

Chapter Title: Engaged pedagogy, informality and collaborative governance in South Africa

Chapter Author(s): Stuart Paul Denoon-Stevens, Lauren Andres, Martin Lewis, Lorena Melgaço, Verna Nel and Elsona van Huyssteen

Book Title: Engaged Urban Pedagogy

Book Subtitle: Participatory practices in planning and place-making

Book Editor(s): Lucy Natarajan, Michael Short

Published by: UCL Press. (2023)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv33pb026.13>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



This book is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.



UCL Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Engaged Urban Pedagogy*

5

## Engaged pedagogy, informality and collaborative governance in South Africa

Stuart Paul Denoon-Stevens, Lauren Andres, Martin Lewis, Lorena Melgaço, Verna Nel and Elsona van Huyssteen

For many years South Africa has modelled its urban planning practices on Northern systems, reinforced by the education and training provided to urban planning students in higher education institutions. Concerns have been raised about these methods' relevance and applicability when planning African cities (Watson, 2003, 2009). The UN-Habitat's Global Report on Human Settlements: Planning Sustainable Cities (2009) emphasises the role of urban planning in addressing urban dysfunctions and stresses the relevance of urban planning education in Africa. The South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN), which acts as the accrediting body in the country, clearly positions planning education as a way to raise the awareness of graduates and practitioners about core urban challenges. Indeed, urban planners in South Africa play a meaningful role in the development and transformation of the country (Andres *et al.*, 2020; Denoon-Stevens *et al.*, 2022). However, many crucial changes need to be made to ensure that planning and planners can help address sustainability challenges (Oranje, 2014) in a context of resource scarcity (including the number of planners and their ability to train beyond graduation). Addressing these challenges has pedagogical implications as aspiring planners need to grasp all the complexity of a profession that is evolving quickly. This requires employing diverse and innovative methods to engage students in unwrapping rapidly changing formal and informal urban contexts.

This chapter engages with the tension between planning processes that purport to be collaborative but whose legislative design limits and undermines the ability of planners to undertake collaborative and participative planning actions, and the consequences this holds for urban dwellers, particularly those living in informal settings. It explores the implications for higher education pedagogy in this context. Many of these supposed participative processes are often captured by an elite, who use such processes to further their own agendas and as such are highly exclusionary. This chapter asks: what are the challenges limiting collaborative governance in South African planning and how can planning education contribute to tackling such challenges? By doing so, this chapter responds to the need to further explore the frustrations that planners experience as a consequence of such dynamics, but also queries how such tensions can be partially resolved, particularly from an engaged pedagogical perspective. This includes, for example, exploring how planners may develop social skills to influence powerful stakeholders in this process or gain the means to trigger systematic changes to planning legislation and legislative structures that enable a more inclusive approach to governance.

Relating this to the themes and connections dealt with in this book as a whole, this chapter speaks to the notion of reviewing curricula – reflecting on how the knowledge taught in planning schools acts as a foundation for future professional development, and thus through engaging with planning professionals we create a feedback loop back in planning pedagogy. This chapter speaks in particular to the risk that occurs when normative ideals taught in universities encounter the harsh terrain of practice, and how we create a base of ‘ethical stamina’ that encourages future planning professionals to endure through the challenges of practice.

We draw on the results of an ESRC/NRF<sup>1</sup> project looking at the appropriateness, usefulness and impact of the current planning curriculum in South African higher education. The project was a collaboration between the University of Birmingham/UCL and the University of the Free State. The research team encompassed researchers with in-depth knowledge of the research and education landscape in the country, including experience of working at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and SACPLAN. The project consisted of two stages of data collection. The first included a survey conducted in 2017 with 219 planning practitioners across South Africa, with questions ranging from concerns relating to work satisfaction, to a ranking of the usefulness of planning competencies learned in accredited planning courses. During the second stage, in 2018, 89 planners across the country in both

metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas were interviewed, working in the public (n = 36), private (n = 21) and education (n = 13) sectors or with a mixed portfolio of activities (n = 19). The interviews were conducted to acquire more in-depth views on some of the topics flagged as relevant in the surveys, spanning from the current state of planning, challenges and achievements, including informality; relevance of planning education and the existing curriculum; and the conditions of work in the field. The latter included available resources and preparedness of planners. While the interviews were coded by one researcher for consistency, the process was undertaken in collaboration with other members of the research team to ensure relevance. For the purpose of this chapter, reflections from practitioners are used to demonstrate (1) their experiences in working with low-income communities, especially in a township<sup>2</sup> setting, and hence accounting for informal uses and practices and/or (2) their experiences in working with vulnerable communities, as well as on (3) their perception regarding the appropriateness of their planning curriculum.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, it starts by contextualising the planning profession in South Africa and the wider issue of informality and poverty in both planning education and planning practice. Second, it builds on the concept of inclusive collaborative governance by highlighting the challenges related to implementing such governance as mentioned by interviewees and reflecting on the implications thereof for planners' education. Third, it discusses and reflects on the pedagogical implications involved in tackling the challenges identified before concluding on the broader lessons that the South African case may offer to the wider Global South.

