Historical development of informal township settlements in Johannesburg since 1886[1]

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1. Introduction

The development of informal township settlements in Johannesburg has been poorly managed and influenced by politics since the discovery of gold. Most historical studies, for example of Soweto, are from a political perspective. This paper analyses the informal township urbanisation process from an economic development perspective since 1886. However, this cannot be separated from the political decisions that dictated the urbanisation process. Klipspruit is the oldest of a cluster of townships that constitute present day Soweto. African and Indian residents of Brickfields were moved to Kliptown by the British controlled authorities, following the plague in 1904. The majority was later forced to move illegally into vacant areas such as Orlando, Pimville, Dube, Newclare and Alexandra due to a shortage of housing, planning and management. Squatter suburbs sprang up virtually overnight, as is the case again at present. In 1957 the poor conditions in the "shantytowns" caused Ernest Oppenheimer to secure a £3 million loan from the 7 mining groups to build 15 000 houses over 3 years. These and other aspects of the historical development of informal settlements are analysed in this paper.

Of all the characteristics that typify informal settlements, the principal attribute is the lack of security of land tenure. Occupants of informal settlements live in a permanent state of legal and social insecurity. This lack of legal recognition is

mainly due to the unlawful occupation and unauthorised use of the land on which they live. Informal settlements are typified by the absence of formal planning and unplanned growth. The majority of the informal settlements are located on the peripheral edges of urbanisation and far from employment opportunities and services. They are often situated in environmentally hazardous conditions associated with dangers, such as floodplains. The illegal status of informal settlements does not attract public sector investments and lack government-funded social amenities and economic infrastructure. Moreover, residents of informal settlements are poor and typically dislocated from the formal labour market (COURC 2005:15). The poverty of residents provides a fertile ground for exploitation.

Informal settlements are products of failed policies, ineffective governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, exclusionary urban economic development, poor urban management strategies, dysfunctional and inequitable land markets, discriminatory financial systems and/or a profound democratic failure (Department of Housing 2004b:1+2; Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006:43). Combating poverty, inequality and discrimination not only supports informal settlements and deepens democracy, but can also improve the prospects of robust and socially inclusive economic growth.

The persistence of informal settlements and their continued growth, despite extensive government subsidised housing since 1994, has increasingly received national attention. The Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme calls for a paradigm shift in relation to informal settlement intervention (Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006:41). One of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 (UN 2000:5). This was grouped as Target 11 under the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7. "Slum" was later defined as any area lacking basic services, or with inadequate building structures, overcrowding, unhealthy and hazardous conditions, insecure tenure, and poverty and exclusion

(UN-Habitat 2005). In South Africa, political leaders refer to MDG 7, Target 11 when stating their commitment to dealing with poverty and informal settlement upgrading programmes.

Section 2 examines the historical development of informal urbanisation from 1886 to the present. This is discussed under three time periods, namely, 1886 to 1947, 1948 to 1993 and 1994 to the present. The paper concludes with a summary of the main findings and some tentative conclusions.

2. Historical development of informal settlements from 1886 to the present

2.1 Introduction

The discovery of diamonds and gold brought about fundamental changes in the economy and society of town and countryside. The capitalist and industrial economic system set the scene for the emergence of racial segregation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and for the policy of apartheid in the late 1940s (Worden 1994:34).

Only small parts of South Africa had been transformed into settler societies before the 1870s. The development of the diamond fields at Kimberley and the gold mines of the Witwatersrand transformed South African society. These developments spawned new industrial towns and created new demands for labour and agrarian produce. This had a major impact on rural societies both nearby and far from the mines. In short, South Africa acquired a capitalist and industrial economy and society (Worden 1994:37).

After 1876 stricter controls over African workers were put into effect by the larger mining companies. Registration passes and fixed contract terms were enforced to limit the ability of labourers to play off one employer against another. In an attempt to control illicit smuggling the increasingly powerful companies went

further and strip searched workers leaving the mines in the 1880s. Closed compounds were introduced, modelled initially on the compounds used by the De Beers Company at Kimberly, for the housing of convict labour (Worden 1994:38-39). The advantages to the employers were direct control over the workers and wage savings that could be made by the provision of cheap accommodation and food (Turrell 1984; Worden 1994:39). These policies were transferred to Johannesburg.

