Struggling for the ‘right to the city’:
*In situ* informal settlement upgrading in Kibera, Nairobi

by

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Abstract

The government of Kenya has implemented a ‘slum upgrading’ pilot project in the informal settlement of Kibera through the Kenyan Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) with the aim of improving the livelihoods of residents through upgrading housing structures, securing tenure, and providing infrastructure to increase access for service delivery. However, KENSUP’s project provides an altered version of in situ informal settlement upgrading that involves ‘replacing’ housing structures by building new apartment complexes instead of upgrading existing structures. This fails to address the limited employment opportunities available, access to capital, or social mobility of residents. Using data acquired through policy analysis and interviews with people connected to the project, this paper analyzes the impact of the project on factors that are important to residents’ struggle for a right to the city so that lessons can be learned about what strategies are harmful or successful towards achieving the goal of in situ upgrading initiatives.
# Acknowledgments

I have many people to thank for their help, support and participation throughout this research process. I would first like to thank my research participants for their invaluable contributions and for sharing their rich and interesting perspectives and experiences with me; their voices drove this project. I would also like to thank professor Obudho and professor Jonyo at Nairobi University for their supervision during my fieldwork and their helpful input with my thesis proposal. I am grateful for Fred Ochieng’s help with translating interviews, and also Kevin and Michael for their help with both translating and organizing interviews. I also have to thank Andrew and Leonora Obara for their continued support and assistance throughout this project; my fieldwork would not have been possible without them.

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Another big thank you goes to my family and friends for at least pretending to be interested in my project these past 2 years. Special thanks go to Kayla Cuggy for all the time she spent editing my work.

Finally, I hope that the residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village are able to progress in their struggle for the right to the city, and that my research showcases their voices and experiences and in some way helps advocate for their plight.
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFD – French Agency for Development

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

EIU – Economist Intelligence Unit

ID – Identification

KENSUP – Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

NHC – National Housing Corporation

SEC – Settlement Executive Committee

SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency

UN – United Nations

UN-HABITAT – United Nations Human Settlements Programme

WB – World Bank
Introduction

The poor living conditions, infrastructure and access to basic services for residents of many informal settlements around the world are increasingly recognized and problematized. However, many strategies designed by various governments, organizations and international agencies to address the proliferation of informal settlements have been more harmful than helpful for the residents they are supposed to benefit. Many context-specific factors must be considered when developing strategies aimed at improving the lives and livelihoods of residents of informal settlements. The challenges and failures stemming from the implementation of these strategies speak to their appropriateness in particular contexts and offer broader lessons that can inform interventions with similar objectives in the future and present.

Larger problem:

Nearly 1 billion people in the world are estimated to be living in ‘slums’ or informal settlements.¹ With so many citizens dispossessed and marginalized in urban areas, many have no choice but to find informal housing solutions that limit residents’ access to public space and services, which negatively affects their quality of life. The urban space that is available to the poor is becoming increasingly closed off with the rise of gentrification and economically competitive land and housing markets within city centers. This thesis asserts that capitalism, through the process of urbanization, destroys the notion of the city as a space for urban commons (a social, political and livable space that can be used by all citizens).² In this way, understanding the creative destruction of capitalism will help expose the underlying causes for the proliferation of informal settlements, and identify ways to appropriately address them.

Historically, states have often addressed informal settlements or ‘slums’ through eradication or elimination, thereby violating the human rights of residents occupying those ‘informal’ spaces; unfortunately this trend has persisted into the present. The eradication of informal settlements is increasingly being perceived as an unacceptable government response in reaction to increasing resistances from residents and other human rights advocates and allies; however, the struggle to implement policy approaches that address the underlying causes for the growth of informal settlements (as opposed to just treating symptoms) remains a challenge. In response to these circumstances, there is increasing support in the field of urban planning for informal settlement upgrading initiatives that seek to upgrade existing informal settlements by facilitating access to public services and infrastructure that did not previously exist. ‘Slum upgrading’ strategies have developed from a global urban initiative aimed at addressing informal settlements and are increasing in popularity among international development agencies.³ The government of Kenya’s adoption of ‘slum upgrading’ policy demonstrates the increasing popularity of such policies. The government created the Kenyan Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) to carry out these upgrading initiatives in various cities across the country.

KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera was to be implemented by the Ministry of Housing and local authorities,⁴ initially in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT).⁵ A memorandum of understanding between the government of Kenya and the UN-HABITAT was signed in 2003, but KENSUP was officially launched on October 4th, 2004.⁶ The government of Kenya has acknowledged the need to support pro-poor initiatives as a way of

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⁴ Such as the Nairobi County Government (formerly known as the Nairobi City Council).
addressing the poverty and inequality experienced by 60-80% of Kenya’s urban population residing in informal settlements.\(^7\)

**Context of Nairobi:**

The state and residents of informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya share a hostile history. This tension is currently fuelled by Nairobi’s competitive land and housing market, the city’s dense population of over 3.915 million citizens, and Kenya’s immense unemployment rate of roughly 40 percent.\(^8\) Nairobi has experienced uneven spatial development since the colonial era, creating methods of social exclusion of the urban poor (and residents of informal settlements) that continue to be generated through urban design and land-use decisions. These urban planning decisions ostensibly cater to economically competitive markets and industries as well as middle and upper class citizens.\(^9\) Nairobi demonstrates a grossly unequal distribution of land with roughly half the population living on 18 percent of land in the area.\(^10\) British colonial administrators employed a strategy of unequally distributing land to particular elite groups; this segregation continues to perpetuate the socio-economic inequalities that exist in Nairobi today. The history behind this social exclusion provides insight into the persistence of Nairobi’s marginalized citizens residing in informal settlements on the periphery of the city center.\(^11\)

\(^7\) Ibid, 10.
\(^11\) Makachia, “Evolution of urban housing strategies,” 222.
Moreover, recent policy responses to the uneven spatial development of land have been insubstantial due to the limited amount of space that is available for non-private sector actors.\textsuperscript{12}

Nairobi’s transformation into the Western capitalist market system continues to affect its land and urban management.\textsuperscript{13} The state has increasingly put the responsibility for infrastructure investment and service provision into the hands of private interests with the expansion of capitalist urbanization.\textsuperscript{14} When it comes to urban land and housing, the relationship between the state, politicians, and those with an interest in producing housing for subsequent rental has been clientelistic in nature, benefitting those with power and position rather than serving the interests and basic needs of all citizens.\textsuperscript{15} Since resources are scarce, there are exclusive criteria attached to their allocation.\textsuperscript{16} In this way, the top-down approach to planning processes and policy making in Nairobi does not mobilize around serving the needs of either the majority of citizens or the marginalized/ poorer segments of the population.\textsuperscript{17} Because Nairobi’s historical legacy of policy and planning processes are exclusionary and favour patronage and rent-seeking over progressive public policy, the urban policies and plans developed often operate at the expense of gender, equity, sustainability and poverty concerns.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{13} Bob Hendriks, \textit{Urban Livelihoods, Institutions and Inclusive Governance in Nairobi: ‘Spaces’ and their Impacts on Quality of Life, Influence and Political Rights}, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 73.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 172. While it should be imperative to provide affordable housing to those who cannot afford it,\textsuperscript{[1]} the construction of housing is often based on profit (ie. in informal settlements housing construction for subsequent rental) rather than meeting basic vital needs.\textsuperscript{[2]} [1] Kenna, “Globalization and Housing Rights”, 460.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 3.
Residents occupying informal settlements in Nairobi often pay significantly high levels of rent to capitalist landlords. In this way, residents cannot simply occupy urban space without paying for it. Marie Huzermeyer argues that Nairobi can be considered a ‘tenement city’ - a term associated with rental investment in Europe and the United States when cities were shaped by the profit-making interests of landlords. Private landlords dominate the housing market in Nairobi with rental accommodation being the main form of housing. This situation has arisen outside of Nairobi’s urban planning framework with the recognition of opportunities for profiting from the city’s overwhelming housing demand. The spatial polarization between residents based on their socio-economic status is visible with many wealthy citizens residing in western areas and a heavy concentration of disadvantaged residents in the eastern ones. In this eastern residential area, large-scale private rental investment is lucrative and many wealthy investors are able to extract profits from these lower-income households.

Nairobi’s historically unequal distribution of land has become exacerbated by the marketization of land in Kenya. Increasing urban competitiveness and land’s intense commodification severely limit the space that is currently available to the urban poor in Nairobi. This makes securing tenure in urban areas difficult, particularly on good quality land where there is access to the city centre and public services. The privatization of land in Kenya has led to social exclusion for a marginalized segment of the population (often residing in informal settlements) resulting in inadequate access to housing, services, employment, security, and decision making power. In response to these struggles faced by residents of Nairobi’s informal

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20 Ibid, 714.
21 Ibid, 719.
22 Ibid, 729.
23 Ibid, 715.
settlements, the Kenyan government’s KENSUP aims to improve the livelihoods of residents through upgrading housing structures, securing tenure, and providing infrastructure to increase access for service delivery. However, the implementation of the government’s pilot project has demonstrated the difficulty of creating a policy solution that appropriately addresses the underlying causes of poverty within the city. The practice of translating this type of generalized policy into a local reality is challenging as different nuances, ideological imperatives, and regional contexts make it difficult to create successful informal settlement initiatives that can be replicated in other settlements, cities and countries.

Understanding upgrading:

Despite the popularity of informal settlement upgrading strategies, the way they are interpreted can differ significantly due to a variety of factors. The goal of in situ informal settlement upgrading policy is to “leave as many structures as possible in their original position, provide formal rights to the occupants of the land, introduce infrastructure and services with minimal disruption, and provide support for the gradual transformation of ‘shacks’ into more durable housing.”24 Thus, this upgrading strategy seeks to respect the human and citizens’ rights of residents of informal settlements by enabling access to public services, securing tenure and improving the living conditions of this often marginalized demographic. However, in the UN-HABITAT’s 2008 strategic document outlining its partnership with KENSUP, the Government of Kenya’s objectives are stated as “to improve the livelihoods of people living and working in slums and informal settlements in the urban areas of Kenya through provision of security of tenure, housing improvement, income generation and physical and social infrastructure” which

24 Ibid, 133.
excludes the issue of the relocation and displacement of residents. The semantic differences between these definitions of informal settlement upgrading are noteworthy: KENSUP’s definition leaves room for the possibility of residents becoming dispossessed from their homes and communities. This negative outcome actively works against the primary goal of \textit{in situ} informal settlement upgrading strategy as it is intended to be implemented and distorts its objectives to accommodate their plans involving the relocation and redevelopment of existing informal settlement communities. In turn, the expectations that accompany upgrading strategies as they are applied in various places around the world become misleading since they are framed by the same ideological assumptions.

Although approaches at informal settlement upgrading are increasing in popularity in African cities, they are also being distorted from what they are intended to achieve. Marie Huchzermeyer identifies a struggle over the definition of ‘slum upgrading’ by highlighting government policies in different African cities that are contradictory to \textit{in situ} informal settlement upgrading initiatives. For instance, the ‘Cities Without Slums’ slogan propagated by Cities Alliance implies the eradication or elimination of informal settlements while the actual policy is intended to promote upgrading them. According to Huchzermeyer, KENSUP’s pilot project translates upgrading into redevelopment through its construction of attractive multi-

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[26] These distortions are partly due to the influence of neoliberal approaches to service delivery and financing; they emphasize pro-growth strategies that assume wealth will trickle-down to the poor. Jennifer Robinson, “Developing Ordinary Cities: City Visioning Processes in Durban and Johannesburg,” \textit{Environment and Planning} 40 (2008): 77.
\item[27] Huchzermeyer, \textit{Cities With ‘Slums’}, 59.
\item[28] Ibid, 38. Cities Alliance is a liberal multilateral organisation that receives funding from the World Bank, UN-HABITAT, and other UN member countries. One of the Cities Alliance targets was to “improve the lives of one-tenth of the global ‘slum’ population of the year 2000 over the subsequent 20 years” while promoting the slogan ‘Cities Without Slums’ into the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Seven Target 11. The slogan contributes to the increasingly global vision of ‘slum free’ cities, which leads to a wide range of strategies and approaches to addressing informal settlements [Ibid, 1].
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storey buildings which cause significant disruptions to residents. Conceptually, it is clear that whatever housing existed in Kibera’s Soweto-East village before the project began is not being ‘upgraded’, but rather demolished in order to replace them with completely new and putatively “modern” constructions. My fieldwork explores how KENSUP’s narrow focus on providing affordable housing neglects several key causal factors for the proliferation of informal settlements; namely, land commodification, land distribution, access to capital, decent employment and access to public services. Although housing may be provided to residents at a low cost, there are other barriers affecting their livelihoods and socio-economic status’ that are not addressed through this particular upgrading model. My research examines the exclusion of some residents from the project, the risk of the exclusion of others in the future, and the project’s impact on the social, economic and political circumstances of the people it is intended to benefit. Initially this project received a lot of global attention and garnered the support of large international agencies. However, years after the project’s implementation and the break-down of partnerships and funding streams, there are questions being raised about the government’s long term commitment to the project and the reasons for its adoption in the first place.

Why Kibera?

Kibera is Nairobi’s largest informal settlement with hundreds of thousands of residents inhabiting the government-owned land approximately 5 kilometers from the city center. As a result of Kibera’s international recognition for its adverse living conditions and dense population, it was selected for KENSUP’s ambitious ‘slum upgrading’ pilot project. KENSUP,

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29 Ibid, 141.
30 Accessing the population of Kibera is highly contested; according to the Kenya Population and Housing census of 2009, there are approximately 170,070 residents, whereas other sources claim that there are up to 1.5 million residents. “Map Kibera Project – Map and Statistics,” accessed August 23, 2015, http://mapkiberaproject.yolasite.com/maps-and-statistics.php
initially in partnership with the UN-HABITAT, decided to focus their upgrading strategy on housing, thereby electing to develop new vertical apartment-style housing structures within one of Kibera’s 12 villages: the Soweto-East community. The village was divided into 4 zones (A, B, C and D) so that the project could be carried out in various phases; the construction of these housing units would require the temporary relocation of residents (starting with Zone A) to a decanting site on donated land in a nearby area called Lang’ata where vertical housing structures were built for residents to occupy while this redevelopment was being undertaken. At the decanting site, residents are expected to pay a monthly fee as rent as well as additional fees for amenities such as electricity. Simultaneously, they are encouraged to save for the down-payment on the new housing units being constructed. Residents are to eventually purchase these new units from the government of Kenya through membership in a housing cooperative formed by residents in the community. Tenants of the new housing structures will be paying rent to the Ministry of Housing through the housing cooperative. In this way, the government is essentially selling its ownership of the land to the community-led housing cooperative. In the initial design phase, the costs attributed to the new units ranged from Kshs. 450,000/ to Kshs. 900,000/ per unit. However, these costs did not consider the change in cost over time as there were increases in building costs and land prices due to construction being delayed by several years.

The implementation of the project is ongoing and has experienced several prolonged delays due to conflicts with stakeholders, funding/ resource issues, and legal battles. In fact, residents of Soweto-East’s Zone A have been living in the temporary apartment units for over 4

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31 Interview with member of the housing cooperative board in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.
32 450,000 ksh = approximately $4883 USD and 900,000 ksh = approximately $8767 USD.
33 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 20, 2014.
34 One of the delays was due to a court injunction against the government that was pursued by structure owners in the community who were unhappy with the project and the poor compensation they received; this legal process stalled the project for 2 years.
years. As a result, many residents have found it difficult to save for the down-payment for the new housing structures while simultaneously paying rent and building debt at the Lang’ata decanting site.

Several committees were established within Kibera’s Soweto-East community to encourage a bottom-up and participatory implementation process. The Settlement Executive Committee (SEC) was set-up as a middle-man between government officials working for KENSUP and residents of the community. More recently, a vetting committee was created to decide which intended beneficiaries of the project would be selected to occupy Zone A’s new housing units as they become move-in ready. My fieldwork suggests that the selection process for deciding which project beneficiaries should be the first to move into the new housing structures is being based on residents’ financial ability and stability. This runs in contrast to the objectives of the initiative as it implies that some residents will be excluded from the project if they cannot afford to pay for the down-payment on the new housing units.

Kibera’s Soweto-East village covers an area of 21.3 ha., and a population of approximately 19,318 people.\textsuperscript{35} Residents of Kibera rely heavily on their engagement with the city’s informal economic sector, particularly buying and selling goods in local markets. The cost of food and the cost of housing is considerably cheaper within Kibera in comparison to the rest of Nairobi; the community’s affordability demonstrates that residents’ connection to place is important to their livelihoods. Many residents depend on their connections to social networks within the community where there are established markets that include a customer base and

As Kibera’s Soweto-East village is not that far from city center and is next to a major highway with access to Nairobi’s public transit system, many residents are able to commute to the city center to pursue economic opportunities. However, the temporary relocation of residents to the decanting site in Lang’ata has disrupted these established social and economic networks and has left many residents in a worse economic position than before the project’s implementation. Residents are eager for the new housing structures to be move-in ready as many hope to be able to pick up where they left off with their businesses and income-earning activities. According to the design plans of the new housing units, the ground floor of the apartment buildings will be devoted to residents’ income-generating activities by allowing space for peoples’ small businesses. However, the fact that the majority of residents earn their livelihoods this way suggests it will be difficult to accommodate everyone who wants access to that market space.

**Theory:**

This research project considers the political economy of informal settlements from a Marxist perspective. The project explores the way in which the commodification and privatization of land has led to social exclusion from the dominant system for a marginalized segment of the population resulting in inadequate access to housing, services, employment, security, and decision-making power. Within Nairobi there has been what David Harvey refers to as ‘accumulation by dispossession’ of public resources, where wealth and power are increasingly

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36 I am invoking the term social networks to refer to the social and economic connections and relationships that residents rely on within the Soweto-East community to facilitate their small businesses and to purchase goods at affordable prices. Although I observed these networks while conducting my fieldwork, I did not collect any specific empirical information on them during my interviews.

37 Matatus are large vans used as public transit that seat 12 people; larger buses are also used.
consolidated into the hands of a few through private interests. In this way, land can be enclosed and those occupying it can be expelled, further enabling capital accumulation and the profitability of privatization. This enclosure has led to an unequal distribution of resources as well as exclusionary access to social goods and urban public spaces. The theoretical framework of this research project considers how Marx’s notion of the ‘primitive accumulation’ of land is applicable to informal settlements. The privatization of property and of land means profit for the capitalist class at the expense of those who are dispossessed by accumulation. As Harvey highlights, assets that were formerly held by the state or ‘in common’ have been released to the market with the widespread ‘enclosure of the commons’ that stems from privatization and liberalization of the market so that overaccumulating capital can claim them. Land is a fabricated form of capital where its value is determined based on expectations of future rents with its private property use. The property rights of land-use are able to increase in value so that lower income households are no longer able to afford them. This has negative consequences for class inequalities and disparities and for marginalized groups in society. Slum upgrading’ strategies can become manifestations of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ through their unintended experiences of displacement and gentrification within informal settlements where access to capital is limited for marginalized residents.

It is understood among many Marxist theorists that gentrification is a process driven by the dynamics of capital accumulation. In this way, if there is potential for landowners and businesses to make more profit in a particular area, neighbourhoods are at risk of becoming

39 Ibid, 149.
40 Ibid, 149.
41 Ibid, 158.
43 Ibid, 28.
44 Ibid, 28.
Gentrification is typically evidenced by local residents being replaced by new residents who have higher incomes and are therefore able to pay more to occupy the space and consume more from businesses in the area. According to Smith, gentrification takes place when capital moves into urban spaces that were previously disinvested. The attraction of new productive capital leads to a restructuring of urban space according to the needs of capital. Eventually, this contributes to a ‘back to the city’ movement of capital which targets middle and upper class people while other citizens are pushed towards the periphery of the city. As a result, landowners are able to charge higher levels of rent for the use of the property that is on their land in order to extract a greater profit. If residents cannot afford to remain in the settlement after upgrading occurs, then they have been ‘dispossessed’ from the land they were previously occupying at the expense of growing profitable opportunities in the area. This research project will explore how KENSUP’s housing project manifests a pattern of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ through its inability to avoid displacing residents and by provoking the possibility of gentrification occurring in the future.

Drawing on David Harvey’s work on the city and capital accumulation, this research project explores how capitalist urbanization destroys the notion of the city as a space for urban commons (a social, political and livable space that can be used by all citizens) through the process of urbanization. Capitalism depends on the perpetual search for surplus value (profit);
since the urbanization process enables the extraction of surplus, Harvey describes the relationship between capitalism and urbanization as mutually dependent. While capitalism continuously produces the surplus product that urbanization needs to absorb, capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually creates. Left unregulated, capitalism destroys two basic common property resources in urban areas: the labourer and the land. In this way, capitalist urbanization is about the perpetual production of an urban commons and its continuing appropriation and destruction by privatization. As the space that is available to the

53 Surplus value is surplus that is produced from a commodity whose value is greater than the sum of the values used in its production (i.e. the means of production and labour power), which is translated into profit in capitalism [Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy: Volume One*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), 293]. The capitalist is driven by profit-making at the expense of the labourer and without attention paid to use-value [Marx, *Capital*, 293-306]. To illustrate in the context of informal settlements, Marx’s concept of use and exchange values can be applied to land and property in order to make the distinction between the utility of land as profit-making versus the utility of land as a social good. As Marx claims, the use-value represents the utility of a thing, whereas the exchange-value is the fetishized appearance of value. When commodities are exchanged, their exchange-value becomes something that is different from their use-value. Thus, the realised price of a commodity has nothing to do with its actual value. In order to become a commodity, a good is transferred to someone for whom it will serve as a use-value by means of an exchange. Then, the exchange-value of a commodity becomes its value that is realised through a social relation objectified in a commodity at the moment of exchange which it converts into money as its value-form. Since exchange-values are derived from the social manner of expressing the labour bestowed upon a product, a use-value is realized without exchange (the direct relation between a thing and a person). In this way, the use-value of property rights is essential for the satisfaction of basic human needs such as shelter because of their non-commodified utility. In contrast, the exchange-value of property rights is concerned with profit-making since their value is a relative value that can change depending on the societal context. For example, location influences the exchange-value attributed to land and housing; thus, the exchange-value of the commodity (land/housing) is abstracted from its use-value and as a result, something that should be a basic need that can be accessed by all is given a higher value that further alienates marginalized members of the population (i.e. low income groups and residents of informal settlements). For instance, occupying land that is close to an urban center will have a higher value than property located further away from downtown, excluding people who are unable to afford a higher cost of living from the urban centre.

1 Midheme and Moulaert, “Pushing back the Frontiers of Property”, 74.
2 Marx, *Capital*, 126.
7 Ibid, *Capital*, 177.
8 Midheme and Moulaert, “Pushing back the Frontiers of Property,” 74.
10 People who have been divorced from the means of production.
53 Ibid, 5.
54 Ibid, 5.
55 Ibid, 80.
urban poor in Nairobi is severely limited due to increasing urban competitiveness and the intense commodification of land, the drive to claim valuable land near the city center where informal settlements exist has been steadily growing. Since upgrading informal settlements often increases the value of the land and their accessibility to private investment, one must call into question the political and economic motivations behind these government-led initiatives.

The rising popularity of frameworks such as the ‘urban livelihoods approach’ amongst scholars and development practitioners have forced people to recognize the different vulnerabilities that marginalized groups experience in urban centers. Through considering the vulnerabilities that the poor and marginalized often experience in urban areas, one is forced to consider the variety of ways that residents’ livelihoods can be affected by a particular policy or plan. If not approached carefully, addressing one type of vulnerability can negatively affect other vulnerabilities. For instance, poor living environments are considered as vulnerabilities to urban livelihoods. However, if this vulnerability is addressed with a policy that disregards the economic vulnerabilities of residents and their dependence on income-generating activities particular to their living environments, then the urban livelihoods of those citizens have not necessarily improved. It can be counter-productive to narrow in on one area that affects urban livelihoods if it is at the expense of other significant vulnerabilities. For this reason, this project draws on the theory of intersectionality. When it comes to experiences of urban poverty and systemic oppression, issues of race, class and gender intersect; this impacts people differently based on their particular identities and positions in society. For example, through the lens of intersectionality, Leslie McCall argues that while poverty may be on the rise for women, the way

in which all women are affected is not equal. The urban poor experience poverty differently not only based on class relations, but also based on gender and race. If the distinctions and different experiences of people based on their race and gender are not acknowledged, policy responses may address class inequalities for men or for people with a privileged status while neglecting women from subordinate racialized groups. For example, the relocation of residents to a different area may be isolating for women participants in particular as they often shoulder more domestic responsibilities requiring them to stay close to home. Consequently, informal settlement upgrading strategies and any other policies or plans that address poverty should be approached through an intersectional lens, paying attention to the way gender interacts with disparities along class, race and ethnic lines to produce specific kinds and degrees of vulnerability.

Informal settlements generally refer to unauthorized or illegal settlements that emerge as a result of the inadequate provision of affordable housing to the poor or lower income groups. Although income levels are varied among informal settlements, there is an over-representation of poor and very poor residents inhabiting them. It is generally understood that formal housing implies legal guarantees of recognition and security, while informal housing can have de facto recognition or acceptance, or be seen as illegal by the state. However, informality is inconsistently conceptualized. Using Ananya Roy’s definition, informality is described as “a state of deregulation where ownership, use and purpose of land cannot be fixed and mapped

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59 Ibid, 1780.
61 Hansen and Vaa, Reconsidering Informality, 9.
63 Ibid, 9.
according to any prescribed set of regulations or the law.”