## Contextualising the planning profession in South Africa

The planning profession in South Africa is not only relatively young, but is a profession that has faced a huge task in turning around the profession's association with the Apartheid State (Harrison, Todes and Watson, 2008; Oranje, 2014), its largely white, male membership (Mabin and Smit, 1997; Muller, 2000) and its primarily technical approach to education (Nel and Lewis, 2020) after the change to democracy in 1994. This immediately provides a key challenge for state-citizen engagement, given that for the majority of South Africans, the state, and by proxy, planning, was an entity that historically worked against their best interests, and thus invoked an understandable distrust of the state. Planners also face

the challenge of having to address the spatial and socio-economic legacy and disparity of colonialism and apartheid (Schensul and Heller, 2011; Madlalate, 2017), materialised in continuing endemic poverty, extreme economic inequality and spatial division (Denoon-Stevens *et al.*, 2022).

Inclusive, democratic and collaborative planning has been positioned as a central tenet in post-apartheid South Africa, with extensive public participation processes systematically being implemented through a new suite of planning policies and legislation, namely the Development Facilitation Act 1996, the White Paper on Local Government 1998, the Municipal Systems Act 2000, and the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 2013 requiring redress and community collaboration. However, urban and regional planning is also a small profession in the country, with 2,885 registered professional and technical planners by June 2021 and an additional 1,721 planners in their candidacy phase of training (SACPLAN, 2021). To put this in perspective, the number of registered professional and technical planners equates to a ratio of one planner to 20,847 (13,058 if including candidates) of the population, and this number is not likely to increase anytime soon. The distribution of planners is also not geographically uniform, as metropolitan areas mostly have a larger number of registered planning staff (42 on average), whereas smaller municipalities are often understaffed, with an average of three planners per municipality in secondary cities, and an average of one planner (not necessarily a registered professional planner) or less in all other municipal categories (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2012).

These significant discrepancies in available resources between large and smaller cities, and rural areas, as well as pressures towards competing agendas and investment strategies mean that planners have to tackle very complex and diverse problems 'some familiar to practitioners in the global North, some relating to broader questions of development in the global South and cutting across both public and private sectors, and some very specific to the South African context' (Denoon-Stevens *et al.*, 2022). This has some reflection on the skills, competencies and ways to train South African planners, which has been at the core of scholars' interest for more than a decade (Todes *et al.*, 2003; Denoon-Stevens *et al.*, 2022).

Despite these challenges, results from the South African Planning Education Research project demonstrated that overall, planning education in South Africa has been meeting its expectations, with the majority of professionals surveyed noting that they were well prepared for practice. There were, however, a significant number of areas for improvement identified, which differed in 'conventional' (elite) universities and technical universities. A commonality that was found was the difficult balance

between practice and theory and the importance of localising the learning in order to bridge gaps between theory and practice in socio-culturally distinct contexts (Denoon-Stevens *et al.*, 2022). Part of the problem is the lack of opportunity for continuing professional development along with ongoing mentoring to allow more interactions between practitioners and academics, particularly in the first five years after graduation (Andres *et al.*, 2018). This need for lifelong capacity development, as part of the learning curve, is particularly significant when planners must engage with informality (Oranje, van Huyssteen and Maritz, 2020) and navigate within the unplanned nature of fast-growing towns and cities.

As a legacy of apartheid, South African cities are characterised by extremes. They display very distinct urban landscapes ranging from the planned suburbs of middle and upper-class areas quite similar to suburban areas in Europe and North America, to informal areas with few services and no formal planning. However, the proportion of households living in formal dwellings has increased from 68.5% in 2001 to 79.2% in 2016, which is a growth of more than 5 million households in absolute numbers. Two other significant trends relate to backyard dwellings and traditional housing. The absolute number of households living in a formal or informal backyard unit, or a room/flat let on a property, has also increased from almost 1 million households in 2001 to almost 2.2 million in 2016. Of the approximately 2.2 million households in 2016 living in a backyard dwelling on a property, just over 900,000 were living in informal structures, about 1.1 million in formal structures, and about 133,000 in a room/flatlet on the property (Statistics South Africa, 2002, 2016).

