the upgrading project, runs several development and welfare programmes in the area. The church also networks with other churches and organisations, and undertakes much advocacy work for slum dwellers' rights. Therefore, it offers the physical as well as social infrastructure needed by external agencies to enter Kwa-maji. The openness of Catholic priests makes the parish a suitable place for development organisations to initiate their projects.

Some development organisations contacted AIDX to obtain documents and context analyses of Kwa-maji before starting a project, but then disappeared soon after and never returned for feedback following their own research. AIDX staff complained a lot about this type of behaviour. One of these development organisations, after collecting all the literature available from the KUDP project, sent a European consultant. During my fieldwork, this consultant came to the parish, where the priest was asked to gather groups of women and young people. The consultant bought some soft drinks and the invitees took part in what was supposed to be a participatory focus group, but turned into a lengthy series of questions and answers mediated by interpreting English to Swahili and vice-versa. These participants had answered the same questions many times and had pre-prepared answers ready to please the visitor (see also section 2.4.5).

In another telling episode that took place during my fieldwork, the Regional Office of another big donor agency that had been supporting the local Roman Catholic Church's projects for years wanted to rethink their youth policy, and needed to

interview some local youths from Nairobi slums. They came by taxi and, with the help of a contact in the parish, invited random youths into the car, to ask them about their lives in Kwa-maji, and the problems they faced. The encounter had a tinge of the absurd, as each interviewee was tried to please the researchers by proffering accounts from the field that he knew they needed – accounts that were largely fictional.[62]

In 2010, probably the most important human rights NGO in the country used Kwa-maji as the location to do research on teenage pregnancy and unsafe abortion (abortion is illegal in Kenya). It reported that 92% of the young women interviewed (over 75% of whom were below the age of 22) 'had procured an abortion'. Kwa-maji was used to support a national campaign to legalise abortion. Another well-known global human rights organisation collected a lot of data in Kwa-maji for a report on the risks of being raped on the way to toilet facilities. The report presented women's experiences in the slums of Nairobi and argued that more and better toilets would help prevent gender violence.

In short, Kwa-maji has provided a variety of organisations with the data they need for their own advocacy activities and to raise their profiles. Often, it was a source of 'shocking' and sensational data that could be used to further organisational objectives, as well as empirical data needed to justify projects.

This section has shown the complexity and number of development interventions underway at the same time in Kwa-maji. The KUDP not only tried to help the residents with new development interventions but also tried to create governance structures capable of regulating prior interventions. The KUDP attempted to bring under the control of a single body the wide array of activities taking place in the settlement and to improve the coordination of such initiatives. However, as we shall see, it only partially managed to accomplish this task.

---

[62] The contents of this encounter were reported to me by a member of the community who had agreed to be in the car as a translator/mediator.

4.3.1 Over-researched

Another point which gives credence to the metaphor of Kwa-maji as a 'lab', is that residents feel 'studied' and constantly under observation.[63] Within the relatively short span of time that I was there (September 2009 – December 2010), the population was subject to four massive research projects, and many more localised feasibility studies and baseline surveys. The first was the national census (August 2009). A network of slum dwellers set up a task force in order to monitor the census and get an understanding of its accuracy.[64] They reported that external enumerators came to Kwa-maji and tried to collect detailed information from the already over-researched inhabitants, and – according to this task force – since the inhabitants were tired of being asked private details by strangers, more than half of the residents refused to be counted. It is impossible to know the exact census coverage achieved, but these observations are enough to cast serious doubts on the validity of the census exercise in Kwa-maji and similar areas.

Shortly after, a team from the Lead Government Agency of the KUDP carried out a survey called 'numbering of structures'. Using a map of the settlement, they identified every structure, painted a number on every door and registered the owner of each one. This was followed by the KUDP socio-economic survey, which was sub-contracted by UNX to a private consultancy firm. The latter carried out an extensive survey that was administered to a significant sample of the households and businesses, and several focus groups in every village in December 2009. Finally, in May/June 2010, a full enumeration of every head of household in Kwa-maji was conducted by the Lead Government Agency in conjunction with members of the Residents' Committee (Chapter 8). Many other NGOs and actors, including public service providers and other government departments, carried out studies. Residents received little or no feedback from these research projects, and felt as though something was being stolen from them, since they perceived the researchers to be making a living from their work but leaving the people with nothing.[65] Sometimes, there was a sort of final focus group discussion of the data as a validation exercise,

---

[63] This, of course, has serious implications for the position of an independent researcher within this community, discussed in greater detail in the methodology chapter.

[64] This network of slum dwellers decided to monitor the process of data collection of the national census because they argued that census data regarding informal settlements are used by policy-makers to decide budget allocations for these areas. Therefore, the network wanted to comprehend how accurate such data were.

[65] This remark was also made to me by community members in relation to my research (see Chapter 2).

but these tended to be more a confirmation of the data for the researcher than a return of something to the community.

Even AIDX complained that, despite the fact that some development agencies initially asked for permission and for available data, after completing their own research, they never again contacted AIDX or the Steering Committee of the upgrading programme to discuss their findings and present their project ideas. Officers from AIDX and the Lead Government Agency clearly expressed frustration when faced with a repetition of uncoordinated efforts and a failure by the different agencies to share data and analysis. AIDX and the Lead Government Agency could not do much about the private NGOs, but what was particularly worrying for them was that they also had difficulty in obtaining research results on time from UNX, when this research had been commissioned and paid for by the KUDP.

Therefore, despite the fact that the community is over-researched, there is still a lack of reliable information. The first page of the KUDP socio-economic survey released in March 2010 states that, regarding the number of people living in Kwa-maji, we should rely on (at the time) forthcoming government census data which was expected to provide accurate figures. However, as observed above, the data are highly problematic. Moreover, the most controversial and important aspect of the socio-economic survey – i.e. the relationships between tenants and structure-owners – was eliminated from the research during a preliminary workshop in which the consultancy firm and the Residents' Committee discussed the contents of the survey to be undertaken (Chapter 8).[66]

Some of the researchers were aware of the problems likely to arise from working in an 'over-researched community'. The evaluation of one of the many NGO interventions in the area states: 'Residents in the area are highly accustomed to being questioned about their lives and receive regular visits from researchers investigating a wide variety of topics'. Therefore, the evaluation report continues, 'respondents learn what interviewers are expecting to hear and give standard answers to familiar questions'. The report concludes that 'Households in [Kwa-maji] are extremely unlikely to respond honestly to questions about income, and are very accustomed to

[66] The reasons for this elimination are provided in Chapter 8.

manipulating surveys'. However, this awareness did not prevent any organisation from undertaking its own 'social experiments'.[67]

4.3.2 Pilot projects as social experiments

In his book, *Development projects as policy experiments*, Rondinelli (1993) underlines the discrepancy between the nature of the development process and its management practice. In his view, development agencies 'seek to *control* rather than to *facilitate* development' (1993: 3, my emphasis). For Rondinelli, development policies are *social experiments*, which should be able to deal with the complexity and uncertainty of social change. Unfortunately, the administrative practices of development are all too often 'obsessed' with 'control' and are unable to cope with such complexity and uncertainty. In this context, the concept of the 'pilot project' often serves to cover up this dilemma.

Most projects in Kwa-maji are 'pilots', 'phase one', or tests – all aim to demonstrate an approach, to find 'the right way'– the best way – the most effective solutions. What happens in practice is that, since the situation is extremely dynamic and requires ongoing negotiation, no pre-determined project can work. However, rather than admitting that there is no 'recipe for development', development workers are likely to claim that they are looking for just such a recipe. Therefore, Kwa-maji becomes a 'community lab', in which development agencies conduct social experiments of many kinds. Every project is a pilot project which, while it needs extra commitment to find the right approach, once found it is believed that this will be replicable elsewhere. In practice, most of the projects remain pilots. Every case is for different reasons exceptional: 'As soon as organisers provided details on a case, these always turned out to be exceptional when compared with the model' (Hilhorst, 2003: 123). AIDX admitted that their level of commitment and investment in the KUDP was not sustainable for every project and was only justified by the fact that they were looking for an approach that, once identified and perfected, could be replicated indefinitely at lower costs. The belief that there can be a best practice that can work as a panacea was unquestioned. There was little recognition that every situation is different, that every project generates conflicts and involves negotiations, and therefore that every

[67] Both examples reveal a dynamic similar to what has been described by Mosse (2005: 91-93). In his analysis of needs assessment through Participatory Rural Appraisal, Mosse argues that beneficiaries were replying with what they thought development consultants wanted to hear.

project requires an incredible amount of commitment to be successful. Another important aspect is that the presence of so many projects implemented at the same time on the same population makes it very difficult to disentangle the effects on the target group of one project from those of another intervention. Thus, it is very difficult for the implementing organisations to evaluate the effects of their projects.

The 'community'[68] does not have a passive role in these experiments. Over the years, they have become familiar with the development agencies – the way they work, the language they speak. Every elder knows how to speak about gender, participation, community, partnership, savings, and the other 'buzzwords' (Cornwall & Brock, 2005).[69] Gatekeepers know how to use their privileged access to the agencies to create patronage relationships within the community. Residents – in exchange for benefits – will act in the way indicated by the gatekeepers according to what they think the agency needs or wants. The 'community' knows very well the 'rules of development': it understands competition amongst different agencies, and how to exercise its bargaining power, to such an extent that the 'community' was able to undermine the important relationship between a donor government and a large UN agency, as explained in section 6.4. Agencies which are not willing to bargain with 'the community' – or which have too many constraints – are simply left out. Learned behaviour emerges from being involved in many community participation projects (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 135) and it is residents, particularly the elites, 'who acquire "planning knowledge" and learn how to manipulate it' (Mosse, 2001: 21). These elites are much more knowledgeable of the needs and functioning of development agencies than the latter are of local dynamics (Hilhorst, 2003).

4.3.3 Conflicting interests and approaches

All of the community and development actors discussed thus far pursue their own interests, which are sometimes in conflict with each other. For instance, an OECD

[68] Community is a problematic concept in my study. I use the term 'community' in inverted commas when I refer to what the development agencies believe the community to be; but in reality what they consider the 'community' is a small elite group that has access to development agencies and purports to speak on behalf of all the residents. To indicate the people who live in the settlement, I prefer to use the term *the residents of Kwa-maji* rather than *the community*. Community is a concept that contains certain values of unity and homogeneity which the development policy would like to be therein order to foster collaboration, social capital, and conflict resolution, but that are in practice imposed upon a heterogeneous group of residents.

[69] As noticed by Cecilia Jackson in a rural context, 'farmers readily learn the language of participation, and what is articulated should not too readily be taken, at face value, as a thoroughgoing adherence to participatory philosophies' (1997: 244).

ambassador's wife complained to AIDX about its road project, which was disrupting people's work activities, and wanted to have her say in the project. Programme staff explained to me that UNX were obliged to fund her soap-making income-generating activities with a group of women in order to placate her.

One complaint AIDX had was about the construction of community cookers fuelled with gas generated by the faeces of public toilets. Despite the fact that serious concern was expressed about their safety at a conference of donor agencies engaged with urban development, an OECD donor went ahead and built the cookers in the area covered by the AIDX-funded KUDP project. In a private meeting with me, an officer at AIDX lamented that, as a result of this project, untrained community organisations are managing potential 'bombs' (i.e. the cookers) in the most crowded and dangerous areas of the community. Moreover, these community cookers had been constructed in Kwa-maji without any discussion regarding their location within the upgrading project, and therefore they might well have been constructed in a location where the KUDP was planning to build something else. The officer could not do anything about this issue, since he did not have the authority to challenge another important OECD country. What he did not know was that one of the staff members working for him on the project, to whom he had probably openly voiced this complaint several times, had obtained funding for his studies from the other government involved and had been given the contract to evaluate the community cookers, which he did in very positive terms. Development workers on the ground are thus 'brokers' (Lewis & Mosse, 2006) who can wear multiple and contradictory 'hats' (cf. Mallarangeng & Tuijl, 2004: 924) and institutional affiliations in the same area and at the same time.

4.3.4 Community expectations and relationships towards development agencies

An important issue underlined by community members and other stakeholders working in Kwa-maji is their feelings of being cheated and used both by politicians and NGOs, who both obtain funds in the name of Kwa-maji without, in the eyes of residents, leaving much for the community. Kwa-maji residents had contributed to many feasibility studies, workshops, and focus groups, but often, they complained, the promised projects had either never materialised or had achieved little impact.

As noted already, during the last 10 years, Kwa-maji has hosted a large number of NGOs and different development programmes, and many of the current community leaders have been involved in past development initiatives.[70] KUDP staff underlined how Kwa-maji representatives have a high level of awareness and knowledge of development agencies' operational practices. Many Kwa-maji representatives have been abroad, and some leaders had founded community-based organisations which later became NGOs, and were able to attract their own funding. There have always been a significant number of development actors willing to work in Kwa-maji, but the number of proposals has increased since the beginning of the upgrading programme. As a result, Kwa-maji leaders are not desperate to accept any funding or proposal, but rather choose carefully and are able to negotiate conditions.

As we have mentioned, Kwa-maji was formed after different waves of evictions from more central slums; government intervention was therefore a violent action which forced original residents out of their dwellings. This was subsequently followed by years of neglect – with the exception of populist promises before every election. Therefore, the community residents are suspicious of every actor who approaches them. Community scepticism has been identified by both NGOs and the government as the major obstacle to development interventions in Kwa-maji. From the perspective of community members, many researchers have collected information, written their reports and received salaries, but so far little benefit from these research interventions has reached the residents. The perception that external interventions are exploitative has existed for a long time, and the minimum expected by community leaders involved in development activities is to be paid for their work (which is becoming increasingly demanding with the KUDP). 'Development' is the way that gatekeepers have been making their living for many years. Development agencies are competing to work with the same target groups, so the latter are more than happy to attract overlapping external help, and to play strategically to obtain the most out of it.

[70] This emerged clearly from interviews and participant observation.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has presented the context in which the KUDP is being implemented. It started out with the local history of Kwa-maji and particularly the long struggle around the issue of land and the failure of a previous slum-upgrading project. My social analysis of Kwa-maji has presented the conflicts amongst different groups and described the social organisation of the area. Subsequently, Kwa-maji has been presented as '*the* place' for development interventions; a human 'lab' where external agencies attempt to implement different types of research and development projects, while beneficiaries adapt to the situation in varying ways.

Kwa-maji is a 'lab' where various development actors attempt to carry out their operations. These interventions, however, are not passively accepted by the residents, who use their agency to shape the projects proposed by external actors in an attempt to achieve their own aspirations. The KUDP attempted to coordinate all the existing development initiatives in Kwa-maji. It also introduced policy ideas of liberal democratic representation and participation. Local gatekeepers – who have learned over the years how to manage project implementers – have found ways to subvert policies and maintain their leadership through patronage politics and other strategies. The following chapter will look at how the local elite of landlords manipulated the participatory and democratic process at stake in the creation of the structures of community governance.

5 Building community governance: the (non)management of Participation

Community and democratic participation continue to be essential components of mainstream development interventions. Development agencies need community partners in order to implement their programmes, and are therefore concerned with 'building' communities and their governance structures. However, the informal settlements in Nairobi host heterogeneous and fragmented residents who are socially divided into two main groups: structure-owners and tenants (Chapter 4). This chapter analyses the effects on social in/equality of the implementation of KUDP policies that are technically participatory. In brief, I shall argue that the project's aim of seeking democratic representation from 'the community' failed to take account of pre-existing power imbalances and conflicts.

Much writing in the area of urban development studies has examined how state-driven regeneration programmes have resulted in displacement and gentrification (Bassett, *et al.*, 2003; Campbell, 1990). Recent studies have shown, on the contrary, how communities self-organise to demand public services, and have praised the collective action of disadvantaged urban communities in pursuit of their own development (Appadurai, 2001; D'Cruz, *et al.*, 2009; Mitlin, 2008; Weru, 2004). Despite their different approaches and conclusions, these two bodies of work share an exploration of the relationships between 'the state' (or other development agencies) and 'communities'. Contributors to this debate seldom problematise the community itself, despite the fact that it is widely acknowledged in the literature that slums are some of the most unequal settlements in the world.

For a long time, a variety of authors have observed the marginality of poor urban tenants, their relationship with landlords, and their exclusion from local organisations (Amis, 1984; Gilbert & Varley, 1990; Nelson, 1979; Rakodi, 1995c). Research has also shown how community leaders in low-income urban areas do not represent all residents and how the interests of women are frequently ignored (Ward & Chant, 1987). There is also significant work exploring the diversity of livelihood strategies among slum dwellers (Beall, 2002; Rakodi, 1995b; Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones,

2002). Yet, with a few notable exceptions (De Wit & Berner, 2009; Dill, 2009; Lemanski, 2008; Zérah, 2009), there is limited exploration of the impact of residents' social organisation and internal community dynamics on more recent participatory projects in urban areas, particularly with regard to slum-upgrading programmes. There is, of course, much significant work questioning the notion of community in development at a more general level (e.g. Mohan & Stokke, 2000), and in relation to *rural* participatory projects in particular (e.g. Chhotray, 2004; Mosse, 2001; Platteau, 2004). This chapter builds on this latter literature to examine what happens to pre-existing inequalities in the context of the implementation of an urban development programme through 'participatory' frameworks. It looks inside the 'black box' of 'community', in order to analyse the process through which structures of community governance are created, particularly *community elections.* It also explores how the wider political situation – specifically post-election violence – as well as limitations on government capacity affect the way participation is managed.

The chapter starts out with a selective review of the relevant literature on the concept and practice of 'community participation' and 'elite capture', developing what was briefly mentioned in Chapter 1. It is followed by an ethnographic account of the process of creating structures of community governance in Kwa-maji. This account provides the basis for analysing the progressive process of exclusion of certain sections of residents, and for a critical examination of the impact of pre-existing social inequality on the participatory project. The analysis of this process draws on the history of Kwa-maji and prior interventions, and on the account of social organisation presented in the previous chapter.

5.1 Community participation and 'elite capture' in current development discourses and practices

In the 1980s, the failure of large-scale, state-driven, and top-down approaches – which ignored the priorities and needs of the poor – opened a debate on participatory development, with the idea of 'putting the last first' in the planning of development interventions (Chambers, 1983, 1997). The key idea was to learn from the poor, and to understand the complexity of their social reality in order to design more appropriate programmes in conjunction with intended beneficiaries. The concept of

participation entered mainstream development, defining what became critically termed a 'new orthodoxy' in the 1990s (Gardner & Lewis, 1996). 'Participation' remains at the heart of both development discourses and practices today.

With the passage of time, a growing body of work has begun to examine how participatory approaches and techniques can easily turn into another form of domination (Woost, 1997) and be deployed to control the poor (Craig & Porter, 1997). According to Mosse (2005: 96), these techniques have often become rituals aimed at transforming people into the beneficiaries of development interventions. Moreover, participatory projects have unwittingly built upon pre-existing power structures, often reinforcing them (Chhotray, 2004; Mosse, 2005) to the advantage of the 'learning elites' (Wilson, 2006). These learning elites are formed by local people who have learnt how to manage the discourse and process of participation, and are able to exploit these skills to gain (or maintain) privileged access to development resources. They present themselves as representatives of a community, and become intermediaries between project officials and beneficiaries. Thus, several studies have argued that participatory projects are vulnerable to 'elite capture' (Platteau, 2004), and create parallel structures, subtracted from the democratic process and public scrutiny (Green, 2000; 2002: 67).

A common argument is that in communities with 'serious power imbalances [...] the poor are heavily dependent on vertical links with local elites, [therefore] it is difficult to form the horizontal associations necessary for organising collective action for the common good' (Das Gupta, Grandvoinnet, & Romani, 2004: 28). When collective action takes place, elites may strongly oppose it or capture the benefits (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2000). In very unequal communities, 'the "elite capture" problem becomes more acute' (Abraham & Platteau, 2004: 229).[71] Zérah corroborates this point by arguing that 'class remains a relevant category in understanding participation as a terrain of struggle' (2009: 859) – an important argument for the analysis of the KUDP set out here.

[71] This thesis engages more extensively with the existing literature on 'elite capture' of participatory processes in the Conclusion, after having considered and analysed empirical evidence from other chapters.

More recently, other authors have recognised that participatory planning has opened up new spaces that are potentially empowering (Cornwall, 2002; Hickey & Mohan, 2004). '[U]nderstanding the ways in which [participation] relates to existing power structures and political systems provides the basis for moving towards a more transformatory approach to development rooted in the exercise of citizenship' (Hickey & Mohan, 2004: 5). However, the capacity of participatory programmes to achieve more efficient and equitable results than their top-down predecessors continues to be seriously questioned (Dill, 2009).

Another problematic issue relating to participatory approaches is their often-idealised view of harmonious 'natural' communities, a view which suffers from a lack of understanding of power structures (Guijt & Shah, 1998; Mohan & Stokke, 2000; Mosse, 2001), and of how community representatives may be motivated by individual interests rather than the good of the collective (White, 1996). Participation is the outcome of a political process influenced by participants' inequalities in terms of access to resources and power (Mayoux, 1995: 245). These misunderstandings regarding communities and personal incentives have meant that participatory projects may serve to entrench rather than reduce inequalities.

5.2 The community elections of 2008

With its emphasis on democratic community participation, it was necessary for the KUDP to identify legitimate representatives of Kwa-maji, both in order to deal with government officials in the implementation of the programme, and to secure community support. The KUDP therefore set about organising the election of a Residents' Committee.

However, during a first preliminary meeting between the implementers and six elders of Kwa-maji – who were mostly part of the local elite of structure-owners, as explained in the previous chapter – the latter argued that holding elections in Kwa-maji 'was likely to cause tension in the community' (KUDP, 2008e: 2). They convinced the implementers that, instead of elections, would be better to promote a process led by the local Chief whereby, during *barazas* (public meetings) held in each village, residents would select two representatives. Two weeks later, in another

consultative meeting, the same elders reiterated their opinion that elections were not appropriate at that moment. Instead, they proposed to have simultaneous meetings in each village to select representatives for the Residents' Committee. The elders, who held an established position of power, perceived that their situation might be challenged by the proposed elections and tried to resist the process. In the preparation of community elections, the Lead Government Agency consulted those members of Kwa-maji who had the most to lose from elections. Although initially convinced by the argument that community elections were a risky undertaking in the aftermath of national post-election violence (a reasonable argument), in the end the implementers insisted on holding elections. However, they were willing to negotiate the social composition of the elected committee, and the rules and methods for the elections.

The project implementers began by opening up the consultations beyond the initial group of six elders. A first stage in this process was a two-day listening survey (June 2008), carried out by university students accompanied by village elders and supervised by project staff. In the words of a programme officer, it was conducted 'to get [a sense of] the feelings on the ground'. The survey asked people who the opinion leaders were in the community, among other things. Names were collected and these people were subsequently invited for an 'Opinion Leaders' Sensitization Workshop', which was attended by 42 people (July 2008).

This workshop drew up the methodology for elections, including the key issue of the composition of the Residents' Committee. The official report of the workshop states that, 'After lengthy discussions, it was agreed that the Residents' Committee should comprise six community representatives from each of the seven villages:[72] two structure-owners, one tenant, one woman, one youth and one elder' (KUDP, 2008a: 7). Crucially, in terms of the eventual outcome, there was no further elaboration of how these categories would be interpreted.

Barazas were then held in each of the villages, where, as stated by the official report on the elections, 'the *structure-owners* met and agreed to collectively support the programme' (KUDP, 2008b: 3, my italics). In one subsequent *baraza,* the District

[72] Initially two villages were considered one by the programme.

Officer announced that the elections would take place at the beginning of August. Prior to this date, there was an information campaign, involving street-posters, and mobile loudspeaker announcements from the programme vehicle. As regards the actual voting process in August 2008, the Kenyan Government report states: 'The voter turnout for the Residents' Committee election was high, with some villages recording several hundreds of people who had turned out in readiness for the exercise' (KUDP, 2008b: 19). In an interview, a programme officer commented, 'There was a high turnout, the lines were very long', and concluded that the elections had 'created emotions, but were peaceful. [...] It was a democratic process' (Interview 1, 17/11/2008).

The outcome of this process was that the KUDP now had its own 48-member Residents' Committee; and the community partner needed to proceed with implementation. The elected leaders were given training and became the conduit between the government and the 'community'. During the 'Leadership Training Workshop' that took place 10 days after the Committee was elected, a government official explained that the Committee would have important functions relating to the key issue of land allocation. These included 'definition and identification of the target groups and beneficiaries; coordinating verification of the lists of beneficiaries; selection of development and planning options, including land tenure, layout options, physical improvement options; resolving structure ownership disputes; resettlement of residents displaced by planning and infrastructure improvements' (KUDP, 2008c: 6-7).

The first, and most basic, point to make about these elections is that the composition of the Committee itself was socially unbalanced: a minority (structure-owners) were assigned twice as many representatives as the majority (tenants). This makes it hard to sustain the argument that this process was in essence democratic. A second point of criticism is that the voting method chosen was the *mlolongo* vote,[73] whereby voters line up in front of their favoured candidate. According to the government election report, the *mlolongo* was preferred because a secret ballot 'would require too much

[73] The national election held in 1988 saw the advent of the *mlolongo* system (Swahili word for queuing), where voters were supposed to line up behind their favoured candidates instead of a voting by secret ballot. Authoritarian governments have used this method to legitimise themselves through elections exercises where intimidated people had to vote by standing in front of the candidates.

time and resources, and was more open to abuse' (KUDP, 2008b: 4). However, as emerged from my ethnography and as even the KUDP Concept Paper recognises, 'The tenants have no tenure security, as the structure-owners enjoy the right to evict for non-payment of rents or any other reason' (KUDP, 2008d: 4). Therefore, it is likely that many tenants voted for their structure-owners out of fear of eviction, or as a way of reinforcing their client relationship with their structure-owners.

In addition, the *mlolongo* method of queuing, without even registering voters, and the confusion regarding guidelines, facilitated the 'importation of voters', whereby candidates were able to bring people from nearby villages to queue in front of them. Importation of voters was a problematic issue, as acknowledged in the official report on the election (KUDP, 2008b: 19). There were complaints that some candidates brought 'their people' to stand in front of them. Without registration of voters, it was difficult to prevent this. Moreover, it was not clear who could vote for whom. For instance, there were guidelines indicating that only structure-owners could vote for structure-owners and tenants for tenants; however, this was unimplementable in practice due to the selection of the *mlolongo* as an electoral method. The local authorities and project staff supervising the process had no system to distinguish between structure-owning and tenant voters.

While importation of voters was unavoidable without voter registration, there were some vague guidelines on how to hold the elections in order to ensure the achievement of the agreed composition of the Residents' Committee. However, according to the official report, these were not followed in the same way in each village. Moreover, they were inherently problematic. In principle, to be eligible a candidate needed to have lived in Kwa-maji for over 10 years. To run for the position of *youth*, a candidate was supposed to be less than 30 years of age. For the position of *structure-owner*, a candidate had to own a structure within Kwa-maji and to run as a *tenant*, a person had to be renting a structure within Kwa-maji. The process was supposed to begin by everyone voting to elect a village elder. Then, tenants and structure-owners were supposed to elect their representatives. However, as mentioned above, there was no way of checking that people voted only within their category. At this point, according to the guidelines, women were to vote for their representatives. In this instance, it was fairly easy for the staff to ensure that only

women were in the lines. Finally, the youth voted for their representatives. It was more difficult for the implementers to prevent those older than 30 from voting. The lack of clear guidelines and the lack of an extended effort to build political awareness within each interest group led to the paradox that, at least in one case, even the tenants' representative came from a structure owner's family, as was recognised in the official election report (KUDP, 2008b).

In one village, some residents complained about the way elections were held and the Steering Committee agreed to repeat the elections in that village. The new elections took place a month and a half later and all the candidates elected previously were re-elected unopposed. In the end, therefore, while the elders did not succeed in their initial attempt to convince implementers not to hold elections, they at least managed to agree on a committee composition that was to their advantage. Moreover, in some villages they anticipated the elections by agreeing in advance on who should be chosen as a representative and convincing residents not to present alternative candidates. As a result, a significant number of candidates were elected unopposed (27 out of 48). In some cases, people lined up in front of the candidates and the officers counted the votes, but often the number of candidates running for a position was equal to the number of places available, therefore making the queuing redundant. The government report comments, 'the villagers' minds were already set on whom to elect in the various posts' (KUDP, 2008b: 19). Considering the importance of such elections – the representatives were called to decide on who should be entitled to be allocated a piece of the land on which all residents lived – the level of consensus was problematic.[74]

The whole process led to a Residents' Committee dominated by structure-owners. This could probably have been predicted in advance on the basis of the Committee composition agreed during the initial sensitisation workshop. However, the results turned out to be even more unbalanced than this constitution would imply, since in some villages, the representative 'woman' and 'elder' elected were also structure-owners. In this way, it was possible that four or even five out of the six positions

[74] In local organisations where members share similar interests, candidates elected unopposed are common and it is not necessarily a problem. Often, to choose students' representatives, members of neighbourhood committees or parents' representatives in schools, elections are not needed. However, in Kwa-maji a clear difference of interests existed and the upgrading was to take decisions that could severely undermine the livelihoods of certain sectors of residents.

assigned to each of the eight villages could be occupied by structure-owners. In fact, I calculate that between 32 and 40 of the 48 members were structure-owners.[75]

Even the widespread official narrative that voter turnout was high needs further scrutiny. The visual image of long queues in front of candidates was taken as evidence of high turnout. However, the report on the elections estimates that only around 3,500 to 4,000 people voted, which must be deemed a very *low* turnout, even if one accepts the (also very low) total figure of 34,000 residents arrived at by the programme's enumeration (Chapter 8).

Even after the elections, there was an ongoing process of establishing a strong power-block of structure-owners inside the Residents' Committee. At the Leadership Training Workshop already mentioned, an Executive Residents' Committee was elected from the 48 members. The government report on this workshop states that after discussions, the following composition of the Executive Residents' Committee was proposed and elected: eight structure-owners, two tenants and a youth representative. The area Chief, a city council officer, and the area councillor were included as *ex officio* members (KUDP, 2008c). Clearly, this further skewed the already-unbalanced representation in favour of structure-owners.

5.3 Institutionalising pre-existing inequalities

The analysis of the ethnographic account that follows is divided into five sections, each of which deals with one aspect of the process which served to institutionalise pre-existing inequality. The first section analyses how the concept of *government through community* contributes to understanding the process of 'community-building' in Kwa-maji. The second section looks at how the perceived need to avoid further conflict led the parties to adopt a pragmatic alliance with the structure-owners as 'representatives' of the community. The third section addresses barriers to participation in the project process, particularly as regards gender. The fourth section looks specifically at how capture by an elite worked to exclude those who had originally been intended as the 'target group' of the upgrading programme. The fifth

[75] This was a very sensitive issue. However, my calculations were confirmed by various community members, including a local missionary, who raised the issue during a meeting with the government, 'In the Residents' Committee more than 60, maybe even 70... 80 per cent are structure-owners'.

and last section examines discourses of community and their relation to heterogeneity and political divisions among structure-owners in Kwa-maji.

5.3.1 Governing through community

The concept of community has been central to urban regeneration projects since the 1960s, when in the USA, the War on Poverty was based on 'Community Action Programs' (Cruikshank, 1999: 72-73). After being partially ignored in the neo-liberal decades of the 1970s and 1980s, community came back in the 1990s as a key concept in urban regeneration in developed as well as developing countries. In the latter, the concept of community merged well with the practices of participatory development that were becoming increasingly popular, particularly in rural areas. Community participation approaches implied that communities were not simply the object of government intervention. Instead they were increasingly considered as a *subject* in development—the needed partner of governments and development agencies. On the one hand, involving communities offers a democratic *legitimacy* for intervention, as required by overarching participatory policy frameworks. On the other hand, community involvement is considered to be necessary to guarantee effective implementation, by securing the compliance and contributions of the intended beneficiaries. The result is that if 'the community' is not there, it must be created to fulfil the needs of the development project.

In Kwa-maji, programme officers refer to the residents as a 'community', whereas residents are very heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, class, and religion (Chapter 4). As discussed in the previous section, the elections in Kwa-maji functioned to formalise the pre-existing social organisation and power structure, as the most pragmatic way of fulfilling the programme's overall aims of democratic and community participation. In Mosse's terms (2005), the election of a Residents' Committee was part of a 'necessary ritual' to transform thousands of dynamic and ethnically diverse people into a homogeneous, 'natural community', ready to be developed and capable of expressing a single will.

Project documents show very clearly the implementers' need to create a community through specific activities. Implementers were aware that a community was not yet there and thus had to be created: 'In going for a participatory process, it will be

necessary to find ways of getting round the challenge of internal divisions and stratifications of the community. This could be done by an intensive community sensitization and education programme' (KUDP, 2008f: 5). In the language of the programme, *community sensitisation and education* meant all sorts of social engineering processes, such as meetings, workshops, and creation of committees, to push people towards conceiving of themselves as a community. Community participation was also considered necessary to the 'democratic' process, according to the implementers' discourse, as presented in this extract of the Listening Survey Report:

> This [community participation] is the most democratic way forward. Its attraction is that it would ensure genuine ownership of the process. The challenge with this approach is its slowness, given the numerous and often disparate voices in the community. There is also the challenge of the process turning 'political' in a negative sense, where the goal shifts from one of improving the community's overall good to competition between different groups in the community (KUDP, 2008f: 6).

Again, internal differences are conceived as an obstacle to be overcome through the construction of a homogeneous community working for the common good.

The work of Tania Li (2005a, 2006; 2007: 230-269) has built upon Rose's concept of *Government through Community* (1999) and provides a useful framework in terms of making sense of the KUDP. Nikolas Rose argues that:

> In the institution of community, a sector is brought into existence whose vectors and forces can be mobilized, enrolled, deployed, in novel programmes and techniques which encourage and harness active practices of self-management and identity construction, of personal ethics and collective allegiances' (Rose, 1999: 179).

Using this perspective, Tania Li analyses a massive World Bank social development programme in Indonesia. She argues that government does not only 'invoke community instrumentally in order to regulate individual behaviour when coercion fails. Government through community is centrally concerned with social relations and how they can be optimized for particular, improving ends' (Li, 2005b: 3). At the centre of *government through community* lies a paradox: 'The supposed naturalness of community is in tension with calculated interventions in the arena of community made technical. Natural communities require expert attention to make them complete' (Li, 2005b: 36). As Rose phrases it, 'community is to be achieved, yet the

achievement is nothing more than the birth-to-presence of a form of being which pre-exists' (Rose, 1999: 177). Communities have 'the secret to the good life [...], yet experts must intervene to secure that goodness and enhance it' (Li, 2011: 59). In response to a question on the inequalities within Kwa-maji, a development worker stated, 'we have to recognize existing structures of the community'. In his discourse, there is a 'natural community' with its own structures, but also development workers and experts are needed in order to make the community visible, decipher its internal processes and, through a participatory democratic process, s/elect its 'natural' representatives.

Li shows how 'community has become the site of technical interventions of extraordinary intensity. Donors attempt to build civil society and promote democracy' (Li, 2005b: 36). This is precisely what has happened in Kwa-maji. The current mainstream development agenda perceives 'community as a self-generating formation capable of governing itself. Communities of various kinds are being *made up, autonomized and responsibilized*' (Li, 2007: 234, my italics). Right from the start, the KUDP strategy of democratic community participation was paving the way for the future hand-over of the management and implementation of the slum-upgrading programme to the community. In practice, this meant handing over to the Residents' Committee, and in order to enable this, the Committee was registered as a non-profit corporate body and a formal constitution was drawn up.

When the elections to the Residents' Committee took place, the project had finally established its communication channel with the 'community' or, put differently, the elections created the community that the programme needed in order to develop it. A very heterogeneous mix of people – who had found themselves living in the same area – now had a committee 'representing them', whose decisions project officers could regard as the voice of the 'community'. In this way, a 'community' able to make its own decisions and deal with the government was formed.

The paradox presented above seems to reveal another contradiction that was clearly evident in Kwa-maji. The notion of a pre-existing community conceived of as possessing a decision-making capacity was crucial to provide the project with its participatory and democratic features. However, if the community is generated by

the project itself, the democratic character of community involvement is likely to be undermined.

5.3.2 Avoiding conflict

The community elections took place just after general elections had led to the most severe political crisis in independent Kenya, a crisis which claimed many lives, some within the programme area. This clearly explains the government's concern with avoiding violence in the Kwa-maji elections. From this perspective, the election exercise was very successful, disregarding for the moment the cost at which this was attained. Moreover, a Residents' Committee dominated by structure-owners – those with strength and power in the community – had advantages in terms of the effective implementation of the programme. However, conflict was avoided by supporting and promoting those whose capacity to generate conflict had caused the failure of a similar upgrading programme in 2001 (Chapter 4).

The previous chapter has analysed the multiple identities and social composition of this elite of structure-owners and their role in the governance of Kwa-maji, exploring patronage relations in particular. Specifically, years of dealing with community issues means that many residents are connected to this elite through relations of patronage. The loyalty of people towards their patrons allows the latter to mobilise their clients easily and facilitate their compliance with project implementation (Platteau, 2004). In the case of Kwa-maji, no other actor would have been able to successfully manage residents' consent. The publicly visible voting system contributed to the reproduction of these relations of patronage. Many residents themselves, after seeing the disaster of national elections conducted through a secret ballot, genuinely considered queuing in front of the candidates a more transparent way to display alliances and loyalties within Kwa-maji. To this extent, the Residents' Committee was a success in reconciling the conflicting policy needs of the project, since it could be officially considered a democratic and legitimate form of community representation, while still maintaining pre-existing power relations unchanged.

Both the GoK and AIDX needed to achieve their objectives. One can surmise that they pushed towards the easier route: the alternative of dealing with the conflict more openly could have destroyed the entire process at its inception, with the structure-

owners boycotting the upgrading, as had happened in 2001. However, Mosse's (1997) work is particularly instructive in demonstrating the way in which participatory and community-driven development is not possible without the transformation of the social equilibrium through which elites maintain control over the management of resources. However, challenging this equilibrium is a slow and gradual process and requires a full understanding of political and social dynamics. In the current case, the KUDP seems to have taken a decision to avoid disturbing the existing social equilibrium, even though it is clear that in order to genuinely achieve full participation and social inclusion, a very different and more conflictual intervention would have been necessary. In addition, an intervention that challenged the *status quo* could not have been undertaken in a short space of time, as is shown by the example of the nearby Kibera slum (mentioned in Chapter 3). In that instance, the GoK did indeed attempt to bridge the power-gap between tenants and structure-owners; but at the cost of not yet having completed the initial pilot phase after over seven years of implementation (although its attempt to treat all residents fairly is only one of the reasons for the delay).

5.3.3 Barriers to participation

An important issue, severely underestimated by the KUDP but widely acknowledged in the critical participation literature, is that for vulnerable groups to be able to participate, it is necessary to remove barriers – participation requires resources (Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 6). Mayoux (1995) argues that this has an important gender dimension, since the resources required, especially skills and time, lead to inequality in opportunities for participation. Lack of formal education, or of mobility to attend meetings, frequently put women at a disadvantage when it comes to participating. Moreover, participatory programmes require considerable amounts of time, and the resulting 'opportunity costs' may also work to the disadvantage of women (Mayoux, 1995: 246-248).

In Kwa-maji, involvement in public meetings and community governance structures requires a substantial time input, as well as a minimum level of education, in order to understand the process and be able to participate meaningfully. In female-headed households, women cannot afford to leave aside their daily work in order to participate, as this would imply a direct loss of income. During the Leadership

Training Workshop, it was specified that representatives 'should be committed and available for intensive involvement. Frequent meetings, sometimes on short notice; should be ready to work on voluntary basis – no pay' (KUDP, 2008c: 7). Only those who do not need to engage in paid work can afford these conditions: in this context, this means primarily the structure-owners, who gain income from their rent revenues.[76]

Also included was a general criterion regarding the 'levels of education' of community leaders: this, too, operated to discourage tenants (who are among the poorer people in Kenya and have a lower level of formal education) from putting themselves forward for election to the Executive Residents' Committee or other official positions. Moreover, for the most disadvantaged residents to begin publicly to express their social and economic needs would imply taking up a position against powerful groups and they would have to think carefully before making requests that might challenge an important patron (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 252). In their detailed review of practices of participation, Mansuri and Rao (2004) emphasise that, along with material barriers, there are these psychological obstacles to participation. In line with Mayoux's (1995) conclusions in relation to India, Nicaragua and Kenya, we find that in Kwa-maji, the most vulnerable and marginalised people need government or NGO actors to be fully cognisant of their interests and to give extra support to their participation through, for instance, affirmative action strategies. As Das Gupta *et al.* (2004) put it, empowering the urban poor requires 'considerable political commitment on the part of the state, to overcome landlord resistance as well as tenants' fears of retribution from landlords' (32).

5.3.4 Excluding the target group

Analyses of participation elsewhere have exposed how participatory projects are often built upon pre-existing oppressive power structures (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2005), particularly if there is no will to challenge the existing social equilibrium (Mosse, 1997). What is interesting in Kwa-maji is how community

[76] Recent research undertaken in the informal settlements of Dar es Salaam (Hooper & Ortolano, 2012) shows how property owners were more likely to actively participate than tenants in risky and time-consuming community initiatives. The findings countered the expectations of the promoters of such initiatives who were expecting higher tenants' participation. They also found the division between structure-owners and tenants to be the most important in explaining different patterns of participation (Hooper & Ortolano, 2012: 112).

participation, planned through the construction of local governance structures in order to facilitate the implementation of the upgrading, has *further* empowered dominant elites.

As argued above, to avoid further conflict after the national, post-election violence, recognition was given to the established elite of structure-owners as legitimate representatives of the community. The consequences of this concession, whether intended or not, were that established power relations were acknowledged and institutionalised, rather than challenged. To challenge them on a deeper level, would, of course, have implied putting in place a much more time-consuming and conflictual process of social and political change.

As mentioned, the programme registered the Residents' Committee, giving it legal status as a non-profit corporate body. This formalisation fostered the notion among the structure-owners that, since they were effectively in control of the local governance structures, they would eventually become the legitimate owners of both the land and developments in Kwa-maji.

Platteau (2004) has argued that in rural community-driven projects, 'elite capture' does not prevent a project benefitting everyone in the community. While the elites who deal with development agencies and attract funding tend to appropriate a much larger share of the benefits of such a project; everyone's initial situation is likely to improve. In the case of Kwa-maji, elite capture is more worrying than in other development contexts, since here it is not a matter of simply excluding some people from the benefits of the project, but has the potential to lead to the complete disruption of the lives and livelihoods of large sections of the population. This is because, in urban slum-upgrading, what is at stake is the very land on which people live.

In Kwa-maji, the elected committee had to decide who would be entitled to receive land and how. The Residents' Committee was called on to make important political choices that would affect all residents, but without itself being constitutionally representative of these different groups. The Committee had to address a number of key questions. Should the programme give land only to structure-owners? Should

land allocation include or exclude *absentee* structure-owners? Should the programme give land to tenants who had resided in Kwa-maji for over ten years? If so, what course of action should be taken in terms of the other tenants (at least 45% of the households and probably more) who would then be displaced? Would tenants who were not granted land-rights be able to afford rent, once the houses had been improved and the area fully serviced? Besides these formal choices, the degree of control vested in the Residents' Committee allowed it to shape the outcome of activities, such as the participatory enumeration, even though that had originally been designed to bring other interest-groups into the programme (Chapter 8). All in all, the 'participatory' process gave the structure-owners access to areas of decision-making and influence that extended their previous power in new directions. Conning and Kevane recognise that social exclusion is 'deeply rooted in local social divisions and the way the community operates and regulates access to resources. Changing these structures and breaking down social divisions often requires challenging established structures and mobilizing the disadvantaged' (2002: 389). They conclude that, rather than letting 'the community' choose the rules and criteria to obtain programme benefits, as in Kwa-maji, 'carefully chosen national targeting rules, criteria and national political support can help strengthen the position of disadvantaged groups in these local contests' (Conning & Kevane, 2002: 389).

5.3.5 Discourses of 'community' and internal heterogeneity

It would be incorrect to argue that the implementers of the project were not aware of the conflicts and differences of interests among the residents. However, their assumption was that, following the election process, legitimate leaders would emerge and would express the will of 'the community'. It was expected that negotiations would take place among the elected leaders, and later the three top representatives, who had the right to sit on the Steering Committee, would bring community issues to the attention of the implementers. Programme officers on the ground considered that to have challenged choices made by the community leaders would have been tantamount to a betrayal of the participatory process. It would also have implicated them in the adoption of a patronising attitude towards the community, rather than viewing it as a partner.

However, while there is no doubt about the structure-owners' dominance over the Residents' Committee, structure-owners also represent a very fragmented category. Some of them refused to take part in the project activities, and remained faithful to the structure-owners' association that had blocked the previous slum-upgrading attempt in 2001, despite its eventual court defeat (Chapter 4). These structure-owners continue to boycott the project, making a stream of allegations against the Residents' Committee and the implementers. Even among the structure-owners elected to the Residents' Committee, conflicts emerged. For instance, the next chapter presents an internal conflict over the management of a community hall (Section 6.5). Other splits arose around the divide between absentee and resident structure-owners. Arguably, internal divisions such as these have actually opened up a space for more balanced decisions in the Residents' Committee. For instance, some structure-owners have come to recognise that tenants with over ten years' residency in Kwa-maji have a more legitimate claim to land than absentee structure-owners. This group of structure-owners has been using longstanding tenants' claims to further their own struggle against *absentee* structure-owners.