Increasing numbers of Africans in the towns led to central state interventions. Prior to the 1920s, the housing and administration of Africans were left in the hands of the municipal authorities. In Johannesburg areas of freehold black property ownership, such as Sophiatown, also existed. Increasing numbers of Africans were migrating permanently to the towns. These pressures led to the establishment of the Stallard Commission, whose recommendations were adopted in the Urban Areas Act of 1923 (Worden 1994:42-43). This empowered municipalities throughout the country to enforce residential segregation. It also prohibited the further granting of freehold property rights to Africans, because they were not permanent urban residents. Any permanent African presence in the towns was deemed undesirable and they were only permitted within municipal areas in so far and for as long as their presence were demanded. Black freehold ownership remained in Sophiatown and Newclare in Johannesburg, while they were removed to a new location in Brakpan in 1927 (Sapire 1989; Worden 1994:44). Forced removal could not legally take place unless alternative accommodation had been provided, which had large cost implications.

Johannesburg was a more complex urban society than Kimberley and grew into a city of over a quarter of a million people by 1914. By then the Rand accounted for forty percent of the worlds gold production and a capital investment of £125 million (Van Onselen 1982:2; Worden 1994:30-40). Pass law controls were introduced in 1896 and controls were used to minimise labour mobility and to

prevent desertion. Racial division of labour was maintained, because the mine owners could not afford to pay the subsistence cost of a fully proletarianised permanent labour force.

2.2 Historical development of informal township settlements in Johannesburg from 1886 to 1947

In less than thirty years, a republic founded on a modest agricultural economy was transformed into a colony boasting the world's largest and most technologically sophisticated gold-mining industry. This transition was overseen by four different governments, punctuated by an attempted coup, and completely halted by a war lasting two and a half years.

In 1886 when gold was discovered on the Rand, the new industry produced only 0,16 percent of the world's gold output. By 1898 it produced no less than 27 percent of the world's gold and by 1913 the Witwatersrand mining colossus produced no less than 40 percent of the world's gold output. Within 10 years of finding the first gold nuggets in 1886, the original camp population of 3000 grew to over 100000 people. By this time almost 60000 Africans were employed on the mines and the gold output was worth £20 million a year (Bonner and Segal 1998:11). Both blacks and whites arrived in search of short-term financial rewards. The social life reflected the temporary character of the population. Virtually the entire population of male miners lived first in tents and then in crude corrugated iron structures. It was only in the early 1900s that Johannesburg acquired a more stable and settled character. This happened after it became clear that there were large reserves of gold deep underground. Capital investment grew to £75 million in 1899 and £125 million by 1914 (Richardson and Van Helton 1980:18-19). It was on gold that Johannesburg was built and developed.

The Transvaal transferred its economic weight from agriculture to industrial production over a short period of 30 years. The Witwatersrand over a length of 65km along the line of the reef, from Springs in the east to Krugersdorp in the west, caused an urban sponge of mining compounds and towns. Urbanisation had to absorb the ever-increasing numbers of black and white miners who made their way to the new goldfields. Almost exactly half-way along the line of reef outcrop lay the social, political and economic nerve centre of the new order, Johannesburg (Van Onselen 1882:2). Initially all settlements were of an informal nature, because of the uncertain lifespan of the gold industry.

According to Van Onselen (1882:2) the tented diggers' camp of the 1880s soon gave way to the corrugated iron structures of the mining town of the mid-nineties. This developed into more substantial brick buildings of the industrial city with suburban homes during the first decade of the twentieth century (Van Onselen 1882:2). By 1896 the 3000 diggers of the original mining camp were lost in a town of 100000 residents. By 1914 these 100000 were in turn becoming harder to find in a city with over a quarter of a million inhabitants. The inexorable pressure exerted by people, houses, shops, offices and factories pushed back the municipal boundaries from 5 square miles in 1898, to 9 square miles in 1901, and to 82 square miles in 1903.