The number of traditional dwellings (houses typically made out of natural building materials following African customary practices) has decreased from 1.65 million in 2001 to 1.18 million in 2016. The number of households living in informal settlements and flats has remained relatively steady over this time compared to those in backyard and traditional dwellings. These key figures denote the importance for planners to address and understand the challenges and vulnerabilities often related to forms of living largely relying on informality. Roy (2005: 149) states that informality 'must be understood not as the object of state regulation but rather as produced by the state itself ... The planning and legal apparatus of the state has the power ... to determine what is informal and what is not'. Informality thus also refers to the range of processes and systems, often highly credible, through which housing, and resources and services are provided, often due to the inefficiencies and even inappropriateness of 'formal' institutions and systems (Oranje, van Huyssteen and Maritz,

2020). It is also worth noting that while informality is most widely studied in the Global South, informality also occurs in the Global North. However, in the North, informality is more evenly distributed between ‘informality of need’ versus ‘informality of desire’, such as deviations from regulations merely for leisure and other purposes (Devlin, 2019).

Consequently, engaging with informality is a key issue for planning education as it connects to much more than just the problems related to land development and land use management, or land ownership and building regulations. The challenge for planners in South Africa is thus to develop systems compatible with residents’ lived reality, rather than systems based on a fictional notion of what urban life is ‘supposed’ to be (Robins, 2002). It is of critical importance for planning students to engage with such realities, the implications thereof, but also with the limitations of the formal planning system and thus often the value of informal processes and development. This challenge also relates to a wider issue of inclusive collaborative governance which is explored next by understanding how planners engage and struggle with such processes in their daily activities. This chapter builds on such everyday realities to reflect on pedagogical implications.

## Perspectives on inclusive collaborative governance and urban planning in South Africa

The concept of inclusive and collaborative governance draws upon the work of Ansell and Gash (2008) and rests on the involvement of a wide range of public and private actors, from different backgrounds and different interests, with the objective of promoting consensus-orientated decision-making. In spite of high ideals for a collaborative and integrated planning system in South Africa, the practice realities have suffered from the impact of a highly bureaucratised and compliance-driven system. In such a context, consultation processes for a wide range of integrated, spatial and sector plans at ward, municipal, regional and provincial scales, take place within incredibly tight timelines – in most cases requiring the development of plans every five years and reviews on a yearly basis. In addition to the above, spatial transformation, integration and collaborative planning are impacted by performance management systems where individual performance and/or departmental performance is often more important than collaboration (SACN, 2020). Recently, calls have been made to transform government and civil society engagement, ‘especially to facilitate the inclusion of marginalised groups’ (NDA,

2020: 78). Co-governance and the effectiveness of civil society is considered here as a way for the government to be effective and responsive, requiring a policy review to encourage quality engagement (NDA, 2020). This imperative is of great relevance when considering informality, and an ongoing issue that planners have been keen to engage with but have struggled to date.

Several planners interviewed acknowledged the need for a more collaborative approach to governance, pointing out the many ways in which the current system prevented it. One issue mentioned was that participation tended to occur in silos, while communities' issues are obviously not silo-based and often beyond the scope of the specific process, leading to high levels of frustration. This was described as follows by a respondent:

And planning can't solve all those problems. Obviously, when you go into public participation processes around planning exercises, people target that process to try and address all those problems. And it can become very frustrating and kind of demotivating because you can't respond to all those problems ... There is all sort of other sector-based issues that just drive agendas, that you don't have so much control over. (Female, mid-career, experience in the public sector and currently at the private sector)

Furthermore, local plans and participation processes are merely cogs within a wider governmental apparatus. While purporting to be participative, such processes often result in being more focused on informing the general public, or merely collecting needs than truly enabling collaborative governance. This was exemplified by an experienced planner who framed the issue as follows:

When you speak to informal settlement communities, of course some of them demand a lot from the municipalities. But, I get the feeling ... the municipality officials come there and say this is what we can do. Not like, how can we change what we can do to accommodate you. It's more like you know ja, we hear you but actually rule is we come here to relocate you and then we're gonna create this and that and that. (Black, male town planner, private sector)

This frustration and seemingly lack of ability to effectively influence processes are also reflected in opinions that speak to how plans are being used as 'window dressing' to make a government entity appear compliant



and progressive, while the views of residents are disregarded in practice. A mid-career female planner working in the public sector at a large municipality noted that:

South Africa's got a very bad pattern of public participation and consultation: it's just a compliance thing; I published an ad in the newspaper; I had one public meeting. Not just the planners, politically if we review the Integrated Development Plan (IDP)'s, we approve the budgets; it's a tick box exercise and after 20 years of IDPs, there's also a process of people don't participate and there's just wish lists. (White, female senior town planner, public sector)