The consolidation of neoliberalism has complicated the notion of informality with privatization. As Roy argues, although informality used to be mainly practiced on public land and in public space, it now plays a role in urban planning that is privatized and market-oriented. While informal human settlements in Nairobi dominated by the urban poor have often been demolished and eradicated by the government, middle class citizens have benefited from the state’s tacit acceptance of ‘informality’ when it serves their interest with respect to capital accumulation. This is exemplified in Nairobi by the Buru Buru middle class estate where housing structures were constructed without reference to building bylaws or zoning ordinances. This example demonstrates how informality is accepted by the state when it benefits the state since the reaction of the state to ‘informality’ is different depending on class power and whether or not it leads to economic growth and the creation of infrastructure and services. In contrast, the ‘informality’ encompassed by informal settlements does not typically incur these benefits. The limited access to public services and infrastructure that often contributes to adverse living conditions within informal settlements clearly indicates the need for government support within these spaces. However, residents are forced to negotiate with the state to take responsibility because of the informal and precarious nature of their living circumstances. As Marcello Balbo argues, “a settlement is illegal largely because the state did not provide enough housing or land; nonetheless, its inhabitants have to beg in order to get water and sanitation. Water, electricity or

65 Ibid, 82. Neoliberalism being understood as a theory of political economic practices that believe human well-being can be improved by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills through an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, free markets, and free trade. [David Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism, 2].
66 For instance, the creation of informal subdivisions. Roy, “Why India Cannot Plan its Cities,” 82.
public transport are never acknowledged as a right; they always have to be negotiated with those who hold the right to the city.”

The residents occupying informal settlements have consistently struggled with the right to remain within urban space since it can be denied by the state on the basis of ‘informality’ if a greater profit can be made by displacing them. As a result, there is an insurgence of new forms of citizenship within informal settlements where residents struggle against the state for rights and citizenship, and rights as citizens. Through capitalist urbanization, common urban spaces increasingly become exclusive, limiting access to only those members of society who can pay for it. Henry Lefebvre defines citizenship based on inhabitance as opposed to acquiring or possessing formal citizenship status. Thus, regardless of whether or not the state has awarded people with official recognition of their formal citizenship, those who inhabit the city have a right to the city. Lefebvre’s concept of the right to the city involves both the right to appropriate urban space (i.e. the right to use and access urban space) and the right to meaningful participation (i.e. the right to be involved in decision-making regarding the production of urban space at any scale). In this way, the right to the city applies to the struggle of residents of informal settlements to claim a right to live within the city where there is access to services and infrastructure, and the right to shape the city and public space by participating in decision-making processes. Across the world, there has been a growing “right to the city” social

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70 Roy, “Why India Cannot Plan its Cities”, 83.
73 Fenster, 219.
movements. The right to the city movement can be considered as a resistance to the destructive nature of capitalist urbanization as it showcases oppressed urban residents seeking support and sustenance through demanding a transformation in everyday urban life. Consequently, the right to the city is about making an alternative urban life that is less exclusive and isolating. The question of who gets to make decisions about how everyday urban life is shaped is central to this movement and particularly relevant in the context of KENSUP’s participatory approach to ‘slum upgrading’. 

**Problem:**

Informal settlement upgrading strategies can be applied in contexts where there are underlying ideological assumptions and imperatives that run in contrast to the ostensible objectives of upgrading initiatives. For instance, the ideology driving their implementation can be based on a human rights framework that prioritizes realizing the rights of residents as citizens, or they can be based on a capitalist framework that encourages economic competition and a modern redevelopment of urban living environments. In this way, not all upgrading initiatives necessarily support the same objectives. Generally speaking, in reaction to the way governments

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75 While notions of rights and citizenship are normally discussed within a national context, the ‘right to the city’ discourse engages with them at a smaller, more localized, municipal level. According to Fenster, the city is a more appropriate scale than the state for discussing reconstructions of citizenship and the “different formations of belonging in everyday life.”[1] There are various forms of resistance that citizens collectively engage in that contribute to their struggle for the right to the city. For example, in Nairobi *matatus*, informal bus networks, are the primary (albeit problematic) mode of transportation that link settlements, work places, urban industrial sites and rural surrounding areas in Nairobi.[2] Matatus are a form of resistance in the sense that they fill a gap that has been left by the state (and their resonating ineffective colonial infrastructure)[3], but they also contribute to the city’s insecurity. Because this issue affects the way citizens are able to exercise their use of the city and experience citizenship, it highlights the importance of integrating urban security as part of the physical space in city planning.[4]

76 Harvey, Rebel Cities, xvi (preface).
77 Ibid, x (preface).
78 Ibid, xii (preface).
have addressed informal settlements in the past which have often resulted in human rights violations such as displacement and forcible evictions, the goal of in situ informal settlement upgrading is to promote changing residents’ sense of citizenship by making them into recognized stakeholders in urban life and governance. Thus, this type of upgrading strategy is a reaction to the destructive effects of capitalist urbanization striving to improve the livelihoods of residents and defend their right to claim the land they occupy. However, instead of gradually upgrading existing structures into more durable housing, KENSUP’s slum upgrading pilot in Kibera provides a version of informal settlement upgrading which ‘replaces’ housing structures by building new apartment buildings on the land that was formally occupied by the project’s intended beneficiaries, temporarily displacing them while the new housing units are constructed. In this way, KENSUP’s policy interpretation cannot be considered as in situ. Furthermore, the project’s inability to transform residents’ precarious economic circumstances suggests that its intended beneficiaries may not gain access to these new housing units since they are required to pay a fixed fee to the housing cooperative that was formed in the project’s early stages. My field work suggests that KENSUP’s interpretation of informal settlement upgrading in Kibera’s Soweto-East village is actually increasing economic differentiation among residents and further complicating their struggle to obtain a meaningful right to the city. The purpose of this research project is to analyze the impact of KENSUP’s housing project on factors that are important to residents’ struggle for a right to the city so that lessons can be learned about what strategies have been harmful or successful towards achieving the goal of in situ upgrading initiatives. This requires examining the ideological assumptions and imperatives underlying KENSUP’s decision to implement this project and to have it focus on housing.
Method:

This research project explores the complexity of translating informal settlement upgrading policy into a national, municipal, and local reality using information and data acquired through policy analysis and interviews conducted with residents and community members of Kibera. I focus specifically on Nairobi, Kenya’s informal settlement Kibera as a case study. I have selected Kibera as it has been over 10 years since the implementation of KENSUP’s ‘slum upgrading’ pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, making it particularly relevant for analysing ‘slum upgrading’ policy. Kenya’s colonial history, and the neocolonial influence that international agencies have on the type of policies Kenya adopts, make Nairobi a particularly relevant case study when looking at how capitalist urbanization has led to the uneven spatial development of the city and have impacted the livelihoods of urban residents of informal settlements. However, my analysis will be relevant for other countries besides Kenya, particularly other African cities that have adopted similar approaches and interpretations of ‘slum upgrading.’ Looking at how in situ informal settlement upgrading strategies can contribute to the struggle of residents in claiming a meaningful right to the city will likely have relevance for other cities and states that are driven by urban competitiveness.

I spent 3 months in Nairobi from September to December 2014 conducting fieldwork for this research project. The primary source of data was collected through semi-formal interviews conducted with residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village and various officials involved with the design and implementation of KENSUP’s pilot project in the community. The interviewees were selected through snowball sampling after utilizing contacts on the ground to make the appropriate connections. Although the sample size was small (approximately 20 people), the list of questions were extensive and provided a lot of useful information for an in-depth analysis.
These 20 informants included a full range of stakeholders on this issue. I interviewed residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village who were selected as beneficiaries of KENSUP’s housing project in order to showcase their voices and opinions about how the project has affected them. I also interviewed people responsible for working on the project with KENSUP in order to understand how and why the project was implemented and to balance the opinions expressed by residents. The types of questions that were posed during interviews related to personal backgrounds, descriptions of the project, direct and indirect effects and impacts of the project, and peoples’ perceptions about the rights and citizenship of project beneficiaries.\(^{79}\)

A secondary source of data was derived from policy analysis comparing the UN-HABITAT’s policy recommendations for ‘slum upgrading’ with KENSUP’s policy interpretation. Critical policy analysis as a way to engage in the kind of reflexivity appropriate for generating results that expose exclusion, power differentials, and the social and political structures which exist within the policymaking process. One of the crucial uses of policy analysis is to deconstruct hegemonic policy discourses in order to create policy prescriptions that understand the complexity and context of policy situations.\(^{80}\) This is particularly relevant for Kenya’s ‘slum upgrading’ policy since it is shaped by recommendations made by international organizations targeting a broad audience (such as UN-HABITAT and the World Bank).\(^{81}\) My analysis throughout this research project uses a critical lens in order to address the challenges accompanying ‘cookie-cutter’ approaches to policy-making and to recognize the grounded complexities and realities that make some policy recommendations inappropriate in practice.

\(^{79}\) I have included a list of the questions that were posed during my semi-formal interviews in Appendices 1, 2, and 3.


\(^{81}\) For example, policies that target the general category of ‘developing countries’ by organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
depending on context and location. The process of a critical policy analysis by a non-partial actor should be exercised before the implementation of any kind of upgrading policy as initiatives that affect residents of informal settlements’ lives and livelihoods in such fundamental ways should face very careful scrutiny. Engaging in a critical analysis of these ‘slum upgrading’ approaches helped to promote reflexivity, identify failures, and open up the discussion to search for alternative solutions. The scalar and spatial levels where policies occur are highlighted in order to keep the different global, national and local implications of the implementation of KENSUP’s ‘slum upgrading’ initiative in perspective. Throughout my analysis of KENSUP’s upgrading policy, I consider how the project affects residents’ human rights as well as their rights as citizens.

**Scope and limitations of the study:**

There are inevitably some limitations of using interviews as a primary source of data. For instance, some of the information collected could contain inaccurate information or be clouded by personal biases. Additionally, some interviewees may not have felt comfortable sharing all the relevant information or opinions they possess for fear of repercussions from people working with the project or from fellow community members benefitting from the project. Although I anticipated that gender would be an important part of my analysis as residents of informal settlements often experience the city, work and home life differently based on their gender, the responses to my gender-related questions from interviewees led me to background these

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19 The analyst should not ignore the importance of scale, space and place.
82 Policy relating to urban land and housing in Nairobi, Kenya involves hegemonic forces contributing to shape both existing and former national policy (both colonial and neo-colonial).
questions despite the importance of its consideration to upgrading initiatives. There are also limitations to conducting a critical policy analysis as one does not necessarily receive the whole picture with a policy document since it is often difficult to anticipate how the goals and objectives listed will be applied in practice.

Ultimately, it is important to be realistic about what informal settlement upgrading initiatives are able to achieve; for instance, they are not capable of ending poverty. Although it is acceptable for the goals or objectives of informal settlement upgrading initiatives to be modest, they should in no way be destructive. Despite the fact that the Kenyan government has begun to approach informal settlement upgrading projects through a different model other than housing with the Kenya Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme (KISUP) (most likely in response to resource constraints), it has not necessarily addressed or understood the many variables that caused KENSUP’s housing project to fail in the first place (e.g. its lack of consideration of the limited economic opportunities available to residents).

One of the most important aspects of informal settlement upgrading initiatives is the fact that it represents a shift in perception and policy towards respecting the human rights of residents of informal settlements and their rights as citizens. This goal is not always prioritized appropriately in favour of producing more visible and tangible results, as can be evidenced through the Kenyan government’s approach of a housing redevelopment project instead of upgrading existing structures in Kibera’s Soweto-East village.

In terms of the outline of the remaining chapters, the following chapter will examine and problematize the different interests and motivations guiding the government of Kenya’s decision

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85 In my interviews I asked residents whether they were impacted by the project based on their gender. The gender-related interview questions can be found in Appendix 1, section C: question #5.
86 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
to focus their resources for this ‘slum upgrading’ initiative specifically on housing. Chapter 1 will investigate the project’s complex negotiations of scale due to the different actors involved that were operating at various local, national and supranational levels. Chapter 2 will examine the implications of neglecting to address residents’ access to capital, social networks, and employment opportunities available in order to focus on housing. Chapter 3 will consider the impact KENSUP’s housing project has had on resident views of government accountability, citizenship and human rights, as well as factors important to residents’ struggle for the right to the city. Finally, Chapter 4 will provide recommendations and explore lessons learned from KENSUP’s pilot project that can inform similar approaches to informal settlement upgrading interventions in the present and future.
Chapter 1: Understanding Interests

This chapter seeks to understand the Kenyan government’s reasons and motivations for implementing a ‘slum upgrading’ initiative in Kibera, what the project is intended to accomplish, and what strategies and priorities characterize KENSUP’s approach. This chapter will examine the intrinsic tension that exists between urban planning strategies that promote economic competitiveness versus those that provide social welfare services; I will argue that the project serves both of these interests despite their contradictory natures. This chapter will also explore the UN-HABITAT’s withdrawal from its involvement with KENSUP’s housing project by conducting a brief policy analysis. Finally, I discuss the challenges of scale in this type of project, which requires translating a generalized supranational policy into a national and local reality. Throughout this chapter, I question what drove the decision to have KENSUP’s project focus on housing. I argue that the project was overly ambitious and ultimately unsustainable given the conditions in which it was intended to intervene.

Section 1.1: Understanding motivations and interests

Kibera’s Soweto-East village was selected for KENSUP’s pilot project because land ownership in the area was clear and there was an existent organized community group that would enable community mobilization. Additionally, there were a significant number of resident structure owners (as opposed to absentee landowners) in the community. Experts working with KENSUP believed these qualities would make it possible to obtain community members’ permission and participation with implementing the upgrading project.87 Upon evaluating the challenges and needs of residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, the poor living conditions

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87 Interview with former member of design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 6, 2014.
within the informal settlement became evident to government officials as the shacks and shanties being occupied were directly contributing to poor sanitation, hygiene and quality of life. As such, it is not surprising that the Kenyan government saw the need to address these poor housing conditions - if not on a human rights level, then certainly because the existence of informal settlements works against the beautification efforts of a competitively driven urban centre. However, what is not clear is why KENSUP decided to focus the upgrading project on its housing redevelopments, thereby committing its limited resources to constructing new vertical apartment structures for residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village.

The Ministry of Housing undertook the physical mapping of Kibera in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands which divided Soweto-East village into 4 zones (A, B, C and D) based on data collected regarding the area’s physical characteristics and population. KENSUP then focused on Zone A for the first phase of the housing project. Although the recorded population of Zone A during initial enumeration in 2005 was 6288 residents, only 624 housing units were complete when I visited the site in December 2014. More than 10 years after this project was introduced, there are still not enough housing units to meet the housing demand of the project’s first round of intended beneficiaries. If this pilot project really was intended to be replicated in the rest of Kibera and other informal settlements in Kenya, the issues it has encountered with sustainability and limited resources makes one question the appropriateness of KENSUP’s strategy to focus primarily on housing given the community’s overwhelming need.

88 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, October 13, 2014.
89 Interview with member of Kibera’s Soweto-East village’s housing cooperative board, November 29, 2014.
90 First round of beneficiaries meaning residents selected in Zone A.
The design and redevelopment team's method of determining the affordability of KENSUP’s new housing units in Kibera did not adhere to the factors laid out by the sustainable livelihoods literature. During the design phase, residents expressed to project planners how the affordability of rent is the most critical determinant of their housing options, and that most residents do not live in Kibera by choice but rather due to economic constraints. Relevant to the marginalized circumstances of residents, the sustainable livelihoods literature stresses the importance of considering peoples’ capabilities and livelihoods when approaching development. According to Nussbaum, capabilities are closely related to human rights since they include many of the same entitlements such as political liberties, the freedom of association, the free choice of occupation, and various economic and social rights. As Nussbaum argues, fundamental rights can only be realised if the relevant capabilities to function are present. Thus, in order to secure the right of adequate housing, citizens must be in a position of capability to do so where they are living since rights can exist without being recognized or implemented. Similar to the capabilities approach, the ‘livelihoods approach’ is a comprehensive and complex way to characterize deprivation as it considers various means of securing the necessities of life. According to Hendriks, many studies on urban livelihoods in the past have focused predominately on individual assets while neglecting structural household characteristics (such as

91 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 18, 2014.
92 According to Amartya Sen, capabilities are what people are actually able to do and to be (Nussbaum, 33). International agencies such as the UN have been influenced by Sen’s notion of ‘development of freedom’ which assumes that the goals of development entail a set of freedoms that relate to peoples’ capabilities including political freedoms, freedom of opportunity, and economic protection from abject poverty (Nussbaum, 34). Martha C. Nussbaum, “Capabilities as fundamental entitlements: Sen and social justice,” Feminist Economics 9:2-3 (2003), 36. Sen, Amartya (1999). Development as freedom (1st ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
93 Nussbaum, “Capabilities as fundamental entitlements,” 37.
94 Ibid, 37.
95 Hendriks, Urban Livelihoods, Institutions and Inclusive Governance in Nairobi, 23.
peoples’ assets and vulnerabilities) that affect livelihoods at various scales.⁹⁶ For this reason, many scholars who take a livelihoods approach utilize the ‘asset—index’ which indicates “the size and composition of human, financial, productive, social, organisational and political assets that households have at their disposal,” as well as the ‘vulnerability-index’ which represents peoples’ “capacity to ‘bounce back’ after shocks and stresses in urban life in terms of resilience, diversification and regularity.”⁹⁷ Given the precarious social and economic positions of residents, the design and redevelopment team needed to establish an affordable cost for the housing units that would be sustainable and manageable for project beneficiaries requires careful consideration of the assets, vulnerabilities, and resiliency of the community’s residents. The cost of KENSUP’s new houses in Kibera was determined after the initial enumeration was conducted in 2005.⁹⁸ Initially, during the participatory design phase where community hall meetings were held and residents were able to voice their concerns on the projects major decisions, residents agreed on the cost of housing during the project’s design phase when the government proposed a lower price of 900,000 ksh for ownership of a new housing unit. Designers consulted residents about the project’s plan but also had to negotiate with them in order to get their approval moving forward.⁹⁹ However, residents’ abilities to save for the down-payment on the new housing units were affected both by their struggle to pay the rent required to live in the temporary housing units in Lang’ata, and by moving locations from where residents had previously engaged in income-generating activities. Although residents initially agreed to the terms suggested by KENSUP representatives, the circumstances later changed not only for residents, but also for the government since the project went over-budget and the cost went up. This forced the government

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⁹⁹ Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
to raise the price of the new housing units from 900,000 ksh to 1.4 million ksh after they were constructed.\textsuperscript{100} Despite having established an obvious need for affordable housing solutions, measuring residents’ household incomes was not conducive for accurately evaluating the project’s long-term sustainability. Evidently, peoples’ assets, vulnerabilities and resiliency were not adequately measured during the policy design phase since most residents were not capable of adapting to the project’s unanticipated jump in price.

KENSUP’s decision to focus on housing in this project is difficult to understand since the strategic documents reflect upon the types of economic constraints that affordable housing solutions cannot necessarily address. For instance, a KENSUP document briefly mentions the economic vulnerability of residents in Kibera, stating that it is crucial to mobilize financial resources early on in the project in order to develop strategies to improve income-earning abilities. However, interviews with residents conducted years after the project began have demonstrated that these financial concerns were not effectively addressed upon implementation.

Reviewing KENSUP’s policy documents reveals that the constraints associated with mobilizing finances for slum upgrading initiatives were highlighted before the project officially began. There was recognition early on that this would be a resource-intensive model that the government alone could not afford, and that coordinating donors who are willing to contribute would be difficult. In the UN-HABITAT’s initial strategy document on its partnership with KENSUP, the project’s development objective was “to improve the livelihoods of people living and working in slums and informal settlements in the urban areas of Kenya through housing improvement, income generation, and the provision of security of tenure and physical and social

\textsuperscript{100} Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’ Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014. 1.4 million ksh = approximately 13, 637 USD and 900 000 ksh = approximately 8,876 USD.
Income generation is a variable that, although identified and recognized as important, does not seem to have been strategically addressed in the project’s implementation. Moreover, the document’s list of specific objectives (see Box 1.1) does not reflect the intention to address any of these economic concerns.

**Box 1.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote and facilitate broad-based partnerships utilising consensus building and consultation among all the stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build institutional and human resource capacities at local and national levels for the sustainability of slum upgrading interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the implementation of innovative and replicable pro-poor slum-upgrading models through pilot projects, delivery strategies, and approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist the Government of Kenya in the development of financial strategies and the mobilisation of funds for slum upgrading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake collection and dissemination of information for the promotion of sustainable slum upgrading practices and the provision of linkages to global best practices.</td>
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</table>

*Source: UN-HABITAT and the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme: 2007, p. 15.*

This begs the question, why did the Kenyan government go ahead with the project anyway? There were several red flags raised in the initial policy proposals about the lack of economic opportunities available to residents even if the project were to fulfill its objectives. When interviewed, a former KENSUP team member observed that because of the issue of persistent unemployment, many residents are still unable to pay the small amount for rent KENSUP is asking them for, and at this point KENSUP is far enough in debt that they are struggling to cover the costs themselves. When residents asked to pay in smaller and more frequent installments, the administration began giving out numerous receipts for very small installments, which led to

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102 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
complaints from accountants that they were printing too many receipts. The interviewee does not believe that the government has the funds to replicate this type of project and called it expensive and unsustainable.  

KENSUP’s bold and determined vision of creating new housing structures in Kibera has led them to ignore the critical recommendations of experts. The design team responsible for creating KENSUP’s plans for the new houses were somewhat restricted in the types of housing model recommendations they could make due to Kibera’s density and the Kenyan government’s intention to accommodate a large number of beneficiaries. For instance, one of the architects on KENSUP’s design team revealed in an interview that they would have preferred to use a different ‘slum upgrading’ housing model where smaller houses were constructed over a longer span of time. The following interview citation describes an alternative upgrading model that the interviewee found more effective than the one used in Kibera’s pilot project:  

I think Zone A’s a bit too big, and it takes so much time to implement, so even with the lessons you learn, you’ve lost time between conceptualization and implementation of the project. So the model itself takes years to complete, then you don’t learn the lessons effectively. Conceptualize the design, 6 months later do it, learn the lessons, plan the project, the next year implement it. But again, this is a very personal view and also stems from my experiences in Huruma [another informal settlement in Nairobi]. Because we do very small scale in situ upgrading projects initially, and then you build it up, but continuously. You learn the lessons, make amendments, etc. –Former member of design team for KENSUP’s housing project, November 6, 2014.

This quotation also speaks to criticisms about KENSUP’s top-down delivery. Through seeking advice selectively, the government was able to ignore any criticism that might not support their particular vision, which resulted in a compromised participatory process.

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103 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
104 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera. October 13, 2014.
One of the key components of the pilot project was that it be participatory, incorporating the input and wishes of community members, thereby envisioning a bottom-up approach that is not typically seen with government initiatives. After consultations with various partners and experts, KENSUP developed an institutional structure for this project. Although KENSUP intended its housing project to be participatory, the government had already decided to focus its resources on creating housing redevelopments, thereby limiting the degree to which the project could become participatory before it even began. The creation of new housing redevelopments (or the provision of affordable housing according to KENSUP) was prioritized over expanding access to public services like infrastructure improvement and the creation of public schools. In this way, KENSUP’S policy documents outlining the project’s strategy fail to address the unequal access to public services for urban citizens (like education) and the prioritization of planning initiatives that drive economic growth over those that target the social welfare needs of the poor. Residents have been involved in the planning process and were able to give their own input in the design of the new houses, but they also made other requests unrelated to the houses that were neglected. For example, KENSUP’s design team for the pilot had difficulty incorporating shared/communal and accessible open spaces for residents due to the high density and small area available within Kibera. Additionally, KENSUP wanted to integrate residential and commercial interests since residents were clear about wanting to maintain their commercial activity within Kibera. However, interviews with residents suggest they have not succeeded at this since there are many complaints about the lack of economic opportunities available throughout the implementation of the project which has affected their ability to save for the down payment on the new housing units. This is significant because it proves that KENSUP’s

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105 Interview with former member of KENSUP’s design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, November 6, 2014.
priority has been mainly focused on the housing aspect - which is also one of the more visually transformative qualities of the project - at the expense of other areas of concern. Consequently, it can be argued that KENSUP’s motivation for participating in this project is that it can pursue its own interests while maintaining public support by both appearing to help the urban poor and by giving the urban centre an economically competitive edge. This supports the view that the priorities in this project are in line with the government’s economic and political interests.

According to members of the Soweto-East community requested public spaces they could access for various activities; in particular, spaces to conduct informal market activities since this is how most residents earn an income. Although KENSUP’s design plans incorporated a space for shops at the bottom of the apartment buildings, it remains unclear whether this will be adequate space for residents’ needs given the high percentage of people reliant on income from informal market activity. The fact that these vertical housing structures are within a ‘gated community’\(^\text{106}\) means that they will be removed from highly trafficked areas where there are people to purchase their goods. As a result, it is unclear how these new circumstances and location will affect their ability to buy and sell goods with the social networks they belonged to before their relocation. During the community meetings with members of KENSUP’s design team, it was revealed that residents wanted access to public spaces such as schools, churched or recreational spaces.\(^\text{107}\) The following resident interview passage highlights public services that have not been realized in the community 10 years after the upgrading project’s implementation:

…if we don’t have public schools that means our kids are not enjoying education which in the constitution should be free [free primary education], but our kids are not enjoying

\(^{106}\) There is a gate that has been created around the perimeter of the new housing complex in Kibera’s Soweto-East village that has a gate in front of the road with a security guard to allow people to enter and exit.