Johannesburg was rocked by class conflict during this period ranging from white workers against black, skilled miners against the mine owners and the landlords against the state (Van Onselen 1882:2). These turbulent events, the city's cosmopolitan immigrant population and the all-consuming worship of wealth, prompted the visiting Australian journalist in 1910 to comment that "Ancient Nineveh and Babylon have been revived. Johannesburg is their twentieth-century prototype. It is a city of unbridled squander and unfathomable squalor" (Pratt 1913:166; Van Onselen 1882:2).

Johannesburg's early growth was marked by significant uneven development. Johannesburg's immigrant miners were for many years reluctant to commit their wives and children to a settled life on the Witwatersrand. The expense and difficulty of getting to the Transvaal, before the rail link with the Cape was established in January 1893, also meant that early Johannesburg was largely devoid of working-class family life. The skilled white miners from England took up residence in numerous boarding-houses, while the unskilled black workers were pushed into the repressive conformity of the mine compounds (Van Onselen 1882:5-7). The large majority of the Rand's boarding houses were located either on the mining property or in Jeppe in the East and Fordsburg in the west. The mine compounds for black workers were situated on mining property without exception. Most working-class accommodation extended along the east-west axis of the Witwatersrand. Most workers lived as close as possible to the point of production, with the shortest distance between the place of residence and the place of work.

Black miners entered into short-term labour contracts of between 6 and 18 months. They left their wives and families behind in the rural areas while they worked underground. Life on the mines was tough for black labourers, while they lived on the mining property in tightly controlled single-sex barracks. Migrant labourers were forced to carry an identity document, which detailed their work contracts and enabled the authorities to exert control over their movements (Bonner and Segal 1998:11).

African labourers also worked as domestic workers, shop workers, engineering labourers, brick makers and washer men as Johannesburg grew. Most of the employers had neither the resources nor the interest to house their staff. The workers were forced to seek their own accommodation in one of the three locations provided for the Africans, Indians and Muslims near the city centre by the Kruger government in the late 1890s (Bonner and Segal 1998:12). Others were moved to inner-city areas where rows of crude structures were erected in

yards or along the perimeter of a factory that was rented by the landlords who were intent on making money.

Prostitution and drinking grew out of the male culture that was rooted in the boarding-houses and the mine compounds. This also helped to shape the limited economic opportunities which existed outside the mining industry (Van Onselen 1882:7).

Evicted from the white farms and driven out of over-crowded and drought-stricken reserves, thousands of Africans had moved into the cities by 1939. However, those hoping for a better life were soon disappointed. For the majority conditions in the urban slum yards were as poor as they had been in the countryside. Out of the seemingly hopeless situation rose the spirit of resistance which culminated in the Soweto riots (Oakes 1989:354). A belt of slums sprang up from the east to the west across central Johannesburg (Oakes 1989:355).

With the exception of a few mining and industrial areas that developed at a later stage, the broad pattern of black urbanisation had been laid as early as 1904. The foundations of a permanent black urban population were also laid by 1947 (Mears 1997:606). Since then, urban growth was partially the result of rural-urban migration, but mainly a consequence of the natural rate of population growth in these areas.

The Anglo-Boer War broke out in 1899 between the Boers of the Transvaal and the British colonialists who were intent on gaining control of the newly found gold wealth of the Rand. This severely disrupted gold production until 1902 when the British administration took direct control over the Transvaal and its mines (Bonner and Segal 1998:12).

Johannesburg's population grew rapidly after the Anglo-Boer War. An estimated 10000 poor white Afrikaners immigrated from their farms, which had virtually

been laid waste by the "scorched earth policy" of the British during the war. Poor blacks also arrived in increasing numbers to escape poverty and shortages in the rural areas. Both black and white immigrants took up residence in the increasingly crowded and squalid inner city slums. Although conditions were often unfit for human habitation, slumlords charged high rentals for rooms which were usually simple sub-divisions of old sheds, stores, workshops or outbuildings (Bonner and Segal 1998:12).