The role of politics was also cited by participants as one of the issues impacting collaborative planning. Many respondents felt politicians were irresponsible, making promises that were not achievable, and changing plans to suit their agenda:

And sometimes you know you still get hit in the end with problems because obviously these processes take one, two, three years, sometimes, to go through and what you decided three years ago with your social agreement with those people could change in a year when a new political figure comes up and tells these people 'No, they are trying to mess around with you'. So yes, it's a very volatile, ever-changing situation. But we like to learn from other experiences and as planners we try and do the right thing, I think, but it's not always politically the right thing because you know politicians blow things up and make promises that you can't achieve obviously. (White, male senior town planner, public sector)

The wider consequence is not simply disruptions to planning processes, but disillusionment with the state, given the constant failure to deliver what was promised. This is not specific to the South African situation, yet the impact can be dramatic in a context of limited resources and selective strategies. It has wider consequences in the ability of planners to understand and appropriately engage with the everyday realities of townships, their diversity along with the complex informal processes that characterise them. And, given the low-income status of the majority of households residing in townships, these households are far more reliant on the state than middle-income households, as the latter are usually able to establish parallel processes to that of the state, effectively filling in the gaps

created by state failure (e.g., private schooling, security, basic services, among other things).

The political nature of planning and power relationships shaping local planning processes and participation connect with the wider failures of the planning and governance system, evident in the often-unrepresentative nature of organisations such as ward committees and civic organisations, leading to limited engagement with the private sector. Ward committees comprised only up to 10 people, who are supposed to represent the ward (noting the average size of a ward in South Africa in 2011 was 12,104 people), but the actual composition of the committee is heavily dependent on the whims of the politically elected ward councillor, often with no democratic process behind the selection of members (Piper and Deacon, 2009). Although civic organisations purport to represent the 'community' in an area, they often only represent a small group of property owners, in many cases with particularly conservative views. They are often associated with being anti-development, resisting new developments and attempts to densify new areas, typically using arguments such as development eroding the character of the area, and parking and traffic issues (Anciano and Piper, 2018; Appelbaum, 2019). As a respondent described it:

And then the rate payers who have the luxury of living there in the apartments with over 50 million think they can say what can and can't be. One of my big bugbear[s] is how much voice is given to the rich and the government of the city. (Female, mid-career, experience in the public sector and currently at the private sector)

In such contexts, identifying and addressing the realities of everyday informal needs is not a priority.

Thus, many respondents appeared to be frustrated about the public's lack of participation and subsequent lack of input into shaping (often abstract) spatial and long-term plans for urban settlements:

And I think in terms of spatial planning, forward planning they actually need to have general meetings with the public ... we should actually educate them why it is important to attend such meetings to understand what we want to achieve, specifically for their communities rather than just deciding or following theories to develop a settlement which will not work in their case. (Female, white, mid-career planner, public sector)

Unfortunately, views such as this could also point to a belief about 'us' and 'them' and a perception that it is the public who needs to be 'educated', while it might be 'planning' that requires to be more context relevant.

This issue translates into exclusionary dynamics as privileged groups may use participation and planning processes to further their agendas, often at the expense of the city as a whole, with dire disadvantages for the poorer communities, particularly those living in townships. This issue was evident in the comment of an experienced, male planner at a medium-sized municipality who has had an unusual opportunity to guide the development in an urban area after a major wildfire:

Part of my job is to oversee the reconstruction of [\_\_\_\_\_]. And now I'm sitting with an interesting scope to say, 'Hmm, okay, let's do a mixed typology integrated housing project.' And everyone looks at me like 'What? What is that? We don't want low-cost housing in [\_\_\_\_\_].' Well ... So, I'm finding it very interesting to engage and bring some of what I've learned elsewhere, here. But it's a very conservative mind-set, and you have to convince on a small scale before you can start to do so on a big scale. (White, male, senior town planner, public sector)

Such concerns were also shared by respondents about issues that arose when trying to navigate between the complexity of policy positions (and good practice) and experiencing opposition from privileged groups, while not necessarily being accepted by communities and individuals that these policies are supposed to 'benefit'. One respondent clearly underscored the desire of individuals living in township for low-density development, contrary to what is accepted as 'good planning practice': 'They don't want anything denser; they don't want a different house type. They also want to stay here but if the other people have to move for them to get a bigger plot, the people must move' (black, male town planner, private sector). This response highlights not only the concern regarding collaborative governance and the planner's desire to ensure buy-in for planning objectives, but also the fact that these objectives unfortunately remain uncontested in planning education and practice.