5.4 Conclusion

Patronage relationships at the local level have been considered a constant feature of African politics (Platteau, 2004), and not one which will be easily undermined by one development programme. Chapter 4 showed how such patronage systems have been in place in Kwa-maji for decades and were well consolidated. However, when elites capture a programme involving *land distribution* and become legitimised to take important decisions on its allocation, the likely outcomes include not only the exclusion of some beneficiaries but also a serious risk that the programme will exacerbate previous inequalities, with potentially disastrous results for the poorest.

In Kwa-maji, the Lead Government Agency feared that confronting the structure-owners would have led to a much more time-consuming and conflictual process, especially in the immediate aftermath of post-election ethnic violence that had destabilised the country. Such an undertaking would also have required a very intensive use of resources and would have been difficult to justify to other actors, not least to the international donor, who wanted to see community consensus.

In order to ensure that marginalised categories (tenants, single-mothers, and so on) have an input into the decision-making process in a participatory programme, a government needs to act consistently and firmly, and has to be able to challenge powerful local groups. As argued by Das Gupta *et al.* (2004), in communities characterised by severe power imbalances, 'higher levels of government may be actually better placed to help the disadvantaged' than local actors with vested interests (2004: 28). One of the paradoxes and criticisms of participatory practice in general is that, although it emerged out of a widely-felt need for a power reversal between development agencies and beneficiaries (Chambers, 1983), it nevertheless relies on some *external* agency to organise participation. This has led many critics to argue that participatory processes are shaped by outsiders (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2005).[77] However, and despite this criticism, the lesson from Kwa-maji is that there may be benefits from a *stronger* display of power from the 'outsiders' – government and development agencies – in the management of participation. In addition, reducing poor people's dependence on members of the local elite 'takes much [...] careful design and effort', with the effort required increasing in more unequal contexts (Das Gupta, *et al.*, 2004: 29). Engaging communities requires 'careful planning and active management' (Das Gupta, *et al.*, 2004: 48). Participation *has* to be managed carefully if a programme involving land-distribution is to avoid 'elite capture' and the worsening of the living conditions of a significant share of the target group. As several authors (Abraham & Platteau, 2000, 2004; Das Gupta, *et al.*, 2004; Tendler, 2000) have argued, there are severe risks in quickly devolving power to communities. Rather, community involvement requires attentive management and careful social analysis of the target community.

Careful management of participation implies tackling powerful interests. In Kwa-maji, this was difficult for a series of reasons, amongst which the wider political situation figured prominently, particularly the national post-election violence. Additional causes included the failure of the previous upgrading project, and the *local*

[77] To cope with this contradiction in the context of participatory programmes, external agents (i.e. development professionals) have to 'deny or conceal their own expertise and agency (and their practical role in programme delivery) in order to preserve an authorized view of themselves as facilitators of community action or local knowledge' (Mosse, 2011b: 17).

history of structure-owners' resistance and violent reaction to it, which contributed to the government's prioritising of the need to avoid further violence.

So far the analysis of the KUDP poses questions around the viability of community-driven, 'participatory', slum-upgrading projects in the context of conflicts which the implementers do not have the resources to deal with. The depressing likelihood is that attempting to implement the project under these conditions means that it may end up, like most of its predecessors in Nairobi, by subsidising groups with a higher income, rather than the intended beneficiaries (Syagga, *et al.*, 2001). This sombre conclusion is in line with the predictions of economists that, given the social conditions in Nairobi's slums, standard slum-upgrading approaches, based on provision of infrastructure and security of tenure, are likely to benefit structure-owners rather than the poorest residents (Gulyani & Talukdar, 2008). What this chapter has shown is *how* this prediction is allowed to come true, despite the lessons from other, similar cases. Unravelling the detail of these social processes, both at the local level and as they play out in relation to government and international partners, is a necessary precondition if upgrading projects are to achieve more genuine social transformations in future. In the next chapter, the focus will shift to the negotiations between different actors in key arenas of the programme. The chapter explores how the elected elite engages with other actors and how alliances and conflicts are played out.

6 Negotiating the upgrading

This chapter adopts an actor-oriented approach (see Chapter 2) to examine negotiations that took place during the implementation of the KUDP after the introduction of the relevant governance structures (Chapter 5). The focus is on revealing the social dynamics and processes at play. The chapter analyses the delicate power balance that legitimises the different actors, and how their roles are continuously contested and renegotiated. In particular, this chapter explores how leaders of the residents attempted to protect their interests by struggling against the actors that could have undermined their position – AIDX, the Catholic Church, and UNX.

The community elite created an alliance with the Lead Government Agency based on shared interests. Not only did the Lead Government Agency consolidate its power as a result of the redrafting of the project and the consequent reallocation of major responsibilities to it, but it further enhanced its position by creating a 'special relationship' with 'the community', as well as other strategies, including fund management. Such negotiations are observed in the privileged arena of the Steering Committee. However, this is not the only arena where decision-making takes place; thus the chapter will offer a sample of negotiations in other *loci* such as 'site meetings'. This chapter also attempts to analyse the different social interfaces in play, focusing on the 'the linkages and networks that develop between individuals or parties' (Long, 2001: 69). A detailed explanation concerning this actor-oriented approach was discussed in Chapter 2 above and underpins what follows.[78]

Many organisations were represented in the project by just one or two persons, and therefore, the actions of the organisation in the project were consistent and can be analytically assimilated with the actions of its representatives. However, the Lead Government Agency and the leadership of the residents had many different members working on the project, each bringing different attitudes, capacities, and interests. Thus it was necessary to undertake an analysis that goes beyond a consideration of these collective actors as having a single, uniform agency, and which can explain inconsistencies and struggles within collective 'actors'.

[78] This chapter is predominantly based on original ethnographic material. The analysis builds upon the theoretical framework and the literature presented in previous chapters, particularly Chapters 1 and 2.

The interests of actors are shaped by a complex range of factors (e.g. ethnicity, class, national politics, and age), making it necessary to study how such factors intersect in the context of actors' strategies and processes of negotiation. For instance, to understand such processes it is necessary to explore, on one hand, tensions in the relationship between the residents' leadership and UNX, and, on the other, interpersonal struggles within the community elite and how these struggles were played out through every resource available, including the project itself. Therefore, we must consider the interplay between internal community conflict and residents' relationships with external actors. The nature of interpersonal conflicts within the community will also be investigated. Another aspect is that some individuals were part of more than one collective actor and were consequently double-bounded (see Section 4.3.3).

Negotiations and debates concerning the construction of the roads in Kwa-maji – the project's major undertaking during the period of my fieldwork – provide an interesting instance for examining the delicate interdependency among various actors, and the need for legitimacy on the part of the elected leadership of Kwa-maji. This topic will be further developed in Chapter 9, where it will be included in a wider theoretical discussion regarding the social construction of development success.

Observation of the negotiations among different actors is one of the key elements of my analysis, and was an important aspect of my research work. Such negotiations are presented and analysed throughout the thesis. However, the detailed analysis of processes of negotiation and struggle presented in this chapter provides the tools to better comprehend the whole thesis.

6.1 The Steering Committee as arena

> Excluding the lengthy reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, about half of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion of old and petty secondary issues such as the construction of the fence around the Residents' Committee office, and the construction of the basement for the emergency water tanks (which were supposed to be an emergency measure during the drought and to have been in place a long time ago). These two issues together imply the expense of no more than 2,000 euro in a programme with an initial budget of over two million euro over two years.

> [...]
> After the meeting, the AIDX staff member remained to talk with a Lead Government Agency staff member in a corner of the room; a UNX staff member was having a quick meeting with the representatives of the Residents' Committee in another corner; and on the stairs a Lead Government Agency engineer was discussing an issue with a higher official. Moreover, during the Steering Committee meeting, other meetings between AIDX and other actors were mentioned.
>
> The Steering Committee is certainly an important place of encounter among the different actors, and it is important to observe the mood of the actors; but it is definitely not the place where major choices are made. To move things forward and make key decisions, other informal meetings with a smaller number of actors seem to be taking place. (FN 27/11/2009)[79]

The main governing body of the KUDP was the Steering Committee, conceived as an 'open space' where the stakeholders would meet and take decisions. It was composed of the main partner organisations, but also welcomed interested parties on specific issues. For instance, when the project started to address water and health issues, the Nairobi public water corporation and the Ministry of Public Health joined the committee. The host (the Lead Government Agency) and AIDX were always present, but the attendance of other members was not regular, and the turnover was high. The meeting did not have a secretive character, and I was accepted as a researcher attending the meetings without difficulty.

As will be illustrated below, not all major choices were taken within this arena, and decisions were still subject to the veto of other authorities such as the Programme Coordinator (who generally did not attend such meetings) or of more restricted technical committees. However, it was a space in which all the relevant actors were present at some point and where confrontations were played out, with certain actors exploiting any available chance for one-upmanship through more or less subtle criticisms of others. As such, the analysis of this arena offers a privileged perspective on conflicts among the actors.

6.1.1 Consolidation of Lead Government Agency power

The meetings took place in the boardroom of the Lead Government Agency. Initially, UNX was supposed to be the project leader, but the Kenyan Government pushed AIDX

[79] Extract from a fieldnote containing my analysis, jotted down immediately after the meeting.

to use a government department as the lead agency. The funding of the project was a bit atypical, since AIDX was not a donor in a standard sense. The project was financed via 'debt conversion' and this meant that funds were actually coming from the Kenyan Ministry of Finance. The Kenyan Government wanted to establish ownership of the project; recipient-government ownership was also important for AIDX, whose aid programmes fell under the Paris Conference framework (Chapter 1). After the AIDX staff member initially working on the project was transferred, a new person was brought in who was trusted by the AIDX Regional Director. Some informants told me unofficially that this happened subsequent to pressure by the Kenyan Government.[80] It contributed to an increase in the bargaining power of the Lead Government Agency, because the new AIDX staff member was aware of what had happened to his predecessor, and the local AIDX employee saw what had happened to his former boss and acted accordingly.

The fact that the Lead Government Agency was the principal implementer meant that the Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator and Project Manager of the KUDP were all staff of the Lead Government Agency. The rationale for the Lead Government Agency's key role in decision-making was also connected with the fact that, as project leader, it was accountable to the Ministry of Finance regarding the use of funds (Interview 13, 10/04/2010). This responsibility provided the Lead Government Agency with the legitimacy to exercise its power. Initially, the implementation strategy included the assignment of specific activities to different actors, which would play the role of lead agencies with regard to those activities. However, this approach was problematic in practice, and most activities continued to be managed directly by the Lead Government Agency.

Some practices further increased the Lead Government Agency's power, although they may not have been conceived for this reason. Last-minute rescheduling after a quick consultation between the two main actors – the Lead Government Agency and AIDX – functioned as a mechanism of exclusion that frustrated the other participants somewhat, leading them to complain explicitly about this several times. In addition, the absence of the Coordinator – who was needed to ratify any decision taken – moved the real decision-making to smaller meetings outside the Steering Committee.

[80] I could not obtain an official statement.

Both continuous rescheduling and the absence of the Coordinator were justified by the Lead Government Agency on the basis of its staff being overworked, on a busy schedule, and having shifting commitments and priorities established by the top management.

For instance, the time of one meeting was communicated to the members less than a week in advance, and it was then brought forward via email a couple of days in advance (FN 3/2/2010). Even AIDX complained that they needed to be informed of a meeting at least two weeks in advance – not two days – while the Lead Government Agency insisted that AIDX needed to be flexible (FN 3/2/2010). More than once, members tried to push towards establishing a fixed monthly meeting on the first Thursday of every month, but this never worked out.

Another practice consisted in not providing a clear understanding of the funding situation, to the extent that it was impossible for Steering Committee participants to make any real decision, since they did not have a full grasp of the project's economic situation. Relevant issues such as the renewal of staff contracts were discussed, but no decision could be taken since the participants had no information on the budget. During one of the meetings, the local missionary commented on this lack of transparency by stating:

> We have approved a budget, and we have not seen any financial report after that. We do not know if we are spending money in the right way – if it is too little or too much. We need reports for transparency and clarity (FN 27/11/2009).

Upon this explicit request for a financial report, the Lead Government Agency official answered that the accountant was out of town on an official assignment, and that though he had the figures, 'We could have a look at the numbers but we would not understand without the explanation of the accountant'. Therefore, it was better to wait for this until the following meeting (FN 27/11/2010).

At that time, there was indeed a pressing liquidity issue due to bureaucratic constraints external to the programme, but the Lead Government Agency appeared to be exploiting this situation to maintain a state of constant confusion. Lack of proper information and the need for the Coordinator's approval of any expense – a

Coordinator who was hardly ever at the meetings – allowed the executive power of the Lead Government Agency to remain unchallenged regarding implementation, diminishing the possible role and contribution of other actors.

Funds for the project were allocated, but there were delays in their release by the Ministry of Finance. At one meeting, a concerned accountant kept repeating how the Ministry of Finance had told him that funds had been transferred to the Lead Government Agency, even though it had not received them. Moreover, the available funds were used to pay the road contractor, since the accountant wanted to avoid 'legal issues' (FN 6/04/2010); therefore meeting other project expenses was delayed creating major obstacles to implementation. For instance, funds for UNX were delayed, making it impossible for them to carry out their activities. Despite this, UNX's delay was used as an excuse to accuse it of inefficiency, and the Lead Government Agency proceeded with an important activity – the numbering of structures – without waiting for UNX, despite this being part of UNX's duties (Chapter 8).

Participants felt that the Steering Committee was being undermined. During one of its meetings, the local missionary complained that 'the Steering Committee is losing its role of steering, of leading' (FN 3/2/2010) and, in particular, he complained about the repeated absence of key people. Later in this chapter, a telling example will be presented showing how conflict erupted from the actors' frustration with the limited capacity of the Steering Committee to take important decisions.

6.1.2 Significance of other arenas in decision-making

As mentioned in the opening quote of this section, while the Steering Committee was a privileged arena in which to observe interaction among actors, there were other arenas equally important to the decision-making process and the discussions in the Steering Committee were often limited to issues of secondary importance. For example, the interviews I conducted with project officials were often interrupted by telephone calls involving key actors who were deciding how to deal with some issue, or consulting each other on what decisions to take. I did not participate in the more informal 'hallway meetings'; but informal decision-making among key actors – witnessed for instance during phone conversations and seen in informal discussions

described in the fieldnote excerpt above – certainly played an important role. In terms of decision-making, site meetings, technical meetings, or other more informal situations appeared to be very significant. Therefore, some examples of other arenas where negotiations were taking place are provided in this and other chapters.

Nevertheless, the Steering Committee maintained an important role. If key decisions were not taken there, being part of the Steering Committee still provided the actors with the legitimacy they needed to undertake actions in Kwa-maji within the framework of the KUDP. NGOs and other development agencies who tried to intervene in Kwa-maji without first having presented their project to the Steering Committee failed, although, approval from the Steering Committee was not enough to intervene in Kwa-maji and the Residents' Committee was still able to exercise veto powers. Being part of the Steering Committee therefore – or at least having its support – was a prerequisite to being able to operate successfully in Kwa-maji.

6.1.3 The alliance between the Lead Government Agency and Residents' Committee management

An important element in the consolidation of the Lead Government Agency's power was its special relation with community representatives. This section provides a detailed examination of the motivations that allowed this mutually convenient relationship to continue, and of how this alliance played out in project negotiations. The staff of the Lead Government Agency had experience in dealing with 'slum communities' from previous interventions in other areas, and always displayed sincere respect for community members and genuine commitment in listening to their concerns. The staff conducted numerous meetings prior to the community elections, and discussed in depth the concerns of structure-owners. Therefore, the Lead Government Agency was also the guarantor of the outcomes of these informal, pre-implementation consultations and agreements. There was an element of 'local' against 'external' actors; community representatives feared foreign intervention associated with UNX, AIDX and – to a certain extent – foreign missionaries in the area. This also related to the previous slum-upgrading attempt (Chapter 4), which had been linked to foreign support from international NGOs and the presence in the field of Indian experts and a particular foreign missionary.

While the relationship between community representatives and leading government implementers is often highly conflictual, particularly in urban development, in the KUDP this relationship was generally smooth. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the Lead Government Agency and the residents' leadership are both comprised of many different persons with individual characteristics, and certainly some petty conflicts existed between the two. During Steering Committee meetings, community representatives often complained about the absence of the Programme Coordinator and about delays in implementation (for instance, in the procurement of their office equipment). At the same time, the staff of the Lead Government Agency stressed that community representatives were continuing to ask for more facilities without showing the capacity to properly manage those that were already under their control (FN 27/11/2010). However, such tensions never compromised the strong alliance between the Lead Government Agency and the Residents' Committee leaders. The argument is not that this is particularly unique or odd; such an alliance is an important condition for the proper functioning of a development programme. The point that I am making here is that a convergence of interests further consolidated this alliance, and was used to strategically limit the actions of actors who could have potentially undermined these interests.

The Lead Government Agency cultivated this alliance carefully, fearing that major conflict could lead to community rejection of the project and its consequent failure.[81] Many urban projects – including the previous attempt in Kwa-maji – had failed or were paralysed due to conflict with residents, but the career development of Lead Government Agency staff depended upon the successful implementation of the project. For example, a young manager in his first demanding position was very aware of these risks, and therefore always took the side of the leaders of the Residents' Committee.

The project was harshly criticised by the local MP, who also made allegations against the Residents' Committee. On one occasion, the local MP invited the residents to boycott the payment of the small project fee, accusing the Residents' Committee of lacking transparency, and said that the construction works were disrupting people's

[81] Chapter 4 explains how a previous slum-upgrading attempt had failed due to the community boycott, and Chapter 5 analyses the fear of the government in Kwa-maji connected to the context and post-election violence.

businesses in Kwa-maji. This populist rhetoric put the Chair of the Residents' Committee in a difficult position. The fee collected from every structure-owner as a community contribution to the project was decided by the Steering Committee, which includes many Government Ministries; it was not a bribe imposed by the local leadership. The MP was also invited to join Steering Committee meetings, which she purposely avoided. In addition, she tried to turn Luo tenants against the Residents' Committee, which, as noted, was dominated by structure-owners, to gain political support. However, by making such accusations and indirectly accusing the Residents' Committee of collecting money unfairly and mismanaging it, she undermined community support for the project which had been painstakingly constructed by the Government and the community leaders. Despite the fact that she was also part of the Government, which was making efforts to make the project viable, she was willing to undermine its work in order to secure political advantage. Her statements affected the delicate legitimacy through which the Residents' Committee maintained the much-needed support of other residents (Chapter 9). Her attack on the project further united the Lead Government Agency and the Residents' Committee.

6.1.4 Community elite in the Steering Committee

The previous chapter provided an in-depth analysis of the community election process. In this chapter, we examine the role of the top three Residents' Committee officials representing the residents of Kwa-maji in the 'top management body' of the KUDP, i.e. the Steering Committee. I have shown how certain interests were legitimated by the election process and became dominant within the official representation of the community. Here I describe how the interests of the community elite were represented in the Steering Committee, and how they became important in the decision-making process.

The elected Secretary, Chair, and Treasurer of the Residents' Committee were members of the Steering Committee, representing the community. From the outset, they waged a campaign to limit the role of actors which might have undermined the privileges of the community elite. These actors were AIDX, the Catholic Church, and UNX, which had an explicit commitment towards egalitarian policy driven by the 'good of the poorest', rather than appreciating the 'historical legitimacy' of the claims of the structure-owners in Kwa-maji.

6.2 Weakening the church's position

The Catholic missionaries present in Kwa-maji were part of the Steering Committee largely as a result of their historical involvement in obtaining the debt swap which was central to the financing of the project and their role in securing the project itself. They had undertaken an intensive advocacy campaign mobilising civil society in the donor country. The mission had been in the area for about 20 years, providing several social services to the residents, and the missionaries were still living within the project area in shacks very similar to those of the other residents.

While all actors acknowledged the role played by missionaries in sourcing funding for the project, they were not particularly happy with the missionaries' presence on the Steering Committee. In particular, the community representatives had a hostile attitude towards the presence of Catholic missionaries. AIDX and the Lead Government Agency were also not enthusiastic about it.

The resentment of the Residents' Committee was directly connected to the active pro-tenants role played by the mission (although by different priests) in the previous slum-upgrading attempt in 2001, and to the role played by the Catholic Church in the nearby project of Mathare 4A (Chapter 3). The local missionaries represented one of the major threats to the structure-owners' interests, since they were on the ground and knew the internal dynamics of the Kwa-maji. Moreover, the missionaries had never concealed their concern for more vulnerable residents.

This hostile attitude diminished after the Catholic missionaries demonstrated their willingness not to interfere with community decisions or the project in general, but rather to play an observational role. However, their limited role in the project was also the result of a complex strategy to limit their power. They were more tolerated when community representatives became convinced that they were not taking any actions against the latters' interests. Nevertheless, a critical comment by the missionaries was enough for the residents' leadership to send them an explicit reminder of the dubious legitimacy of their presence on the committee.

The project organised visits for the Residents' Committee to other slum-upgrading programmes; among them a visit to the project located in the nearby area of Mathare

4A (Chapter 3). There, a German Catholic donor funded a slum-upgrading programme that was managed by the Catholic Church rather than the government. As discussed in Chapter 3, what had been supposed to be a tenant-purchase scheme had beenwas transformed into a rental scheme in which the Church owned the new houses and collected rent from tenants. Former structure-owners who had previously lived off rent had been given a lump sum as compensation for their structures, but had lost their properties and source of livelihood. During the visit, a local Mathare leader explained the violence that had been generated by the programme, made some allegations against the Church, and provided some advice to the Kwa-maji leadership. The foreign missionary working in Kwa-maji talked to me about the visit and how he felt:

> In Mathare, it happened something very significant. [...] A man from Mathare said, "That Mzungu [white person] priest... If you want your project to be successful, send him away". Mzungu, but also priest, because he identified me through my cross. And it has been very hard to swallow because I knew that I was not there like the priests of Mathare 4A, so I said that I was there because I live in [Kwa-maji] and I will not have any real estate agency to allocate houses and no key role [in the programme], apart from being there and saying, "Let's open our eyes on what needs to be done" (Interview 6, 3/02/2010).

This event affected the missionary, who as a result felt less legitimate and less welcome in the slum-upgrading process, and who told me that he subsequently adopted a low-profile attitude. In the next section, the Residents' Committee's attempt to reduce the role of the missionaries in the programme will be used to exemplify one of the Committee's strategies for furthering their interests in relation to the project.

6.3 'The community feels', 'the community wants', 'the community fears': elite monopoly of the sentiments of residents.

This section presents one of the strategies employed by Residents' Committee members to delegitimise and weaken the role of actors who had the potential to undermine their interests. This strategy was based on the manipulation of the discourse of community and was also employed in order to make certain demands of the project.

The starting point for this discussion is what the Lead Government Agency officials and AIDX staff considered to be the main obstacle to project implementation: 'community scepticism' (see also Chapter 2). The attitude of the community towards the programme was regarded as the key variable in the success or failure of the project. Government officials recalled how Kwa-maji residents had already rejected a slum-upgrading programme in 2001, and how residents had been misused by development agencies, thus losing trust in development interventions. In their discourses, the implementers repeatedly stated that the most significant risk faced by the project was potential community opposition.

Once the Lead Government Agency and the donor had recognised the local governance structure (i.e. the Residents' Committee - created as a result of community elections organised by the project) as the legitimate representation of the community, it was difficult to challenge the discourse of Residents' Committee members when they argued, 'The community wants this'. Also, the notion of the community as a single subjectivity with a unitary will was consistent with the process of securing 'legitimate representatives' supposedly capable of expressing the will of the community. This process was the result of a combination of the implementers' fears of resident resistance, and their strong belief in the community participation model adopted by the project.

The elected community representatives – who had enduring experience in dealing with development agencies (Chapter 4) – understood their leverage power. They held a monopoly in terms of the framing of *what the community fears and feels*, and *what the community wants*. This gave them quite a considerable amount of power. The very nature of the concept of 'fear' is such that it may be irrational, and therefore difficult to measure or challenge. The implementers considered residents' *fears* to be the outcome of the misuse and abuse of the urban poor by development agencies (Chapter 4). Thus, no matter how ill-conceived such fears were, as long as they were the fears of slum residents, they were felt to be potential threats to the project.

'Community fear' was an ideal tool that could be used by community leaders to disguise their requests and foster their own interests by attributing them to 'the community'. It did not matter whether or not the requests or fears they voiced had a

concrete foundation in facts. For instance, if a leader said that *he* did not want UNX to undertake the participatory enumeration on the basis that UNX had taken part in the 2001 slum-upgrading in Kwa-maji, UNX and other actors could say that this allegation was not true and that UNX had never been involved in the enumeration. However, if a leader said that *the community* feared the involvement of UNX because they had been involved in the previous upgrading and would refuse to cooperate with the project if they were involved, it did not matter whether or not that fear was based on false information, UNX would have to step back.

As shown by the following example, the power to define community fears and feelings was employed in the struggle to delegitimise the Catholic missionaries working in Kwa-maji, but it was also used in other circumstances to exclude other actors. Since the first meetings in September 2008, just after the community elections, the Residents' Committee members expressed to the Steering Committee that 'the community' was uncomfortable with the participation of the Catholic missionaries. The tensions raised by the presence of the missionaries in the Steering Committee were of such significance that they were recorded in the minutes. Despite the fact that the minutes generally soften the conflicts through the use of accommodating bureaucratic language, it is still possible to detect the attempt that the Residents' Committee members made to exclude the missionaries. The extract below describes how Residents' Committee members insisted in a second consecutive meeting that 'the community' did not want the involvement of the Catholic missionaries, despite the implementers' attempts to persuade them to accept the missionaries.

> The Residents' Committee was asked whether suspicion among the [Kwa-maji] residents had reduced, as they had been given the responsibility to sensitize[82] the community on the role of [name of the congregation] in the Steering Committee and as the secretary [of the Residents' Committee] still insisted that the community was still uncomfortable with [name of the congregation] being that their contribution to the failure of Mathare 4A was known by the community (Official Minutes, Steering Committee 25/09/2008).

This passage is particularly relevant because it illustrates very well one of the methods used to delegitimise actors. This technique was based on a particular form

[82] In Kenyan English, 'to sensitise' means to create awareness.

of communication: Residents' Committee members often mentioned 'the community' as if it were a unitary subject unanimously uncomfortable with something, or that wanted something else. As shown, for instance, in the extract above ('the community was still uncomfortable...'), this discourse was also widely embraced by the Lead Government Agency and AIDX. These two actors were also used to talking in terms of 'the community said, the community wants, the community feels, the community fears', and this rhetoric recurred in many conversations and interviews. What an individual resident said could easily become what 'the community said'. On one occasion during a meeting, UNX was accused by the only community representative present of not having involved the community adequately. After counter-arguing that they had engaged with the leaders and the community, the UNX representative asked, 'Who is the community?' The Lead Government Agency officer then pointed at the residents' representative, answering, 'She is the community' (FN 2/3/2010). This discourse had an immediate and powerful effect. If, as the Lead Government Agency Officer suggested, the community representative was 'the community', then no effort from UNX staff to provide evidence of how they had involved the community could counter a claim supposedly coming directly from 'the community'. The UNX representative understood this dynamic immediately, gave up arguing, and asked the member representing 'the will of the community' to give him instructions on what he should do.

In the extract of the Steering Committee minutes cited above, a residents' representative argued that the community did not want a specific actor to be involved in the project because that actor was considered to have done something wrong in the past. It did not matter if this was true or not, because community fears and scepticism were considered by the implementers to be strong and difficult to change. The minutes explain that a representative of the residents reported that the community was uncomfortable with the local Catholic missionaries' involvement in the project because they had contributed to the failure of the Mathare 4A project. As noted above, the Kwa-maji missionaries in fact had had nothing to do with the Mathare 4A project, but this was not important as long as it was one of the community's fears. It did not matter what was true, but rather what the community felt. The minutes go on to report that the leaders sought to 'sensitise' the community, but the community continued to fear the missionaries:

> The RC [Residents' Committee] was asked to continue the sensitisation as they understood [name of the congregation]'s role being that they were also members of the SC [Steering Committee]. However, they asked the Kenyan government and partners in the programme to go to the ground and help in dispelling the community's fear of involvement of [name of the congregation].
> [...]
> The chair of the Residents' Committee further said that the community's suspicion was also being fuelled by the fact that [name of the congregation] still gave conditions on implementation of the programme. This made them think that perhaps [name of the congregation] and other religious groups had hidden interests. However, he expressed the community's appreciation to [name of the congregation] for fighting for [Kwa-maji] to be considered for upgrading. However, Fr. [name of the missionary] told the meeting that [name of the congregation] Catholic Church is situated outside [Kwa-maji] and they therefore had no vested interests, but only wanted to help the community (Official Minutes, Steering Committee 25/09/2008).

In the 'way forward' section of the minutes, the following points were decided regarding the presence of the Catholic missionaries:

- The [name of the congregation] fathers should only support the programme to ensure its success.
- The Residents' Committee should ensure that they properly explain the presence of [name of the congregation] in the Steering Committee [to the other residents].
- If the Presence of [name of the congregation] is an issue, then their presence in the SC [Steering Committee] should be addressed.
  (Official Minutes, Steering Committee 25/09/2008).

This situation forced the missionaries to adopt a defensive attitude rather than being able to make critical contributions to the slum-upgrading programme. In particular, the last point shows how the presence of the missionaries as members of the Steering Committee would be open to discussion if the residents continued to question it. It was a written warning, stating that if the missionaries' presence was not wanted by the Residents' Committee (who are the voice of the residents), they were liable to be excluded. This definitively weakened the missionaries' voices and limited their role in the project. Moreover, as the interview extract reported in the previous section demonstrates, the situation also affected one particular missionary on a personal level.

During an interview, a government official further described how the presence of the missionaries had become problematic for the programme:

> I told you this community has been misused by very many NGOs, faith-based organisations... by the way, there was also a lot of resistance of working with the Catholic fathers because they [the residents] felt that these [name of the congregation] fathers have helped us to source the money... Now that we have got the money, you should leave us to do the work. Why do they want to be involved in helping the others? So even their influence or the continued participation of the [name of the congregation] fathers has come up in various meetings, the steering meetings, they [community representatives] erupted until they just walk out so they are not talking unless we bring the other small sects to participate in this (Interview 11, 7/4/2010).

This describes how the residents' representatives also tried another strategy to exclude the Catholic missionaries, by framing their request in terms of fairness to other religions. Unless all the Kwa-maji religions and denominations were represented, my interviewee claimed, it was unfair to have a Catholic missionary as a representative. As explained in Chapter 4, in Kwa-maji, there are dozens of different denominations and religions, making it difficult to include all of them in the steering body. Therefore, the request was not obviously pointed at directly excluding the missionaries, but rather did so indirectly, through a claim for the equal treatment of all religions.

Power struggles in the committee were seldom clear-cut conflicts, but rather gradual pressures implemented through different strategies. The missionaries were marginalised during the visit to Mathare 4A, and told to stay in their place. Then, the missionaries' presence in the Steering Committee was contested on several other occasions and through the deployment of different arguments. The government also contributed to their exclusion; the Lead Government Agency did not invite the missionaries on a three-day visit to another slum-upgrading project attended by all the other actors. The missionaries told me that they were hurt by this, although they did not raise the issue with the other actors (FN 5/10/2009).

It should also be mentioned that when the Catholic missionaries kept a lower profile, they were better tolerated. Indeed, there were situations when they strongly supported the community representatives against other actors, and conversely community members defended the position of the Catholic missionaries against other

actors in the project. This type of alliance was sometimes presented through the rhetoric of 'those living in Kwa-maji' (the community members and the missionaries), who understood local dynamics, whereas the 'middle-class bureaucrats' did not. But the discourse could quickly change; if the missionaries contradicted the Residents' Committee, they would immediately become the 'foreigners'. This use of different and powerful discourses against the missionaries worked very well in limiting their role in the project.

A similar process of exclusion was faced by UNX, and the next section will examine in detail the reasons behind the opposition to UNX and how it played out. The strategy of residents' leaders here resembled that employed against the missionaries. The leaders of the Residents' Committee said that 'the community' did not want the participation of UNX in the project because of UNX's past attempts to expropriate residents' land in the slum-upgrading attempt of 2001 (Chapter 4), even though UNX had nothing to do with that slum-upgrading, which was in fact implemented by a local NGO with the support of an international network of slum dwellers. While some residents might have genuinely confused a United Nations agency with a local NGO, this was certainly not the case with the community leaders. They were well aware that UNX had not been involved in the previous upgrading project, since these same leaders had been deeply involved in it. The Chair of the Residents' Committee had also been the elected Chair of the previous slum-upgrading attempt that was considered by residents' leaders to be the reason for the community's fear of UNX.

In a process similar to that presented by Mosse (2001) and Abraham and Platteau (2004), exploiting their dominant position, the local elite of Kwa-maji manipulated the discourse of community participation by 'subtly representing their own interests as community concerns' (Abraham & Platteau, 2004: 228). A more detailed discussion of the relevance of this literature to the analysis of the KUDP began in Chapter 5 and will continue over the next Chapters.

6.4 The struggle against UNX

This section illustrates the process employed to reduce the power of UNX, as well as the way in which a minor UNX intervention was used as a battlefield for an internal

struggle within the community leadership. Since 2001, the Government of Kenya has been involved in a partnership with UNX for the upgrading of informal settlements (Chapter 1 and 3). AIDX wanted UNX to be part of the Kwa-maji project in order to provide technical expertise, and to act as a *neutral* party.

In Nairobi, a UN agency was at the time of this study implementing another major slum-upgrading programme based on a policy of asset redistribution that treats structure-owners and tenants on an equal basis (Section 3.3.3). The Residents' Committee, with its preponderance of members who are structure-owners (Chapter 5), has therefore viewed UNX with suspicion from the start. They claimed that UNX was involved in the 2001 attempt to upgrade Kwa-maji (which divided the community) and that UNX was now seeking to expropriate the land from the residents. While many slum dwellers may not understand the difference between an NGO and a UN agency, the leadership knew that UNX had not been part of the previous upgrading attempt, yet they continued to make this accusation. Most surprising, perhaps, is the fact that the Chair of the Committee that had carried out the earlier project – and who had travelled to India with the NGO concerned – was re-elected to the Residents' Committee and as its Chair by the other elected members.

In the first draft of the KUDP Concept Paper, UNX was to be the Lead Agency in the implementation of the programme. However, the Government of Kenya wanted to have a more prominent role, and a compromise between the donor and the Government of Kenya removed many responsibilities from UNX. Finally, a government department was nominated as the Lead Agency.

The process of delegitimising UNX – and in particular the discourse that UNX was not seen in positive terms by 'the community' – resulted in the Steering Committee considering UNX to be unable to perform certain duties, which were still under UNX's responsibility in the revised Concept Paper. Such activities, among them the politically sensitive enumeration (Chapter 8), were therefore reassigned to the Lead Government Agency. There existed a sort of alliance of interests between the Residents' Committee and the Lead Government Agency in terms of the attempt to exclude UNX. In addition, the Lead Government Agency worked to gain a stronger

direct relationship with AIDX by showcasing the fact that they enjoyed the 'trust of the community'.

During their report to the Steering Committee, residents' representatives commented that, 'They indicated that they were happy with [name of the Lead Government Agency official on the ground]'s work but unhappy with [UNX]' (Official minutes, Steering Committee, 30/07/2009). As occurred in the case of the Catholic missionaries, the discussion in the Steering Committee recorded in the minutes worked as a written warning and reminder of how UNX should behave. 'It was noted that since [UNX] was contracted by the [Lead Government Agency], they should undertake the tasks in the work plan as per the expectations of the client,' (Official minutes, Steering Committee, 30/7/2009). From being the main project implementer at the project's conception, UNX became a mere contractor with little bargaining power in the subsequent phase.[83]

A telling example of how this process was used to limit the role of UNX is a small, AIDX-funded intervention within the slum-upgrading that was to be implemented by UNX. AIDX allocated leftover funds of USD 30,000 to UNX to implement a short-term project to improve security in Kwa-maji through the construction of a youth centre. An analysis of the attempt to implement this project helps to understand the *agency* of the community leadership.

In this situation, where residents' leaders were sceptical of UNX intervention, the Lead Government Agency and AIDX thought that this small concrete project could help UNX regain trust. The following is an excerpt from my notes taken during a meeting of the Residents' Committee in November 2009:

> AIDX staff: [AIDX] had some funds left and gave them to the [XXX] programme of [UNX] to make projects in Kwa-maji. They came to [Kwa-maji] last Tuesday with Fr. [name of the father] and the youth of the Residents' Committee.
>
> Lead Government Agency official: [Name of UNX staff], this is the chance to show that [UNX] do something different than just talking.
>
> UNX staff: this is exactly what we want.
> (FN 29/11/2009)

[83] In Chapter 9, the thesis will look at how a change in the project circumstances transformed the role of UNX, enabling it to gain recognition.

In this extract, the Lead Government Agency officer seizes the opportunity to criticise UNX. He in effect accuses UNX of 'just talking' rather than doing anything concrete. I heard this criticism voiced on several other occasions by residents in Kwa-maji. In fact, the only thing UNX was mandated to do on this project was to undertake the socio-economic survey – they had no mandate to construct infrastructure. But residents clearly did not feel that their lives had been improved by a survey. Instead of clarifying to the residents what the role of UNX was, the Lead Government Agency mocked UNX's alleged penchant for merely talking and not taking action. This contributed to a questioning of UNX's role to the point where the presence of UNX in the project was undermined when they entered into conflict with the Residents' Committee.

The amount of money for the youth centre was relatively small, and UNX came with a preconceived approach and with a need to spend the money in a short period of time. The Residents' Committee was aware that the money had been allocated for Kwa-maji, and did not want it to be spent on the facilitation of workshops by foreign consultants.[84] Several conflicts regarding the way the project was managed also erupted within the Residents' Committee. In July 2010, things got so bad that the Residents' Committee actually told UNX that they did not want their project and that they could return the money to the donor. UNX – who had already started spending the budget – had then to explain to the donor that they had been thrown out of the community without having achieved any result. Moreover, AIDX became very concerned because the intervention of UNX had created conflict within the Residents' Committee, whose role was fundamental in the achievement of a successful slum-upgrading project.

This event had significant consequences for UNX. As it lost more and more credibility and responsibilities, AIDX began to question the role of UNX in the process. The small, thirty-thousand dollar project was also a test of the capacity of UNX to work in the context of Kwa-maji at a time when AIDX was debating whether or not to fund UNX again. Without being fully aware of the extent of the implications of their actions (since they did not know that the relationship between AIDX and UNX was at a critical

[84] These workshops were supposed to initiate a participatory process through which to establish a youth centre.

point), the Residents' Committee managed to generate a crisis in the relationship between a donor and a UN agency. This had the effect of further reducing the power of the agency in the programme, relegating it to a more secondary role, and making it more accepting of 'community' decisions.

6.5 Internal struggles in the Kwa-maji leadership

One of the most interesting aspects of the minor UNX intervention mentioned above was the internal conflict that emerged within the community leadership. Such conflicts are generally the result of the intersection of many contrasting interests and alliances. This section will describe facets of the conflict around the UNX intervention which exemplify the nature of the conflicts within the Kwa-maji leadership. Chapter 4 has shown how several agencies had implemented development or research projects of various sizes in the area. The development agencies in question had to obtain the approval of the elite of elders and gatekeepers coordinated by the local Chief in order to implement their respective projects. Quite often, the various participatory meetings with beneficiaries had to take place in the community hall adjacent to the Chief's office. Every agency paid rent for the use of the facility, which was collected on behalf of the Chief by Frances,[85] an important Residents' Committee member (who was also the leader of the village[86] in which the hall was built). Other Residents' Committee members were unhappy about the private appropriation of what they considered a communal facility, and used the UNX intervention to challenge the *status quo* by, for instance, proposing to refurbish or renovate the community hall and use it as a youth centre.

The UNX project had already set up a youth committee, within the Residents' Committee, which was open to other Kwa-maji residents and enjoyed the participation of the Chair of the Residents' Committee. Frances felt that her position was threatened by the criticisms of other Residents' Committee members, and during a Steering Committee (which no other community representatives attended) she accused the project of not having involved the community. She further stated that she had been excluded and did not know what was happening. In fact, she was well

[85] Pseudonym.
[86] Kwa-maji settlement is divided into eight small areas called villages (see Chapter 4).

aware of what was occurring, because she had attended a previous Residents' Committee meeting where the project of the youth centre had been presented and discussed with the members of the Residents' Committee. The minutes of the Steering Committee, which were written by the Lead Government Agency, reported her complaints as follows:

> The RC [Residents' Committee] indicated that not all the RC representatives have been involved in the previous activities and only a section of the RC was in the [UNX intervention] Committee. The chairlady of [name of the village] also the [her role in the Residents' Committee] indicated that she was not involved in the decision to have the youth centre in [name of the village] which she represents. [UNX representative] indicated that all communication had gone through the Chairman RC. (Official minutes, Steering Committee, 2/3/2010).

In that period, the Lead Government Agency had a hostile attitude towards UNX and this small project. It was particularly sceptical about anything that could create internal conflict among the Kwa-maji leadership. What is interesting to note in the minutes is *how* the Lead Government Agency supported the claim of Frances. The minutes state that 'The RC indicated that...'. However, the reality was that these sentiments were not expressed by the Residents' Committee as a whole, but only *one* of its members – Frances. The approach of attributing someone's statement to an entire group is consistent with the strategy presented earlier of attributing a request of the elite to the entire community.

Hostility towards the UNX small project within the Residents' Committee was also fostered by the fact that Jane,[87] a young member of the Residents' Committee with political ambitions (FN 05/12/2010), began to lead the planning of the youth centre. She was particularly appreciated by the UNX officials because she was young – therefore fitting the target group – and was able to keep up regular email communication (including writing and sending minutes of meetings) – the UN's favoured means of communication. However, her position in the intervention became rapidly contested.

Jane had been involved in certain youth activities and groups in Kwa-maji, and brought into the UNX project her personal links to other youth in the area. She

[87] Pseudonym.

became prominent and was managing the relationship with UNX well, to the point that some people started to identify the intervention with her, calling the prospective youth centre 'Jane's Centre'. Through the project, she was gaining political capital amongst the youth, but her privileged access to UNX was soon questioned by the other members of the Residents' Committee. They declared that Jane had never received any mandate, and accused UNX of having bypassed the formal hierarchy of the Residents' Committee (see the extract above). The Chair of the Residents' Committee, who was part of the youth centre project, had to put the decision back to the wider Committee, who deliberated to dissolve the *ad hoc* committee and start the entire process over from scratch. Further conflict with UNX and its approach led to other situations of discord, up to the point at which, as mentioned previously, the Residents' Committee told UNX to return the money to the donor and leave. Later, this rupture was partially ameliorated, but the balance of power shifted strongly in favour of the Kwa-maji leadership (see paragraph 6.5).

This conflict also revealed the leadership's fear of UNX because of their track record in pro-poor projects. In the analysis of a UNX employee reported in the interview excerpt below, the hostility of the Kwa-maji leadership towards the UNX intervention was motivated by the approach they had adopted in other UN projects, where structure-owners were given an equivalent status to tenants. He also pointed out that, by contrast, the Lead Government Agency had the trust of the Residents' Committee.

> The structure-owners trust the [Lead Government Agency] because they received some guarantees. For instance the community always demands the presence of the [Lead Government Agency] at any meeting, this [is] evidently because they are the guarantors of certain interests. On the contrary, UN is promoter of the interests of the more vulnerable and, for this, it is not seen in positive terms by those who defend certain interests (Interview 18, 10/5/2010).

An important community member provided another interesting analysis of this leadership conflict between the Chair of the Residents' Committee and Frances regarding the UNX intervention. He stated:

> There is a conflict, but then it is a conflict of interest [...] She was not chosen in the executive of this [UNX intervention] and she sees that [name of the Chair] is there, so it seems that this guy is fighting a cold war. But eventually you will see those people are united. Eventually you will see

> that [Frances] and [name of the Chair] are united (Interview 10, 22/3/2010).

In particular, the interviewee underlined how the two members of the Residents' Committee belonged to the same ethnic and interest group within Kwa-maji. Therefore, he concluded that these types of leadership conflicts reflected internal competition, but would ultimately become of secondary importance when the people concerned faced more significant issues.