The First World War brought a wave of industrialisation and with it the need for African labour. Pimville was the only existing location, but was ten miles from the centre of Johannesburg. A definite need existed for another location a little more conveniently cited. The Western Native Township with accommodation for some three thousand families was built. A tall iron fence was erected all around it. This meant that Sophiatown was situated in an area where the non-Europeans were in the majority. Tobiansky, who developed and named the town after his wife Sophia, started selling his land to Africans, Coloureds and Asiatics. Under one of President Kruger's laws he was perfectly safeguarded for doing so. When Tobiansky sold freehold properties to Africans, he was in fact establishing a unique situation by creating a non-white suburb in Johannesburg (Huddlestone 1956:119-120).

As Johannesburg expanded, so did its need for African labour. Apart from the squalid slums in Vrededorp and the distant corrugated-iron location in Pimville, there was nowhere for the people to live except the Western Native Township and the suburbs of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare, which surrounded it. By 1920 it had become obvious that this area belonged by right of possession to the non-Europeans of Johannesburg. Sophiatown had matured and had an atmosphere and character of its own (Huddlestone 1956:120-121).

During the war years (1939-1945) the construction of new houses for Africans almost came to a halt, with only 750 units built in 1941 and 1942 and none in

1943 and 1944. Faced with a major housing crisis, the Johannesburg City Council began to issue more and more permits to allow households to take in sub-tenants. This pushed more people into Pimville which had only 63 water taps for more than 15000 people. In March 1944 thousands of Africans moved out of their overcrowded hovels and began setting up homes on any vacant piece of land (Oakes 1989:356). Squatting had become a means of survival and some settlements became a no-go area for white officialdom. It was cheaper than council-built dwellings and nearer to places of employment (Oakes 1989:357). It cut down on transport costs and offered some protection against the many laws aimed at African urban dwellers. The state was far from beaten and by 1950 it had virtually crushed the squatter movements and had pushed them into large housing estates which would later become known as Soweto. Future government policy on urban Africans meant greater control of both housing and labour.

New suburbs for white artisans developed west of Ferreirastown, namely, Brixton, Newlands and Westdene and encircled the non-European area. By 1937 the first sounds of battle were heard, and by 1939 a city councillor demanded the total removal of Sophiatown and all non-European settlements in the Western Areas (Huddlestone 1956:185-186). The total failure of the City Council to build houses fast enough anywhere in Johannesburg to meet the needs of the African labour force combined with the demands made on South Africa by the Second World War, was the main reason why nothing was done. In 1944 the City Council approved in principle the removal of all Africans and Coloureds from the areas surrounded by white suburbs.

3. Historical development of informal township settlements in Johannesburg from 1948 to 1993

When the Malan government was returned to power in 1948 the City Council was ordered to get a move on and to implement its recommendations of 1944. The

removal was never discussed with the people who were going to be removed (Huddlestone 1956:187). During the period 1944 to 1949 the shantytowns emerged and the number of African families without proper homes expanded rapidly. The idea of uprooting 60000 people who had a roof over their heads in Sophiatown was ludicrous in view of the large number of homeless people. These people had to make do with shacks and shanties all around the western perimeter of the city. The basic problem was that white Johannesburg had encroached on black Johannesburg and therefore black Johannesburg had to move on (Huddlestone 1956:186).

Huddlestone was concerned mainly with the hardships caused by Verwoerd's clearance of slums and slum dwellers without provision of substitute accommodation. Although Ernest Oppenheimer could not initially believe that Huddlestone gave a fair reflection of the position, he went to see for himself (Hocking 1973:323). Ernest had to confess on his return home that Huddlestone was right. He was shocked that the Johannesburg City Council had refused to initiate new housing schemes for Africans. The city's African population had grown significantly, with the surplus forced to seek shelter in emergency breeze-block huts or shanties they built themselves from waste materials. The city council was expected to clear the "black spots" in white areas, before it could attend to the problems of the slums (Hocking 1973:323).

Even with government loans at its disposal the city council could only build a maximum of 3000 houses a year. However, 17800 houses were required for the 100000 Africans jammed into the breeze-block shelters at Orlando and the emergency shanty camp at Moroka. Although the government had initiated its own housing scheme, it was inadequate and only catered for Africans driven out of white areas (Hocking 1973:323).