\(^{107}\) Interview with resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village and member of the housing cooperative board, November 29, 2014.
these rights because there are no public schools… We don’t have public hospitals either, and health is also a necessity, but we are definitely not enjoying it. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, member of the housing cooperative board, November 29, 2014.

Contrary to these requests from community members, the public space portion of the community’s wish list for this project was ultimately set aside in order to focus on housing. It seems as though KENSUP decided which requests from residents would be incorporated and which ones were to be cast aside based on their own priorities, which suggests that the project’s execution is more top-down than the policy intended. These concessions that contradict the community’s preferences demonstrate the limitations of the project’s participatory planning process.

In order to facilitate community participation, the Settlement Executive Committee (SEC) was created as a go-between for the government and residents. Representatives were community members elected by residents which included representation for various marginalized groups (e.g. people with disabilities, youth, elderly, structure owners, etc). Interviews with residents alluded to a gradual erosion of the communication structure between the SEC and Ministry officials. The following interview passage describes this breakdown of communication:

There’s a need for better communication; the leaders are not representing residents; the SEC members attend meetings but don’t share with residents. Now they don’t know which way to go or what is happening. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, December 5, 2014 [translated].

So far communication has been a challenge because of blocks in the line of communication. So the residents are supposed to pass information to the SEC, then SEC is supposed to take it to the Ministry. But as you take the information, the communication stops, and the information just disappears. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

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108 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.
If there are problems with how the SEC is conducting itself, then that impacts the project’s participatory capacity. Some residents claim they are not always informed of project updates, which negatively affects their ability to participate in decision-making processes.\textsuperscript{109} As this project is intended to be run by the community upon completion, the fact that residents are voicing concerns about its current leadership is worrisome. The following excerpt from an interview with an architect on the housing project’s design team outlines some of the problems encountered with community organization and the risk of always dealing with representatives:

While it is possible to work through a participation process, community organization is often hampered by political intervention, and I’ve seen that in Kibera. When you’re talking about the market, the leadership can sometimes be overwhelming on the people. If you’re taking about the settlement, the youth group can at times be overwhelming. A certain sense of leadership that takes away the voices of many, it can appear to be positive because you’re entering a community structure, there’s a leader, but if you’re not careful, as a designer, planner or manager, in this process you can easily find that you’ve curtailed a great deal because of this representation. So one way to go deep into the community, open up avenues for the community to discuss and openly share their views. But due to my past experience, I organized several open forums where community members could openly air their views, so I avoided the trap of always dealing with representatives, so we could get open feedback from the community as a whole. This included town hall meetings where we would let people say what they wanted to say, react to the designs and share with us their views. –Former member of KENSUP’s design team for KENSUP’s housing project, November 6, 2014.

There is always a danger that the voices of residents will be silenced through SEC representatives speaking on their behalf. More notably, residents voiced concerns in interviews about the possibility of corruption occurring within the SEC.\textsuperscript{110} Creating strategies and mechanisms to establish a participatory process is not easy, and in this particular project, much

\textsuperscript{109} Interview with UN-HABITAT worker, November 20, 2014.
\textsuperscript{110} In one particular interview, a resident claimed that corruption is involved with the SEC as some residents are paying SEC members to ensure that they will be vetted and that they will receive one of the new housing units. Interview with selected beneficiaries of KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, December 5, 2014.
of the residents’ input and requests were not able to be integrated into the project at all. When it comes to the project’s difficulties with organization and communication, it is possible that the complex interactions between residents, the SEC, and KENSUP have complicated the project’s participatory process and impeded the ability of residents to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives.

In recognition of residents’ concerns about the economically precarious circumstances of many people in the area, part of the project’s design plan revolved around the empowerment of unemployed youth in the community. Kibera’s Soweto-East village has a vibrant and active youth community that struggles with unemployment due to a lack of job opportunities in the area. The government of Kenya often launches programmes to try and mobilize the youth by providing work experience within the community. However the ‘employment opportunities’ presented to them to encourage their involvement in upgrading the community are mostly volunteer-based and do not seem to be financially driven; this restricts any social mobility or significant changes to their socio-economic status. Unfortunately training and skills development can only take people so far; there are greater needs for support and resources that enable the community’s youth to become gainfully employed. The following passage from an interview conducted with a resident speaks to the youth’s struggle to enter the workforce:

There are so many challenges, but the biggest one is finance. The next one is the expectation from the community. For instance, when a young person undergoes the training that’s offered, their expectations are very high. So when they come here to learn IT, they expect to get a job, which is not true; it’s only that they’re gaining a skill. At the end of the day it’s up to them to look for a way to apply that skill. –Selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 18, 2014.

111 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 6, 2014.
These concerns from residents draw attention to the fact that providing a housing alternative does not address the underlying causes of the proliferation of informal settlements. In fact, these types of strategies leave it up to residents to find ways to pull themselves out of poverty. After all, providing housing does not transform the economic situations of residents, and when residents pay higher amounts of rent than they had previously, the long-term sustainability of such housing alternatives become unrealistic.

**Section 1.2: Exploring the tension between economic competitiveness and social welfare**

The tension between focusing on economic competitiveness or social welfare within Nairobi’s urban planning strategies will be explored in order to understand some of the different political and economic motivations driving KENSUP’s decision to implement this pilot project. KENSUP’s strategic document recognizes the past failures of state responses to informal settlements.\(^{112}\) This acknowledgement demonstrates that the Kenyan government has contributed to the proliferation of informal settlements in the past, and is now trying to change its stance towards informal settlements by establishing the project as a pro-poor initiative.

The state’s response to informal settlements in Nairobi has been highly political since land has often been awarded to citizens for political loyalty. As Klopp argues, slum clearance could be used as a means of social control over urban popular dissent and as a means to gain political favour.\(^ {113}\) When the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) government engaged in slum demolitions in the 1990s, it was essentially withdrawing access to land from dissident residents and reallocating it towards its political supporters.\(^ {114}\) Since withdrawing access to land...


\(^ {114}\) Ibid, 295. Kenya has a multi-party democracy with KANU being the political party in power from 1963-2002.
has been a technique for closing political space, contested urban space is also contested political space.\textsuperscript{115} Because of the Kenyan government’s tarnished history in the way it has addressed informal settlements, residents are often sceptical when the government begins to display its political interest in the area. As of recently, it is more widely understood that Nairobi’s urban citizens are negatively affected by the proliferation of informal settlements for several reasons including poor security, inaccessible public spaces, increased crime, and a plurality of health and sanitation issues.\textsuperscript{116} This general realization has created a political space for interests that prioritize policies addressing informal settlements and the urban poor. As a result, political support for pro-poor policies can help parties in power gain political favour. The nature of the government’s political interests in Kibera came to light with KENSUP’s housing project when they were tasked with finding land for the Soweto-East residents’ temporary relocation. Since the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga is the Minister of Parliament (MP) in the district of Kibera, his insistence that residents must not be relocated too far from the community (or anywhere out of his voting district) demonstrates that political parties are more receptive to complaints from citizens in districts where they have more political support.\textsuperscript{117} The following interview excerpt describes the contentious negotiation period between political parties when deciding on the location of the project’s decanting site, which is the site where the temporary housing units are located for project beneficiaries to occupy during the construction of the new housing units:

> There was huge controversy over the decision of where to build the decanting site. Finland had donated land to the Ministry of lands in Athi River [a town about 23 kilometers from Kibera] so the decision was made to place the decanting site there (providing housing for those who would be displaced for the construction of the new housing units of Kibera’s Soweto-East Zone A area.) However, this land was located a

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, 295.
\textsuperscript{117} Fernandez and Calas. “The Kibera Soweto East Project in Nairobi, Kenya,” 3.
distance from the residents’ former area, disrupting their social networks and it would remove them from their voting district (which was the riding of Raila Odinga, the head of Kenya’s Rainbow Coalition and the country’s Prime Minister). As a result, [Prime Minister] Odinga said that wherever the decanting site was set up must remain within that voting district/area around Kibera. So they were tasked to find available land near the area in Kibera which is NOT easy to do. Finally they acquired land in Lang’ata, close to Kibera. –Former member of design team for KENSUP’s housing project, October 13, 2014.

Since the land that was donated by Finland was in an area that would lose Kenya’s Rainbow Coalition part of their voting base, the party fought to find land for the decanting site that would allow residents to remain within the voting district. Residents were pleased with the result since the donated land was much further away than the current location of the decanting site in Lang’ata; however it does highlight the political significance that residents of Kibera have with the Kenyan government.

The prioritization of policy initiatives that are concerned with economic growth versus those concerned with poverty reduction is a point of entry into understanding how urban planners allocate municipal resources. For instance, the government of Kenya’s Vision 2030 plan puts social welfare and policy relating to poverty reduction and informal settlements at risk because it focuses on the goal of making Nairobi a globally competitive city, prioritising private sector development, economic growth and employment creation. Post-independence, Nairobi has continued to develop plans that aim for a Western-style metropolis. In 2008, the Kenyan government released the ‘Nairobi Metro 2030: A World Class African Metropolis’ plan, further exemplifying their interest in the city’s promotion as a hub for global competition. The plan

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caters to the interests of investors and tourists at the expense of local needs, social inclusion and the redistribution of resources towards improving livelihoods of the urban poor. Such a blatant emphasis on urban competitiveness contributes to further marginalizing residents of informal settlements. The plan’s vision stipulates that “in 2030 the NMR [Nairobi Metropolitan Region] will be a world class business setting, recognised nationally, regionally and globally as a centre for business excellence.” The endorsement of a ‘world class business setting’ moves the state towards supporting the elimination and eradication of informal settlements through its mounting pressure to beautify the city landscape and to open up space for new capital and investments; urban competitiveness is fuelled by the goal of attracting foreign investors into the city. These efforts limit the urban space available to residents of informal settlements resulting in gentrification and displacement, demonstrating ‘accumulation by dispossession’ of public resources by driving residents of informal settlements away from the land they are occupying through a rise in the cost of living. It is unclear whether or not the Kenyan government’s commitment to ‘slum upgrading’ policy runs in contrast to this national plan and vision since its interpretation of the policy seems to promote ‘slum redevelopment’ (or elimination) rather than promoting upgrading initiatives that preserve residents’ attachments to informal settlement communities. In this way, KENSUP’s interpretation of informal settlement upgrading seemingly supports Nairobi’s 2030 Vision under the guise of the label of a pro-poor initiative concerned with social welfare needs.

There is a tension between economic competitiveness and providing social welfare services in this project because upgrading is able to serve both interests; it works towards the

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122 Huchzermeyer, Cities With ‘Slums,’ 33.
123 Harvey, The New Imperialism, 158.
124 Huchzermeyer, Cities With ‘Slums,’ 42.
beautification of the city while also addressing an often neglected and marginalized population. Through the urbanization process, the destructive effects of capitalism are evidenced as common urban spaces accessible to all citizens are taken away through privatization.\textsuperscript{125} If citizens do not hold purchasing power as consumers, then they are excluded from the use of these privatized urban spaces. This issue extends to accessing urban land as well since land is considered to be a commodity within capitalist urbanization despite its important social function.\textsuperscript{126} This has implications for the poorer segments of the population because when land is seen as a commodity, it becomes the main focus for profit-making as opposed to a site for social reproduction.\textsuperscript{127} Typically, the people who have control over land control both the use and income rights of property.\textsuperscript{128} As a result, this breeds social exclusion and enables those who have power over land to demand prices that are higher than many peoples’ incomes can afford. This view of land and property rights as a commodity represents the ‘liberal’ pursuit of ownership and leads to inequity and uneven spatial development.\textsuperscript{129} With capitalist urbanization, the push for privatization in the pursuit of ‘liberal ownership’ of private property creates issues of inequality. In the context of Nairobi, as the value of urban land near the city centre increases, so too does the cost of living for residents. In this way, by pushing to privatize the ownership of ‘public’ land in Kibera, the government is making residents more vulnerable to the competitive commoditization of Nairobi’s urban land market.

As a result of this process of capitalist urbanization, some people fear ‘slum upgrading’ projects and their potential accompaniment of gentrification. If gentrification occurs in the

\textsuperscript{125} Harvey, \textit{Rebel Cities}, 28
\textsuperscript{126} Emmanuel Midheme and Frank Moulaert, “Pushing Back the Frontiers of Property: Community Land Trusts and Low-Income Housing in Urban Kenya” \textit{Land Use Policy} 35 (2012), 73.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 73.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid, 73.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid, 73.
community, economic barriers could bar some residents from accessing common urban spaces. However, it is important to distinguish between upgrading and gentrification: upgrading is trying to formalize services that were previously missing and enable their communal access to everyone within the community, whereas gentrification is a potential consequence that can accompany a growing desire for private investment within a community that may result in a rising cost of living through the expansion of competitive businesses and land and housing markets. Informal settlement upgrading formalizes a public space that was previously inaccessible to all citizens, opening up economic opportunities in a competitive urban environment. On the one hand, upgrading seems to work against economic competitiveness as it is resource intensive and takes money and investment away from initiatives that may benefit the economic growth of the city more directly. On the other hand, through its investment in things like basic services and infrastructure, upgrading seemingly supports the city’s economic interests as it makes citizens accountable to the government for fees and taxes. As a result, one can argue that upgrading serves both categories of economic growth and poverty reduction strategies, but often in contradictory ways where one is prioritized over the other.

One of the assumptions with upgrading initiatives is that the regularization of land tenure within a particular community will be accompanied by private investment. Although the government views this as a positive outcome, it is not necessarily helpful for residents. According to Marcello Balbo, “the periodic demolition of squatter settlements, as well as the clean-up programmes by which street vendors and shoe-cleaners are removed from the city centre, are certainly decided according to the economic appetite of some local businessman or

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130 Harvey uses the example of Margaret Thatcher’s privatization of social housing and its result of intense gentrification forcing low-income populations out into the periphery of cities with a loss of affordable housing in urban neighbourhoods. Harvey, The New Imperialism, 158.
politician (or both) or the modernisation wave that springs up every now and then.” Private investment will not necessarily benefit the poor. In fact, it could result in a cost of living that is less affordable for those already marginalized. This particular assumption signals the possibility of gentrification. This fits with the argument that KENSUP’s project supports the interests of economic competitiveness since gentrification is a consequence that benefits the beautification efforts of a competitively urban environment, while also providing social welfare support and services for a marginalized demographic.

Section 1.3: UN-HABITAT’s withdrawal from KENSUP’s housing project

It was difficult to obtain definitive answers regarding what inspired the UN-HABITAT’s decision to withdraw its involvement from KENSUP’s housing project in interviews with people connected to the project. Consequently, I include here a brief policy analysis of the UN-HABITAT’s Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme guidelines and KENSUP’s pilot project plans to identify possible explanations for the change in this relationship. This section examines the goals and objectives of the UN-HABITAT to see how they compare with KENSUP’s plan and vision for the housing project in Kibera.

The government of Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN-HABITAT on January 15th, 2003. In the strategic document, the UN-HABITAT’s role was highlighted as supplementary; it included the provision of technical advice, capacity building of relevant authorities and communities, provision of basic infrastructure, and testing innovative slum upgrading pilot approaches. These roles seem to be intentionally vague as their execution can be fulfilled in many different ways, leaving room for the UN-HABITAT to display various

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131 Balbo, “Urban Planning and the Fragmented City of Developing Countries,” 29.
degrees of involvement depending on the context of the project being implemented. Based on my observations of the UN-HABITAT’s role in ‘slum upgrading’ projects in other places, it appears as though in countries where local governments permit them to have more control, they end up playing a larger role.\textsuperscript{134}

The partnership between KENSUP and the UN-HABITAT eventually dissolved as a result of disputes over the definition of their role and how to allocate funds. Although they worked collaboratively on developing the policy guidelines and strategic plans, there was a lack of understanding around the extent of the UN-HABITAT’s involvement. The UN-HABITAT began to receive criticism for its involvement with KENSUP due the increasing controversy surrounding the objectives of the housing project.\textsuperscript{135} According to Huchzermeyer, KENSUP’s pilot project is linked to Nairobi’s Vision 2030 strategic plan of increasing urban competitiveness through a beautification process that produces an expensive modern transformation.\textsuperscript{136} The Nairobi Vision 2030 strategic document explicitly says that the elimination of slums like Kibera is critical for promoting and branding Nairobi’s metropolitan region.\textsuperscript{137} As a result of the exposure of the government’s economic interest in eliminating informal settlements, the modernist nature of KENSUP’s project centered on ‘housing redevelopment’ began to receive criticism from advocates and allies of residents of informal settlements. In response to growing criticism of the project, the UN-HABITAT ended its partnership with KENSUP and began an independent \textit{in situ} upgrading project addressing water

\textsuperscript{134} This is based on my experience in Nampula, Mozambique in 2012 where I worked as an intern for the municipality of Nampula and the UN-HABITAT on a ‘slum upgrading’ project in the informal settlement community of Muhala. If the government is dependent on the UN-HABITAT’s funding, then it is more likely that they will allow the UN-HABITAT team to have more control over the implementation and execution of the project. This is where KENSUP’s housing project is unique: since they have their own resources and an entire branch of Ministry committed to its upgrading initiatives, they do not want to relinquish control of the pilot project.

\textsuperscript{135} Huchzermeyer, \textit{Cities With ‘Slums,’} 158.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, 161.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid, 161.
and sanitation issues in the community. This has resulted in a bizarre scenario where the UN-
HABITAT is engaged with \textit{in situ} upgrading initiatives in Kibera’s Soweto-east village while
KENSUP has continued with its original plans to demolish the existing settlements and
redevelop new housing structures in the same community.\footnote{Ibid, 163.}

A former Ministry employee on KENSUP’s design team gave their perspective on what
inspired the conflict between these two key stakeholders in an interview.\footnote{Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.} According to this
member of the design team, people working at KENSUP were under the impression that the UN-
HABITAT would set-up a trust fund for KENSUP to access. However, the UN-HABITAT did
not want to give up control of the finances, creating tension and eventually leading to a
breakdown of the partnership.\footnote{Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.} Although it was not entirely clear about what the UN-
HABITAT’s role in the project would be, the Kenyan government assumed they were going to
be receiving funds from them.\footnote{Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.} However, the nature of KENSUP’s housing project was
somewhat inappropriate for the UN-HABITAT’s involvement since their mandate does not
allow them to get involved with investments.\footnote{Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.} As KENSUP’s pilot project is focused on the
construction of new housing structures instead of the gradual upgrading of existing settlements, it
somewhat distorts what the goals and objectives of informal settlement upgrading initiatives
are intended to achieve.\footnote{Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.} In this way, it is not surprising that the UN-HABITAT felt it needed
to retreat from its involvement in the implementation of the housing project. Moreover, the UN-
HABITAT is supposed to focus more on consultation, advocacy and policy design in its

\footnote{This is expanded upon in the introduction; refer to p.10-11.}

\footnote{Ibid, 163.}
partnerships with governments. Consequently, their role in these selected communities is often limited to upgrading initiatives that target projects addressing issues like infrastructure improvement, and access to water and sanitation facilities. The lack of clarity about what roles and responsibilities the UN-HABITAT is allowed to commit to seems to have contributed to the dissolution of their partnership with KENSUP.

Box 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal and Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create conditions that can sustain long term nationwide slum upgrading in Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harness political will, strengthen nascent forms of organisation of slum dwellers, and promote an inclusive process based on consensus and partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address inappropriate policies that contribute to the growth of informal settlements and worsening of living conditions in slum areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidate, rationalise and institutionalise a broad range of shelter related policies including the creation of institutions and mechanisms for sustainable financing and development of shelter and related infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operationalise concepts of decentralisation, partnerships, consultation, stakeholder participation, consensus building, leadership and the empowerment of beneficiary communities in upgrading projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement appropriate service and livelihood improvements including designs, delivery strategies and approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen and enhance capacity for research, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and replication of shelter and human settlements programmes at the central government, local authority and community levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address and mitigate the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS</td>
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144 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
145 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
Among the goals and objectives listed in the UN-HABITAT’s strategic document outlining their involvement with KENSUP, housing is not included (see Box 1.2).\textsuperscript{146} Although one of the objectives is to “consolidate, rationalise and institutionalise a broad range of shelter related policies including the creation of institutions and mechanisms for sustainable financing and development of shelter and related infrastructure,” it does not explicitly state any intention to provide affordable housing for residents. The UN-HABITAT’s mandate provides a list of objectives outlining their involvement in KENSUP’s project; however they do not overtly commit to helping with the development of new housing structures (see Box 1.3). Box 1.3 shows the overlapping development objectives between KENSUP and the UN-HABITAT that were highlighted in the strategic document. Note how the nature of these objectives are not necessarily best served by building new structures under a cooperative model. For instance, any of these objectives could be achieved through an upgrading model that targets upgrading infrastructure or services that reach the entire community.

\textit{Box 1.3}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Promote and facilitate broad-based partnerships utilising consensus building and consultation among all the stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build institutional and human resource capacities at local and national levels for the sustainability of slum upgrading interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the implementation of innovative and replicable pro-poor slum upgrading models through pilot projects, delivery strategies, and approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist the GoK in the development of financial strategies and the mobilisation of funds for slum upgrading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undertake collection and dissemination of information for the promotion of sustainable slum upgrading practices and the provision of linkages to global best practices</td>
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In the strategic document, the implementation strategy states KENSUP’s intention of building housing solutions more explicitly; however, the phrasing of the goals and objectives are interesting as they create some distance between the UN-HABITAT’s commitment to KENSUP’s vision of developing housing. The fact that any mention of the intention to provide affordable housing is omitted from the document’s stated goals and objectives is noteworthy due to our knowledge of the UN-HABITAT’s eventual withdrawal from KENSUP’s housing project in the community.

In addition to a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders involved in KENSUP’s housing project, there were also changes made to the roles and responsibilities that were given to the Kenyan government, the local authorities and the UN-HABITAT in KENSUP’s initial policy and plans after the project’s implementation. Interviews with individuals involved with KENSUP’s housing project explained that the Nairobi County Government had failed to fulfill its intended role, requiring the government of Kenya to step in and take control of the project’s implementation responsibilities. The UN-HABITAT’s withdrawal also changed the intended institutional framework. The intention was to have other stakeholders involved, such as public-private partnerships, community-based organizations and civil society organizations. However, it is possible that potential participants were discouraged by all the controversy and delays surrounding the project due to various its legal battles and resource constraints.

KENSUP’s ability to secure funding for its housing project has become an issue that is exacerbated by the confusion surrounding the roles and responsibilities of the various

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147 Formerly known as Nairobi City Council.
stakeholders. Although KENSUP suggests that community and government ownership of the project will ensure social sustainability,\(^1\) social sustainability and financial sustainability are different factors with different constraints. The strategic document states that that the Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF) would be influencing housing finance issues within the project and developing the UN-HABITAT’s financing strategy for KENSUP.\(^2\) Furthermore, it is unclear if the Slum Upgrading and Low Cost Housing and Infrastructure Fund intended to ensure the programme’s sustainability and replication was ever established.\(^3\) The fund was supposed to be assisted by the UN-HABITAT who would manage financial and material resources.\(^4\) Since the UN-HABITAT was part of KENSUP’s housing project’s funding stream, now that the partnership has ended, the current status of KENSUP’s financial streams are unclear.\(^5\) As the UN-HABITAT is an internationally respected and recognized organization, the UN-HABITAT’s withdrawal from KENSUP’s housing project has likely resulted in lost funding opportunities and partnerships, creating internal constraints for KENSUP’s ability to implement its plans and policy as they were initially intended.\(^6\)

The “lessons learned” section of the UN-HABITAT’s strategic document includes a sentence that seems to have held true in the context of this pilot project: “Translating partners’ verbal commitment to slum upgrading is not always easy.”\(^7\) The sentence is telling given what

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\(^2\) SUF is a new global facility within UN-HABITAT financed by the governments of the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden, meant to give financial and technical advice and to develop financial instruments in order to expand private sector and public sector involvement with ‘slum upgrading’ projects (i.e. loans given for the project to be able to leverage domestic capital). United Nations Human Settlement Programme, “Slum Upgrading Facility: Land and Slum Upgrading,” (Nairobi: UN-HABITAT, 2009), 1. United Nations Human Settlement, “Briefing Note on GOK/UN-HABITAT Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP),” (UN-HABITAT, 2007), 4.
\(^6\) UN-HABITAT dissolved its partnership with KENSUP around the year 2009, although the date is not exactly clear since it is not formally stated.
transpired between these two key stakeholders. The strategic document also speaks to the clarity that KENSUP’s structure requires for more effective coordination and delivery.\textsuperscript{156} This generalized statement is almost ironic considering how unclear the roles of the project’s various partners and actors were throughout its implementation. It is interesting that the relationship between KENSUP and UN-HABITAT changed so dramatically after the collaborative development of these firm policy guidelines. A noteworthy observation from conducting field work is that the UN-HABITAT is very careful about not giving details to the public about their withdrawal from the housing project due to the delicate relationship it must maintain with the Kenyan government. If the UN-HABITAT wants to continue its upgrading initiatives in the community, the organization requires government permission and cooperation for it to remain possible. As a result, representatives of the UN-HABITAT are reluctant to voice criticisms of KENSUP and the housing project itself, which highlights the limited extent to which the Kenyan government is accountable to external actors.