The issue of ethnicity deserves some consideration here. 'Ethnicity' was carefully managed by the community leadership in order to avoid the spread of dangerous conflict that could undermine the *status quo*. Structure-owners were constantly aware that in the neighbouring area, the ethnic tensions which occurred during the 2008 post-election violence had led to the refusal Luo tenants to make rent payments to their Kikuyu structure-owners (Chapter 4). The widespread discourse in Kwa-maji was that the local MP from the party of the Prime Minister and from the Luo tribe was continuing to undermine the slum-upgrading process. The MP was believed to be inciting the tenants – particularly the large Luo section – to refuse to pay rent and to sabotage the slum-upgrading, which is led by structure-owners who are mostly Kikuyu. The reality is not so clearly defined: many structure-owners are Somali, and some are even Luos. However, despite its questionable accuracy, this ethnic discourse has significant strength. It is also interesting to note the effects of the ethnic discourse in Kwa-maji. To understand this issue, we need to take into account ethnic politics as played out at the national level and in particular the ethnic violence that followed the 2007 general elections, which strongly affected Kwa-maji (Chapters 4). In a telling example, when the Residents' Committee lost its trust in their secretary and wanted to replace him, the criterion for selection was Luo ethnicity in order to avoid allegations that the change was an attack against the Luos, which would have had severe consequences. As the following interview with one community member reveals:

> [name of the former secretary] was so political and so much... he seemed to be so independent and so strong towards these people until he appeared to be a threat [...] so they took him out. Since he was a Luo, they didn't want them to see that it is a war against Luos, so they appointed another Luo to come and take his place. So that is why they put [name of the new secretary] there. [...] [If] they would have put another Kikuyu, it could be another war now. But then they say: 'for the interest of peace let

> us put another Luo here'. So that it does not seem that it is a war against them (Interview 10, 22/3/2010).

In Kwa-maji, actions are often interpreted through an ethnic lens, and so paradoxically, ethnicity conditions the behaviour of actors so as to *avoid* them being labelled as ethnically biased.[88]

The conflicts surrounding the small UNX intervention discussed in this section are indicative of the intersection between pre-existing and more recent conflicts within the settlement, and demonstrate how the project offered an appropriate interface in which the multiple dimensions of the conflicts within the leadership could be played out. The various dimensions to the conflict included the struggle around a 'common good' – the community hall – monopolised by the Chief and Frances. A further instance was the *youth's* attempt to gain increased spaces against the *elderly* who have traditionally – and increasingly through the KUDP – dominated the decision-making process in Kwa-maji. Another factor was the conflict between charismatic leaders seeking to be recognised as the deliverers of the intervention, in order to gain political support in Kwa-maji. Another dimension was the conflict between the Lead Government Agency – keen to maintain the present power relations in Kwa-maji because they were effective and because of the fear of emerging conflict (Chapter 5) – and UNX which was seeking to create a process centred on youth. Finally, the issue of ethnicity needed to be taken into account by all actors in their strategies.

6.6 The delicate interdependency of social actors around the construction of the road

An examination of some of the conflicts arising around the road construction element of the KUDP provides important insights into the process of negotiation within the project. The road is particularly significant because it was by far the largest

[88] This also had methodological implications for me as a researcher (see Chapter 2). Another sociologist who conducted his PhD research in Kwa-maji some years earlier told me the following anecdote. While walking through Kwa-maji, he was asked insistently by a young, hungry boy to buy him some French fries, which are very cheap food sold on Kwa-maji's streets. He brought them to this boy and found more youths asking him for the same. He refused, saying he couldn't afford to buy food for everyone, and soon found himself surrounded by very angry people. When the situation was eventually solved, someone explained to him what had happened. Without realising it, he had bought food for a youth belonging to one ethnic group, but had refused to buy it for a youth of another ethnicity. This gesture was interpreted as him supporting one ethnic group and discriminating against another, which generated resentment.

undertaking during the first two years of the project, both in financial terms and in terms of its visible impact on the settlement.

At the time that community priorities were being decided upon, Residents' Committee members highlighted the importance of road construction (which had already emerged as a request in meetings prior to the community elections). The Government and AIDX approved the idea of building the main roads within Kwa-maji because they represented much-needed infrastructure that could be delivered before the final stage of planning.[89] Whatever direction the final planning took, the main roads were to use existing routes. As an achievement, road construction was visible, and was supposedly less problematic than other interventions (merely requiring a tender and the contracting of a company).

However, financially this was a significant commitment. On the one hand, it solved the problem of the lack of spending capacity of the Lead Government Agency, making the project more manageable and more likely to achieve formal success – i.e. spending the budget within the timeline and delivering objectively quantifiable results (this will be explained in greater detail in Chapter 9). But on the other hand, it made the success of the project dependent upon the capacity of the private contractor to comply with the terms of the agreement. The road construction also took priority in project payments, using up all liquidity since transfers from the Ministry of Finance were divided in different tranches, at times leaving the project without immediately available cash (see Chapter 9). This was clearly stated by the Lead Government Agency accountant during a Steering Committee meeting: 'The construction of the road has interfered with the whole budget. It is such an ambitious undertaking. This is because the contractor took the priority on the payments. Otherwise we incur legal issues' (FN 6/4/10).

A problem well captured in the following extract from the minutes is the fact that the Residents' Committee members also needed to maintain their legitimacy through

[89] The project wanted to deliver certain concrete infrastructures to boost community confidence and showcase some tangible results. This was clearly stated in the KUDP Concept Paper. However, not all infrastructure development could be implemented before achieving full planning of the settlement, which was the final objective of the initial two-year phase. For instance, proper water and sanitation pipes could not be implemented without full planning of the settlement. By contrast, there was an existing road network on government maps. Therefore it was possible to pave the roads before completing the planning phase of the project.

effective implementation. The Residents' Committee – the expression of an elite group (Chapter 5) – was able to enjoy a significant level of support in Kwa-maji as long as they could demonstrate effectiveness in terms of delivering development. As one AIDX staff member described their role, 'If the Residents' Committee did not represent the community, they would not have been able to convince people to make room for the road,' (FN 14/01/2010). However, if people vacated their structures to give way to the road and the road was not constructed for several months, the position of the Committee might have been undermined.[90] The Residents' Committee members knew very well that recognition of their position was strongly linked with implementation. Their concern had already been captured by the minutes of the Steering Committee at an early stage of the project:

> They [the Residents' Committee representatives] expressed concern on the delay of [UNX] in going to the field. They also indicated that wrangles in the community should not delay progress in implementation of the Programme, saying that the delay was becoming a burden to them because of high expectations from the community (Official minutes, Steering Committee, 30/07/2009).

When the construction of the road started but implementation was advancing slowly, the issue became one of immediate concern. The following is an extract from my notes taken during a Steering Committee meeting:

> Catholic missionary: We have a problem of time and quality. It is not fair because people emptied and demolished structures immediately, and now they have been waiting for so long.
>
> Lead Government Agency official: Let us await the site meeting with all parties. The road is managed by the [local engineer]; if he is not responding at the site meeting, you can get to the Coordinator of the [programme].
>
> Residents' Committee member: So what is the point of the Steering Committee?
>
> Lead Government Agency official: This Steering Committee can instruct who is in charge of the road to make changes or put pressure on the contractor. But let us have the site meeting first. I'm not saying we can't raise an objection at this higher level.

---

[90] The settlement was partially planned in the sense that space for the main roads was left when the land was initially temporarily allocated in the different waves of migration to the settlement (Chapter 4). However, over time, some dwellings had encroached on the road reserve, especially business premises.

> Residents' Committee member: We cannot complain every month here and nothing happens. I have never seen the Coordinator sitting here with us. I'm proposing we need a Director here. At least once every three months. And if he is busy let him reject the duty and pass it on to someone else, because it is difficult to contain the residents of [Kwa-maji] and their pressure.
> (FN of Steering Committee meeting 6/4/10)

During an interview, the same member of the Residents' Committee quoted in the fieldnote above expressed once again the difficulties of containing the discontent of the residents with the slow progress of the upgrading:

> When something goes wrong they [the residents' of Kwa-maji] will never look for the contractor but they will come to the Residents' Committee [...] The structures were removed so that the roads will be [constructed] and they don't see that. [...] We might see somebody being frustrated by the contractor when the contractor is delayed to paying them: the casual workers, and some other fundis [craftsmen]. The skilled workers and then the unskilled ones, they will never go to the contractor, they come to the Residents' Committee because who introduced them to these people is the Residents' Committee. Those people never came by themselves to introduce themselves to the community of [Kwa-maji], that's through the Residents' Committee so the Residents' Committee has been as an intermediary between the community and the other people (Interview 12, 9/4/2010).

A few weeks after the Steering Committee meeting mentioned above, the frustration of all actors with the contractor, whose delay was affecting everyone, emerged. This happened during a site meeting, an account of which will occupy the remainder of this section. This site meeting presents some of the conflict dynamics that were repeated throughout the programme. The meeting had been postponed several times because the contractor was not available, and when a date was finally agreed upon, he did not attend, instead sending his engineer and another manager. Government and AIDX staff, as well as community members, were worried, since no real decision could be taken without the presence of the contractor. In my fieldnotes, I noted how even the AIDX local staff member – normally very accommodating – was quite harsh with the contractor, especially complaining that the work was not being done properly. The government engineers also underlined that the work was not being done well (FN 21/04/2010). Everyone unified their voices against the contractor: the community, the donor, the Lead Government Agency staff, and even City Council personnel.

While everyone voiced concerns with regard to the contractor's late and poor quality work, the contractor complained that he had not been given the plans he needed to finish the job and that he wanted to organise the job according to his own schedule. The contractor's engineer stated:

> It is the first time in a project that I'm told how to do things and what I should do first. That's up to me if I want to put tarmac at the end, that's one-day work. I will do it at the end. But you can't keep my machines idling waiting for the designs that have to come from the [government] engineer. So far we don't have them, and we are incurring a loss because the machines are parked instead of working (FN 21/04/2010).

The contractor said that no one had ever told him what he should do first, although the Lead Government Agency and AIDX reminded him that the work plan he had submitted had not been followed. The Lead Government Agency continued to argue that it would not permit the contractor to commence work on a new area if they had not finished the previous phase of road construction. This was because the Lead Government Agency considered that the contractor should not create a lengthy disruption around the market area, which would negatively affect the livelihood of residents. The Lead Government Agency official stated:

> I do not want to give you the designs because you are so slow in doing the work on the other road. And if you need the same amount of time for doing this last road, it will be a disaster because this road has a market and the market cannot be closed for so long since it is the economic centre of [Kwa-maji]. You can start with the road near to the market and start the market road only when you have everything ready and you can concentrate on it and finish it as fast as possible. And you should also provide alternative access, otherwise you will have riots there (FN 21/04/2010).

The Lead Government Agency was also unhappy that the contractor had written six formal letters to complain about the delays to implementation due to the lack of designs. AIDX and the Lead Government Agency asked the contractor to stop writing such letters, which, according to them, did not help dialogue, arguing that such issues would be more appropriately addressed through discussion. According to both government officials and UNX staff members interviewed at a later stage, the contractor's behaviour was in fact common practice under public contracts in Kenya. According to them, when contractors violate the terms of contracts, they typically

attempt to negotiate orally to avoid incurring penalties, but then use their legal office to claim time extensions and additional money, due to alleged external conditions and impediments.

The Lead Government Agency remarked:

> When we gave you this contract, we gave you 12 months, and you were saying that this was six-month job. And now we are at eight months and according to the contractor's report, less than half of the work has been done (FN 21/04/2010).

The contractor responded, 'We want to finish on time, we'll finish on time'. The contractor tried to negotiate his breach of the agreed work plan orally, but then used the firm's legal office to claim losses arising from the Lead Government Agency's failure to provide designs, and claimed more money for non-specified 'security issues' that were increasing his firm's costs.

When this last issue was raised in front of the community – which was supposedly causing the 'security issues' or at least was not able to protect the contractor – the conflict exploded. By claiming extra money for security, the contractor was implying that the Residents' Committee was not performing its role, or worse, that it was boycotting the construction work. The contractor's engineer actually mentioned that they suspected sabotage, and that community members only wanted to be paid allowances. This was the point that made the conflict escalate, reaching a climax that only the authoritative intervention of the local Chief, who joined the meeting, was able to mitigate (FN 21/04/2010).

When, at the site meeting, the contractor's engineer directly accused the leadership of the Residents' Committee of removing the pegs from the road, the Chair of the Residents' Committee left the room and the discussion became confused and bitter. During the animated debate, the contractor's engineer interrupted the secretary of the Residents' Committee by saying, 'You just want allowances'. The secretary answered that the engineer did not know how the establishment of allowances was decided, and that if the contractor wanted it could go on alone with the work because the Residents' Committee would abandon the project. He added that the contractor's engineer was the problem facing the project. From that point on, it was difficult for

the speakers to finish their interventions uninterrupted. The chaos pushed the Chief – located in her office 50 metres away – to join the discussion and chair it.

The Chief's authoritative role as the local head of the Administration Police succeeded in restoring order. She stepped in, saying that when she stood everyone else had to sit down. She reminded all present what everyone was aware of. She said that everyone in the room was a leader and, if the project failed, they would all be blamed. Therefore, the failure of the project was not in the interest of anyone, and they could discuss the project in an appropriate manner and should 'cool down' and remain seated.

When the meeting became more relaxed, the Lead Government Agency staff tried to reconcile the situation by defending the community leaders, underlining that it was highly offensive for them to be told that they were only after allowances. The staff reminded the contractor that this was a community-led project, that the Residents' Committee members had worked hard on the project in Kwa-maji, and that the road was theirs. He continued by saying that it was through the work of the Residents' Committee that this project had been made possible, and thus urged the contractor working there to have a lot of respect for the Residents' Committee and their role. The backing of the Government gave confidence to the community representatives, who intervened by building upon the speech of the Lead Government Agency staff in their support. The Chair of the Residents' Committee – who returned to the meeting – mentioned the details of the debt swap through which the slum-upgrading is funded: 'This is a conversion of 44 million euro; we worked to include [Kwa-maji] as one of the six districts in the conversion'. He also mentioned the work done since 2000 with another Catholic missionary, indirectly referring to the first slum-upgrading programme (Chapter 4). (This was the same programme which Residents' Committee leaders had used elsewhere with the very different purpose of delegitimising UNX.[91])

[91] This example demonstrates how the Residents' Committee deployed events in contradictory ways depending on their strategic goals. The 2001 slum-upgrading attempt was here used to claim 'their' 10 years of work for the community, while elsewhere it was used as evidence of how a programme had tried to expropriate slum residents.

Another member of the Residents' Committee argued that they were not happy with the contractors' behaviour, and claimed that since the beginning they had had a bad relationship with the company. Paraphrasing the Lead Government Agency staff, she said again that the committee had got the project off the ground, and that the road was theirs. She also said to the contractor: 'If you do not want to work in the slums, if you do not respect slum people and if you do not want to work with us, then leave. Give our money back and then leave [Kwa-maji]' (FN 21/4/2010). Facing these pressures, the contractors changed their attitude, and said they would finish the work on time. Contradicting their previous remarks, they said that despite the fact that other contractors did not want to work in the area and told them that they would face problems, they were happy to work in Kwa-maji and acknowledged that thus far they had not encountered any such problems.

A further issue that should be mentioned is that the conflict became explosive only after the donor representative left the meeting for another commitment. In some ways, the presence of a donor limits the extent to which conflict can erupt. During an interview, a UNX member who had been working on many government projects said that, in her experience, the presence of a foreign donor ensures that people try to find a solution, and donor-funded projects proceed more quickly than other projects in which funds were derived directly from the government (Interview 17, 21/4/2010). This suggests that the threat that a donor may withdraw from a project creates an incentive to collaborate more effectively, or at least to better conceal conflict.

The contractor was an easy target, and attacking him worked to unite the community and the government. As stated previously, the road was central to the project's success, and the project was prioritising payments to the contractor, who was not performing according to the work plan. Without the road, the Residents' Committee would have been seen as a failure by the other residents, and similarly AIDX and the Lead Government Agency would have been seen as failing in their project. The contractors, for their part, were aware that the government would pursue the cancellation of the contract only as a last resort, because it would imply a long court case to settle the payment and begin a new tender process, causing a delay of at least a couple of years. The contractors took advantage of this, but they knew the boundaries that they could not cross, given that court proceedings might have had an

impact on their access to future public tenders. Therefore, it was not in the interest of any of the participants for the relationship to break down altogether, and the parties were well aware of this. The conflict was a sort of exaggerated theatrical performance that had to end with an agreement, but in which all parties emphasised and amplified their positions in order to increase their bargaining power.

Six months later, the construction work had not been completed and residents' leaders faced increasing difficulties maintaining their legitimacy. Once more, residents' leaders raised the issue with the Steering Committee and expressed their desire to meet the contractor on behalf of the Committee. An AIDX member told them that they could not because they were not the ones who had signed the contract. The Catholic missionary backing the residents' leaders asked what the role and the authority of the Steering Committee was if they could not directly contact the contractor. The AIDX member in question replied that if the missionary considered that the Steering Committee was 'useless', he could leave. At that point, a residents' leader – who did not like the attack on the missionary – got upset and left the meeting, while the Catholic missionary ignored the provocative remark and remained (FN 10/10/10). Finally, the community representatives met with the contractor, but they did not come to any agreement, and the Chair of the Residents' Committee spoke of his frustration because Kwa-maji residents had dismantled their shops months earlier to give way to a road that had not been built, and were complaining to him, rather than to the contractor (FN 10/10/10).

6.7 Negotiated community leadership

As we have argued, community leaders can maintain the support of residents, as long as the residents can see continuous improvements. Platteau (2004) argues that those at the bottom may accept the privileged position of elites as long as they see some of the benefits trickling down from their patrons. Instead, what the residents faced in Kwa-maji was a construction job which had been started but was left incomplete. People were losing their initial enthusiasm, and started to associate this development project with the many others which had preceded it and which had never achieved significant improvements (Chapter 4).

The KUDP participation policy was genuinely shifting significant decision-making power towards the Residents' Committee. The community participation framework gave responsibilities to 'the community' and, as we have seen in Chapter 5, this worked to the advantage of learning elites/gatekeepers, predominantly composed of structure-owners. The Residents' Committee was given real power: all major decisions passed through them. In the name of 'the community', the Residents' Committee could subvert the law, nullify title deeds (Chapter 7), and decide who could and could not work in Kwa-maji (Chapter 4).

However, this power faced continuous checks and balances, primarily coming from internal conflicts in the community, which were expressions of the multiple intersecting interests at play (some of which have been presented in Chapter 4). These complex intersections also allowed for the forging of new alliances that apparently contradicted certain patterns of conflict. There was a generational dimension to the leadership conflict between youth and elders; the elders felt their traditional position was being threatened by young people able to use email communication (increasingly used by the development agencies), and with better English language skills, a key asset in dealing with AIDX and UNX. Similarly, in his work on Tanzanian community-based organisations, Dill (2009) shows how the English language can work to exclude some community members. He points out how the bureaucratic documents – such as organisations' constitutions – were sometimes only in English, meaning that a section of the members would not be able to read them. However, in Chapter 9 we shall see how an entrepreneurial youth became very close to the Chair and helped him to prepare a speech in English, creating an inter-generational alliance.

Another dimension to the tensions within the Kwa-maji leadership relates to the relationship between the project's local structure of governance (i.e. the Residents' Committee) and the local government authorities (i.e. the Chief, the Ward Manager, and the local Councillor). An ethnic dimension was also present; bonds were built with certain members rather than others, and this was connected to the national political situation (Chapter 3 and 4). It was also, and in particular, linked to local politics, where an MP associated with Luo tenants was openly critical of the KUDP.

Besides such internal conflicts, the Residents' Committee was continuously influenced and controlled by the public. Residents' Committee members mentioned how many times people came to knock on their doors at night to ask for their intervention on a wide variety of issues. I personally witnessed people asking the help of members of the Residents' Committee for an alcoholic friend who was particularly sick, assistance in dealing with a motorcyclist who had run over a woman, and so forth. Although they may have represented certain elite interests and the pre-existing power structure (as shown in Chapter 5), the Committee members did have to maintain their public exposure, providing leadership to *all* residents and always remaining under their scrutiny (Chapter 9).

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the negotiations occurring within the project. Different interests and agendas, but also different viewpoints and cultural understandings, shaped the process. Organisational struggles intersected with varying approaches and methodologies. While the donor organisation was following its own policy framework, government officials from the Lead Government Agency were following their approach, developed within another policy framework.[92] The actors deployed a variety of discourses to enrol the support of other actors. In this process, temporary and constantly changing alliances were created. The local elite managed to manipulate the discourse of community participation and present itself as 'the voice of the community', resulting in a real shift in power from the government to the local elite, even though that power was constantly renegotiated.

Key decisions did not appear to be taken within the governance structures of the KUDP. However, being part of these structures provided legitimacy to the actors to have a say in the decision-making process: without being members of the Steering Committee, actors would not have easily been able to affect the project. At the same time, those actors that were members of the Steering Committee also sought to influence the process beyond official meetings. The official Steering Committee

[92] A concrete example was that while UNX was particularly keen on sanitation and building communal toilets, the Lead Government Agency considered the building of toilets showed a lack of respect for people's dignity and was strongly disempowering, because it meant deeming people to be unable to provide for their own basic needs.

retained an important role: it had the power to exclude actors from operating in Kwa-maji. NGOs or other actors required the approval or support of the Steering Committee, which could veto their intervention.

The project's success was heavily dependent upon the contractor's capacity to deliver the road. Its inability to do so created a common enemy that helped to build coherence and unity among the other actors, and enable them to move beyond certain divergences much faster than might otherwise have been the case. The residents' leadership drew legitimacy from the implementation of the project; consequently, their position was at stake when there were delays in implementation. The careers of the civil servants and donor representatives were also linked to the success of the programme, which was highly dependent on the capacity of the Residents' Committee to act as a communication channel between the government and the community. The next chapter will focus solely on the negotiations regarding the key matter of land and security of tenure, the most controversial and challenging aspect of the slum-upgrading programme. The chapter will also examine the discourses and resources – legal, social, economic, historical, political – available to the actors in supporting their claims.

7 Negotiating land

> The largest landowners in Kenya today are the families of the only three presidents the country has had since independence – the Kenyattas, the family of his successor, Daniel arap Moi, and the present president, Mwai Kibaki, who served in the Kenyatta and Moi administrations. A little further down the scale are a residual group of white settlers, senior politicians and businessmen with political connections (McGreal, 2008).
>
> The success or otherwise of the upgrading exercise may well lie on how the issue of land ownership and security of tenure is handled. Land 'lords/owners' on the one hand are extremely sensitive about any moves that could jeopardise their ownership claims (KUDP, 2008f: 4).

To understand land negotiations within the KUDP, we need to look at how land has been managed in the past at local and national levels by different institutions in formal and informal ways. The first extract above is reminiscent of some of the issues introduced in Chapter 3: the use of land allocation for patronage politics, and the centrality of land in Kenyan politics. Also, we need to appreciate the role of land in Kenyan culture and historically as the basis for the struggle for independence. The second extract states unequivocally that the success of the KUDP depends upon the way the issue of land is addressed and indicates that programme implementers have been aware of it since the initial steps of the project.

Drawing upon the discussion presented in Chapter 3, on the importance of land and on the different types of land tenure systems adopted by slum-upgrading programmes in Kenya, this chapter will look at how land was negotiated in the initial planning process of the Kwa-maji upgrading. To understand these negotiations, the text refers to the Kwa-maji context and the social divisions within the settlement—especially between structure-owners and tenants. It is also important to consider how land has been historically allocated in the areathrough patronage and customary practices by a committee of elders, local politicians, and government representatives (Chapter 4). The starting point is that the KUDP was dealing with the most important political issue in Kenya, in an area where land had already generated conflict.

This chapter provides only a sample of the negotiations by looking at three significant events located in three different arenas: the discussion in the Steering Committee

regarding the construction of a dispensary, which was delayed due to differences in the procedures of various Ministries; a two-day planning workshop where the contentious issue of land tenure was discussed by the government and the residents' leaders; and a roundtable discussion in which the institutional actors – Government departments, AIDX, UNX – were able to express their concerns without the presence of community representatives. Complementing the ethnographic account of these events with interview excerpts, the chapter will illuminate the negotiation process.

7.1 The power to plan land and the constraints of 'bureaucracy' in the Steering Committee

The officer of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation (MoPHS) was scolded by residents and AIDX for delays in the approval of a plan for the construction of a dispensary (a small clinic providing basic health care) in Kwa-maji. It was a task that fell under the competencies of that Ministry. The officer justified herself by claiming that they had many procedures with which they had to comply and many ongoing programmes and specifically that they could not proceed without the title deed for the land.

> Local Missionary (to MoPHS Officer): Funds are there. People in offices do not care, they do not stay in [Kwa-maji]. You are not updated and you come to the meeting.
>
> AIDX Local Officer (to the Ministry of Lands Officer): Please, could you clarify the allocation of land for the dispensary?
>
> Ministry of Lands (MoL) Officer: It is a common practice. You decide, you put it in the plan and then the MoL will ratify it.
>
> AIDX Local Officer: The Permanent Secretary [of the MoPHS] needs an insurance that they can build.
>
> Lead Government Agency Officer: When the dispensary is there, there are no problems. Once it will be there and stakeholders know it, land will be allocated like the office of the Residents' Committee, we wouldn't have built it if we weren't sure that it wouldn't be destroyed.
>
> MoL Officer: We can't send a document until the plan is approved.
>
> MoPHS Officer: We are only waiting for the confirmation of the land.

Foreign Missionary: Don't wait for construction. The Ministry of Health is not there only to build, you can start supporting existing facilities in the meantime.

MpPHS Officer: We are assisting them already, working hard.

Lead Government Agency Officer: Having worked with the government, I know what she went through. There is a lot of bureaucracy.

AIDX Foreign Officer: We need a time-frame. If by January the Ministry [of Health] is not giving an answer, we need a plan B. Can the City Council, which is not here, build a dispensary?

Lead Government Agency Officer: the Ministry of Health will build it. (FN 27/11/2009)[93]

This is one of the many types of procedural conflicts sometimes used to justify inefficiencies and delay. The actual discussion was much longer; this is only a short but typical extract. Before approving the project, the Ministry of Public Health & Sanitation waited to receive confirmation from the Ministry of Lands that the land had been officially allocated for the dispensary. But the MoL needed the project to be approved before allocating the land. The officer of the MoL argued that the MoPHS did not need further confirmation, since the location of the prospective dispensary was on land assigned to the KUDP. This land was going to be managed through the Steering Committee, and any decision on the land taken by the Committee would eventually be ratified *ex post* by the MoL. Therefore, according to the officer of the MoL, the Minutes of the Steering Committee meeting were sufficient for other actors to start building. But the officer of the MoPHS insisted that she needed approval directly from the MoL.

This situation generated frustration on the part of the exasperated and pragmatic donor, AIDX, which wanted the dispensary to be built and immediately started to look for alternative solutions. During the meeting, AIDX threatened a reallocation of the funds and, in the extract above, looked for another more effective actor which could do the job, proposing the City Council, only to realise that the City Council representative was not even present at the meeting. The Lead Government Agency officer tried first to defend his government colleague with a show of solidarity with

[93] This official meeting, like many other meetings, could not be taped. The notes were taken manually and therefore minor differences from the actual speech may exist. However, this does not affect the sense (see Chapter 2).

regard to the necessary 'evil of bureaucracy', and then promised that the MoPHS would eventually accomplish its mandate. He added that the City Council could not build a health clinic because it did not have a mandate to do so. The constraints due to slow, unclear, and conflicting bureaucratic procedures affected project implementation on many other occasions. In these instances, the donor tried to speed up the process by looking for pragmatic solutions.

The discussion reported above had an important effect. It revealed the total planning power of the Steering Committee with regard to the land assigned to the KUDP. The residents' representatives witnessed how the Ministry of Lands gave the Committee *carte blanche* on the use of Kwa-maji land. The residents' leaders also became aware of the fact that a decision in the Steering Committee (recorded in the Minutes) was sufficient in order to implement a given action. This is the same Steering Committee that, as shown in Chapter 6, was conditioned in its decisions by the discourse articulated by the three residents' representatives in the Committee around what the 'community fears and wants'. The KUDP was assigned the task of upgrading a certain area by giving its Steering Committee a special jurisdiction outside the usual legal framework for land administration. Before moving into the micro-level negotiations of the KUDP, a brief section will contextualise the discussions in Kwa-maji within the wider thinking around land titling.

7.1.1 Land titling

After years of enthusiastic promotion of land titling as the key strategy for unleashing the potential of the 'dead capital' of the urban poor, global development institutions are slowly recognising that the evidence paints a more complex and problematic picture. In his highly influential work, de Soto (2000) argues that the poor have many assets but due to the lack of property titles they cannot use them as collateral to access credit and invest in business. De Soto argues that the presence of a well-established legal system of private ownership is the key variable that explains the wealth of the West.

De Soto's argument fitted within the neoliberal development agenda and his ideas inspired a set of policies focusing on land titling (Gilbert, 2002). As Payne, Durand-Lasserve and Rakodi (2009) notice, it is striking how such policies were pursued with

little evaluation of the empirical evidence. Payne *et al.* acknowledge that recently the World Bank (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2006) has begun to recognise that titling is not a panacea capable of solving all the problems of the urban poor and that the implementation of titling is problematic. It is costly, not flexible enough to cater for different pre-existing land regimes, and does not significantly improve access to formal credit (Payne, *et al.*, 2009: 445).

It has been convincingly argued that security of tenure is a *relative* concept and goes beyond the simplistic dichotomies of legal/illegal and formal/informal (Payne, *et al.*, 2009: 447). Payne *et al.* quote many examples in which residents of informal settlements enjoy '*de facto* tenure security' (2009: 447) without titling. Therefore, they argue, it is important to distinguish *tenure security* from *titling*. While there is substantial evidence that titling has increased security of tenure, there are also examples from many countries where titling has actually *reduced* security of tenure. The possession of a title has not prevented eviction and at the same time the enhanced value of titled land has made it more attractive to higher-income groups. In addition, rents have often increased significantly as a result of titling. Thus, there are examples in which titling has favoured processes of gentrification (Payne, *et al.*, 2009). For example, in the Philippines, Berner has shown how a government programme to sell urban land to the occupiers had ambivalent effects and served 'mainly a middle-class squatter elite and even worsen[ed] the situation of poorer squatters and renters' (Berner, 2000: 563). Another major problem with titling identified by Payne *et al.* is the cost and resources required of land administration agencies. Moreover, corrupted practices in the process of issuing titles may lead to 'land grabbing' (Chapter 3). Considering the scarcity of public resources and the lack of clear evidence that titling ultimately improves the living conditions of the residents, Payne *et al.* (2009) conclude that there may be more important and effective interventions to address the tenure security needs of the urban poor.

In the context of Nairobi, some informal settlements have enjoyed political protection for decades, therefore enjoying '*de facto* tenure security' without titling. However, changes of policies or politicians have also led to brutal evictions and demolitions. It is not uncommon for people to have been evicted more than once, forcing the victims of eviction have had to rebuild their businesses, their social networks, and all the

arrangements that made their livelihoods in the city viable. Not surprisingly, these experiences have been very traumatic and have deeply marked the lives of affected residents. As a result, residents of informal settlements often perceive the Government as a perpetrator of violent and destructive interventions that undermine their livelihoods. In the discourses of both Kwa-maji residents and project staff, land titles (collective or individual) were considered a prerequisite to achieving long-term security of tenure. In other words, only formal and legal title deeds were thought to be able to deliver security of tenure. As argued by Rakodi (2006b), urban growth and development in African cities has undermined informal social institutions, weakening the tenure security sometimes enjoyed under informal arrangements. In such cases, despite costly and complex processes, people have attempted to use formal institutions to protect their properties.

It is also important to note that titling policies are directly connected to the goal of home-ownership. In fact, titling provides tenure security only to those who are allocated land. As argued in Chapter 3, home-ownership may not be the most appropriate solution for very poor households, particularly in a city like Nairobi, where 92% of the residents of informal settlements are tenants (Gulyani, Bassett, & Talukdar, 2012). Titling has the potential to favour pro-poor urban development but it needs to be accompanied by other interventions and not regarded as a 'silver bullet'. In the context of the KUDP, however, formal titles were the central request made by the Residents' Committee. This was not a surprising demand considering that the Committee was predominantly composed of structure-owners.

7.2 The centrality of land and security of tenure

A brief summary of the key issues at stake is useful in terms of understanding the subsequent discussion (Sections 7.3 and 7.4). The key issue in the KUDP is undoubtedly the question of land allocation. There is a technical debate about the best way to do it (Chapter 3), but fundamentally it is a political question: to whom to give a scarce resource. The Government sought agreement on the best way to achieve this with the representatives of the community, largely dominated by the structure-owners (Chapter 5). The land formally belongs to the Government, but informal

ownership and an informal land market have operated in the area with the help of local government authorities which have legitimised such practices (Chapter 4).

In the drafting of the KUDP, all residents – structure-owners and tenants – were identified as beneficiaries. However, this creates difficulties if the Government was expressing an intention of merely recognising informal ownership. The constitution of the Residents' Committee identifies as primary beneficiaries *resident structure-owners,* followed by *tenants* living in the settlement for more than 10 years. Residents' leaders expressed on many occasions the preference for *individual title deeds.* Moreover, when we consider the demands on space with regard to a variety of infrastructural and other issues (roads, public spaces, infrastructures, schools and other public buildings, the need to maintain minimum distances from the rivers, respect minimum plot size, regulations on access to the road, the building percentage, etc.), it is clear that there is insufficient land for all to be issued with title..

This led to a request from residents that the KUDP buy alternative land in order to resettle those who would no longer fit into the area after the upgrading. This was not a new idea: in order to improve living conditions through installing roads, services, public building and lower density housing, many slum-upgrading programmes involve the resettlement of a portion of the residents. The need for the government to provide alternative land for 'spillover' had already been considered by the previous failed programme in Kwa-maji in 2001 (Chapter 4). At that time, suitable land had been identified but residents made allegations that it had been misappropriated.

The preference for individual titles, with each household constructing its own house, is not surprising given the cultural importance of owning land (Ndungu, 2004) and the lack of trust amongst residents (Chapter 4), who prefer not to engage in potentially risky cooperative undertakings with other residents. In her work in Tanzania, Green (2000) found that, similar to Kwa-maji, housing is pursued as an individual accomplishment rather than as a collective project, particularly considering because of people's experience of limited benefits from their investments in community projects.

However, the programme was initially conceived with the objective of providing 'collective security of tenure', which was seen as having two main advantages. First, it is thought to prevent the resale of land, speculation and consequent gentrification (Bassett, 2005). Second, it provides one single land title for a large group, thereby diminishing the costs of issuing a title to each beneficiary. Finally, and more importantly, it is thought to facilitate compliance with building regulations. This is because, while the large communal title has to respect by-laws such as minimum size, direct road access, and so on, the smaller portions assigned to different households are not subjected to these restrictions. At the same time, collective ownership would potentially facilitate the construction of multi-storey buildings, allowing higher densities, and the creation of cooperatives to facilitate savings and provide access to credit.[94] Technically, individual titles might have worked for certain semi-planned areas of Kwa-maji, as the Kwa-maji project area is divided into eight villages with quite different characteristics. By contrast, in other areas of Kwa-maji, collective forms of ownership might have allowed for better use of the land, enabling the achievement of higher population density and avoidance of the gentrification that has affected the majority of past programmes in the country (section 3.3).

However, a conflict with the Residents' Committee emerged immediately. The Committee members accused the project of having already established 'collective' security of tenure, without giving them the chance to decide how they wanted to own the land. This led to pressures to change the project's goal from 'collective security of tenure' to 'appropriate security of tenure'. This meant it was to be decided together with the residents according to what would best suit them. In the 'way forward' section of the Minutes of the Steering Committee meeting in which residents' representatives raised this issue, it is stated: 'It was recommended that a correction on the 'collective security of tenure' be done on the website' (Official Minutes, Steering Committee, 15/1/2009), *de facto* changing the project's objective.

[94] At the time of my fieldwork, there were two types of collective security of tenure that could have been used in the urban context of Nairobi and within the Kenyan legal framework. The reflections on the advantages are valid for both. Under a Community Land Trust, land is owned by the trust and individuals are leased a piece of land and enjoy ownership of any development on the land (i.e. a building) that can be sold to others with the approval of the Trust. However, the land itself remains the property of the Trust. Through sectional titles, the second type, individuals own a part of the land together with others. This is the title used for cooperatives, but also by those who buy a flat within a larger building.

Well before starting the planning and taking a decision on the land allocation, the residents' leaders had already put the buying of extra land on the agenda.

> Residents' Committee Member: The land is small, I'm worried when [Lead Government Agency Officer 1] is saying he's out of funds. We need 10 million to buy land.
> Lead Government Agency Officer 2: How many hectares?
>
> Residents' Committee Member: I don't know, if you give us the OK, we look for alternative land.
>
> MoL Officer: If we do the plan, there will be displacement. Only we don't know the number [of the people]. They [the Residents' Committee members] look forward. Eventually, people will be displaced.
>
> Lead Government Agency Officer 2: The spill over... the relocation is more than just buy land. We are moving a community.
>
> Senior Lead Government Agency Officer: This is not the time [to discuss this issue].
>
> Lead Government Agency Officer 1: But it is good that it came out. So that when the time will come, [AIDX Officer] will be aware of the issue.
>
> Lead Government Agency Officer 2 (to the Residents' Committee members): Be careful, you will be accused by the community to appropriate the land for yourself, this is a delicate issue.
> (FN 27/11/2009)

Conscious of the power relations on the ground and having observed the success of structure-owners in "winning" the elections and lobbying for individual titles, a missionary living in Kwa-maji revealed his pragmatic proposal to me in an informal conversation:

> I suggested to my confreres to buy as many structures as we could so that we can give them for free to people in need when they will be evicted. The land can't go to the owner of the structures, this way the residents will lose everything. For this reason, a Community Land Trust was the best option (FN 5/10/2009).

In other words, he proposed to buy structures in the market and transform the church into a 'good structure-owner', giving dwellings to poor residents, when at a later stage of the project some would eventually be evicted.

While the residents' leaders were working towards legitimising the idea of individual title deeds, the donor was still convinced of the need for collective land ownership as

reported in this short exchange between the AIDX Regional Director, AIDX Foreign Officer, and AIDX Local Officer at a meeting to discuss the progress of my research.

> AIDX Foreign Officer: [...] We will do collective ownership [...]
>
> AIDX Regional Director: Has it already been decided?
> AIDX Foreign Officer: Not formally, but you can't give them individual titles, it is a small land for many people. It would be impossible.
> [...]
>
> AIDX Local Officer: Some people like the Muslims have already started to build permanent structures, you can't allocate them another land or tell them we'll give your structure to someone else... the [Lead Government Agency] is talking of appropriate land tenure system in the programme, they cannot start imposing the Community Land Trust. They are trying to sell the idea of the Community Land Trust to the community. But it is a long process and they have to sell the idea slowly.
> (FN 14/1/2010)

While the AIDX Foreign Officer was confident about the need for collective tenure, his Local Officer was more aware of the negotiation on the ground, meaning that a definite decision was not yet possible.

Everyone in the project was aware of the fundamental importance of security of tenure. The Government knew very well that to get the leaders to accept collective tenure might have been difficult and in any case would involve a long process. Such a decision was perceived as the end of a long process. Focusing on big infrastructural interventions such as road construction (Chapter 6) were also a way of delaying the final decision on land tenure. As part of this long process of negotiation, a two-day workshop, analysed below, was organised by the Ministry of Lands with the help of the Lead Government Agency, UNX and AIDX to plan with the Residents' Committee the future of Kwa-maji.

7.3 Negotiating land with the 'community'

After an introductory presentation of the project's progress made by AIDX local staff, a senior Lead Government Agency officer introduced the workshop and the task of planning. He wanted to make clear that planning means negotiation. He named the leader of the residents and, when he got his full attention, he repeated clearly, 'No rigid minds! Forget planning if you have fixed minds' (FN 11/2/2010). He then

opened a discussion to try to find a Swahili translation for 'fixed minds', although the people agreed that the concept is better understood in English. 'In planning you give and take. If there is no cooperation, I'm going back to my office', he continued. 'Decisions are going to be painful, some of you will be happy, others will cry [...] Kazi ni ngumu lakini tuko tayari [The work is hard but we're ready]. We have to open our minds and to help our people' (FN 11/2/2010). Despite the rhetoric, this introduction contained the key elements that the Government wanted to make clear: negotiating means that no one will get what he initially hoped for, and everyone has to work for the good of the community.

The tea break was followed by a long presentation of the socio-economic survey made by a consultancy firm hired by UNX. The presentation contained huge inconsistencies regarding income and expenditure levels and other indicators. The senior consultant presenting had certainly not prepared the slides herself, as she was noting the contradictions in the data and trying to justify the mistakes while reading through them.[95] An influential Residents' Committee member and powerful structure-owner said that there were two different languages being spoken, because Kwa-maji people were there to discuss how to obtain land titles, not to hear data on the people. The government planners tried to defend the presentation, saying that the socio-economic information was useful for planning.

In the following presentation, the Lead Government Agency explained what they had been doing: they had identified project boundaries, village boundaries, and owners for every existing structure, remarking after describing every activity that they carried it out with the community. The Lead Government Agency said that they had also verified land ownership: the land belonged to the Government. The presentation also reported that an NGO had started to apply for a legal title for the land occupied by the structures they used to carry out their activities, and a church had obtained a title deed.

A picture of this title deed was projected on the wall and an animated discussion erupted after people realised that the title indicated an area of land larger than the current site of the church. Following the advice of the officer of the Ministry of Lands,

[95] Chapter 8 presents these results and their contradictions in more depth.

it was decided that the Residents' Committee would write to the Ministry and get the title modified, settling the dispute. In other words, the power to cancel land titles was given to the residents, whose leaders immediately understood how to deploy this power. It was already lunchtime when the Commissioner of Land was called to introduce the different existing types of land tenure – individual, cooperative (sectional), and the Community Land Trust. He squeezed a rather poor presentation into less than 10 minutes.

The Commissioner of Land argued that, through the programme, the Government wanted to give security of tenure to the residents. 'The citizens are part of the Government', he continued. 'Land has a cultural dimension and we have to divide it in peace' and he added that he wanted to achieve total security. He referred to the previous discussion and said, 'title deeds do not mean security of tenure. [The name of the Church] has a title but not security. The Government want to see trust in the community and it then will give total security' (FN 11/2/2010).

He simply stated that there are different tenure options. As he explained, people can own some land together (sectional titles) and then build the houses through a cooperative and each shareholder will then own a section of it: an apartment; or there is the Community Land Trust: one title for the whole community; or there are individual title deeds. The presentation did not identify the advantages and disadvantages of the options, or the costs involved.

After Lunch, a City Council officer explained the by-laws for construction, moving the workshop into the real negotiation phase. He explained that the *minimum plot* size for a house was 30x60 feet (9x18 metres). If the plot is smaller, he suggested, it could be used as a store but not as a plot for housing. He said that only 45% of the plot should be built, the rest should remain open space. Without a sewerage system, only 25% can be built on. An influential structure-owner proposed to reduce the minimum plot for his village to 30x40 feet and insisted that the *standards need to adapt to the situation*, cleverly mentioning a nearby programme where the City Council had agreed to apply *ad hoc* standards. The Lead Government Agency officer explained how in another project in Voi (Chapter 3) the minimum plot had been reduced to 30x50 feet. A chaotic discussion ensued, until a government officer

reminded the meeting that tenants who had lived there for more than 10 years were also beneficiaries and referred to the opening speech in the morning, repeating that there should not be 'fixed minds'. A resident answered: 'I'm a Luo and you try to convince me to be a Kikuyu but I'm not. There are things we are saying to people we cannot change' (FN11/2/10). A structure-owner continued, 'we have plots, we need to formalise [them]', meaning that there was not much planning to do, only to give individual ownership of the plots on which different structures were built. The MoL said that the road must be nine metres wide, and the City Council officer added that only roads wider than nine metres are maintained. A key Residents' Committee member stated that some people had their own hidden agendas.

A Lead Government Agency officer tried to shift the discussion on to something less controversial and asked community members to identify public buildings such as schools, while his colleagues added them on the digital map projected on the wall. However, another conflict started when residents were asked to identify a location for the public library they said they would need, with one resident saying 'there is no place in [name of the village] for a Community Library. The structure which belongs to someone is his plot'. Here the MoL officer emphasised that this was the problem so that they had to go beyond the idea of not touching existing structures.

In the discussion that followed, a young Muslim resident proposed that a mosque be put in every village and everyone laughed. The MoL reiterated that they had agreed in the morning to respect everybody's opinions, and suggested that this could be done later, 'there is a tool called change of use of a plot and Muslims could buy a plot and make their mosque'. Another resident added, 'No churches, no mosques... plots and a school' (FN 11/02/10).

At the end of the day, a programme officer asked what I thought about the meeting and I said that despite heated discussion the process looked very calm considering what was at stake. I was answered, 'it is smooth because everything is already set. It is a theatrical farce.' A similar perception emerged from an interview with an important residents' leader and structure-owner the following month:

I: What is your opinion of the government involvement in the programme?

Residents' Committee member: Up to where we are, we have not seen any problem, because we are expecting [that] all what we agreed from the beginning is what the government will do for us and if the government does what we talked we have no problem.

I: You said "what we had agreed in the beginning", when?