To increase the pace of removals from Johannesburg, Verwoerd instructed the council to concentrate on a new scheme of "site-and-services". The illegal

squatters in the city were moved to "serviced" sites in African locations well out of the way. They were expected to assemble their own shacks until they or the municipality had money to build houses. The services included vacant plots equipped with water taps and closets as their sole amenities (Hocking 1973:324). The council could not even keep pace with the provision of "site-and-services".

Harry Oppenheimer was an opponent of apartheid and attacked Verwoerd in parliament in 1954 to show what the world of business could lose through this policy. He showed that only about a third of the Native population lived in the reserves. The industrial development on which South Africa depended for everything required the co-operation of Black and White. Harry explained that no policy will be successful unless it can carry with it the goodwill of the Native people. *"We cannot have peace and security if the bulk of the people are dissatisfied"* (Hocking 1973:306).

A loan of £3 million was secured by Ernest Oppenheimer from the seven great mining groups in 1956. After many delays this was used to provide decent housing with all reasonable amenities (Hocking 1973:325-326). The shanty town responded to the new activity. Although there were still shacks by the ten thousands in the sprawling slum areas, the sight of so many new houses going up somewhere raised the spirits of the whole community. The difference was immediately apparent with those who moved into new houses. Ernest justified his efforts as "enlightened self-interest".

In 1954 the Natives Resettlement Act gave the state the power to override local municipalities and to forcibly remove Africans to separate townships. One of the first casualties was the African freehold areas of western Johannesburg in Sophiatown, whose inhabitants were relocated to the new township at Soweto in 1955. Most of Soweto was built within a short space of time in the 1950s and early 1960s. Although the area was only given its present name in 1963, the first African township in modern Soweto was established in 1905. Initially called

Klipspruit it subsequently changed to Pimville, the name that the original township of Soweto is known today (Bonner and Segal 1998:10).

Although Sophiatown was a slum housing 70000 instead of 30000, the word slum was grossly misleading according to Huddlestone (1956:121-122). The decision to destroy all the properties built there, and to transplant the whole population to Meadowlands, four miles further away from the city, was taken by people who had no firsthand knowledge of the township. It presented the authorities with a sound native policy of freehold rights and permanence in a living community. Firstly, Sophiatown was not a location, but a suburb in the residential area of Johannesburg (Huddlestone 1956:123-126). It was utterly free from monotony, in its location, in its buildings and in its people. Secondly, the people of Sophiatown made it a community or living organisation which had developed through the years. It was cosmopolitan with an atmosphere which was unique. They lived ordinary lives in extraordinary conditions and were the Christian community in Sophiatown (Huddlestone 1956:134).

The beginning of the end for Sophiatown started on 10 February 1955 (Huddlestone 1956:179-183). On this day the great removal began of 60000 people to Meadowlands. The removal took place 50 years after the first Africans occupied Sophiatown. It was 40 years since Newclare was established and whites were specifically restricted from residing in the Township. By 1920 no one would have questioned the fact that Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare were and always would be black areas. Sophiatown with its 1800 stands cracked at its seams with the growing population (Huddlestone 1956:185).

Informal settlements were strictly controlled during this period, but it increased again after the mid-1980s. Although it was well managed and controlled, the problem of housing was not addressed, but rather suppressed. The pent-up demand for mobility and migration to Johannesburg increased significantly during the late 1980s and during the 1990s. The relaxed management and control led to

the rapid increase of informal settlements, sadly also at cross-roads and along the highways in Gauteng. The policies, forced removal of black people and resettlements are discussed in a case study of Whittlesea in Ciskei (Mears 2005:83-108).

The forced removal of indigenous peoples and temporary sojourner status in the urban areas, with no access to ownership, was the position until the mid-1980s (Royston and Narsoo 2006:3). The change in the 1980s was the result of large resistance in the urban areas. This led to the widespread land invasions fuelled by the increased urbanisation process. The urbanisation process was managed by influx control and by segregation of living areas, particularly for African people. However, as these measures broke down and urbanisation gained momentum, large backlogs emerged in water, sanitation and related services. The large pent-up demand for migration led to informal settlements, which were strictly regulated for most of the period 1948 to 1993.