Even in projects where there has been extensive collaboration, promises may not be fulfilled: 'A number of years ago ... we helped a particular community ... to participate in the upgrading of informal settlements. And those plans were developed and approved by the municipality, but they've not been implemented' (white, male senior planner, NGO sector). Failure to implement plans, the continual review of plans

and the extent of residential growth that happens outside the scope of the formal land development processes may lead to disillusionment with planning by planners and communities alike. This can result in citizens being excluded materially while creating a perception of inclusion in governance and decision-making (Miraftab, 2009), thus losing the trust of all parties involved, including residents, industry, politicians and planners (from government or private sector).

South African planners find it extremely difficult to achieve inclusive and collaborative planning among the numerous and complex challenges, not only in more affluent areas but more importantly in townships where informal living, adaptations and coping prevail. These challenges have pedagogical implications regarding the exposure planning students have to the realities, complexities and experiences in tackling such crucial issues.

## Collaborative governance in planning education and pedagogical implications

Teaching planning to students requires a subtle balance between what can be referred to as hard skills (i.e., understanding planning regulations and land uses) and softer skills (being creative, learning how to communicate and to navigate within a highly complex and diverse environment). Betts *et al.* (2009: 102) quoted the Australian Council of Deans Education stating that ‘skills of collaboration will supersede the competitive skills required in the old industrial economy and the focus will shift to interpersonal relations and communications’. Collaboration and communication are indeed eminently linked and go back to Davidoff’s (1965) advocacy and pluralism planning principles. Collaboration and consensus building have been identified by SACPLAN as one of the underlying generic competencies required by urban and regional planners (SACPLAN, 2014; Lewis and Nel, 2020). As a result, South African planning educators must adopt the relevant methods and techniques to train aspiring planners.

Following Davidoff and further on, Healey’s collaborative planning, planning theorists have insisted on the need to involve and empower communities in planning processes (Todes, 2009; Borraine, 2021). Such narratives, though, have been principally designed in a context which is not the one characterising South Africa and many other urban settings where the (formally) planned co-exist with the (formal) unplanned.<sup>3</sup> Engaging with those living in informal settings entails more than just

technical skills and know-how, and includes the sensibility and wisdom to understand what is required, having empathy and being willing to create conditions that exceed what is specified by legislation. This is strongly connected to the importance of local context and localised practice experience, as well as requiring high levels of personal and emotional maturity to engage in complex and diverse political environments. These are crucial soft skills. Because planning is essentially a process of negotiating trust, hope and the allocation and sharing of scarce resources (e.g., public funds, land), it is of critical importance that such issues are not merely 'discussed' but that aspiring planners are also afforded opportunities to practice base interactions and transformative experiences (Taşan-Kok *et al.*, 2017).

As noted in the previous section, this ties into a wider issue for planners of the state being willing to listen, and work with, the communities that the state serves. If legislation requires participation, but the state is unwilling to listen, then the planner is forced into the role of creating the façade of a participative state, which is not backed by the reality of actual governance practices. Pedagogically, this begs the questions of how to prepare planning students to cope with such situations, and how to equip them to act in such scenarios to subvert the dialogue and force the state to truly engage with residents.

The complexity of such a task underscores how, in a highly unequal and diverse country such as South Africa, pedagogy must consider the limitations of (even technically proficient) collaborative processes. Thus, discussing planning education needs to transcend 'what' is to be taught, towards understanding the requirements for an engaged, inclusive and collaborative pedagogy where opportunities are created for students to engage with diversity (i.e., in backgrounds, culture and expression) but also in perspectives (i.e., private sector, traditional leaders and to collective learning). Bell hooks (1994: 13) cited in Berry (2010: 20) felt that students should be taught 'in a manner that respects and cares for' their souls rather than using 'a rote, assembly line approach'. Fostering a diverse learning environment also requires diversity in the classroom as a way to expose students to learning and practice experiences that inspire listening and dialogue, showing the importance of remembering 'to go in, before going out'. For students, it is a matter of engaging and contributing to each other's overall development (Danowitz and Tuitt, 2011), and to have an interactive relationship between student and teacher.

This education approach involves acknowledging that diversity can contribute towards teaching and learning (Danowitz and Tuitt, 2011). These transformational experiences often require vertical learning time

and relationship building. Furthermore, fostering such experiences demands a pedagogy sometimes contrary to approaches followed in curricula and qualifications focused on a magnitude of knowledge and skills-based competency requirements (Van Huyssteen, 2018). It needs to be more agile and such engaged pedagogy must be embedded within creativity and adaptability. However, this does not suggest that all planners need to be highly skilled facilitators, but rather that they are able to connect with people and be humble and respectful enough to solicit appropriate support.