Residents' Committee member: What we have agreed is we don't want our houses to be built, we want to be given our plots then we build for ourselves. No matter where we shall get money, we build for oursel... for ourselves (Interview 8, 10/3/2010).

The second day of the workshop started with the Senior Lead Government Agency officer, who had opened the meeting the previous day, reminding participants of the attitude he sought, 'This is a collective process so don't blame your colleagues, *we* do planning. It involves negotiations. Negotiating is give and take.' He then moved on to outline some planning principles, reminding participants that, if residents violate the riparian reserve and the Chief intervenes, it is not because he or she is a 'bad Chief' but it is the law that has to be respected. They should also, he urged, avoid ethnic residential segregation like the British did in Nairobi, dividing Whites, Asians and Blacks. They should keep the roads wide enough, he continued, to allow the passage of vehicles in case of emergency. An elder immediately said, 'we don't want roads'. Following on from his talk the day before, the officer said that this was an example of 'fixed minds' which need to change in order to plan and added that when we plan, 'If we start by saying "but the house of X is affected...." eh...', meaning that it will be impossible to plan. Later, he continued, 'When you plan, don't say that someone has put the road there to eat your land. Patience pays.'

After the speech, residents were divided into groups according to their respective villages and asked to discuss and answer a long list of questions related to a visioning exercise, a first fundamental step in planning.

What is the vision for [Kwa-maji] plan?
List 9 key problems facing [Kwa-maji]? For every problem suggest a solution.
List 9 key problems facing land use in [Kwa-maji] and for each problem suggest a solution.
List 9 problems facing housing in [Kwa-maji] and for each problem suggest a solution.

List 9 key problems facing public facilities and for each problem suggest a solution.
List 9 key problems facing transport in [Kwa-maji] and for each problem suggest a solution.
List 9 key opportunities for capital investment in [Kwa-maji].
Suggest tenure option for [Kwa-maji] and explain the reason.

The groups were also provided with a map of their village and asked to draw their vision on it. I observed the work of one village: amongst the six village representatives, there were three women and three men. An old woman looked very tired and did not follow the work, a young woman said she was sick and left, while the remaining veiled woman was listening on one side. Two of the men drew on the map with pencils; one was an influential absentee structure-owner. They drew the road narrower than the minimum required, fitting it within its current route as they did not want to affect existing structures. Whenever the pencil got close to a structure someone said 'this is the house of X' and the person drawing reduced the width of the road to avoid drawing on the structure. They also agreed to put some trees close to the river as a public space, because they were told that it was not possible to build there. In conclusion, not much planning and no real discussion took place in the group. During the group work, some government officers were very keen to take a lot of pictures, to the point that the old tired lady asked to have her picture taken with me. Then, she asked the young government officer to give the camera to a colleague to join us for another picture. These pictures were later used during the KUDP conference (Chapter 9), and on the official website as evidence of community participation.

The groups reported back to all the participants while the AIDX Local Officer facilitated the process and took notes on a flipchart. The vision was fairly similar across the villages: good houses, water, employment and safety. The AIDX Local Officer listed all the problems identified by the groups and asked for help in selecting crosscutting issues. This was the result: insecurity; access roads; title deeds; poverty; street lights; drainage/sewage; electricity; water; poor housing; planning. When the officer asked participants to rank the issues and choose the most important, most residents answered in unison: 'title deeds'. The solution to all the problems identified by the people was *planning* and *individual title deeds*. Some groups added that the donor should provide *alternative land* for displaced people.

The Ministry of Lands officer asked every member of each group to sign their map and told them that they would give the maps to the technical team which would work on a digital plan based on the maps produced during the workshop. The residents' leaders said that they would share the discussion during the workshop with other residents and asked the Chief, in her capacity as a representative of the Government, to close the meeting with a prayer.

7.3.1 Analysing decision-making in the workshop space

The Residents' Committee members enjoyed the workshop, for which they received an allowance that roughly corresponded to the minimum monthly wage and good quality food and accommodation. The workshop created a more cohesive group and offered a good opportunity for socialising. The residential workshops of the KUDP organised outside Kwa-maji also functioned to create cooperation among the large number of institutional actors who normally worked on the project from their different offices. This workshop became a space to exchange ideas and information as well as to create interpersonal relationships which were very friendly, while people genuinely enjoyed the company.

However, while the workshop fulfilled the project need to foster cooperation, technically speaking it presented some problematic issues. A UNX officer, who had previously worked for the Kenyan Government for over 20 years, commenting on the choice of having a planning workshop at this stage said:

> They did it the wrong way because they should have started with knowing how many are we as beneficiaries that are legitimate? And [...] then divide that size of the land against the beneficiaries. Then you would know now the beneficiaries are these, this land can accommodate this number of people because the houses [...] must meet the standards of housing approved by law (Interview 7, 3/3/2010).

In other words, he argued that they did not have the information the residents required to make an informed decision regarding the different tenure types available.

When I asked the AIDX Local Officer how it was possible to plan without knowing the number of beneficiaries, I was told that this was only a first exercise and would not affect the programme. A Lead Government Agency officer, who had previously worked in other slum-upgrading programmes, was of the same opinion, seeing the

workshop as being a preliminary step in an important and lengthy process of negotiation. On the subject of negotiating security of tenure the officer said during an interview in his office:

> This has to start early, you know it is not one-time thing to go and ask [...] Remember we have various interest groups there: we have landlords who feel they own, I mean the structure-owners who feel they should be allocated the land; we have tenants who really have no claim over the land, they hire out today here, tomorrow the next place; there are the long-term tenants who actually they belong now to [Kwa-maji]; there are the speculators who feel that because they have been in [Kwa-maji] for some time, they should be allocated the land. *So the issue of security of tenure is a process, to me this is not one-time decision, so the initial workshop was not for them to make a choice, although they [the residents' leaders] went ahead to jump to the final stage and say "this is what we want" but that choice has not yet been officially made*, it could not be made at that point, so that workshop was to start training them on the various types of tenure [...] When you are working with [a] community structure can be very frustrating. They will listen to you, then they are not even waiting for another time to make their decisions today, so you leave them to think... to say what they want to say, but still other workshops are planned on this subject of choice of tenure (Interview 11, 7/4/2010, my emphasis).

However, one prominent Residents' Committee member had a clear and inflexible view on the type of tenure she favoured. When asked in an interview what type of tenure was the most appropriate for Kwa-maji, she answered:

> Individual, individual, individual what? [pause] individual allotment letters [with emphasis], you see there are so many allotments, there are so many title deeds but we as [Kwa-maji] community, we would like the government to give us a lease each and everyone to have his or her own lease, no matter how small portion you have but you have your own document (Interview 8, 10/3/2010).

On the other hand, a key Lead Government Agency officer continued to support the idea of a Community Land Trust. The Lead Government Agency was very interested in replicating the Voi model of a Community Land Trust (Chapter 3), scaling up the approach in a significantly larger and challenging settlement in the capital. However, the officer recognised the need for residents' support, as shown in this extract from an interview conducted in his office.

> Lead Government Agency Officer: The other challenge is the issue of land because [Kwa-maji] land is so small, you see it cannot be able to fit everyone, but using the Community Land Trust will be doing that, people will be able to share the land as we will adopt other development measures.

I: Which one you think would be the best security of tenure type?

Lead Government Agency Officer: Okay we are yet to... this is being done with the conjunction with the... the decision is being done in conjunction with the community, we cannot decide for them but initially we had talked of Community Land Trust.
[...]
Lead Government Agency Officer: So the Community Land Trust would be recommended though it is still under debate.
[...]
I: In particular, in relation to the Community Land Trust, in the last workshop the different villages and people did not even mention it as a possibility, they...

Lead Government Agency Officer: You see this is something that will go on until the end, may be they have not understood what the Community Land Trust is all about, but if it doesn't work the other alternatives will be source for funds to get alternative land so that those who will not be able to get land here will be resettled somewhere.
(Interview 9, 15/03/2010)

As the government officer recognised, not having collective security of tenure would imply that each plot cannot be smaller than a certain size and therefore more land would be required. Overall, this implies that beneficiaries would ultimately receive more land than they would under a collective title. In this sense, it is understandable for the Residents' Committee to ask for individual titles and at the same time for more land to be bought by the programme.

The workshop was supposed to be a preliminary step; in fact, it was very unlikely that the rough manual drawing which simply marked the existing road networks and the schools would make any difference in the overall planning. The drawing exercise did not really lead to new planning choices. In most parts of Kwa-maji, roads were already there; they had only been encroached upon by structures which would need to be removed. However, the ritual of drawing and signing collectively the map had the function of symbolically giving *ownership* to the residents – they were the ones doing the planning – and *legitimacy* to the planners. Participatory workshops have been criticised for being rituals to transform people into beneficiaries of development interventions (Mosse, 2005) and legitimise such interventions (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Workshops are a key tool of participatory development practice and were used at critical moments in the KUDP to obtain 'community' endorsement of the

process. Similar to Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) and their derivatives,[96] participatory planning in this workshop involved certain tools, such as drawing village maps, listing and ranking issues, all of which functioned as rituals to give legitimacy to the process. According to Korf, 'The decision performed in this time-space container becomes the legitimating source for the expressive realisation of the unity of an authentic community' (Korf, 2010: 718).

Participants 'played the game' and participated in the different activities. However, as soon as they were given space, they underlined clearly what they wanted: individual title deeds. In practice, they manipulated the participatory space and anticipated planners by expressing their aim and promoting what they considered to be the solution to all the problems of Kwa-maji.

The other important aspect is that, as described above, residents had understood their power when the MoL ratified their decision to revoke a title deed held by a church. Korf (2010) defines the PRA workshop as a 'post-political space of exception [...] where law and political order of the postcolonial state are temporarily suspended' (718) and this was indeed the case. For instance, in Kwa-maji, where participants were able to take an important decision in relation to land, bypassing what is normally a complex bureaucratic procedure. In practice, under this perspective, the workshop was a space which empowered participants to nullify laws and circumvent national democratic politics.

7.4 Talking frankly: sharing concerns without 'the community'

About a month after the planning workshop, AIDX organised a small roundtable among the institutional actors involved in the project to take stock of the situation and draw some initial lessons in view of the World Urban Forum 2010, at which AIDX wanted to showcase the KUDP. The idea was to have a few short presentations and then open a discussion. One of the presenters was a UNX officer, who gave a rapid summary of the socio-economic survey results, which had already been introduced by a consultant during the planning workshop, and distributed copies of the report. One aspect of the data that was repeatedly referred to in the subsequent discussion was

[96] Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and its derivatives such as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA), Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

the ratio of tenants/structure-owners, respectively 68% to 26%, according to the findings based on the sample.[97] They also invited me to make a presentation about social inclusiveness and inequalities in Kwa-maji and I was the last to speak before the discussion. I dealt in a provocative but politically correct way with the issue of land allocation and security of tenure by presenting hypothetical future scenarios. These scenarios were based on different choices regarding land and underlined the risk of gentrification. The presentation induced a lively debate in which the various institutional actors revealed their worries freely in the absence of Residents' Committee members. In this context, they analysed and debated the situation of the KUDP with regard to the issues of land and relations between structure-owners and tenants. The best way to present the different perspectives and challenges as they were perceived by the different actors is to let them speak, through a substantive use of their discussion.

After my presentation, an officer from the Ministry of Finance (MoF), who was not very familiar with the local dynamics (as his role was to audit expenditure and transfer funds), asked me for clarification on the issue of security of tenure. I answered that the Lead Government Agency was better equipped to respond. The MoL officer intervened, saying that they were drafting a plan and thought that the best option was *sectional property* whereby residents 'build and own property together'. However, he added, there was a need for 'a lot of awareness to sell this idea to the community'. He said that it was good that the issue of alternative land for overspill was emerging at an early stage of planning and added:

> We can vary the standards a little bit and keep them to a minimum: the minimum size of the road, the minimum size of each plot, but still there is a lot of land that will be used for infrastructures. Definitely there will be a displace[ment] of people. Where we will take them? How far can we take the overspill? Because if we move them too far or too many, we destroy their network and livelihood (FN 17/03/2010).

The MoF officer asked: 'Why are people against the model of Kibera?'[98] The other participants laughed in unison, helping him to understand the naïveté of his question.

---

[97] It was not very clear who the remaining 6% were. The explanation provided was that they were relatives of structure-owners allowed to live in the house for free. This ratio was subsequently nullified by the findings of the enumeration (Chapter 8).

[98] Although this is an extreme simplification, the Slum-Upgrading Programme in Kibera was planning to compensate the structure-owners with a lump sum, move all the residents away, and build multi-

The answer was already very clear to all the people on the ground. The MoL officer answered: 'People want to own something'. The Lead Government Agency officer added,

> Structure-owners oppose the Kibera idea, they want to own plots, their main objective is owning land [...] Maybe we will have a mix of social housing and plots, but plot allocation must be there. Structure-owners are very powerful and direct most of the things (FN 17/03/2010).

The MoL officer continued, 'To me, it is not yet clear. Who are we targeting? 68% are tenants. The majority are tenants. Who are we focusing on? Structure-owners... how did they get the land?' At this point, the most senior Lead Government Agency officer present felt the need to intervene and an active debate followed. Below are some of the most salient extracts.

> Most Senior Lead Government Agency Officer: Regardless of how they [structure-owners] got their land, they are there. There are challenges, there are very rich people inside [Kwa-maji], against this power force you are going to intervene. The intervention is for the poor, but there are the rich. How can we meet the interest of the poor people without compromising the programme? [...]
>
> Local Missionary: In the Residents Committee more than 60%, maybe even 70... 80% are structure-owners and they are only 26% of the people but are determining the fate of the 68% of the community. They know these things. They know how upgrading programmes work, they had experiences. People who speak for [Kwa-maji] are structure-owners so, even if tenants want high-rise [buildings], they cannot say it.
> (FN 17/03/2010)

A researcher based in a UK university who had been invited to attend the meeting said, '[the Lead Government Agency officer] just said that if we say we do high-rise we fail. I'm a planner but here I know that what we need is not planning, but negotiations'. A sociologist employed by one of the Government Ministries expressed her opinion on how to prevent gentrification:

> Structure-owners are getting private ownership and tenants want better housing. Structure-owners and absentee structure-owners will benefit. The structure-owners will also decide for the overspill. This Residents' Committee was already there in the [19]90s. [...] What we need are other activities to involve tenants, otherwise few people leading everything will get all benefits. We should start from activities involving the poor tenants

---

storey buildings that residents could pay for in instalments. Details of the project are presented in section 3.4.3.

like saving schemes and other activities to improve their income (FN 17/03/2010).

The MoPHS officer shared the concern about whom the programme was targeting:

> The objective is to improve the standards of the poor. But the structure-owners who will benefit are people who are economic[ally] stable, not the poor. The problem was that there was no proper agreement between landlords, tenants and the Government. If you upgrade infrastructures and structure-owners will improve houses, the rent will increase and the people will move. Other people will come in but not the targeted poor (FN 17/03/2010).

What followed was a discussion on how to deal with the power of the structure-owners. The Lead Government Agency officers and the local AIDX officer, who were involved on a daily basis with the Residents' Committee, invited those present to consider the history and local dynamics and to understand the perspective of the structure-owners, while other actors were more concerned with gentrification:

> Lead Government Agency Officer: To understand the programme we have to look at how it started. It was already very difficult to have tenants in the Residents' Committee. Whether you want it or not, structure-owners are so powerful. There is still a court case. Moreover, even if they are of a poor quality, structure-owners have provided houses for all these years that the Government have not. We may have a mix of social housing and plots allocation, but plots allocation cannot be avoided.
>
> AIDX Local Officer: In [Kwa-maji], people have been resettled there by the councillor who then was Mayor, in short by the Government. For them, it is not acceptable to be considered equal to tenants. We have to recognise that there has been already an important negotiation and change because the structure-owners have included in their constitution as beneficiaries the tenants who have been living there for more than 10 years.
> [...]
> UNX Officer: [...] We all agree that the structure-owners in the programme are not a big group in number but they are in charge in terms of power and they influence the Residents' Committee and this is due to the history of [Kwa-maji]. Our colleague [referring to the sociologist who spoke earlier] said to expand participation as a strategy and I agree.
> [...]
> Ministry of Water Officer: When we put infrastructure, those living there will vacate the area and infrastructure will be enjoyed by richer people. What is supposed to be done is to provide public low-cost houses given to the municipality as it is done in Britain, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and so forth. Putting water and roads, in 5 years will be like Mathare North... an area for the affluent. [Officer's name] will buy together with others and develop because there is tarmac, water, things which are not there somewhere else.

> Most Senior Lead Government Agency Officer: Every human being has the right to basic services. We cannot deny them on the fear that they [tenants] may be leaving.
>
> Lead Government Agency Officer: Whether provided by the Nairobi City Council, Government or people is always housing. If we provide the security of tenure, the structure-owners have the capacity to develop houses. And the Government has limited resources.
> [...]
> MoL Officer: [Kwa-maji] people feel owners; they have applied for title deeds, people in Kibera no. The Government cannot discriminate and it is not possible to control their behaviour after giving titles. My assessment is that we have to use individual title deeds unless people are properly sensitised to other options.
> [...]
> AIDX Local Officer: Infrastructures can contribute to improving quality of life but they can also contribute to gentrification. So we need a strategy to prevent gentrification.
> (FN 17/03/2010)

As far as I know, this was the first time that the participants acknowledged and discussed this delicate topic in a formal meeting with all the institutional actors present. In other events, at which community representatives were present, the structure-owners/tenants conflict always remained implicit, but was never directly addressed. However, once community representatives were not present, the other actors revealed their serious concerns on this issue. Community consent was deemed so important as to force development agencies to adopt a 'frontstage' when they were dealing with the community and keep to a 'backstage' their real concerns. The fact that, following participatory approaches, elected community leaders were present at most of the meetings had prevented institutional actors from openly voicing their concerns. These concerns emerged strongly in the protected space of the roundtable.

Another theme that surfaced in the discussion and the interviews that followed was that the project was not designed to disentangle the established power imbalances in Kwa-maji, because of the fear that structure-owners' reactions could jeopardise the project. Another reason was that the structure-owners' position was somehow deemed legitimate and that the aim of the project was therefore not to expropriate and redistribute, but rather to legalise current informal ownership. In the words of a UNX officer interviewed, 'It is true that Government has a redistributive power and

this is undeniable, but it is not possible to make a revolution' (Interview 18, 10/05/2010).

7.5 Conclusions

The KUDP is about many things, but the key deliverable is security of tenure. The project is therefore dealing with one of the most challenging political issues in Kenya. As such, despite possible attempts to think about the project in technical terms, it is first and foremost political. Both government officers and community members deployed discourses, examples, and policy ideas from other projects at national and international levels to frame their arguments regarding land and security of tenure. Through the analysis of these practices, the chapter has contributed to clarifying the important relationships between local negotiations and wider processes.

Structure-owners, who dominate the spaces of community participation in the project (Chapter 5), realised that the Steering Committee had real power regarding decisions over land. They were told that it was sufficient to have a decision on the use of land recorded in the Minutes of a Steering Committee meeting to make it implementable. They were also aware of how to manipulate decision-making in the Steering Committee through the discourse of 'what the community wants and fears' (Chapter 6). Finally, they saw that the chaotic character of the implementation, which was characterised by unclear procedures and relations between the actors, including the MoL, would enable whatever decisions emerged from the Steering Committee to be ratified *ex post*.

Through the planning workshop, members of the Residents' Committee understood how they could cancel a title deed owned by a church by arguing that it was illegitimate, and that they would be encouraged and supported by the Government in this process. Structure-owners even suggested changes to the planning and construction by-laws, asking the City Council to accept smaller plot sizes, and their request was considered legitimate. In other words, structure-owners became aware of how workshops could be decision-making arenas outside the 'normal' law (Korf, 2010). The workshop was a new governance arena that structure-owners could influence and they attempted to manipulate this participatory space by clearly

putting forward their own agenda. This 'new space' was certainly empowering (Cornwall, 2002; Cornwall & Coelho, 2006), but the question is: empowering for whom? As we have seen in Chapter 5, not all the different interests among the residents were incorporated into the structure of community governance.

The workshop activities may have been merely symbolic rituals; for instance, the drawing of maps. However, dominant participants were able to make clear their request for individual title deeds to the point that a Lead Government Agency officer had to admit in an interview in his office that he could not say in public what he believed to be the best tenure option:

> I am not saying communal is best for [Kwa-maji]. I meant that statement... to me that would be suicidal because it means I am not respecting their choices, that I had already made the decisions. [In] such communities you have to be very careful to be seen to be allowing the community their choices, even if you already know this is this way (Interview 11, 7/4/2010).

The difference between the two arenas of the workshop and the roundtable highlights very well how the necessity of 'community consent' forced other institutional actors to adopt a 'frontstage' and 'backstage' approach, as they could not voice their concerns in front of community representatives. In the Steering Committee meetings or in the workshop, issues regarding gentrification or structure-owners' dominance never emerged explicitly. However, in the 'private arena', away from community representatives, it emerged that some actors were clearly very aware of the risks and of the difficult choices to be made in terms of finding an equilibrium between conflicting needs: on the one hand, maintaining structure-owners' support and, on the other, achieving a 'fair' outcome. The roundtable was a sort of secret meeting whose existence could not be revealed to the community representatives for fear that they would feel excluded and perceive the Government as plotting against them. The participatory character of the project meant that in almost all the project meetings involving different agencies, community representatives were present, therefore preventing discussion around how to avoid gentrification and protect tenants.

Nevertheless, structure-owners understood that government actors would not easily accept their request for individual titles and were scared by the unknown number of

tenants who had lived in Kwa-maji for more than 10 years; a category that the project sought to acknowledge as legitimate beneficiaries. This uncertainty pushed structure-owners to put in place a strategy through which to protect themselves by shaping the participatory enumeration, which was originally conceived as a mechanism for recognising all the residents, but developed into something quite different. This process will be examined in the next chapter.

8 The politics of counting people

> Not [only] in my view but in my experience, [enumeration] is very key before any upgrading because [if] this is the piece of land [where] you want the upgrading to be done, first and foremost you need to have an idea, a very clear and a realistic one. How many people are living here? Out of these many people, how many are residents? How many and among these residents... how many are tenants? How many are landlords? Again out of these people, how many are absentee landlords? How many? Who owns how many structures? So that with this information the residents are able to negotiate among themselves and be in consensus because we live here. This land cannot expand. It is just this and we must fit in. So how does each one of us access this space? The fight would be: it is us the structure-owners who should own houses, but what about the poor tenants? The land belongs to the Government and the Government has the responsibility of resettling its people so time has come. The Government must do that so there must be a consensus an agreement between the tenants, the structure-owners and the Government on how people will access this small piece of land and what type of houses would be built (NGO worker, Interview 20, 21/06/2010).

This chapter examines one of the most sensitive steps of the KUDP: the participatory enumeration of all Kwa-maji residents implemented to identify and recognise the residents as beneficiaries. Government censuses and enumerations have always been much more than a mere technical data collection process. They have consistently raised political issues and have been resisted and challenged. In the African context, they were perceived as a tool of the colonial government and associated with other policies of forced labour and forced migration. Censuses implemented by independent governments have also been political because data were used to identify constituency borders, for resource allocation, etc. (Campbell, 1976). More recent analyses have adopted a Foucauldian perspective and conceptualised censuses and enumerations as the state's attempts to render a population 'legible' for the purpose of government (Rose, 1999: 215-230; Scott, 1998). Global policies in relation to informal settlements have shifted from evictions and demolitions to planning development *in situ* (Chapter 3), and this has meant that slums have increasingly been the targets of government enumerations. Over the last decade, residents themselves have increasingly conducted their own 'participatory enumerations' to ensure they are taken into account and to engage with local authorities (Chitekwe-

Biti, Mudimu, Nyama, & Jera, 2012; Farouk & Owusu, 2012; Huchzermeyer, 2009; Karanja, 2010; Muller & Mbanga, 2012; Patel, Arputham, Burra, & Savchuk, 2009; Patel, d'Cruz, & Burra, 2002; Weru, 2004).

Sometimes residents have produced their own data to counter government figures (Ghertner, 2010; Livengood & Kunte, 2012: 84). By using enumerations as a tool to negotiate with the state, urban communities participate in the co-production of development (Mitlin, 2008). Such co-production is a key process explored in this thesis. As we just said, the literature on state enumerations tends to emphasise the dimension of *governmentality* and analyse the process from this perspective. For example, in *Seeing the State,* Corbridge *et al.* (2005) explore encounters between the state and the rural poor and examine how through such multiple encounters the poor become co-producers of the state itself. As we have argued in the Introduction, Corbridge *et al.* reject restrictive interpretations of Foucault regarding the concept of governmentality, but adopt Foucault's view of 'dispersed practices of government' (2005: 5), rather than conceptualisating the state as a discrete and singular entity. Following Fuller and Harriss (2001), they look at the state as 'bundles of everyday institutions and forms of rule' (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 5). They argue that 'We can learn about the practices of government by attending to the diverse ways in which the state is experienced and understood by differently placed individuals, including by its own employees' (8). To do so, Corbridge *et al.* contend that we need to focus on the performance of these encounters between the state and the citizens.

The influential Journal *Environment and Urbanization* has dedicated considerable space to the discussion of participatory enumerations, including a special issue (Vol. 24, Issue 1, 2012). However, with the exception of Hooper and Ortolano (2012), who explore different motivations for participation in community initiatives on the basis of social class, there is little mention of the importance of local social organisation or internal conflict in informal settlements. 'Community-led' enumerations are presented as consensual processes that empower entire communities. In the articles in this special issue, the actors are 'the community' and the Government. The only possible conflict is between the two; but often, it is argued, participatory enumerations facilitate productive cooperation. Sometimes, potential conflict in a community is said to be the result of a misunderstanding of the intentions of the

enumeration process, but once implementers have explained the advantages for the whole community to 'opinion leaders', the process is smooth (Makau, *et al.*, 2012: 39).

With reference to Kenya, Weru (2004) describes resistance by part of a community to a participatory enumeration and Karanja (2010) explains the process of participatory enumeration and the potential problems that may arise. Even though these papers do not give a detailed account of the micro-politics of carrying out such processes and do not explore local dynamics deeply, they show the conflictual nature of such processes.

Such conflicts within the community around enumerations were particularly evident during my fieldwork. Therefore, I found accounts which present enumeration as a consensual process that is fully embraced by the community (as a single actor) somewhat surprising. The papers in *Environment & Urbanisation* and elsewhere show how enumerations are used by 'the community' to make their demands for the right to live in a location and for services to the Government. Some accounts mention 'dialogue' between 'the community' and 'the Government'; others report how community-generated data can challenge the legitimacy of government data. However, there is seldom any direct reference to internal conflict. This is ironic because enumerations are presented as participatory research to learn more about a community, but the authors analysing enumeration processes present urban communities, which are in fact highly unequal (Chapter 3 & 5), as homogeneous groups.

For example, Livengood and Kunte argue that 'This process [community mapping and data collection] has helped to open and sustain a dialogue between the residents of informal settlements and city government around "slum" upgrading' (Livengood & Kunte, 2012: 77). They also mention how different steps were taken 'with settlement leaders' (Livengood & Kunte, 2012: 91). However, there is no mention of who these leaders are, to which social group they belong, how they became leaders, and so on. The community is presented as a single unproblematic actor, with undisputed and legitimate leaders, common goals, and clear requests to make.

There are, of course, more nuanced representations (e.g. Karanja, 2010) in which potential challenges are presented, but in such cases insufficient detail is provided.

Most accounts of participatory enumerations contained in *Environment and Urbanization* refer to the work of Slum Dwellers International, a network of dwellers promoting community-led slum-upgrading based on participatory enumerations. What surprised me is that, while conflicts are not explored in the published articles about their experiences, the members of Slum Dwellers International are very aware of the internal conflicts generated by enumerations and the type of strategies adopted by various actors to manipulate enumerations. My analysis of some of the strategies deployed by structure-owners to exclude tenants in the government-led enumeration described in this chapter owe a lot to the insights provided to me by some of the members of Slum Dwellers International, whom I met and interviewed on different occasions relating to other upgrading projects. This chapter contributes to the debate on participatory enumerations in informal settlements by analysing the local micro-politics of an enumeration.

The next section of the chapter discusses the *political* nature of *numbers* and *data* regarding informal settlements. Later, the chapter analyses how the elite of structure-owners in Kwa-maji operated to simplify the enumeration exercise and gain control over the delicate process. The analysis of the ethnographic account reveals the strategies deployed by the structure-owners and how the project did not employ existing best practices to counter elite capture. Finally, the chapter makes a contribution to Foucauldian analyses of this type of census process. While enumerations are indeed a 'technology of government', a government's attempt to render an area 'legible' through the collection of data may be shaped by the *agency* of residents. Some residents know how to manipulate the process and provide the government with their own 'reading' of the community.

8.1 Numbers and slums: playing with figures

Beyond the process of enumeration itself, it is important to be aware of how the numbers of slum dwellers have always been deployed and manipulated to achieve political goals. Discrepancies between the so-called 'official' data and the 'real' data presented by civil society groups have been a constant feature in many development-related issues, such as the rate of HIV infection in the population, participation in

formal education, and other socio-economic indicators. The number of slum dwellers has itself been one of these contested figures.

Following the policy shifts explained in some detail in Chapter 3 and mentioned above, the Government of Kenya (GoK) abandoned its policy of denying recognition to informal settlements coupled with forced evictions, and adopted the idea that slums can be improved *in situ*. This led to the creation of the joint Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) between the GoK and the United Nations (Chapter 3). In this new context, inflated numbers of slum dwellers became strategic as a way of attracting foreign funding. Census data was considered inadequate for the provision of information on the slum population because censuses had not been designed in such a way as to achieve full coverage in informal areas. Moreover, the growth rate of slum populations in Kenya, which in 2001 was estimated at around 5.88% annually (UN-Habitat, 2006: 190), was too fast to be appropriately recorded by the national census that takes place every 10 years. Therefore, disparate estimates were possible.

Kibera, the biggest slum in Nairobi, attracted a significant amount of resources when the United Nations claimed that it was the largest slum in Sub-Saharan Africa. The UN estimates ranged from 500,000 to one million. One UN publication (UN-Habitat & ICPC, 2010: 12) reported that 2 million people lived in Kibera. This was most likely a mistake, but definitely a telling mistake that shows the tendency of the policy environment to inflate such figures. Kibera is also the constituency of the current Prime Minister, who has been an MP representing the area for the last 19 years, and hosts a large concentration of residents from his Luo ethnic group. Before the 2007 elections, he presented himself as 'the people's president', the president of the poor, and used the slum-upgrading programme to make electoral promises. He pledged that this time the slum-upgrading would bring advantages to the residents of Kibera; he said that he would give the houses to the people who were in Kibera at the same price they were paying at the time. Therefore, he needed to attract significant funding and sustaining the inflated numbers was one way of obtaining it. A similar interest in having an inflated number of slum residents was shared by the United Nations and their relatively small but growing Programme dealing with sustainable urban development – UN-Habitat. The Programme needed to sustain awareness on

urban issues in order to continue its growth, after it gained momentum with the 2008 announcement that over half of the world's population is now living in cities.

Looking at how many years it takes for new evidence to be accepted and reflected in UN reports, Potts states: 'In time, fictitious figures became facts by being constantly re-stated' (Potts, 2012b: 2). This is of particular significance in this instance, because UN statistics and figures are used as a benchmark by many scholars. More recent studies claimed that Kibera had a lower population; between 235,000-270,000 (Marras, 2008), while cartographers and GIS experts at the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA) estimated in 2009, before the release of national census data, a population of approximately 200,000 people (Desgroppes & Taupin, 2011). However, their findings were not taken into account until the National 2009 census was released in 2010, indicating a population of about 170,000 people. The UN-Habitat website still indicates that 'Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, is the second largest slum in Africa with a population of approximately 700.000 inhabitants'.[99]

In other instances, the Government has downplayed the number of residents, particularly when there was a need to make the case that the eviction of residents in a certain area would not have a dramatic social impact; evictions were often needed to allow investors to develop a particular zone.

On certain occasions, Government representatives felt their own data to be so inadequate that in public speeches, they started to use NGO data instead. For example, the next chapter describes how the acting Mayor of Nairobi avoided the newly released census data and used civil society numbers. The Deputy Prime Minister did the same when speaking shortly after (Chapter 9). The data presented by City Council and government representatives in their speeches significantly contradicted the data from the Government's own census. It is also interesting to note that the actors did not feel that they needed to justify their numbers saying, for instance, that they used these data because they did not trust the census. The next chapter will provide an example of how the number of slum dwellers is used by the Government at different levels in contradictory and inconsistent ways to make political claims.

---

[99]http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=548&cid=4962 (Accessed 2/6/2012).

For the moment, this chapter focuses on another important part of the process: data collection. It explores the localised politics of counting people and the importance of this process in local struggles. In India, being counted and recognised as long-term residents implies entitlement to compensation in the case of eviction or enrolment in slum-upgrading programmes (Ghertner, 2010). In Kwa-maji, being counted was equally important in order to be defined as a beneficiary of the KUDP. In Chapter 4, we have seen how, in 2001, Kwa-maji structure-owners, aware of the implications of the enumeration, opposed its implementation. This chapter describes how Kwa-maji leaders, who had travelled to India and been trained about the slum-upgrading process during the 2001 NGO-led intervention, carried out strategies to counter the redistributive character of a participatory enumeration aimed at recognising all residents. In short, the chapter analyses the *politics of counting people* on the ground where data are generated.

8.2 The Kwa-maji participatory enumeration

After having established a community governance structure (Chapter 5) and started on some infrastructural work (Chapter 6),[100] the next decisive step of the upgrading programme was to carry out a 'participatory enumeration', in effect a detailed census of all residents, which would identify project beneficiaries. Whatever the political choice in relation to land allocation, a properly conducted enumeration is necessary in any slum-upgrading programme. It is normally a preliminary step, but in Kwa-maji, due to the sensitivity of the exercise, it was postponed for a long time.

UN-Habitat has recently released a publication that discusses the importance of participatory enumerations and their multiple uses. They invited community and academic experts from different countries to meet and share experiences. The result of their discussion has been condensed in the report *Count Me In: Surveying for tenure security and urban land management* (2010). It starts by clearly stating that collecting people's information in informal settlements is 'never a neutral exercise' (2010: 3). Well carried out, it suggests, enumeration can be used to rectify existing inequalities.

[100] An office for the Residents' Committee, a footbridge, and water tanks in every village were the initial infrastructure improvements. The construction of the road was under way and the construction of a dispensary was at a planning stage.

A carefully implemented participatory enumeration can, it asserts, counter 'the actions of powerful elites within a settlement' and 'marginalised groups (women, tenants, seasonal contract workers, backyard dwellers, etc.) can be included in the upgrading and development processes that follow' (UN-Habitat, 2010: 8). On the other hand, if such an enumeration is conducted in a superficial manner, it acknowledges that it can 'favour only particular groups or classes of residents, at the exclusion and expense of others' (UN-Habitat, 2010: 118). Indeed, it states, enumerations can be said to *generate* conflict because they expose to public scrutiny pre-existing inequalities in resource allocation and relationships between tenants and landlords (UN-Habitat, 2010: 140).

The UN-Habitat report forecasts that enumerations may also face other challenges such as people's refusal to be counted or cooperate; and residents providing false information, or trying to prevent the survey from taking place. Their description of the typical attitude of people in informal settlements perfectly fits the Kwa-maji situation:

> Often their right to live where they [people in informal settlements] are is very uncertain, and they fear being told to move elsewhere. Many have already been forced to move – some more than once. Justifiably, many people do not trust what others are planning for them (2010: 3).

As described in Section 4.1.1, Kwa-maji was formed after different waves of evictions from more central slums; therefore, in the experience of the residents, government intervention implied violent interventions which had forced them out of their dwellings, followed by years of abandonment (except for populist promises before every election). In 2001, the NGO-led effort to conduct a participatory enumeration, supported by the local authorities, generated such a level of suspicion and conflict that the police had to escort the enumerators, resulting in a climate of threats that stopped the NGO intervention (Chapter 4). Residents were therefore sceptical of external intervention and even more reluctant to provide personal information to third parties. Moreover, as Chapters 2 and 4 have shown, at the time of the KUDP enumeration, the residents had already been the subjects of several pieces of research within a short time span and felt exploited by researchers. The following sections describe the process of the enumeration in Kwa-maji and how the local elite deployed a range of strategies to contain its emancipatory potential.

8.3 Change of implementer

Since 2001 the Government of Kenya has been involved in a partnership with the United Nations for the purpose of upgrading informal settlements. Initially, as discussed in Section 1.2.2, the donor of the KUDP, AIDX, wanted a United Nations organisation (UNX), which it considered to be both expert and neutral, to be the main implementing body for the project. This was the role assigned to UNX in the first draft of the KUDP Concept Paper. However, the GoK also sought to maintain a prominent role itself and AIDX agreed to have a GoK department, the Lead Government Agency, as the principal implementing body, thus significantly reducing the role of UNX (Chapter 1 & 6). Nevertheless, UNX still held responsibility for the politically delicate enumeration.

However, UNX encountered several challenges in its attempt to carry out the enumeration. The debt swap funding mechanism of the KUDP works in such a way that the donor did not itself release funds. Instead, the GoK rather than paying back its debt to the donor, uses the resources for agreed development interventions (Chapter 1). If the GoK does not release the funds, therefore, a programme cannot be implemented. In particular, in the Kwa-maji case, the release of money for activities that UNX was to implement was delayed, postponing the hiring of staff and consequently blocking the operational capacity of UNX in the KUDP. A programme officer of the Lead Government Agency said that the delay was a UNX responsibility and the government felt that it could no longer wait, 'so the mapping team was forced to do the numbering, which we did' (Interview 11, 7/04/2011). In this way, the Lead Government Agency started the implementation of one of UNX's activities: the numbering of structures, which was part of the enumeration process and hence of UNX's duties.

Bypassing UNX, the Lead Government Agency started the process of the enumeration in a very peculiar way. They went through all the structures, recording the name of the owner and painting a number on every structure. They called this process 'numbering of structures'. Subsequently, UNX commissioned a local research consultancy to carry out a socio-economic study (October-December 2009). Because of alleged 'time and budget constraints', this was based on a sample of 540 households rather than a census. Meanwhile, the national census had been

undertaken but not in cooperation with the KUDP. Finally, realising the importance of recording the tenants living in Kwa-maji, an enumeration of all residents was organised.

At this stage, UNX had received the money for the activities that it was supposed to carry out. However, a process of 'defamation' commenced, which reproduced the false accusation that UNX had participated in the 2001 NGO-led slum-upgrading attempt (Chapter 6), further delegitimising the organisation. The top leaders of the Residents' Committee insisted that UNX was not seen in positive terms by the community, and persuaded the Steering Committee of the KUDP to reassign the sensitive enumeration exercise to the Lead Government Agency. The Residents' Committee had viewed UNX with suspicion from the start because the United Nations were implementing another major slum-upgrading programme in the slum of Kibera, based on a policy of redistribution of assets (see Section 3.3.3). After receiving compensation (which was still under negotiation at the time), structure-owners were to be equated with tenants, both being beneficiaries on equal terms.

This power struggle among different institutions emerged in my interviews and revealed a subtle hostility towards UNX at this particular stage of the slum-upgrading process. GoK representatives stated that their choice had been to proceed, because UNX was delaying becoming operational (Interview 11, 07/04/2010), but UNX said that they had no funds to start the activities because the government was delaying the release of funds (Interview 18, 10/05/2010). AIDX said it was an efficiency issue:

> We felt that [UNX] would have had difficulties to accomplish this type of activity and therefore, to achieve results quicker and for an efficiency choice, it has been preferred to use the Lead Government Agency as implementing agency. It was a matter of administration and management (Interview 13, 12/04/2010).

The choice to proceed with the numbering of structures without UNX was framed by both the Lead Government Agency and the donor as a technical matter due to UNX's slow bureaucracy. In fact, UNX's actions were constrained by the delay in receiving funding. Everyone was aware of the sensitivity of the process of enumeration and, even when UNX finally received the funds, it immediately agreed to let the Lead Government Agency implement the enumeration of all residents. UNX perceived that the environment was not favourable to it and that the Residents' Committee would

not accept it as the implementer of the exercise. As a matter of fact, UNX would have encountered community resistance if they had tried to implement an enumeration process applying their own standards and procedures to ensure inclusiveness and counter elite capture.

The new implementer did not have the UN-Habitat report (2010) as a model for the conduct of enumerations. They used the guidelines of the Minimum Intervention Approach (MINA) that had been developed in a previous project, particularly in Voi (Section 3.3.1), the aim of which was to record the *status quo*. In that instance, only the structure-owners voted to decide which tenure type they wanted (Bassett & Jacobs, 1997). The Lead Government Agency officials followed this model, whereby structure-owners are regarded as the primary and legitimate beneficiaries of a land allocation process. Their view was that structure-owners provide a useful service to the country by providing cheap housing and that the Government should *recognise* them, not *expropriate* them (Section 7.4).

8.4 The implementation

After a few brief remarks regarding key issues raised by enumerations in the context of slum-upgrading, this section explores in detail the implementation of the enumeration process in Kwa-maji. An enumeration is normally a comprehensive and costly exercise, but if vigilantly implemented can provide all the information necessary to plan slum-upgrading. Types of data and accuracy differ between enumerations, depending on the purpose for which the data are collected (UN-Habitat, 2010). In some cases, the aim may simply be to ascertain the total number of residents. In others, and this was the case in Kwa-maji, complete accuracy is of the highest importance, since the enumeration was to be used to identify the beneficiaries of the project. In such cases, any mistakes would have the serious consequence of excluding potential beneficiaries.

In principle, information should be given back to the community in an understandable format and should work as an empowering tool to start planning. However, an enumeration can be disempowering when it is used to favour only

particular groups. As noted in Section 8.2, the UN-Habitat *Count Me In* report points out that enumerations are a potential source of conflict:

> Enumerations bring to the fore, and invite discussion, on the often underlying and hidden factors of how a community is organized. Who owns the land and buildings? What are the relationships between landlords and tenants? What resources exist in a community and who controls those? What are the systems distributing or sharing these resources? And so on. The prospect of exposing these issues for discussion is contentious. This is because in informal settlements assets and resources are usually very inequitably distributed (UN-Habitat, 2010: 140).

8.4.1 The socio-economic study

In Kwa-maji, as described above, the process of data collection was divided into three different research projects: the numbering of structures; a socio-economic survey; and the enumeration of residents. Prior to the first of these, the Lead Government Agency carried out a physical mapping of the whole area. It then assigned a number to every structure, identifying the owner/s by name, and connecting the structure to the GIS.[101] It is important to the analysis here to note that this exercise identified only the structure-owners; no information on tenants or other residents was collected.

When the above had been completed, UNX commissioned a local research consultancy to carry out a socio-economic study (October-December 2009). This had three components: a household survey administered to a random sample of 540 households, another survey sent out to 77 business owners, and some Participatory Urban Appraisal methods (primarily a focus group discussion in each village). Before the household survey was embarked on, its contents were carefully examined by the Residents' Committee, in an *ad hoc* workshop with the consultants hired to carry out the survey. In the process, members of the Committee managed to eliminate collection of any data they deemed controversial, in particular regarding relationships between structure-owners and tenants. The Committee cleverly argued that collecting such data would generate conflict and further division in the community. It is significant that neither the Lead Government Agency nor UNX had any objection to these simplifications, since they accepted at face value this threat of conflict or 'community resistance' to the research.

---

[101] The GIS (Geographic Information System) is a set of tools that captures, analyses and manages data linked to spatial locations.

The data collected was inconsistent and full of errors, so that even the final draft of the study was still far from the minimum requirements of any 'scientific' investigation. For instance, it contained illegible graphs drawn manually from non-specified data sets. As noted in Section 7.3, the results were presented to the Residents' Committee and government officials during a planning workshop in February 2010, where an employee of the firm displayed confused and inconsistent data from which she drew apparently unfounded theoretical conclusions.[102]

In March 2010, UNX staff presented the preliminary data at a roundtable discussion of the KUDP stakeholders. Using aggregated and well-selected data, the overall picture began to appear more consistent. Finally, in June, the final version of the *Socio Economic Study Report* was released and, while some of the most evident contradictions had been removed, it was still quite problematic. The UNX officials justified the high-level of inconsistency by arguing that the study was based on people's responses that could not be verified and therefore the mistakes lay in people's answers and not in the study. This disclaimer was used on several occasions and appears at the beginning of the final draft.[103] The final, simplified 'snapshot version' of the study presented in December 2010 at a high-level conference (Chapter 9) was full of pictures and had most of the inconsistencies removed.