The UN-HABITAT is very strict about prioritizing a participatory process for any ‘slum upgrading’ project with which it becomes involved as it is one of the organization’s core values. This particular project’s participatory process experienced several challenges throughout its implementation. KENSUP’s project was intended to be bottom-up, working alongside communities so that they could decide what services they wanted to receive. However, it was difficult for those involved in KENSUP’s design team to negotiate with so many stakeholders in a way that was representative of everybody’s wants and needs. The degree to which the project has been participatory is difficult to measure since it is not easy to determine whether the project has adequately incorporated the community’s input or if it has merely ensured that the

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 65.
community has been consulted. These are some of the challenges of a ‘participatory’ policy approach: it is very difficult to implement, it often means different things to different people, and it depends heavily on context. The following interview excerpt with one of the architects on KENSUP’s design team explains the challenges of participatory planning:

The project did not have a simple cost; participatory design can be very complicated. The designers, planners and architects have very different attitudes and specializations; they had to bring themselves to integrate the team. First they had to agree on the process and also to agree to the steps to take to come up with the design.157 —Former member of design team for KENSUP’s housing project, November 6, 2014.

There were further difficulties with the design process when it came to consulting residents. A member of KENSUP’s housing design team stressed that it was challenging to negotiate with residents when the things they wanted were not financially feasible or sustainable given the context.158 For instance, it was difficult to respond to residents’ demands when what they wanted was to have housing and space that they could not afford at the time.159 The local reality of this community’s participatory process may look differently than the UN-HABITAT would have anticipated or had experienced in previous projects; this is one of the challenges of scale in taking a generalized supranational policy idea and translating it into a local reality. In light of the importance placed on community participation, it is possible that KENSUP’s participatory approach impacted the UN-HABITAT’s decision to withdraw from the housing project.

Although the size of the project attracted global attention, donor support and partnerships form large and reputable international agencies, it also created issues of scale that makes translating a generalized policy into a complex local reality very difficult in practice.

157 Interview with architect and former member of the design team of KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, November 6, 2014.
158 Interview with former member of the design team of KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
159 Interview with former member of the design team of KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
Section 1.4: The challenges of scale with upgrading initiatives

Scale often becomes a challenge with upgrading initiatives since their implementation involves taking policy that is often generalized on a supranational level, and making it into a national and local reality. As a result of these various levels of operation, it becomes difficult to negotiate between the different stakeholders and partners involved. There have been several stakeholders with competing interests involved in KENSUP’s housing project; some of these include the government of Kenya, the Nairobi County government, the UN-HABITAT, and structure owners and tenants of Kibera’s Soweto-East community. The contradictions that are revealed by the different interests of these stakeholders help explain why there have been so many challenges throughout the project’s implementation.

The local authorities (Nairobi County Government) were supposed to be the main implementing agency running the pilot project’s activities on the ground, but due to internal capacity constraints the Kenyan government felt the need to take over the project. The implementation was tasked to the municipality, who were to provide the funds and be involved in supervision.160 The initial/original designs for the new houses had been undertaken by Nairobi County Government, but they later brought in outside contractors. According to an interview with a former KENSUP employee, the Nairobi County government was promised a lot of resources from the Kenyan government that it did not receive, making its role as implementing authority difficult.161 The failure to deliver these resources could have been a consequence of the UN-HABITAT distancing themselves from KENSUP and the funds they were supposed to

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160 Interview with former member of the design team of KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
161 Interview with former member of the design team of KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
supply. A member of KENSUP’s design team who was responsible for planning the new housing structures highlights the project’s funding difficulties saying:

Initially, it was supposed to be a basket and donors were also supposed to contribute to it. But eventually it was just the government. I’m not sure what is happening on the ground now, but at the time we were designing the project there were no donors. I think UN-HABITAT had promised to do something and I’ve never seen them do it… - *Former member of design team for KENSUP’s housing project*, November 6, 2014.

Evidently, coordinating the different roles and funds of various stakeholders was challenging, particularly since the project’s anticipated financial streams changed during its implementation. KENSUP’s intention of having Nairobi County Government run operations on the ground was not particularly realistic given the municipal government’s tainted history.  

There are strong arguments that support the perspective that local governments and authorities should take charge of implementing upgrading projects in order to scale-down, decentralise and democratise at the local level. However, it is not necessarily an effective strategy if these institutions are ineffective, corrupt or under-resourced. Although one can argue that local level governance is the ideal solution with the most chance at being effective if the appropriate mechanisms are functioning properly, it cannot be assumed that this is the case in any particular context. The following interview excerpt from a member of KENSUP’s design

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162 The Nairobi County Government’s (formerly known as Nairobi City Council) has a bad reputation since the colonial era. As Anderson argues, corruption in municipal government was part of Nairobi’s colonial legacy that saw an unequal development of the city with the creation of policies of segregation, preferential rating and differential investment. In this way, corruption within city hall led citizens to distrust the ability of the state to effectively regulate the city. Since Kenya’s independence in the 1960s, the government in Nairobi has ineffectively allocated municipal resources towards housing policy initiatives resulting in the proliferation of informal settlements that have grown ‘informally’ resisting government control and regulation, giving Nairobi the title of a ‘self-help’ city.


team explains some of the challenges with the different roles and responsibilities of the project’s many stakeholders:

If you ask me conceptually, the Ministry should just direct policy, the Nairobi County government should direct implementation, UN-HABITAT should coordinate international linkages, learn lessons and generate funds and best practices, and the community should also be involved in the implementation process. But that structure is just conceptual. The county government has not been effective in project implementation for the last 40 years or so. That means that project implementation is again backed by the policy arm which is the national government. So the national government is now doing both policy and implementation. I think this is a major difficulty because their focus should be on policy driven intervention rather than project implementation. But because of the weaknesses of the county government, they have no choice but to implement. This brings further long-term difficulties, because if the national government takes over how will the county government ever build capacity? –Former member of design team for KENSUP’s housing project, November 6, 2014.

This perspective demonstrates a disconnect between the project’s conceptual plans and actual implementation. Although policy makers wanted this project to be operating at the local level, circumstances turned out to be more complex in reality. Despite concerns about whether or not the Nairobi County government is capable of implementing such projects, this former member of KENSUP’s design team stresses the importance of the political visibility of local level authorities. The interviewee believes the municipal government has more direct political interest and that the project would have more continued support in the future if it could be implemented at this level as it is easier to appeal to constituents in local government.\textsuperscript{164} Although this member of the design team believes it is important to strengthen development at the local level, they also understand why the Kenyan government felt obliged to step in due to capacity constraints.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{164} Interview with architect and former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, November 6, 2014.
\textsuperscript{165} Interview with architect and former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, November 6, 2014.
Another issue that emerged from KENSUP’s housing project relating to scale involves the delayed timeframe of the project’s implementation. Ultimately, the fact that KENSUP and its key partners all suffered from resource constraints impeded their ability to implement the project as planned. An interview with a Ministry of Lands employee (and former member of KENSUP’s housing design team) raised the issue of the project’s timeframe since it resulted in constant turnover (both politically and bureaucratically) of people working on the project over time.¹⁶⁶ For instance, government ministries keep moving, restructuring and being combined. Moreover, those people who were initially working on the project from various partnerships or organizations have since left and been replaced by new people.¹⁶⁷ This constant turnover inevitably contributed to communication problems amongst stakeholders. The delayed timeframe indicates that the proper mechanisms to implement this type of project were not in place. Although the project has experienced both external and internal constraints by various actors and forces throughout its implementation, the project’s failures are largely a result of the government’s own poor planning and decision-making. While the UN-HABITAT’s withdrawal from the project acted as an external constraint affecting KENSUP’s funding stream, this was largely due to the fact that the government did not want to listen to the advice of outside experts when it came to selecting an upgrading strategy. The government’s desire to stick firmly to their singular vision of the provision of housing drove away external support and made their project more insular than they had envisioned.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
¹⁶⁷ Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera, October 13, 2014. [This is a problem that I saw first-hand when conducting my research. I had difficulty getting in contact with UN-HABITAT officials who had been involved in the project’s earlier phases].
Section 1.5: Summary

KENSUP’s decision to focus its project on housing redevelopment remains unclear and ill-advised after considering the social and economic constraints faced by residents before the project’s implementation. Although KENSUP knew the economic positions of residents before the project’s implementation and that some residents would struggle to afford the houses and require assistance, not enough effort or resources were devoted to ameliorating the economic circumstances of residents. In terms of KENSUP’s motivation for carrying out this particular project, the government’s political and economic interests are served by its visibility for voters and its potential for economic spin-offs that benefit Nairobi’s competitive urban environment. The housing project addresses urban poverty through a particular group of marginalized citizens, demonstrating that the government is working towards serving the urban poor, but on a small and concentrated scale. In this way, KENSUP’s project internalizes the often competing interests of providing social welfare services and promoting economic competitiveness. An analysis of the UN-HABITAT’s informal settlement upgrading policy objectives and goals reveal that the organization was never specifically focused on housing, thereby suggesting that the UN-HABITAT’s withdrawal from KENSUP’s housing project was due to differences in vision concerning how informal settlement upgrading should be achieved. Furthermore, challenges involving the project’s participatory process and the communication structure between KENSUP and the Settlement Executive Committee (SEC) likely complicated any existing or potential relationships with partners or donors. The project encountered challenges of scale in its transition from a broad supranational policy to a local reality throughout its implementation. As a result, the municipality was unprepared to carry out project operations on the ground as conceptualized in KENSUP’s policy design, leading to significant delays and resource constraints. Evidently,
there was not enough thought put towards the project’s sustainability despite the early recognition that the project would likely encounter resource issues. Ultimately, it appears as though KENSUP’s housing project is an inappropriate strategy for a Ministry that is under-resourced and relatively inexperienced in informal settlement upgrading initiatives. The following chapter will explore how, by neglecting to consider the project’s sustainability, the government has failed to properly gage important economic and social factors that will affect the affordability of the new housing units for their selected demographic.

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168 As this is a pilot project and the first attempt of its kind.
Chapter 2: Investigating Impact and Challenging Strategy

The national government of Kenya has adopted ‘slum upgrading’ policy and established the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) aiming to improve the livelihoods and security of residents through upgrading housing structures, securing tenure, and providing infrastructure to increase access for service delivery. However, KENSUP’s slum upgrading method of gradually upgrading existing structures into more durable housing provides a distorted version of in situ informal settlement upgrading since housing structures are replaced by new apartment complexes and residents are temporarily displaced while the new housing units are constructed. Although several residents interviewed in this research project claim that access to infrastructure and basic services has improved for some of the selected beneficiaries of the new housing units, the project has not necessarily changed other important attributes of ‘improved livelihoods’ such as, employment opportunities available, access to capital, or the social mobility of residents. This chapter examines the implications of neglecting these factors affecting the livelihoods of residents in order to focus primarily on the aspect of housing. After exploring some of the negative outcomes the KENSUP project has had on residents, I will argue that KENSUP’s housing project has shown a lack of consideration for economic opportunities and the role of social networks in residents’ economic activity as both producers and consumers. Moreover, this chapter considers whether or not the housing cooperative model is effective and appropriate for this project given the context of Kenya’s liberalized land markets.

Section 2.1: The implications of focusing mainly on housing

When examining the effect that KENSUP’s ‘slum upgrading’ project has had on residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East community, one can compare the benefits experienced as a result of the
project versus its costs. This form of analysis allows for the identification of specific strategies that are more harmful or helpful in terms of their impact on residents both individually and for the community at large. Through semi-formal interviews, residents shared their views on how the informal settlement upgrading project has changed their lives and impacted how they earn their livelihoods. My research indicates that while many residents agree that there has been improvement in access to services in the community due to the various upgrading initiatives, the benefits that have been tangible to residents since the project’s implementation in 2004 have not necessarily been connected to KENSUP’s housing redevelopment project. Furthermore, there have been negative consequences from the project’s implementation that demonstrate its role in increasing economic differentiation in the community. Although it is widely accepted that providing affordable housing to the urban poor can help ameliorate peoples’ livelihoods and environments in a meaningful way, I argue that KENSUP’s housing redevelopment scheme will not necessarily transform residents’ economic and social realities.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the UN-HABITAT’s partnership with KENSUP dissolved due to differences in vision regarding the project’s plans and implementation. However, the UN-HABITAT remained in the area and in collaboration with the community and the Kenyan government, it carried out upgrading initiatives on a smaller-scale that were separate from KENSUP’s pilot project. One of these upgrading initiatives targeted infrastructure and involved the construction of a road through the village, the insertion of electricity poles to light the road, and the construction of a resource centre for the community providing access to a

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169 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, October 13, 2014.
clinic, an information technology (IT) centre, and a town hall meeting place. ‘Slum upgrading’ projects carried out by the UN-HABITAT are often cited by residents as success stories in terms of providing services to the community:

It [the upgrading project] has increased accessibility. Before there was only a small path whereby if a house caught fire, we couldn’t easily put it off. So now with the road, the fire brigade can drive in. The infrastructure has been getting better every day. Right now, we are setting the high masts with electricity (5 of them in our wards, 300 meter radius each); so [there will be] an overlap of light at night to cut the issue of insecurity.

-Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 20, 2014.

There have also been significant changes regarding security within the community; this is a benefit from the upgrading initiatives that was mentioned frequently in interviews with residents.

Before the project, there was no security in the community. There were pickpockets, robberies; white people could not simply walk through. In those days you [a white person] would need 3 policemen to walk you to where we are speaking now. But the community organized and pushed for police posts to be set up. The lighting system was improved. There was better infrastructure introduced. Security increased and crime decreased. Now people who commit crimes get 3 warnings, then they are declared not fit for the community and driven out. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 20, 2014.

The positive aspects of the project that residents have cited most frequently include improved access to services like water, electricity, sanitation and hygiene (i.e. toilets), infrastructure (road construction, street lights), garbage collection, and security. These are also benefits that work towards expanding residents’ rights as citizens as they work towards realizing the rights of residents to access basic services and the use of public space. But not all of these benefits originate from KENSUP’s housing project. The complaints made in interviews with KENSUP’s project beneficiaries were mainly concerned with service delivery connected to KENSUP’s

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170 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village. November 20, 2014.
housing project, while the praise they gave was about upgrading initiatives that provide services for the community at large. In this way, most of the benefits cited by residents were connected to the UN-HABITAT’s *in situ* upgrading initiatives in the community, independent of KENSUP’s housing project. These personal accounts from residents demonstrate that making positive changes and ‘upgrading’ livelihoods does not necessarily require a resource-intensive housing model. Moreover, these accounts also suggest that the lives and livelihoods of residents are being negatively affected by the project’s specific focus on housing in several ways.

There are other upgrading initiatives in the community that involve short-term projects which address issues that are imperative to the success of any upgrading effort such as education, community organization, economic opportunities, infrastructure, sanitation and hygiene, etc. These projects are important for the community as well as residents who are not part of Zone A’s selected beneficiaries; this way residents see tangible benefits, change and improved access to services despite not directly benefiting from the housing project. Further benefits of these initiatives include improvements in community organizing and tangible evidence of the government delivering services to Kibera’s urban poor. The following interview passage provides some detail about a community volunteer project organized by the government involving the youth of Kibera in various upgrading initiatives:

> Sometimes the government comes as the partner, but really they just give us a very small amount to entice the youth to participate. They are getting less than half a dollar a day. Because they remain within the locality that they are serving, they are also a dweller, the person using that water, social amenities like toilets, schools, churches, mosques, or whatever other areas that everyone shares. Currently we are trying to write new proposals to extend this kind of project, because this is just short-term period work involved in the upgrading project, providing some work for young men and women who are well-learned, but have no jobs, it’s a challenge. –*Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village*, November 25, 2014.
As suggested in the interview excerpt, resources are limited for these types of upgrading efforts. This is why community members are often asked to volunteer their time and labour. Although attempts are sometimes made to provide modest payments to volunteers (e.g. less than half a dollar a day), these levels of compensation are so low that they cannot actually be considered as employment opportunities for residents. Subsequently, what little support that exists for this kind of community mobilizing and sensitization diminishes when resources are channelled towards KENSUP’s housing project. Perhaps if resources were more readily available for upgrading initiatives other than housing, there could be more opportunities for employment creation or volunteer compensation in the community.

Section 2.2: The threat of gentrification and neglect of economic concerns

There have been numerous costs attached to KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera. Some of these consequences are currently relevant while others have potential to become problematic in the near future. My fieldwork proves that this project has demonstrated a lack of consideration for economic opportunities available to residents, the effect on existing income-generating activities, the role of social networks in residents’ economic activity, and the possibility for future experiences of gentrification in the community. The failure of past affordable housing projects in Kibera contextualizes residents distrust towards KENSUP’s current housing project. Residents of Kibera experienced gentrification in the early 1990s with the ‘Nyayo High-Rise Estate’ affordable housing project undertaken by the National Housing cooperation.171 Residents in the Soweto-East community were told these affordable housing units were being for them, but

171 Ibid, 296. The National Housing Corporation is a state-owned corporation owned by the Government of Kenya; the board of directors consists of 9 members: 5 of which are from the private sector and 4 of which are principal secretaries or their representatives from various ministries (such as housing). “About us,” National Housing Corporation, accessed August 10, 2015, http://www.nhckenya.co.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=48
in reality the flats were occupied by members of Nairobi’s middle class, excluding residents of Kibera from its use. A resident describes how the experience of the former High-Rise Estate project affected Kibera’s Soweto-East community in the following interview excerpt:

When you walk in, there is an estate called High-rise; the estate was built after appealing to residents of Kibera who were told they would be built for them, and it never happened. So there was fear of the same thing happening; the same gimmicks and strategies used by the government to evict people living there so they can build those buildings. So there were some reservations of accepting the entire project; there were even people who went to court, and when the court settled the matter and built the decanting site moving residents there, it wasn’t until then that people began to trust the government. And now people feel they can one day own them [KENSUP’s new housing units]. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 25, 2014.

This past experience speaks to the community’s scepticism about the intended outcome of KENSUP’s housing project before it was even implemented. Although it is too early in the project’s implementation to determine whether gentrification has been demonstrated, KENSUP’s new housing structures are certainly opening up Kibera’s Soweto-East community to the possibility of gentrification in the future. According to David Harvey, ‘accumulation by dispossession’ can occur where there is a possibility of profitable redevelopment; Kibera fits this precondition. The inability of the state to accumulate capital sustainably in order to expand reproduction within the city has resulted in attempts to accumulate the urban space being occupied by residents of informal settlements. This has been done by dispossessing them from those areas through evictions that are forced, coerced or market-led. Nairobi’s fiercely competitive housing market provides context for citizens’ willingness to occupy structures built in/near the informal settlement Kibera as there is limited access to urban space in the city.

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Additionally, the congested traffic and considerable time it takes to commute across the city contribute to the high demand for land/housing closer to Nairobi’s core. The issue of market-driven evictions and displacements are relevant in the community since upgrading the quality of the land can lead to an increase in its value and price, driving out residents who can no longer afford to live there. While these processes of market-led evictions may appear to be less contentious than forced evictions since they are more subtle and covert, the effect of displacing marginalized residents is ultimately the same. The experience of the ‘High-rise Estate’ project in Kibera exemplifies how residents of informal settlements are vulnerable to this type of ‘accumulation by dispossession’, where marginalized residents are dispossessed from the land they were occupying in order to create housing that will make a profit in Nairobi’s competitive housing market.

Fears of gentrification and market-led evictions are particularly worrisome in the context of KENSUP’s pilot in Kibera since many residents have already been removed from their community and temporarily relocated to another area. The stakes are high because if KENSUP’s pilot has the same result as the former High-rise project, residents occupying the decanting site will find themselves as victims of displacement and divorced from their original community. Moreover, the housing project has had an adverse effect on how residents earn their livelihoods due to the relocation of the project’s beneficiaries (residents of Zone A) and their subsequent removal from existing social networks. The following resident’s account provides an example of the negative economic implications associated with the relocation of participants of the housing project to a site outside of the Soweto-East community:

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Kibera is about 5 kilometers from the city center.
Originally I lived in my house which I never paid [for], I had my own business next to my house, now my business is gone. Here yes the house is good and nice but there are no business opportunities for me. Also the demand to join the [housing] cooperative and save up to Ksh 1 million deposit to get the new houses being built [is a challenge]. The move has negatively impacted my business and therefore I have no income. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

When it comes to understanding both formal and informal human settlements in urban areas, one must recall that peoples’ relationships to capital and to land depend on time, place and space. The temporary relocation of residents to the decanting site in Lang’ata has created a heavy and often economically crippling financial burden of transportation to the city center for many residents. This suggests that there had been a lack of understanding of the economic importance of social networks in the implementation of this policy as residents’ location impacts the income-earning abilities of residents. The location of the temporary housing structures is important because if one is already earning a very low income, the additional cost of having to commute a considerable distance takes away a substantial portion of an already modest income.\(^{175}\) This relocation decision can be considered as gender insensitive since the reproductive labour activities of women in the community (such as childcare, food preparation, and other domestic duties), often requires their productive labour activity to be close to home. As the decanting site is removed from the markets that women participants usually draw their business from, their ability to engage in income-generating activities due to their unpaid domestic responsibilities is constrained. Additionally, residents have raised concerns over the lack of meaningful employment opportunities provided throughout the project’s implementation, which undermines attempts to improve the social and economic status of residents. This absence of economic

\(^{175}\) Whereas residents used to be able to either to engage in income-generating activities within the community, or if they earned their livelihoods in the city center, it was less expensive and considerably faster to get there from Kibera’s Soweto-East community.
opportunities impacts the affordability of the new housing units, causing residents to worry about their security of tenure as tenants or home owners of the new housing units. When asked in an interview whether or not the project would fulfill its objectives, a resident expressed the following concerns:

I believe some people will be deprived of the total benefit. Because as they are coming here, they will gain the houses, but the spaces they used to have to do their small-scale businesses has not yet been achieved. So on the issue of better housing, no question about it, it has been achieved. The issue of better infrastructure, no doubt about it, it has been achieved. But now the thing is, how are they going to gain economic empowerment? At the end of the day, you are not just coming to sit in this house and that is all. You’ll have to be paying a certain amount of money every month so that you can work out paying your mortgage. On the one hand, we are getting better infrastructure, better housing facilities, but on the other hand, we have a vacuum that we need to fill: economic empowerment. - Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENUSP’s pilot project, November 25, 2014.

If residents are still accountable for monthly rent payments, then their ability to generate income is essential in order to be able to enjoy the upgraded housing situation long-term. Otherwise, it is possible that evictions will occur which once again result in residents being priced out of Nairobi’s competitive housing market. This would force residents to find space within a new informal settlement, potentially displaying symptoms of gentrification if the evicted units' new occupants are more affluent. Since increasing urban competitiveness and the intense commodification of land severely limits the space that is available to the urban poor in Nairobi, securing tenure in urban areas is difficult - particularly on good quality land where there is access to the city center and public services. In this way, gentrification occurs when market pressures are created to push residents of informal settlements off of valuable urban land near the city center, forcing them to relocate to other informal settlements (often in peri-urban areas or further towards the fringes of the city) to make room for processes of capitalist urbanization. Despite the
fact that upgrading initiatives are supposed to support the expansion of residents’ rights as citizens, this type of policy does not protect residents from the pressures imposed by these competitive market forces.

Several residents described their positions of economic precariousness as a barrier to saving for the 10 percent down-payment of the new housing units (a prerequisite for residents to gain access to these homes).\(^\text{176}\) The lack of income-generating opportunities available to residents living at the decanting site makes paying rent for the temporary housing and saving for the new housing units very difficult. The following quotation demonstrates an overall lack of clarity about the pricing and payment process that has left some residents afraid that they will be turned away in this final phase of the project when the housing units become move-in ready:

The people here thought they were being helped, so whatever they did they thought they were being helped when you can’t afford the maximum to buy these houses… And being helped they thought they only needed a portion of it. They didn’t think it was a must to have saved the down-payment. They thought that if you were here, once the Ministry finished the houses, you would need to move back whether or not you’ve saved enough. They thought the upgrading was changing the face of Kibera, not just undermining people. They thought the point was that anybody in Kibera should have access to the houses. Whether you save or don’t save. But now they’re saying that you need to pay 1 point something million shillings \([1.4]\), and a person like me can’t afford to pay that. It means that people are being carried away from the project due to the cost. That is the fear of the people that the project is out of their hands because of the unaffordability. So people are demoralized in a way. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 20, 2014.

The price of the housing units has increased since a price was set during the project design phase.\(^\text{177}\) An interview with a former Ministry employee working on the project confirmed that

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\(^\text{176}\) Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project and interview with member of the housing cooperative board in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.