2.4 Historical development of informal township settlements in Johannesburg from 1994 to the present

"In the current development discourse, land and property relations occupy a central position. For example, Hernando de Soto argues that property title holds the key to making capitalism accessible to the poor" (Royston and Narsoo 2006:3). Moreover, land plays an important role as livelihood assets and has both a use and exchange value. The simple solution accepts capitalism as the status quo and makes the residential market more functional, simply by legalising the informal or extra-legal processes that already exist (Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006:11). The human settlement policy process in South Africa, "breaking new ground" is the government's comprehensive new plan for sustainable settlements (Department of Housing 2004). After winning the 2010 World Cup bid, the transformation of all informal settlements visible to international visitors along main roads from airports were also considered (Mbeki 2004;

Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006:45). Although this was not adopted in the final programme, it informed the development concept of the N2 Gateway project in Cape Town.

Access to title is a fundamental principle of the national housing policy. However, a significant proportion of formal and informal housing for low income South Africans has not yet been transferred into the names of the entitled individuals (Royston and Narsoo 2006:5+6). The Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy has not begun to address backyard shacks orcommunal land holding. This is important to understand local tenure arrangements and markets. A thorough understanding of the complex processes involved in land relations and rights is still emerging in South Africa. These processes are often referred to as informal or extra-legal and are only logical within the local context (Royston and Narsoo 2006:7). The BNG plan supports the eradication of informal settlements through in-situ upgrading in desired locations. Where development is not possible or desirable, the households are relocated (Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006:46).

In Johannesburg, 215000 households live in informal settlements and backyard shacks. The City's master plan for housing is coordinated to create opportunities for the homeless by 2009 (Royston and Narsoo 2006:8). Informal settlements are not unique to Johannesburg or sub-Saharan Africa, because local land arrangements and demand far exceed formal market and/or public supply. The national strategy emphasises markets and assets. However, very little is known about the existence of local or informal land markets. For example, the Zandspruit informal settlement consists of the following three areas. A transit camp, which is not to be temporary, of 1200 households, four privately owned pieces of land that house another 3600 households which invaded the land, and an official site and service project of 440 households. This, however, does not include all the inhabitants of Zandspruit 1 to 7, which already accommodated more households than this in 2005 (COURC 2005:56-61).

Like most big South African cities, Johannesburg is a divided city. The poor live largely in the south or on the peripheries of the far north. The middle classes live largely in the suburbs in the centre and the north. The poor are 70 percent black while the affluent are largely white, with 17 percent of the total population. About 20 percent of the population live in abject poverty in shack settlements that lack proper roads, electricity or direct municipal services. Another 40 percent live in inadequate housing, with insufficient municipal services (COURC 2005:16). Although the economic growth in Johannesburg is higher than the national average, unemployment has increased mainly because of the large inflow of the unskilled labour.

Currently the administration of Johannesburg is decentralised into 11 administrative regions. Each region is operationally responsible for the delivery of health, housing, sport and recreation, libraries, social development and other local community-based services (COURC 2005:16). This new structure promises increased public participation and service delivery that reflect the local needs and conditions. The COURC Survey (2005:14) shows that there were more than 130 informal settlements in the Johannesburg metropole in 2005. The total number of households and people living in informal settlements, excluding backyard accommodation, are very difficult to estimate. Consensus seems to gravitate around 150000 households, but figures as high as 220000 are also estimated (City of Johannesburg 2006:33+34). The 2005 provincial housing survey found a large number of locked dwellings, apparently unoccupied by any household. Up to 30 percent of the structures in Johannesburg's informal settlements appear to have no residents in them on a full-time basis. The survey captured 110051 families and 47852 locked structures in 2005. Of the total of 157903 households, 20,1 percent were single households, 7 percent were on the 1996/97 waiting list, 6,9 percent were non-South African and 11,4 percent rented the structures (City of Johannesburg 2006:34). This enables the uncounted poor to be statistically visible. Enumerations and surveying is a powerful means of community mobilisation, creating the space for initiating new savings or other schemes.