8.4.2 The enumeration of residents

It was eventually established that long-term residents were also to be included among the beneficiaries of the programme, and that therefore a full enumeration of

---

[102] For instance, basing her statements on the median case for each village, she argued that in one village people were spending 60% more than their income and then concluded that in that village people could only be surviving through taking out major loans. People had probably reported daily incomes instead of monthly income but in her Powerpoint presentation this was not clear, resulting in doubtful conclusions regarding income differences. The presenter, who probably did not take part in compiling the report, did not even understand that the data referred to the median case and kept stating that monthly income from casual work ranged from Ksh 100 to 7,000 (Ksh 110 = 1 Euro December 2009 when the data was collected) according to the village, health expenses from Ksh 20 to 3,000, and family income from Ksh 180 to 13,830. These were presented as differences between neighbouring villages in the same settlement. She managed to ensure that her improvised theorising on such data went unchallenged, due to the fact that she was the UN consultant and by using unintelligible tools such as tables and graphs, while the audience were poor slum dwellers. A government officer limited his doubts to questioning whether or not data verification through presenting the findings to the community had been done after the collection and when he was informed that had not been, he insisted that this was important and was part of what had been agreed. However, such verification did not take place (or at least there is no mention of it in the methodology section of the final report or in other documents).

[103] The disclaimer was phrased in this way: 'The socio-economic survey, as opposed to the other data collection exercises, is based on the community view and perception on the various issues and must be read in that light'.

residents was needed. At this point, the Residents' Committee gave their consent to the enumeration on condition that it was implemented, under their control, by the Lead Government Agency. While enumerations are generally admitted to be costly (UN-Habitat, 2010), the Kwa-maji enumeration was conducted with a budget of only 1.2 million Kenyan shillings (11,000 euro), about 0.5% of the project budget.

I joined one of the two enumeration teams in their work to enumerate the second most populous of the 8 villages that compose Kwa-maji. Most of the ethnographic details and information on the conduct of the enumeration are taken from my observations and conversations recorded in my own fieldnotes. The team of enumerators was made up of one government officer, who was in charge of two members of the Residents' Committee and a variable number of female enumerators (one to three) recruited from amongst recent university graduates. The enumerator called at the door of a dwelling and asked for the ID and voting card of the person who answered. The enumeration form was then filled in with both parties standing outside the door of the dwelling. This was carried out on weekdays between 10.30am and 3pm, a time when many people are away from their homes.[104] When no one was found in a dwelling, neighbours were approached for information; however, in most cases neighbours refused to provide information on others. Moreover, no documentary details were obtained of people who were absent on the day of enumeration. At one point, I myself managed to ask a question of the enumerators as to what they would do to get information about those who were absent. The team leader answered: 'We told people about the enumeration and we are trying our best, but we know that if we are enumerating 10,000 people we have maybe an error of 500'. I stressed the fact that mistakes in an enumeration interested in knowing the total number of people were not that important, but when inclusion in the list of beneficiaries was the aim of the exercise, accuracy was fundamental, and people could not be excluded just because they were away at work. I received the answer, 'It is unfortunate for them'. I then asked whether people would have the chance to come and register themselves at a later stage, for example during a 'public data verification'

[104] Other NGO workers who had conducted household surveys (Interview 21, 19/07/2010 and Interview 22, 29/07/2010), as well as academic researchers, were keen to explain how they needed to work at night or weekends in order to find people at home. For instance, in her PhD thesis, Prof. Winnie Mitullah, now Lecturer at the University of Nairobi, clearly states in her methodology that interviews had to be conducted in the evenings (Mitullah, 1993: 56).

event (as advised by best practices); but I was told that it was not in the plan at that time.

8.4.3 The enumeration form

The design of the enumeration form was based on that used by the United Nations and the GoK in other enumerations, in particular the one carried out in Kibera. Enumeration forms used by other organisations in analogous circumstances all had a length of about eight pages per household. However, in Kwa-maji the form was drastically simplified down to only one page per structure. In view of the fact that most structures have eight rooms, each occupied by a 'household', it must be concluded that the enumeration in Kwa-maji was designed to collect up to 64 times less information than a standard enumeration undertaken for similar purposes (Figure 1).[105] In general, it can be said that the more data is collected about residents, including all the tenants and their families, the more it is possible to recognise them as programme beneficiaries with specific needs. However, in the present case this specific information was not collected. Instead, there was an attempt to rely on the information from the socio-economic random sample study previously conducted, as described above. This meant that issues and needs could be identified at the level of the settlement as a whole, but particular people in need would not be registered for special intervention. For instance, the enumeration form did not contain information on disabilities, family composition and so forth, which could have been used to identify priority groups and design targeted social policy interventions.

Moreover, the enumeration form was too simple to distinguish between a room that was vacant and a room where the residents were out at work. Therefore, even if the will had been there to improve the data by getting back to those residents who were out when the enumerators called, it would have been impossible to know which forms were in need of such completion.

---

[105] As a comparison, I here list the information collected in an enumeration undertaken for similar purposes. The list is taken from Karanja (2010). Questions asked of residents included: name of owner, owner ID, gender, age, level of education, occupation, daily household expenditure, marital status, religion and relation to household head; type of plot ownership (purchased, allocated by government, inherited or moved onto) and whether they had a title deed or other evidence of ownership; land/house use; plot size; details of all occupants and whether they were land/structure owners or tenants; size and quality of house; years of residence; distance to work; main source of water, time needed to collect it and how much is used in a day; and availability of services.

The intention was to record the names and document numbers of the heads of each household occupying a dwelling in a structure. However, as I witnessed, many structure-owners told their tenants to tell the enumerators that the owner was living with them. Since tenants had no clear idea of how the data would be used, some of them acceded to this request. Because the form only had space for one name, the enumerator had to put the name of the structure-owner as head of household and delete the name of the tenant. In this way, many tenants, without knowing it, lost any chance of being included as a beneficiary of the project. Structure-owners, on the other hand, wanted to be registered as residents because they knew that in *other* slum-upgrading programmes, absentee structure-owners had not benefited to the same extent as those who were resident in the settlements.

There is also an important issue of gender: when the only name reported on the enumeration is the head of household, this is almost always given as the man, if a couple is living in the household. This problem has been widely noted elsewhere, but the result in this case was particularly problematic, since it meant that many women were not recorded as potential beneficiaries. If only their male partners were be listed, in the context of the dynamic and unstable relationships that characterise Nairobi slums (Flores Fernandez & Calas, 2011: 133), including Kwa-maji, women's dependence increased. For instance, if a woman were to later leave a violent husband, she would not have been able to benefit from the slum-upgrading, as her residence was not recorded. However, this was never perceived as a problem by the programme officers, who were, with two exceptions, all middle-class male professionals. This is yet another case to add to the literature that shows how household surveys may end up worsening women's situations (Kandiyoti, 1999).[106]

When I asked UNX personnel why they agreed to such a simplified exercise, instead of following the advice of their own brand new report, I was told that in Kibera the analysis of the collected data took more than a year and they could not afford such a 'waste' of time and resources. In Kwa-maji, they already had socio-economic data gathered through the socio-economic survey, and therefore thought that they only needed a list with information relating to the number of residents, property

[106] This issue had also been identified in relation to the slum-upgrading in Kibera, where the list of beneficiaries was composed by taking the names of heads of households from the enumeration (Flores Fernandez & Calas, 2011).

ownership, and number of years in the settlement – the last two being the key criteria to define the list of beneficiaries. Moreover, I was told that a full enumeration would represent excessive government control over the citizens: it was, they claimed, akin to putting people on a police style record. However, if a citizen claims government benefits (e.g. unemployment benefits, social housing, etc.) or, as in this case, serviced land and future financial facilities, any state bureaucracy needs full comprehensive information to avoid abuses and distribute benefits according to established criteria.

The importance of the design of a research tool in achieving the desired outcomes has been widely acknowledged and recognised (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The example of Kwa-maji shows how the simplification of the tool contributed to the trivialisation of the entire exercise.

Village.....Structure no.....Structure Type P / SP / T.....No. of rooms..... No. of households..... Structure Owner(s): .....

Name..... Id No..... Resident/Absentee.....
Name..... Id No..... Resident/Absentee.....
Name..... Id No..... Resident/Absentee.....
Name..... Id No..... Resident/Absentee.....
Name..... Id No..... Resident/Absentee.....
Name..... Id No..... Resident/Absentee.....

STRUCTURE OCCUPANCY DETAILS

No.	Name of Household Head	Id No.	H/hold size	No. of Rooms	Total space (M2)	Occupant Owner/Tenant	No of Years in Kwa-maji	No of years in Structure	Voters Card No	Polling station
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

Enumerator.....Team Leader..... RC Representative..... Date.....

Figure 1. The Enumeration form. Source: Lead Government Agency.

8.5 Analysing the process: elite capture and social exclusion

8.5.1 Enumeration in practice: the exclusion of 'everyday bureaucracy'

This section examines how the social exclusion of certain groups of residents was achieved. The account of the enumeration process so far has shown a certain level of carelessness in the recording of information. This lack of accuracy was undoubtedly tolerated because of the desire to finish what was turning out to be a tiring and under-funded exercise as quickly as possible. The actual enumeration was carried out by young, female graduates on short-term contracts: one enumerator had a short

contract with the Lead Government Agency for other secretarial needs of the project, which was due to expire in less than a month's time and which was eventually not renewed; the others were just recruited for the purpose of the exercise and complained about the slim chance of having their contracts renewed. They therefore had little incentive to do the job well, and simply followed instructions given to them by community members. They certainly did not have the social power or the will to challenge or further verify the information given to them.

The timing of the enumeration was not intentionally designed to exclude people but to fit into normal office working hours and the non-incentivised personnel made no extra efforts to work outside these hours. The employees of the Lead Government Agency met at the office in the city centre and their driver took them to Kwa-maji, on the outskirts of the city, through the morning traffic-jams, meaning that they started at around 10.30am. They typically finished around 3pm with a short briefing, before going back to the city centre office in time to avoid the afternoon traffic. The work was physically tiring, as it involved standing and writing under the hot sun for about five hours. Moreover, during that period the hot days were generally interrupted by an afternoon of violent, tropical rain, with the result that the team members wanted to leave before it started to rain.

Each morning the car had to go back to the headquarters for a second round to pick up the remaining staff who joined the rest of the team around mid-day. We always started with only one enumerator in our team, which increased to a maximum of three during the day. One morning, I followed closely the work of a young enumerator who was under a considerable amount of pressure to increase the pace of her work because the plan was to complete enumeration of the village that day and she was the only enumerator present. I observed that the newly recruited graduate's attempt to comply with the request was achieved at the cost of accuracy. She could not wait for the tenants to go and collect their documents, for children to call their parents, or even properly knock on every door. On one occasion, a frightened young girl was invited to provide the information on behalf of her father who was not there.

As long as some households residing in the structure were on the form, it seemed that this was considered to be sufficient. The level of accuracy on that morning was

significantly lower than that of the same enumerator the previous day, when three enumerators were present and more time per structure was allowed.

As mentioned above, when no one was found in a home, neighbours were approached for information; which in most cases was not given. While the enumerators considered it strange that people would not provide details about their neighbours since 'they only live a thin wall of mud apart' (FN 11/05/2010), residents did not feel comfortable taking the responsibility for revealing details about others to the government. In this situation, the enumerators would sometimes ask to be told at least the ethnicity of the head of household and put this as the name of the head of household on the form. Ethnic affiliation was considered to be in the public domain and generally provided to the enumerators. Ethnicity was used as a way of identifying project beneficiaries and avoiding leaving the form blank. However, all the government could learn was that, for instance, a Kikuyu household was living there, which is not a very valuable piece of information for the preparation of a list of residents, considering that more than half of the households are Kikuyus.

Something that I also started to notice was that respondents would not automatically include little children when answering the question regarding how many people lived in a household. Only when the enumerator insisted and asked to count all the people who slept in the house, including small children, would people re-count carefully and provide the correct figure. This latter question was not asked systematically, leading to possible underestimation of household size. A number of inconsistencies emerged in the forms and were somehow adjusted quickly on the spot rather than through accurate data verification. A common inconsistency was that the number of rooms in a particular structure did not correspond to the number of households listed on the form.

The work was organised in the following fashion: the team leader had the village map detailing all the structures. As the team approached a structure, he marked it on the map so that even if the team left with incomplete data, the structure would appear to have been enumerated. In many of the forms there was missing data, but it would be impossible to know which ones. Despite their apparent hurry, the team ran out of enumeration forms several times. Each time, *all* the forms were used before someone

went back to the Residents' Committee office to get more forms. On one particular occasion, there were no forms left at the office and the team leader sent some Residents' Committee members to make photocopies. Since there were no photocopy machines in Kwa-maji and the machine in the nearby settlement was broken, the work of the entire team was interrupted for a considerable period.

Clearly the laxity evident in the enumeration process was not a carefully planned outcome. Rather, the point I am making is that the lack of interest of the Residents' Committee members and the enumerators in collecting complete and correct information led to many residents not being counted correctly. In summary, we can say that the exclusion of marginalised groups in Kwa-maji was accomplished socially through a series of small, bureaucratic omissions and approximations in compiling the forms. However, there are other factors which contributed. The simplification of the data collection tool has already been described. In what follows, I analyse the strategies of structure-owners, information asymmetry, and the avoidance of best practices.

8.5.2 Structure-owners' strategies

The strategies that powerful actors, in particular structure-owners, put in place to shape the process to their advantage and counter the redistributive and empowering effects of enumerations were an important topic in both the UN-Habitat report mentioned above and in the interviews and meetings with experienced staff members of NGOs dealing with such processes. This section presents how these strategies played out in the Kwa-maji enumeration and then analyses why they were not checked by programme implementers.

An NGO worker with over 10 years of experience in enumerations and slum-upgrading programmes immediately pointed out to me in an interview that, 'when you talk of enumeration nowadays, and especially government [enumerations], people know you are talking about [land] allocation' (Interview 22, 29/07/2010). In many other interviews with slum-upgrading professionals, I was told that everyone in the slums is aware that the government, especially in a foreign-funded programme, has no interest in allocating a *large* piece of slum land to *one* person, even if he or she owns multiple structures. Therefore, the typical structure-owner behaviour in such

circumstances is to conceal property concentration by registering his/her relatives as owners, starting with his/her offspring, siblings or cousins, and even using trusted figureheads as revealed by interviews with various UN and NGO experts. It is not surprising therefore that the initial numbering of structures in Kwa-maji showed little concentration of property ownership.

The programme implementers' interpretation of the data was that in Kwa-maji there were no large structure-owners, unlike other Nairobi slums (e.g. Kibera, Mathare). Instead, I argue that the data is indicative of structure-owners' knowledge of development interventions and their capacity to create coping strategies. My ethnography reveals that there were certainly some important structure-owners whose considerable amount of property did not emerge from the data collected in the numbering of structures.[107] As argued elsewhere in this thesis (Chapters 4, 6, 7), structure-owners have a lot of knowledge of the way development programmes work and are able to act strategically in order to protect their personal interests.

Moreover, structure-owners were aware that the government criteria for the allocation of land were more likely to divide the benefits equally between selected beneficiaries, rather than according to how much they informally owned. One tactic adopted by a significant number of small structure-owners was to insist on having their structure registered with two owners, usually them and their sons. From the enumeration data, it appeared that over a third of the structures had more than one owner. This clearly shows how structure-owners were not only trying to conceal property concentration, but were also trying to disperse the ownership amongst as many beneficiaries as they could.

---

[107] The multiple informal discussions but also formal interviews with community members confirmed the following information. Whereas the situation had changed compared to 20 years before, when a single person used to own almost all the structures in a village that had his name (later renamed), there were still some big owners and people named them to me. Triangulating the information provided, I can confidently say that some people owning more than one structure did not appear as multiple owners in the enumeration. The local MP and high-level Provincial Administration officials were named by people amongst those who had owned many properties in the area that they sold at the end of the 1990s, when they feared that policy changes might undermine their investments. However, due to the sensitivity of this information and the informality of such transactions I could not personally verify it.
What has to be recognised in the claim of project implementers is that Kwa-maji does indeed have more resident structure-owners possessing a relatively small number of structures than in other settlements where extensive informal commercial renting was prevalent (e.g. Kibera). This is due to Kwa-maji's specific history of temporary allocations granted to people evicted from other areas (Chapter 4).

The other key strategy was to prevent tenants from registering by registering in their place members of the structure-owner's household or other relatives as tenants. An NGO worker interviewed explained what happens during enumerations. Speaking in the first person (as if she were the structure-owner), she referred to the enumeration conducted in a slum near Kwa-maji where a slum-upgrading programme had been initiated several years before.

> Legitimately, I own these structures [...] during enumeration I will mobilise my big children [and tell them] to come and stand here. And the tenants are silenced. So what used to happen in Huruma... you would find somebody standing at the door waiting to be enumerated. But then, when we insisted to get in[side the house], she doesn't want to get in because she doesn't belong to that house. She has everything: if you need an ID she has it here. She has been waiting for enumeration (Interview 22, 29/07/2010).

Therefore, she argued that in a proper enumeration you need to enter every room so that:

> at least you know whether I have any connection with the house you are enumerating. 'Cause if you ask my ID, I will go to my handbag and of course I don't sit with my handbag here [on the doorway]. If it is in my house my handbag could be in the bedroom or in the, in case it's one room may be under the bed or somewhere I keep my handbag. So you would relate me with this room but now we would meet people waiting for us with a stool at the doorstep when you ask for the ID, they have the ID with them ready for you. So we could be having fewer tenants or many structure-owners or owners just because they were able to organise themselves prior to the enumeration. So they distribute. I can even tell you, 'Andrea, come, we are being enumerated and I don't want my house to go to tenants. Sit and say you are the owner of this structure' (Interview 22, 29/07/2010).

In Kwa-maji no verification inside the houses was ever made, and thus it was not possible to know whether the person at the door was the resident, or a relative of the structure-owner purposely sent to enact the role of resident and get registered instead of the tenant.

The weakness of tenants in countering this process has been partially explained in previous chapters. As already mentioned in Chapter 5, even the KUDP Concept Paper underlines how in Kwa-maji there is a permanent 'struggle between structure-owners and tenants over land and tenure rights. The tenants have no security as the

structure-owners enjoy the right to evict for non-payment or any other reason' (KUDP, 2008d: 4). Given these power relations, the lack of an organised tenant response is not surprising. Unfortunately, more detailed information on the conflict between structure-owners and tenants was not collected during the socio-economic study since the questions on this matter were removed at the request of the Residents' Committee (Section 8.4.1). This was in spite of the fact that data emerging from that same study indicated tensions between structure-owners and tenants as the major cause of conflict among the people of Kwa-maji. The categories of 'land issues' and 'rent issues' accounted for 28% of the causes of conflict, followed by the more general category of 'insecurity issues' (27%).

During the enumeration of Kwa-maji, it often happened that a single individual answered for all the households of one structure, with the result that enumerators did not speak to every tenant or examine the documents provided carefully. The structure-owners knew that the enumeration was going to take place and some of them were ready waiting with the relevant documents outside a given structure. On one occasion, a structure-owner had all the documents ready (ID and voting card) for all the people that he claimed to be his tenants. In many other cases, the information on tenants was provided by the structure-owner, who also provided the answers to the delicate issues of household size and the number of years a tenant had been living in the settlement (the latter being the key criterion for inclusion as a beneficiary).

Another strategy reported by NGO staff working on other projects is that structure-owners do not want tenants to be registered as independent households, because they fear that, in this way, tenants would be considered as beneficiaries (Interview 23, 2/09/2010). As shown in Section 8.4.3, in Kwa-maji, including tenants in the same household as the structure-owner was a very practical way of excluding them, since only the name of the head of household was recorded on the form.

In one particular instance, a structure-owner said to the enumerators that there were no tenants in his structure. A tenant woman living in a neighbouring structure, who had just been enumerated, heard the conversation and said, 'He is lying. There are tenants and these are their names', and went on to list their names. This was followed by a sort of verbal conflict and, at the end, the enumerators wrote down the

names given by the woman. However, the tenants were not present and therefore they could not be fully registered.

One of the recommended ways to counter all these practices and obtain an enumeration database that can help avoid abuses during the exercise and in the subsequent allocation of benefits is to take a photograph of each entire household in front of the door of their dwelling. Such a picture is very useful for verifying the data at a later stage and during the allocation process. While the photo technique will not always include all household members, taking pictures is a well-established practice in these types of enumerations and, through the use of digital support, it is not particularly expensive.[108] However, no such measure was ever considered in Kwa-maji.

One important issue debated in the programme and in particular among the Residents' Committee was that of which policy to adopt in relation to absentee structure-owners. In Kwa-maji, many structure-owners (according to the enumeration under discussion here, over half of them) reside outside the settlement and own over 56% of the structures as a profitable investment.[109] The objective of the KUDP is purportedly to benefit the residents, not just those owning property in the area. In the Constitution of the Residents' Committee (Chapter 5), absentee structure-owners are considered beneficiaries but given less priority than resident structure-owners and long-term tenants. Still, many members of the Residents' Committee, including some very prominent ones, are actually living outside the settlement.

Some structure-owners that normally reside outside Kwa-maji were informed about the enumeration and came to be enumerated. On the form, the choice between

---

[108] Slum Dwellers International, one of the most experienced organisations called to contribute to the UN-Habitat report, prepares photo-cards for all residents. A photo of every member of each household is taken at their doorstep, showing the house number (UN-Habitat, 2010).

[109] The following is an example of returns on an investment in rental structures in Kwa-maji. An eight-room structure may cost Ksh 30,000 and generate a monthly rent of Ksh 500 per room, or a total of Ksh 4,000 per month. Even including the cost of intermediaries to collect rent and other informal fees, within a 10-12 month span, the investor has fully recovered the investment and enjoys a perpetual rent. This is only one example, the cost of structures and rents vary a lot within the settlement related to the location of the structure, its size, and its quality. However, the profitability of such an investment remains extraordinarily high throughout the settlement. Various recent calculations for Nairobi's other informal settlements may be found in Syagga et al (2002) and Gulyani and Talukdar (2008). They all agree on the high profitability of the informal rental market (Chapter 3).

marking an owner as 'resident' or 'absentee' was particularly delicate, since it was likely to have an impact on the inclusion in/exclusion from the project's benefits. In one case, Residents' Committee members argued that one owner, who was at the time participating in the enumeration process, did not live in the area. The latter tried to explain that while he had moved out, his son was now living in the structure and therefore he had to be considered as resident. Another issue was that when a structure-owner was not there he was often considered an absentee, but it was not possible to know whether he was absent, resident in another structure in the settlement, or simply not there at that particular moment. This also revealed different degrees of power amongst the structure-owners between those connected with Residents' Committee members and those who were not (see next section).[110]

8.5.3 Analysis of the strategies

The above mentioned UN-Habitat report regarding enumerations and the interviews conducted with experts recommended a series of checks and controls to counter elite strategies. But even the simplest checks recommended by international best practice to avoid such errors were dismissed as unnecessary by the Lead Government Agency, on the grounds that the Residents' Committee was supervising the process. This, of course, represented a failure to take into consideration how this committee was itself a concrete expression of the structure-owners and their interests.

NGO staff who had worked on other enumerations explained during interviews that to counter structure-owners' strategies there is a need to create a wider process around the enumeration to 'strengthen the tenants so that they are able to question, they are able to challenge, that's what eventually gives you a more valid [residents'] list, but if you do an enumeration and disengage then obviously you will never get [a valid list]' (Interview 23, 2/09/2010). In this particular interview, the NGO officer also underlined the importance of a process of data verification supervised by a neutral actor. Such verification, it was suggested, must take place after equally crucial processes of empowerment and education for the tenants.

---

[110] The heterogeneity of the structure-owners and their internal conflicts have also been described in other chapters. Chapter 4 presented the conflict between the association of structure-owners and those who joined the slum-upgrading programme in 2001, and Chapter 6 analysed internal conflicts in the elected structure-owners' leadership.

However, the Lead Government Agency and the UNX representative argued that there was no need for such checks and controls, since the Residents' Committee – considered to be comprised of the legitimate and democratically elected representatives of the community – was fully involved in the enumeration and would prevent abuses and provision of erroneous information. In the view of programme officers, the presence of community members was sufficient to guarantee that data would be correct. There was considered to be no need to consider the exclusionary strategies and actions of powerful elites, encountered in other enumerations and widely reported in the UN-Habitat report (2010), as well as by NGOs conducting enumeration work elsewhere in Nairobi. Moreover, project staff considered that further checks would have been tantamount to a betrayal of the participatory process because they would have implied that the Government did not trust the community representatives. However, as argued by Robins (2008) in her work in South Africa, community leaders act as 'power brokers and gatekeepers in order to accumulate personal resources and power' (97) – a similar process to the one described in Kwa-maji in Chapter 4. Moreover, as argued in Chapter 5, the Residents' Committee was largely composed of structure-owners. Consequently, the resulting conflict of interest called for accurate checks on the enumeration process.

In the discourse of the programme, what the leaders said was regarded as what the community said. They became the voice of the community. This discourse had important effects (Chapter 6), a further example of which was provided by the enumeration. Programme officials argued that in this case there was no need for the checks and balances normally employed to prevent abuses, *because the community, through their leaders, was directly involved* (my italics). In this way, the notion of 'community' was invoked in such a way as to conceal oppressive power relations within that same 'community' (Guijt & Shah, 1998; Mohan & Stokke, 2000).

Another example of the deployment of this discourse occurred when the leaders of the Residents' Committee stated in the Steering Committee that the community did not trust UNX and did not want UNX to undertake the enumeration. There was no questioning of *who* within the community did not want UNX. The task was simply reassigned to the Lead Government Agency, and UNX was requested to transfer the money they had received for this activity to the Lead Government Agency. This

discourse was so strong that it allowed the obfuscation of the clear political reality that for the structure-owners, a UN body that in other programmes had been assiduous in recognising tenants' rights represented a threat, and was certainly less easy to influence than the Lead Government Agency.

8.5.4 Information asymmetry

Another assumption of UNX and other programme staff was that since the programme had been on-going for about two years at the time of the enumeration, all residents should have been aware of the slum-upgrading programme. From this perspective, all residents were supposed to be aware of the role of the enumeration and of the criteria to become a beneficiary. When interviewed before the enumeration, programme workers expressed their expectation that they would obtain an inflated number of residents, all of them claiming that they had been residing in Kwa-maji for more than 10 years – the criteria to be eligible for land allocation. Another reason why this did not happen was that information was unequally disseminated among the population.

The power of the leaders is connected to their access to information that is strategically guarded to maintain their position, often as brokers/gatekeepers (Chapter 4). The slum-upgrading programme did not involve all residents *equally;* many lacked information and viewed the programme with scepticism as one of many development initiatives that took place in the area (Chapter 4). Analysing these dynamics in the Indian rural context, Corbridge *et al.* pointed out that 'some people also know more than others and are able to control, in some degree, how information circulates across a space-economy' (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 131). Control of the circulation of information in Kwa-maji was absolutely crucial in elite strategies.

The enumeration outcome was also very influenced by the social networks of the different structure-owners. We mentioned inaccuracies resulting from the strong pressure to accelerate the enumeration process. However, the Residents' Committee members made sure that the important structures owned by people they knew were attentively enumerated, controlling the compiling of the forms closely, in some cases dictating the information directly to the enumerator. At one point, a Residents' Committee member working with a particular enumeration team came to check that

the forms relating to some of the structures owned by her relatives were compiled the way she wanted and, when she realised that her brother-in-law was marked as an absentee structure-owner, she got the team to change the form. By contrast, a small structure-owner living in a nearby slum, who had invested his savings in a structure in Kwa-maji, had no idea what was going on, or what were the criteria set for benefiting from the programme. He also had no connection to any member of the Residents' Committee. During the enumeration, the Residents' Committee members present were holding the list containing the names of the owners; this gave them significant influence over the process. Moreover, by collecting data on the ownership of structures, members of the Residents' Committee themselves implemented a process of verification of the data that had been collected months before during the numbering of structures.

Awareness of the importance of the enumeration and other information on how and when residents were being counted could be gained through acquaintance with at least one Residents' Committee member. However, being enumerated or not also depended on physical location. The residents on the main roads saw the enumeration team arriving and had time to call other family members and prepare documents. By contrast, many people residing in the small walkways deep into the slum were not ready. Sometimes if the head of household was not there, the people found by the enumerators offered to go and call the head of household. Children, in particular, asked to go and find their parents, who were generally working somewhere within Kwa-maji (often at their vending stalls). They were answered that the team was in a hurry and could not wait. The enumerators collected the little information available from those who were present and left. But such information was not supported by documents. Another factor of advantage was that if someone was residing close to the main road and was momentarily away, other people were able to go and tell him/her that they were enumerating his/her house, because the process is very visible. However, when the team was deep into the small walkways this did not happen.

Full information about why the enumeration was being carried out and why it was important did not reach everyone equally. Some people were very keen to be registered and they were ready and waiting with their documents, while others were

completely unaware of the importance of the exercise. As observed with regard to other activities of the programme (Chapter 4), asymmetry of information was an important issue. The availability of information was one of the factors which determined whether someone was enumerated or not; thereby establishing whether he/she would be a beneficiary or not. The power of community leaders was strongly based on their role as information brokers; this was particularly relevant because, according to the socio-economic study, 'word of mouth' was considered the main form of communication in the settlement by 68% of the respondents. In the context of the prevalence of this means of communication, their role in the Residents' Committee as conduit between implementers and 'community' reinforced structure-owners' power as gatekeepers and information brokers.

8.6 Conclusion

Enumeration experts brought together by UN-Habitat recognised some of the problems I am analysing here. They concluded that enumerations may work to bring to light hidden conflicts but it is not easy to ensure adequate representation of vulnerable groups.

> Communities are not homogeneous: power disparities exist within them, and empowerment for the most disadvantaged is a major challenge. Enumeration is likely to include conflict: who controls resources, who owns land, what are the boundaries, who holds which proof? Enumerators and community leaders will need to understand their role in conflict management and might need professional facilitation, mediation or legal support. It is difficult to ensure that the interests of marginalized groups such as tenants or women are adequately reflected in an enumeration, as there is a danger that the results may solidify an already unequal distribution of rights, assets and access to resources (UN-Habitat, 2010: 141).

To avoid this danger, the report of the meeting of experts argues that it is important to conduct an enumeration *carefully.* However, in the case of Kwa-maji, the implementation would seem to have been characterised rather by *carelessness.* The research tool was oversimplified, contributing to the dumbing down of the entire exercise. The survey was conducted in a hurry, during the middle hours of the day, and without verifying individual households by entering dwellings. The results were clearly startlingly out of line with previous quantitative estimates, but, remarkably, no one questioned them. The initial project documents had suggested a total

population of 100,000-120,000 in Kwa-maji. This figure is widely thought to have been an exaggeration, but the figure of 34,000 arrived at by the enumeration is likely to have underestimated the tenant population.[111]

The Kwa-maji socio-economic study commissioned by UNX and implemented just a few months before the enumeration states that the population inside the settlement had continued to grow over previous ten years. The enumeration conducted in 2001 had identified 18,537 households, while the new enumeration considered here found only 10,581 households. This huge discrepancy did not provoke any questioning; for instance, the Lead Government Agency could have asked the NGO that had conducted the previous enumeration for their dataset if they had really wanted to understand how 8,000 households had disappeared over a ten-year period, during which their own socio-economic study argues that population had *increased*.[112] This never

---

[111] As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, estimates were often inflated; however, the actual counts may be underestimations of informal settlements' population. For instance, the figures of the official national census also found a smaller population. Here it is worth providing a few comments on the process of administration of the national census in Kwa-maji. Critical discussions in the media and allegations of corruption in hiring enumerators had already emerged in the weeks before the implementation of the national census in August 2009. In this context, a network of slum dwellers decided to monitor the census in different informal settlements, including Kwa-maji. The network argued that the government budget allocation for informal settlements was inadequate and one of the reasons given was the lack of realistic figures on the number of slum dwellers. Therefore, they wanted to assess the penetration of the census in order to understand the validity of government data. The team monitoring the census process reported that external enumerators came to Kwa-maji and attempted to get detailed information from the already over-researched inhabitants (Chapter 4). Again according to this team, since the inhabitants were tired of being asked private details by strangers, *more than half* refused to be counted. The monitoring team was composed of youth, who did not undertake a scientific survey in order to evaluate the implementation of the government census, thus it is impossible to know the exact level of coverage of the census. However, their reports are enough to cast serious doubts on census numbers in relation to the residents of Nairobi's informal settlements. An international NGO working in another Nairobi slum was interested in knowing how many slum dwellers had been enumerated in the national census and added the question, 'Have you been enumerated?' to a survey they did of the 1,748 beneficiaries of a cash transfer programme. The large majority answered that they had been enumerated. However, there might have been an incentive to answer that way since being enumerated is compulsory and people would not state that they did something illegal – refusing to be enumerated – to the NGO which is providing them with a monthly income, especially as this was asked in a written questionnaire administered to every beneficiary.

[112] Apart from an unsubstantiated and bizarre hypothesis by a foreign staff member, 'I haven't been in Mathare for a long time and last week when I was there I had the feeling that there were less people, the main road seemed to be emptier than usual, the slums are depopulating, so probably also Kwa-maji...' (FN 18/11/2010), the claim that Kwa-maji lost a significant part of its population was not borne out by the answers to the questions I asked of all Kwa-maji residents in searching for evidence. On the contrary, every person, including local authorities and spiritual leaders, told me that population density had increased, except for a small area that was also an ethnic border and had been the theatre of acute violence. Therefore, except for the opinion of a foreign staff member based on his tour of a slum after 'a long time', I have no evidence that the population may have decreased. On the contrary, Nairobi's population increased, in particular in the slums.

happened *despite the fact that the dataset was offered to them.*[113] Whenever I personally raised any doubts, I was always answered that the Residents' Committee – hence the community – had supervised the process and therefore it must have been fair and correct: if there were irregularities, it was argued, people would have raised their voices.

The enumeration also revealed information on the ownership and the phenomenon of absentee structure-owners. The 3,268 structures recorded apparently belong to 4,343 structure-owners, over half of whom were enumerated as absentee. The data show that amongst the households resident in Kwa-maji about 20% are of structure-owners and 80% are tenant households (while the socio-economic survey based on a sample gave a 26% to 68% ratio). However, if the tenant households are underestimated, as argued up till now, the percentage of tenant households may be even higher.[114]

It is important to stress that what is significant is not only the possibility of quantitative errors in the data collection (and therefore mistakes in the total number of households and residents), but also, as I have shown in the above ethnographic account, the limited and poor quality of information collected regarding tenants. This is probably more important because, even if tenants had been included in the total

[113] When the NGO officers met with Lead Government Agency officials at the World Urban Forum 2010 in Brazil, the NGO offered to provide the Lead Government Agency with free access to their comprehensive dataset that had been collected with the help of the Provincial Administration, so they could make some checks and comparisons. However, the Lead Government Agency showed no interest and never asked for the data (Interview 22, 29/07/2010). I asked for it myself and while the NGO was very open, staff argued for months that they had problems in retrieving it from their archives and I was only able to access a report that summarises the main figures, not the full database with the raw data. A methodological difference may partially explain the difference in the data, although it still shows that there are missing households in the KUDP enumeration. When the NGO found a dwelling without people but neighbours reported that normally someone resides in the room, they counted the household and hoped to complete the form during the verification (that was never completed due to the interruption of the programme). Instead, in the KUDP enumeration, it is not even possible to find out how many rooms were usually vacant and how many had tenants living there, who were away when the enumerators called. What is interesting to note is that the KUDP had initially used the data of the NGO and still in February 2012 the background section of the KUDP website was indicating that 18,537 households were living in Kwa-maji, while, from the same website, it was possible to download the results of the enumeration claiming 10,581 households.

[114] Gulyani et al (2012) find that the average for Nairobi informal settlements is 92% tenant households and 8% owner-occupier.

number of residents, the scant availability of data may still work to exclude them in practice in subsequent phases of the project.[115]

It cannot be argued, either, that the elite in Kwa-maji were unaware of the political nature and ramifications of an enumeration in the context of slum-upgrading. Some elite members of the Residents' Committee, who had been involved in the previous slum-upgrading programme, had at that time travelled to India with the aim of learning from other enumerations and slum-upgrading approaches. They were therefore fully aware of the potentially *empowering* effects of enumerations to challenge the *status quo*; and it was in full knowledge of this possibility that they acted to transform the exercise in their favour. In this they were supported by a government interested in finishing the exercise quickly and without generating any conflict with the local elite which was their main partner in the settlement. The instrument for the socio-economic survey was simplified each time a discussion was held about its content, and the same thing happened subsequently with the form for the enumeration. Again, the discourse of the involvement of 'community leaders representing the interests of all residents' was used to justify a certain level of laxity in relation to these vital processes. At the same time, Residents' Committee members ensured that those who were closely connected to them were accurately enumerated.

Years of development interventions in Kwa-maji, in particular the previous slum-upgrading attempt, had allowed the elite of structure-owners to learn about slum-upgrading processes, such as how enumerations are implemented and what they imply. They had become what Wilson (2006) calls 'learning elites'. As a result, they managed to capture the local governance structure set up under the current programme, and later successfully contained the effects of a potentially emancipatory participatory enumeration. They prevented UNX from conducting the enumeration by managing the language of participation and arguing that the community would not trust an external actor; they were then happy with the Kenyan Government Department which, they said, the community trusted. This confirms the findings of the review by Mansuri and Rao (2004), namely that participatory projects 'create effective community infrastructure' but '[m]ost such projects are dominated by elites,

[115] For instance, if a neighbour told enumerators that in a particular room there lived 4 Kikuyus, they were counted in the final figure of enumerated residents, but it is not clear whether it will be possible to involve this household in the project.

and both targeting and project quality tend to be markedly worse in more unequal communities' (2004: 1).

Rather than a government attempt to render the community 'legible' for the purpose of government, local elites manipulated the enumeration by exercising a significant degree of agency. The 'legible representation' of the settlement created in this process was shaped by specific interests and tended to exclude certain groups of residents. Synthesising these two approaches, we could say that the Government consciously let local actors shape the process in order to create a 'legible representation' that would be accepted by both the Government and by the local elite, who could otherwise have sabotaged the programme. This confirms once again the negotiated and co-produced nature of development. The enumeration served an important purpose in the programme; it is significant that this was not *despite* its inaccuracies but *because* of them. In fact, the enumeration accommodated (and was itself the product of) different interests, while at the same time, it allowed the programme to claim a rigorous and scientific data collection process. This chapter has assembled new evidence on the socially constructed and political character of 'scientific' data. In an attempt to explain how the 'success' of the KUDP was achieved socially, the next chapter will show the central role played by the enumeration in the process.

9 Constructing success and enrolling support

This thesis aims to reveal the key social processes affecting the success or otherwise of slum-upgrading programmes. It also seeks to gain increased understanding of how a complex network of actors (UN, foreign donors, government, and community) came together in one project, and how their cooperation has been sustained during its implementation. This chapter explores these issues by looking at the construction of 'development success', and the processes that allow the KUDP to remain 'successful'. I will assess to what extent 'success' is connected with project implementation, and to what extent it depends upon the capacity to provide a representation accepted by most stakeholders and as such capable of maintaining relationships and enrolling further support. To explain the processes around development success, I will consider some mid-level theories, particularly the work of David Mosse (2005).

This thesis analyses the first phase of the KUDP. As explained in some detail in previous chapters, this project was funded through a debt swap in which the Government of Kenya was to spend an agreed amount of money on development projects approved together with the donor, which pardoned the corresponding amount of debt. The debt swap funded the initial two years of the slum-upgrading, but after that, there were no clear monetary commitments beyond AIDX's stated intention to continue their support, possibly on a cost-sharing basis whereby other donors would join the effort. At the same time, in order to justify the continuation of the investment, AIDX had to demonstrate results and get recognition for the project's achievements from its peers in the international arena. In short, to continue to exist, the project needed more funding. In order to obtain further financial support, the project needed to be presented as a successful venture: this would have allowed AIDX to continue the flow of resources and convinced other donors to join.

Two years into the implementation of the KUDP, the creation of a structure of community governance (Chapter 5) was demonstrating community participation; the road and other minor infrastructure developments (Chapter 6) were proof of 'tangible' achievements; while the process of the enumeration and the socio-

economic survey (Chapter 8) were the 'scientific' evidence upon which the programme was supposed to build its 'holistic upgrading plan'. Such a plan had to create consensus among the different actors, but also to work as a fundraising document.

The three elements were complementary in the construction of the success of the programme, and therefore in the process of enrolling new donors. Community participation showed that the project had established a working relationship with the 'difficult' people of the slums,[116] and that the programme was complying with the dominant 'participatory' policy framework. Infrastructural improvements showed that the project machine had the capacity to deliver tangible results. The Kwa-maji Situation Analysis, integrating information from the numbering of structures, the socio-economic study and the enumeration of residents, demonstrated that the programme had the scientific data to control and plan the development of the settlement and had managed to 'render legible' the complex reality of Kwa-maji. What was needed was a donor willing to add capital. But to make such an investment, a donor needs to be sure that the investment will be value-for-money. Therefore, donors require a coherent work plan, possibly one bearing the logo of the United Nations – supposedly to guarantee quality and coherence with state-of-the-art global policies and best practices.

The rest of this chapter is divided into two parts. The first provides an ethnographic account of a conference organised to disseminate the project's achievements. Here I explore the conference's role in the composition of a representation of the project as a success. The second part looks at the complex construction of the project's success, starting with an analysis of the conference and building upon elements presented in previous chapters.

[116] During many official occasions, the difficulties of working in a problematic informal settlement were reiterated. For instance, the Minutes of an official meeting reported, 'The chair asked members to understand and appreciate the complexity of [Kwa-maji]. Everyone reckoned that [Kwa-maji] is not a simple environment to work in, and therefore the need to adopt a multifunctional approach' (Official Minutes, Steering Committee, 3/9/2008). This is a 'politically correct' euphemism to say that the project considered working with the residents of Kwa-maji particularly challenging.

9.1 Building a successful representation: the KUDP Conference

This section presents a high-profile conference organised in December 2010 by project implementers (AIDX, the Lead Government Agency and UNX) to showcase achievements in order to increase political support for the KUDP, and possibly find new financial support. The analysis of the ethnographic account of the conference contributes to an understanding of the conference's role in the construction of the project's success. The project's achievements, which included the data collection described in the previous chapter, were presented as demonstrating scientific control over the slum-upgrading process, so that the UNX Regional Director could state, in reference to the upgrading of Kwa-maji, 'we know how to do it' (FN 10/12/2010). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the data used by the project to claim confident control over the process of social change was generated in a very problematic manner (Chapter 8).

Stakeholders and other donors were invited to the conference and asked to express interest in joining or collaborating with the programme. The place chosen for the conference immediately indicated the political relevance of the event, which was crowned with the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister. The location was the highly symbolic *Amani* room (Peace in Kiswahili) of the Serena Hotel – the biggest conference room of the most luxurious hotel in Nairobi. This was the hotel where Kofi Annan had chaired the inter-party talks that had led to the signing of the agreement between the two main presidential candidates which brought the post-election violence to a halt in February 2008 (Chapter 3). The hotel periodically hosts the most significant political meetings and press conferences in the country.

Beside employees of the three main implementing agencies – AIDX, the Lead Government Agency, and UNX – and four key members of the Residents' Committee, the invitees largely belonged to the same type of organisations, respectively: Western bilateral donors (Japanese International Cooperation Agency, German Embassy, Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique), Government Ministries (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, Ministry of Medical Services, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of State for Planning National Development and Vision 2030, Ministry of Lands, and certain offices of the Nairobi City Council), and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank

and UNHCR. In addition, there were representatives from NGOs, especially from the country in which AIDX is based. While the first part of the meeting involved collecting political support from the top management of the main implementing agencies, in the second part, a representation of the technical achievements on the ground was offered to the audience.

9.1.1 Raising political support

A representative of the Lead Government Agency began the conference with some introductory remarks, and then said that Kenya is already 40% urbanised. If well managed, he asserted, urbanisation is a positive process, but then added that the proliferation of slums may lead to poor quality of life due to poor services. Finally, he underlined that the Government is committed to improving the informal settlements, and portrayed the KUDP as proof of this. The Mayor of Nairobi said that 60% of the city's population live in slums, and that the City Council was grateful to the partners, who are helping the Council's mission to provide services.

The Director of UNX regional office was happy to see efforts to address urban poverty, but Nairobi's 200 slums that host 60% of the city's population, he suggested, indicate a failure of public policy. He said Kenya has universities, technology, and resources; but lacks political will. He placed his hopes in a serious commitment from the Government of Kenya and in the role that Kwa-maji may have as a blueprint programme. The contribution of AIDX, he continued, was only a drop in the ocean – even the Government should give a contribution. In Kwa-maji, he added, UNX was ready to do its part but consistent support was required. For the next 5 or 6 years, he suggested dedicating 20-25% of the budget of the debt swap to the KUDP and merging it with the contribution of other actors. He concluded, 'The plan is there and we know how to do it. We will demonstrate that we can make slums history' (FN 10/12/2010). This speech emphasised the technical nature of UNX as an expertise provider. The message was that they had the technical solution and what was missing was political will; suggesting that wherever a government displayed political will and followed UNX's technical advice, it succeeded.

The Ambassador of the country where AIDX is located congratulated the Lead Government Agency and AIDX, and said that he had visited Kwa-maji several times.