\(^\text{177}\) The price of the units increased from the time of the initial design of the project (in 2005) at around 400,000 to 900,000 ksh \([\$3896 \text{ USD} – \$8767 \text{ USD}]\) to approximately 1.4 million ksh \([\$13, 637 \text{ USD}]\) in the current phase of
the construction of the apartment buildings went over budget and the government needed to raise the price due to a lack of resources.\textsuperscript{178} Despite the fact that the project has already run over its budget, KENSUP’s plan was to expand the project to Kibera’s other three zones. Most of the residents interviewed for this research project were still under the impression that the project’s expansion was going to happen. Subsequently, there are many residents in the community who are patiently waiting for housing structures but may not be receiving them after all these years now that the ambitious nature of the plan is in conflict with the government’s budget deficit. The fear is that some of the new housing units will be made available to people who were not selected as project beneficiaries as a consequence of the increased cost. If this is the case, then residents who are unable to afford the housing units will be excluded from the project, thereby demonstrating the government’s ability to profit from the land’s privatization. This result would serve the state’s interest since they would finally be able to make money off of Kibera (government-owned land) through payments from the housing cooperative, taxes and potentially from private investors if they are drawn into the area. As David Harvey argues, with capitalist urbanization “how we view the world and define possibilities depends on which side of the tracks we are on and what kinds of consumerism we have access to.”\textsuperscript{179} If the goal is to encourage private investment and draw in a new consumer base, then many of the project’s intended beneficiaries will struggle with its impact on their established social and economic networks. Since the state tends to be implicated in facilitating gentrification,\textsuperscript{180} the state’s

\textsuperscript{178} Interviews with selected participants of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village.
\textsuperscript{179} Harvey, Rebel Cities, 15.
interests in the potentially profitable side-effects of this housing project must remain under intense scrutiny.

Due to delays in project implementation, KENSUP is still working on Zone A of Kibera’s Soweto-East village raising serious doubts about its intention to expand the project to the village’s other 3 zones (B, C and D). Over 4 years after residents were relocated to the temporary housing structures at the decanting site in Lang’ata, residents are still occupying them while they wait for the new housing units to be ready. In addition to residents becoming worried with whether or not they will receive a new housing unit, residents also expressed concern about whether they will be able to return to the community and rebuild their disrupted social networks. Moreover, many residents have built up arrears over this considerable span of time which potentially disqualifies them from accessing the new housing units. Subsequently, there are rumours of outsiders occupying the decanting site as not all intended project beneficiaries could afford the monthly payments for rent and other amenities or handle the lifestyle changes. The following interview citation mirrors many complaints voiced by residents occupying the decanting site housing structures:

There are no such opportunities for jobs, there are no jobs here, no business opportunities, the cost of transport to town is expensive, you see from town to Kibera you pay Ksh 20, but transport cost to this place (Lang’ata), they charge between Ksh 50-100. At Kibera there are more opportunities for casual labour especially with ongoing road construction nearby. The construction workers can buy foodstuff from me. There are no customers here. Here it’s so difficult to get such opportunities. I hope when we go back to my original place life will be better. I will be able to sell to my old customers. I am hoping things will change when we move to the new housing units. –Resident of Kibera’s

181 Soweto-East is one of Kibera’s 12 villages.
182 Interview with member of the housing cooperative board in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.
183 Huchzermeyer, Cities With ‘Slums,’ 163; and interviews with selected participants of KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village.
This quotation demonstrates how residents are unsure if the disruption to their social networks will be resolved and go back to the way things were upon their return or if the damage will be irreparable, restricting their access to their former client base. The process of relocation and redevelopment for this project is disrupting residents’ connection to home and work. For instance, the design of the new housing structures discourages informal businesses from operating within the community, not only by offering a limited amount of formalized commercial spaces, but also by crowing out informalized commercial activities that can operate within the housing community since the structures are gated, which discourages non-residents from accessing the space. Although there are a few spaces set aside for businesses within the apartment complex, they will be formalized with residents paying to use the space. For many residents, it will be a significant financial burden to add a rental costs to their other expenses, thereby limiting the spaces provided for small businesses to residents with the ability to pay for it, possibly excluding more marginalized residents who would benefit from an income-generating opportunity the most. The general concern from residents is that the absence of job creation possibilities renders their future income-earning ability as uncertain. In order to justify relocating residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East community, KENSUP argued that residents would be compensated when they return to the area with a better living environment that would improve their livelihoods. However, the relocation process has negatively affected the lives and livelihoods of residents as many will not be returning to the area in the same socio-economic position they were in before. This suggests that KENSUP’s housing project has not only failed to expand the rights of residents as citizens, but in some cases has also infringed upon them.

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184 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 6, 2014.
According to UN-HABITAT and KENSUP’s policy, the housing project was supposed to encourage and create employment opportunities for residents where it was possible.\textsuperscript{185} However, government officials decided that contractors with experience needed to be hired for quality control.\textsuperscript{186} As a result, interviews with residents revealed discontent with the government’s lack of follow-through with that promise. The following citation expresses a resident’s criticism of the project for failing to incorporate local labour:

For the labour [connected to KENSUP’ pilot], a greater percentage [of jobs] could have been given to the community. But it was given to other people from other places. And we have very good man power here and people who are educated, but people were taken from other locations. If it was the community itself that was involved here, our lives would have been better than they are right now.” – Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project and former structure owner, November 29, 2014.

If the government had focused less on minimizing costs and instead made more of an effort to employ local labour by encouraging training and mentorship for residents to learn new skills, residents would have had access to better employment opportunities; this would have made it less difficult for them to produce the necessary savings. Nonetheless, these type of assurances through factors other than housing should not have been made to residents during the design phase if KENSUP was not going to follow through with them upon implementation.

Section 2.3: Contextualizing the Limitations of the Housing Cooperative

The goal of KENSUP’s project is to ‘upgrade’ the community while creating an affordable housing solution for Kibera’s urban poor. Since the value of land and housing will inevitably increase through ‘upgrading’ initiatives’, it will create an opportunity for landlords

\textsuperscript{186} Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.
and capitalists to make significant profits and for gentrification to follow. The design team in charge of creating the plans for KENSUP’s pilot project understood these risks and were aware of such past experiences in Nairobi. Subsequently, the implementation of a cooperative housing model was intended to prevent these negative outcomes and to protect residents from financial vulnerability by offering them a safety net where members could pool together resources communally to gain ownership of the new housing structures. However, accounts from residents about their inability to save for the new housing units and to meet current rent payments at the decanting site suggests otherwise.

A cooperative is defined as a voluntary association of people pursuing joint economic, social or cultural goals through democratic control. It is an alternative property system to individual property systems since ownership is communal instead of individual. Although cooperatives are not antithetical to capitalism, they are sometimes considered as forms of resistance against the harmful consequences of private property regimes. There are many examples of cooperatives that have been useful in Kibera such as cooperatives related to food, other businesses and financial savings groups. However, despite the success and value of housing cooperatives in certain contexts, they are not always an appropriate model for securing tenure in marginalized communities as it is important to consider the local reality within which the cooperative is operating. There are constraints to the ‘freedom’ and decision-making power of this housing cooperative because it must operate within the context of Nairobi’s competitive land and housing market. In this way, there are limits to the power cooperatives can have in protecting marginalized residents against the destructive effects of capitalist urbanization.

It remains unclear how the housing cooperative in Kibera’s Soweto-East village will be able to effectively shield residents from the political interests of the government in power and from competitive market pressures within the city. Over the past 50 years in Kenya, when it came to formal titling of land at the policy level, the assumption was made that formalisation equals individualisation.\textsuperscript{188} Kenya’s Land Adjudication Act reflects this assumption by only showing concern for interests in land that amount to ownership.\textsuperscript{189} As property rights benefit those who wield power, it comes as no surprise that in a city like Nairobi where competition for land is fierce, more and more citizens are becoming priced out of housing markets.\textsuperscript{190} Nairobi’s formal housing markets have not been regulated in a way that favours human rights (such as housing rights) over private property rights.\textsuperscript{191} Even the informal and affordable housing options that exist are exploitative, with many non-resident owners of illegal structures extracting profits from tenants.\textsuperscript{192} Approximately 84.7\% of Nairobi’s housing market rents, with a big gap in price between the rental housing options for middle-class citizens and renting options for residents of informal settlements.\textsuperscript{193} This means the transition from inhabiting informal settlements to middle-class residencies is quite difficult. Accordingly, ‘slum upgrading’ should be targeted at those who cannot afford to move from informal settlements to multi-storey housing alternatives.\textsuperscript{194} KENSUP’s housing project compromises tenure security by increasing market competition in the area due to improved access to services and infrastructure which attracts

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid, 1464.
\textsuperscript{190} Midheme and Moulaert, “Pushing Back the Frontiers of Property,” 73.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid, 22.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, 24-25.
people from wealthier classes; this, in turn, can compromise the affordability of housing and force the most marginalized residents to leave the community.\textsuperscript{195}

The failure of the government of Kenya’s urban land and housing policies has encouraged prevailing informal land markets.\textsuperscript{196} The widely held assumption propelled by Hernando De Soto that there is a direct link between formalised property rights and economic productivity, and a causal relationship between formal titling and access to credit facilities, has influenced Kenya’s land policy despite the fact that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support such claims.\textsuperscript{197} This emphasis on individual private property rights can lead to a wave of dispossession among the poor who are unable to meet strict development regulations or adapt to market fluctuations.\textsuperscript{198} The inability to adapt to market fluctuations is already being demonstrated with residents being unable to pay rent at the decanting site and to save for the down-payment on the new housing units.\textsuperscript{199} The following interview excerpt highlights these financial constraints:

\begin{quote}
We are expected to pay [for] these houses and we can’t afford [them]. It’s also expensive to pay for this house and at the same time join a cooperative society to start paying for the new houses before we move into them. Where are we expected to get that money? – Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, 26.
\textsuperscript{197} Hernando de Soto’s hypothesis assumes that the poor have failed to benefit from capitalism because of their inability to produce capital due to an inadequate system of property rights; this completely eschews discussions of substantive redistribution. Musembi, “De Soto and Land Relations in Rural Africa,” 1457-1459.
\textsuperscript{198} Midheme and Moulatet, “Pushing back the frontiers of property,” 73.
\textsuperscript{199} According to interviews with residents, they were paying around 500-1000 ksh [approximately $5-10 USD] per month before the project’s implementation, but the housing project requires them to pay 3000 ksh [approximately $30 USD] per room per month. This is not including the 10 percent down-payment they are expected to save in order to receive a new housing unit.
One of the questions relevant to the analysis of this project is whether or not the way that tenure is secured through the alternative property system of a housing cooperative model offsets some of the harmful effects of capitalist urbanization. As the government’s policy approach of ‘slum upgrading’ generally increases the value of land, Nairobi’s experience has demonstrated that participants of land titling programmes who are poor often come under pressure to sell their assets to developers and “slum-lords,” exacerbating their marginality and increasing inequality.\textsuperscript{200} KENSUP’s design team incorporated the cooperative model into the plan in response to these past experiences and in hopes of avoiding this trend. However, KENSUP’s attempts to address the negative effects of land commodification and distribution in Nairobi have not yet proven to be successful. Since Kenya’s land policy restricts the state’s role in distributing land and securing tenure by encouraging a market-led approach to land reform,\textsuperscript{201} the responsibility of providing social protection for land and housing is shifted from national governments towards the private sector. This exposes the limits of the cooperative model when the larger parameters governing land remain unchanged. As a result, the state has contradictory and incompatible commitments: private, individualized land markets on the one hand, and the mitigation of that commercial model through collective ownership in the form of cooperatives on the other.

Most residents in Soweto-East village do not live in Kibera by choice but rather due to economic constraints.\textsuperscript{202} As a result, the idea of being permanently tied to the settlement may not

\textsuperscript{200} Musembi, “De Soto and Land Relations in Rural Africa,”1470.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid,1458
\textsuperscript{202} Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 18, 2014. As mentioned in chapter 1, these observations were a result of a socio-economic mapping exercise undertaken by KENSUP and the UN-HABITAT.
be appealing for all residents. An architect who worked on the project explains how KENSUP’s design team conceptualized the creation of the housing cooperative model saying:

It was decided that individual property rights would not be the way tenure was secured to dissuade residents from selling their units to receive money. They were given two options: the first was to enter a housing cooperative in order to mobilize finances for the units; residents of this Zone A pilot were asked to save 50 shillings every Friday. In this cooperative model they would have shares of the housing structure, giving residents the right to stay there but not the sell the units. A second option of renting was given to those so they were not forcing people to enter a cooperative they might not want to be a part of.

– Former member of design team for KENSUP’s housing project, November 6, 2014.

Residents were supposed to have a renting option as an alternative to ownership so that people would not be forced to join the cooperative if they did not want to. However, it appears as though only financially secure members of the cooperative are being selected to occupy the new housing units that are ready and that residents who may have preferred the renting option will be excluded. As a result, it is unclear whether or not residents who are uncomfortable with this cooperative model will benefit from the project after all. The governing structure of the housing cooperative was designed to be community-led, with new members of the cooperative board elected annually. However, the decision regarding which residents will be first to occupy the newly completed housing units have been left to a separate vetting committee where the selectivity of residents to occupy the new units seems to be based on their financial ability to pay full down-payment on the mortgage. This selectivity is making the project more exclusionary by isolating some of the project’s most marginalized beneficiaries who chose to rent.

It is important to understand the context of Kibera when implementing this type of property system as Kibera houses many different people with different housing needs. Some

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203 Interview with member of the housing cooperative board in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.
residents are grounded and attached to the place, some are transient and will move frequently within and outside of the city depending on personal circumstances, and others consider their living situations in the settlement as temporary while they come to Nairobi to work with the intention of returning to their rural homes. Another reason that KENSUP provided for its decision to form a community-led housing cooperative was that the cooperative would enable the shared use of recreational spaces that could be used to facilitate other employment or income-generating activities.\textsuperscript{204} During the design phase, planners set aside the bottom floors of the housing structures to be devoted to market activity where a few shops and small businesses could be established and formalized.\textsuperscript{205} However, these plans fail to understand the context of informal activity in Kibera as the space being offered is too small to accommodate all residents that are engaged in entrepreneurial activity in the community. In addition, the design of the housing redevelopment has failed to consider the importance of place, space and social networks since they have essentially created a gated community by segregating the structures from the rest of Kibera. If residents are renting space for their businesses within these housing structures, then how will they be able to generate business if they are unable to draw in customers from the rest of the community?

KENSUP’s project planners failed to understand Kibera’s unique context by not anticipating the challenges of establishing democratic member control of the cooperative. Although the housing cooperative has approximately 1500 members from the community registered, not all members have succeeded in saving for the 10 percent down payment on the

\textsuperscript{204} Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 6, 2014.
\textsuperscript{205} Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, October 13, 2014.
new houses, and only 624 housing units have been completed to-date.\textsuperscript{206} When conducting my fieldwork in December 2014, it appeared as though many cooperative members had no control over who was to be selected as the recipients of the housing units that were move-in ready. Despite the fact that leadership of the cooperative is rotational with elections that take place on an annual basis, it is not up to the cooperative board to select which residents get to occupy the new flats.\textsuperscript{207} These decisions were left to a vetting committee which consisted of various community representatives selected by residents who were in collaboration with the government. The structure of the vetting committee demonstrates that members of the cooperative do not have democratic control over these decisions that affect them and that many members are unable to participate in important decision-making processes. With a tarnished history of election violence in 2008,\textsuperscript{208} Kibera’s Soweto-East community is prone to corruption with frequent complaints that people in leadership positions take care of their family and friends first.\textsuperscript{209} These tensions complicate democratic decision-making, which affects their success and sustainability since cooperatives depend on transparency and accountability to function effectively.

The assumption that highly marginalized residents would be able to cover the costs of the new housing units was an oversight in the project’s design phase. Although the government has subsidized the cost to residents by charging a very low price despite the structures’ high cost and using numerous resources to try to make it affordable, it has not been enough for most residents. The following interview passage describes the expectation for there to be some sort of saving

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{206} Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 18, 2014.
\item \textsuperscript{207} Interview with member of the housing cooperative board in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.
\item \textsuperscript{209} Interview with selected participants of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, December 5, 2014; November 11, 2014.
\end{itemize}
mechanism to protect residents who are unable to afford the cost of the new housing units, but also the confusion surrounding its establishment:

We don’t say we come to a level whereby everyone can afford to pay the amount they are supposed to pay every month. Because it depends on how much I have. Say somebody’s earning 5000 shillings every month, they have to pay the rent, school fees, food, electricity, and somebody’s making 50,000 shillings. And the same people are being told to pay maybe 5-6,000 shillings every month. It means that the first person will only be working to pay for their housing. That’s why we’re trying to have a level base, so far we have not yet come up with a very clear strategy of how much we should pay every month.

–Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 25, 2014.

The lack of clarity regarding the pricing mechanism for financially insecure residents is particularly significant since it is not clear at this point whether or not it will be followed through with. According to interviews with residents on the cooperative board, the decisions regarding which residents will move into the new housing units are primarily being based on peoples’ immediate financial ability to pay the 10 percent down-payment. In practice it would seem that the priority is being put on recruiting residents who might be less economically precarious, suggesting that they do not want to include the most marginalized members in the cooperative since they would likely require more financial support. This forces one to consider what will happen to those residents who have been unable to achieve this goal. As demonstrated through the following interview quotation, the confusion surrounding the fees residents would have to pay and the project’s timeframe regarding when residents would move into the new houses also played a factor in peoples’ inability to plan their savings appropriately:

We are expected to pay for the houses through our cooperative, after paying a certain amount of money you get ownership of the house. Depending on how much you pay you can have 1 room, two rooms or 3 rooms, however they are yet to agree on how much.

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210 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.
The existence of this cooperative model seems encouraging because it appears to support an alternative property system to individual private ownership where residents share ownership of the housing units and enjoy security of tenure and occupancy rights. However, in reality the government is still reliant on residents purchasing the ownership of their investment and will likely be stringent about collecting payments.

Since being a member of the housing cooperative means that people cannot individually sell their assets, it is intended to discourage residents from selling their housing units to receive the money and remain living in the slums. The following interview excerpt provides a resident’s view of the cooperative’s purpose:

When you are saving, you are saving with your friends. It is not the government that you’re giving your money to. Through the saaco [cooperative], you are giving it to the officials you elected to become the leaders. So if you become tired of the project, you can ask for your money from that community, not the government, because the secretary of the project is you as a community. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 29, 2014.

The citation above highlights the importance of trust and accountability to establishing a successful and sustainable housing cooperative since one must have faith that the community will handle your savings responsibly and that if you ever need to move, you will not be left with nothing. However if the problem becomes that residents are unable to afford to remain living in the new housing units, then it will not have succeeded in upgrading livelihoods in a sustainable way. Another benefit associated with cooperatives is that membership increases the ability of residents to access capital through securing loans. However, if residents are unable to make the payments then they do not get to enjoy this benefit. If membership of the cooperative only
consists of the very poor, how can they hope to cover everyone’s costs and pool together enough resources to achieve this goal? If residents become excluded from the project and do not gain access to the new housing units, then not only will the project fail to positively impact their lives, it will also result in their displacement. Consequently, this infringes upon several key aspects of residents’ ‘right to adequate housing’, a human right that recognizes the freedoms and entitlements of peoples’ housing needs including protection from forced evictions, security of tenure, and participation in housing-related decision-making at the national and community levels.211 Given the government’s limited resources, one must revisit questions regarding KENSUP’s motivation for focusing on housing over alternative upgrading initiatives and consider whether this project was interested in eliminating aesthetically displeasing shanties that previously occupied the settlement to replace them with a more formalized, attractive and modern looking environment.

Section 2.4: Summary

KENSUP’s primary focus on the housing aspect in their approach at ‘slum upgrading’ has led to the neglect of other important attributes to improving livelihoods such as, employment opportunities, access to capital and the social mobility of residents. As demonstrated by residents’ positions of economic precariousness, KENSUP’s housing project has shown a lack of consideration for economic opportunities, income-generating activities, and the role of social networks in residents’ economic activity. Although members of the cooperative are able to make mortgage payments over the span of 20 years, residents are also exposed to the market pressures/distortions that might alter their ability to pay their fees, forcing them to leave the housing

cooperative in the future. As a result, the vetting committee’s recent process for selecting residents to move into the new houses is selecting members who can demonstrate financial accountability of the long-term payments. Since the cooperative has not yet been able to successfully pool together resources for residents’ communal ownership of the apartment buildings in a way that is inclusive to all of the project’s intended beneficiaries (particularly the most marginalized), the cost of the financial prerequisite of the housing cooperative has been unattainable for some residents.\textsuperscript{212} This goes against one of the project’s main objectives: to provide an affordable housing solution that improves the living standards of some of the city’s most economically vulnerable citizens.\textsuperscript{213} The community’s housing cooperative board does not seem able to avoid the social exclusion of certain residents from accessing this land and housing, which suggests that the selective and exclusionary behavior displayed by this particular group is becoming increasingly problematic.

In order to express their disillusionment with the project, a resident stated that they “have been living at the decanting site for 4 years. It is those who have money who will be moving to those new houses. It [the project] has not been a success.”\textsuperscript{214} Because of the project’s many delays over the past 10 years, residents of the Soweto-East community have been through many ups and downs, changing peoples’ views about the government’s involvement and hopes for the project’s success. Evidently, the ideological imperatives supporting KENSUP’s decision to focus on housing and to create this modern housing redevelopment have complicated the way this

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{212} The financial prerequisite being the 10 percent down-payment on the housing units required by residents in order to make it through the housing cooperative’s vetting process.
\textsuperscript{214} Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, December 5, 2014 [translated].
\end{flushleft}
upgrading initiative is approaching the issue of housing rights.\textsuperscript{215} The government’s support of the internationally recognized ‘right to adequate housing’ has been set against the property regime to which the Kenyan government is still committed regarding land allocation.\textsuperscript{216} The following chapter will address how the various contradictions and challenges revealed throughout the implementation of KENSUP’s pilot project have almost certainly affected the perception residents have towards citizenship, government accountability and the struggle for a meaningful right to the city.

\textsuperscript{215} I am referring to the ideological imperatives discussed earlier in the chapter that accompany a capitalist framework, such as economic competitiveness, beautification of the city, and the positive spin-offs of gentrification. \textsuperscript{216} As this property regime prioritizes private and formalized property rights in a market-led system, the government ends up neglecting many of Nairobi’s urban poor who are priced out of formal land and housing markets.
Chapter 3: Exposing Perceptions and Contextualizing Outcomes

In situ informal settlement upgrading initiatives are intended to increase the quality of life and access to services for residents without their displacement or divorce from the land and space they have been occupying. Therefore, if done properly, upgrading initiatives make citizens feel that the government is accountable to them through the delivery of these services which support the citizen rights of residents. For this reason, it is important to pay attention to the challenges revealed throughout the implementation of KENSUP’s housing project relating to how the rights of residents have been addressed. As previously discussed, residents of Kibera are from a marginalized group that are often denied access to services and the use of public space as a result of Nairobi’s historically uneven distribution of land and urban space, and because of the negative effects of capitalist urbanization. As a result, residents are forced to struggle for the right to access/use urban space and participate in decisions that shape urban spaces. Since the main objective of in situ informal settlement upgrading strategies are predicated on the expansion of these rights, any upgrading strategy that does not support residents’ struggle to achieve a meaningful right to the city is inappropriate. The rights and citizenship of residents in this context are not exclusively in reference to formal legal citizenship, but also about civic participation, recognition and community membership, and the legal/formal structures that enable or constrain their meaningful recognition and participation (particularly for marginalized groups). The distortions made to in situ informal settlement upgrading policy through KENSUP’s housing project have prevented the government from establishing a trusting relationship with residents based on accountability because of the negative impact the project has had on the lives and livelihoods of residents. As a result, resident views and perceptions of citizenship are important to consider when determining whether or not this project has
contributed to their struggle to attain the right to the city. The sections of this chapter will be divided based on the different stages of KENSUP’s project: initial enumeration and design phase, relocation to the decanting site stage, and the final construction and move-in phase of the new housing units. Throughout this chapter I will examine the importance of citizenship to KENSUP’s project, the impact the project has had on residents’ perception of government accountability, citizenship, and human rights, and the way in which the project has affected residents’ struggle for the right to the city.

Section 3.1: Initial enumeration and design phase

The urban livelihoods approach considers how policies and planners should account for certain vulnerabilities that are common among the urban poor in cities like Nairobi. According to Meikle, these vulnerabilities include: “the informal legal status of poor men and women; poor living environments; and poor urban men and women’s dependence on a cash economy for basic goods and services.” As I argue in Chapter 2, economic vulnerabilities are inadequately addressed in KENSUP’s housing project. Moreover, while access to KENSUP’s housing redevelopments may address some of the urban livelihood vulnerabilities experienced by residents of informal settlements, such as legal status and living environments, it is also possible to address these vulnerabilities in other ways. KENSUP’s housing project failed to effectively address all of the vulnerabilities of the urban poor despite its attempt to improve urban livelihoods. According to Carney, a livelihood is sustainable when it can handle/ recover from fluctuations and shocks by maintaining its capabilities and assets in the present and future. My fieldwork and analysis of KENSUP’s pilot in Kibera suggests that the housing project fails to

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218 Rakodi, Urban livelihoods, 4.
support sustainable urban livelihoods since the socio-economic positions of several residents have suffered as a direct result of the project’s implementation.