While facilitating skills are essential, in isolation they may fail to achieve expectations due to a struggling system. As the previous section showed, many planners raised concerns about their ability to engage with collaborative practices and were unable to achieve change due to the inherent challenges, complications and bureaucracy of the South African planning and political system. The complicated multi-sphere architecture of the South African governance system dependent on inter-sectoral support is poorly designed to accommodate meaningful and collaborative sense-making, decision-making and delivery of citizens' needs. In this context planners may feel alone and ill-equipped to glimpse social change.

Notwithstanding the above, the strategies of the powerful are themselves subject to negotiation (Andres *et al.*, 2020). Planners are not merely passive recipients of legislation and policy, rather statutory strategies are produced through co-construction between powerful actors, whose interests often are at odds. This is an important lesson to share with students to build their confidence and ability to negotiate and work within the structures of power, everyday temporalities and to find ways to gain additional training once in the field. From an engaged pedagogy perspective, this means that planning educators need to teach planning students to be creative, to enable planners to think beyond tried and tested methods and approaches to planning, and identify and embrace alternative practices in planning and regulation better suited to the South African context. At the heart of this is recognising that a successful planner should be able to balance hard and soft skills.

This balanced skills approach is essential to develop planners' ability to think critically and question the current South African planning system, particularly regarding the persistent belief that the public needs to be 'educated' about the value of planning, as opposed to encouraging planners to reflect on how the profession needs to change to be relevant to the public. Until this is addressed, collaborative governance will continue to be limited to isolated exceptions and will not become the norm.

Thus, pedagogy needs to include a critical and constructive reflection and practise engagement with relevant planning systems, regulations and institutional environments that inhibit and/or support inclusive and collaborative governance. This is by no means a new argument, as noted by Reece (2018). Unfortunately, challenging practice contexts, limited opportunity for practice mentoring, the demands for career growth allied with short-term orientated performance management agreements, escalating needs and trauma in communities, and personal expectations of what 'a planner' should be able to do could result in disillusionment and significantly impact the confidence and agency of planners in South Africa. The pedagogy of practices that are future-orientated require a changed approach to acknowledge the complexity, paradox and ever-changing nature of context and process (van Huyssteen, 2018).

Lastly, as noted in the previous section, part of the challenge faced by planners in pursuing collaborative planning is the actual design of the system, such as the undemocratic nature and small size of ward committees. The alternative would be that the modes of participation that have insufficient consideration of the realities of townships and low-income households, and which end up privileging the voices of the wealthy. This emphasises the importance of planners advocating for changes in the legislative structure, and governance norms, in the public sector, to create the pre-conditions needed for collaborative governance. Pedagogically, the emphasis is on the importance of ensuring planning students are taught systems thinking and equipping them with the advocacy and lobbying skills needed to effect such changes, for example, by incorporating change management as a formal skill taught in planning education programmes.

## Chapter synthesis

In this chapter, the challenges faced by planning education and practice in navigating among the complex tensions inherent to the planned and the unplanned nature of South African cities has been discussed. The post-apartheid planning system in South Africa is a system that has been overtly designed to be transformative. Inadequate consideration of the realities of participative planning and the demands placed on the state has strained attempts to promote collaborative governance and achieve inclusive, participative planning. This chapter has delved into the frustration of practising planners and considered how new forms of engaged pedagogy during the early stages of planning education could facilitate

participative planning. Planning students should be equipped with both hard skills and soft skills that should allow them to overcome such inefficiencies in the system. Soft skills rest on an ability to be agile and creative and more importantly to communicate and engage in dialogue in a way that allows the planner to adapt to the reality of local governance and those of informal living, particularly in the monetary poor townships. This is far from easy. Aspiring planners must be taught about the difficulties of practice, and be aware of the challenges they will face and their ability to deliver transformative change, even at a small scale. Planning educators here play a crucial role, and this has important consequences in the way planners are taught not only in their home country but also in the international landscape of international planning education (Adams *et al.*, 2020). Crucially, engaged pedagogy founded on agility and adaptability is a starting point to help planners to build stronger, inclusive and sustainable places.

Two key practical takeaways from this chapter are:

1. The level of diversity in societies globally differs, and in highly diverse and unequal situations there are limits to what can be achieved by collaborative planning practice. Pedagogically, we must ensure that what is taught in planning education sets a realistic bar in terms of what can be achieved. In such cases, teaching students how to appreciate small wins can be critical for future work satisfaction, given that big wins may often be unattainable.
2. Planning students need to be made aware of how collaborative planning processes are used by some states to present a façade of compliance, while in practice they retain a technocratic approach that is hostile to collaboration. In planning schools, students need to be prepared for how to manage the ethical, professional and personal tensions of being put into situations where they are used as part of this façade, and what options are available to them in such situations.