He added that slum-upgrading is not an easy process and needs the involvement of all stakeholders; 'it works only if the process is transparent and inclusive. It was initiated in 2008 with the representatives of the local community. The programme started a framework, a policy dialogue to have *inclusive participation*, and it combines long-term vision with concrete short-term achievements' (FN 10/12/2012, my emphasis). He requested that UNX and the Government of Kenya analyse the approach and replicate it. 'That is also why today we are here to disseminate achievements' (FN 10/12/2012). The Ambassador emphasised a desire to contribute to the building of an approach capable of replication, which could place the work performed by AIDX at the forefront of urban development. He finished by thanking the Lead Government Agency for their commitment in the implementation and gave special recognition to the Residents' Committee and the local missionaries, involvement of whom, he said, proved that achievements could be obtained *only* through a community-driven process.

The final speech of this panel was left to the Deputy Prime Minister. In front of the donor community, he started by thanking AIDX for the debt swap and said the resources were being used effectively. He acknowledged 'the presence of generous partners: the World Bank, JICA and [UNX] that are here to exchange information'. He said that, 'the [government] budget for slum-upgrading is modest, but we are trying to re-engineer the financial arrangements'. He then mentioned that, '*community participation* is very important – we cannot do it without it. No plans without people' (my emphasis). He stated his concern that:

> the pace of slum growth is alarming. I visited Morocco twice, they plan very well. They managed very well to improve the welfare of people – you think you are in Europe. It can be done. I fully support the view of the need for a policy change. Resources need to be reallocated. Programmes have to be comprehensive (FN 10/12/2012).

He finished by saying that the presence of the Minister at this type of event was unusual, and showed commitment because of his busy schedule.

The Residents' Committee Chair was given the chance to talk before the project video was projected. The following is an extract from his speech:

> On behalf of [Kwa-maji] residents, we thank you. We feel the change. We were living in constant fear of demolitions. When the Government came we welcomed it because it drives people out of poverty. [...] We took part in the socio-economic survey and the enumeration. We look forward for

> the day in which we will receive title deeds and build our houses from where they will never evict us. However, we need better communication so that people do not feel tired and see things implemented (FN 10/12/2012).

The speech had been written by a young Residents' Committee member who also directed the video. Through his leadership skills, he had made his way up to the top of the Residents' Committee where he occupied the newly-created position of managing coordinator. The main message was, 'We support you as long as you give us land titles'.

The video started by showing how the programme was addressing the basic needs of the residents and how the community was involved. In the video, the Programme Coordinator appears in a long interview and, after the screening, he added that Kwa-maji is not the same: it is now considered as an example of best practice throughout the world. With these words, the conference stopped for a tea break, concluding the political part of the conference. After the break, only the technical people remained, while the Ambassador, the UNX Regional Director, the City's Mayor, and the Deputy Prime Minister left.

9.1.2 Defending the official narrative

The planning had initially been put in the hands of the Physical Planning Department at the Ministry of Lands, until the Lead Government Agency realised the lack of planning skills of this Ministry, further debilitated by the transfer out of the Ministry of a key person. The Lead Government Agency understood that the UNX had the capacity to manage the planning phase, and prepare a plan that could attract financial support. This was at a time when the Lead Government Agency quickly saw that funding was running out and itself had to start working without secretarial staff. Even the drivers' contracts – without whom project vehicles would be totally useless – were at risk. Now that UNX was no longer perceived as a threat (as it was at earlier stages of the programme, see Chapter 6), the Lead Government Agency understood the need for UNX involvement in the planning and consequent fundraising phases, and reallocated the planning budget to UNX.

It was in this new cooperative framework that a UNX officer was called to present the project and the results of the socio-economic survey. His presentation was incredibly long, with detailed slides full of socio-economic data about Kwa-maji, including people's attitudes and priorities. He entered into a micro-level description of all the information collected, most of which was contained in a publication distributed to all participants. Given that none of this detail entered into the discussion that followed, I argue that it can be interpreted as showcasing the 'scientific' knowledge necessary to claim full control of the process of social change. Subsequently, the officer in charge of the enumeration presented the enumeration results very quickly. He also explained how the main goal of the project was to provide residents with security of tenure. He emphasised how the enumeration had been carried out together with the Residents' Committee, who signed each form, and how the Residents' Committee later verified the data. The outcome was a list of resident structure-owners, a list of long-term tenants, a list of absentee structure-owners, and a list of all tenants. The remaining steps, he said, were to take decisions about security of tenure, beneficiaries, planning, and resettlement.

After the presentations, space was left for the participants to ask questions and offer collaboration. Immediately, the Ministry of Housing – which was engaged in a bigger slum-upgrading programme – asked how they were dealing with the structure-owners/tenants conflict. The officer in charge of the enumeration gave a quick general answer, saying that the programme was based on *collaboration* in order to avoid 'structure-owners overriding tenants' (FN 10/12/2010). The World Bank went straight into the contentious issue that had been purposely avoided during the presentations, and asked about *land tenure*, in particular how to prevent further displacement if they were building infrastructure without first giving title deeds, since infrastructural improvements increase rents, generating immediate gentrification (Chapter 7). A Lead Government Agency officer answered that, even if a structure-owner owned more than one structure, he would get the same area of land as those owning only one. If there is not enough land for all tenants, he suggested, the project will approach the Government to obtain land on which to resettle the residents. But at this point, he noted, the programme had not taken any decisions. He said that they had held two workshops on the topic with the residents and the Ministry of Lands, and that they recognised that tenure was a challenge.

However, he said, the programme will not impose a tenure system on the community, since 'the community will decide about title deeds' (FN 10/12/2010). Other actors offered collaboration in their specific fields, proposing interventions, and the KUDP Project Manager responded by saying that they were grateful for the offers but that 'no initiative can take place unless the community wants [it]' (FN 10/12/2010).

In his closing remarks, the AIDX Regional Director emphasised the crucial *role of the community* in the implementation and how the programme was interested in a dialogue among stakeholders that would be extended to the private sector, research institutes, NGOs, and other organisations. The next part of the chapter will draw upon this account of the conference and the conclusions made in previous chapters to explore the process of building and maintaining the success of the project.

9.2 The social construction of development success

Before commencing the analysis, it is useful to build on appropriate theoretical framework to make sense of the conference and understand how the actors involved worked to *construct* the 'success' of the project. What I have argued so far in this thesis – and is largely acknowledged in recent ethnographies of development – is that development is a negotiated practice that *cannot* simply be imposed. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have shown how the programme required collaboration and compromise. Chapter 8 has illustrated how the enumeration was possible only after a long negotiation with the local elite, which changed the nature of the process. These findings corroborate Tania Li's (1999) argument that maintaining *legitimacy* and *reputation* are necessary elements for development agencies, whether donors, governments, or NGOs. Development accomplishments are therefore fragile and contingent (Li, 1999), and their contestation can be used to undermine legitimacy of the state (Gupta, 1995: 383), particularly when states fail to maintain promises. This makes development a highly political matter, and even state agencies are forced to negotiate their interventions (Li, 1999).

From this perspective, I have found Mosse's work on how development success is achieved, which owes much to the work of Bruno Latour (Latour, 1987, 1996), particularly useful. Mosse's starting point is that 'development success' is not objectively determined by an evaluation of what has been achieved on the ground,

but that it is *socially constructed*. This is widely acknowledged by research in the field of the anthropology and sociology of development that adopts an actor-oriented approach, and rejects a linear understanding of development interventions as the step-by-step implementation of a project's policies (Apthorpe, 1997; Long, 2001; Quarles van Ufford, 1993). In his work, Long (2001) mentions Latour's work (1986) on the importance of enrolling actors 'in a given political and social scheme' (264) – i.e. the development project – to ensure success. In particular, the work of Latour (1996) has shown how projects are formed by complex networks of actors. A project can succeed or fail according to its capacity to stabilise its interpretation: an interpretation that has to maintain the network of alliances around the project.

David Mosse has developed Latour's work in the context of development (Lewis & Mosse, 2006; Mosse, 2004, 2005). In his book *Cultivating Development* (2005), he argues that development success depends on: (i) the capacity to create a coherent official interpretation/representation of the project and sustain it as the main one; (ii) the coherence between this representation and wider policy frameworks; and (iii) the capacity of this representation to accommodate the interests of the different actors and possibly enrol other supporters. Consequently, Mosse contends that '"Success" and "failure" are policy-oriented judgements that obscure project effects' (2005: 19). This conclusion also draws upon Apthorpe's claim (1997: 44) that interventions that fail on the ground may succeed as policy arguments. For instance, as early as 1982, reviewing failed agricultural development projects in northern Australia, Davidson concluded:

> The decision to build the second stage of the project when it had been shown that farming was unprofitable suggests that the political advantages to be gained from proceeding with the project outweighed the economic advantages of not proceeding with it (Davidson 1982: 20 cited in Porter, *et al.*, 1991: 84).

In Mosse's view, *development success* is strongly connected to the capacity of policy 'to conceal ideological differences, to allow compromise and the enrolment of different interests, to build coalitions, to distribute agency and to multiply criteria of success within project systems' (Mosse, 2004: 663). What Mosse argues is that to ensure success, rather than *control over the implementation* on the ground, *'control over the interpretation of events'* is needed (2004: 646, my emphasis). In other words, this means managing the narrative of the project and stabilising the official

interpretation as the *main* one. According to Mosse (2005), development success 'is also about how particular interpretations are made and sustained *socially*. It is not just about what a project does, but also how and to whom it speaks, who can be made to believe in it' (158, emphasis in original).

The implication of Mosse's argument is that development success *is not* linked to implementation on the ground but rather depends on the project's representation. While most of Mosse's argument about development success is validated by the findings of this thesis, the analysis of Kwa-maji arrives at different conclusions: in Kwa-maji development success *is* linked to implementation. In other words, development practice matters to the construction of project success and the 'need for success' influences the way the project is implemented on the ground. This is because what happens on the ground may reinforce or undermine the stability of the official representation. To support this claim, a journey through the struggle to construct and maintain the success of the KUDP is presented in the following pages. This argumentation draws upon several elements outlined in previous chapters.

9.2.1 The role of the conference

The role of the KUDP Conference was precisely to validate the official narrative. The presence of 'the community' functioned to confirm the representation of a fully participatory programme that was achieving its stated objectives as depicted in the presentations of the KUDP staff. This was done in front of an audience of actors whose support the project sought to enrol.

The participants were presented with a coherent picture of an innovative and successful project. However, the display of control over the development process in Kwa-maji through scientifically-acquired knowledge was a performance that could conceal only temporarily the inherent contradictions that emerged on a closer look. Experts from the Ministry of Housing and the World Bank immediately identified the critical points in their questions, but received general answers that did not fully address the issues raised: How do you solve the tenants/structure-owners' conflict? Through collaboration. How do you allocate the land and decide what tenure type to use? The community will choose, and if the land is not sufficient they will ask the government for more (Section 9.1). Of course, the audience could not question the

data since they did not have alternative figures, but contradictions persisted even in the official data. The most visible issue centred on the number of residents. In the socio-economic survey report which was distributed at the conference, the figure for the number of Kwa-maji residents was the one from official project documents (100,000-120,000); but the video mentioned over 80,000 residents; while the presentation of the enumeration and the short booklet *Kwa-maji Situation Analysis* reduced it to 34,000. These various figures were presented without even a footnote to explain the inconsistency.

The democratic and participatory formation of a structure of local governance – i.e. the Residents' Committee – and the enumeration, both of which I have critically reviewed in preceding chapters of this thesis (Chapters 5, 7 & 8), were presented as the main project results in a meeting that aimed to bring together different stakeholders. These achievements were used to legitimise the work conducted by AIDX, the Lead Government Agency, and UNX. Such accomplishments were the basis for maintaining their reputation in front of, respectively, partner governments, other ministries and government departments, and other international organisations such as the World Bank. Due to their key role in the presentation of success, it was not possible to criticise these achievements, and this meeting solidified the narrative of the democratically elected Residents' Committee and of the data generated by the participatory enumeration, collected and verified by 'the community' itself.

The conference also worked to reconcile the different actors and renew their collaborative pact. Through the participation of VIP guests and by distributing ownership of the 'success' among all the actors involved, enthusiasm for the project was revived, and the supporting network around the KUDP was reinforced and expanded. Awareness of the importance of this event in the construction of 'success' was well expressed by an officer from AIDX. In a telling episode, a local missionary, upon the receipt of the conference invitation, critically commented, 'We are going to the most expensive hotel to celebrate ourselves with the Deputy Prime Minister, but on the ground, things are not moving'. The officer from AIDX responded by saying, 'You also complain people are not coming to the meetings, so we need political support; we cannot do this programme just you and me' (FN 2/12/2010). When the conference ended with a feeling of relief about the high-level of political commitment

received, the officer from AIDX asked the missionary if he was happy, and the missionary agreed that the event had been good and successful. He was also pleased that he had had a chance to speak in front of all the actors (FN 10/12/2010). Presenting success was very important to creating political support, generating interest and reinforcing *internal* as well as *external* support. Commitment and enthusiasm need to be maintained through such high-profile meetings,[117] so that an individual programme does not shift to a lower position in the agenda of the stakeholders (Latour, 1996).

The Ambassador of the country where AIDX is located, the UNX Regional Director, and the KUDP Programme Coordinator underlined the replicability of the KUDP in their speeches. They also emphasised that the new approach the KUDP was developing represented a 'best practice'. AIDX needed to show to its peers the value of the KUDP to convince them that it was worthy of further investment, and it had to convince the Lead Government Agency to commit politically to the programme. In his speech, which was prepared by AIDX, the Ambassador emphasised the local community and inclusive participation, and thanked the Government of Kenya and, more specifically, the Lead Government Agency for their productive relationship. The Government of Kenya remarked on the importance of the community, as a hallmark of their intervention, and expressed their gratitude to AIDX.

9.2.2 Creating coherence through ambiguity

Mosse's argument is that development programmes work to maintain themselves 'as coherent policy ideas – as systems of representations – as well as operational systems' (2005: 159). Mosse also argues that Latour's (Latour, 1996) statement that project design has to be *ambiguous* in order to be adapted to the 'different institutional languages of its stakeholder supporters' (2005: 172) is also valid in the field of development. In the KUDP, not only was the project document ambiguous, it was largely ignored during the implementation. It was never referred to during meetings, nor was it mentioned in confidential conversations or in-depth interviews, or deployed as a common platform for negotiation. From my interviews, it emerged that every member had in his/her mind a different model and different priorities.

[117] Referring to the difficulties faced by development professionals working in rural contexts, Robert Chambers argues that, 'Vision and hope are needed for action', in order to avoid self-delusion and the failure of a project (1983:35).

The different actors in the KUDP were drawing upon different policy ideas and representations. For instance, while the actors shared the view that the programme had to be participatory, each had a different view of what this actually implied. The conference was therefore an opportunity to rebuild a sense of unity of purpose and coherence.

For AIDX's officer, it was important to address the residents' immediate needs, 'with clean water we are saving children's lives, before the construction of our footbridge people were dying [falling in the river]' (FN 14/01/2010). Beyond this interest in tangible deliverables, AIDX was new to slum-upgrading and had no strict guidelines in terms of which direction to take. The overarching policies of AIDX were guided by the framework of the *Paris Conference on Aid Effectiveness* (Chapter 1). On urban issues, AIDX followed the developments of the global discussion in urban policy at the World Urban Forum, where they wanted to showcase the KUDP. While for the residents, security of tenure was the top priority – as they underlined on every public occasion – an AIDX officer stated that:

> Security of tenure is the last of my problems. It is just a legal issue. If children will not die of malaria, if women will be able to drink clean water, their quality of life will improve. This is what I'm interested in (FN 14/01/2010).

The Lead Government Agency officer supervising the activities on the ground favoured the Minimum Intervention Approach (MINA) developed in the past by the Kenyan Government (3.3.1). However, these guidelines were not even mentioned in the guiding programme document – the KUDP Concept Paper – which was largely written before this government agency was established as the lead agency and before the officer supervising the activities on the ground joined the programme. In fact, he stated that often when people write project proposals, they copy and paste from others without necessarily knowing the context and so the outcome may be wrong. According to him, the project document contained some problematic issues, such as the selection of communal title deeds, while MINA guidelines required the tenure system to be decided by the community (Chapter 7). Finally, UNX hoped to use their own toolkit for participatory planning, and lamented the lack of understanding of other actors regarding what proper planning involved.

In addition to its objective of enrolling other donors, the conference was crucial to building internal coherence. The conference harmonised these different tendencies by creating a feeling of working towards the same goal. Through the conference, the project managed to convey a coherent image to external actors as well as providing a sense of moving towards a common direction to the actors involved. At the same time, ambiguity regarding the core issues remained unchanged, allowing the actors to feel that their view fitted within the project. For instance, on the issue of land tenure (Chapter 7), there were plural and contradictory positions validated by contrasting and incompatible arguments. The answer provided by the Lead Government Agency officer during the conference – the community will decide about tenure options through a long process (see above) – was an expedient way to avoid conflict, bypassing the need to find common ground among the implementers. 'Community participation' and 'holistic programme' were the two 'buzzwords' shared by everyone, which could be filled with different meanings (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). 'Community participation' has been discussed in Chapter 5. 'Holistic programme' – a formulation widely adopted by project documents – meant that to improve the life of the residents, the programme had to adopt a comprehensive approach encompassing all sectors (e.g. social, physical, environmental, economic, political, etc.). This added to the ambiguity of the KUDP, allowing everyone to see his or her ideas as potentially fitting into the project.

At the conference, two very ambiguous representations of the project were displayed: a video and a photographic book. These representations allowed for the presentation of success while maintaining enough ambiguity in terms of the programme's contents to accommodate all the stakeholders' positions. The achievements were presented through a video that largely showed construction work, scenes of daily life in Kwa-maji, and new infrastructure (the Residents' Committee Office, the footbridge, and the water tanks). The audio of the video contained a general introduction to the KUDP very similar to what can be found on the project's brochure or homepage, with some interview extracts, especially with the Programme Coordinator.

Every participant was given a photographic book entitled *Kwa-maji Urban Development Project: Improving the livelihoods of Kwa-maji Residents*. It contained a mixture of pictures from programme workshops, construction work, and daily life in

the settlement taken by an employee from AIDX and a famous local photographer. Four scant pages providing a little information on the context and listing the project's partners and achievements preceded the pictures. The only other report presented to the participants was the *Kwa-maji Situation Analysis,* a summary of the outcome of the socio-economic survey and some enumeration data prepared by UNX. As Mosse points out, programmes need symbols of success from 'elaborate public ceremonies' to publications and pictures (2005: 171).

According to Mosse, this very important work of producing and maintaining particular representations through the dissemination of achievements is often considered by managers of successful programmes 'more rewarding than struggling with the contradictions of implementation' (Mosse, 2005: 163). I never saw the Programme Coordinator at any Steering Committee meeting throughout my fieldwork, although he was very eager to facilitate the conference and was the main voice in the video. Similarly, other Lead Government Agency officials found it more rewarding to fly to Brazil or China to present the project's achievements at international events than to deal with the daily conflicting situations in the dusty settlement.

9.2.3 The visibility and proximity of Nairobi informal settlements

As indicated above, my analysis differs from that of Mosse with regard to the question of the relationship between programme implementation on the ground and its 'success'. A key determinant of this discrepancy is the project's location. Instead of the *remote* rural area inhabited by indigenous people where the planned intervention analysed by Mosse was implemented, the KUDP takes place in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya and most important city in the region. In an interview, a high-level UNX official with over 20 years of experience told me that Nairobi is a *special* location, where both development success and failure are highly visible. This reduces the willingness of development agencies to undertake risky activities but, at the same time, increases the possibilities of direct control over the implementation (Interview 7, 3/3/10). There are strong incentives 'to make it work' in order to showcase success in what is the backyard not only of UNX,[118] but also the Government of Kenya and the numerous Western development agencies based in the city. Moreover, the proximity of the

[118] Nairobi is one of the four UN headquarters and the only one in the Third World, allowing the creation of a veritable 'projects' showroom'.

location to their offices allows the central Government, UNX and the donor to supervise the implementation of the project closely, which is not normally possible in more remote areas. 'This can be good or bad', depending on the level of agreement amongst the implementers and their potential political interest in the project (Interview 7, 3/3/10).

An officer from AIDX stated clearly that they could put significant resources (especially human) into the project only because it was *nearby* and was regarded as 'the pilot'. They were interested in learning both how to go about slum-upgrading and how to collaborate with the Kenyan Government (Interview 13, 12/4/10). In Nairobi, political interference in development projects is particularly intense, and there is a complex interplay between the different levels of government, each of which attempts to reinforce their patronage relationships by getting credit for any development intervention taking place in the city (Chapter 3). Importantly, in terms of the analysis presented here, the visibility of the project and the proximity of its location to the implementers' headquarters do not automatically imply that implementers have better knowledge of the social processes in the field, especially with regard to the dynamics of beneficiaries. What the visibility and proximity of the project do mean is that implementers interact more with local project staff and visit the field more often.

Another consequence of the location is media awareness of urban development programmes, especially when there are residents who claim that the programme is against their interests. The media can undermine the official representation of such a programme and offer a powerful counter-representation, potentially putting the success of a project at risk. The media's behaviour is connected to a multiplicity of factors that I only mention here and which warrant deeper analysis.

In Kenya, there is a widespread narrative regarding development agencies that are said to impose projects on slum dwellers; projects that are deemed to benefit only the implementers. This portrayal of development originates in the reality of a multitude of uncoordinated and fragmented interventions in Nairobi's informal settlements that have achieved limited impact. Moreover, the history of Kenya is littered with state interventions in slums that have often been accompanied by coercion, evictions,

gentrification, and corruption in the allocation of housing units (Chapter 3). In the last decade, the Kenyan media have played an active role in the transition to democracy, and have given their support to struggles for citizens' rights, with an increasing interest in informal settlements. But there is also a logistical aspect to their urban focus. The major media houses are based in Nairobi and for them it is very cheap and quick to prepare a news feature by sending a journalist to do a few quick interviews in a nearby slum, rather than far from the capital, as a communication consultant revealed to me while speaking about getting the media to cover a story in informal settlements (FN 10/12/2009).

For instance, a superficial news feature covering the opening of the footbridge constructed by the KUDP was entitled: 'Kwa-maji residents in Nairobi protest against slum upgrading'. The reporters had interviewed a few random residents who had expressed concerns about the project, and also the key members of the Residents' Committee. However, the way the clip was edited gave the impression that even the Chair of the Residents' Committee was against the project. The news feature was constructed to connect the KUDP to other failed urban programmes in the country and underlined residents' discontent, while in reality the opening of the bridge was received with enthusiasm. In sum, a TV station only needed to interview a couple of people who expressed doubts to critically undermine the programme's representation.

To neutralise such potential threats to the official representation, residents' continued support is needed. In addition, showing visible achievements (i.e. infrastructural improvements) may push the media into portraying the positive achievements of an intervention. *Residents' support* is a key factor to be managed in order to maintain the project's success. As I have shown in previous chapters, residents' support does not mean negotiating the programme with *all* the residents, but rather building a pragmatic alliance with the elites of Kwa-maji. The following sections will look at how this partnership is achieved and what its effects on the implementation of the project are.

9.2.4 Avoiding further conflict: state weakness and the support of residents

In the KUDP, residents' support was particularly crucial due to the fact that the state on the ground was weak and fragile. This was due to various issues: (i) limited resources; (ii) a large and fragmented government following post-election violence; (iii) institutional fragmentation and internal competition; and (iv) the need to avoid further conflict. The KUDP had limited financial and human resources and it could not make big promises in the initial two-year phase because it had a limited budget and no guaranteed assurance that further funds would follow. The state has more strength and its decisions are more likely to be accepted by citizens when it is in a position to distribute significant benefits.[119] The project started in the aftermath of the post-election violence that led to the formation of a large government of national unity that in practice lacked coherence (Chapter 3). In this context, development programmes were instrumentalised as part of political competition among government departments attempting to shore up their patronage systems in preparation for the next elections. Besides the post-election crisis, the Kenyan institutional framework was already characterised by overlapping and fragmented levels of power. The Provincial Administration which is directly linked with the Ministry of Internal Security, the City Council and its departments, the local MP and the Lead Government Agency were all involved in the development of informal areas.[120]

The 2007-2008 post-election violence had epicentres in the informal settlements of Nairobi, and even Kwa-maji has been the theatre of serious ethnic/criminal violence (Chapter 3). As discussed throughout the thesis (Chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8), avoiding conflict in the slum-upgrading project was a top government priority for several reasons, some of which have been examined in detail in previous chapters. For example, the 2001 slum-upgrading attempt in Kwa-maji had led to widespread

---

[119] If the project had been distributing a finished house to everyone, beneficiaries would have been more likely to accept certain conditions in exchange for the high-value transfer, and the elite might have accepted more easily their former tenants becoming home-owners. However, if the Government is simply dividing a scarce resource (land) that some residents perceive as already theirs, these residents will struggle for that resource, refusing the redistributive government intervention.

[120] As an example of how this translates on the ground, in some Nairobi informal settlements, residents were allocated land by the Provincial Administration, and then the City Council released other permits to the land. But it is the Ministry for Lands that should regulate land allocation. Residents think they have security of tenure since they have an official government document, but it is often not valid because it was not released by the competent authority. Nevertheless, the government documents residents hold cannot be totally ignored. This points towards a wide array of institutions which exercise overlapping authority and have conflicting competences.

violence and failed due to a boycott by a powerful section of structure-owners and their legal action. Moreover, conflict with residents would have been unacceptable for AIDX whose projects had to fit within overarching 'participatory' and 'democratic' policy frameworks. Thus, a news report of conflict between the implementers and the community could have destroyed the image of cooperation and local participation.

Sustaining a representation coherent with the participatory policy context was crucial in order to demonstrate success to partners and other stakeholders; the programme had to be able to show that it had community support. Taking into account the considerations that we have discussed so far – a weak state, the need to avoid conflict, limited resources, and so on – programme implementers had to negotiate the intervention with the local elite, accommodating and compromising with their interests in order to achieve community support. Programme staff recognised the pre-existing social organisation in Kwa-maji, which was dominated by structure-owners (Chapters 4 & 5). The acceptance of an elite of mainly structure-owners as the legitimate representatives of the community was also due to the historical legitimacy of this group; they had originally themselves been evicted from other areas and allocated plots in Kwa-maji by the local authorities (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 has explained in some detail the process that led to a committee dominated by structure-owners.

Mosse (2004) argues that,

> Programme success depends upon the active enrolment of supporters including the 'beneficiaries'. This is not to say that such compromises are in the interests of the poor, who are often excluded from benefits by pragmatic collaborations between junior bureaucrats and the better-off that compromise development targeting (646).

The 'pragmatic collaboration' explained by Mosse describes exactly the relationship between implementers and the elite in Kwa-maji. In relation to participatory or decentralised interventions, Mosse cites Heller's work: 'When a *weak state* devolves power it is more often than not simply making accommodations with local strongmen rather than expanding democratic spaces' (Heller, 2001: 139, cited in Mosse, 2004: 646, my emphasis). In Chapter 5, we reviewed the position of several authors who have argued that participatory projects are particularly vulnerable to elite capture (Dill, 2009; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Platteau, 2004) and looked at how such projects

reinforced the local elite. As already explained in Chapters 3 and 5, the priority of the weak and fragmented government in Kwa-maji was to avoid conflict by choosing pragmatic cooperation with the local elite rather than pursuing an entirely equitable and democratic management of the programme, which might have involved conflict with powerful groups. Lead Government Agency officials were aware of the failure of the 2001 slum-upgrading attempt that, after creating violence in Kwa-maji, led to a court case against the government that was still open when the KUDP commenced (Chapter 3).[121] Consequently, programme implementers had limited capacity to challenge the local power structure, nor was this one of their objectives (Chapter 7). Programme workers joked about how they had to undertake *slow* negotiations, not like in China (where they visited for the World Urban Forum) where slum-upgrading means bulldozers clearing everything to build brand new dwellings (FN 14/01/2010).

Kwa-maji was also not like Kibera – the other major slum-upgrading programme in the city (Chapter 3) – which was being implemented in the constituency of the Prime Minister in the slum that has been long considered one of the largest in Africa, and that had attracted the interest of major bilateral and multilateral donors. In Kibera, where the programme was building houses and aimed at distributing a very valuable resource, the Government had the strength to challenge the structure-owners and give them equal status with tenants. Still, the challenge came at the cost of delaying and compromising the implementation (Chapter 5). In Kwa-maji, not only was the government not as strong, but structure-owners could claim greater legitimacy due to historical circumstances (Chapter 4).[122]

In this context, the alliance between the programme management and the local elite in the Residents' Committee became a fundamental element in securing the success of the project. Residents' support was one pillar of the narrative of success presented at the KUDP Conference, where such support was emphasised several times as a primary achievement. The next section examines how challenges to the legitimacy of the Residents' Committee were rejected.

---

[121] The court case ended in May 2010.

[122] There are other reasons that explain why in Kibera it was possible to challenge the structure-owners, but the focus here is rather on why in Kwa-maji this was not feasible. Thus I leave out a more detailed analysis of Kibera.

9.2.5 Playing with 'ignorance': rejecting threats to the legitimacy of the structure of local governance

The success of the project depended upon the capacity of the elite of Kwa-maji to retain legitimacy. The local governance structure created for the programme – the Residents' Committee – had to maintain its position as the supposedly 'legitimate' and 'democratic' representation of the community. This was a difficult job that required continual efforts to manage challenges to its leadership. On the one side, it required the propagation of the official narrative that the Residents' Committee was composed of democratically elected representatives and, on the other, it necessitated the rejection of attacks on their legitimacy.

A telling example of the programme's defence of this narrative was the rejection of a paper that AIDX commissioned me to write on the participatory approach of the KUDP. I wrote a paper that analysed the composition of the structure of local governance, underlining how it reproduced pre-existing power imbalances through an analysis similar to the one presented in Chapter 5. It justified the approach by arguing that the election of the Residents' Committee was a positive outcome considering the history of Kwa-maji and the post-election violence that had affected the settlement a few months earlier. However, the paper undermined the key claim of the official project narrative: that the community election process fulfilled democratic and participatory standards and that the Residents' Committee was fully representative of the Kwa-maji community. This critical paper, with its analysis of the micro-politics on the ground and use of the anthropological method of participant observation, was labelled as gossip and dismissed. I was told that such a text could compromise the project and the relationship between AIDX and the Lead Government Agency. AIDX criticised the source of data; for instance, they could not believe that what I described were the criteria chosen for the elections (for each village, two structure-owners, one tenant, one elder, one woman and one youth). When I told them that those were the criteria described in government reports, they dismissed the quality of the Lead Government Agency reports, until their own local employee explained that those were indeed the selected criteria used in the community elections.

What happened was similar to what Quarles van Ufford (1993) experienced in Indonesia. The donor had funded a long period of research that allowed in-depth analysis of a participatory programme, which revealed that local organisations were not representative of the peasants. As a consequence, transfers of benefits – made to local organisations in the name of a bottom-up approach and participatory management – were going to friends and relatives of the elite. The report undermined the official narrative and was stored away and never translated into the local language.

Quarles van Ufford (1993) explained how the concept of 'local organisation' – similar to the KUDP 'local governance structure' – fulfilled the function of demonstrating that there was active participation of peasants in the local organisations. When the anthropological study revealed that the organisations were only façades through which the local elite were appropriating programme benefits, this knowledge undermined the programme. In other words, 'The project's survival depended upon maintaining – or creating – sufficient *ignorance about what was happening locally*' (Quarles van Ufford, 1993: 138, my emphasis). By playing strategically with ignorance and knowledge, development agencies can protect their representation of a project:

> The capacity to control definitions of what is supposed to be happening locally is of the utmost importance to the agencies [...] Such representations provide the means for the agencies to gain political support and access to funding in their own constituencies (140).

Norman Long has observed a similar process. The engineers of an irrigation project in Mexico were deciding policies for water allocation, but the 'water guards' (technicians who open and close pipes, controlling the water flow) were using engineers' ignorance of what was happening on the ground to create an autonomous space for compromise and negotiation with the peasants, unintelligible to the office-based management. 'It is certainly valid to conclude that the engineers in their offices can only have a limited view on what actually happens in the field. This allows the water guards the room to create their own autonomous fields of action' (Long, 2001: 78). Long also described the failed attempt of a field development worker to bridge what was happening on the ground with the policies of the competent Government Ministry. This failure had the effect of further 'keep[ing] the social worlds of peasants

and bureaucrats apart. This separation resulted in the mutual generation of socially constructed systems of ignorance' (Long, 2001: 83).

The process in Kwa-maji shares some of the elements described by Long and Quarles van Ufford. AIDX maintained ignorance about the process of creation of the local governance structure to the point of ignoring even basic information reported in official field reports. A paper showing the discrepancy between the participatory and democratic process reported in official representations and the social process on the ground compromised the precarious equilibrium. In Latour's terms, it undermined the stability of the network of alliances, which is what ensures the success of a project. For the same reasons, it was important to hide the limitations of the enumeration process (Chapter 8), the official narrative of which needed to be protected since it was key to the process of claiming success and 'scientific' knowledge of the settlement (Section 9.1). The KUDP relied on 'ignorance' to cover the fact that the 'participatory' and 'democratic' process envisaged in the policy documents, inspired by liberal democratic models, profoundly differed from the reality on the ground (characterised by patronage relationships and dominated by local elites). With the exception of their Kenyan officer, AIDX largely ignored the dynamics at play on the ground. There was significant ignorance of the importance of land, and of how the elections had been conducted.

In her study of a resettlement programme in Indonesia, Tania Li (1999) observed that programme workers were not judged on the basis of achievements against policy objectives, but whether or not the houses built were inhabited, and on the *physical presence* of beneficiaries willing to attend when visitors came to the project. The managers were not concerned at all 'about *who* exactly filled the slots' (Li, 1999: 308, my emphasis); they did not care if the beneficiaries belonged to the project target group or not. Similarly, in the KUDP, donor representatives and high-level government officials judged the success of the programme on the basis of car tours of the settlement, or the long queues of voters (Chapter 5), rather than through micro-level analysis of the identity of the beneficiaries.

As Tania Li reminds us, 'The official monitoring and evaluation process focuses on whether the inputs were delivered: houses built, goodies handed out, guidance

lectures presented' (1999: 309). In the words of an experienced UNX officer who had worked for many years in Kwa-maji with other organisations, 'The project was interested in having a Residents' Committee, not in *who* was inside the committee' (interview 7, 3/3/2010, my emphasis). Along the same lines, the project was interested in saying that they installed water tanks rather than understanding how that impacted on water prices and availability. The 'ignorance' involved here was functional to the representation of success: 'we have given clean water and we have created a democratic representation of the community'.

An important point developed in previous chapters (particularly Chapter 8) is the *asymmetry of knowledge*: the community elite knew more about the implementing agencies and the way development works than these agencies knew about dynamics within the settlement. Likewise, in her ethnography of development programmes in the Philippines, Hilhorst (2003: 95) describes how local development brokers and village experts were more knowledgeable about donors and government procedures than the latter were about local processes. The prior knowledge of the community elite was such that they were capable of sustaining the representation required by development agencies through the use of 'participation buzzwords and performances'.[123] These participatory performances did not, however, change or affect community dynamics and power relations.

Another threat to the legitimacy of the local governance structure were the divisions within the leadership, and these had to be carefully managed. For instance, when the Chair of the Residents' Committee was criticised, he threatened to resign on a number of occasions. However, whenever he threatened to resign, he received strong support from project implementers, who praised him and convinced him to continue in his role. Project staff knew that he was one of the few individuals with the capacity to exercise authority over a composite committee and over the even more heterogeneous resident population. His resignation would therefore have constituted a serious threat to the project. The Chair's theatrics were necessary to reinforce his

[123] For instance, the elite exposure to numerous PUA (Participatory Urban Appraisal) exercises and participatory workshops of all kinds made the leaders capable – without expert facilitation – of autonomously displaying the performance of a participatory workshop – collectively setting the rules, aims and expectations – which impressed foreign consultants. However, such workshops were ultimately mere performance, since most important decisions were in fact taken by the leadership of the Residents' Committee, often outside the space of the workshops.

leadership when challenged. Another example is that when a small UNX project to create a youth centre generated conflict within the leadership of Kwa-maji, AIDX and the Lead Government Agency were very worried (Chapter 6).

Elite capture of the Residents' Committee exposed the project to the risk that certain groups of residents would be excluded and possibly gentrification (Chapters 5, 7 & 8). But the success of the project is arguably not undermined by gentrification; on the contrary, gentrification facilitates speedier development of the neighbourhood. Moreover, targeting all residents as set out in the project documents would undermine the project itself, because it is not easy to involve certain categories, such as children-headed households or very poor people with no saving capacity, in a complex bureaucratic project. Therefore, as long as it could be represented as the outcome of a legitimate and participatory process, the consolidation of elite power in the KUDP was functional to the construction of development success.

9.2.6 Legitimacy through delivery: towards physical development

In practice, the major threat to the legitimacy of the local governance structure came from other residents. For different reasons – they felt excluded, had lost elections, or felt their interests were not being considered – some residents were unhappy with the selected leadership from the beginning. However, their capacity to mobilise others or challenge the Residents' Committee was quite limited as long as the Committee could demonstrate that they were *delivering* development. In other words, the Residents' Committee remained legitimate as long as they could prove to the residents that *change* was occurring (Chapter 6). This had the effect of pushing the activities of the programme towards outputs that all residents would acknowledge as significant achievements. This also allowed the neutralisation of what KUDP staff felt was the major constraint on the programme – the scepticism of beneficiaries (Chapter 2). This section explores the process of maintaining legitimacy through the delivery of development and its effects on the programme.

The initial two-year funding was originally conceived as being largely employed for preparatory *soft* activities, particularly community capacity-building and the preparation of a 'slum-upgrading plan' for the subsequent phases of the slum-upgrading project. However, this money was diverted to infrastructure

development.[124] During a project meeting, the accountant stated that 'the construction of the road has interfered with the entire budget. It is such an ambitious undertaking. This is because the contractor took priority on the payments; otherwise we incur legal issues' (FN 6/4/10).

Physical improvements such as the road, a footbridge and water tanks could be appreciated by everyone – including children, alcoholics, and youth – and everyone could feel ownership of these improvements by walking through them. The choice to concentrate on these outputs underpinned the legitimacy of the Residents' Committee. It was also welcomed by the donor and the Lead Government Agency, who were happy to have very *visible* and *tangible* results to display to external agencies or their superiors as proof of their work being successful. Moreover, it is easier to find agreement on physical interventions: they are *useful* for the donors as they can be displayed as tangible achievements to their constituency and in diplomatic bilateral meetings between donor and recipient; they are useful for the implementing government to show effective use of donor funds; and they are useful for community leaders to maintain their leadership and demonstrate that they are delivering development.

A road is less 'political' than organising tenants into saving groups, and – although some tried – it is also more difficult to challenge its utility.[125] Moreover, a major issue in the debt swap was the lack of spending capacity of some government departments, which were unable to spend the available money by the established dates and in compliance with formal procedures. The KUDP was also facing this issue, as revealed by an AIDX officer: 'Before the road project, there was a bit of delaying in absorption of funds. But the roads being a major concrete work, the absorption of the funds is much better' (Interview 14, 12/4/2010). With one single contract, over two-thirds of

---

[124] The original project document for the first two years included a budget allocation for some short-term infrastructure in order to 'win' community confidence. But this infrastructure component did not include allocating over two thirds of the budget for the road contract alone. Out of a budget of Ksh 210 million (2 million euro), over Ksh 140 million has been employed for the construction of the road by a private contactor. To this, it should be added that even budget items such as 'support to community' were employed to build some sort of infrastructure, such as the Residents' Committee office. Therefore, not much was left for running other activities.

[125] Very minor voices were raised against the road construction. Some NGO representatives in the area argued that the motorbikes that now pass along the newly paved road represent a danger to Kwa-maji children that exceeds the benefits of the road. Others argued that the disruption to business activities due to the protracted construction works undermined the livelihood of many residents (see also Chapter 4).

the budget was spent in road construction that was supposed to take less than one year, saving the programme from the consequences of its inability to spend the budget within the planned schedule (see also Chapter 6).

A project such as the KUDP is also needed to maintain bilateral relationships, and could be regarded as successful if the donor Ambassador can inaugurate a new building, road, or any other infrastructure with a local Minister without the hostility of residents. For instance, the footbridge and the Residents' Committee office were officially opened by the AIDX Ambassador and the Deputy Prime Minister. Such events play an important role in maintaining the relationship between a donor and a recipient government. The achievements were largely evaluated by high-level officials of the three main implementing agencies in terms of the physical changes perceived during a drive into the settlement.[126] An AIDX staff member commented, 'We are concrete; the Swedish have only done studies', comparing their work to a slum-upgrading programme funded by a Nordic agency (FN 14/01/2010). This convergence of interests on physical outputs between programme staff and the local elite further consolidated the strategic alliance between the two parties (Chapter 6).

As a consequence, fundamental and yet not physical interventions – such as the enumeration or the promotion of the local economy (entrepreneurship, saving cooperatives) – were continually postponed and/or underfunded. One problem is that a massive focus on physical infrastructure may lead to gentrification (Section 7.4). The development of infrastructure before defining the beneficiaries generally leads to rent increases and the consequent departure of poorer residents. Without economic empowerment activities to raise income levels, many residents may have to abandon the 'upgraded' settlement: once the programme is over, people will have to pay bills, and if allocated land they will need to build houses, thus needing savings. Therefore, if only physical changes take place, the project may face gentrification, and people may be forced to sell or leave, no matter what conditions on land sale or rent restrictions the project sets. Unfortunately, the activities that contribute to the construction of development success are *not* the same as those that would prevent

[126] While remote projects rarely get frequent high-level visits – and thus high-level government officials and top donor representatives are satisfied with project reports – the proximity of Kwa-maji allowed periodic trips into the settlement where Kenyan politicians, the AIDX regional representative, and the AIDX ambassador wanted 'to see development'.

gentrification and lead to improvements in the lives of *all* residents. As I have shown, in practice social change has to be visible to external eyes; the aesthetic component of development is central in the evaluation of success by residents, implementers and funders alike. This aesthetic element is key to the production of a representation coherent with wider frameworks of validation and respondent to the needs of external actors. The term 'aesthetic component' emphasises that such interventions were selected, as explicitly acknowledged by implementers, to fulfil the symbolic function of creating actors' confidence in the project by displaying 'development'. Of course, the interventions also had a 'practical' value; however, if this aesthetic need had not existed, the implementation schedule and priorities would have been different.[127]

9.3 Conclusion

The need to sustain a certain representation in order to claim success influences the implementation towards visible rather than other types of outputs, pushing the intervention towards an 'aesthetics of development' (Clammer, 2012) that fulfils the *visual* demands of residents, donors, implementers, and their peers. Around the programme, the actors created an epistemic community that shared a common approach to the interpretation of success. Such an approach guided the project towards certain activities, which were very different from those in the original programme design; these activities on the ground were crucial in allowing the programme to sustain a representation of success. Therefore, in Kwa-maji, the success of the programme was linked to its implementation on the ground.

To achieve success, the programme maintained or created *ignorance* about 'the micro-politics of the community', especially when they threatened the official representation. This official representation had to be consistent with overarching policy frameworks. The physical proximity and frequent visits of the main actors did not generate enhanced knowledge of the social dynamics; instead, the project *purposely* required 'the use of ignorance' to maintain the successful representation of the KUDP. This representation had to guarantee the stability of the network of actors

[127] For instance, in terms of upgrading the settlement, it would have been better to wait until a more advanced stage of the urban planning before undertaking the road construction. Other developments such as the fence around the office of the Residents' Committee had almost exclusively an aesthetic value.

and fragile relationships that composed the KUDP. Such conclusions are probably valid for other urban projects with similar characteristics that need to maintain themselves as coherent arrays of actors. Building upon the entire thesis, the next chapter presents the conclusions of this study.

10 Conclusion

In Chapter 1 we began by examining different ways to understand development as well as introducing an emergent body of work grouped under the broad notion of a 'new ethnography of aid'. These studies are characterised by an increasing uneasiness with 'monolithic notions of dominance, resistance, hegemonic relations and the implication of false consciousness among the developed (or the developers)' (Mosse, 2004: 645). They also refuse to conceptualise development projects merely in terms of the rational implementation of policy documents. Finally, an important element of this literature is the view that development cannot be imposed, but has to be negotiated.

Whether analysing specific development projects or broader state interventions, this literature focuses primarily on *rural* contexts, and most contributions have come from South and Southeast Asia. Similarly, the critical literature on 'participation' and 'community' in development predominantly analyses rural projects. This study has drawn on the 'new ethnography of aid' and the critical literature on participation and community development to analyse an *urban* project in Sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, it has used the theoretical and analytical tools provided by these bodies of literature to examine a participatory slum-upgrading programme. This task takes on a specific importance in the context of the increasing focus of development on the urban poor and the growing number of slum-upgrading programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa and globally.