Current informal settlement intervention is structured through the capital subsidy scheme of the national housing policy. This entitles low-income households to a standardised serviced plot with free-hold tenure and a core housing structure, in a formalised township layout (Huchzermeyer 2003:591). Through this form of intervention, informally developed settlements are replaced by full standardised townships on cheap tracks of land. This usually involves relocation, which perpetuates the existing structure of the South African city.

Informal, unauthorised or unplanned township settlements are visually characterised by temporary structures, characteristic of shantytowns. However, shanties, shacks or informal housing structures exist also in transit camps and/or serviced sites. Informal settlements refer to the housing structure, settlements resulting from land invasions, settlements with temporary legal rights or transit areas and formally planned and laid out site-and-services schemes (Huchzermeyer 2003:592). The upgrading of these projects is done within an approved Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the municipality. Land rehabilitation is funded only on the basis of sound financial and socio-economic indicators (Department of Housing 2005:7; Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006:49).

2.4.1 Current and long-term strategic perspective on informal township settlements in Johannesburg

Masondo (2006:2) acknowledges that there is a need to address the dysfunctional housing market. New housing opportunities at the lower end of the spectrum nowhere matches the demand. Initiatives in the areas of affordable rental accommodation and in the range of options available between RDP housing and the first tier of the bonded housing are also investigated. Another key challenge facing Johannesburg is to address the spatial form of the city to ensure that new residential areas are established closer to job opportunities and in places that have basic infrastructure. A survey conducted in 2003 shows that

48 percent of Johannesburg's residents spend more than 10 percent of their income on transport cost (Masondo 2006:2).

The housing challenges, both in terms of current backlogs and the ever-emerging demand for new housing for new entrants, make this one of the key concerns for the next five years. The "housing ladder" approach is aimed at arresting the housing challenges of the city. The Johannesburg Social Housing Company (JOSHCO) is overseen by the Housing Department. The City aims to create sustainable settlements where there is a wide range of accommodation that are of good quality. Moreover, the Informal Settlement Programme aims to formalise existing informal settlements through the relevant town planning and land registration process, where possible and appropriate (Masondo 2006:6). The City will reach the target of formalising all informal settlements within the mayor's term of office. Major upgrading in these settlements through the provision of basic services has a clear national commitment

The formalisation of informal settlements means the inclusion of the settlement in a township register and the provision of basic services, such as water and sanitation. The location of each shack or unit will be numbered in a particular street with a name. Each shack or unit will be in a yard that is fenced and each informal settlement must have a clear programme for the removal of waste (Masondo 2006:6). The Basic Services Delivery Programme will strive to eliminate all backlogs in access to basic services over the next five years. It strives to achieve at least 95 percent coverage for water, sanitation and electricity distribution. It will also provide street lighting to at least 60 percent of informal settlements. The City estimates that the number of the poorest of the poor exceeds 200000. Addressing their housing backlogs is the first priority (City of Johannesburg 2006:10).

The City is aware that the provision and delivery of cheaper and better housing, services and settlements will attract increased numbers of immigrants. The

successful implementation of housing development will attract more poor and hopeful households into Johannesburg. Reducing living costs in poor areas also lowers the perceived threshold for entry. This can result in a greater number of lees-educated migrants and the unemployed deciding to move to Johannesburg (City of Johannesburg 2006:23+33). Although informal settlements have been contained in most parts of the City, they continue to expand and densify in other parts. In addition, there are also inner-city slums and pressure on older residential accommodation in high-rise apartment blocks. The City is obliged to cater for the housing needs of the residents who want to locate to the inner-city (City of Johannesburg 2006:34).