## Notes

1. Economic and Social Research Council, UK (ESRC) and National Research Foundation, South Africa (NRF).
2. As noted by Donaldson (2014: 267), townships during apartheid were areas for exclusive occupation by people classified as 'Black', 'Coloured' and 'Indian', and since 1994 'have undergone dramatic transformation from a homogeneous to a differentiated urban landscape', where formal and informal coexist in various ways. The term is still largely used to refer to low-income areas where a substantial portion of the housing is (typically) provided by the state, with recent usage also including low-income housing areas built by the post-apartheid government. In the South African setting, 'coloured' is the appropriate terminology as this is



the term that this group identifies with, we are cognisant that this term in other countries can be perceived as offensive.

3. Noting that such spaces, while formally unplanned, many often are planned according to unrecognised informal or traditional approaches to settlement building.

## References

- Adams, D., L. Andres, S. Denoon-Stevens and L. Melgaço. 2020. 'Challenges, opportunities and legacies: experiencing the internationalising of UK planning curricula across space and time', *Town Planning Review* 91(5): 515–34.
- Anciano, F., and L. Piper. 2018. *Democracy Disconnected: participation and governance in a city of the South*. London: Routledge.
- Andres, L., S. P. Denoon-Stevens, M. Lewis, E. van Huyssteen and V. Nel. 2018. *Matching Needs: planners in local government*. SAPER Briefing Note. Unpublished.
- Andres, L., P. Jones, S. P. Denoon-Stevens and L. Melgaço, L. 2020. 'Negotiating polyvocal strategies: re-reading de Certeau through the lens of urban planning in South Africa', *Urban Studies* 57(12): 2440–55.
- Ansell, C., and A. Gash. 2008. 'Collaborative governance in theory and practice', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18(4): 543–71.
- Appelbaum, A. 2019. 'The micro-politics of state-led spatial transformation: the suburban middle class in a municipal tribunal'. In M. T. Myambo (ed.), *Reversing Urban Inequality in Johannesburg*. London: Routledge.
- Berry, T. 2010. 'Engaged Pedagogy and Critical Race Feminism', *Educational Foundations* 24(3–4): 19–26.
- Betts, K., M. Lewis, A. Dressler and L. Svensson. 2009. 'Optimizing Learning Simulation to Support a Quinary Career Development Model', *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education* 10(2): 99–119, [https://www.ijwil.org/files/APJCE\\_10\\_2\\_99\\_119.pdf](https://www.ijwil.org/files/APJCE_10_2_99_119.pdf) (last accessed on 1 December 2022).
- Boraine, A. 2021. Question and Answer Section – Session 2: Recalibration and innovation of post-pandemic governance – Urban Festival 2021 – The Rebuilt City. Zoom Webinar (27 October 2021). SACN.
- Danowitz, M. A., and F. Tuitt. 2011. 'Enacting inclusivity through engaged pedagogy: a higher education perspective', *Equity & Excellence in Education* (44)1: 40–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2011.539474> (last accessed 1 December 2022).
- Davidoff, P. 1965. 'Advocacy and pluralism in planning', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 31(4): 331–8.
- Denoon-Stevens, S. P., L. Andres, P. Jones, L. Melgaco, R. Massey and V. Nel. 2022. 'Theory versus practice in planning education: the view from South Africa', *Planning Practice & Research*, 37(4): 509–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2020.1735158> (last accessed 1 December 2022).
- Devlin, R. T. 2019. 'A focus on needs: toward a more nuanced understanding of inequality and urban informality in the Global North', *Journal of Cultural Geography* 36(2): 121–43.
- Donaldson, R. 2014. 'South African Township Transformation'. In A. C. Michalos (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Dordrecht: Springer, 267–8.
- Harrison, P., A. Todes and V. Watson. 2008. *Planning and Transformation: learning from the post-apartheid experience*. London: Routledge.
- Lewis, M., and V. Nel. 2020. 'Setting standards and competencies for planners'. In Carlos Nunes Silva (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Urban Planning in Africa*. London/New York: Routledge, 162–76.
- Mabin, A., and D. Smit. 1997. 'Reconstructing South Africa's cities? The making of urban planning 1900–2000', *Planning Perspectives* 12(2): 193–223.
- Madlalate, R. 2017. '(In)Equality at the intersection of race and space in Johannesburg', *South African Journal on Human Rights* 33(3): 472–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02587203.2017.1395166> (last accessed 1 December 2022).
- MirafTAB, F. 2009. 'Insurgent planning: situating radical planning in the Global South', *Planning Theory* 8(1): 32–50.