This chapter brings together the empirical and theoretical strands raised throughout the thesis and sets out what is most significant in my analysis of the Kwa-maji case study, as well as drawing out the ways in which this original research contributes to the development of academic debates. The chapter sums up and develops the core arguments of the thesis, focusing on: the key social processes affecting the success or otherwise of slum-upgrading programmes (specifically the process around the social construction of development success); the understanding of how a complex network of actors has come together in one programme, and how their cooperation is sustained in its implementation; the relationships between state/government and 'community' in development programmes; the role of intra-community dynamics in

the implementation of an urban development project; and the role of property ownership and land tenure within slum-upgrading programmes. This chapter also includes some policy implications and some methodological implications for the study of development.

10.1 Co-producing development

Drawing on abundant empirical evidence, we have problematised narratives that situate development as a process which is externally imposed by development agencies or states. In the case of the KUDP, we find that state agencies were relatively powerless and often had to accede to the requests and decisions of the residents' elite. Likewise, the donor was very much constrained by the position of a Kenyan Government Department as leader of the project and by the donor's organisational need to maintain good relationships with the recipient country. Community actors displayed varying forms of agency and were able to substantially reshape the intervention. While these findings confirm that development outcomes are *co-produced* and move the analysis away from the narrative of a dominant development discourse, they also call for an exploration of *community agency* by looking at intra-community dynamics and power distribution. This is a significant point, indicating that the transfer of some power to community actors does not ensure equitable outcomes *per se*. Indeed, the analysis presented here suggests the importance of conceptualising development as a negotiated practice, taking place within existing power structures.

The complexity of this process of negotiation, moreover, means that to focus solely on intra-community dynamics is insufficient. It is important also to analyse how different actors within the community interact with state actors and other development agencies in various ways. It is also fundamental to consider these relationships as continuously *shifting* in the course of the development intervention. As negotiations progress, people readjust their alliances to achieve their strategic goals in ways that may initially appear unintelligible or contradictory.

Development projects are complex *compositions* resulting from negotiations that attempt to accommodate the interests of various actors (Latour, 1996; Mosse, 2005). Indeed, the development programme analysed in this research was far from a linear

implementation of the initial policy. Rather, it was a continuously negotiated and contested process constantly shaped by the actors involved. These were: the residents of Kwa-maji (both tenants and structure-owners), local missionaries, contractors, the Provincial Administration, project staff working for the City Council, the Lead Government Agency, other Kenyan ministries, AIDX, and UNX. The implementation of the project was also deeply intertwined with political, historical, and economic conditions. Moreover, alliances among actors shifted throughout the project. For instance, UNX was initially marginalised and only kept in the programme due to the 'need of the UN logo' (Chapter 6). At a later stage in the implementation of the project, however, UNX became a fundamental actor in the production of a credible upgrading plan capable of attracting other funders (Chapter 9). This research also allows us to understand the interdependency between development and other political processes. It reveals the delicate, fragile character of planned interventions, which are in need of *legitimacy* from a wide range of internal and external actors.

Finally, this thesis provides useful insights to those who are looking for ways to improve urban governance. The study has examined in depth 'issues of power, politics, decision making and legitimacy', which according to Rakodi 'need more attention in analysis, policy and practice' (2001: 209). Moreover, by exploring the relationships between government and non-government actors and on the basis of the conceptual framework of the 'co-production of development', this thesis supports the argument for the importance of 'devis[ing] better governance arrangements' (Rakodi, 2001: 209) and rejecting modernist views of planning based on blueprint models.

10.1.1 Reflections on the use of the actor-oriented approach

The actor-oriented approach has already been discussed in the methodology chapter. However, and without repeating the considerations discussed in that chapter, here I want to stress the relevance of the actor-oriented approach in relation to the co-production of development. Given its orientation towards everyday encounters between actors at the interface (Chapter 2), the employment of the actor-oriented approach in this research has made possible the analysis of the different arenas of the programme under investigation.

Moreover, my use of the actor-oriented approach allows for an analysis which takes into account the complexity of actors' identities at different interfaces. For instance, an actor may have emphasised and behaved according to her/his *Kikuyu* identity after the national elections. S/he may act as a *structure-owner* in negotiating land, or perform the role of a *community leader,* ostensibly representing everyone's interest in bringing community problems to the attention of the Government or to the Police. The analysis has revealed that it is necessary to go beyond static representations of relationships amongst actors in the development process, which is best portrayed as one of shifting alliances, ideas and attitudes. Actors draw upon different cultural repertoires (including development discourses and past experiences) and play out their complex and often contradictory identities. A complex understanding of *agency* and actors' *interests,* rather than the limited view of 'interest' adopted by game theory and assumptions of utility-maximising rational behaviour, is important if we are to understand the process of implementation of development programmes.

Evidence from this thesis has corroborated Long's actor-oriented approach, which is philosophically grounded in a social constructionist perspective (Long, 2001: 2). The *lifeworlds* of the actors studied were built around their constructions of certain events. It was what the 'community believed', *not* what had *actually* happened that mattered. It was not the official narrative of previous projects that influenced the behaviour of Kwa-maji residents but their 'own constant self-assembling and re-evaluation of relationships and experiences' (Long, 2001: 241). Rather than the actual intentions of a development agency, it was residents' interpretations of the intentions of a particular agency that became important and shaped the implementation of the project (Chapter 6).[128]

The contribution of this thesis to middle-level theories that allow us to grasp some aspects of the process of negotiation described throughout the preceding paragraphs is thus founded on the theoretical perspective of *co-produced development* and the actor-oriented approach. In particular, mid-level theories are used to understand: participation; discourses of community; local governance; and the social construction

[128] It is important to emphasise that Norman Long (2001: 16) acknowledges the contribution of symbolic interactionism to the understanding of social action, particularly Blumer (1969) and Goffman (1959, 1961). However, Long distances the actor-oriented approach from analyses that confine the questions of social action to the exigencies of 'symbolic-normative orders' (2001: 16) and 'focus primarily on how the self and social meaning are reproduced' (2001: 247).

of development success. After brief methodological reflections, the rest of the chapter will summarise these contributions.

10.1.2 Researching development

A number of methodological contributions relevant to researching the development process have emerged from this research. Firstly, the very nature of development as a co-produced and negotiated practice means that an in-depth study of 'everyday encounters' is required. Secondly, to be meaningful this has to happen over a continuous period of time, since alliances and relationships are constantly shifting. Thirdly, actors' complex strategies are often hidden and they may enrol the researcher within their strategy (Chapter 2). Interviews consequently represent a largely inadequate method unless complemented by other methods. Through prolonged participant observation, it is possible to become aware of attempts by actors at enrolling the researcher and to make sense of such attempts. The researcher can even employ these attempts as useful data to further understand the processes taking place.

It is also worth noting the difficulties which arise from the manipulation of data collection at local level. In particular, this thesis has documented the participatory enumeration (Chapter 8) and the very contradictory implementation of the socio-economic survey (Chapter 7). My analysis points out how such data may be very far from a 'real' picture of the situation. This leads me to conclude that researchers should be aware of the limited usefulness of certain databases, especially when it is not possible to follow the data collection process in a detailed fashion. As such, I would argue for a healthy dose of scepticism with regard to those approaches to the study of development which play around with datasets collected by others, often in a country the researchers have never actually been to.

10.1.3 Limitations of this study

One major limitation that is shared by most attempts to use ethnography to study processes of social change within a doctoral thesis is the length of fieldwork observations. As the fieldwork was limited in terms of time-span (September 2009 – December 2010), this thesis has only examined the initial phase of the implementation of the programme. The fieldwork ended with the high profile

conference described in Chapter 9. While the fieldwork had been purposely extended to cover this and other events, the length and dates of fieldwork remain constrained by the PhD schedule. The KUDP is a multi-year intervention and it would have been useful to cover it from the outset until well after its completion to be able to provide a complete account. However, the thesis could not and did not aim to give a comprehensive overview of the entire implementation of the programme. Instead, it offers an in-depth study of a small part of the project and examines only some activities and encounters in those interfaces I was able to access.

Another important limitation lies in the fact that participant observation was largely confined to programme events and thus most of the actors interviewed and observed were highly involved in the programme. The study does not provide an in-depth analysis of those likely to be excluded by the upgrading process. While informal interviewing and meeting with residents not active in the programme were used to inform the analysis, the thesis does not contain an exhaustive analysis in this regard. This was mainly due to my focus on the implementation of the programme. However, it was also partially due to the limitations of my access and to other contextual matters. As explained in Chapters 2 and 4, the area was already over-researched, and administering another survey would have associated my work with the exploitative character of such research (Section 4.3). Moreover, I was granted access to programme events, but not the freedom to engage with residents outside the spaces of the programme without the permission of implementers. This was because they feared that my questioning could influence community attitudes towards the programme and undermine the precarious collaboration that they had established.[129]

10.2 Community participation

Patronage relationships at local level have been considered a constant feature of African politics, and cannot be easily broken by one development programme (Platteau, 2004). A project such as the KUDP cannot override the social organisation in place in a settlement, which has been built through complex social processes over more than three decades, and is rooted in local and national politics. As a result,

[129] I was able to negotiate some room for autonomous research and the implementers were very flexible. Still, my research project focused on relationships within the implementation of the programme, rather than on all the residents of Kwa-maji.

many participatory projects have experienced 'elite capture' (Dill, 2009; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Wilson, 2006). Referring to the rural context, Platteau (2004) has argued that in community-driven projects, 'elite capture' does not prevent the project benefiting everyone in the community. In such cases, elites who deal with development agencies and attract funding tend to appropriate a much larger share of the benefits of projects. Nevertheless, such projects will generally improve the situation of the wider community and the latter will often be thankful to the elite for bringing the project to the community. Olowu (2003) argues that local elites have 'resources, knowledge, influence and networks' (46) and are therefore crucial to local governance structures, even though they should not be allowed to exclude the poor. He concludes that institutional frameworks should be designed in order to involve elites but, at the same time, to prevent them from exploiting the structures of local governance for private interests. This is difficult given that when access to external funds is limited to a small elite, the bargaining strength of non-elite groups is very limited and the latter are obliged to accept highly unequal patterns of distribution of project benefits (Abraham & Platteau, 2004: 226).[130] On the other hand, Dasgupta and Beard (2007) argue that, even in the context of 'elite capture', projects may benefit the poor. In their urban case studies, local elites were willing and able to contribute the time and know-how needed to facilitate community-level projects and governance.

However, when elites capture a programme involving *land distribution* and gain legitimacy as key decision-makers with regard to land allocation, the likely outcomes include not only the exclusion of some beneficiaries from their fair share of the benefits, but also a serious risk that the programme will exacerbate previous inequalities, with potentially disastrous results for the poorest. For instance, if the land is given to a minority of the residents and the state provides infrastructure and services as well as facilitating housing improvement, *rents are likely to increase* and many tenants may become unable to afford to live in their current area (Chapter 7).

The programme transferred a considerable amount of executive power from the Government to the elected leaders of the residents. Without the support of these

[130] Abraham and Platteau (2004) argue that the situation is similar to an ultimatum game. If members of the elite withdraw their support, the project will not take place. Therefore, the elite has a strong leverage because without them the rest of the people will not obtain any benefits.

local leaders the project could not have taken place (Chapter 4) and therefore they enjoyed significant bargaining power (Chapter 6). A deeper social analysis demonstrated how such leaders came from a particular category of residents—the structure-owners. The elections in Kwa-maji functioned to formalise the pre-existing social organisation and power structure, as the most pragmatic way of fulfilling the programme's overall aims of democratic and community participation (Chapter 5). In Mosse's (2005) terms, the election of a Residents' Committee was part of a 'necessary ritual' to transform thousands of dynamic and ethnically diverse people into a homogeneous, 'natural community', ready to be developed and supposedly capable of expressing a single will. To avoid further conflict after the national, post-election violence, the existing elite of structure-owners was recognised by the project as legitimate representatives of the community. The consequence of this concession, whether intended or not, was that established power relations were in the process acknowledged and institutionalised, rather than challenged. To challenge them on a deeper level, would, of course, have implied putting in place a much more time-consuming and conflictual process of social and political change (Chapter 5). All in all, the 'participatory' process gave the structure-owners access to areas of decision-making and influence that extended their previous power in new directions.

The local elites investigated in this thesis had engaged with development agencies over an extended period of time (Chapter 4) and developed 'learned behaviour' (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 135). They became what Wilson (2006) calls 'learning elites', familiar with development language and able to mobilise other residents as required by development agencies. As mentioned in Chapters 4 and 8, some elite members had travelled to other continents to learn about slum-upgrading processes and often had a sophisticated understanding of development projects. As a result, they were been able to capture the local structure of community governance (Chapter 5) and successfully contain the effects of a 'participatory enumeration' which had the potential to transform existing social relations (Chapter 8). Moreover, by manipulating the discourse of 'community', they were able to silence criticism and push their own agenda forward. Chapter 6 shows how the residents' elite played the role of *the voice of the community* and, exploiting implementers' fear of community opposition, were able to argue that the community feared certain actors, who were consequently marginalised in order to prevent 'community resistance'.

The discourse of 'community' had another important effect on the implementers of the programme. The latter were not so naïve as to deny a degree of conflict and difference of interests amongst the residents. However, influenced by their own powerful discourse of 'community participation', implementers assumed that after the election process legitimate leaders would emerge and would express 'the will of the community'. Further, it was expected that negotiations would take place among the elected leaders, and that afterwards the three top representatives, who had the right to sit on the Steering Committee, would bring community issues to the attention of the implementers. Programme officers on the ground considered that to have challenged choices made by such community leaders would have been tantamount to a betrayal of the participatory process. It would also have implicated them in the adoption of a patronising attitude towards 'the community', rather than viewing it as a partner.

Going back to Dasgupta and Beard (2007), it is certainly important to recognise that local elites not only possess know-how but also enjoy community recognition, which may facilitate the implementation of community projects. These authors argue that elites may also be willing and able to contribute their time and play a key leadership role. Therefore it is useful to distinguish between *elite control* over the project and *elite capture* of the benefits (244). In Chapter 4, the analysis of local history revealed how the elites in question had supported local government authorities through their participation in village committees. These committees contribute to local governance in many aspects of community life; from solving interpersonal disputes to granting community security by establishing private patrols. Therefore, it was clear that local elites could potentially play an important role by facilitating the implementation of the project. In complex contexts, local power structures of patronage may be used productively by projects. In Kwa-maji, members of the local elite have years of experience in development projects. In addition, through their involvement in village committees, they have learned how to deal with residents' dynamics (Chapter 4). These combined skills enable members of the elite to adapt project policies to the local context and exercise their leadership in relation to the entire community. However, this elite may exploit their power to shape the project to their advantage. In these circumstances, the state has a duty to ensure that the prominent role of the elites in the project does not undermine the stakes of other residents. The role of the

state implementers may actually be that of ensuring that the local expertise of members of the elite is used productively and not at the expense of the poor. A project may not be able to dismantle consolidated social structures – and there are also good reasons for projects not to aim at revolutionising the existing social order – but at the same time the state should ensure that the poor are not excluded from interventions that are likely to radically change their lives.

One way of doing this is by promoting the participation of vulnerable groups within a settlement by, for instance, removing barriers to their participation. Participation is costly (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 149; Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 6). In Chapter 5, and to a lesser extent in Chapter 8, we have shown how in order to participate in the KUDP, several resources are required: time to attend the numerous meetings, as well as a minimum level of education. These have important gender and class dimensions. In some female-headed households, women cannot afford to leave aside their daily work in order to participate, as it would imply a direct loss of income. Moreover, the project explicitly required that community leaders would be available at short notice and without pay (Chapter 5). Only those who do not need to engage in paid work can afford these conditions. In Kwa-maji, this meant mostly the structure-owners, who gain income from their rent revenues. Finally, for the most disadvantaged residents, to begin to express publicly their social and economic needs would imply taking up a position against powerful groups. They needed to think carefully before making requests that would challenge an important patron, since they had realistic assumptions about the long-term character of power structures (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 252). In this regard, Crook argues that 'popular perceptions of the logic of patronage politics' reinforce 'elite capture of local power structures' (2003: 86).

In considering the question of community participation, it is worth mentioning another important finding of this thesis: participation is not only costly for beneficiaries but also for implementers. In order to ensure that marginalised categories have an input into the decision-making process in a participatory programme, the government needs to act consistently and firmly, and has to be able to challenge powerful local groups. This requires a resource-intensive process. This thesis makes a case for the need for *careful management of participation.* Participation cannot be naively considered to be an entirely people-driven process

where external agency is interpreted as a failure to achieve 'genuine' participation. The aim cannot be a full 'power reversal' between beneficiaries and implementers (Chambers, 1983). Participation can only be managed by project implementers towards more equitable outcomes. The lesson from Kwa-maji is that there must be a *stronger* display of power from the 'outsiders' – government and development agencies – in the management of participation. Participation *must* be managed carefully if a programme involving land allocation is to avoid 'elite capture' and worsening of the living conditions of a significant share of the target group.

Such careful management implies tackling powerful interests and, as mentioned above, this requires various resources which may not be available in every context. In Kwa-maji, it was difficult for a series of important reasons, amongst which the wider political situation figured prominently, particularly the national post-election violence. However, the failure of the previous upgrading project, and the *local* history of structure-owners' resistance and violent reaction, also contributed to the government's prioritising of the need to avoid further violence. As explained earlier, challenging existing power structures would have implied a much longer conflictual process that the government implementers were not prepared to face.

The government implementers also lacked *legitimacy*, a key resource needed to tackle powerful interests. There was no political support for a process which might have created conflict in the informal settlements in the aftermath of what could have potentially have become a disastrous civil war. The project had limited financial resources, and the donor was unwilling to have the resources invested in such a risky undertaking. Moreover, while in other contexts the state may have the legitimacy to use its power to manage development processes, implementers in Kwa-maji lacked this legitimacy. In Nairobi slums, the state is largely absent as a service provider and it is perceived by residents only in its repressive and brutal dimension, particularly as the main perpetrator of evictions and demolitions. The post-election violence further delegitimised the state. Under these conditions, implementers found the support of the local elite very valuable and aimed at establishing a mutually beneficial alliance (Chapter 6).

When discourses of community participation are coupled with limited resources to deal with internal community organisation, the likely result is elite capture. In such cases, 'participation' may become, as Ranhema (1992: 119) critically argued, a tool for saving money by passing on some of the costs of development to the poor. In this context, participation can save costs associated with ensuring community compliance and collaboration. However, as we have argued up till now, if 'participation' is to avoid failure with regard to its pro-poor objectives, then it is anything but cheap. An important conclusion of this study is that, in the context of consolidated pervasive inequalities, it may not be possible to initiate a transformative process of social change without creating conflict. Thus, resources to deal with such conflict are needed. This finding is in agreement with Mosse's (1997) work, which demonstrates that participatory and community-driven development is not possible without a transformation of the social equilibrium through which elites have maintained control over the management of resources; challenging this equilibrium requires a slow and gradual process and calls for a full understanding of the political and social dynamics of the area in question.

Thus far I have argued that, in order to work, participation in development projects demands careful external management and a deep understanding of social dynamics. This argument runs counter to the claims of most radical proponents of participation. As mentioned above, participation emerged out of a widely-felt need for a power reversal between development agencies and beneficiaries (Chambers, 1983; Fals Borda, 1998). However, many critics have argued that participation continues to rely on some *external* agency to organise the process, with the result that participatory processes are shaped by outsiders (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2005). In the context of land-distribution in the presence of conflict, this thesis argues for a *strong* external agency in the management of participation to avoid worsening the living conditions of many of the intended beneficiaries.

It is worth acknowledging that the introduction of 'participation' took place in a context of lack of confidence in the capacity of the state and other agencies to deliver development. Proponents of an understanding of participation as involving the self-organisation of communities tend to start from a pessimistic view of the state and its role in development. With important reforms, and acknowledging its complexity as a

contradictory array of many actors, I see the state as a fundamental actor in the betterment of the lives of the urban poor, particularly in the context of a large capital city such as Nairobi. This perspective is even more pertinent when the development process entails the allocation of public resources to private citizens.

It follows that commitment to a 'participatory process' without predetermined results does not imply that a given intervention will require a lesser degree of involvement on the part of development agencies. Paradoxically, in the case of persistent power imbalances, a participatory process may require a *more* active role of development agencies to enable full inclusion of *all* residents. This may be perceived as a more invasive intervention, or even as a return to large-scale state-led interventions, particularly by those sceptical of state capacity to deliver any positive change.

There are successful examples of participatory slum-upgrading in a context characterised by pre-existing inequalities and conflict. For instance, in the informal settlement of Moravia in Medellin, Colombia, a participatory urban development project was considered a success by the United Nations and other local actors (Puerta Osorio, 2011). The City Council, which implemented the project, deployed a widespread staff-presence on the ground. Project staff started to work with different categories of residents at the same time in order to circumvent the presence of dominant elites. Moreover, the project had considerable financial resources. This funding made possible the regularisation of the property of the structure-owners by issuing title deeds, as well as offering highly subsidised housing to their tenants (although quite far from the settlement). The project also provided a free house for those structure-owners who had to be relocated because their buildings stood on unsuitable land or land needed for public infrastructure (Puerta Osorio, 2011).

It is important to remember that by underlining the importance of external agency coming from the state and/or other development organisations, I am not implying that grassroots forms of participation and self-organisation never work or are unimportant. Several authors (Hasan, 2006; Hendriks, 2010; Mitlin, 2008; Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2004; Patel, *et al.*, 2009; Patel, *et al.*, 2002; Satterthwaite, 2005) have powerfully shown how self-organised urban communities are able to directly address

their own needs and/or make the state responsive to their requests. Moreover often, grassroots social movements are viewed as intrinsically virtuous and 'morally noble models of democracy', obscuring 'internal divisions and hierarchical control' and preventing critical analysis of 'contradictions and paradoxes' (Chollett, 2011: 293). In these cases, the implications of this analysis confirm the importance of exploring the internal dynamics and power relations of grassroots initiatives. However, when slum-upgrading programmes aims to distribute a very valuable and contested public asset such as land in large and heterogeneous neighbourhoods, then the self-organisation of residents, if delinked from careful state management of the process, will be likely to work to the advantage of local elites.[131] This is even more evident in a context such as Nairobi – the most important city in the region – where land is particularly scarce and subject to speculation (Chapter 3).

As illustrated in detail by the ethnographic evidence presented in this thesis, the KUDP was unable to implement a democratic participatory project and this resulted in elite capture (Chapter 5, Chapter 8). Using Mosse's (2005) work on the production of 'development success', Chapter 9 showed how the staff involved in the KUDP were able to create an official representation of project events which depicted a participatory and democratic process. As analysed in detail in the previous chapter, and drawing on the work of Quarles van Ufford (1993), this representation was obtained by *maintaining a substantial 'ignorance'* about what was happening on the ground. In particular, official representations concealed details regarding how elections were held and the way the power of the pre-existing elites was inforced within the new structure of community governance. The official representation of a participatory and democratic process was achieved with the strategic support of members of the local elite, who eagerly participated in the construction of this representation by enacting 'the participant community'. Members of the local elite played this role in the production of official project representations such as the video, or in the 'community' speech at the KUDP Conference analysed in Chapter 9. As will be discussed below, this has been very important in the construction of the project as successful.

[131] In my argument, I am in no way implying that government land allocation leads necessarily to more equitable outcomes. On the contrary, examples from Nairobi presented in Chapter 3 show corruption and political patronage in the allocation of housing units in government-led projects.

10.2.1 New spaces

A growing body of work has emphasised how participation has created *new* spaces which have the potential to empower people and generate transformative social change (Cornwall, 2002; Cornwall & Coelho, 2006; Hickey & Mohan, 2004). These authors argue that whether such spaces were *claimed* by the people or *invited* by state or other development actors, they may provide people with the opportunity to meet and speak with government officials for the first time. Such participatory spaces may be provided in order to facilitate compliance and control over beneficiaries. Nonetheless, as Williams puts it, the consequences of participation 'are not predetermined and its subjects are never completely controlled' (2004: 557). This thesis supports the argument that participation may indeed open new empowering spaces, but poses the important question, 'for whom?' My analysis of the Kwa-maji case study has clearly shown how new spaces have empowered the local elite of structure-owners. However, my analysis also indicates that such spaces opened up new possibilities of contestation.

Indeed, in spite of the fact that the KUDP has consolidated pre-existing power imbalances, other social processes mitigated the effects of the dominant role of local elites. These processes included internal conflicts among the leaders of Kwa-maji, the creation of new spaces and expectations, and requests for accountability from non-elite residents. New spaces were not simply the community structure of governance or public meetings. They also included *physical* spaces such as the Office of the Residents' Committee, which played a key role in making the local leadership identifiable and in giving residents access to their leaders. I have argued that the composition of the Residents' Committee was not an equitable representation of all the different groups of residents in the settlement (Chapter 5). However, the construction of the office exposed the elected members to the public. It made clear and explicit to everyone in Kwa-maji *who* those taking part in the decision-making process were. This process made the elected leaders visible to other residents, who could easily identify to whom to voice their concerns. Moreover, the residents had a physical space, the office, where they could find and meet with their leaders (Chapter 6 and Chapter 9).

The members of the elite who were formally invested as legitimate representatives of all the residents had to maintain their position – constantly challenged and contested – by delivering results and mediating with residents on local issues. As the residents started to recognise the elected elite, they also started to ask for their intervention on matters of community life, to the point of knocking on their dwelling doors at night to request their intermediation in solving a particular issue. To a certain extent, this made the elite accountable to non-elite residents. The capacity of elected leaders to maintain this equilibrium of legitimacy was, quite rightly, perceived by implementers to be a key variable in determining the success or otherwise of the project (Chapter 6 and Chapter 9). Moreover, such an elite is far from a monolithic block; elite groups are characterised by a diverse range of interests, age groups, property ownership, ethnicities, visions, and religions. It is this heterogeneity of the elite, internal potential conflicts, and their capacity to manage relations with the rest of the residents that allowed spaces for discussion and negotiations to open up. This in turn resulted in a process that recognised as beneficiaries of the project other groups of residents outside the elite of structure-owners that 'captured' the Residents' Committee. For instance, some resident structure-owners acknowledged that long-term tenants have a more legitimate claim to land than do absentee structure-owners (Chapter 5).

10.2.2 Conclusions on community participation

The main contributions of this study to the literature on participation can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the thesis has shown the conditions that favour processes of elite capture and how this may lead to the worsening of the situation of a significant section of residents, particularly when the asset to be distributed is the very same land where people are living. The thesis has described how elites may manipulate the discourse of participation and community to advance their own agenda and reduce the power of implementers.

Secondly, I argue that participation is costly both for beneficiaries and implementers. Beneficiaries need time, skills, and to be able to overcome social, cultural, and psychological obstacles to challenging openly powerful groups. Implementers need economic resources, and legitimacy both from local residents and in terms of political support from other government actors.

Thirdly, this study concludes that participation needs *external agency* and *careful management* to achieve equitable results. When this is not possible, development agencies can still create a representation of the project as a democratic and equitable process. Such representation fulfils the needs of the implementers to comply with wider policy frameworks of participation and development agencies can use it to claim successful achievements (Chapter 9 and Section 10.4).

Fourthly, participation is definitely creating previously absent spaces of contestation. In Kwa-maji, *new spaces* have further empowered those who were already occupying a dominant position. Nevertheless, other residents have managed to use the new spaces and the new visibility of the decision-makers to keep the elected leaders accountable and responsive to some of their requests. The consequences of such processes have been described in Chapter 9 and will be further considered later in this chapter.

10.3 Considerations on the role of 'the state', 'elite capture' and land

Providing policy recommendations has not been a priority of this thesis. While the findings of the study may contribute to more policy-oriented work by other scholars, it would be inappropriate to draw policy conclusions on the basis of an analysis of one project. Therefore, rather than policy recommendations, I would like to put forward some more general reflections and clarifications in relation to the arguments presented here.

My argument in favour of a more prominent role for government development agencies in 'managing participatory projects' which aim at allocating public resources may be misunderstood as a return to a 'paternalistic state' and to the type of state-led top-down development which legitimised newly independent states. In my view, the argument presented in this thesis does not involve a vision of a paternalistic state more than any moderate view that favours a welfare state. For neoliberal and/or libertarian critics of the state, any redistribution policy and any form of welfare state, including public education and health, is a form of 'paternalistic state'. I argue that when 'the state' allocates public assets to citizens, it must do so rigorously, with

enough power to ensure fair outcomes. This is what most liberal democracies try to do: when allocating public housing, European states generally establish criteria, create proper lists of beneficiaries, and verify eligibility. The Kenyan State must follow similar procedures when allocating public land to low-income groups. If the Kenyan State seeks to involve citizens in the process of land allocation (participation), careful oversight will be required (particularly if there are already conflicts and power imbalances among citizens).

As I have emphasised in the previous section, and as Abraham and Platteau put it:

> In societies where a great deal of socioeconomic differentiation has taken place, the main obstacle to the participatory approach is the "elite capture" problem. Here, for such an approach to be successful, there needs to be an *effective state* at the helm of the decentralization program so that local patrons and doubtful intermediaries can be prevented from subverting the participatory logic for their own benefit (Abraham & Platteau, 2004: 231, my emphasis)

Similarly, Conning and Kevane (2002) argue that mechanisms through which communities contribute to the selection of beneficiaries are more effective 'where the center defines and monitors targeting categories, rather than unconditional devolution to community groups with little basis for evaluation or control' (2002: 378). With the diffusion of the 'participation orthodoxy', community-based targeting has been increasingly adopted in development. However, it 'may lead to, or increase, conflict and divisions within the community; it may also be subverted to serve elite interests' (Conning & Kevane, 2002: 378).

The findings of Abraham and Platteau in relation to decentralisation and participatory processes in Brazil are very much in line with my argument for an important role for central government:

> Brazil's success in decentralization of public service from state to municipal government (in the state of Ceara in the northeast) is that "it had at its core a strong and new role played by central government" (Tendler 1997, 73). More precisely, the (state) government "kept an iron hand" on some crucial components of the decentralized programs so as to substantially reduce the opportunities for mayors and local power holders (especially large landowners) to exercise patronage (Abraham & Platteau, 2004: 229).

With this argument for a more active involvement of the Kenyan state, I am not by any means implying that the state/government is a discrete and singular entity. In the Introduction (Section 1.1) and at the beginning of Chapter 8, I have clarified the approach pursued in this thesis to look at the 'everyday state' (Fuller & Harriss, 2001: 26) as an array of contradictory institutions or better, as 'bundles of everyday institutions and forms of rule' (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005: 5). The thesis has analysed how different government actors at different levels interact, create alliances and exercise overlapping authorities. In Chapter 3 and 4, I have also argued that the government is often directly involved in mechanisms of political patronage and elite capture, particularly regarding land. Nevertheless, the study of Kwa-maji indicates that a *weak* involvement of the government in favour of 'community control' over the process of transferring public assets to private citizens may actually lead to worse outcomes in terms of social exclusion and inequality. While state bureaucracies are far from being a fair, neutral and independent actor, their withdrawal from important redistribution processes in the name of community participation may not lead to better outcomes as the Kwa-maji case and much of the literature presented suggest.

However, the state may not always have adequate resources to manage complex bureaucratic processes. In the case of Kwa-maji, the state lacked both economic and political resources. In relation to land titling, some authors (Payne, *et al.*, 2009; Rakodi, 2006b: 280) have convincingly argued that titling is an expensive process that requires considerable state resources which are scarce in many developing countries. This may lead to the diversion of government efforts away from more important interventions towards very slow and costly processes of titling. While titling generally leads to security of tenure, Payne *et al.* (2009) argue that, in certain contexts, other less costly tenure arrangements are equally able to provide enough security of tenure to foster urban development. Moreover, they argue that there is little evidence that titling has led to improvements in the income and living conditions of low-income urban residents.

In Kenya, many people face a complex and costly process just to get Identification Cards, which are often needed in order to claim basic rights. Without ID it is not possible to vote, access formal employment, obtain medical treatment, or secure entry to certain schools. In this context, it is true that titling may not be a priority

intervention and that my call for a 'strong' and 'costly' state intervention may be criticised on the basis that state bureaucracy should first address more urgent issues.

However, while I welcome policy alternatives to individual title deeds, such as the Community Land Trust or Cooperative Titles, I argue that current land arrangements in the slums of Nairobi are not able to produce urban development beneficial to most current residents. Projects initiated and managed by residents themselves are also inadequate in terms of creating the conditions required to provide most low-income groups with access to land and to improve their living conditions. Therefore, government bodies remain the primary actors in any process of urban development that could significantly improve access to land for low-income dwellers in Nairobi.

Notwithstanding notable differences between settlements, the current arrangement in informal areas can be summarised as a minority of structure-owners, many of whom are living outside the settlement in question, who provide expensive and poor-quality rental housing in areas which lack services and infrastructure. The market in structures is monopolised by a group of local elders (generally structure-owners), working together with local authorities such as the Provincial Administration (but sometimes also involving more 'political' authorities such as City Councillors or party representatives). Therefore, the current system of residential land management in informal settlements is *not* a viable and less costly alternative to titling to promote urban development, at least in Nairobi. In a recent paper, Gulyani *et al.* (2012) demonstrate that living and housing conditions in Nairobi's slums are far worse than those produced by informal arrangements in other contexts, specifically Dakar. Moreover, for housing of comparable quality, informal housing in Nairobi is significantly more expensive than elsewhere. The study also argues that living conditions for tenants are worse than for structure-owners (Gulyani, *et al.*, 2012: 252).

In Nairobi, the relative success of, and increase in, housing projects self-managed by low-income groups who either negotiated access to land with local authorities (Section 3.3.5; see also Weru, 2004) or autonomously bought land on the private market (Hendriks, 2010), are encouraging. However, so far such projects have worked with a small number of households on small pieces of land (often newly

acquired undeveloped land, rather than developing areas with existing slums) and their impact has been limited (Omenya & Huchzermeyer, 2006). These considerations lead me to conclude that they are not feasible to address the challenges of most informal settlements in Nairobi.

It could be argued that land arrangements may not be the key determinant with regard to the relatively low rate of improvement in housing in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The main variables, some would argue, are the lack of public investment and service provision which lead to poor living conditions. This observation is certainly true. However, I think that public investment in informal settlements, for instance in terms of infrastructure and service delivery, may be counterproductive if it does not simultaneously address the issue of land. This is due to three key observations regarding the informal settlements of Nairobi: (1) the relationships between structure-owners and tenants, described throughout this thesis; (2) the findings of other studies that have demonstrated that slum rental markets in Nairobi function in similar ways to formal rental markets; (3) the chronic housing shortage that pushes higher income groups to move into housing planned for low-income groups. Therefore, in this context, improvements in infrastructure and service delivery are likely to increase rents and displace a significant proportion of residents.

It is important to recall at this point that land is probably the key political issue in Kenya (Ndungu, 2004; Porter, *et al.*, 1991; Southall, 2005), and many commentators argue that it is a central issue affecting the economic development of the country. While I welcome more localised and flexible land management systems, and support the plurality of tenure types in Kenya, I believe that long-awaited reforms in the field of land demanded by activists and citizens are a necessary step to improve the situation.[132] The lack of administrative capacity of Kenyan authorities and the discourse around the capacity of current informal arrangements to provide housing may be used to keep in place the present system, and this is a concern. As argued in this thesis, the existing situation in Nairobi has produced absentee and profitable structure-ownership without channelling any resources into investing in the

[132] A more centralised model of land management has already led to the identification of key urban land which has been obtained illegally by large companies, land which the Minister of Land has promised to expropriate and put to public use.

development of the informal housing sector. The urban poor are not likely to see their living conditions improved, unless the Government embarks on a conflictual and costly process of urban development.

In the case of Kwa-maji, the KUDP was originally conceived (at least on paper) as a process through which the large majority of long-term tenants were to be ultimately transformed into home-owners (by developing the allocated land). This would involve a radical change in the social relations in place in the area. Such transformation would undoubtedly require considerable resources. Therefore, I view my argument for a careful and resource-intensive government management of the project to be consistent with the stated goal of the KUDP. I am not arguing here that the objectives of the KUDP were necessarily the best approach for Kwa-maji. Rather I argue that however the Government wanted to implement a slum-upgrading project that changes established power relations, a resource-intensive and costly process is needed.

10.4 Governmentality in development

While an in-depth discussion of Foucault's governmentality and its uses in development has not been a central concern of this thesis, this study may be able to contribute to the debate in two ways. The first contribution is that this thesis has provided a significant amount of evidence in relation to the negotiated character of development that counters a certain stream of Foucauldian analysis which conceptualises development as the imposition of a dominant discourse, resulting in cognitive control (Escobar, 1995; Sachs, 1992) and/or expansion of the bureaucratic rule of the state over people (Ferguson, 1990). As argued at the outset of this thesis, Foucault's work has been used by such authors to analyse and deconstruct policy discourses without the use of detailed ethnographic evidence. These authors have mostly focused on policy documents, examining development as a *text*. However, when development is analysed through encounters on the ground in the complex and contested process of project implementation, it is possible to see how development is far from being *imposed*. Implementers have to engage in complex negotiations, with unpredictable results. Power relations may also shift throughout the implementation and actors who started out in a marginal position may find themselves at the centre of the process (Chapter 6 and Chapter 9). In this regard, the thesis has provided a

substantial amount of evidence that corroborates the findings of many other authors that development is a *negotiated* and *contested* practice (Corbridge, *et al.*, 2005; Li, 1999; Sivaramakrishnan & Agrawal, 2003).

The other important contribution to the governmentality debate is in relation to the accounts that portray state censuses and surveys as tools to *render people legible* and *governable*. Chapter 8 has shown how government efforts to map the residents were successfully countered by the local elite of structure-owners. This elite managed to capture the process of the participatory enumeration. They used the language and tools of the Government to influence the enumeration's results and provide the Government with a 'reading' of the community that served their own interests. Similarly, the process of building a 'community' out of heterogeneous residents for government purposes of was subject to resistance from the residents themselves. This clearly shows that, while development projects may be conceived as 'projects of rule' (Scott, 1998), the dimension of governmentality at stake in such projects faces the agency of residents. The 'subjects' of Government are never fully under control (Li, 1999; Williams, 2004). As a result the consequences of development are unpredictable.

A final remark I wish to make is linked to my observation in the previous section with regard to how the state and its role in development are viewed negatively in a significant part of the current critical literature on development. Maia Green (2011), drawing on the work of Habermas (1985, 1986), makes an important point in this regard:

> Rejection of the project of modernity outright jeopardizes the opportunity for social and political transformation; the issue for him was not to reject the capacity of government to contribute to improvement outright, but to seek ways in which government can achieve this less repressively. Social scientists and philosophers after Foucault have all but denied that this is possible, seeing in government and in governments only the potentiality of repression, subjection and power. If change for the better cannot be enacted institutionally because of the inherent problems of governance, power and the state, then, Habermas suggests, we risk immobilization in the quagmire of a profoundly conservative present (Green, 2011: 50).

Green argues that anthropology has focused on the repressive and damaging aspect of government. In so doing, it has inhibited an engagement with policy communities

and governance which might have the potential 'to bring about significant and positive social change' (Green, 2011: 51). I share Green's concern regarding the importance of social scientists acknowledging the emancipatory potential of complex forms of social organisation and power such as the state. This thesis represents a critical but *constructive* engagement with the state. On the basis of my ethnographic fieldwork and analysis, I argue that despite the shortcomings of state action – many of which have been analysed in this study – the state plays a key role in development and it is strategically positioned to facilitate positive social transformation.

10.5 The social construction of development success

The analysis of the implementation of the KUDP also explored how project success was produced and what its effects were. The findings from Kwa-maji make a contribution to Mosse's work on the social construction of development success, which was introduced in Chapter 9. Mosse's (2004, 2005) starting point is Latour's (1994) argument that a project can succeed or fail according to its capacity '*to stabilize the interpretation* of [project] events' (Mosse, 2004: 646, my emphasis). A stable interpretation is needed to maintain the network of alliances that support the project and to enrol new supporting actors (Latour, 1994, 1996). Mosse points out that 'development success' depends on the capacity to create a coherent policy representation and to maintain it as the *main* interpretation (Mosse, 2005: 158-159). Such representation has also to be coherent with wider policy frameworks and, at the same time, accommodate the interests of the different actors at stake. In the work of Mosse (2005), this representation has little connection with implementation on the ground. The ensuing implications are that project success does not depend on its implementation and that implementation of a project is guided by organisational needs rather than project policy (16-17).

Mosse's argument is based on his account of a project implemented in a remote rural area of India. However, in Kwa-maji, I have argued that different conditions led to some differences in the outcomes. Kwa-maji's geographical and political centrality played an important role in the process. In particular, the following aspects were important: the physical proximity of the project to high-level actors who could often visit the area, the political unsustainability of conflict with the residents (see above),

and the realistic threat that residents could access the media or other channels to dismantle the official representation.

The fact that the headquarters of the donor, UNX and the Government were relatively close to Kwa-maji, with the result that these actors frequently visited the settlement, does not mean that they gained accurate knowledge of the social processes on the ground. On the contrary, the construction of a coherent representation required a certain amount of ignorance with regard to the micro-politics of the community. This was particularly needed because knowledge of this micro-politics could have undermined the official representation of the project by exposing its contradictions. Ignorance of what happens on the ground has been considered by some to play an important role in that it allows distorted representations to be built that can reconcile what is going on at local level with policy objectives (Quarles van Ufford, 1993). Such representations can take the form of 'scientistic' reports, in which contradictions in the data are hidden and accomplishments are celebrated through 'symbols of project success' such as video and photos (Mosse, 2005: 171).

An important point that emerged from my analysis of the social construction of development success in Kwa-maji regards the way in which the need to build a coherent representation shaped the implementation of the project. As part of the construction of this representation, it was very important to show that the project had community support. The elite of structure-owners were best placed to enact the role of the 'supportive community' (Chapter 9). At the same time, the donor, the Lead Government Agency, and to a lesser extent UNX, needed to *see development* during their visits and, as discussed in section 10.2, in order to maintain their legitimacy, residents' leaders needed to show to other residents that they were delivering development. These needs were translated into a focus on physical improvements.

The need to sustain a certain representation in order to claim success modified the implementation of the project towards visible outputs rather than other types of outputs, pushing the intervention towards an 'aesthetics of development' (Clammer, 2012) that fulfilled the *visual* demands of residents, donors, implementers, and their peers. The practices of project implementation that helped to build appropriate validating representation were oriented towards physical and visible improvements.

I have provided ethnographic evidence of the negotiated character of development and its interdependency with other political processes. The thesis also pointed out the delicate, fragile character of development interventions, which need legitimacy at various levels to avoid failure. Local leaders need to maintain their position amongst residents, implementers require the support of residents' leaders, and the project must be presented to potential donors and other external actors in a way that is coherent with the latter's policy framework and that can secure the flow of vital funding. 'Success' is the result of this complex struggle to hold the project together by fulfilling all these different, and at times, contradictory needs. In Kwa-maji, the representation of success was used for gaining not only external legitimacy but also internal unity. Physical improvements that responded to the needs of most actors were central to the holding together of different actors. An 'epistemic community' that recognised physical infrastructure as a sign of success was created.

As noted by Rakodi (2001: 221), 'Political legitimacy is [...] an essential condition of effective urban planning and management'. However, development workers will not get this legitimacy unless they first show that they can effectively manage projects and deliver development. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in Kwa-maji, project implementers lacked the legitimacy required to implement the project and tackle powerful interests (see the above reference to post-election violence). This contributed to changing the work plan towards activities capable of generating legitimacy and which did not require much planning and management.

Instead of engaging in a costly participatory process, the programme opted for a physical and relatively unproblematic solution: making the construction of roads the major activity, taking up two-thirds of the budget. This radically revolutionised the initial budget, as such a costly intervention was not planned. For the donor, this was further evidence of the participatory character of the project, since they had acceded to a community request for road building. The initial two-year phase of the KUDP was originally focused on the creation of an inclusive consultative process that would lead to the preparation of a slum-upgrading plan. It had a physical component but this was limited to a few high-priority, low-budget interventions intended to gain the confidence of the community in the project. However, the KUDP changed the initial

plans and spent two-thirds of the budget on the construction of roads, as well as committing additional resources for the construction of the Residents' Committee office, a footbridge, water tanks, and a health centre. This left very little money for the more 'political' activities planned at the inception to foster an inclusive process through capacity building, economic empowerment, and participatory planning.

The analysis of this process leads us to conclusions which differ from those of Mosse (2004, 2005) in one important way. Mosse's work in the Indian context concludes that project success is founded on the capacity to produce a stable interpretation and that project failure is a 'failure of interpretation' (2004: 658). Project events and activities on the ground are *not* important in the construction of project success: what matters is how they are interpreted and framed into a coherent representation by development professionals. Such representations have to be consistent with policy models and to be able to accommodate the needs of different actors. In constrast, in Kwa-maji, project events and activities on the ground were strongly linked to the construction of project success. The residents had the capacity to destroy the official project interpretation. Therefore, the need to sustain a specific interpretation of the project directly influenced the implementation of its activities.