Social inclusion and tenure security cannot be achieved without affordability. Solutions that are not affordable to beneficiaries in the long-run will lead to their displacement to housing areas that impose fewer costs, usually in new or remaining informal settlements (UN-Habitat 2001; Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006:54+55). Internationally, tenure security is considered central in strategies to alleviate poverty. The new Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme prevents exclusion in the procedure that allocates project benefits to residents. It enables all existing residents to benefit from an upgrading project irrespective of whether they qualify for the household-linked capital subsidy under the Housing Subsidy Scheme. The municipality receives a grant for the land registration and upgrading intervention. The new community-based or area-based subsidy mechanism for land and infrastructure is central to achieving tenure security and does not apply qualification criteria. Vulnerability is addressed through initial or immediate provision of interim engineering services, later to be upgraded to permanent services.

3 Summary of the main findings and tentative conclusions

Informal settlements are products of failed policies, ineffective governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, exclusionary urban economic development,

poor urban management strategies, dysfunctional and inequitable land markets, discriminatory financial systems and/or a profound democratic failure. The development of informal township settlements in Johannesburg has been poorly managed and influenced by politics in one or more of these ways since the discovery of gold in 1886. Only the Current Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme, discussed in Section 2.4.1, has an economic development perspective, but only time can tell if it will succeed.

Initially all settlements were of an informal nature reflecting the social life and temporary character of the population. Johannesburg's early growth was marked by uneven development. The rail link with the Cape in 1893 meant that more women could come to Johannesburg. However, it was only around 1914 that Johannesburg acquired a more stable and settled character. This happened when it became clear that there were large reserves of gold deep underground.

The mobility and migration to Johannesburg was so large that the provision of housing could not satisfy the demand at any stage in its history. A belt of informal settlements or slums sprang up from the east to the west across the Rand. With the exception of a few mining and industrial areas, that developed at a later stage, the broad pattern of black urbanisation had been laid by 1904. The foundations of a permanent black urban population were also laid by 1947. Since then, urban growth was partially the result of rural-urban migration, but mainly a consequence of the natural rate of population growth in these areas.

As Johannesburg expanded, so did its need for African labour. The total failure of the City to build houses fast enough anywhere in Johannesburg to meet the needs of the African labour force, led to informal settlements. Moreover, in 1944 the City Council approved in principle the removal of all Africans and Coloureds from white areas. The basic problem was that white Johannesburg had encroached on black Johannesburg and therefore black Johannesburg had to move on.

During the period 1948 to 1993 the control and management of the informal settlement problem was much stricter. The backlog in the supply of houses caused the government to build many new houses in Soweto, including site-and-services. The private sector even assisted with loans. In 1954 the Natives Resettlement Act gave the state the power to override the local municipalities and to forcefully move Africans to separate townships. Even Sophiatown, the non-white suburb of Johannesburg where Africans had legal free-hold property rights, was moved by force in 1955. The forced removal of the indigenous peoples and temporary sojourner status in the urban areas, with no access to ownership, was the situation until the mid-1980s. The large resistance to this situation in the 1980s led to widespread land invasions, fuelled by the increased urbanisation process. The large pent-up demand for migration led to new informal settlements, which were strictly regulated for most of the period 1948 to 1993.

After repeating many of the mistakes of the previous government between 1994 and 2004, the "Breaking the Ground" (BNG) is the comprehensive new plan for sustainable settlements. In this plan land and property title play an important role as livelihood assets and to make capitalism accessible to the poor. The BNG plan supports the eradication of informal settlements through in-situ upgrading in desired locations. The households are removed only where development is not possible or desirable.

In Johannesburg, 215000 households lived in informal settlements and backyard shacks in 2005. The City's master plan for housing aims to create opportunities for the homeless by 2009. Estimates of the number of households living in informal settlements vary between 150000 and 220000, but are very difficult to estimate. The 2005 provincial housing survey found that up to 30 percent of these structures were locked dwellings, which appeared to have no residents in them on a full-time basis. The upgrading of the informal settlements is done

within an approved Integrated Development Plan. For the first time in Johannesburg's history it is accepted that mobility and migration is a natural process that cannot be controlled through restrictions. The City is aware that the provision of better delivery of cheaper and better housing, services and settlements will attract increased numbers of migrants. This economic development perspective on informal settlements is the best policy to date. This economic development plan has the best chance of success, but only time will tell how successful it will be.

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