- Muller, J. 2000. *Deconstructing Differences: the transformation of the planning profession in South Africa*. Paper presented at the Millennium Conference of the South African History Study Group, Planning for Reconstruction and Development, 29–31 May 2000, University of Natal, Durban.
- Municipal Demarcation Board. 2012. *State Municipal Capacity Assessment 2010/2011: national trends in municipal capacity*, [https://municipalmoney.gov.za/static/state\\_of\\_municipal\\_capacity\\_assessment\\_2010\\_11\\_national\\_trends\\_report.a5b5a4d2722e.pdf](https://municipalmoney.gov.za/static/state_of_municipal_capacity_assessment_2010_11_national_trends_report.a5b5a4d2722e.pdf) (last accessed 1 December 2022).
- NDA (National Development Agency). 2020. *Requirements for Transforming the Civil Society Sector in South Africa*. Research Report. December 2020.
- Nel, V., and M. Lewis, M. 2020. 'The resilience, adaptability and transformation of the South African planning profession'. In Carlos Nunes Silva (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Urban Planning in Africa*. London/New York: Routledge, 141–61.
- Oranje, M. 2014. 'Back to where it all began ...? Reflections on injecting the (spiritual) ethos of the Early Town planning movement into planning, planners and plans in post-1994 South Africa', *HTS Theological Studies* 70(3): a2781.
- Oranje, M., E. van Huyssteen and J. Maritz. 2020. 'Rapid urbanisation to non-metropolitan urban South Africa: a call for accrediting credible "informal" life-enhancing responses and institutions', *Cities* 96: 102487.
- Piper, L., and R. Deacon. 2009. 'Too dependent to participate: ward committees and local democratisation in South Africa', *Local Government Studies* 35(4): 415–33.
- Reece, J. W. 2018. 'In pursuit of a twenty-first century just city: the evolution of equity planning theory and practice', *Journal of Planning Literature* 33(3): 299–309.
- Robins, S. 2002. 'Planning "Suburban Bliss" in Joe Slovo Park, Cape Town', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 72(4): 511–48.
- Roy, A. 2005. 'Urban informality: toward an epistemology of planning', *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71(2): 147–58.
- SACN (South African Cities Network). 2020. *Built Environment Integration Practice*. Johannesburg: SACN.
- SACPLAN (South African Council for Planners). 2014. *Guidelines for Competencies and Standards for Curricula Development*. Document number 8/4/1/C&S/Curr/12-2014. Midrand: SACPLAN.
- SACPLAN. 2021. 'Total Registration Statistics', *Newsletter* 8: 18.
- Schensul, D., and P. Heller, P. 2011. 'Legacies, Change and Transformation in the Post-Apartheid City: Towards an Urban Sociological Cartography', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(1): 78–109.
- Statistics South Africa. 2002. *South African National Census of 2001* (Dataset), <https://superweb.statssa.gov.za/webapi/jsf/login.xhtml> (last accessed 1 December 2022).
- Statistics South Africa. 2016. *Community Survey* (Dataset), <https://superweb.statssa.gov.za/webapi/jsf/login.xhtml> (last accessed 1 December 2022).
- Taşan-Kok, T., E. Babalik-Sutcliffe, E. van Huyssteen and M. Oranje. 2017. 'Mismatch between planning education and practice: contemporary ethical challenges and conflicts confronting young planners'. In T. Taşan-Kok and M. Oranje (eds), *From Student to Urban Planner: young practitioners' reflections on contemporary ethical challenges*. London/New York: Routledge, 15–32.
- Todes, A., P. Harrison and V. Watson. 2003. 'The changing nature of the job market for planning in South Africa: implications for planning educators', *Town and Regional Planning*, 2003(46): 21–32.
- Todes, A. 2009. 'City planners'. In Johan Erasmus and Mignon Breier (eds), *Skills Shortages in South Africa: case studies of key professions*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 246–61.
- UN-Habitat. 2009. *Planning Sustainable Cities: global report on human settlements 2009*. London: Earthscan.
- van Huyssteen, E. 2018. *Being, Becoming and Contributing in (and through) Planning*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria.
- Watson, V. 2009. "'The planned city sweeps the poor away...': Urban planning and 21st century urbanisation', *Progress in Planning* 72(3): 151–93.
- Watson, V. (2003). 'Conflicting rationalities: implications for planning theory and ethics', *Planning Theory & Practice*, 4(4): 395–407.