There are many informal settlement upgrading strategies that work towards improving urban livelihoods and reducing the vulnerabilities of residents which do not require a specific focus on housing. Residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village made it clear during interviews that the various upgrading initiatives which have taken place over the course of the past several years in the community have positively impacted peoples’ quality of life by improving living conditions in the area and enabling access to basic services that did not previously exist. Before upgrading initiatives began in the community, residents’ access to water was particularly poor, inconvenient and expensive, restricting the ability of its use and contributing to poor sanitation and the spread of diseases. Residents in Kibera are often forced to pay private water vendors who exploit the restricted accessibility and dramatically overcharge (often between 5 to 20 times the tariffs applied to citizens with a metered water connection). As a result, residents of informal settlements pay disproportionately more for water than other citizens in Nairobi. Moreover, the transportation of water from particular stations is a practice that is both time consuming and labour intensive. In fact, women within the community are overwhelmingly responsible for reproductive labour that is unpaid over productive labour that is paid, which

219 Upgrading initiatives that are not specific to KENSUP (e.g. upgrading initiatives in the community carried out by the UN-HABITAT).
220 These are the same conditions the rest of Kibera is experiencing currently.
creates more barriers for women trying to earn an income. In Kibera, 85 percent of women are engaged in water collection on a daily basis. Quantitative data on the time and distance women had to travel to collect water within two informal settlement communities in Kenya (Nyalenda in Kisumu and Kibera in Nairobi) demonstrates that water collection significantly constrains women residents’ livelihoods, affecting possibilities regarding their engagement in the economic sector, education, and time spent engaged in other activities. As argued in Amnesty International’s report on Kenya’s informal settlements, the privatization of water in Kenya has not improved service delivery or affordability of water to residents as accessibility remains poor and prices high.

In addition to water access, Kibera’s high density and population size has been particularly troublesome for waste disposal due to its lack of proper sanitation facilities and toilets. In light of these problems, some residents have been known to produce “flying toilets” which are plastic bags filled with human waste that get thrown into other areas of the slum (due to a lack of proper waste disposal facilities), contributing to the spread of bacteria and disease within the settlement. The following interview excerpt demonstrates the effect that upgrading initiatives have had in the Soweto-East community on transforming the living environment of residents:

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224 The dichotomy between productive and reproductive labours stems from the earliest liberal regimes where the domestic sphere was governed by a patriarchal doctrine. In this sense, reproductive labour is considered to consist of unpaid or non-wage work such as domestic labour and caring activities; basically work that is essential for social reproduction, but often receives no financial compensation. Whereas productive labour is considered to consist of paid or ‘wage’ work that contributes directly to economic production. Janine Brodie, “Globalization, Governance and Gender: Rethinking the agenda for the 21st Century,” in Louise Amoore (ed.) The Global Resistance Reader, (London: Routedge, 2005), 247.

225 Ibid, 175.


I’m still there but my situation has improved. I’m happy. We used to pass stool in the house; I would bring a plastic bag, pass our stool, and then just throw them into the road. In the middle of the night or during the day, at the container there, we would pass urine or stool there like people do in jail. Early in the morning I would just move slowly and throw the bags there when I thought no one could see me. [Because there were no toilets in the area she could access]. The upgrading is now doing wonders. Toilets, we now have them. We have water. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East community, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 29, 2014.

As Kibera has developed informally over the past several decades, a lot of the electricity accessed by residents is accessed illegally through tapped power lines; this is a practice that is very dangerous and results in many deaths and frequent fires throughout the settlement.

Consequently, the government’s willingness to negotiate the introduction of these services within the settlement is an important step towards residents attaining their basic rights as citizens. When asked if the project has changed accessibility to services in the community, a resident responded:

When the project started we had problems with roads. It was difficult for people to access matatus [buses used for public transit], people would even have to hide within the latrines [in order to let vehicles pass], but now they are trying to build enough roads so that matatus can be more accessible. Also the ambulance can now run on some of these roads. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 29, 2014.

Evidently, improvements in service delivery and road access have had a positive effect on security in the community since improving infrastructure and accessibility discourages crime and allows for law enforcement to have a presence where they did not before. Before upgrading initiatives in the area began, it was difficult to enter the settlement in ways other than by foot. But now the construction of the road has improved access to emergency and service delivery vehicles as they are now able to enter the Soweto-East village in areas that were previously inaccessible. In this way, enabling access to these services within informal settlements is an
important step towards expanding the rights of residents as the provision of these basic services are supported by human rights that the government claims to uphold and respect.

Kenya’s 2010 constitution recognizes the right to adequate housing as a universal human right to be respected. As a result, the Kenyan government is supposed to respect various human rights laws (both national and international) that support this right. These obligations include avoiding forced evictions whenever possible, protecting people from the interference of their rights by others, and adopting measures that help realize the right to housing. The Kenyan government has committed to prioritizing the provision of the minimum basic levels of housing for all residents beginning with the most marginalized, ensuring that peoples’ right to participate and to be consulted in decisions that affect them are upheld, and to provide alternatives if these rights are violated. However, the laws stating that forced evictions should not occur if they can be avoided do not actually prohibit the state from performing them; they simply complicate the process so that it takes them longer. In this way, many of the rights that residents are supposed to hold, and the obligations that the government is supposed to support, are not enforceable or can be easily circumvented if the case is made that evictions are necessary or are being carried out in a way that provides fair compensation. There is a difference between enforceable laws and ones that are more aspirational, especially when it comes to informal

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231 Although the structure owners against KENSUP’s housing project were able to delay the demolition by a few years by going through the legal process, the government won the case in court and the project was implemented as planned. There have been several examples of the government forcibly evicting residents of informal settlements in Nairobi despite Kenya’s constitutional commitment to the right to adequate housing. For example, the Nairobi City Council (now the Nairobi County Government) demolished the settlements occupied by residents living in Kabete NITD (Native Industrial Training Department) without discussing relocation or compensation beforehand. Min Jung Kim, “Forced evictions seize Kenyans’ right to adequate housing,” Human Rights Brief: Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, posted December 6, 2013, accessed August 26, 2015, http://hrbrief.org/2013/12/forced-evictions-seize-kenyans-right-to-adequate-housing/
settlements in Kenya where many residents are marginalized, attempts at seeking justice are limited, and the legal process is very slow. Furthermore, the government can create many excuses to support the claim that in situ upgrading is not possible and that the relocation of residents is necessary. Determining fair terms of compensation is also a difficult task as the break-up of social and economic networks often affect residents in ways that are not necessarily quantifiable. This is where the notion of the right to the city becomes relevant for residents of informal settlements; instead of defining citizenship by the recognition of formal/legal status, the view is that people who inhabit the city have the right to the city. Citizens right to the city involves both the right to appropriate urban space (i.e. the right to use and access urban space) and the right to meaningful participation (i.e. the right to be involved in decision-making regarding the production of urban space at any scale). As a result, the struggle of residents in claiming a meaningful right to the city often becomes a power struggle with those who control the city’s resources and set municipal priorities.

Throughout the implementation of the project, KENSUP has failed to ensure the protection and realization of residents’ housing rights in several ways. Kenya’s contested elections in December 2007 led to an eruption of violence throughout the country that had a devastating impact on residents of informal settlements throughout Nairobi, including Kibera. The election violence gave rise to the displacement, death, and forcible eviction of many residents as a result of serious ethnic and political tensions reaching a boiling point. Several

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233 Huchzermeyer gives the example of the South African government ignoring its own national policy that states relocation should be a last resort, making up excuses to justify its lack of consideration for in situ upgrading in its involvement with the Harry Gwala informal settlement in Johannesburg. Huchzermeyer, Cities With 'Slums,' 229-233.
234 Fenster, 219. Henry Lefebvre developed the notion of a ‘right to the city’ in his work published in 1968.
235 Fenster, 219.
intended beneficiaries of Kibera’s Soweto-East housing project were killed or forced to flee the community for their personal safety (and they have never returned), and the initial enumeration conducted before the election was never revised. This means that residents who moved into the structures that were previously occupied by those project beneficiaries who were either killed or chased away from the community have also been excluded from the project and forcibly evicted without compensation through the construction of the new housing. The following interview participant explains this process:

We had post-election violence in 2007, so many people shifted and left their houses which have new occupants; they were not there during enumeration. Those people are considered illegal by the government. But they are still citizens, they are still the same kind of people. So the government is not giving any alternatives for when they are displaced. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 25, 2014.

When a project involves any kind of displacement of residents, it requires careful consideration of peoples’ rights and the assurance that these rights are not being violated or infringed upon. The fact that KENSUP’s housing project has already demonstrated unintentional experiences of displacement and exclusion is indicative of how challenging such an undertaking can be despite the government’s best efforts to avoid harming residents. The following interview excerpt is in response to a question about whether or not residents thought the project has changed how members of the community view their rights and citizenship:

You know human rights issues are very complex. Because what you will be saying is your right probably isn’t my right. But generally the issues are that when you relocate people and demolish/clear whatever structures they used to live in, and then they fail to provide an alternative, I think that is infringing on their rights. And that’s why we’re saying that if we give out the space for construction, we want the government to ensure that these people/community members are given their title deeds. If you get a title there now, your rights will not be infringed on. But if you are relocated or not compensated/settled elsewhere, so that you’re not benefitting from the entire process, I think that is
also infringing on peoples’ rights. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, member of the housing cooperative board, November 29, 2014.

The relocation of residents was always required in this project since it was designed as a housing redevelopment; this design feature alone should have raised red flags about the project’s commitment to respecting residents’ right to adequate housing since it required the temporary displacement of residents in the area. An investigative report conducted by Amnesty International in 2005 expressed fears that the design and implementation of KENSUP’s housing project would not comply with international human rights laws, in particular, the requirements for determining ‘adequate housing’ identified by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee highlighted the following requirements: legal security of tenure, availability of services, location, habitability, affordability, accessibility, and cultural adequacy. Several years later, there have been cases where people have been relocated without compensation, and there have been issues with affordability, service delivery, and overall accessibility. The government has evidently infringed upon the rights of residents.

My fieldwork suggests that many residents believe the government has infringed upon their rights; in particular, the right to adequate housing. KENSUP made it clear that there would be no cash compensation for residents or for both resident and non-resident structure owners of the Soweto-East community. The benefit for residents would be in accessing the new housing units and improved social and physical infrastructure facilities in the community; however, this does not allow flexibility for residents who may not be able to (or want to) follow this process.

Subsequently, residents are forced to accept the design of the new housing structures which is

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237 Huchzermeyer, Cities with ‘Slums.’
240 Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, October 13, 2014.
not fair for those who do not want to adapt to a vertically-built apartment lifestyle where residents’ relationships with their previous neighbours have changed and they must now adjust to having new neighbours in different housing arrangements with one household living one on top of the other.

Since structure owners in the community had to donate their structures to the project without financial compensation, the project has affected how they earn their livelihoods as they no longer receive rental income, limiting their economic opportunities. When asked about whether or not there have been any conflicts or challenges with the implementation of the project, a resident responded with the following:

From other people’s views, yes. Especially the landlords; they were expecting to be compensated. So they don’t fully support the project. But the ones who were affected earlier [structure owners in the first phase of the project in Zone A], they see that it was for the good of the community. But not many people think like this, mostly the landlords. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project and former structure owner, November 25, 2014.

In terms of supporting KENSUP’s pilot project, structure owners who are also residents of the community were eventually convinced to participate in KENSUP’ pilot after extensive community sensitization efforts (including town hall meetings) and accepted that the project would have positive effects for the overall community. This experience is significant because it highlights the power residents had over the decision to implement the project since the government required the community’s participation and consent. Although project documents suggests that residents started off hopeful and supportive once government officials sensitized

241 There were concerns from structure owners who earned their livelihoods from these structures, and also from Nubian structure owners (the tribe who originally occupied the forest where Kibera exists today) whose relatives had been given rights to the land from the colonial government and felt they were not being fairly compensated by the government with the implementation of this project. Demands for compensation from the government were responded to negatively since it was considered it to be definitively government-owned land and the government felt there was nothing to compensate. Huchzermeyer, Cities with ‘Slums,’ 162.
the community and explained the intentions of the project, my interviews with residents display a shifting sense of peoples’ trust in the government’s ability to achieve the goals and objectives it promised residents during the early stages of the project. Evidently, the flaws in the project’s implementation have changed the outlooks of many participants concerning the future success and completion of KENSUP’s pilot in Kibera.

**Section 3.2: Relocation/ move to the decanting site phase**

The complaints made about poor service delivery at the decanting site demonstrate residents’ changing expectations regarding their right to access public services and urban space. I was able to visit the Lang’ata decanting site and its temporary housing units when conducting my field work; there, I saw first-hand the degradation of the facilities that residents have been occupying for over 4 years since the relocation phase of KENSUP’s housing project began. When the new government was elected a few years after project beneficiaries moved into the decanting site housing units, the government stopped offering its resources to manage garbage removal and cleaning services in the area, leaving the responsibility to residents. After Kenya’s new government was elected in 2013, a new political party came into power and it became difficult to ensure that the government’s initial commitments and promises would be upheld since the new government’s priorities are not necessarily in line with the previous plans for KENSUP’s project. The former Prime Minister Raila Odinga (Kibera’s MP) intervened in the project in its early stages after residents voiced concerns that the previous failures of comparable interventions would be repeated. As different political parties cater to different voters and voting districts, it is not surprising that residents began to fear becoming neglected by the

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242 Fernandez and Calas. “The Kibera Soweto East Project in Nairobi, Kenya,” 3. The “past failures of similar interventions” is alluding to the National Housing Corporation’s ‘High-rise Estate’ project in Kibera.
leadership of President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Jubilee coalition. Since residents viewed the decanting site as a temporary living situation (and thought they would be leaving after a short duration), they neglected to maintain the units. As a result, when I visited I saw that the apartments were falling apart, there was garbage everywhere and there were difficulties with accessing water. Residents describe living conditions at the decanting site in the following passages:

It’s bad, sewages are blocked, the environment is bad, they don’t repair the houses, it’s like nobody cares. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

The environment first of all is not conducive. They dump things everywhere, there’s sewage and waste everywhere. The structures weren’t made with good material because they are already torn apart. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

Youth members of the Soweto-East community were recruited to take care of these waste management and custodial tasks, but the government stopped paying them. The youth eventually stopped cleaning the site because they were not being compensated for their labour. With the government’s decision to withdraw its support for cleaning and waste disposal, living conditions at the decanting site have become comparable to the rest of Kibera where issues of poor waste management, poor maintenance and water shortages persist. Evidently, providing a space for residents to live does not solve the larger environmental issues affecting residents of informal settlements since problems with accessing service delivery are frequent. The following passage from an interview with a resident highlights issues with service delivery on the temporary housing site:

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244 Interview with resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 25, 2014.
245 Interview with resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 25, 2014.
When we got to the decanting site, the distance was very far to the city centre, it was a challenge… [Approximately 7.5km]. The main challenge that people have had is the issue of water. Because much of the time we have had long periods of water shortages. Recently we’ve had a shortage of 3 months without water. So if you’re living on the 4th floor, you need to go to the nearby village, get water, and come back using the staircases, it is hectic. And maybe you need like 10 gallons of water because the toilets we are using need lots of water. – Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 25, 2014.

The sustainability issues relating to service delivery at the decanting site is yet another complication that KENSUP’s housing project has encountered during its implementation. The Nairobi County government was supposed to be the local body responsible for implementing KENSUP’s upgrading initiatives – which includes the housing project’s long-term service delivery - but they do not have the autonomy, capacity or competence to do so effectively.

Without adequate access to essential services, these housing units are not necessarily improving livelihoods since residents are not always able to flush toilets, cook meals, and use electricity. The absence of a long-term sustainable implementing body for a project that is dependent on the effective delivery of services further exemplifies the short-sightedness of KENSUP’s plans and policy.

KENSUP’s narrow focus on housing has been at the expense of other factors important to improving urban livelihoods which have limited the project’s ability to positively impact the rights of residents. There are other missing services in Kibera’s Soweto-East village despite residents’ appeals to the government to provide essential services in the area. For instance, the community made specific requests for the government to provide public schools in the area.

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246 The distance between the UN-HABITAT Office in Kibera Soweto-East village and the Lang’ata Women’s prison (located next to KENSUP’s Lang’ata decanting site). Google maps, accessed August 24, 2015, [https://www.google.ca/maps/dir/Langata+Womens+Prison,+Nairobi,+Kenya/UN-Habitat+Office,+Mbagathi+Way,+Nairobi,+Kenya/@-1.323322,36.7776785,14z/data=!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x182f1a9eb1b891b:0x23ef08b4c3914401!2m2!1d36.7773221d-1.319574!2m2!1d36.805428!2d-1.314859!3e0](https://www.google.ca/maps/dir/Langata+Womens+Prison,+Nairobi,+Kenya/UN-Habitat+Office,+Mbagathi+Way,+Nairobi,+Kenya/@-1.323322,36.7776785,14z/data=!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x182f1a9eb1b891b:0x23ef08b4c3914401!2m2!1d36.7773221d-1.319574!2m2!1d36.805428!2d-1.314859!3e0)

during the project’s design phase, but the government has failed to address this issue. Recurrent themes that emerged in interviews with residents reveal fears of displacement, flaws in the implementation of the project resulting in an inability to meet the community’s housing demand, and a failure to provide residents with a sense of government accountability. Although this project has changed many residents’ senses of citizenship and perceptions of their rights as citizens, the following interview excerpt shows a resident recognizing the government’s failure to fulfill these rights:

Because what we need for our members is security of tenure, so that we can stay somewhere that is habitable while having the hope that by going with that cooperative arrangement, we hope that public bodies and institutions will be considered within the settlement; like public schools and public hospitals (because we don’t have these public institutions here now). Even though the constitution says it’s our right, but we are missing out on it. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village and member of the housing cooperative board, November 29, 2014.

The severely limited access to primary schools in Kibera’s Soweto-East village highlights the challenge for residents to access services that are supposed to be their rights as citizens. According to Amnesty International’s investigative report, the community’s lack of public schools is an issue that has not been addressed by the government despite their involvement in upgrading initiatives in the community.248 As stated in the 2009 report, Kibera’s Soweto-East village has approximately 25,000 residents and no public schools; at the time of the investigation it had 2 private schools which charged Ksh 800-1200 per year, forcing families who could not afford the fees to send their children to public schools outside of the settlement if they were able

to enrol them in Kenya’s overcrowded school system. Although Kenya implemented a free primary education programme in 2003, it is clear that not everyone is able to access it.

One must consider how residents’ sense of citizenship or their struggle to achieve the right to the city has been affected by the implementation of this government-led project. Although the government gives the impression that it is creating job opportunities with these youth oriented projects, this is not really the case. What is perceived as paid work is actually voluntary, so the economic circumstances of residents tend to either not change or become even more precarious, yet to the outside world (or “on paper”) it looks like its empowering residents and providing unique opportunities. Subsequently, one must wonder to what extent these government efforts are for political appearances considering how ineffective and unsustainable they are in reality. The UN-HABITAT has taken a similar approach to the government in providing these volunteer job opportunities within the community. Due to limited resources, positions offered to residents that were once modestly paid have been transformed into uncompensated, voluntary positions, forcing participants to sacrifice other income-generating opportunities if they want to remain involved. Although there are benefits that stem from the volunteer positions created in the community in terms of developing skills, increasing community participation and ownership of the benefits of upgrading – such as the resource centre constructed by the UN-HABITAT, the sanitation facilities, and community sensitization and infrastructure improvement efforts – these benefits have not translated into substantial economic opportunities for most residents.

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249 Amnesty International, “Kenya – The unseen majority Nairobi’s two million slum-dwellers,” 11. 800-1200 ksh = approximately $8-12 USD.
KENSUP has failed to deliver on many of its promises regarding improving livelihoods and access to services in the Soweto-East community since many residents will not have any personal benefits of upgrading realized through the housing project. This will inevitably affect residents’ perception of government accountability and citizenship. KENSUP originally planned to expand the housing project to Kibera Soweto-East village’s other 3 zones, using the decanting site as temporary housing for the subsequent group of displaced residents. However, these structures are in no condition for a new group of residents, and the likelihood that the government will pay for renovations and cleaning does not look promising. If the project is to continue upon the completion of Zone A, it does not seem fair for the new group of participants to have to move into these degraded housing structures or bear the cost of necessary renovations. Residents have started feeling hopeless in reaction to the news that only participants who have saved for the down-payment will be selected by the vetting committee to occupy the new structures. The following interview excerpt describes this experience:

We hoped for a better housing and clean environment. But it seems like without the deposit some of us will not be able to occupy the new houses, unless they let those of us without money occupy and pay in installments. But if they don’t do that than most of us who don’t have the money will not occupy the new houses and are likely to go back to the slum area where we can afford to live. Even here we have people who have rent arrears and they say if you don’t clear your arrears you don’t move into the new house. – Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

In the meantime, continued delays in the project’s implementation have made it difficult for residents to save for the new housing units while they continue to pay rent at the decanting site years after the scheduled timeline.

Evidently, the challenges revealed throughout KENSUP’s housing project stress the importance of considering the economic impact that upgrading initiatives will have on the
residents they seek to benefit. It is not free for residents of Kibera to access basic services; project beneficiaries pay monthly fees to access water and electricity despite their economically precarious circumstances. Although investments in infrastructure and improvements to service delivery seem to be benefit residents in their struggle for a right to the city, these services still come at a cost for those living in the temporary housing structures and/or the completed housing units. Residents are not individually financially responsible in the same way for paying for other upgrading initiatives which target infrastructure improvement in the community such as the road construction, lighting system, and sanitation facilities. These services can be enjoyed by the entire village without putting a significant financial strain on individuals. The following citation highlights upgrading initiatives that residents have cited as most beneficial in the community:

> Everything has a benefit, but we look at what is more. Even though we don’t know how this project will end up, it has also helped a lot (e.g. sanitation blocks have helped upgrade sanitation and hygiene in the community). Also these sanitation blocks contribute a little to the savings of the community [because they charge for usage]. Also, although there is poor drainage, the sanitation blocks are cleaner than other areas in the village so that is good. So it has brought a good unity of community members. People from different ends are getting to know one another, that social network has been built up. –Residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 20, 2014.

Although most of the upgrading efforts in the community have at least benefitted a few residents, certain initiatives have had more of an impact on community members collectively rather than individually. For this reason it is important to highlight the distinction between upgrading initiatives that enable access to services and infrastructure that can be enjoyed by the community at large, versus access to services that are granted to individuals with monetary strings attached. One is building up social networks and community, while the other is breaking them up by individualizing access to services, segregating one part of the village from the rest, and forcing a
specific kind of lifestyle on people who may not want it. The different effects of these upgrading approaches highlights the need for policies and plans that shift focus away from individual self-interest and towards collective interests.

KENSUP’s failure to focus on communal interests has also neglected the consideration of community dynamics. Although overall security in the community has increased, peoples’ individual security is not ideal at the decanting site since there are frequent break-ins and thefts. Additionally, there have been robberies since some residents’ keys have been copied. The benefits of receiving this affordable housing has to be carefully weighed with the costs; experiences of insecurity that occur in the temporary housing arrangements (Lang’ata) are building distrust between neighbours, but the expectation is for residents to move into the new housing units and become permanently attached to the same group of people.251 This supports the argument that KENSUP’s lack of understanding about social networks has not only ignored economic concerns, but also social dynamics between community members.

Residents of informal settlements are vulnerable to human rights violations as they often have less power and resources to effectively respond to any wrong-doing by the state. As residents of informal settlements lack security of tenure and it is difficult to provide proof of residency since things are done informally, there are often restrictions to the way the land or homes being occupied can be used by residents, and they are vulnerable to violations of their rights such as unfair rent increases, dispossession or forced evictions.252 In interviews with residents I asked if they anyone who has had to move to another area without compensation because of the project in order to gage the success, respect and attention being paid to

251 Participants of the housing project do not get to select their neighbours.
displacement prevention, human rights and *in situ* upgrading by KENSUP’s housing project. The following interview participant addresses this issue:

Yeah, very many people have had to move (especially for the roads). For example, those who were evicted by the road construction had to move away and they will not be compensated with the new houses. And there are others who have no I.D.s [identity cards] that prove that they have the right to the houses, so they will have to move away. And others are moving in. There are others who have come into the community since it’s been many years since the project began. And many people have died, and that I.D. card is not transferable to another person. So that’s a big challenge. –*Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project and former structure owner*, November 29, 2014.

Technically, residents who have entered the community after the beneficiaries of the project were selected are excluded from the project and are being evicted and displaced from the community as the project’s implementation progresses. In this way, KENSUP’s housing project is violating the rights of these residents who have been displaced without receiving compensation. Although a former KENSUP worker explained in an interview that selected beneficiaries of the project would be unable to sell their identification cards that are required of them to receive a new housing unit, residents discussed several known beneficiaries who have done so anyways. This means that those people who have purchased their identification cards will not be able to use them to obtain a housing unit and have wasted a considerable amount of money trying to do so. It is difficult to police these experiences and to prevent them from occurring since the demand for these housing units from residents in the area who are not beneficiaries of the project is high, and the immediate economic vulnerability of many selected beneficiaries of the project can compel them to try to sell their ID cards despite the barriers KENSUP has created to prevent it.
In the UN-HABITAT’s strategic document for KENSUP’s housing project, when discussing the guiding principle of inclusive participation, it states that participation of community members in the informal settlement upgrading process is their basic right as they have a right to have a voice in the urban processes that shape their lives.\textsuperscript{253} Despite the fact that this guiding principle puts the project in line with the goal of achieving a meaningful right to the city, the extent to which it was successful upon implementation is another issue. Although participation and consent were carefully considered in the beginning stages of the project, the project has become more top-down causing residents to feel disconnected from the project’s progress and the decisions that the government is making. The UN-HABITAT’s withdrawal from KENSUP’s pilot indicates that their different approaches to ‘slum upgrading’ were significant enough that KENSUP’s housing project was not adhering to the UN-HABITAT’s core values or upgrading objectives (which appear on paper to be more in line with the right to the city than KENSUP’s interpretation of slum upgrading). The implementation of upgrading initiatives has made residents more aware of their rights, which is partly due to all the education and sensitization that has taken place in the community. This is positive, since as things stand, it seems as though residents will need to start fighting for their rights as a result of the poor implementation and progression of KENSUP’s distorted approach at ‘slum upgrading.’