10.6 Assessing the project

As argued throughout, development is a negotiated process. In addition, empirical evidence from this study has shown how alliances between actors shifted and how project implementation took place in a highly dynamic environment. Therefore, any attempt to make judgements or predictions on a process of development which is still open would be of little value. Nevertheless, I want to make a couple of important remarks to avoid my critical analysis of the project being understood as a dismissal of the KUDP achievements.[133]

In this thesis, I am not arguing that the election of an elite to represent a community is in itself an undesirable or unjust result. I am not interested in providing a judgement on the 'fairness' of the KUDP. Instead, what I argue is that this community

[133] This short section answers primarily to the need to avoid 'harm after publication' discussed in Section 2.3. Since this thesis will be made available to some of the actors involved in the research, it is important to make explicit some more general considerations regarding the project.

election was not what the official narrative of the project describes; i.e. a fully democratic process that complies with the liberal democratic principles guiding the work of western aid agencies. However, even this obvious comment may be seen as undermining the success of a programme which builds upon such a representation of participatory and democratic processes (see Section 10.4). In this thesis, I have tried to deconstruct this representation in order to reveal the social processes at play in the implementation of a slum-upgrading programme, *not* in order to criticise the project. As argued by Mosse (2005), such a discrepancy between the official interpretation of a project and its activities on the ground is an inherent characteristic of development interventions.

There is also another point that I wish to make after having witnessed in some detail the achievements of this programme and at the same time looked into other similar projects. From a comparative perspective, and given the constraints of the context, the programme achieved a lot, both in terms of physical infrastructure improvements and in creating the human infrastructure needed to carry out the process. At the end of my fieldwork, the project was definitely 'successful' in many respects. Of course, the Kwa-maji Urban Development Project Conference (Chapter 9) overestimated the results and downplayed the drawbacks, but this is part of the game of development. No development agency or donor government would invite their peers to the most exclusive hotel in the country to tell them that the programme is 'more or less' achieving the expected results.

Considering that it started out in one of the most problematic periods of Kenyan history – the immediate aftermath of post-election violence, which particularly involved the slums of Nairobi – the programme has done remarkably well. An example is the road construction. While the completion of the roads had been delayed, almost the entire 4 km were ready by the end of my fieldwork. By contrast, in the informal settlement of Kibera, barely 500 metres had been paved after years of negotiation.

10.7 Beyond best practices

If development was a technical process, then a recipe for it would have been created, but development is rather an inherently political process, requiring daily

negotiations. Nevertheless, development agencies continue to look for best practice. Thus, as shown in Chapter 4, to justify their inability to follow policy, they end up working mostly on pilot projects, rather than recognising the inherent, *co-produced* character of development.

Before an interview, an important AIDX officer revealed to me that the efforts they had put into this project were not sustainable for other projects, but that they were making this investment in the confident belief that they will identify the right approach to successful slum-upgrading. The findings from this research reveal that this is not the case. Often, framing a programme as a pilot helps to justify the high cost of the programme and the apparently low value for money (Mosse, 2005: 171). The high costs are accepted because the results are expected to inform policy and to facilitate the design of replicable approaches. Donors find confirmation of the validity of their own model in a request from the recipient government for scaling up and/or replicating the project. However, such a request often signifies a welcoming of more aid rather than a genuine belief in the virtues of a specific donor's approach.
The divergence of the outcomes and dynamics of development projects from the neat frameworks of policy models tends to be interpreted by development agencies in terms of the exceptionalism of a given case. However, as mentioned by Hilhorst, on closer examination every case turns out to be an exception (Hilhorst, 2003: 123, see also Chapter 4). This is because every situation is different, every project generates conflicts, and therefore every project requires an incredible amount of commitment and a process of negotiation (Section 10.1). The belief that there is such a thing as a 'best policy' is perhaps a comforting thought for development workers.

In this regard, Booth's call for 'more context-sensitivity among policy makers' (2011: 20) is of particular importance. He argues that donors should enter into a closer relationship with partner countries and develop an understanding of *local politics*. This may also lead to a new accountability, no longer in relation to wider universal policies, but on a case-by-case assessment.

Moving beyond the best practice approach also involves an acknowledgement of the creative and complex work performed by development workers on the ground. If development is a negotiated process, driven by daily practices on the ground, then

lower-level officers on the ground play a key role. They are not mere technical implementers but skilful professionals who creatively 'translate' (Lewis & Mosse, 2006) and negotiate the implementation of a project.

10.8 Beyond the local

This thesis has focused on the localised implementation of one programme. As I argued earlier, this study responds to a much-felt need for understanding intra-community dynamics and how they play out in the daily encounters amongst different actors in the implementation of urban development programmes. However, I am in no way suggesting that wider processes at city and national levels are unimportant.

I became aware of the necessity to look at the specific locality and its history (Chapter 4), which was overlooked by wider analyses that assumed homogeneous patterns in every informal settlement. Analysing the peculiarities of individual slums provides new tools to recognise particular claims, differences, and the complex process by which a slum originated. A similar political awareness lay behind the compiling of the *Nairobi Slum Inventory* (Pamoja Trust & Slum Dwellers International, 2008), which mapped the different histories and singularities of Nairobi slums. This awareness is also a key element of the recent *Environment and Urbanization* issue (Vol. 24, Issue 1, 2012) on 'documenting the undocumented':[134]

> There is also a lack of data about informal settlements – their scale, boundaries, populations, buildings, enterprises – and the needs of their inhabitants. This also implies their exclusion from government policies and public investments. [...] A lack of documentation about these informal settlements contributes to a lack of understanding about their importance to city economies. It serves as an excuse for public sector agencies not to provide infrastructure and services (Patel & Baptist, 2012: 3).

Nevertheless, it is important also to appreciate power relations and exploitative dynamics beyond a particular settlement. While local solutions must take into account the specific history of each settlement, a citywide approach may respond better to wider oppressive dynamics. The issues raised by slum-upgrading programmes imply dealing with very political processes that not all donor agencies

[134] In Chapter 8, I have critically examined this issue in relation to other aspects.

are willing to engage with. This partially explains some of the frustration of technical development workers, who feel constrained by long political negotiations.

In this regard, it is important to note that conflict between structure-owners and tenants could be ameliorated were the government to commit greater resources. Sixty per cent of Nairobi residents live on 5% of the land, as acknowledged widely by the Government and the City Council (Chapter 9). In this situation, solutions to the housing problem may not lie in finding ways to divide this 5% amongst 60% of the people. They need a citywide approach that is able to increase socio-spatial equity. The Minister for Lands himself has emphasised the need for spatial equity (Daily Nation, 17/11/09). It is encouraging that in 2004 a government report acknowledged that over 200,000 land titles had been issued through irregular or illegal procedures and called for their revocation (Ndungu, 2004; Southall, 2005). A progressive land policy and constitution may bring some hope for real change (Chapter 3). However, despite a potentially promising situation, Tania Li's argument regarding the elite's 'limited tolerance [...] for interventions that might actually restructure relations in favour of the poor' (Li, 2007: 4) can probably be extended to Kenya's political elite. Concretely, too little has been done to address the huge inequality in resource distribution, particularly regarding land.

10.9 Conclusion

This thesis has provided a small contribution to the understanding of local dynamics, power structures, and social processes around a slum-upgrading programme. It has also explored what development agencies consider a 'successful project' and argued that their judgement of success may not be linked to significant improvements in the lives of most residents. The thesis has revealed how, beyond the surface of a 'participatory' and 'democratic' project, there was a process of social exclusion in place, with the potential to worsen the living conditions of the majority of residents in the project area. At the same time, the thesis has shown in detail the agency of all the actors involved in shaping development. This calls for more attention to be paid to the local implementation of projects, moving away from dominant concerns for policy design. This approach to the conceptualisation of development recognises the central role of low-level implementers on the ground. Furthermore, project outcomes are

linked with the specific history and social organisation of a locality. Thus, understanding local politics becomes a fundamental preliminary step to engaging with the intended beneficiaries of a project, particularly when their participation is sought. Such social and political analysis is a huge undertaking, but it is an unavoidable task if a project is to take into account the conflicting interests of heterogeneous residents. In this regard, the thesis contributes to our understanding of the highly problematic character of community participation. The detailed account of the social and political processes involved also presents 'slums' as places of 'habitation, livelihood, self-organization and politics', countering 'apocalyptic' and 'dystopian' narratives (Roy, 2011: 223). Finally, the thesis has shown how interventions which are typically considered 'technical' or 'neutral' by development agencies – e.g. discussion of land tenure systems (Chapter 7) or the implementation of a participatory enumeration (Chapter 8) – are, in fact, highly political matters, subject to intense negotiation and manipulation.

Bibliography

Abraham, A., & Platteau, J.-P. (2000). The Dilemma of Participation with Endogenous Community Imperfections. *Working Paper, Department of Economics and CRED,* Namur, Belgium: University of Namur.

Abraham, A., & Platteau, J.-P. (2004). Participatory Development: where culture creeps in. In V. Rao & M. Walton (Eds.), *Culture and Public Action* (pp. 210-233). Standford: Standford University Press.

Amis, P. (1984). Squatters or tenants: the commercialization of unauthorized housing in Nairobi. *World Development, 12*(1), 87-96.

Amis, P. (1996). Long-run trends in Nairobi's informal housing market. *Third World Planning Review, 18*(3), 271.

Amis, P., & Rakodi, C. (1995). Urban poverty: Concepts, characteristics and policies. *Habitat International, 19*(4), 403-405.

Appadurai, A. (2001). Deep democracy: urban governmentality and the horizon of politics. *Environment and Urbanization, 13*(2), 23-43.

Apthorpe, R. (1997). Writing development policy and policy analysis plain or clear: on language, genre, and power. In C. Shore & S. Wright (Eds.), *Anthropology of policy: critical perspectives on governance and power* (pp. 43-58). Oxon: Routledge.

Apthorpe, R. (2011). CODA With Alice in Aidland: A Seriously Satirical Allegory. In D. Mosse (Ed.), *Adventures in Aidland: the anthropology of professionals in international development* (pp. 199-219). Oxford: Berghahn.

Arabindoo, P. (2011). Rhetoric of the 'slum'. *City, 15*(6), 636-646.

Arce, A., & Long, N. (1987). The dynamics of knowledge interfaces between Mexican agricultural bureaucrats and peasants: A case study from Jalisco. *Boletin de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, 5-30.

Arce, A., & Long, N. (2000). *Anthropology, development, and modernities: exploring discourses, counter-tendencies, and violence.* London: Routledge.

Archer, D. (2012). Baan Mankong participatory slum upgrading in Bangkok, Thailand: Community perceptions of outcomes and security of tenure. *Habitat International, 36*(1), 178-184.

Atkinson, P. (2001). *Handbook of ethnography.* London: SAGE.

Baptist, C., & Bolnick, J. (2012). Participatory enumerations, in situ upgrading and mega events: the 2009 survey in Joe Slovo, Cape Town. *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 59-66.

Bardhan, P., & Mookherjee, D. (2000). Capture and governance at local and national levels. *American Economic Review, 90*(2), 135-139.

Bassett, E. M. (2005). Tinkering with tenure: the community land trust experiment in Voi, Kenya. *Habitat International, 29*(3), 375-398.

Bassett, E. M. (2007). The Persistence of the Commons: Economic Theory and Community Decision-Making on Land Tenure in Voi, Kenya. *African Studies Quarterly, 9*(3), 1-29.

Bassett, E. M., Gulyani, S., Farvacque-Vitkovic, C., & Debony, S. (2003). Informal settlement upgrading in Sub-Saharan Africa: retrospective and lessons learned. *Working Paper, Water and Urban, Africa Region, World Bank.*

Bassett, E. M., & Jacobs, H. M. (1997). Community-based tenure reform in urban Africa: The community land trust experiment in Voi, Kenya. *Land Use Policy, 14*(3), 215-229.

Beall, J. (1995). Social security and social networks among the urban poor in Pakistan. *Habitat International, 19*(4), 427-445.

Beall, J. (2002). Living in the Present, Investing in the Future - Household Security Among the Urban Poor. In C. Rakodi & T. Lloyd-Jones (Eds.), *Urban livelihoods: a people-centred approach to reducing poverty* (pp. 71-87). London: Earthscan.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social construction of reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. London: The Penguin Press.

Berman, B. (1990). *Control and crisis in colonial Kenya: the dialectic of domination*. London: James Currey.

Berner, E. (2000). Poverty Alleviation and the Eviction of the Poorest: Towards Urban Land Reform in the Philippines. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 24*(3), 554-566.

Beynon, J. (1983). Ways-in and staying-in: Fieldwork as problem solving. In M. Hammersley (Ed.), *The Ethnography of Schooling: Methodological Issues* (pp. 39-53). Nafferton: Driffield.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: perspective and method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Boonyabancha, S. (2005). Baan Mankong: going to scale with "slum" and squatter upgrading in Thailand. *Environment and Urbanization, 17*(1), 21-46.

Booth, D. (1994). *Rethinking social development: theory, research and practice*. Harlow: Longman Scientific & Technical.

Booth, D. (2011). Aid, Institutions and Governance: What Have We Learned? *Development Policy Review, 29*, s5-s26.

Brillembourg Tamayo, A., & Klumpner, H. (2005). Introduction. In A. Brillembourg Tamayo, K. Feireiss, H. Klumpner & Caracas Urban Think Tank (Eds.), *Informal city: Caracas case*. Munich; New York: Prestel.

Brock, K., Cornwall, A., & Gaventa, J. (2001). Power, knowledge and political spaces in the framing of poverty policy. *IDS Working Paper 143*.

Brubaker, R. (2006). *Nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in a Transylvanian town*. Princeton, NJ; Woodstock: Princeton University Press.

Buckley, R. M., & Kalarickal, J. (2006). Land market issues: the mystery of capital revisited. Urban land policy – is titling the answer? In R. M. Buckley & J. Kalarickal (Eds.), *Thirty Years of World Bank Shelter Lending: Directions in Development Infrastructure* (pp. 27-38). Washington DC: World Bank.

Burgess, R. G. (1985). *Strategies of educational research: Qualitative methods*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Campbell, I. (1976). The Nigerian census: An essay in civil/military relations. *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, 14*(3), 242-254.

Campbell, J. (1990). World Bank urban shelter projects in east Africa: matching needs with appropriate responses? In P. Amis & P. C. Lloyd (Eds.), *Housing Africa's urban poor* (pp. 205-223). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Cassell, J. (1978). Risk and benefit to subjects of fieldwork. *The American Sociologist, 13*(August), 134-143.

Cassell, J. (1980). Ethical Principles for Conducting Fieldwork. *American Anthropologist, 82*(1), 28-41.

Castañeda, Q. E. (2006). The Invisible Theatre of Ethnography: Performative Principles of Fieldwork. *Anthropological Quarterly, 79*(1), 75-104.

Chambers, R. (1983). *Rural development: putting the last first*. London: Longman.

Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose reality counts? putting the first last*. London: Intermediate Technology.

Charmaz, K., & Mitchel, G. R. (2001). Grounded Theory in Ethnography. In P. Atkinson (Ed.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 161-174). London: Sage.

Chase, S. E. (1996). Personal vulnerability and interpretive authority in narrative research. In R. Josselson (Ed.), *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives* (pp. 45-59). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chhotray, V. (2004). The Negation of Politics in Participatory Development Projects, Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. *Development and Change, 35*(2), 327-352.

Chitekwe-Biti, B., Mudimu, P., Nyama, G. M., & Jera, T. (2012). Developing an informal settlement upgrading protocol in Zimbabwe - the Epworth story. *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 131-148.

Chollett, D. L. (2011). 'Like an ox yoke': Challenging the intrinsic virtuousness of a grassroots social movement. *Critique of Anthropology, 31*(4), 293-311.

Clammer, J. (2012). The aesthetics of development *Culture, Development and Social Theory: Towards an Integrated Social Development.* London: Zed.

Clifford, J. (1986). Introduction: Partial Truths. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography* (pp. 1-26). Berkeley; London: University of California Press.

Collins, R. (1981). Micro-Translation as a Theory-Building Strategy. In K. D. Knorr-Cetina & A. V. Cicourel (Eds.), *Advances in social theory and methodology : toward an integration of micro- and macro-sociologies* (pp. 76-84). Boston; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Conning, J., & Kevane, M. (2002). Community-based targeting mechanisms for social safety nets: A critical review. *World Development, 30*(3), 375-394.

Cooke, B., & Kothari, U. (Eds.). (2001). *Participation: The new tyranny?* London: Zed.

Cooper, F., & Packard, R. M. (1997). *International development and the social sciences: essays on the history and politics of knowledge.* Berkeley; London: University of California Press.

Corbridge, S., Williams, G., Srivastava, M., & Véron, R. (2005). *Seeing the State: Governance and Governmentality in India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cornwall, A. (2002). Making spaces, changing places: situating participation in development. *IDS Working Paper 170.*

Cornwall, A., & Brock, K. (2005). What do buzzwords do for development policy? a critical look at 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'poverty reduction'. *Third World Quarterly, 26*(7), 1043-1060.

Cornwall, A., & Coelho, V. S. P. (2006). *Spaces for change? The politics of citizen participation in new democratic arenas.* London: Zed.

Craig, D., & Porter, D. (1997). Framing participation. *Development in Practice, 7*(3), 229-236.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design : choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Sage.

Crewe, E., & Harrison, E. (1998). *Whose development? An ethnography of aid.* London: Zed.

Crook, R. C. (2003). Decentralisation and poverty reduction in Africa: the politics of local–central relations. *Public Administration and Development, 23*(1), 77-88.

Cruikshank, B. (1999). *The will to empower: democratic citizens and other subjects.* Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press.

D'Cruz, C., McGranahan, G., & Sumithre, U. (2009). The efforts of a federation of slum and shanty dwellers to secure land and improve housing in Moratuwa: from savings groups to citywide strategies. *Environment and Urbanization, 21*(2), 367-388.

Dafe, F. (2009). No Business like Slum Business? The Political Economy of Continued Existence of Slums: A case study of Nairobi. *Working Paper Series, Development Studies Institute, LSE.*

Das Gupta, M., Grandvoinnet, H., & Romani, M. (2004). State-community synergies in community-driven development. *Journal of Development Studies, 40*(3), 27-58.

Dasgupta, A., & Beard, V. A. (2007). Community Driven Development, Collective Action and Elite Capture in Indonesia. *Development and Change, 38*(2), 229-249.

De Waal, A. (1989). *Famine that kills: Darfur, Sudan, 1984-1985.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

De Wit, J., & Berner, E. (2009). Progressive Patronage? Municipalities, NGOs, CBOs and the Limits to Slum Dwellers' Empowerment. *Development and Change, 40*(5), 927-947.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The Research Act.* New York: Prentice Hall.

Desgroppes, A., & Taupin, S. (2011). Kibera: The Biggest Slum in Africa? *Les Cahiers D'Afrique de L'Est.* Nairobi: IFRA.

Devas, N. (2004). *Urban governance, voice, and poverty in the developing world.* London; Sterling, VA: Earthscan Publications.

DeWalt, K. M., & DeWalt, B. R. (2002). *Participant observation: a guide for fieldworkers.* Walnut Creek, CA; Oxford: AltaMira Press.

Di Gregorio, S. (2000). *Using Nvivo for your literature review.* Paper presented at the Strategies in qualitative research: issues and results from analysis using QSR NVivo and Nud*ist, Institute of Education, London.

Dill, B. (2009). The Paradoxes of Community-based Participation in Dar es Salaam. *Development and Change, 40*(4), 717-743.

Doolittle, A. (2006). Resources, Ideologies and Nationalism: The Politics of Development in Malaysia. In D. Lewis & D. Mosse (Eds.), *Development brokers and translators: the ethnography of aid and agencies* (pp. 51-74). Bloomfield, Conn.: Kumarian Press.

Dubisch, J. (1995). *In a different place: Pilgrimage, gender, and politics at a Greek island shrine.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Emerson, M. R., Fretz, I. R., & Shaw, L. L. (2001). Participant Observation and Fieldnotes. In P. Atkinson (Ed.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 353-368). London: Sage.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes.* Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Eriksen, T. H. (2002). *Ethnicity and nationalism* (2nd ed.). London: Pluto.

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: the making and unmaking of the third world.* Princeton, NJ; Chichester: Princeton University Press.

Escobar, A. (2012). Preface to the 2012 Edition *Encountering Development* (pp. vii-xliii). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fals Borda, O. (1998). *People's participation: challenge's ahead.* New York; London: Apex Press; Intermediate Technology Publications.

Farouk, B. R., & Owusu, M. (2012). "If in doubt, count": the role of community-driven enumerations in blocking eviction in Old Fadama, Accra. *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 47-57.

Ferguson, J. (1990). *The anti-politics machine: "development," depoliticization, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Flores Fernandez, R., & Calas, B. (2011). The Kibera Soweto East Project in Nairobi. *IFRA Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est, 44*, 129-146.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell & C. Gordon (Eds.), *The foucault effect: studies in govermentality* (pp. 87-104). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Foucault, M. (2003). *Society Must Be Defended.* New York: Picador.
Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Foucault, M. ([1969] 2007). *Archaeology of knowledge.* London: Routledge.
Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (1980). *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977.* Brighton: Harvester Press.
Frederiksen, B. F. (2010). Mungiki, Vernacular Organization and Political Society in Kenya. *Development and Change, 41*(6), 1065-1089.
Frediani, A. A., French, M. A., & Ferrera, I. N. (2011). *Change by design: building communities through participatory design.* New Zealand: Urban Culture Press.
Fuller, C. J., & Harriss, J. (2001). For an anthropology of the modern Indian state. In C. J. Fuller & V. Benei (Eds.), *The everyday state and society in modern India* (pp. 1-30). London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers.
Gardner, K., & Lewis, D. J. (1996). *Anthropology, development and the post-modern challenge.* London: Pluto.
Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology.* Cambridge: Polity.
Ghertner, D. A. (2010). Calculating without numbers: aesthetic governmentality in Delhi's slums. *Economy & Society, 39*(2), 185-217.
Giddens, A. (1987). *Social theory and modern sociology.* Cambridge: Polity in association with Blackwell.
Gilbert, A. (2002). On the mystery of capital and the myths of Hernando de Soto: What difference does legal title make? *International Development Planning Review, 24*(1), 1-19.
Gilbert, A. (2007). The Return of the Slum: Does Language Matter? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 31*(4), 697-713.
Gilbert, A. (2008). Viewpoint: Slums, tenants and home-ownership: on blindness to the obvious. *International Development Planning Review, 30*(2), i-x.
Gilbert, A. (2011). Epilogue. *City, 15*(6), 722-726.
Gilbert, A., & Varley, A. (1990). *Landlord and tenant: housing and the poor in urban Mexico.* London: Routledge.
Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* New York: Aldine.
Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* London: Mayflower.
Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates.* London: Penguin.
Gould, J., & Secher Marcussen, H. (Eds.). (2004). *Ethnographies of aid - exploring development texts and encounters.* Roskilde: Roskilde University.
Government of Kenya. (2004a). Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme Implementation Strategy 2005-2020. Nairobi.
Government of Kenya. (2004b). Sessional Paper No. 3 on National Housing Policy for Kenya. Nairobi.
Government of Kenya, & UN-Habitat. (2005). Kibera Social and Economic Mapping: Household Survey Report. Nairobi: KENSUP.

Grammig, T. (2002). *Technical knowledge and development: observing aid projects and processes.* London: Routledge.

Green, M. (2000). Participatory Development and the Appropriation of Agency in Southern Tanzania. *Critique of Anthropology, 20*(1), 67-89.

Green, M. (2002). Social development: Issues and approaches. In U. Kothari & M. Minogue (Eds.), *Development theory and practice: critical perspectives* (pp. 52-70). Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Green, M. (2011). Calculating Compassion: Accounting for Some Categorical Practices in International Development. In D. Mosse (Ed.), *Adventures in Aidland: the anthropology of professionals in international development* (pp. 33-56). Oxford: Berghahn.

Guijt, I., & Shah, M. K. (1998). *The Myth of Community: gender issues in participatory development.* London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Gulyani, S., & Bassett, E. M. (2007). Retrieving the baby from the bathwater: slum upgrading in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy, 25*(4), 486-515.

Gulyani, S., Bassett, E. M., & Talukdar, D. (2012). Living Conditions, Rents, and Their Determinants in the Slums of Nairobi and Dakar. *Land Economics, 88*(2), 251-274.

Gulyani, S., & Talukdar, D. (2008). Slum Real Estate: The Low-Quality High-Price Puzzle in Nairobi's Slum Rental Market and its Implications for Theory and Practice. *World Development, 36*(10), 1916-1937.

Gupta, A. (1995). Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State. *American Ethnologist, 22*(2), 375-402.

Habermas, J. (1985). Modernity - An Incomplete Project. In H. Foster (Ed.), *Postmodern Culture* (pp. 3-15). London: Pluto.

Habermas, J. (1986). The new obscurity: the crisis of the welfare state and the exhaustion of utopian energies. *Philosophy & Social Criticism, 11*(2), 1-18.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: principles in practice* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Hart, G. (2004). Geography and development: critical ethnographies. *Progress in Human Geography, 28*(1), 91-100.

Hasan, A. (2006). Orangi Pilot Project: the expansion of work beyond Orangi and the mapping of informal settlements and infrastructure. *Environment and Urbanization, 18*(2), 451-480.

Hendriks, B. (2010). *Urban Livelihoods, Institutions and Inclusive Governance in Nairobi: 'Spaces' and Their Impacts on Quality of Life, Influence and Political Rights.* Amsterdam: Vossiupers UvA.

Hickey, S., & Mohan, G. (Eds.). (2004). *Participation: from Tyranny to Transformation? Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development.* London: Zed.

Hilhorst, D. (2003). *The real world of NGOs: discourses, diversity, and development.* London: Zed.

Hilhorst, D., & Jansen, B. J. (2010). Humanitarian Space as Arena: A Perspective on the Everyday Politics of Aid. *Development and Change, 41*(6), 1117-1139.

Hooper, M., & Ortolano, L. (2012). Motivations for slum dweller social movement participation in urban Africa: a study of mobilization in Kurasini, Dar es Salaam. *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 99-114.

Huchzermeyer, M. (2007). Tenement City: The Emergence of Multi-storey Districts Through Large-scale Private Landlordism in Nairobi. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 31*(4), 714-732.

Huchzermeyer, M. (2008). Slum Upgrading in Nairobi within the Housing and Basic Services Market. *Journal of Asian and African studies, 43*(1), 19.

Huchzermeyer, M. (2009). Enumeration as a Grassroot Tool Towards Securing Tenure in Slums: Insights from Kisumu, Kenya. *Urban Forum, 20*(3), 271-292.

Imparato, I., & Ruster, J. (2003). *Slum upgrading and participation: lessons from Latin America*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Jackson, C. (1997). Sustainable development at the sharp end. *Development in Practice, 7*(3), 237-247.

K'Akumu, O. A., & Olima, W. H. A. (2007). The dynamics and implications of residential segregation in Nairobi. *Habitat International, 31*(1), 87-99.

Kandiyoti, D. (1999). Poverty in Transition: An Ethnographic Critique of Household Surveys in Post-Soviet Central Asia. *Development and Change, 30*(3), 499-524.

Karanja, I. (2010). An enumeration and mapping of informal settlements in Kisumu, Kenya, implemented by their inhabitants. *Environment and Urbanization, 22*(1), 217-239.

Korf, B. (2010). The Geography of Participation. *Third World Quarterly, 31*(5), 709-720.

KUDP. (2008a). Opinion Leaders Sensitization Workshop Report. Nairobi: Lead Government Agency.

KUDP. (2008b). Residents' Committee Election Report. Nairobi: Lead Government Agency.

KUDP. (2008c). Residents' Committee Leadership Training. Nairobi: Lead Government Agency.

KUDP. (2008d). Concept Paper (Final Draft). Nairobi: Lead Government Agency.

KUDP. (2008e). Minutes of the Consultative Meeting with the Kwa-Maji Community. Nairobi: Lead Government Agency.

KUDP. (2008f). Listening Survey Report. Nairobi: Lead Government Agency.

Kumar, S. (2011). The research policy-dialectic. *City, 15*(6), 662-673.

Latour, B. (1986). The Powers of Associations. In J. Law (Ed.), *Power, action and belief: a new sociology of knowledge?* (pp. 264-280). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Latour, B. (1987). *Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Latour, B. (1994). On Technical Mediation - Philosophy, Sociology, Genealogy. *Common Knowledge, 34*, 29-64.

Latour, B. (1996). *Aramis: or the love of technology*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Leach, A. (2000). Land Reform and Socio-Economic Change in Kenya. In S. C. Wanjala (Ed.), *Essays on Land Law. The Reform Debate in Kenya* (pp. 192-225). Nairobi: Faculty of Law, University of Nairobi.

Lee-Smith, D. (1990). Squatter landlords in Nairobi: a case study of Korogocho. In P. Amis & P. Lloyd (Eds.), *Housing Africa's urban poor* (pp. 175-187). Manchester: Manchester University Press for the International African Institute.

Lemanski, C. (2008). Houses without community: problems of community (in)capacity in Cape Town, South Africa. *Environment and Urbanization, 20*(2), 393-410.

Lewis, D., & Mosse, D. (2006). *Development brokers and translators: the ethnography of aid and agencies*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Li, T. M. (1999). Compromising power: Development, culture, and rule in Indonesia. *Cultural Anthropology, 14*(3), 295-322.

Li, T. M. (2005a). Beyond "the State" and Failed Schemes. *American Anthropologist, 107*(3), 383-394.

Li, T. M. (2005b). Government through Community: the World Bank in Indonesia. *Invited Paper for the Hauser Colloquium: Globalization and Its Discontent.*

Li, T. M. (2006). Neo-Liberal Strategies of Government through Community: The Social Development Program of the World Bank in Indonesia. *IILJ Working Paper 2006/2.*

Li, T. M. (2007). *The will to improve: governmentality, development, and the practice of politics.* Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press.

Li, T. M. (2011). Rendering Society Technical: Government through Community and the Ethnographic Turn at the World Bank in Indonesia. In D. Mosse (Ed.), *Adventures in Aidland: the anthropology of professionals in international development* (pp. 57-80). Oxford: Berghahn.

Livengood, A., & Kunte, K. (2012). Enabling participatory planning with GIS: a case study of settlement mapping in Cuttack, India. *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 77-97.

Long, N. (1977). *An introduction to the sociology of rural development.* London: Tavistock Publications.

Long, N. (1992). Introduction. In N. Long & A. Long (Eds.), *Battlefields of knowledge: the interlocking of theory and practice in social research and development* (pp. 3-15). London: Routledge.

Long, N. (2001). *Development sociology: actor perspectives.* London; New York: Routledge.

Long, N. (2004). Contesting policy ideas from below. In M. Boas & D. McNeill (Eds.), *Global Institutions and Development: Framing the world?* (pp. 24-40). London: Routledge.

Majale, M. (1998). *Settlement Upgrading in Kenya: The case for environmental planning and management strategies.* PhD in Architecture, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle.

Makau, J., Dobson, S., & Samia, E. (2012). The five-city enumeration: the role of participatory enumerations in developing community capacity and partnerships with government in Uganda. *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 31-46.

Mallarangeng, A., & Tuijl, P. V. (2004). Breaking New Ground or Dressing-up in the Emperor's New Clothes?: A Response to a Critical Review. *Third World Quarterly, 25*(5), 919-933.

Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2004). Community-Based and -Driven Development: A Critical Review. *The World Bank Research Observer, 19*(1), 1-39.

Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: the emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual review of anthropology, 24*, 95-117.

Marras, S. (2008). Mapping the unmapped. *Afronline.* Retrieved from http://www.afronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/kibera_mapping_the_unmapped.pdf

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research.* London: Sage.

Mayo, S. K., & Gross, D. J. (1987). Sites and Services-And Subsidies: The Economics of Low-Cost Housing in Developing Countries. *The World Bank Economic Review, 1*(2), 301-335.

Mayoux, L. (1995). Beyond Naivety: Women, Gender Inequality and Participatory Development. *Development and Change, 26*(2), 235-258.

McGreal, C. (2008, 7 February). 'Who's to blame? It depends where you begin the story', *The Guardian.* Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/feb/07/kenya.chrismcgreal

Mitlin, D. (2008). With and beyond the state – co-production as a route to political influence, power and transformation for grassroots organizations. *Environment and Urbanization, 20*(2), 339-360.

Mitlin, D., & Satterthwaite, D. (Eds.). (2004). *Empowering Squatter Citizen: Local Government, Civil Society, and Urban Poverty Reduction*. London: Earthscan.

Mitullah, W. (1992). State policy & urban housing in Kenya: the case of low income housing in Nairobi. *IDS (Nairobi) Working Paper 485*.

Mitullah, W. (1993). *State Policy and Urban Housing in Kenya: the case of low income housing in Nairobi.* PhD, University of York.

Mohan, G., & Stokke, K. (2000). Participatory development and empowerment: The dangers of localism. *Third World Quarterly, 21*(2), 247-268.

Morgan, D. H. J. (1972). The British Association Scandal: The Effect Of Publicity On A Sociological Investigation. *The Sociological Review, 20*(2), 185-206.

Mosse, D. (1997). The Symbolic Making of a Common Property Resource: History, Ecology and Locality in a Tank-irrigated Landscape in South India. *Development and Change, 28*(3), 467-504.

Mosse, D. (2001). "People's Knowledge", Participation and Patronage: Operations and Representations in Rural Development. In B. Cooke & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: the new tyranny?* (pp. 16-35). London; New York: Zed.

Mosse, D. (2004). Is good policy unimplementable? Reflections on the ethnography of aid policy and practice. *Development and Change, 35*(4), 639-671.

Mosse, D. (2005). *Cultivating development: an ethnography of aid policy and practice.* London: Pluto.

Mosse, D. (2006). Anti-social anthropology? Objectivity, objection, and the ethnography of public policy and professional communities. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 12*(4), 935-956.

Mosse, D. (2008). International policy, development expertise, and anthropology. *Focaal, 2008*(52), 119-126.

Mosse, D. (2011a). Introduction: The Anthropology of Expertise and Professionals in International Development. In D. Mosse (Ed.), *Adventures in Aidland: the anthropology of professionals in international development* (pp. 1-32). Oxford: Berghahn.

Mosse, D. (Ed.). (2011b). *Adventures in Aidland: the anthropology of professionals in international development.* Oxford: Berghahn.

Muller, A., & Mbanga, E. (2012). Participatory enumerations at the national level in Namibia: the Community Land Information Programme (CLIP). *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 67-75.

Murphy, E., & Dingwall, R. (2001). The Ethics of Ethnography. In P. Atkinson (Ed.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 339-351). London: Sage.

Ndungu, P. (2004). Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal/Irregular Allocation of Public Land. Nairobi: Government of Kenya.

Nelson, J. M. (1979). *Access to power: politics and the urban poor in developing nations.* Princeton; Guildford: Princeton University Press.

Ngau, P. M. (1995). Informal settlements in Nairobi: A baseline survey of slums and informal settlements and inventory of NGOs and CBO activities (Vol. Technical Report No. 2).

Ochieng, C. C. (2007). Affordability of Low Income Housing in Punwani, Nairobi, Kenya. *International Journal of Architectural Research, 1*(2).

Odhiambo, W., & Nyangito, H. (2002). Land Laws and Land Use in Kenya: Implications for Agricultural Development *KIPPRA Discussion Paper* (Vol. 15). Nairobi: Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis.

OECD. (2005). *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.*

Olowu, D. (2003). Local institutional and political structures and processes: recent experience in Africa. *Public Administration and Development, 23*(1), 41-52.

Omenya, A., & Huchzermeyer, M. (2006). Slum upgrading in the complext context of policy change: The case of Nairobi. In M. Huchzermeyer & A. Karam (Eds.), *Informal settlements: a perpetual challenge?* (pp. 290-312). Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd.

Pamoja Trust, & Slum Dwellers International. (2008). Nairobi Slum Inventory. Nairobi.

Patai, D. (1991). U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible? In S. B. Gluck & D. Patai (Eds.), *Women's words: the feminist practice of oral history* (pp. vi,234p.). New York; London: Routledge.

Patel, S., Arputham, J., Burra, S., & Savchuk, K. (2009). Getting the information base for Dharavi's redevelopment. *Environment and Urbanization, 21*(1), 241-251.

Patel, S., & Baptist, C. (2012). Editorial: Documenting by the undocumented. *Environment and Urbanization, 24*(1), 3-12.

Patel, S., d'Cruz, C., & Burra, S. (2002). Beyond evictions in a global city: people-managed resettlement in Mumbai. *Environment and Urbanization, 14*(1), 159-172.

Payne, G. (2002). Tenure and Shelter in Urban Livelihoods. In C. Rakodi & T. Lloyd-Jones (Eds.), *Urban livelihoods: a people-centred approach to reducing poverty* (pp. 151-164). London: Earthscan.

Payne, G., Durand-Lasserve, A., & Rakodi, C. (2009). The limits of land titling and home ownership. *Environment and Urbanization, 21*(2), 443-462.

Peattie, L. (1990). Participation: a case study of how invaders organize, negotiate and interact with government in Lima, Peru. *Environment and Urbanization, 2*(1), 19-30.

Platteau, J.-P. (2004). Monitoring Elite Capture in Community-Driven Development. *Development and Change, 35*(2), 223-246.

Porter, D., Allen, B. J., & Thompson, G. (1991). *Development in practice: paved with good intentions.* London; New York: Routledge.

Potts, D. (2011). Shanties, slums, breeze blocks and bricks. *City, 15*(6), 709-721.

Potts, D. (2012a). Viewpoint: What do we know about urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa and does it matter? *International Development Planning Review, 34*(1), v-xxii.

Potts, D. (2012b). Whatever happened to Africa's rapid urbanisation? *Counterpoints.* London: Africa Research Institute.

Preston, P. W. (1996). *Development theory: an introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Puerta Osorio, D. (2011). Macro Project for Integral Intervention in the Neighborhood of Moravia and its Area of Influence. In A. B. Sanin (Ed.), *Medellin Laboratory: An exhibit of ten ongoing practices.* Medellin: Alcaldia de Medellin.

Quarles van Ufford, P. (1993). Knowledge and ignorance in the practices of development policy. In M. Hobart (Ed.), *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance* (pp. 135-160). London: Routledge.

Rahnema, M. (1992). Participation. In W. Sachs (Ed.), *The development dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power* (pp. 116-131). London: Zed.

Rakodi, C. (1991). Developing institutional capacity to meet the housing needs of the urban poor: Experience in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. *Cities, 8*(3), 228-243.

Rakodi, C. (1995a). The household strategies of the urban poor: Coping with poverty and recession in Gweru, Zimbabwe. *Habitat International, 19*(4), 447-471.

Rakodi, C. (1995b). Poverty lines or household strategies?: A review of conceptual issues in the study of urban poverty. *Habitat International, 19*(4), 407-426.
Rakodi, C. (1995c). Rental Tenure in the Cities of Developing Countries. *Urban Studies, 32*(4-5), 791-811.
Rakodi, C. (2001). Forget planning, put politics first? Priorities for urban management in developing countries. *International Journal of Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation, 3*(3), 209-223.
Rakodi, C. (2006a). Relationships of power and place: The social construction of African cities. *Geoforum, 37*(3), 312-317.
Rakodi, C. (2006b). Social agency and state authority in land delivery processes in African cities: Compliance, conflict and cooperation. *International Development Planning Review, 28*(2), 263-285.
Rakodi, C., & Lloyd-Jones, T. (2002). *Urban livelihoods: a people-centred approach to reducing poverty*. London: Earthscan.
Rao, V. (2006). Slum as theory: the South/Asian city and globalization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 30*(1), 225-232.
Richardson, L. (1996). Ethnographic Trouble. *Qualitative Inquiry, 2*(2), 227-229.
Rigon, A. (2010). 20 years of "sweat and blood": lessons from the constitutional review process in Kenya. *ISPI, Policy Brief 188*. Retrieved from http://www.ispionline.it/it/documents/PB_188_2010.pdf
Robben, A. C. G. M. (2007). Multi-Sited Fieldwork. In A. C. G. M. Robben & J. A. Sluka (Eds.), *Ethnographic fieldwork: an anthropological reader*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
Robins, S. L. (2008). *From revolution to rights in South Africa: Social movements, NGOs & popular politics after apartheid*. Suffolk: James Currey.
Rondinelli, D. A. (1993). *Development projects as policy experiments : an adaptive approach to development administration* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
Rose, N. S. (1999). *Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rossi, B. (2004). Revisiting Foucauldian Approaches: Power Dynamics in Development Projects. *Journal of Development Studies, 40*(6), 1-29.
Roy, A. (2011). Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 35*(2), 223-238.
Sachs, W. (Ed.). (1992). *The development dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power*. London: Zed.
Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Satterthwaite, D. (2005). Meeting the MDGs in urban areas: the forgotten role of local organizations. In T. Bigg & D. Satterthwaite (Eds.), *The central role of local organizations in meeting the MDGs* (pp. 99-128). London: iied.
Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
Schuurman, F. J. (1993). *Beyond the impasse: new directions in development theory*. London; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed.
Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press.
Simon, D. (2011). Situating slums. *City, 15*(6), 674-685.
Sivaramakrishnan, K., & Agrawal, A. (2003). *Regional modernities: the cultural politics of development in India*. Stanford: Stanford Univ Press.
Soto, H. d. (1989). *The other path: the invisible revolution in the Third World*. London: Tauris.

Soto, H. d. (2000). *The mystery of capital: why capitalism triumphs in the West and fails everywhere else*. London: Bantam.

Southall, R. (2005). The Ndungu Report: Land & Graft in Kenya. *Review of African Political Economy, 32*(103), 142-151.

Stein, A. (2010). Sex, Truths, and Audiotape: Anonymity and the Ethics of Exposure in Public Ethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 39*(5), 554-568.

Stoker, G. (1998). Public-private partnerships and urban governance. In J. Pierre (Ed.), *Partnerships in Urban Governance: European and American Experience* (pp. 34-51). Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stren, R. E. (1978). *Housing the urban poor in Africa: Policy, politics, and bureaucracy in Mombasa* (Vol. 216). Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California.

Syagga, P., Mitullah, W., & Karirah-Gitau, S. (2001). Nairobi Situation Analysis. Consultative Report. Nairobi: UN-Habitat & Government of Kenya.

Syagga, P., Mitullah, W., & Karirah-Gitau, S. (2002). A rapid economic appraisal of rents in slums and informal settlements. Nairobi: UN-Habitat & Government of Kenya.

Tendler, J. (2000). Why are Social Funds so Popular? In S. Yusuf, W. Wu & S. J. Evenett (Eds.), *Local dynamics in an era of globalization: 21st century catalysts for development* (pp. 114-129). New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turnbull, B., Hernandez, R., & Reyes, M. (2009). Street children and their helpers: An actor-oriented approach. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*(12), 1283-1288.

Turner, J. F. C. (1967). Barriers and Channels for Housing Development in Modernizing Countries. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 33*(3), 167-181.

Turner, J. F. C. (1977). *Housing by people: Towards autonomy in building environments*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Turner, J. F. C., & Fichter, R. (1972). *Freedom to build: dweller control of the housing process*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Tuts, R. (1996). Cost modelling for appropriate building and planning standards in Kenya. *Habitat International, 20*(4), 607-623.

UN-Habitat. (2006). State of the World's Cities 2006/7.

UN-Habitat. (2007). *Enhancing urban safety and security: global report on human settlements 2007*. London: Earthscan.

UN-Habitat. (2008). State of the World's Cities 2010/2011 - Bridging The Urban Divide.

UN-Habitat. (2010). Count Me In: Surveying for tenure security and urban land management. Nairobi.

UN-Habitat. (2011). A Policy Guide to Rental Housing in Developing Countries. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.

UN-Habitat, & ICPC. (2010). Youth Resource Guide.

UNFPA. (2007). State of the World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth.

Varley, A. (2012). *Postcolonialising Informality?* Working Paper. Department of Geography, UCL. London.

Villarreal, M. (1994). *Power, Subordination and Gender Identity in the Context of a Mexican Development Project.* PhD, University of Wageningen, Wageningen.
Ward, P., & Chant, S. (1987). Community leadership and self-help housing. *Progress in Planning, 27*(0), 71-135.
Watts, M. (2001). Development Ethnographies. *Ethnography, 2*(2), 283-300.
Weru, J. (2004). Community federations and city upgrading: the work of Pamoja Trust and Muungano in Kenya. *Environment and Urbanization, 16*(1), 47.
White, S. C. (1996). Depoliticising development: The uses and abuses of participation. *Development in Practice, 6*(1), 6-15.
Whyte, W. F. (1943). *Street Corner Society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Williams, G. (2004). Evaluating participatory development: tyranny, power and (re)politicisation. *Third World Quarterly, 25*(3), 557-578.
Wilson, G. (2006). Beyond the Technocrat? The Professional Expert in Development Practice. *Development and Change, 37*(3), 501-523.
Woost, M. D. (1997). Alternative vocabularies of development? 'Community' and 'participation' in development discourse in Sri Lanka. In R. D. Grillo & L. R. Stirrat (Eds.), *Discourses of Development: Anthropological Perspectives* (pp. 229-253). Oxford; New York: Berg.
World Bank. (1993). Housing: Enabling Markets to Work. Washington, DC: World Bank.
Zérah, M.-H. (2009). Participatory Governance in Urban Management and the Shifting Geometry of Power in Mumbai. *Development and Change, 40*(5), 853-877.