Section 3.3: Final construction and move-in phase of Zone A housing units

As discussed in Chapter 2, the process of relocating residents to the temporary housing site has negatively affected how people maintain their livelihoods, which decreases their economic opportunities and increases economic differentiation between residents. Nonetheless, the financial difficulties accompanying the relocation of residents are not the only factors

causing them to feel unsettled; it is also the uncertainty accompanying the government’s declining commitment to communicating with the community. This exacerbates the government’s lack of understanding of the precarious circumstances of intended project beneficiaries. The following passage from an interview transcript describes a resident’s concern with the future of the project:

It’s a good project, before we lived in inhuman conditions; it rained on us because the houses in the slum were bad. However lack of business opportunities here is a problem. It’s causing us not to be able to pay rent. We request the Ministry to be kind to us and be understanding because it’s not that we don’t want to pay rent but rather it’s the circumstances that force us not to pay. Some pay because they are lucky at times to get casual jobs while others are not lucky. The ministry does not communicate to us. They only issue notices. We don’t have a social worker who can represent us and defend us. – Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

Somewhere between the design phase and the period of temporary housing, residents have found cause to distrust the government’s plans for the future of the housing project due to various delays, increasingly poor communication, and unanticipated financial constraints. According to Amnesty International’s investigation in 2009, there was already a lot of misinformation circulating about project details.\textsuperscript{254} Since residents were assured before the project was implemented that there would be support for those who could not afford the new housing units as they experienced financial difficulties making payments, the current vetting process for selecting residents to move into the new units is simply unethical.

KENSUP’s high-rise constructions are aesthetically pleasing, colourful, and visible from a major highway, thereby giving KENSUP’s project a positive appearance to the public despite the challenges residents are facing. A wall has been constructed delineating the perimeter with a

security guard on duty at all times. In this way, KENSUP has essentially created a gated community; the living conditions within these new housing constructions visibly demonstrate improved living standards, but the financial position of many of the project’s intended beneficiaries relate a different story. Residents of the new housing units will be responsible for monthly water and electricity fees. The electricity is pay-as-you-go which is meant to help residents struggling with rent so that they can conserve, but this also means that many residents will occasionally be living in the dark. Waste collection is intended to be contracted out eventually, but this is uncertain due to the financial constraints of participants.\textsuperscript{255} The clear separation of the new housing structures from the rest of the village makes it obvious that KENSUP’s housing project is individualizing the benefits of their upgrading initiative in the community. Meanwhile, far more people are able to access the benefits of upgrading with the community’s public toilets, sanitation facilities, or community center provided through the UN-HABITAT’s upgrading projects in the area.

Residents’ growing sense of unease towards KENSUP’s housing project is justified given the government’s past approaches at addressing informal settlements. Not only is there distrust in terms of accountability and security, but also with the politics of resource commitment in a country rampant with corruption and where bureaucracy and government action can be severely delayed and altered throughout a project’s implementation. It is not surprising that some residents lack confidence that the project will ever be fully completed. The process of having to wait for the government to get its affairs in order and organize the project’s various stages of implementation has been long and drawn-out while residents have been disrupted, displaced and

\textsuperscript{255} Interview with resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 20, 2014.
up-rooted from their lives, homes and community. The following quotations from residents shed light on some of their fears and doubts:

Initially there was accountability and that openness, and the process was so comprehensive. The community believed in the government. But we’re heading now towards the final stages of phase one, I think the residents have started losing faith because the project has taken long, there is no transparency and accountability. When they’re dealing with things, the initial consultations that took place at the beginning is now lacking. The program was initially meant to take a down-to-top approach, but now we’ve started to see a top-down approach, and when they come from up and we are not consulted, we definitely start reading mischief. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, member of the housing cooperative board, November 29, 2014.

When the project was started people had so many hopes, because we were living in such bad conditions, there was no proper draining system, no proper housing, so what I expect is people will get proper housing at a poor man’s cost. They will get the sanitation. But the government should not be operating like a business, but working for the people. So I think that it should be easier to access the upgraded houses, rather than making it so difficult to obtain them. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 25, 2014.

These passages are striking because they express genuine fear from residents regarding what may occur in the future with this project. For instance, residents living at the decanting site are afraid of not receiving a new housing unit, getting evicted, and eventually having to return to living in the slums after all these years of waiting. Some participants have remained in the community because of this project, turning down other opportunities in pursuit of the dream of one day owning their own apartment (which would not be possible for many residents otherwise). Additionally, my interviews with residents revealed discouraging predictions about where they see themselves and the community 5 years from now: “It’s almost been 9 years since 2005… so 5 years from now, there won’t be that much change. Maybe they will begin constructing the next zone, but now that the roads are going on… Zone D is far [in the
future]. When asked if the project had changed peoples’ sense of government accountability towards them as residents, a participant responded with financial concerns: “The government hasn’t been helping with those who have been struggling with saving.” The level of confidence residents have in the government fulfilling its intended goals and objectives has thus diminished throughout the project’s implementation because of the increasingly disappointing delivery of promises made during its enumeration and design phase.

Although KENSUP’s housing project was supposed to address residents’ lack of security of tenure, residents’ responses when asked if they felt secure in their housing situation were overwhelmingly negative. A resident expressed feelings of insecurity saying: “I don’t [feel secure in my housing situation] because I haven’t been able to raise even a quarter of the money required, so I don’t know if I’ll be evicted/ displaced or not. Maybe I’ll end up back in the slums.” The uncertainty residents are facing regarding the future outcome of KENSUP’s housing project has violated peoples’ sense of security. Evidently, the pilot project has failed to provide security of tenure to participants with so many of them doubting they will ever receive a new housing unit. The amount of disruption, stress and dispossession KENSUP has inflicted on residents continues to increase in the final phase of its housing project.

In many ways, the struggle over claiming a meaningful right to the city frames the struggles of residents of informal settlements. The notion of citizenship is important to this project because upgrading initiatives are supposed to change residents’ relationships with urban spaces and the institutions that shape them through the transformation of informal spaces into

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256 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 20, 2014.
257 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 11, 2014.
258 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 11, 2014.
formal spaces. The project’s role in the struggle for residents of informal settlements to claim the right to the city is important in Kibera’s Soweto-East village because residents will likely need to continue to negotiate with those in power as some residents are selected to move into the new housing units, and others are left behind. According to David Harvey, claiming a right to the city is about demanding some kind of power to shape processes of urbanization and to have a say in the ways the city is created in a fundamental way. Engaging in the struggle for a right to the city is a way to challenge the destructive capitalist system of perpetual accumulation and its exploitation of class and state power. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Kenyan government’s commitment to ‘slum upgrading’ runs in contrast to their national plan and vision of promoting a ‘world class business setting’ fueled by urban competitiveness, global competition, and the goal of attracting foreign investors into the city. There are not enough resources provided for poverty reduction initiatives that do more than treat the symptoms of larger problems or formulate short-term responses due to mounting pressure to beautify the city landscape and open up spaces for new capital and investments. Subsequently, grassroots mobilisation and civic participation are important so that residents may negotiate with the government over obtaining a right to the city.

*In situ* informal settlement upgrading is supposed to respond to the destruction of common property resources (e.g. labour and the land), like in Nairobi where common urban spaces are only accessible for citizens with enough wealth and power to pay for them. However, KENSUP’s housing project has failed to promote an ‘urban commons’ where residents of Kibera are able to share in the wealth and access to public resources. As the project

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259 Harvey, Rebel Cities, 5.
260 Ibid, 5.
261 Huchzermeier, Cities With ‘Slums,’ 33.
262 Huchzermeier, Cities With ‘Slums,’ 33.
263 Harvey, Rebel Cities, 25.
264 Ibid, 25.
progresses, fewer participants are set to benefit from it due to financial limitations, delays in implementation, and other distortions to the initial policy that make it more exclusionary.

The city is an appropriate scale to discuss reconstructions of citizenship as peoples’ experiences of urban space shape their lives and identities in many ways. When examining urban space in Nairobi, it becomes obvious that certain spaces are designed to exclude poor and marginalized groups. Because so much urban space (particularly in the city center) is privately owned but publically accessible, certain people are excluded from accessing spaces if they do not wield consumer power or contribute to the accumulation of capital. In this way, citizens of Nairobi must be able to pay in order to access various urban spaces that many would consider to be in the ‘public realm’. The notion of the right to the city interconnects with the promotion of international human rights such as access to land, housing and security of tenure, food security, physical safety, and residents’ engagement in the economic sector. To draw from this notion helps to contextualise how urban planning and policy processes can be adapted in a way that enables residents of Nairobi’s informal settlements to navigate some of these different complexities and create transformations or resistances that alleviate some of their daily struggles as residents, citizens and users of urban space.

Identifying the differentiated experiences of residents selected as beneficiaries of KENSUP’s project makes room for discussions within urban policy and planning processes regarding the consideration of the needs of residents of informal settlements and the importance of their participation, particularly when it comes to making decisions that shape urban environments. Residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village have demonstrated the power they are

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265 Fenster, “The Right to the City,” 218.
266 Habitat International Coalition, “Proposal for a Charter for Women's Right to the City,” 2.
able to wield when they organize. For instance, when residents contested the initial relocation proposal because the location selected was too far away, their voices were heard and the Lang’ata decanting site location is consequently considerably closer to the community. Moreover, a group of non-resident structure owners unhappy with the project delayed its implementation by 2 years as a result of their legal battle with the government. Through forms of resistance and collective mobilization, residents of informal settlements can contribute to the struggle for a meaningful right to the city where everyone has a right to remain within the urban space, access urban services, and have their rights as citizens upheld.

Section 3.4: Summary

The barriers that poor and marginalized citizens face in accessing urban space due to the exclusion of certain groups from its use depending on peoples’ differentiated socio-economic positions is a reflection of residents’ struggle in claiming a meaningful right to the city. Evidently, citizenship is an important aspect of KENSUP’s pilot project since the government is trying to change how it addresses informal settlements from its past attempts at slum eradication and forced evictions towards an approach that is more concerned with peoples’ human rights and the delivery of public services. Although it seems as though KENSUP’s promise of providing access to public services that were previously inaccessible to residents would expand the rights of residents, my fieldwork proves that the housing project has actually resulted in poor service delivery, displacement and exclusion. Therefore, in addition to KENSUP’s failure to adequately address all of the urban livelihood vulnerabilities of the project’s intended beneficiaries, the

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267 Non-resident structure owners were unhappy with the project as it meant losing significant sources of income without receiving what they perceive as adequate financial compensation in return. The court ended up siding with the government and after a 2 year delay the project was eventually implemented anyways. Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, October 13, 2014.
project has also failed to respect residents’ right to adequate housing. This chapter has explored
the importance of citizenship to KENSUP’s pilot project, residents’ views on government
accountability, citizenship, and the struggle for the right to the city, and the project’s impact on
factors important to the struggle for a right to the city using the voices and opinions of residents
themselves. Identifying the project’s impact on factors important to the struggle for the right to
the city provides lessons for any *in situ* informal settlement upgrading initiatives implemented in
the future and highlights what strategies have been either harmful or successful in working
towards achieving that goal. Now that the impact of KENSUP’s project on residents has been
analyzed economically, socially and politically, Chapter 4 will present conclusions and
recommendations designed to inform interventions with similar objectives.
Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

My analysis in the preceding chapters has stressed the importance of looking critically at KENSUP’s slum upgrading policy. The project’s various limitations prove that KENSUP’s upgrading strategy is inappropriate for Kibera’s Soweto-East village. As discussed in the previous chapters, the different challenges and contradictions revealed throughout the implementation of KENSUP’s housing project are not only associated with actors and stakeholders themselves and the internal and external constraints they face, but also with the ideological imperatives that inform the project in a way that enables the destructive forces of capitalist urbanization to negatively affect the lives and livelihoods of residents. As a result, these experiences provide broad lessons that can inform interventions with similar objectives in the future. My interviews with residents have been showcased throughout the preceding chapters in order to reveal the different impacts of various upgrading initiatives on peoples’ living standards and livelihoods. This chapter seeks to identify what strategies should be modified in order to better benefit Kibera’s Soweto-East community and any future attempts at upgrading Nairobi’s informal settlements. In doing so I will highlight how flaws with KENSUP’s policy and plans have contributed to the housing project’s failure to produce positive outcomes. I will also consider the constraints imposed on the project resulting from complexities of scale, and finally, I will make recommendations based on the challenges and limitations explored throughout the analysis of my fieldwork for this project and other upgrading initiatives in general.
Section 4.1: Critical policy analysis

The following sections seek to analyze KENSUP’s policy and plans in order to reveal the different interests and motivations underlying the project, to expose the differences between the project’s plans and implementation, and to highlight the importance of understanding local contexts and peoples lived realities when developing urban planning strategies. Upon analyzing KENSUP’s slum upgrading policy, it becomes evident that there are discrepancies between the way the project was planned and the way it is being implemented. This discrepancy stresses the need for critical policy analysis.

KENSUP’s pilot project has confirmed that the underlying causes of the proliferation of informal settlements and urban poverty cannot be solved by building affordable housing alone. The logic of KENSUP’s strategy of committing resources to one concentrated housing project is understandable since the results of their efforts will be tangible and publically visible. The alternative strategy of initiating a more large-scale and generalized effort to provide social services for Nairobi’s urban poor is evidently less appealing politically since such strategies are less attention-grabbing and results-driven. Since KENSUP’s housing project is very visible (even physically: the Soweto-East village is on one of the edges of Kibera that overlooks a major highway), it provides political clout to the party in power, showing citizens that the government is working towards alleviating poverty and dedicated to serving the poor. As discussed in Chapter 1, there were different interests and motivations behind the decision to focus on housing that are not always clear since there were so many stakeholders involved in the project.

According to Huchzermeyer, KENSUP used the excuse of needing to improve urban

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268 Although the provision of housing is a key piece of an effective policy solution for addressing urban poverty.

269 The Kenyan government (KENSUP), the Nairobi County Government, the UN-HABITAT, the World Bank and other donors, residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, etc.
competitiveness in the area to justify their approach at ‘slum upgrading’ that seemingly supports the ‘eradication’ of informal settlements.\textsuperscript{270} Although she describes these interests as being overt in the Kenyan government’s delivery, after analyzing the policy and strategic documents, I believe that these interests have been more carefully concealed. After reading between the lines of upgrading plans and policy and examining the government’s vision for Nairobi more broadly, my analysis suggests that KENSUP’s priorities with this housing project (and the ideological imperatives framing its adoption) are in line with the government’s political and economic interests.\textsuperscript{271} Through the housing project, the government has in a sense reclaimed the “public land” in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, which allows the Nairobi County government to benefit from it where they could not before.\textsuperscript{272} Although the government may not generate economic profit from the project, it is possible that the project will serve other political interests through formalizing an informal public space, creating a taxable area, opening up opportunities for capital to enter, and creating aesthetically pleasing structures where shacks and shanties used to exist within the sightlines of a major highway. In this way, the project supports state and urban planning priorities that promote economic competitiveness such as the beautification of the city and aesthetic upgrading.\textsuperscript{273} For future upgrading initiatives, it is important to identify these types of competing interests early on in the project’s design phase so that they do not interfere with the integrity of the initiative. Otherwise, residents run the risk of being coerced into participating in initiatives that do not serve their interests.

\textsuperscript{270} Huchzermeyer, \textit{Cities With ‘Slums,’} 141.
\textsuperscript{271} Refer to chapter 1, p.59-60.
\textsuperscript{272} United Nations Human Settlements Programme, "Rental Housing: An essential option for the urban poor in developing countries," (Nairobi: UN-HABITAT, 2003), 165.
\textsuperscript{273} Huchzermeyer, \textit{Cities With ‘Slums,’} 137.
It is not surprising that residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village would be enticed by KENSUP’s housing project when they have been presented with plans that appear to be flawless and that make wide-ranging promises that address peoples’ immediate concerns. As discussed in Chapter 1, KENSUP’s strategic documents acknowledge - but do not address - issues that would eventually become problematic, such as those that are economic in nature. For instance, KENSUP’s strategic document claims its objectives include improving residents’ income generation abilities; however the document provides no strategy to address it throughout the project’s implementation. To acknowledge these economic concerns as pressing issues implies that they will be taken into consideration and that the problem will not be exacerbated by the project’s implementation; this was obviously not the case. The following interview passage describes a resident’s satisfaction with KENSUP’s ‘slum upgrading’ policy itself, but not the way it has been implemented:

I would recommend the policy… you see if you read the papers… when they came the first day in the beginning, the proposals, the work they were planning, in terms of the presentations and papers, it was very perfect. When you’re sitting in a board room, you exit it after it’s been explained and you say it’s very perfect. But now when you come to implementation, I wouldn’t recommend that system. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 25, 2014.

This passage highlights a recurrent criticism of KENSUP’s pilot project from residents: the policy and plans appear differently from the project’s implementation. For example, when the government decides that the project should progress to its next phase necessitating the eviction or relocation of residents, people are not being provided with enough time to adequately plan for their evictions so that they can properly prepare for the impact it will have on their families and

274 Refer to chapter 1, p.34.
275 As is evidenced by the negative impact the project has had on the economic circumstances of residents interviewed.
livelihoods. The following interview passage describes a resident’s frustration with the poor planning and limited notice given to participants as the project progresses:

> It’s important that we are given notice if we are to move so that we can plan ourselves. We have children in school and we need to plan sufficiently. If only they followed the rules without corruption it would have been good. If only they followed the plan as it was it would have worked out perfectly. –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

The poor communication of information to residents regarding project delays demonstrates KENSUP’s greater failure to effectively plan for the pilot’s implementation and to make the project bottom-up, inclusive and participatory.

The UN-HABITAT faced criticism for their initial partnership with KENSUP in the early stages of its pilot project; this criticism was warranted considering the fact that several aspects of the project actively worked against some of the UN-HABITAT’s core values and objectives. However, my analysis of the goals and objectives stated in the UN-HABITAT’s strategic document suggests that their interpretation of ‘slum upgrading’ was never particularly focused on housing in the first place. This demonstrates that the housing angle is something that was pushed for by KENSUP, ultimately contributing to the dissolution of their partnership.

Although the UN-HABITAT’s divorce from the housing project resulted in a series of separate upgrading initiatives that have positively affected residents’ quality of life and access to services, the way the UN-HABITAT pulled out of the housing project was not admirable. They promised resources to KENSUP and by extension to the same residents they claim to still be serving; they also failed to do it in a way that was transparent since they have not publically discussed the

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276 Interview with selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 11, 2014.
277 Refer to chapter 1, p.47-55.
278 Refer to chapter 1, p.60.
breakdown of the partnership with residents or the general public. In fact, my interviews with residents suggested that only some community members have knowledge about the changing relationships between KENSUP, the UN-HABITAT, and the rest of the community. As these relationships ultimately affect the project’s access to resources, the failure to inform residents is a significant oversight since the project is eventually supposed to be under the control of residents themselves.279

Although informal settlement upgrading strategies are becoming increasingly popular in developing countries around the world, there is a danger involved in drawing from generalized supranational policy recommendations, since they often fail to understand local contexts and peoples’ lived realities. In order to evaluate the appropriateness of KENSUP’s upgrading strategy, one must look closely at the city of Nairobi, the informal settlement Kibera, and the contradictions between the larger market imperatives driving state policy and the objectives and logics of the housing initiative. Nairobi can be characterised as a ‘market society’ where the state increasingly serves the interests of capital accumulation at the expense of representing the interests of all citizens.280 As discussed previously, ‘accumulation by dispossession’ can occur where there is a possibility of profitable redevelopment.281 Since residents of Kibera are informally occupying government-owned land, they are mostly defenceless against displacement or the elimination of informal settlements if the state chooses to do so. Subsequently, the privatization of land creates profit for the capitalist class since property rights are able to increase in value. As a result, people are often priced out of Nairobi’s competitive housing and land

279 As noted above, this is supposed to occur through residents’ communal ownership of the housing cooperative.
markets.\textsuperscript{282} When the state prioritizes the fierce protection of private property rights, it reinforces the promotion of people’s individual interests. These pressures can actively work against the government’s commitment to respecting citizens’ right to adequate housing. My analysis of KENSUP’s housing project demonstrates that the project focuses more heavily on serving individual interests than collective interests. Meanwhile, KENSUP’s pursuit of individual interests is in spite the fact that residents were happiest with upgrading initiatives in the area that were focused on the entire community.

As I argued in Chapter 2, the housing cooperative’s inability to address the market distortions responsible for pricing some of Nairobi’s poorest citizens out of housing markets reveals the housing project’s failure to combat the destructive forces of capitalist urbanization. The housing cooperative is displaying many elements of exclusion because of the conditions being attached to gaining access to the new housing units which require members to pay a 10 percent down-payment. The tension that these conditions are causing between residents is not necessarily conducive to producing members of the cooperative that are enthusiastic about the democratic control of these new housing structures. When a resident was asked if they consider the project to be a success, they responded: “It’s good if you have money, if you are poor no because of the rent expected that we pay. It will only benefit those who are rich.” Consequently, residents are on high alert for warning signs of gentrification creeping into the community through these new housing structures. David Harvey argues that the damage done by capitalist urbanization can only be addressed by socializing surplus production and distribution, and creating wealth that everyone is able to access.\textsuperscript{283} Although this may very well be true, it does not appear as though the housing cooperative created in Kibera’s Soweto-East community has

\textsuperscript{282} Harvey, Rebel Cities, 28.
\textsuperscript{283} Harvey, Rebel Cities, 86.
been effective at producing a communal financial safety net that is accessible to its members. Interviews conducted with members of the housing cooperative were able to highlight the limitations of the project’s compatibility with residents’ struggle for the right to the city since residents do not have much control over shaping urban space or the use of public space, nor are they included in many decisions that directly affect their living environment in general. The communal control of land may provide a way for local communities to react to these harmful effects of capitalism and to reclaim the ability to share and enable access to wealth for all urban citizens, but it is also important to properly identify the conditions necessary for such alternative property systems to be effective.\footnote{Ibid, 25.} Kenya’s state policy and objectives driven by market imperatives run in contrast to this goal. Moreover, cooperatives are not necessarily in opposition to capitalism; in fact their compatibility is exemplified through cooperatives that exist and compete successfully in many Western markets. KENSUP has failed to consider how market logics (such as the intense commodification and marketization of land and housing in Nairobi) affect residents of informal settlements through the destructive forces of capitalist urbanization. The fact that this community-based housing cooperative is expected to combat these powerful market forces suggests that Nairobi may not be an appropriate environment for this particular cooperative model to function effectively.

Despite the importance of citizenship to KENSUP’s pilot project and the government’s assurances that residents would not be displaced or forcibly evicted without compensation, it did not succeed at supporting and respecting the human rights of many of its participants. Although this project began with careful attempts at promoting a model that was bottom-up, testimonials from residents demonstrate its gradual transition into being top-down. Since many of the laws
promoting Kenyans’ human rights and housing rights are either difficult to enforce or easy to circumvent in the context of informal settlements, there are no serious consequences for violating them. As a result, residents are beginning to fear that the project will result in displacement or gentrification and that they will never reap the benefits they were promised so many years ago. Evidently, the practice of making assurances that human rights will be respected is not enough; the government must be held accountable to the residents it has uprooted. Policy and plans must be followed up with legal mechanisms that ensure residents’ human rights are upheld. Kenyan laws for protecting peoples’ housing rights need to be strengthened in order for them to bear some teeth.

Although one of the main objectives of KENSUP’s pilot was to ensure project beneficiaries would have security of tenure in their living arrangements, residents are worried about the permanency and sustainability of their future circumstances. The city’s competitive land and housing markets make affordability within the city a barrier for many residents; this should be considered when formulating housing policy/urban planning strategies in order to prevent marginalized groups from being priced out of housing markets and excluded from accessing urban space. Relocating residents of informal settlements does not solve Nairobi’s housing problems because one cannot simply isolate the housing issue from other social issues. There are many informal settlement strategies that are not focused on housing which address urban livelihood vulnerabilities. In fact, it is counter-productive to prioritize one specific vulnerability over others when addressing poverty with an urban livelihoods framework since the approach is necessarily comprehensive. Because KENSUP has prioritized housing hierarchically (instead of intersectionally), other factors have been neglected resulting in a policy that ignores the importance of the right for all citizens to be able to access urban services and use public
space. Evidently the policy process was flawed since policy makers would necessarily have created a different policy had they paid attention to the market context. As these problems were predictable, if there had been better consideration given to context (e.g. Nairobi’s market distortions, the importance of social networks in Kibera, and residents’ economic precariousness), then KENSUP would have made different decisions in its early planning stages leading to better outcomes for the project’s targeted demographic.

Section 4.2: The complexities of scale

As there are several stakeholders involved in KENSUP’s pilot in Kibera, many of the challenges revealed are associated with these actors and the constraints operating on them internally and externally. It is important to recognize that particular neighbourhoods, communities and informal settlements have different contexts and realities that make designing wide-ranging policies difficult. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing these settlements, which makes translating broad policies at the supranational level (like with the UN-HABITAT) into local realities (like in Kibera’s Soweto-East village) challenging. It also makes allocating stakeholder responsibilities difficult since different stakeholders wield unequal levels of power and control.

KENSUP’s pilot project encountered difficulties with establishing partnerships and attracting large donor bodies, which highlights the problems that can occur when a project relies on international agencies/ large donor bodies for support. It can be difficult to maintain control of the project or to avoid strict and limiting conditions being attached to any partnership roles or financial assistance. As a result, the interests and objectives that certain organizations are serving by being involved in the project may not always be aligned with the government’s plan and
vision; this makes the long-term sustainability of the project vulnerable since funding partners can withdraw at any time. This shows how focusing on building local capacity to be able to implement these types of upgrading initiatives is important so that they can circumvent multi-scalar complexities by minimizing the amount of players involved. In the context of Nairobi this means building the capacity of the Nairobi County government, an institution that is notoriously corrupt.\textsuperscript{285} The national government has tried to avoid the issue by taking over control of the project’s implementation responsibilities. However, if one takes a more long-term view, addressing local capacity issues would be a more effective strategy for supporting sustainable upgrading initiatives.\textsuperscript{286} The importance of long-term, state-level support for allocating resources for urban planning purposes is evident throughout my analysis, yet the difficulties of municipal governance in Nairobi are widely recognized. With a different configuration of the municipal government in Nairobi, a rescaling towards the city level - and away from the influence of the state and multilateral agencies - means citizens may have more opportunities for participation and inclusiveness in the real pursuit of bottom-up policy approaches as opposed to ones that are top-down. However, some of the limitations of this pilot project are because there has not been enough political will and power to challenge the larger market context in a way that would address many of the social and economic vulnerabilities faced by residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village. Even if the Nairobi County government had the ability, capacity and legitimacy to run operations on the ground effectively, these market imperatives could not be solved at the local level if the state’s surrounding conditions remained the same.

\textsuperscript{285} Nairobi County government (formerly Nairobi City Council) has been known for its issues of corruption over the past 40 years. Anderson, “Corruption at City Hall”, 154.

\textsuperscript{286} Interview with former member of the design team for KENSUP’s housing project in Kibera, November 6, 2014.
In Nairobi, the struggle between landlessness and gentrification has become focused on the right to remain within urban space.\textsuperscript{287} My fieldwork and analysis suggests that the ideological assumptions and imperatives that frame KENSUP’s housing project and its decision to focus on housing are informed by the government’s interests in pursuing economic competitiveness over its interest in serving the social welfare needs of the urban poor. The motivation for Kenya Vision 2030’s transformation of Nairobi into a highly global and competitive city has been a driving force for many of the informal settlement evictions, displacements and relocations that have occurred.\textsuperscript{288} In light of urban competitiveness and gentrification becoming a complicating factor affecting the livelihoods of residents of informal settlements, the struggle for democratisation has steadily been growing in Nairobi.\textsuperscript{289} The recommendation to rescale upgrading initiatives towards the city level also involves including citizens and residents themselves in decision-making processes and setting urban planning strategies that shape urban space. As Jennifer Robinson argues, there is a need for the democratisation of negotiations over policy and planning which requires grassroots mobilisation and civic participation.\textsuperscript{290} If residents stay organized and continue to vocalise their discontent, Kibera’s Soweto-East village can be an effective site of struggle against the state’s prioritization of urban competitiveness and towards achieving a meaningful right to the city.\textsuperscript{291} The mobilization of residents resisting informal settlement eradication or relocation puts pressure on the state and amplifies their voices during decision-making processes. In order to achieve these rights, local demands must be prioritized over global competition, and resources redistributed to increase residents’ access to land.

\textsuperscript{288} Huchzeremeyer, \textit{Cities With ‘Slums,’} 161. And Hendriks, “The social and economic impacts of peri-urban access to land and secure tenure for the poor,” 27.
\textsuperscript{289} Klopp, “Remembering the Destruction of Muoroto,” 297.
\textsuperscript{290} Robinson, “Developing Ordinary Cities,” 77.
\textsuperscript{291} Huchzeremeyer, \textit{Cities With ‘Slums,’} 62.
services, employment and infrastructure. Once access to urban space, rights and citizenship, and rights as citizens are granted to residents of informal settlements, the city can move towards urban planning and decision making that is more inclusive and accountable to citizens based on their humanity and not on their socio-economic status.

Section 4.3: Recommendations for future upgrading initiatives

Although informal settlement upgrading strategies are increasing in popularity in African cities, they are also being distorted from what they are supposed to be. To recap, the goal of *in situ* informal settlement upgrading policy is to allow structures to remain where they were originally, to provide formal rights to residents occupying the land, to introduce services and infrastructure in a way that minimizes disturbances to the community, and to support the measured transformations of ‘shacks’ and ‘shanties’ into housing that is more sturdy and secure. Obviously KENSUP’s housing project has altered this policy and actively ignored several of its key objectives as is evidenced through the relocation of residents outside of the community, through failing to effectively secure tenure for its intended beneficiaries, and by demolishing all the existing housing structures in order to replace them with new high-rise constructions. The way informal settlements have been addressed in the past has often resulted in human rights violations such as displacement and forcible evictions. Consequently, I believe the implementation of any informal settlement upgrading initiative should respect the housing rights of citizens that are supposed to protect them from forced evictions and work towards the goal of attaining a meaningful right to the city. Governments, international agencies, and other key

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292 These distortions are partly due to the influence of neoliberal approaches to service delivery and financing; they emphasize pro-growth strategies that assume wealth will trickle-down to the poor. Robinson, “Developing Ordinary Cities,” 77.

293 As promoted by under the Upgrading of Informal Settlements programme. Huchzermeyer, *Cities with ‘Slums,’* 133.
stakeholders spearheading upgrading initiatives should be held accountable for supporting the goals and standards that define *in situ* informal settlement upgrading initiatives as it is an approach that respects peoples’ human rights and is compatible with residents’ struggle to claim access to public services, and participation in decision-making that shapes urban space.

The proliferation of informal settlements in Nairobi is severe enough that, politically and economically, the government has to respond to their expansion as a result of the increasing population and decreasing urban land and housing available for its citizens. However, the government’s decision to implement a resource-intensive redevelopment project instead of a more general approach at upgrading the delivery of basic and sustainable services like water, electricity and infrastructure raises questions about the government’s long-term commitment in the community. I argued earlier that the best way to achieve the goal of *in situ* upgrading is to target initiatives that serve a broader base (e.g. public spaces and access to services that reach the entire community instead of housing that is individualized) - but this strategy is what *in situ* informal settlement upgrading is intended to achieve. Conceptually, the policy is supposed to be more concerned with advancing rights than it is with attracting investment. In order to reach the most residents possible (in terms of livelihood improvements, and transforming communities) it makes more sense to be targeting public spaces with upgrading, thereby connecting residents to public services and amenities, and contributing to the creation of an infrastructure that can bring about more economic opportunities and positively impact the health, sanitation and welfare of community members.\(^{294}\) In consideration of the limited resources, various stakeholders and

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\(^{294}\) The Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Project (KISIP) was implemented in 2011 by the Kenyan government in collaboration with the World Bank, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and French Agency for Development (AFD), to focus on investing in infrastructure and strengthening tenure security. When I was conducting my fieldwork, it was not clear if any of the projects being undertaken within the community were connected to KISIP. Although due to the similar situation of various stakeholders and international donors, I anticipate many of the concerns attached to KENSUP’s pilot involving complexities of scale and sustainability
political complexities involved with KENSUP’s pilot, coordinating an upgrading strategy that does not specifically target housing is a better way to approach informal settlement upgrading. Nevertheless, it is disappointing that residents have to intensify their struggle for the right to the city as a result of KENSUP’s housing project since smaller-scale and less resource intensive upgrading initiatives would have worked towards achieving that goal. Evidently the government should work towards getting its priorities and interests in line with the needs of residents.

As argued in Chapter 2, most of the complaints from residents about upgrading initiatives in the community are connected to KENSUP’s pilot project and its individualized focus on housing that has resulted in increasing the economic vulnerability of residents. The lack of clarity about the project’s payment process has left some residents feeling hopeless, and unsure if they will be to afford the new housing units. Residents are facing affordability issues with paying rent at the decanting site and saving for the down-payment of the new housing units due to their relocation and loss of income. As revealed in previous chapters, several residents at the decanting site have built up rent arrears which technically disqualify them from accessing the new houses. These complaints are not only signals that the housing project is failing many of its beneficiaries, but also that the construction of these new housing structures is not appropriate in this particular context if residents are going to be required to pay anything in the first place. Although surveys were conducted during the design phase to determine an affordable price for residents, these estimations demonstrate a failure to understand the complex lived realities of Kibera’s inhabitants. As the Kenyan government has not committed to subsidize the cost of the ownership of the new housing units, residents have been put in a precarious position. The


following interview passage expresses a resident’s concern about the affordability of the new houses:

I would like the project to go on but only the poor should be considered. And they should build houses that poor people can afford. There is no need of building expensive houses. Also if they are to relocate slum people temporarily then rent should be abolished because paying rent is problem [since you’re expected to save for the new housing units].” –Resident of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, selected participant of KENSUP’s pilot project, November 11, 2014 [translated].

Due to the precarious circumstances of many community members, the expectation that residents pay rent for the temporary housing units on top of the new housing units is unfair and unrealistic. Although the government has devoted many resources towards subsidizing costs for this project, their commitment has not wide-ranging enough to accommodate the needs of all its participants. Before the project’s implementation, residents were assured that the housing cooperative would not be exclusionary or selective and that there would be a savings mechanism for them to draw from in times of financial need. The reality, as revealed through my fieldwork, is that some members of the cooperative are being excluded from the new housing structures due to financial barriers; this proves that the cooperative is functioning ineffectively and against the objectives of informal settlement upgrading. Although I believe this model is flawed and would not recommend its replication, to stop the project entirely is no longer an option as the lives and livelihoods of residents have been completely transformed. The only way forward is the assurance that members of the community will not be displaced in the future; this requires reevaluating the financial structure that KENSUP has established in order to appropriately accommodate for the economic vulnerability of residents.

Despite the fact that it is too early to predict whether KENSUP’s housing structures will become gentrified, I do suspect this project may be headed in that direction. A resident expressed
these fears when asked if the project is effective at allowing residents to remain within the same
place they were living before:

On the one hand it is working toward it, but you know, money. If you look at it from the
point of view of I have money, they don’t have money, poor people wo are supposed to
change their lives won’t be able to; it will just go in the hands of the richer people.
Because if you don’t have money, you cannot move into that house. The project has
improved some things, but the beneficiaries will be very few. If it could just be for
residents of Zone A whether or not you were able to save, without conditions. With
conditions, the poor man will suffer. Because they won’t be able to meet them. –Resident
of Kibera’s Soweto-East village, November 20, 2014.

If KENSUP does not modify its plans to address the decreasing economic positions of residents
of the Soweto-East community, then they will not be accommodating those residents who need
the project the most. Any future attempts at informal settlement upgrading initiatives should
ensure that the ambition of the policy matches the resources available so that any promises made
can be kept.

KENSUP’s project does not offer resources towards addressing the issue of
unemployment within the community - which is one of the central underlying causes for the
proliferation informal settlements. In my experience working with a UN-HABITAT partnered
‘slum upgrading’ project in Nampula, Mozambique, there was (at least in the policy) a
commitment to job training in construction, and to employ youth in mentorship positions where
they would learn new skills in construction from experienced workers so as to increase their
employability. These types of efforts to create jobs and mentorships would have gone a long way
in helping community members through periods of financial difficulty. A real commitment to
increasing economic opportunities in the community is crucial for the success of upgrading
initiatives that require residents to pay fees for accessing services. KENSUP’s policy and plans
require a more comprehensive and intersectional approach at upgrading that clearly outlines strategies for improving the various types of urban livelihood vulnerabilities.

Section 4.4: Additional Considerations

My criticism of KENSUP’s focus on the creation of new housing redevelopments as an approach to informal settlement upgrading is not intended to minimize the need for affordable housing solutions, nor does it target the recent popularity of the ‘housing first’ approach at addressing urban poverty in cities across North America and Europe. The first step of the ‘housing first’ approach is to provide homeless people with free housing, which enables them access to other support services relating to issues such as drug abuse and mental health in the safety of a private and personal living space.\textsuperscript{296} KENSUP’s housing project differs from this model in that residents are expected to pay in order to gain ownership of the new housing units and there is no assistance provided to find employment and other resources for social services. Obviously, the provision of affordable housing can help marginalized groups improve their lives and livelihoods, and it is important for people to have access to low-income housing alternatives. However, KENSUP’s pilot does not exactly ‘provide’ these housing units to the residents who need it the most. The approach does not address the underlying causes of poverty nor does it safeguard against the same issues perpetuating in the future. The ‘housing first but not housing only’ approach (as referred to by advocates in Canada)\textsuperscript{297} is inappropriate in the context of Nairobi because of the huge volume of poor citizens and incredible demand for affordable

\textsuperscript{296} Canadian cities have adopted it; Obama has endorsed it; New Orleans and the state of Utah have had huge success with it. Erin Andersson, “Inside the world’s best mental –health program to keep homeless people off the street,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 27, 2015, accessed August 10, 2015, \url{http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/study-shows-housing-the-most-cost-effective-treatment-for-mental-illness/article17864700/} “The Homeless Hub- Housing First,” Canadian Observatory of Homelessness, 2015, accessed August 10, 2015, \url{http://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/housing-accommodation-and-supports/housing-first}

housing solutions. In this way, the approach of putting housing first is impossible given the limited resources available and the significant state of unemployment in Nairobi. This approach requires wealth, resources, institutional capacity, and considerable political will to be effective. As a result, my criticism of KENSUP’s focus on the creation of new housing is not intended to be dismissive of residents’ need for affordable housing solutions, but simply its large-scale practicality in a place like Nairobi.

**Section 4.5: Summary and final reflections**

The government of Kenya selected Kibera’s Soweto-East village as the location of their pilot project because of the vulnerable economic position and poor living conditions experienced by residents. Kibera’s dense population offered an opportunity to construct a redevelopment project that would be able to house many of the settlements residents in one place while improving livelihoods through better living environments and access to basic services. However, KENSUP's housing project is built on a flawed premise that has led to negative outcomes in the project. As evidenced through the testimonials of members of Kibera’s Soweto-East community, the focus on housing is problematic because it neglects important causal factors for the marginalization of residents such as access to capital and decent employment. Many residents have lost their livelihoods and fear whether they can rebuild social networks and social capital when they return to the community, which will become even more of an issue if they are excluded from the new housing units. KENSUP’s attempt to treat a symptom of the problem facing some of Kibera’s most economically vulnerable residents through the creation of housing redevelopments has failed since many residents do not consider the new housing units to be affordable. In this way, the project has been unsuccessful at effectively combatting the destructive effects of capitalist urbanization. The project’s limitations demonstrate a lack of
consideration for other strategies attributed to improving livelihoods besides the provision of housing. Many of the challenges and contradictions revealed in the project are the result of constraints operating on actors and stakeholders both internally and externally, thereby complicating the project’s funding stream and creating issues of scale throughout the process of implementation. These challenges reveal some of the ideological assumptions and imperatives framing KENSUP’s upgrading strategy since their housing redevelopment project seemingly serves the government’s interest in Nairobi’s ‘Vision 2030’ aimed at increasing economic competitiveness and global competition.

The delivery of basic services is important for improving urban livelihoods, increasing residents’ access to basic services and the use of urban space, and the expansion of residents’ rights as citizens by realizing rights that they are already supposed to possess (such the right to adequate housing and the right to an adequate standard of living). Several residents of Kibera’s Soweto-East village claim that informal settlement upgrading initiatives have made positive contributions to the community through increasing peoples’ access to services such as water, sanitation and hygiene, electricity and infrastructure. These benefits are examples of how upgrading initiatives can be aligned with the goal of residents claiming a meaningful right to the city. However, the fact that many of these contributions are not attributable to KENSUP’s pilot project is significant. The neglect of economic opportunities, income-generation, and the role of social networks in peoples' economic activity are factors that contribute to why this pilot project's narrow focus on housing limits its impact on the people who need it the most. Consequently, my fieldwork suggests that the intended goals of informal settlement upgrading initiatives would be better served by focusing on social services and infrastructure that are shared by all residents as opposed to those that are individualized (like housing). Although in
situ informal settlement upgrading initiatives should work towards residents achieving a meaningful right to the city, KENSUP’s interpretation of ‘slum upgrading’ does not. Evidently, the government of Kenya must take action immediately if it hopes to prevent any further displacements or experiences of gentrification in the community. The government’s next step will reveal whether or not it will be able to deliver on its promises to not to infringe upon the rights of residents or facilitate their displacement. Nevertheless, the struggle of Kibera’s residents in accessing public services, using urban space, and in claiming a meaningful right to the city continues.


Appendices

Appendix 1: Key Informant Semi-Structured Interview Guide
Residents of Kibera, informal settlement
Project: Informal Settlements and In Situ Slum Upgrading in Nairobi: Struggling for a ‘Right to the City’

This interview will take approximately 30-90 minutes. The following topics will be discussed in the interviews. This is a semi-structured interview so topics may vary slightly based on the answers to questions posed.

A. Personal Background
   1. How long have you lived in the Kibera-Soweto area? Were you selected as a participant for the ‘slum upgrading’ pilot project?
   2. What is your age? What is your gender?
   3. Who do you currently live with? How many people are occupying the space?
   4. Can you describe your living accommodation at the decanting site for me? What is the relative size and condition? How long have you lived in it? Can you briefly describe the process by which you were selected to be a beneficiary of this project? Have you entered the housing cooperative?
   5. Where are you from originally? Do you identify with a particular ethnic group?

B. General Descriptive
   6. Will you be occupying Soweto-East Zone A’s ‘upgraded’ structure constructed through KENSUP’s initiative? If so, how were you selected? Who selected you and by what criteria were they selected? How has your living situation changed over the past several years? How long have you occupied an interim housing structure?
   7. What have been the biggest challenges for you as a resident during the implementation of this pilot project?
   8. What is your understanding of what the project is supposed to accomplish?
   9. Do you think the project will accomplish everything it is intended to do?
  10. Have there been conflicts or challenges living on the decanting site? Are you satisfied with the location?
  11. What changes, if any, have there been to infrastructure due to this project?
  12. What changes, if any, have there been to access to electricity and water?
  13. Can you discuss if there have there been any concerns raised publicly or privately between residents and representatives of the KENSUP initiative?
  14. Have there been issues with receiving information and communication from KENSUP and those involved in the project?

C. Direct and Indirect Effects and Impacts
1. How many new housing units have been constructed?
2. Have there been changes in price or accessibility for these units?
3. Have there been changes to the neighbourhood such as opportunities for jobs or changes to livelihoods?
4. How has the new housing structure changed your lifestyle? Has the relocation process affected your livelihood/how you earn your income?
5. Has this policy been gender insensitive in any way? Do you feel as though your experience of this project has been different because of your gender?

D. Rights and Citizenship
1. Do you feel secure in your housing situation? Please explain.
2. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
3. Where do you see the community in 5 years?
4. Would you consider KENSUP’s initiative to have been effective in allowing residents to remain in the space they previously occupied?
5. Has anyone had to move to a different area because of the project who will not be receiving a housing unit in Soweto-East? If so, please explain.
6. Has this project changed your understanding of the way in which government services are directed to you and other residents of Kibera? Has this project changed the way you view the government’s accountability towards you as a resident?
7. Would you consider the project to be a success?
8. Would you recommend it be replicated in other informal settlements in the city?
9. Is there anything in particular you think the project has done well? Do you have any criticisms of how the project has been implemented so far?

Finally, are there any other questions I should have asked and didn’t? Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix 2: Key Informant Semi-Structured Interview Guide
Government officials working for KENSUP or UN-Habitat workers based in Kibera, Nairobi
Project: Informal Settlements and In Situ Slum Upgrading in Nairobi: Struggling for a ‘Right to the City’
This interview will take approximately 30-90 minutes. The following topics will be discussed in the interviews. This is a semi-structured interview so topics may vary slightly based on the answers to questions posed.

A. Personal Background
1. How long have you worked on KENSUP’s pilot project in Kibera’s Soweto-East area? Can you provide a timeline for me about when you were working on the project?
2. How has the project progressed and changed over the past several years? Have there been any major changes made in the application of the project that differ from the initial policy?

B. General Descriptive
1. In your opinion, what have been the biggest challenges in the implementation of this pilot project?
2. What is your understanding of what the project was supposed to accomplish?
3. Do you think the project will accomplish everything that it intended to do?
4. What changes, if any, have there been to infrastructure due to this project?
5. What changes, if any, have there been to access to electricity and water? What are some of the issues residents have faced living on the decanting site in Langata?
6. Can you discuss if there have there been any concerns raised publicly or privately between residents and representatives of the KENSUP initiative?
7. What are some of the different roles and responsibilities of KENSUP, Nairobi City Council and UN-Habitat?
8. Have there been difficulties in terms of collaboration between the different partners?
9. How much decision-making power or influence do donors have over the implementation of this slum upgrading policy?

C. Direct and Indirect Effects and Impacts
1. Who is providing resources for this project? Have there been any challenges the project has faced regarding finance and funding? Please explain. Have the sources changed over time?
2. Can you tell me more about KENSUP’s partnership with the UN-Habitat?
3. What type of rent or charge is levied on the new housing constructions? How do these prices compare to what residents are used to paying for housing? Do you think the housing units will be affordable and financially sustainable in the long-term?
4. What kinds of employment opportunities or income generating activities have become available since the implementation of the project?
5. How is tenure secured for residents under this policy? Have residents voiced objections to these arrangements?

D. Rights and Citizenship
1. How much security do residents have with their claim to the upgrading housing structures being occupied? How many years will members of the housing cooperative be paying of the units?
2. Where do you see Kibera’s Soweto-East community in 5 years?
3. One of the goals of slum upgrading projects is to allow residents to remain in the space they previously occupied. Would you consider this initiative to have been effective at achieving this goal?
4. What type of planning occurs before ‘slum upgrading’ projects get implemented?
5. Who are the ‘stakeholders’ in the project? How are they selected and what do they do?
6. How is the government remaining accountable to residents of the community?
7. Would you consider the project to be a success so far?
8. Would you recommend it be replicated in other informal settlements in the city?
9. Do you think it would be possible to replicate or implement other informal settlement upgrading initiatives in the city?

Finally, are there any other questions I should have asked and didn’t? Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix 3: Key Informant Semi-Structured Interview Guide
Members of Civil Society Organization based in Kibera, Nairobi
Project: Informal Settlements and In Situ Slum Upgrading in Nairobi: Struggling for a ‘Right to the City’

This interview will take approximately 30-90 minutes. The following topics will be discussed in the interviews. This is a semi-structured interview so topics may vary slightly based on the answers to questions posed.

A. Personal Background
1. How long have you worked in Kibera’s Soweto-East area or with issues relating to informal settlements? Have you observed KENSUP’s ‘slum upgrading’ pilot project since its implementation in 2004?
2. What does your CSO currently focus on? Can you tell me a bit about your organization’s history? Have you done any work that relates to this ‘slum upgrading’ project? Or have you worked with any recipients of this project? Do you work with other groups on this? If so, which ones?
3. What have you observed about the project’s progress and changes that have occurred over the past several years?

B. General Descriptive
1. In your opinion, what have been some of the biggest challenges in the implementation of this pilot project?
2. What is your understanding of what the project is supposed to accomplish?
3. Do you think the project will accomplish everything it has intended to do?
4. What changes, if any, have you noticed to infrastructure in the community due to this project?
5. What changes, if any, have you noticed to access to electricity and water in the community?
6. Can you discuss if there have been any concerns raised publicly or privately between residents and representatives of the KENSUP initiative?

C. Direct and Indirect Effects and Impacts
1. Do you know who is providing resources for this project? Have there been any challenges the project has faced regarding finance and funding? Please explain.
2. Are you concerned about the affordability of the new housing units moving forward? What type of rent or charge is levied on the new housing constructions? Has this meant a change in who can afford the housing units? Have there been any evictions or displacement in the decanting site for residents?
3. How many new housing units have been constructed?
4. Have there been changes in price or accessibility for these units?
5. Have there been changes to the neighbourhood such as opportunities for jobs or changes to livelihoods?
6. Are you concerned about gentrification in Kibera? If so, explain.

D. Rights and Citizenship
1. What is your understanding of the security residents will have with their claim to the upgrading housing structures being occupied?
2. Where do you see Kibera’s Soweto-East community in 5 years?
3. Who are the ‘stakeholders’ in the project? How are they selected and what do they do?
4. Have you observed the inclusion of residents in the participation of this project? How so?
5. How is the government remaining accountable to residents of the community?
6. So far, would you consider the project to be successful?
7. Would you recommend it be replicated in other informal settlements in the city?
8. Do you think it would be possible to replicate or implement other informal settlement upgrading initiatives in the city?
9. One of the goals of slum upgrading projects is to allow residents to remain in the space they previously occupied. So far, would you consider this initiative to have been effective achieving this goal?

Finally, are there any other questions I should have asked and didn’t? Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation!