



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN
Department of Administration and Organization Theory

Master Thesis

“Between a Rock and a Hard Place”

**The Contradictory Roles of Organizations involved in Housing
Delivery in South African Informal Settlements**

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Contents

- Chapter 1. Introduction 1
 - 1.1. Research question and purpose of the study 2
 - 1.2. Outline of the thesis..... 4
- Chapter 2. Housing delivery and informal settlements in South Africa 6
 - 2.1. South African townships and informal settlements..... 6
 - 2.1.1. The internal organization of informal settlements 7
 - 2.1.2. Informal settlement growth in the urban area of Cape Town 8
 - 2.2. Housing delivery in South Africa..... 9
 - 2.2.1. PHP – beneficiary participation in housing delivery 10
 - 2.3. The local context – Atlantis and Witsand informal settlement 12
 - 2.3.1. Witsand..... 13
 - 2.3.2. Witsand prior to housing delivery – a community? 14
- Chapter 3. Theory..... 17
 - 3.1. Urban planning in informal settlements – tensions in housing delivery 17
 - 3.1.1. Striving for stability in fragmented and dynamic informal settlements..... 18
 - 3.1.2. Fragmentation and unintended effects of housing delivery 21
 - 3.1.3. Summarizing – two broad tensions in urban planning interventions 25
 - 3.2. Locating the organization in relation to the organizational environment 26
 - 3.2.1. Organizations – dual “open systems” seeking survival in their environments 27
 - 3.2.2. Organizations and institutions – why are organizations so similar? 28
 - 3.2.3. Three mechanisms of isomorphism and three “pillars” of institutions 29
 - 3.2.4. Decoupling – an organizational response to contradictory demands 31
 - 3.2.5. Specifying WEHBSO’s institutional and “relational” environment 35
- Chapter 4. Methodology..... 38
 - 4.1. Case study methodology 38
 - 4.1.1. What is it a case of? Boundaries between case and context..... 40
 - 4.2. Interviews – why do them? 41
 - 4.2.1. Interviews – limitations and attempts at addressing them..... 42

4.3. Documents.....	46
4.4. Validity and reliability	48
4.4.1. Construct validity	48
4.4.2. Internal validity	49
4.4.3. External validity	50
4.4.4. Reliability	51
Chapter 5. Analysis	53
5.1. Outline of chapter.....	53
5.2. Section 1: WEHBSO – a “stable entity” in a fluid setting	54
5.2.1. An institutional perspective on the tension between “stability” and “fluidity”	59
5.2.2. Summary of section 1	65
5.3. Section 2: The politics of housing delivery in fragile “communities”	66
5.3.1. Fragmentation and politicization of community organizing	67
5.3.2. Neglecting “the mandate” – shack demolitions, toyi-toyi and blaming.....	71
5.3.3. An institutional perspective on organizational fragmentation in Witsand.....	77
5.3.4. Summary of section 2.....	83
5.4. Section 3: WEHBSO as a “good citizen” – signs of organizational decoupling?.....	84
5.4.1. Decoupling of policy and practice	84
5.4.2. Decoupling of means and end	86
5.4.3. Summary of section 3.....	87
Chapter 6. Conclusion	89
6.1. Summary of main findings.....	89
6.2. Concluding remarks and wider implications of my findings	93
Appendix 1	99
List of respondents	99
Appendix 2	101
Analytical distinction between policy-practice decoupling and means-end decoupling ...	101
Appendix 3	102
Interview guide for Witsand residents	102

Appendix 4	104
Interview guide for WEHBSO members	104
References	106

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CBHO	Community-Based Housing Organization
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CRD	Concerned Residents of Delft
DA	Democratic Alliance
DAG	Development Action Group
KCIHT	Kutlwanong Civic Integrated Housing Trust
PA	PEER Africa
PHP	People's Housing Process
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
SANCO	South African National Civic Organization
SO	Support Organization
WEHBSO	Witsand iEEECO Housing Beneficiary Organization

Chapter 1. Introduction

Housing delivery is a central and much debated topic in South Africa, occupying grassroots organizations, informal dwellers, NGOs, public officials, state departments, scholars and activists. It has been so ever since the first democratically elected South African government of 1994 vowed to build one million houses within its first five-year period, and to provide all of its citizens who were living in poor conditions in the townships in the urban periphery and in rural areas with decent, well-located and affordable shelter by 2003. Between 1994 and 2001, the national housing programme delivered more subsidized houses than any other country in the world¹, but still the government is struggling to grapple with the persistent backlog of housing delivery, which in 2011 stood at about 2.3 million units². Among the legacies of the apartheid regime are strongly skewed patterns of access to land, shelter and resources among South Africa's population, an issue which is interwoven in South African housing policy and discourse. While there have been vast advances since 1994 related to the breaking down of various barriers separating its citizens from one another, South Africa is still known for being one of the countries in the world with the highest levels of inequality. In 2011 about 13% of the population lived exposed to the whims of the weather in "townships" with very limited service delivery commonly found on the periphery of larger cities.

While the country as a whole has recently seen a decrease of people living in informal dwellings, the total figures in urban areas such as Cape Town are increasing; from about 125 000 people in 1996 to 219 000 in 2011³. As people in need of shelter and proximity to work construct homes for themselves in the form of informal dwellings – shacks – around Cape Town, in-migration has led to a sevenfold increase in the number of informal settlements from 50 in 1993 to 350 in 2008⁴. This situation means that the government is continuously under pressure to deliver subsidized housing to address the backlog – which increased in the Cape Town area from approximately 150 000 in 1998 to about 400 000 households in 2008⁵.

Approaches to housing delivery by government and various NGOs have been criticized for a number of reasons. Many have argued that the impetus for mass-delivery of

¹ (Ley 2010: 22; Rust 2008: 2)

² (Department of Human Settlements 2012)

³ (Statistics South Africa 2012b: 81)

⁴ (Gie 2011: 10)

⁵ (Gie 2011: 10; Barry 2006: 629)

standardized units on a national scale in an attempt to address the growing backlog has led to a product-oriented focus which obscures important aspects of the *processes* of housing delivery and the effects that these may have in communities of housing beneficiaries. In this respect, processes of housing delivery have been criticized for being unresponsive to local conditions in informal settlements, of overriding community initiatives, of failing to build on existing local practices of organization and even of intervening in these practices in a manner which has negative effects in informal settlement communities in the long-run. A notion embedded in a number of housing projects with the aim of addressing such limitations concerns the participation of beneficiaries in various stages of project implementation. This notion is clearly reflected and valued in South African housing policy. However, participatory processes of housing delivery have also been subject to criticism similar to the types sketched in the above. This critique springs from insights based on existing studies of complex social dynamics and practices of organization in informal settlements, which have found that social networks in these settlements tend to be fragile, while organizing practices are fluid, complex, and continuously changing. In these settings, processes of housing delivery, settlement formalization and upgrading have been marked by seemingly persistent tensions.

1.1. Research question and purpose of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to gain insight into local aspects of housing delivery in informal settlements, through a case study of a housing (and upgrading) project which has been going through various stages of implementation in the informal settlement of Witsand since the first “show houses” were built in 2001 and Phase 1 of the project was approved in 2002⁶. The process of housing delivery in Witsand has been contested locally and has been marked by a number of unforeseen developments, many of which are related to interactions between PEER Africa (PA) – the private firm acting as “implementing agent” for the City of Cape Town – and various community groupings and organizations in Witsand. To be explained further, this interaction has been mediated by a community-based organization (CBO⁷) which has operated as Support Organization (SO) between PA and local residents, called Witsand iEEECO Housing Beneficiary Organization (WEHBSO). In my study I have looked at *organizational processes* during housing delivery in Witsand, and the main research question of this thesis is:

⁶ The project is currently in Phase 2, which was commenced in 2010 and is planned to be completed by 2014.

⁷ Throughout this thesis I will for reasons of clarity refer to community-based *housing* organizations (CBHOs).

How may the persistent tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in South African informal settlements be highlighted by drawing on theories of conflicting requirements of organizations?

In positioning myself to be able to answer this research question, part of the task has been descriptive; I have needed to define what is meant by “organizational processes” and to describe these as observed in the case study. Alongside this descriptive aspect of the study, the analysis chapter contains comparisons of my observations from Witsand with literature on other housing delivery projects in South African informal settlements. A review of other case studies and scholarly texts identified persistent *tensions* in housing delivery, and in this regard I have looked at how organizational processes during housing delivery in Witsand relate to these tensions.

For the purposes of this study, I intend to describe the following two phenomena by using the term “organizational processes”. Firstly, I am referring to the emergence and development of the formal structure and policies of the organization WEHBSO. Secondly, I am referring to processes related to practices and patterns of social organization on a more general level in Witsand. This can be seen as loosely related to Nuijten’s (1999) notion of “organizing practices”, placing more emphasis on people’s activities than on stable structures, though acknowledging that practices of organization may become relatively permanent and regularized (as captured by the concept of “institution”). To be emphasized in the analysis and context chapters, some relevant characteristics of the organizing practices in informal settlements such as Witsand are that they are dynamic and continuously changing, implying for instance rapid changes in positions of local leadership. Some organizational processes I have observed in Witsand during housing delivery are the accentuated fragmentation and politicization of community organizing, related to the emergence of a competing community-based housing organization (CBHO).

I will discuss these observations in relation to literature on other processes of housing delivery in informal settlements, and shed light on them by drawing on concepts and theories from the field of organizational theory. Specifically I will draw on insights from this literature which imply that the formal structure and policies of organizations do not result (only) from rational adaptation to technical requirements of its immediate relational networks, but from adaptation to demands from its institutional environments. Guided by theoretical propositions

about forms of institutional influence on organizations, I have sought to identify possible sources of such institutional influence on WEHBSO's formal policies and structure.

1.2. Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides some contextual and background information for the discussion of organizational processes related to housing delivery in the informal settlement of Witsand. It opens with an explanation of South African informal settlements, emphasizing certain aspects of their internal organization. Then follows a brief overview of issues related to formal housing delivery to informal dwellers, such as the initial rationale for government-subsidized housing, the housing "backlog" and some elements of South African housing policy. The local context of Witsand will also be highlighted here.

Chapter 3 will present the literature that will be engaged in the analysis. It is divided into two sections, the first of which presents critiques of housing delivery identified in the literature on urban planning in South African informal settlements, and the second section will explain the theoretical framework that will be used to shed light on tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in Witsand. This second section outlines theories of how organizations engage with their institutional environments; why they assume the forms they do, and how they deal with tensions between demands from their immediate relational networks and wider institutional environments.

In Chapter 4 I will discuss some advantages and limitations of the single case study as the chosen research design to answer my research question, followed by a discussion of methodological issues and practical experiences related to the research methods employed as part of the case study, namely qualitative semi-structured interviews and document analyses. The final section of the chapter will reflect on the validity and reliability of the research.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical observations from Witsand. It is divided into three sections. In section 1 I discuss a tension between the ideals of stability and continuity in the delivery process and the patterns and practices of organization in Witsand which are fluid and continuously changing. In section 2 I describe some organizational processes that have unfolded in Witsand during housing delivery and relate these to tensions argued in the literature to stem from assumptions of participatory discourse. I will argue that these processes may be understood as unintended effects of housing delivery. I will conclude each of these two sections with a reflection on how the empirical observations might be highlighted by engaging theories on organizations as exposed to conflicting demands from their environments. In section 3 I will discuss how WEHBSO might be seen as responding to such

conflicting demands in practice, drawing on the concept of organizational “decoupling”. This final section rounds off with a reflection on the broader implications for housing delivery in South African informal settlements, focusing on how the seemingly persistent tensions identified in the literature and in observations from Witsand might be shed light by applying a theoretical framework such as the one in this thesis.

In Chapter 6 I summarize the main findings of the empirical analysis, and on the basis of this I suggest some answers to the research question. Furthermore, the chapter will contain a discussion of some implications of my research for the wider field of housing delivery in South African informal settlements, reflecting on how the analysis of organizational processes in Witsand may contribute towards understanding the emergence and persistency of tensions in housing delivery in South Africa.

Chapter 2. Housing delivery and informal settlements in South Africa

The aim of this chapter is to provide some contextual and background information for the upcoming discussion of organizational processes during housing delivery in the informal settlement of Witsand. It will open with an explanation of South African informal settlements, emphasizing certain aspects of their internal organization. Then follows a brief overview of issues related to formal housing delivery to informal dwellers, such as the initial rationale for government-subsidized housing, the housing “backlog” and some elements of South African housing policy. Towards the end of the chapter I will briefly touch on some aspects of the local context of Witsand, related to the origin of the settlement close to the town of Atlantis outside of Cape Town.

2.1. South African townships and informal settlements

The term “informal settlement” has particular connotations in the South African context. “Townships” and informal settlements have been, and still are, sites of political struggle and contestation in the country. The contested nature of South African township politics and spatial and demographic characteristics of informal settlements are embedded in the country’s history. Informal settlements can be understood as a type of human settlement which falls within the wider category of the “slum”; a complex, rapidly changing, and spatially varied settlement “...where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognized and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city” (UN-Habitat 2002, in UN-Habitat 2003: 10). Marie Huchzermeyer, a central contributor to the literature on urban planning which I reviewed in Chapter 3, defines informal settlements as;

“...those settlements of the urban poor that have developed through the unauthorised occupation of land. Tenure insecurity is the central characteristic of informal settlements, with varying attributes of unhealthy and hazardous living conditions to which overcrowding and lack of services may contribute”. (Huchzermeyer & Karam 2006: 3)

This understanding is similar to the official definition which guided the South African National Population Census of 2001, although in this case more emphasis is placed on these settlements as “unplanned” and not following “approved architectural plans” (Census 2001, in Housing Development Agency 2012: 6).

2.1.1. *The internal organization of informal settlements*

Many researchers and observers⁸ have described the internal social and organizational dynamics of informal settlements as complex, fluid, fragmented, fragile and dynamic (as opposed to static). This has been attributed to a number of contextual factors, some of which will be briefly explained here.

The physical layout, political climate and internal organization in the originally state-planned South African townships has been affected by apartheid legislation such as the 1950 Group Areas Act and the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, which was directly aimed at segregating people according to different racial categories, as well as other forms of legislation which was more indirectly part of “...*a number of mechanisms (...) employed over the decades to bring about the peculiar race-based spatial organisation of South African cities*” (Maylam 1995: 27). Quite importantly however, townships as well as the unplanned informal settlements have also been shaped “bottom-up” by the mobilization of residents against the state particularly in the struggle against apartheid in the late 1970s and 1980s (Barry and Rütther 2005: 44; Seekings 2011: 140). During this period, radical “...*localised grassroots organisational structures...*” (Swilling 1993: 16) known as “civics” emerged in townships on the periphery of South African cities (Glaser 1997: 6; Miraftab 2003: 226). These are still influential in community politics, affecting relations between informal settlement residents and local officials (Lemanski 2008: 396). However, the role of the civics is changing, and they have faced challenges in defining their roles after their radicalised struggle led to a transition to liberal democracy in 1994 (Adler & Steinberg 2000). One remnant of the internal organization which developed through the apartheid struggle is a hierarchical administrative structure of locally elected governing committees on various levels (street committees, area committees and block committees)⁹ (Barry et al 2007: 188).

Noting variations between different informal settlements, a general observation is that the internal challenges of the civic movements coupled with the politicization of development processes, have contributed to the fragmentation of internal organization and social networks in informal settlements (Adler & Steinberg 2000; Oldfield & Zweig 2010). In an analysis of the experiences of the housing NGO Development Action Group (DAG) drawn from its work with a number of informal settlements since 1986, Smit (2006: 114-5) exemplifies such

⁸ (Roux et al 2009: 1; Adler and Steinberg 2000; Millstein 2008: 34-5; Smit 2006: 103; Barry & Rütther 2005: 43; Charlton 2006: 60; Huchzermeyer et al 2006: 26)

⁹ This is not to say that contemporary South African informal settlements are normally highly organized. For more details on these committees, see (Barry 2006: 634; Oldfield 2002: 106; Huchzermeyer 2002: 71)

settlement fragmentation. The settlement of Freedom Park in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, was marked by community schisms; there were two clearly divided factions, voting for different political parties, while one of them controlled the residents' association committee (ibid; DAG 2009). Two other settlements, Imizamo Yethu and Morkel Cottage, also located near Cape Town, were divided primarily on the basis of residents' duration of stay in the area.

This section has touched on a few of the complexities of informal settlements that have been described by researchers. The implications of these complexities for housing delivery will be picked up in the theory and analysis chapters. I will now turn to a very general overview of some informal settlement demographics in South Africa, focusing on their expansion in size and increase in numbers.

2.1.2. Informal settlement growth in the urban area of Cape Town

Demographic and statistical data on informal settlements commonly takes the form of estimates rather than exact representations of population numbers and densities. In addition to there being several sources of error in informal settlement counts, differences in operationalized definitions of informal dwellings and settlements also lead to different findings.

According to the 2001 Population Census 1.11 million households (9 % of all households) in South Africa lived in informal settlements, 1.38 million households (12 %) lived in informal dwellings or shacks (not in backyards), whereas just over 700 000 (6 %) lived in both (Census 2001, cited in HDA 2012: 7). The 2011 Census shows a decrease in the number of households in informal dwellings to 1.25 million (Statistics South Africa 2012a: 63). However, the number of households living in informal dwellings in the Cape Town area has increased from 125 204 in 1996, to 218 780 in 2011 (Statistics South Africa 2012b: 81). An internal report by the City of Cape Town's Strategic Development Information (SDI) and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Departments referring to findings based on aerial photography¹⁰ counts, estimates that the number of informal settlements¹¹ in the Cape Town area has also grown, from around 50 in 1993 to more than 350 in 2008.

Studies on informal settlement expansion have led to a distinction between two categories when considering factors leading people to move to informal settlements; *push*

¹⁰ This technique for estimating changes in informal settlement size involves the counting of informal dwelling rooftops, and a source of error lies in the inclusion of roofs of structures that have other functions than that of housing people (Gie 2011: 4-6)

¹¹ Defined for this count as a "...grouping of individual informal dwellings in the same area into an informal settlement name." (Gie 2011: 10).

factors and *pull factors*¹². The former refers to cases where people for instance have been forced, or wanted, to move from their prior home because of overcrowding or not being able to afford accommodation. The latter refers to situations where people have moved to an informal settlement because it is closer to work opportunities or other desired amenities.

Rural to urban migration and the growing number of informal dwellings contributes to the housing backlog in Cape Town, which increased from approximately 150 000 in 1998 to about 400 000 households in 2008 (Gie 2011: 10; Barry 2006: 629). Next I will turn to an explanation of issues related to housing delivery in South Africa.

2.2. Housing delivery in South Africa

Following a decade marked by political tension and upheaval leading up to the abolishment of apartheid, the newly elected government of the first South African democratic election of 1994 set out to address the country's housing crisis. This was seen as critical to ensure political and social stability for the period of post-apartheid transformation (Barry and Rüter 2005: 44; 223). The newly elected African National Congress (ANC) embarked on its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the aim being the provision of “...*decent, well-located and affordable shelter for all by the year 2003*” and the building of one million low-cost houses over the following five year period (ANC 1994; Huchzermeyer 2010: 132; (Del Mistro & Henscher 2009: 334). Despite current President Jacob Zuma claiming a total of 3.1 million houses to have been delivered since 1994 (Munusamy 2013), South Africa still faces a considerable challenge in reducing the increasing housing backlog, which was at more than 2 million units in 2012 (Financial and Fiscal Commission 2012: 4; Barry 2006: 629). The South African Constitution states “adequate housing” as a right for all its citizens, the realization of which is defined as a responsibility of the state (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996).

A central mechanism of state-subsidized housing delivery is the “once-off” capital subsidy, intended to support historically disadvantaged low-income groups in attaining houses. The subsidy is allocated to applicants whose household income is below R3500¹³ a month, who are South African citizens, who have not previously received housing benefits from the government, who are first time property owners and who either have a spouse or are supporting dependents (Charlton & Kihato 2006: 254). The 1994 Government White Paper on

¹² (DAG 2002b, 2003, in Smit 2006: 108)

¹³ 2027NOK/353USD (based on exchange rates 07.06.2013) <http://reise.aftenposten.no/reise/valutakalkulator/>

Housing stressed that housing policy should lead to more than the provision of houses as physical assets to South African citizens, and that it should also set out to create;

“...viable, socially and economically integrated communities, situated in areas allowing convenient access to economic opportunities as well as health, educational and social amenities” (Department of Housing 1994)

The government’s approach to housing has been criticized for not meeting these additional requirements, for reasons such as poor location, unemployment and costs of home ownership¹⁴. A central element in my later discussion of the Witsand case and the review of housing critiques is the widespread critique that housing delivery processes fail to contribute towards the creation of socially integrated communities.

2.2.1. PHP – beneficiary participation in housing delivery

Since parts of the critique of housing delivery that I will refer to in the literature review is particularly directed at participatory housing projects, and the project and Witsand strongly emphasizes participation of the beneficiaries, it will be added here that current South African housing policy emphasizes “people-centered development”, involving the poor in delivery processes, and placing a high value on “community participation”. These notions have been part of housing policy in South Africa since 1994, but following the introduction of a programme of government supported community-based construction of top structures – the People’s Housing Process (PHP) – in 1998, the practical meaning of community participation has been more clearly defined (Charlton & Kihato 2006: 265; Huchzermeyer 2001: 312). PHP was formally introduced in South Africa by the Housing Ministry after a process of funding and promotion of a “self-help” approach to South African housing delivery involving international agencies such as UNDP and USAID and South African grassroots organizations such as the Homeless People’s Federation, and it was partly modeled on experiences from participatory informal settlement upgrading in Sri Lanka (Huchzermeyer 2001: 232; Huchzermeyer 2002: 79; Charlton & Kihato 2006: 265; Ley 2010: 29). In South Africa the model was intended as a means to access a portion of the once-off capital subsidy allowing people to build their own homes themselves with subsidized materials (Huchzermeyer 2001: 232). Infrastructure delivery through PHP follows a conventional approach whereby private

¹⁴ (Charlton, Silverman & Berrisford 2003, Khan & Ambert 2003, Rust 2003, Zack & Charlton 2003, in Charlton & Kihato 2006)

contractors compete for government tenders, and these contractors may temporarily employ local residents to carry out construction (Huchzermeyer 2002: 79).

The implementation of South African PHP projects and participatory housing delivery in general, has been criticized in a number of ways, with scholars observing that;

“[w]hen it comes to ‘people-centred’ development, particularly in terms of water, sanitation and housing in South African cities, there has been so much knowledge, so much policy, so much agreement on what needs to be done, and so little to show for it.”
(Bradlow, Bolnick & Shearing 2011: 267)

This South African paradox of participation has been identified by others as well. Several contributors to a special journal edition discussing the issue converged in the conclusion that while there has been such a strong emphasis on beneficiary participation in upgrading, housing and infrastructure delivery projects in South Africa since 1994, the participatory mechanisms “...currently in place in South African cities do not work properly in practice...” (Bénit-Gbaffou 2008: i-ii). Miraftab (2003: 226) writes that in South Africa following 1994 there were two conditions thought to be favourable for beneficiary participation in housing development processes; firstly, the government’s approach to housing was “people-centred”¹⁵, insofar as it advocated the participation of low-income groups in housing processes and; secondly, the township civic movement arguably “...held significant social capital that could be enlisted to further the new housing directives” (Mayekiso 1996, in Miraftab 2003: 226).

I am not focusing on broad features related to participation in this thesis, but rather on more context-specific issues related to housing delivery in informal settlements that were observed in Witsand. However, the critique is relevant as this project is funded through the PHP mechanism. Some specific implications of this in Witsand will be discussed in the analysis. Before briefly explaining the local context of Witsand and Atlantis, it will be pointed out here that factors internal to South Africa’s history has contributed to the status of community participation in housing delivery, as it is seen by many as a crucial means of contributing towards equal participation in processes which affect the lives of historically disadvantaged citizens, while addressing “*the geographic segmentation of living areas according to race and class, urban sprawl, and disparate levels of service provision and access to amenities in different areas*” (Department of Housing 1994). Furthermore, South African housing policy and PHP might be seen as influenced by elements of participatory

¹⁵ (Department of Housing 1994)

development discourse¹⁶, as embraced by the United Nations and the international development community;

“The involvement of slum dwellers as partners and not beneficiaries was identified as one of the main recommendations that help to empower communities as well as strengthen the effectiveness of participatory slum upgrading processes.” (UN-HABITAT 2013)

2.3. The local context – Atlantis and Witsand informal settlement

The informal settlement which is now known as Witsand developed as people settled closer to work, hoping to find employment at the nearby factories and farms in the larger town called Atlantis. Atlantis is situated about 45km north of Cape Town¹⁷, on what was prior to 1975 an area of unoccupied sand dunes. It was envisaged as an industrial city designated for Coloured people, established by the apartheid government, aiming to increase the population in the area from 0 in 1973 to 500,000 in 2010 by applying state regulation. The project was part of the policy of segregated development based on race, and of subsidized industrialization of South Africa (Stafford 2005: 9-10). In the first ten years of Atlantis’ existence, in spite of many challenges, it looked partly as if some of the goals of the state were to be reached.

Considerable incentive packages and high subsidies attracted more than 100 factories and thousands of Coloured people to the area, and although *“[g]rowth was slower than hoped and living conditions were less than ideal (...) Atlantis was growing and hope for the future was intact”* (Stafford 2005: 58). However, in the mid-1980s, international recession, the international apartheid disinvestment campaign and internal pressure from civic groups, activists and trade unions led to economic losses for Atlantis’ factories, and unemployment begun to increase (Stafford 2005: 63-4). Since then, Atlantis has had among the highest unemployment rates in the Blaauwberg District as well as high rates of crime and homicide¹⁸.

It was around this time, in the late 1980s, that the first shacks were constructed on what is now known as the informal settlement of Witsand. The following section will explain briefly the birth and development of this settlement.

¹⁶ For a discussion of international development discourse and the concept of participatory development, see Gaventa (2004).

¹⁷ See Appendix 5 for maps pointing out the locations of Cape Town, Atlantis and Witsand respectively. See also the end of this chapter for two pictures taken in Witsand during a field visit which depict the formal and informal dwellings.

¹⁸ (City of Cape Town 2007, in City of Cape Town 2011: 16; Mail & Guardian 1995; Ebrahim 1986, in Stafford 2005: 62)

2.3.1. *Witsand*

As is the case for many informal settlements, there is not a large availability of data or prior research on Witsand. Some demographic figures are available – these will be presented shortly. In contrast to the thoroughly state planned Coloured town of Atlantis, the nearby settlement which is now known as Witsand¹⁹ originated when a few people constructed shacks nearby. The exact details around the emergence of Witsand are highly unclear; whereas parts of my own research coincide with other sources in suggesting that the first people to construct shacks there arrived sometime around the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s²⁰, an aerial photograph from 1998 suggests that there were no squatters in the area at the time. However, this could be due to the informal dwellings being small, or of such a makeshift nature that they are not clearly visible, or that the first shacks were in fact not clustered in the area now known as Witsand informal settlement, but were more dispersed in the initial years. Accurate descriptions of informal settlement emergence can be difficult to attain, as these are often “*gradual word-of-mouth processes*” arising out of a need for shelter (Huchzermeyer 2003; 2004; 2006, in Huchzermeyer 2009: 63). However, research done by Stafford (2005) and Magida (2013), in addition to personal interviews with residents who have stayed in Witsand since its initial years, suggests that some of the first people to settle and erect shacks in the settlement were migrant workers from the Eastern Cape (Stafford 2005: 93), whereas other early dwellers came from Atlantis after having lost their jobs as farmworkers, having been evicted from their houses or moved from backyard shacks in nearby residential townships (Magida 2013: 76). Seemingly, a clear majority of the population in Witsand spoke Xhosa (Stafford 2005: 94) and has traditionally voted ANC, but they had somewhat different places of origin and reasons for moving to Witsand. The current ward councillor for Ward 32, to which Witsand belongs, is a member of to the Democratic Alliance (DA), whereas the former councillor – who was, and still is, involved in the Witsand project – belongs to the ANC. Although I will only touch on this briefly in the analysis, party politics has affected project-related interactions between PA, WEHBSO, residents and ward councillors.

In my search for statistical data on demographics in Witsand I have found that different sources use different measuring techniques and they tend to present fairly different

¹⁹ The area was not known as ‘Witsand’ at the time, but I am referring to it by its current name.

²⁰ This is based on a history thesis by Stafford (2005: 93), a research report by Malan and van der Merwe (2006), as well as my own interviews in Witsand (‘Ando’ interview, May 23 2012; ‘Thando’ interview, April 20 2012)

figures. However, these all point to consistent growth in Witsand since 1993²¹. Research done for the City of Cape Town revealed that the number of shacks increased from 34 in 1993 to 312 in 1996 (Abbott and Douglas 2002: 6, in Malan and van der Merwe 2006: 19). Twelve years later in June 2008, another informal dwelling count²² done for the City estimated that this number had increased to 1796 (Gie 2011: 17). In terms of total population numbers, the national census found that there were 2408 people living in Witsand in 2001, and the projected estimate for 2008 was 8263 (City of Cape Town 2011: 39). By comparison, nearby Atlantis has been estimated to have a majority Coloured population of 55,546 and a Black African population of 2,265 (Quantec Research 2010). As explained, the figures from Witsand are uncertain, but they illustrate that the population size and number of shacks in Witsand has been increasing from its conception sometime around 1993 up until 2008.

2.3.2. Witsand prior to housing delivery – a community?

As the literature which points to unintended effects of housing delivery in informal settlements suggests that residents' capacity to engage with housing delivery projects varies according to their level of internal organization and social cohesiveness, I have reflected on what my own research in Witsand suggests in relation to whether the settlement prior to project implementation might have been characterized as a unified "community". No clear conclusions can be drawn here. In other settlements, collective struggles of informal dwellers to access basic service delivery has unified and organized them around shared goals (Oldfield 2000).

As was the case in many other informal settlements, early dwellers in Witsand harboured mistrust towards local authorities and out of fear of eviction they made efforts to keep local authorities from discovering the extent of settlement growth. This will be picked up in the analysis. The emergence of the Witsand settlement seems to have had similarities with a common feature of these processes described by Huchzermeyer (2009: 63); "...*land invaders seldom set out to confront or to make political statements. They seek out land where resistance is likely to be least...*" It does not seem as if the wish to remain "hidden" from local authorities was held equally and with similar motivations by all of the shack dwellers.

²¹ (Malan & van der Merwe 2006: 19; City of Cape Town 2002, in Stafford 2005: 93-4; City of Cape Town 2011; Quantec Research 2010)

²² This count was done by Strategic Development Information (SDI) and the Geographic Information System (GIS) Department for the City of Cape Town. The method of aerial photography used for this count is acknowledged to have an error of approximately 5% (Ivano Mangiagelli, *pers. comm.*, in Gie 2011: 7). Furthermore, a significant increase in these numbers from 2007 to 2008 illustrates how a change in counting method can bring about changed results (*ibid*: 17).

There were some local leaders²³ in the settlement, one of which chaired an area committee which acted as a gatekeeper in the initial negotiation process between PA and shack dwellers in Witsand. It originated informally, and was later linked to the South African national umbrella organization for civic organizations known as SANCO (South African National Civic Organization). It was this committee that explained to the developers that the shack dwellers did not want anyone associated with police or the municipality to come to the settlement. Since the settlement had developed from illegal land invasion on private farm land, the squatters feared the municipality would evict them had they discovered the extent of its expansion. However, it is doubtful whether the practices related to this fear of eviction can be seen as having embodied a “unifying struggle” for the residents. According to some interviewees, a group of local leaders’ economic interests were threatened by the prospects of settlement formalization since they were receiving revenue from informally (and illegally) renting out shacks to shack dwellers in Witsand. Huchzermeyer refers to this phenomenon as “shacklordism”, a practice that was largely removed by the civic movements in the early 1990s, though they have recently been re-emerging (Cross 1994, in Huchzermeyer 2009: 62). To be revisited in the analysis, the illegality of these activities was brought up in interviews with onsite fieldworkers in Witsand. According to Managing Partner of PA, Douglas Guy, there used to be highly strained relations between shack dwellers and the municipality. There was minimal communication between them, and the municipality considered Witsand a “no go area”²⁴. This is also suggested by Magida, referring to the then City of Cape Town Housing Project Manager for the Northern Region²⁵ (which includes Blaauwberg Municipality), who said that he needed “*to be protected by community leaders (...) when attending community meetings*” (Magida 2013: 80). Another element that might suggest some sense of shared struggle among shack dwellers prior to project implementation is a toyitoyi (protest) for housing delivery organized by local leaders at the nearby Blaauwberg Administration’s offices around 1999. Importantly however, I do not know have information on how many of the residents of Witsand participated in this toyitoyi.

Thus, it is argued here that on the basis of insights from contextual literature on informal settlements and what I know about the experiences of Witsand residents prior to

²³ I have been presented with different estimates of how many leaders there were in Witsand’s formative years. Some told me there were three initially. However, the term “community leader” is not necessarily reliable, in that giving someone this label might be subjective and it might differ depending on who you are talking to. Further, positions of community leadership can often be contested, constantly changing, and may often in practice refer to someone being a prominent activist in the settlement (Drivdal forthcoming).

²⁴ Short feature on the Witsand project + personal communication and Magida (2013)

²⁵ (Luhanga 2009)

project implementation, it cannot be assumed that Witsand was a cohesive “community” unified by shared experiences.



(Witsand, field visit 29.09.2011: informal dwellings to the right, formal housing on the left.
Photo: Johannes Rupp)



(Witsand, field visit 29.09.2011: myself [left] and other researchers on a site briefing with WEHBSO.
Photo: Johannes Rupp)

Chapter 3. Theory

In this chapter I will present the literature that will be discussed in the analysis of my case study of Witsand. It is divided into two sections, the first of which focuses on critiques of housing delivery as advanced in the literature on urban planning in informal settlements in South Africa. The critiques point to various types of tension in processes of housing delivery in these areas, and I have identified two broadly defined tensions which will be discussed empirically in the analysis of the Witsand case. The second section of this chapter will present contributions within the field of organizational theory that have aimed to explain how organizations operate in relation to their institutional environments; why organizations assume the forms they do, and how they deal with tensions between demands from their immediate relational networks and wider institutional environments. I conclude the chapter with an operationalization of the core concepts to be drawn on in the analysis, outlining the theoretical framework which will be used to shed light on tensions in the organizational processes during housing delivery in Witsand.

3.1. Urban planning in informal settlements – tensions in housing delivery

“Realities such as existing community organisation, collective and individual ideas for improvement, and fragile livelihoods depending on the informally established land-use pattern and inter-household ties, though pointed to by responsive academics, have largely been overridden by the mandate to deliver standardised units.” (Huchzermeyer 2004: 3)

“The current ambiguous discourse on informal settlements (...) [is] without a clear understanding of the complexities of these highly visible manifestations of poverty, mobility and survival strategies.” (Charlton & Kihato 2006: 258)

As explained earlier, South African informal settlements are commonly described as socially complex, in that their internal organization is dynamic, fluid and fragmented, and their social networks are often fragile. Various forms of critique have been advanced by observers of housing delivery processes, suggesting that these processes tend to unfold in a manner which is unresponsive to the internal social complexities of informal settlements. Understanding the social dynamics is seen as critical for projects to produce their intended effects in communities in the long run (Barry 2006: 629). The following review will focus on literature which has highlighted tensions between certain aspects of the approach to housing delivery in South Africa and the patterns of organization in the informal settlements in which delivery processes unfold. A few broad types of tension may be discerned within this literature, two of which will be explored in this review. The first tension which will be highlighted is that

between approaches to housing delivery that reflect values of stability and “orderliness”, and the fluid and dynamic informal settlement contexts. The second tension is related to how housing processes have been observed to intervene in informal settlements in a manner which is not well-suited to the fragile and fragmented nature of these settlements’ organizing practices. These two tensions are closely related and their explanations are occasionally overlapping in the literature, however they are distinguished here so as to illustrate in the analysis how they relate to the observed tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in Witsand. The arguments from the literature to be categorized in relation to these two broad forms of tension are largely built on a number of case studies of housing processes in South African informal settlements, many of which are located in urban areas such as the area around Cape Town. Some examples from these case studies will be drawn on throughout this review to explain the mechanisms observed and contextualize the tensions that have been identified.

3.1.1. Striving for stability in fragmented and dynamic informal settlements

The category of tensions referred to in this thesis between the ideal of *stability* is claimed to be reflected in the way many housing processes in informal settlements where social networks and practices of organization are often highly *fragmented* and fluid. This category of tension is loosely defined in order to categorize elements within the critical literature on South African housing in a manner which also relates to the observations from Witsand.

Alternatively, the arguments presented could be seen as illustrating a tension between the state and housing developers’ desire for control and oversight, and the difficulties of controlling and managing social and organizational processes of change in informal settlements in an “orderly” manner (Bähre 2007; Huchzermeyer 2009: 61). What follows is a presentation of some case studies and arguments from the literature which will be understood to imply the existence of such tension.

One argument advanced in the literature is that housing processes in practice tend to unfold in a rigid and unresponsive manner in relation to initiatives from local residents, in that they fail to build on existing community-based initiatives and organizing practices (Marais & Ntema 2013: 90-1; Huchzermeyer 2002: 67). In a case study of a process of housing and infrastructure delivery in the informal settlement of Kanana outside Johannesburg, Huchzermeyer (2008) criticizes the so-called “individualized once-off capital subsidy” – the practice of giving a once-off government housing subsidy to individual households – for circumventing existing community structures and CBOs by encouraging

individual households to realize their entitlement to a 300m² plot in a standardised settlement layout while undermining support for the settlement leadership which organized the land occupation and secured the initial development (ibid: 76). In the case of Kanana the physical layout of the settlement, which had been organized by a local CBO, was proposed to be standardized by local authorities; individual land plots were to be similarly sized and boundary lines straightened. Residents were content with the initial layout and the CBO contested the plans of the local authorities. The latter wanted to go with the standardized layout until the CBO insisted on an aerial photograph of the settlement. After seeing that the settlement was designed “*as if by an engineer’s sketch*” (ibid: 76), the authorities decided to base a new layout plan on the existing physical structure of the settlement. However, the process had led made residents become aware of their entitlement to plots of 300m², and they eventually begun to support the standardized layout, undermining support for the CBO that had initially organized the settlement and secured the upgrading process for the residents in the first place (ibid.). Based on this and additional case studies, Huchzermeyer argues that the South African approach to housing should draw more experience from Sri Lanka²⁶, where funding is granted to organized community groups for construction, rather than to individual households. Grants to entire settlement areas, according to Huchzermeyer, would strengthen community organizations and develop the skills necessary to govern and maintain the settlement after it has been upgraded (ibid: 81), whereas the current subsidy is contributing to a weakening of the internal organizing potential in informal settlements. This example was included because it illustrates how housing processes have been claimed in the literature to be rigidly focused on maintaining state control, oversight and stability by pursuing standardized solutions that are unresponsive to initiatives by local residents. Huchzermeyer (2009: 61) has argued elsewhere that the approach to housing delivery in South Africa is characterized by a “...*continued fixation with orderly and segregated development...*” A similar claim is made by Marais and Ntema, who argue that in the field of housing delivery and informal settlement upgrading;

“The lack of continued development, together with the discarding of community-based responses, can probably be ascribed not only to the initial narrow focus of the subsidies, but also to the existence of a new state in which central control is paramount.”
(Marais & Ntema 2013: 93)

²⁶ South African PHP policy was initially modelled partly on experiences from Sri Lanka (Huchzermeyer 2002: 78)

Another set of arguments, which point to a form of tension between “stability”, or “rigidity”, and the dynamics of social networks and organizing practices in informal settlements, concern certain seemingly conflicting logics of *formal* practices and requirements of housing processes, and *informal* organizing practices in informal settlements²⁷. One example of such a critique can be found in Millstein’s (2008) study of community organizing in a housing and upgrading process in the informal settlement of Delft, about 30km from Cape Town. An argument advanced by this author is that the state’s formal authority to define what constitutes legitimacy functions according to different logics than does the informal, “bottom-up” constructions of legitimacy which are meaningful to residents of informal settlements, and that “...*formal requirements (...) are at odds with the fluid and dynamic character of community organising*” (ibid: 40). Millstein’s critique specifically focuses on the ward system, a feature of South African local government introduced with the aim of strengthening citizens’ participation in decision-making processes (ibid: 37). Led by the ward councillor, a ward committee is to function as the “...*formal communication channel between the community and the council (...) [and it] should, in a broad sense, be a communication channel for the entire community*” (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2005: 36). However, this latter function of ward councillors as voices of entire communities has been criticized for resting on the questionable assumption that informal settlements can be treated as unified communities whose interests can be *represented* by one councillor, who is “...*expected by those above [him/her] to serve as a singular voice of the community, [whereas] residents of the ward expect councillors to accommodate multiple interests and organisations.*” (Millstein 2011: 34-5, referring to Bénit-Gbaffou 2008). Based on observations from Delft, Millstein (2008: 37) criticizes the ward system for not being responsive to the way in which legitimacy is often constructed *informally* through social networks in informal settlements. Her argument is that whereas the state sees ward councillors as legitimate representatives of the voices of “communities”, this was not the case in Delft where community organizations did not perceive them as legitimate representatives. One common claim among community organizations in Millstein’s study was that councillors,

²⁷ It is emphasized here that this is a generalization of contextualized arguments from the literature, and is not intended as a universal claim about housing processes as cases where entirely “formal” state practices interact with entirely “informal” practices in informal settlements. Whereas state departments and formal organizations may have patterns of informal behavior that deviate from formal policies, organizing practices in informal settlements may also be characterized by formal aspects; CBOs may be registered as formal organizations, residents interact with formal state programs such as public grants systems etc.

who also represent people from other areas within the ward, did not show up at community events in Delft (ibid: 37-8).

A common implicit feature of a number of the arguments pointing to the tension in “rigid” approaches to housing processes that are not well-suited to social and organizational conditions in informal settlements, is that they claim a number of unintended effects are produced locally when these conditions are sought “simplified” by the state (or other actors) through programmes such as the RDP²⁸. Huchzermeyer (2008) argues that local authorities in the Kanana housing and upgrading process “rigidly” adhered to standardized layout plans rather than being “flexible” and responsive to community-based initiatives, while Millstein (2008; 2011) argues that the ward system in a way simplifies complexities of informal settlements, treating them as having a unified voice that may be represented formally, failing to acknowledge that legitimacy is often constructed informally in these contexts. Some of the unintended effects will be discussed in the following section, which looks at the second observed tension identified in the literature, arising out of the manner in which housing processes intervene in, and interact with, fragmented and fragile social networks in informal settlements.

3.1.2. Fragmentation and unintended effects of housing delivery

“Although complexity is an acknowledged characteristic of informal settlements, planning and management decisions are often based upon a reductionist view of problems. (...) Partial understanding of informal settlements can result in interventions which lead to unintended consequences such as social instability.” (Roux et al 2009: 2)

“The geographical focus of participation appears to fragment rather than unite civil society organisations, thereby inhibiting the use of participatory forums as a basis for citywide development.” (Staniland 2008: 55)

Studies of South African housing projects suggest that development strategies often fail to take into account the distinctive fragility and fragmentation of social networks and organizing practices in many informal settlements. More specifically, a number of case studies have led researchers to critique developers for treating informal settlements as unified “communities” in spite of them being marked by strong internal divisions resulting from various historical, spatial, racial or political factors (Staniland 2008: 34; Lemanski 2008: 396-8; Bénit 2002; Millstein 2008; Miraftab 2003; Roux et al 2009: 1), or for assuming that these settlements’ social networks and organizing practices may function as stable bases around which to

²⁸ Bähre (2007: 80), drawing on the ideas of Scott (1998)

structure housing delivery when these networks and practices are in fact fragile and tend to change throughout, and often as a result of, the delivery process (Oldfield 2002; Oldfield 2000: 105). The literature further suggests that when internal dynamics such as local power relations and patterns of organization are poorly understood, participatory upgrading processes may become biased (Roux et al 2009: 2; Miraftab 2003), and community organization may become further fragmented when participatory processes favor some community groups as representatives, whereas others are excluded (Lemanski 2008: 400). A contextualization of these arguments follows.

Treating social networks in informal settlements as cohesive, was argued by Lemanski (2008) to be a source of tension in her case study of a housing delivery process in the settlement of Westlake Village outside of Cape Town. The residents of the area known as Westlake Village came from different backgrounds, arrived at different times and for different reasons. One fraction consisted of a group of seasonally employed caddies who had begun to construct shacks on an area of government-owned land between Cape Town and nearby Constantia Valley in the late 1980s. By the late 1990s this had grown into “Die Bos”, a settlement of just over 1,000 people. About 80% of these residents were Black Africans and 20% were Coloured. A separate group of around 800 people, who lived in a collection of nearby abandoned buildings, was made up of 88% Coloured and 5% Black Africans. While there was no direct conflict between these two groups, they were distinguished by differences in language and political orientation, and they had not been united by a collective “struggle” to access housing or infrastructure developments (Lemanski 2008: 397). The author further observes that these local conditions were not recognized in the ensuing development process, when the two diverse groups were treated as a single “community” to receive state-subsidized housing. Thus, the abovementioned differences “...*severely hindered the potential for cohesive or united organization or agreement*” (*ibid.*). The point in which the tension between assumptions of “community” and the fragmented nature of social networks arose, was when a single community committee was established by the developers to act as representative of the beneficiaries. It was observed that certain residents were favored in this process as representatives where others were not, which arguably intensified the previously tacit divisions between residents.

The observation that Westlake was awarded housing without a preceding collective “struggle” is also seen as critical in Lemanski’s study;

“Unlike residents of other informal settlements, who developed community strength and capacity by fighting against the state for the right to remain, receive services and ultimately formalize, Westlake residents were “given” formal housing without a struggle.”
(Lemanski 2008: 399)

The capacity of local residents to engage in participatory processes of housing and infrastructure delivery are seen as weak in cases where there is an absence of collective struggle, shared goals, and strong ties between residents (ibid: 400; Oldfield 2000: 859; Oldfield 2002: 105). The literature reviewed here suggests that housing processes tend to unfold in a manner which is unresponsive to such internal social dynamics. Miraftab (2003, drawing on Wilson 1996) adds that when internal power relations are not taken into account, participatory processes often become skewed in favour of interests of local elites and/or developers. This is argued to be the case particularly when developers design and initiate participatory mechanisms, thus defining the “rules of the game”, as opposed to when participatory spaces are “invented”²⁹ by residents themselves.

Lemanski’s (2008: 399) understanding of “community capacity”, which is seen as critical in shaping the way informal residents engage with housing and upgrading processes, draws on Oldfield (2000: 859, 868-70). The latter author discusses this concept empirically in a comparative study of housing processes in the two settlements of Green Point in Khayelitsha and Delft South outside of Cape Town. In the former case, a collective struggle for housing delivery had allowed for the development of internal organizing capacity and, in the latter case, a process related to the forced invasion of government housing intended for other purposes had generated access to external resources – another form of capacity – which had in turn structured the ensuing processes of housing delivery favorably for the beneficiaries. In light of this, Oldfield (ibid: 869) defines community capacity as comprised of the “...*internal strengths and weaknesses that structure their potential to organize [and] external links that critically shape community external capacity.*” Such external links have been emphasized as important for capacity by other observers as well (Miraftab 2003: 228). Moreover, Oldfield (ibid.) argues that the development of community capacity is contingent on the “... *particular historical, political, social and economic contexts*” of the settlement in question. The discussions in Lemanski (2008) and Oldfield (2000) suggest that an understanding of these contexts and their implications among developers and policymakers is

²⁹ For discussions of the distinctions between “closed”, “invited” and “claimed/created/invented” spaces for participation, see Gaventa (2004: 35), Miraftab (2004), Miraftab and Wills (2005).

important for projects to achieve their intended effects in informal settlement “communities”³⁰.

Furthermore, whereas an interpretation of Lemanski (2008) and Miraftab (2003) suggests that housing processes which treat diverse and fragmented social networks as communities may result in biased participatory mechanisms and lead to an intensification of divisions between residents, Oldfield’s (2002: 103) case study of a housing process in the informal settlement of Green Point, Khayelitsha³¹ suggests that housing delivery processes may lead to the formation of new social divisions in settlements that were previously functioning as unified communities. In Green Point, “... *community structures were cohesive and interlocking*” and crucial as a means for residents in Phase One of the Green Point development to attain formal housing (ibid: 106). However, Oldfield identifies two shifts in community governance structures after formal housing was delivered, which have generated new divisions among residents. Firstly, a distinction has surfaced between those from Phase One who have been awarded housing and shack dwellers in Phase Two and Three and; secondly, the patterns of participation have changed (ibid: 107). Several of the community leaders who were actively involved in securing housing for Phase One later withdrew from participation in community structures, which in turn has led to suspicion from the shack dwellers, decreased support of community organization, and loss of knowledge which could have been instrumental in the process of formalizing Phase Two of the settlement (ibid: 107-11). As is often the case in these projects, housing became a contentious issue in the settlement, and the many delays in the delivery process, causing tensions between the housing committee and the beneficiaries, contributed to this situation (ibid: 110). In Green Point, the contested nature of the local housing process led to leaders from Phase One wanting to avoid becoming associated with it.

This illustrates that also in informal settlements, which are not clearly marked by internal social fragmentation and division, social networks may be *fragile*, and cannot “...*be assumed as a [stable] base for further mobilization for development.*” The study of Kanana referred to earlier might also be seen as an illustration of how housing processes in settlements with fragile social networks may produce unintended effects, insofar as Huchzermeyer (2008: 75) argues that the once-off housing subsidy given to individual

³⁰ Where I use the term “community” in this thesis, it is for practical reasons to refer to the entire group of people living in a given informal settlement. It is acknowledged that informal settlements rarely fit the understanding of “community” which implies cohesive, unified groups of people connected by close, strong ties.

³¹ Khayelitsha is the largest of the townships in the Cape Town area, estimated in 2008 to have a total of 90 informal settlements and 46 856 informal dwellings (Gie 2011: 10).

households had the unintended effects of encouraging “...*individualised demand-making at the expense of collective infrastructure and basic needs*” and generating new divisions among residents (ibid: 75). An additional unintended effect of housing processes in such contexts is observed by Muyeba (2011), who argues that home ownership in fragmented and non-cohesive social networks often has the counterintuitive effect of constraining, rather than contributing to, the building of a sense of community among residents. He is not arguing that there is a direct causal link between home ownership and reduced sense of community, but, based on research in Weltevreden Valley and Delft South, he argues that the existing lack of trust at neighbourhood level, and a lacking sense of community implies that home ownership provides a space where *privacy*, valued by many interviewees in this study, may be realized (Muyeba 2011: 6, 17).

Common to the case studies of Millstein (2008), Lemanski (2008) and Oldfield (2000, 2002) is that they illustrate ways in which community organization might become fragmented, contested and politicized locally through processes of housing allocation, a point which has also been argued by Oldfield and Zweig (2010) in a study of contested housing politics in the large iKapa townships³² of Cape Town during the period between 1981 and 1994.

3.1.3. Summarizing – two broad tensions in urban planning interventions

In this first section of the review of literature to be discussed empirically in the analysis, I have looked at critiques of urban planning, specifically focusing on housing delivery in South African informal settlements, identifying two broad forms of tension. The first of these is a broadly specified tension between such ideals as stability, control or “orderliness” which seem poorly aligned with the context of informal settlements which is often characterized by fluidity and continuous change. The second tension concerns an implicit assumption reflected in the way housing processes unfold, namely that informal settlements are cohesive communities which can serve as stable bases for mobilizing around housing delivery. Further, housing processes have been criticized for being unresponsive to additional contextual factors, such as their degree of organizing capacity resulting from for instance collective “struggles” against state interventions or for access to service delivery. These two broad forms of tension will be discussed empirically in the analysis, related partly to the “participatory” approach to housing in Witsand. I will now turn to section 2 of this chapter, which will outline theories which explicate the interactions between organizations and various

³² ikapa is Xhosa for Cape, and the iKapa townships refer to the townships of Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga (Oldfield & Zweig 2010: 134).

parts of their environments. I will conclude with an operationalization of core concepts, outlining the theoretical framework be applied in the thesis to shed light on tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in Witsand.

3.2. Locating the organization in relation to the organizational environment

“...we think that urban sociology can make better use of the dedicated literature on organizations and that contemporary urban institutional transformations make this need even more pressing.” (McQuarrie & Marwell 2009: 249)

One observation I was left with following a series of qualitative interviews with fieldworkers and associates of the developer operating in Witsand, was that most of what these interviewees perceive as having been the largest challenges during project implementation, seem to stem in various ways from social interactions between the developer, its support organization WEHBSO, and Witsand residents. As argued above, the critical literature on South African housing processes suggests that these processes tend to unfold in a manner that is unresponsive to patterns of organization and social networks in informal settlements. Throughout most of the implementation process in Witsand, the mediating body between PEER Africa – the firm contracted by the City of Cape Town to act as the implementing agent for the project – and residents of Witsand has been the community-based organization (CBO) called Witsand iEEECO Housing Beneficiary Organization (WEHBSO). Since it was observed that many social frictions in Witsand have stemmed from interactions between housing developers and residents, and the urban planning literature suggests tension between approaches to housing in South Africa and local conditions in informal settlements, and since WEHBSO is an organization tasked with mediating these interactions (or mediating between formal requirements of housing CBOs and requirements of operating in an informal settlement), a choice was made to discuss observations from Witsand in relation to theory on how organizations are exposed to conflicting demands from its environments. The iterative process of adapting theory and empirical observations, and the choice of empirical focus, is further outlined in the methodology chapter. The analysis of the Witsand case aims to be cumulative in relation to the literature on South African housing projects that has attempted to explain tensions between approaches to housing delivery and social dynamics in settlements, whilst exploring the potential of organizational theory to shed light on and refine the understanding of such tensions.

McQuarrie and Marwell (2009: 258) argue that the understanding of central characteristics of organizations developed through meso-level analysis in the field of

organizational theory may be fruitful for studies of urban social processes, particularly when it comes to examining how organizations relate to their environments. The organizational theory literature will be engaged in the analysis when discussing how the processes in Witsand may be highlighted by examining how WEHBSO is exposed to conflicting demands from its environment. As mentioned, the literature suggests that there are inconsistencies between intervention strategies and organizational realities of informal settlements. This thesis aims to contribute to the discussion by shedding light on an organization (and a private developer) “caught in the midst of” such inconsistencies, experiencing tensions between demands from the “...*local and extra-local dimensions of their environment*” (ibid: 257). Two basic insights developed in the field of organizational theory with implications for how organizations deal with their environments are the characterization of organizations as “dual”, and the conceptualization of organizations as “open systems” rather than as “closed systems”. In the next subchapter I will explain these and other central concepts and theories to be discussed in the analysis.

3.2.1. Organizations – dual “open systems” seeking survival in their environments

“Though official statements and theories are important, an undue concentration upon what men say diverts attention from what they do.” (Selznick 1949: 9)

Early studies of organizations tended to view them merely as formal structures engaged in the rational and technical pursuit of strategic goals. Much of this work was done within the field of engineering, and was centred on the question of how to organize work activities so as to maximize reliability, productivity, efficiency, and performance³³. However, the years leading up to the mid-20th century saw a shift towards viewing organizations as objects of interest in themselves, rather than merely as tools to achieve the goals of a given industry or line of work (Scott 2004: 2; McQuarrie & Marwell 2009: 258; Thompson 1967: 4-10). A prominent scholar associated with this shift is Philip Selznick, who insisted that organizations should be understood as having a dual nature. An implication of his insight in the above quote, he argued, was the importance of recognizing both the formal, stated methods used by an organization and the less visible informal behaviour of those who participate in it (Selznick 1949: 9). Scott presents Selznick’s key contribution as introducing a distinction between;

³³ (Taylor 1911; Fayol 1919 [1949]; Weber 1924 [1968], in Scott 2004: 2; Thompson 1967: 4-5)

“...organization as ‘the structural expression of rational action’, and (...) as an adaptive, organic system affected by the social characteristics of its participants as well as by the varied pressures imposed by its environment.” (Selznick 1948: 25, in Scott 2008: 21)

Following Selznick’s arguments, Gouldner (1959, in Scott 2004: 3) identified two contrasting perspectives on organizations that had developed; one of which understands organizations as “rational systems”, functioning as a means to a given end, open to strategic manipulation, whereas the other views organizations as “natural systems” geared towards survival, evolving organically and spontaneously. The duality of organizations lies in the simultaneous existence of both of these characteristics, reflected on the one hand by formal organizational charts, and on the other hand, by informal behaviour by participants. Scott (2004: 3) refers to these premises as the foundational “cleft rock” upon which later studies in organizational sociology have built.

Another central argument, referred to by McQuarrie and Marwell (2010: 259) as “... [t]he second major premise of organizational scholarship...” in contrast with assumptions of the classical approach of Fayol, Taylor and Weber, contends that organizations cannot be fully comprehended when viewed as “closed systems” unaffected by their environments. On the contrary, the “open systems” perspective maintains that organizations are subject to demands from their environments, and these demands may affect their form (Bromley & Powell 2012: 2).

3.2.2. Organizations and institutions – why are organizations so similar?

The now common position that organizations are best understood as dual and open systems has been expanded on in a number of ways. One discussion that has followed from these insights concerns how organizations are related to their *institutional* environments. This discussion has led to various institutional theories of organizations; explicating how organizations’ emergence, activities and evolution are affected by historically developed institutions in their wider environment (Meyer 2008: 790). These theories differ with regards to how they conceptualize the relationship between actors (organizations) and institutions. Meyer (2008: 790-2) separates broadly between what he calls *realist* and *modern sociological* institutionalisms. The former, often associated with economics and some directions within political science, see society as made up of rational, purposive, and sovereign actors, whose effective interaction depends on certain institutional principles, whereas the latter conceptualizes actors as “...*substantially empowered and controlled by institutional contexts, and these contexts go far beyond a few norms or network structures.*” It is noted here that a

perspective such as that which is described by Tolbert and Zucker (1996: 176) is endorsed in this thesis, where these two conceptions of actors are treated “...*not as oppositional but rather as representing two ends of a continuum of decision-making processes and behaviors*”.

The early scholarly work connecting institutions and organizations was carried out in the 1950s (Scott 2008: 20). Selznick (1984 [1957]: 17) argued that organizations might themselves become “institutionalized” over time; they could become “...*infuse[d] with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand*” (Selznick 1984 [1957]: 17). In a much cited article, DiMaggio and Powell (1983), building on earlier descriptions (Hawley 1968; Hannan & Freeman 1977, in DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 149), discussed a concept that has been forwarded as an explanation of the duality of organizations, namely the concept of *institutional isomorphism*.

3.2.3. Three mechanisms of isomorphism and three “pillars” of institutions

Institutional isomorphism is understood as the process through which an organization builds features from its environment into its formal structure and policies (Scott 2008 151-3; DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 149-150). For DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 147), this process offers a compelling answer to their question; “...*what makes organizations so similar?*” The authors suggested three mechanisms of institutional isomorphism; coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism. *Coercive isomorphism* refers to the process through which an organization’s formal structure and policies come to reflect features of its environment because of direct pressures to conform with societal “cultural expectations” from other organizations or regulatory instances. *Mimetic isomorphism* takes place when an organization adapts its formal structure and policies to other organizations to compensate for uncertainties in its environment, such as when organizational technologies are poorly understood (March & Olsen 1976, in DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 151). *Normative isomorphism* is the process through which an organization adapts to normative rules regulating conditions and methods of its line of work, and is associated by the authors with processes of professionalization (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 150-4).

An attempt at organizing the extensive and diverse work on institutions was done by Scott (2008 [2001]), who categorized this work into what he called three “pillars” of institutions; one regulative, one normative, and one cultural-cognitive. These are seen as forming a continuum ranging from conscious and legally sanctioned to unconscious and taken for granted institutional elements (Hoffman 1997: 36, in Scott 2008: 50). Further, the pillars are not to be seen as synthesizing and integrating the work on institutions, but rather as an attempt

at making explicit the divergent underlying assumptions and mechanisms that exist in the field (Scott 2008: 51; Phillips & Malhotra 2008: 709-11). However, as will be argued in the analysis, this does not preclude the possibility of mechanisms from more than one of the three pillars to be involved in a given social process, although on different “levels”. The *regulatory pillar* of institutions refers to explicit regulatory processes acting as enablers and constraints on behaviour, involving, for instance, rules that actors are conscious of. The primary control mechanism is coercive (DiMaggio & Powell 1983), involving threats of sanctions or inducements. However, if there is a widespread perception of an actor as legitimate, the need for sanctions and inducements may be reduced (Weber 1968 [1924], in Scott 2008: 53). Theorists³⁴ within the *normative pillar* tend to emphasize “...*normative rules that introduce a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension into social life*” (Scott 2008: 54). The core mechanism is *normative*, involving standards and understandings of what is desirable (values) and common perceptions of legitimate means to pursue valued ends (norms) (ibid: 55). As will be discussed in relation to WEHBSO, this pillar also involves the prescription of *roles*; “...*conceptions of appropriate goals and activities for particular individuals or specified social positions*” (ibid.). The third direction within the scholarly work on institutions observed by Scott is categorized as a *cultural-cognitive pillar*. This includes scholars such as Meyer, DiMaggio, Powell (and Scott), who emphasize the importance of cultural-cognitive elements of institutions; “...*the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made*” (Scott 2008: 57). Meanings are seen as arising through social interaction, and are drawn upon by actors when they are making sense of the world around them. A central proposition of scholars within this tradition is that subjective accounts of actors, and not merely objective conditions, must be taken into account in attempts at explaining an action or social process. The cognitive aspect refers to *internal* cognitive frames that have been documented by psychologists as affecting individuals’ attention to, and interpretation of, information, and thus also their judgements and evaluations (Markus & Zajonc 1985, in Scott 2008: 57), whereas the cultural aspect refers to cultural frameworks perceived by actors as objective and *external* to themselves. The mechanism associated with this pillar is the *mimetic* one (DiMaggio & Powell), and compliance occurs because alternative forms of behaviour are “inconceivable” (Scott 2008: 58). Scholars within this tradition have been criticized for treating cultures, cognitive frames, and institutions as deterministic of human activity and for lacking in explanations of the conditions under which

³⁴ Scott associates the regulatory pillar with early contributions from Durkheim, Parsons and Selznick, and with later work by March and Olsen (1989, in Scott 2008: 56) and Stinchcombe (1997, in Scott 2008: 56).

individuals come to contest and actively resist taken-for-granted cultural-cognitive understandings (ibid.; Tolbert & Zucker 1996).

While I am drawing on Scott (2008 [2001]) to construct the theoretical framework of my study, it is noted that Phillips and Malhotra (2008: 711) make an objection regarding the three pillars, arguing that institutions are fundamentally *cognitive*, and that the two other pillars should be understood as “...*important pressures in the process of institutionalization rather than elements of an institution.*” The pressures in question will be empirically discussed in the analysis in relation to Scott’s three pillars. However, it might be interesting to nuance the theoretical framework in a more comprehensive study reflecting more on Phillips and Malhotra’s objection.

This brief overview of literature on institutions and organizations has focused on key theoretical developments to be discussed in the analysis, which are relevant for the concept that will be explained in the following section, namely organizational *decoupling*. This concept will also be drawn upon in the analysis, discussing whether processes in Witsand may be partially explained by looking at WEHBSO as dealing with tensions between conflicting demands from its environment. As will be elaborated on in the analysis, observations made in Witsand and in the literature on housing projects have led to this choice of theory.

3.2.4. *Decoupling – an organizational response to contradictory demands*

Organizational environments are often multifaceted, complex, and uncertain, and might thus make demands on organizations that are highly different and at times contradictory. Scholars have observed that organizations tend to build features from their environments into their formal structures and policies, a process that has become known as institutional isomorphism. When complex environments make contradicting demands, this process might cause tensions for organizations. One concept that has been developed to describe a form of organizational response to cope with such tensions, while drawing on earlier insights of organizational duality, is the concept of *decoupling*. “Decoupling” might be understood broadly as referring to a process when gaps arise between elements of an organization that classical organization theory assumed to be tightly coordinated and coupled with each other (Bromley & Powell 2012: 4). This process has been observed in various ways in a number of studies, and various explanations of why organizations “decouple” have been offered.

An early theory of why organizations become isomorphic with their environments, which involves the concept of decoupling, was offered by Thompson (1967: 148-150) when describing what he called the “paradox of administration”. At the heart of his argument was

an understanding of organizations as driven by a need to reduce uncertainty (Thompson 1967: 13; Kamps & Pólos 1999: 1776). The paradox arises when an organization seeks to align itself with its environment in order to reduce uncertainty, whilst simultaneously wishing to remain flexible and able to respond to possible events in the future, which requires a degree of decoupling from that environment (Thompson 1967: 148-150; Alvarez and Svejnova 2005: 64). Whereas Thompson saw the consequences of uncertainty in an organization's environment as being the paradox of administration, and organizational responses such as buffering of internal activities from outside inspection³⁵, for DiMaggio & Powell (1983: 151) environmental uncertainty led to organizations adopting previously established "tried and tested" organizational forms (mimetic isomorphism).

A decade after Thompson introduced his understanding of decoupling as a response to the paradox of administration, Meyer and Rowan (1977) introduced a second explanation of what causes organizational decoupling. Their arguments were among the first within the so-called "new institutionalism" (Scott 2008: 43; Powell 2007: 1), defined broadly as a school of thought which sees organizational structure as influenced not only by technical demands from their environments, but also from;

*"...institutional forces, including rational myths, knowledge legitimated through the educational system and by the professions, public opinion, and the law."*³⁶
(Powell 2007: 1)

Whereas Thompson's account of isomorphism focuses on technical aspects, such as how complex environments may "*...create boundary-spanning exigencies for organizations...*", Meyer and Rowan place more emphasis on institutional influence on organizations³⁷ in that they conceptualized contemporary organizations as "*...structurally reflect[ing] socially constructed reality*" (Berger and Luckmann 1967, in Meyer and Rowan 1977: 346). A fundamental assumption underlying Meyer and Rowan's argument is that *institutionalized rules* in an organization's environment may affect organizational structure and actual implementation in ways that differ markedly from how they are affected by the social networks with which the organization is operating and interacting (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 341). Institutionalized rules are seen as developing when social processes, expectations and

³⁵ (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thompson, 1967, in Bromley & Powell 2012: 2)

³⁶ (Powell 2007: 1) There exists a number of definitions of "new institutionalism", or "neo-institutionalism" (Meyer 2008; Powell 2007; Scott 2008)

³⁷ (Thompson 1967; Aiken & Hage 1968; Hawley 1968, in Meyer and Rowan 1977: 346)

normative obligations become widespread and “*come to take on a rulelike status*” in thought and action among members of society (ibid.) Lending from Berger and Luckmann (1967, in Meyer and Rowan 1977: 341), the authors understand institutionalized rules as “...*classifications built into society as reciprocated typifications or interpretations*”. The authors further argue that institutional rules might develop into “rationalized myths” which strongly affects organizations. Rationalized myths are prescriptive for organizations in that they define certain social purposes as technical, specify “in a rulelike way” the way in which these purposes should be realized, and are taken for granted as legitimate in society (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 343-4; Zucker 1987: 444).

For these scholars, decoupling is seen an organizational response to conflicting demands placed on organizations, firstly, from rationalized myths embedded in the wider environment in which they operate, and, secondly, from more practical considerations necessary to function efficiently in their immediate social networks. Thus, *decoupling* refers to a “...*decoupling between formal policies from daily practices in an organization’s internal technical core*” (Meyer & Rowan 1977, in Bromley & Powell 2012: 2), which enables them to “...*maintain standardized, legitimating, formal structures while their activities vary in response to practical considerations*” (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 357). Gaps arise between formal policies and actual work activities of organizations in such a way that conformity to institutional rules becomes “ceremonial” and not determining of day-to-day activities (ibid: 341; Scott 2008; Bromley & Powell 2012: 2). Meyer and Rowan applies their perspective to the practice of giving organizations various awards, which has bearings on my discussion in the analysis of the widely (nationally and internationally) lauded Witsand project;

“In institutionally elaborated environments organizations also become sensitive to, and employ, external criteria of worth. Such criteria include, for instance, such ceremonial awards as the Nobel Prize, endorsements by important people, the standard prices of professionals and consultants, or the prestige of programs or personnel in external social circles.” (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 350)

Elements of the bureaucratic organizational structure has been seen as examples of formal structure that is “legitimated” by rationalized myths in some societies (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 343). One might expect organizations which need to be flexible to operate in rapidly changing immediate social environments to experience difficulties in reconciling these demands with institutional demands, particularly if these stem from relatively fixed rationalized myths prescribing an organizational form that reflect values of stability, oversight, and control over

flexibility. Furthermore, following Meyer and Rowan, one might expect an organization in such a predicament to engage in some form of decoupling. This will be elaborated on in the analysis.

Revision and critique – decoupling in the contemporary world

In a recent article, Bromley and Powell (2012: 1-2) argue that the common understanding among organizational scholars of decoupling as a gap between policy and practice is shifting the focus away from a more widespread and influential contemporary form of decoupling, namely decoupling of means and ends. This form of decoupling is also seen as a response to demands from the organizational environment. However, this environment is understood to have changed in recent decades so as to exert greater pressures on organizations, particularly when it comes to demands for accountability, assessment, and transparency (ibid: 2). A number of observers have referred to the “rationalization of the institutional environment”³⁸, wherein organizations are coming to be viewed as “corporate citizens” (Meyer & Bromley 2012, in Bromley & Powell 2012: 2) “... *expected to display an increasingly wide array of the proper characteristics of members of society...*” (Bromley & Powell 2012: 3).

Expectations towards organizations are particularly prevalent when it comes to such collective goods as protection of the natural environment and promotion of equality, and these goals may be highly different from, or conflicting with, the stated core goals of a given organization (Brunsson, 1989, in Bromley & Powell 2012: 3). In such institutional environments, organizations are put under pressure to showcase indicators of their contributions towards the realization of collective goods. It is, however, not necessarily a simple task to measure the extent to which an organization contributes to increased equality or whether its activities directly lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Bromley & Powell’s (2012: 15) argument is that in highly rationalized environments, myths are created around such questions of causality, around which organizations tend to become structured. These myths are understood by the authors as “...*institutionalized conceptions of the appropriate way to achieve goals that emerge in the environment*” (ibid.). Decoupling of means and end thus occurs when organizations adapt their formal policies and structures and implement programs which correlate with prevailing myths of causality, irrespective of whether these programs actually achieve their stated outcomes, or any of the core goals of the organization. As an example of this type of decoupling, the authors refer to a study on decoupling in the American

³⁸ (Boli 2006; Zucker 1987; Frank & Meyer, 2002, in Bromley & Powell 2012: 3; see Meyer et al (1997) for a discussion of how a “rationalized scientific culture” in the modern world has driven the rapid expansion of organization around environmental issues.)

school system by Rowan (2007, in Bromley & Powell 2012: 17), which argues that this system has been structured around new myths celebrating testing and measurement, despite a questionable causal relationship between enhanced learning and the indicators being assessed. See Appendix 2 for a table, offered by these authors, which highlights the differences between means-end decoupling and policy-practice decoupling.

3.2.5. Specifying WEHBSO's institutional and "relational" environment

As outlined earlier in this chapter, the literature on urban planning and housing delivery identifies tensions between approaches to housing and the organization of informal settlements, while insights from organizational theory have highlighted how organizations are exposed to conflicting demands from their environments. In the analysis I aim to highlight the position of WEHBSO as an organization operating in the contested field of housing, formally tasked with mediating between seemingly conflicting demands from its immediate relational network in Witsand, PEER Africa, and the wider institutional environment. Such a focus is seen as fruitful in contributing towards an explanation of the observed organizational processes and social frictions in Witsand during housing delivery. Some key concepts to be drawn on as explanatory tools in the analysis, will thus be operationalized within the theoretical definition in relation to my empirical observations.

One such concept is the organization's "environment". I will highlight two spheres of WEHBSO's environment in the analysis: firstly, its institutional environment; and secondly, its immediate relational networks. Following Scott's (2008: 48) broad definition of institutions, certain elements of the wider social structure within which WEHBSO and PA are operating, that generate various "...*regulative, normative [or] cultural-cognitive...*" pressures through formal or informal channels, will be understood in this thesis as forming part of WEHBSO and PA's *institutional environment*. Some of the scholars referred to in the theory section of this thesis, such as DiMaggio, Powell, Scott, Meyer, and Rowan, emphasize what Scott (2008: 57) labels "cultural-cognitive" elements of institutions; shared, taken-for-granted conceptions of social reality that affect how events and processes are assigned with meaning, compliance with which is often induced because alternative forms of action are "inconceivable" (ibid: 56-9). However, institutional elements that might be understood as "normative" or "regulatory" will also be discussed in the analysis. For instance, as explained in the previous chapter, South African housing policy is affected by experiences specific to the country's history and international development discourse, and values "people-centered" and participatory development. In this sense, WEHBSO can be seen as exposed to *normative*

pressure from its institutional environment on organizations involved in housing delivery, in that it is affected by normatively defines goals and appropriate ways in which to pursue them (Scott 2008: 55). On the other hand, specific policy frameworks such as the People's Housing Process (PHP) might be seen as exerting a type of *regulatory* pressure insofar as it prescribes relatively stable systems of rules which both enable and constrain organizations such as WEHBSO (ibid: 54). I do not look at these analytically defined forms of institutional influence as mutually exclusive. Whereas the PHP framework might be seen as exerting regulatory forms of pressure, that does not preclude the possibility of PHP policy documents "carrying" certain *cultural-cognitive*, taken-for-granted assumptions (Scott 2008: 56-9) and "rationalized myths" (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 343; Zucker 1987: 444) about causal links, preferred organizational structures or ideal features of organizations, such as certain elements associated with the bureaucratic organizational form.

As outlined in the above, "decoupling" is presented in the literature as an organizational response to tensions stemming from conflicting demands from an organization's environment. A "new institutional" approach to the study of this phenomenon (Meyer & Rowan 1977; DiMaggio & Powell 1987; Scott 2008) has emphasized tensions between demands from the institutional environment, or between pressure to conform with elements of the institutional environment and technical demands from an organization's immediate environment (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Bromley & Powell 2012). I will understand WEHBSO's institutional environment as involving (among other things) elements in the wider field of South African housing, such as participatory and "people-centered" development, the housing policy framework of PHP, and the South African system of government tenders.

The other aspect of WEHBSO's environment to be distinguished here, are the immediate relational networks within which it interacts and with which it needs to retain a certain degree of coordination when "...*organizing around immediate technical problems*" (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 354) related to negotiations, housing construction and allocation in Witsand. This aspect of WEHBSO's environment will be understood as including relational networks in the informal settlement of Witsand. "Demands" stemming from this part of WEHBSO's environment will be conceptualized as involving explicit, direct demands or grievances related to upgrading, housing, or any of the organizations in Witsand brought up by residents, as well as more indirect forms of pressure requiring WEHBSO to adapt activities or structure to allow for efficient interaction with the social dynamics and organizing practices in Witsand. My understanding of "organizing practices" lends from Nuijten (1999), who argues

that social processes in areas of informality are better understood by highlighting practices – as opposed to institutions or stable structures – which intersect the formal and the informal in different ways depending on the context (Nuijten 1999, 2005). She argues that the “...patterning of organizing practices in unexpected and often ‘invisible’ ways can often be distinguished in the apparently ‘disordered’, the ‘corrupt’ and the ‘chaotic’” (Nuijten 2005: 6), adding that they may be influenced by official formal rules and procedures “...in many different and often unpredictable ways” (ibid: 5). While critiques of housing and urban planning along with organizational theory are the literatures to be explicitly engaged in the analysis, Nuijten’s concept of organizing practices has been useful in informing the understanding of WEHBSO’s immediate environment of Witsand. A similar theoretical framework is used in a case study of civic organizational processes in the township of Philippi (Drivdal forthcoming). I argue that the urban planning and housing literature reviewed in this chapter, in addition to my observations from Witsand, might be seen as supporting such a conceptual choice. Nevertheless, organizing practices may still become institutionalized (Nuijten 1999), and institutional trajectories and developments are likely to have affected Witsand’s present social and political climate, for instance through affecting the expectations and motives of informal settlement residents.

At this point it seems at its place to point out that a distinction between technical and institutional demands from the organizational environment cannot be made entirely on “geographical” terms, viewing Witsand as a site in which technical considerations related to house construction are the only relevant factors and the wider environment as a sphere wherein only institutional, and no practical or functional, considerations are necessary. However, I have made a distinction for analytical purposes in this thesis between: firstly, Witsand as a part of WEHBSO’s “*immediate*” environment exerting pressure which is often related to technical details regarding house construction, or adaptations necessary to interact efficiently with the social dynamics and organizing practices of Witsand; and, secondly, the wider environment which exerts *institutional* demands, since it is largely in relation to this environment that WEHBSO (and PA) is engaged in “ceremonial” (Meyer & Rowan 1977) displays of achievements, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions or promoting participatory democracy and development in South Africa. Further, on the basis of document analyses, it is easier to identify institutional aspects of the wider environment than of developments internal to Witsand, as the latter has not been thoroughly documented.

Chapter 4. Methodology

In this chapter I will reflect on methodological issues experienced while carrying out the research for this thesis, relating these to literature explaining research design, key issues and tasks for researchers. I will begin by discussing some advantages and limitations of the single case study as research design to answer the question of this thesis, followed by a discussion of methodological issues and practical experiences related to the research methods employed as part of the case study, namely qualitative semi-structured interviews and document analyses. The final section of the chapter will reflect on the validity and reliability of the research. The reflection around the former measure of the quality of the research will be accompanied by a discussion of operationalizing concepts and measurement validity.

4.1. Case study methodology

There exists a number of definitions of the case study methodology, some of which are contradictory and some carry assumptions of the potential of these studies, such as that they should only be applied in the preliminary and exploratory stages of a research process. According to Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011), this is one of a number of widespread misunderstandings of the methodology. Whereas Flyvbjerg (2011: 301) suggests that since most scholarly definitions of case study are normative, one is better off employing a basic dictionary definition, I will refer to Yin, who defines the case study methodology as:

“...an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”

(Yin 2009: 18)

This definition emphasizes two features of the case study methodology; firstly, the *in-depth*, study of a contemporary phenomenon and; secondly, the relation between the phenomenon and its wider *context*. Here I will reflect on advantages of the former characteristic in answering the research question, before turning to the latter characteristic in the next subchapter. A brief reminder of the main research question explained in the introduction is at its place;

How may the persistent tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in South African informal settlements be highlighted by drawing on theories of conflicting requirements of organizations?

In order to analyse these complex local organizational processes relate to tensions identified in the literature on housing delivery in South Africa, it was seen as advantageous to develop an in-depth understanding of them by combining different methods of data gathering. Data was gathered through interviewing residents in Witsand who had received a house through the project and residents who stayed in shacks, some residents working for the community-based organization WEHBSO and other individuals working on the project through PA and an engineer from PA's professional partner Nadeson Consulting Services, and through analyses of documents such as news articles, internal publications and existing (though limited) research on the history of the area. When analysing the data in relation to processes identified in other case studies, such as fragmentation of social networks and community organizing, it was beneficial to combine different sources of data; where news articles may be "informative" in that they (at least claim to) give an account of, say, different sides in a local conflict, some limitations of the news article is that it may be biased, the reporter may have talked only to certain community members and assumed that they are giving an "objective" account of the conflict, and it does not give an indication of how strongly various sides in the conflict feel about what has happened.

Yin (2009: 18) argues that the often unclear distinction between case and context, and the complexity of the phenomena studied following this methodology necessitates such a reliance on multiple sources, "...with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion". Triangulation usually refers to the technique of "*combining multiple theories, methods, observers and empirical materials, to produce a more accurate, comprehensive and objective representation of the object of study*" (Silverman 2011: 369). However, Silverman has argued that whereas gathering information from various standpoints about at an object of study may produce a more "true" account when this technique is employed in the natural sciences, the same is not true for studies of social reality, because in these studies "*...the object of knowledge is different from different perspectives*" and one cannot arrive at a single true representation of social reality by combining them (Moisander & Valtonen 2006: 45, in Silverman 2011: 370). Nevertheless, the context-dependence of accounts of social reality does not imply that qualitative researchers should not attain data from different sources, as this strategy may still add depth and complexity to the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 5, in Silverman 2011: 371). As such, I experienced the combination of different methods and sources of data to gain an in-depth understanding of organizational processes in Witsand as

beneficial in particular for answering the research question, since a rich account was needed to be able to discuss the empirical observations from Witsand in relation to tensions identified in the literature based on other case studies.

4.1.1. What is it a case of? Boundaries between case and context

“If you choose to do a case study, you are (...) not so much making a methodological choice as a choice of what is to be studied” (Flyvbjerg 2011: 301)

This quote speaks to the preceding discussion of method triangulation, but it also points to a critical task for case study researchers; choosing what is to be studied. This choice involves drawing a boundary between what is to be understood as the case and what constitutes its context. Whereas the experiment is a methodology which separates the phenomenon which is studied from its context, for instance by “controlling” the context in a laboratory, the case study methodology involves considering how the case relates to its context (Yin 2009: 18). However, in order to attain a clear conception of what should be understood as the case, and what should be understood as its context, it is necessary to consider the question of “What is it a case of?” (Ragin & Becker 1992: 6). According to Becker³⁹, this question should be asked continuously by the researcher during the research process. He argues that its answer usually develops along with the research process, and that it may in fact be counterproductive to commence research with too confident a notion of what the answer to this question is. Ragin argues that “...delimiting the case may be one of the last steps of the research process (...) [and] the final realization of the case’s nature may be the most important part of the interaction between ideas and evidence” (Ragin & Becker 1992: 220). Ragin has defined the researcher-led process through which an object of study comes to be seen as a case of some wider phenomenon as “casing”; a technique which allows focusing attention on specific aspects of the infinite “complexity, specificity and contextuality” of empirical evidence while obscuring other aspects, in order to “bring closure to difficult issues in conceptualization and research design and thus allow analysis to proceed” while connecting the object of study to theory (Ragin 1992, in Ragin 2009: 523-4). In other words, case is conceived as “one among many”, and as such the task of casing can be conceptualized as one of deciding who/what constitutes the “many”. In this respect, the case study (“the one”) can be a useful tool for getting insight into a particular phenomenon (“the many”). Ragin and Becker’s (1992: 6, 220) thoughts in the above suggest that the task of casing can accompany almost the entire research

³⁹ This is based on Ragin’s reproduction of Becker’s views on this question, as forwarded by him at a workshop conducted by Ragin and Becker in 1988 (Ragin & Becker 1992: 6).

process, and may not be completed until its final stages. This was true for my research; throughout the analysis the issue of casing was dealt with implicitly and explicitly, and it was not until its final stage that I managed to pinpoint exactly what my case should be seen as a case of. The study looks at a case of local organizational processes related to housing delivery in South African informal settlements. The process of casing has been iterative, moving back and forth between observations from Witsand and ideas from the wider literature on housing delivery, adjusting which elements of the data to emphasize and which ideas from the literature to engage, in order to connect observations and theory, in line with *Ragin (2009: 524)*. Specifically I have looked at; firstly, organizational process that have unfolded in Witsand during housing delivery, such as fragmentation and politicization of community organizing and; secondly, organizational processes relating to the development of WEHBSO's formal structure and policies. In relation to this latter aspect, I have drawn on certain theoretical propositions from organizational theory to nuance and suggest explanations of how WEHBSO's formal structure and policies have come about. In the analysis I have sought to link this aspect to the former, concerning fragmentation and politicization of community organizing in Witsand. Moreover, the analysis situates the South African policy framework of PHP and the outsourcing of housing delivery through government tendering procedures as elements of the wider institutional environment of the case, affecting WEHBSO through various mechanisms, to be elaborated later on. The following two subchapters will focus on issues related to the specific research methods employed as part of this case study, namely open-ended and semi-structured interviews and document analyses.

4.2. Interviews – why do them?

During the research I did a total of 20 qualitative interviews. 12 of these were done with local residents, and the remaining 8 were with members of WEHBSO and PA, the former ward councillor and a project engineer⁴⁰. Silverman (2011: 166, 470) argues that since one of the strengths of qualitative research is that it gives the researcher an ability to observe directly what people are doing, it is incumbent on researchers to defend the choice of doing interviews and thus departing from gathering “naturally occurring data” by observing “*situations which exist independently of the researcher's intervention (e.g. everyday conversations but not interviews)*”. As Silverman (ibid.) points out, the interview method does not require much time or financial resources, and it was largely due to practical reasons that other more direct

⁴⁰ See Appendix 1 for an anonymous list of interviewees specifying the date on which the interview was done, and the interviewees' position in Witsand.

forms of observation were not employed to any great extent to gather data. However, some “naturally occurring data” was relevant in the research process. An unforeseen outcome of a number of the trips to Witsand undertaken in order to interview housing fieldworkers and local residents, was that informal conversations with people in local taxis or in the waiting room of the housing office provided an improved understanding of Witsand and residents’ experiences of housing delivery and settlement upgrading. Some of these conversations were with people on housing waiting lists and people who had received a house and came in to the office i.e. with a complaint, whereas others were with people volunteering for WEHBSO. This also happened during a field visit undertaken to observe a meeting with stakeholders and business interested in investing in the project, as well as a field visit during which I observed a meeting organized in relation to a site visit by the owner of PEER Consultants, PA’s “mother company” in the US. Details and thoughts from these conversations were written down as part of the field notes, and provided guidance that assisted the development of a semi-structured interview format and the choice of empirical topics to focus on in the study.

4.2.1. Interviews – limitations and attempts at addressing them

The interview is a common method of gathering data in case studies, and in qualitative research the interview may take different forms varying along a continuum from high structure (closed-ended, asking the same questions to all interviewees) to low structure (open-ended, different questions and approaches for the interviewees) (Yin 2009: 106; Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 102-3). The interviews carried out as part of the case study were all semi-structured, but the initial interviews were leaning towards being open-ended; broad questions were asked about the interviewee’s experiences of such things as arriving in Witsand, of changes to the settlement since the person arrived and of working with housing issues in the community. The answers of the interviewee guided the interviews to a certain extent, where only minor interferences were made to attempt to shift the focus towards other topics. This was done in order to get a sense of what the local residents and housing fieldworkers see as important issues, and some of these issues were followed up when later interviews were made slightly more structured, still allowing room to explore new topics which arose where these were thought to be relevant for the overall goals of the research. A requirement of open-end, but also of semi-structured interviews, is that the researcher is flexible and attentive (Silverman 2011: 162). This attentiveness also allows for interpretations of body language, raised voices and other signs of how strongly an interviewee feels about a given incident in the community, which was experienced as an advantage in my research.

Language barriers and knowledge of case. However, being attentive to issues brought up by interviewees was challenging in some of the interviews which were affected by language barriers, and by limited initial knowledge of the case. Language barriers may in some instances have led to overlooking relevant issues mentioned by the interviewee, in particular where important but subtle nuances are “lost in translation”. In some of the interviews there was someone present for translation. In one interview with an elderly Afrikaans-speaking woman, the translation was done by someone that had previously been interviewed, and it was noticed that the translation was very similar to the responses given in this earlier interview of the translator⁴¹. However, it was helpful when a younger relative living in the same house as the respondent came home and took over the translation.

In-depth knowledge of the local case is not usually something one can “read up on”, at least not when one is studying something happening in an informal settlement which has not been documented or analysed by prior observers. To my knowledge, there is at the time of writing one other master thesis which discusses Witsand and the housing delivery process in detail (Magida 2013); however this thesis had not yet been published when I commenced on my own research. It happened on some occasions that issues brought up in an early interview that had not been given much attention because they were thought to be peripheral to the objectives of the study, were later “discovered” as relevant when re-reading interview transcripts when the knowledge of the case was more extensive. For instance, a community organization – Masiphumelele – was mentioned in one of the first interviews, but this organization was not brought up or emphasized in a few of the following interviews of respondents from WEHBSO. The information brought up about this organization was “forgotten” until the transcript was re-read after having interviewed a number of local residents who had fairly strong opinions about this organization. At this stage it seemed apparent that people volunteering or working for WEHBSO would perhaps not be expected to focus much on this organization, since the relation between Masiphumelele and WEHBSO has been competitive and contested.

Gatekeepers and selection of interviewees. The way in which a researcher gets access to a community may affect the type of data which is collected, and access to certain settings often depend on “gatekeepers” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 201). In the case of this thesis, prior access had been established through a research project at the University of Cape Town and in this respect there had already been collaboration between individuals working on this

⁴¹ Here the translator will be referred to as “Tom”, but in the appendix listing respondents he was given a different pseudonym to protect his identity.

project and the person in charge of PA's activities in Witsand. For interviews of local shack dwellers and house owners, I was accompanied by someone associated with PA's support organization WEHBSO who assisted in the initial selection of interviewees and with some translation (hereafter referred to as "Tom"). This collaboration had a number of advantages; it provided access to the settlement and allowed for walking around safely⁴² while selecting interviewees and getting to know the area; arguably it provided a certain level of trust from interviewees; it opened for discussions of local issues with Tom, who had lived in Witsand for about twelve years. However, there were also some methodological challenges associated with this approach, some of which were related to the absence of explicit agreements with Tom with regards to his role in the process.

Firstly, in the initial interviews of local residents Tom had already selected some interviewees for me when I arrived in Witsand. One could speculate as to whether this selection was biased, if for instance Tom had certain expectations of the kind of interviewees that would be suited for the study, or he could tend to select interviewees that he thought would talk about WEHBSO favourably. It is added here that while this is possible, it did not seem likely based on later discussions of the interviewee selection with Tom. Secondly, and perhaps more pertinent, Tom was present during some of the initial interviews with local residents, and in these interviews his connection to WEHBSO might have affected how people responded. Particularly in one interview of a person who had received a house through WEHBSO, the responses were highly positive towards this organization. One cannot rule out that some of these interviewees could have felt more comfortable with being critical towards WEHBSO had Tom not been present. Thirdly, in some interviews it was evident that people associated me with WEHBSO or with the housing delivery process in general, and answers might have been affected by a belief or suspicion that the research was somehow related to for instance housing waiting lists.

Some steps were taken in order to address these challenges. Firstly, effort was made in order to ensure a degree of random selection of some of the interviewees while walking around in Witsand, for instance when passing shacks and houses where people were sitting outside, and interviews were supplemented with informal conversations, as discussed in the above. The technique called "snowball sampling" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 47) was also employed; some interviewees were asked if they knew of other people I could, or should, talk

⁴² Several people in Witsand warned against walking around without being accompanied by someone who knows the area. Although such warnings may often be exaggerated, I chose to mainly walk around with the person from WEHBSO because of my limited knowledge of the settlement.

to. These were attempts to address some of the known challenges of working with a gatekeeper carrying out interviews in an unknown network when the interviews are carried out in a network (ibid.). Secondly, a decision was made at one point to do the remaining interviews without Tom being present, in the cases where no translation was necessary. Since it was much appreciated that Tom took time to show an unknown researcher around Witsand and assisting in the interview process, and also out of a wish to maintain a good and cooperative relation between us, the reasoning behind this decisions was made explicit in order to avoid giving the impression that his assistance was not appreciated. Thirdly, before all of the interviews the purpose of the research was explained in a non-technical manner (Silverman 2011: 98), as well as my role as a researcher from the university who is independent from WEHBSO and PA and thus, implicitly, does not have a say when it comes to decisions relating to housing delivery.

Recording interview data. 6 of the 8 interviews of people connected to WEHBSO and PA, an engineer, and the former ward councillor, were done with a digital voice recorder. Two of these (the engineer and a resident volunteering at a local food garden) were done at an early and exploratory stage and were not recorded. The technique of digital recording was chosen because it has a number of advantages. Firstly, the use of a recording device allowed for more attention to be devoted to attentive listening and keeping the flow of the interview since it was not necessary to write down everything that was being said and remembering several details which came up through the interview. Secondly, the possibility of listening back to recordings provided opportunities for interpreting nuances in the way responses were given, such as hesitance or various displays of emotion. Thirdly, as discussed in the above, it alleviated some possible misunderstandings and misinterpretations during the interview in that it was possible to listen back to recordings while checking details against other sources or simply understanding them better after having gained knowledge about the case. However, there are a number of limitations attached to using a recorder. Firstly, interviewees might be afraid that the recordings can be used for other purposes or disclosed to others and therefore refrain from talking about sensitive topics. Many of the interviews carried out for this thesis focused on contested issues and events such as prior occurrence of violent protest in Witsand and infighting between local housing organizations, groupings and community leaders, and as such the recorder might have been affecting some of the responses that were given. Secondly, some interviewees might simply not be used to the interview situation and may find being

recorded quite uncomfortable, and this may negatively affect the natural flow of the interview and the willingness to discuss certain topics.

Steps were taken to address these limitations. Firstly, interviewees were informed that interviews are anonymous and confidential, and that they are entitled to withdrawing from the interview process whenever they wish. Further, the “intimidating” effect of the recorded was sought alleviated by engaging in informal conversation before the interview, and I emphasized my role as a *student* more than that of *researcher*, believing this might provide for more trust. It was usually the case that interviews were a bit “stiff” at first, whereas interviewees gradually became more comfortable throughout the interview. Secondly, as Silverman (2011: 275) points out, interview data “... *may be crucially affected by where you position your recording equipment*”, and when possible the recording device was placed somewhere where it was not so clearly visible. Some interviewees started by occasionally looking at the recorder, but paid less attention to it as they became engaged in the topics that were discussed. Thirdly, for the interviews of Witsand residents it was decided to refrain entirely from using a digital recording device, because they are not likely to be as used to the interview situation as members of WEHBSO and PA who have been traveling around presenting the project, presenting it to various stakeholders such NGOs, local and Provincial government and even the UN at the COP17 in Durban.

4.3. Documents

Throughout the study a number of different documents have been collected and used in order to corroborate interviews, improve my own understanding of the national context of housing and informal settlement in South Africa, and of the historical development of the town of Atlantis, next to which Witsand emerged and developed.

Among the documents collected in this study were articles published by PA, some together with WEHBSO and some together with a community-based organization from an earlier housing project in the Northern Cape. These documents have been a source of information about formal aspects of the housing project in Witsand, such as its various phases, what they have consisted of and a few of the stakeholders who have been involved. When reading a document for research purposes, it is critical to keep in mind such things as who its author is, what the author’s agendas might be and which audience it is being prepared for (Yin 2009: 105). In this respect, it was useful to read documents prepared by PA for presentations at the COP17 to see what PA presented as core achievements of the project to such an audience, particularly since it partly inspired what was to become a search for

mechanisms of institutional influence on WEHBSO's formal structure and policies pertaining to for instance participatory, "people-centred" development. Further, in preparation for a guided tour of the project in Witsand with officials from the City of Cape Town, ward committee members, local farmers and landowners and the current ward councillor Barbara Rass, some internal documents were shared with me by PA, and I have looked at site plans handed to me by an engineer during an interview. These have not been used in the analysis, but taken together such documents have been important for providing an understanding of the project and of Witsand.

Some documents collected during my research have contained demographic statistics on a national, or on a more local scale. These have been collected by searching the internet and contacting people in the local administration for updated demographic figures. The demographic figures presented in such documents for informal settlements come in the form of estimates, there are numerous sources of error and the numbers change continuously, implying that figures might quickly become outdated. Another source of information on the emergence and growth of the informal settlement of Witsand was a history thesis by Stafford (2005). By combining the account in this thesis, informal dwelling estimates from aerial photography sent to me from the local administration and figures from the 2001 population Census, it was attempted to provide at least a general account of demographic trends in Witsand. However, the illegality of the initial land occupation and some individuals' wish to be recognized as the first to construct shacks in the area are elements which have made it difficult to obtain reliable information about the first dwellers in Witsand.

Furthermore, articles by other researchers have been critical for my research. Firstly, articles explaining contextual factors such as South African housing discourse and policy, as well as various implications of the struggle against apartheid for organization in informal settlements, have assisted me on a general level in deciding how to approach the study of Witsand. Secondly, the theoretical contributions to the literature which discusses how organizations respond to conflicting demands from their environments were important for guiding me in attempting to explain what I observed in Witsand, whereas the literature on unintended effects of other housing processes in South Africa was helpful in that it could be drawn on for comparative purposes in the analysis. Finally a note is at its place concerning the master thesis by Magida (2013) which is based on her case study of Witsand, though with a different theoretical framework. Parts of the empirical account of local conditions in Witsand given in her thesis supports or nuances my own observations, and a reading of her thesis once

it was published was useful. However, I have not drawn on it to a large extent, and where I have done so, it is important to note that her study might be based on interviews with some of the same individuals I have talked to, and thus open to the same possible sources of error.

4.4. Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are terms developed to function as criteria for evaluating the quality of a research design, and they are associated with various tasks, or tests of quality, researchers need to be attentive to (Yin 2009: 40). There has been some debate around whether the terms validity and reliability are appropriate for qualitative research (Silverman 2011: 19-21), and alternative understandings have been offered in this respect (Golafshani 2003). However, in the following methodological discussion I will draw on understandings of validity and reliability found mainly in Yin (2009). I will refer to Yin's (2009: 40) distinction between three types of validity; construct validity, internal validity and external validity. However, following Adcock and Collier's (2001) review of the literature on validity in which they argued that the separation between independent *types* of validity – the authors identified 37 in total – has caused much confusion for researchers, I will treat Yin's (2009) threefold distinction as constituting three different “*types of evidence for validity*” (Adcock & Collier 2001: 530).⁴³ In its most basic form, King et al (1994: 25) understands validity as referring to “...*measuring what we think we are measuring*”.

4.4.1. Construct validity

Yin (2009: 40) understands construct validity as “*identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied*”. The author further describes two steps that are necessary to achieve this; defining central concepts in relation to the objectives of the study, and identifying operational measures for these concepts (ibid: 42). This first step might be seen as particularly important, and challenging, when dealing with concepts that have been given a wide range of meanings by different authors. Examples of such theoretical concepts discussed empirically in this thesis analysis are “organizational environment” and “*institutional environment*”. Since for instance the concept of institution has been defined in a number of different ways, an important task that needs to be performed before it is even possible to talk of *valid* measurements, is to define them clearly so that one can derive certain operational measures to look for in the data. These concepts were defined in relation to the theoretical

⁴³ Adcock and Collier (2001: 530) argue that researchers should strive towards an overall goal of “measurement validity”; “*when scores (including the results of qualitative classification) meaningfully capture the ideas contained in the corresponding concept*”. Due to lack of space however, their proposed methodology for achieving this will not be outlined in detail here.

literature, and operationalized in relation to the objectives of the study in the theory chapter. For instance, in order to be able to identify “institutional influence” on WEHBSO’s formal structure and policies, specific mechanisms and “pillars”⁴⁴ of such influence were defined in relation to the literature. When I analysed data from interviews, documents and observation in Witsand, institutional mechanisms of influence on WEHBSO’s formal structure and policies could be identified as playing out in the PHP policy framework (normative, regulatory/coercive and cultural-cognitive/mimetic), the tender system (normative and cultural-cognitive/mimetic) and participatory discourse (normative and cultural-cognitive/mimetic).

Yin (ibid.) writes that the second step of meeting the test of construct validity should preferably cite published studies that make the same matches between operational measures and concepts as your own research. A few matches of this kind were identified in a review of the housing literature, which suggests that a number of similar unintended effects in informal settlement communities are reproduced because misguided strategies are repeatedly pursued in delivery processes. This might be seen as supporting the construct validity of my own research, which argues that WEHBSO’s formal structure and policies result from adaptation to institutional expectations that in turn have complicating implications for operating in Witsand. However, construct validity could have been strengthened by for instance studying multiple organizations operating in the same organizational field, trying to identify similarities between these that might result from similar forms of institutional pressure. Alternatively I could have studied organizations exposed to different types of institutional pressure, to see whether these displayed corresponding differences in formal structure and policies. These techniques could make it possible to identify additional variables which affect formal aspects of organizations and test whether my study actually measures what I think it is measuring. The strategy of using multiple sources of evidence is also presented by Yin (2009: 42) as strengthening construct validity. This was outlined in the above.

4.4.2. Internal validity

The practice of striving for internal validity involves “*seeking to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships.*” (Yin 2009: 40). In qualitative single case studies it can be challenging to ascertain causal relationships, as the phenomena which are studied may

⁴⁴ Mimetic, normative and coercive mechanisms belonging to the cultural-cognitive, normative and regulatory institutional pillars (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Scott 2008)

be highly sensitive to context, and affected by a number of additional variables than the one focused on in a given case study. Yin (2009: 40) writes that explanation building and pattern matching are techniques which may be employed in the data analysis to strengthen internal validity.

Explaining a phenomenon implies stipulating “...*a presumed set of causal links about it, or ‘how’ or ‘why’ something happened. The causal links may be complex and difficult to measure in any precise manner.*” (ibid: 141). As mentioned, I have drawn on insights from organizational theory to suggest a possible explanation of why the formal structure and policies of WEHBSO have come to reflect values such as community participation and stability, or continuity. Further, I have reflected on whether the intensification of divisions and fragmentations of community organizing in Witsand throughout project implementation may be partly due to the requirements of operating in an informal settlement being at odds with how these values have been organized into the housing process. The suggested *causal mechanisms* were normative, coercive and mimetic mechanisms of institutional influence, as explained earlier.

Pattern matching involves comparing an empirical pattern with a predicted pattern, and if these coincide it contributes towards strengthening the internal validity of a case study (Yin 2009: 136). This technique was employed in the data analysis. Since informal settlements can be described as particularly dynamic and complex settings, or relational networks, for an organization to operate in, and since a proposition from organizational theory claims that institutional demands often conflict with demands from an organization’s immediate relational networks, a predicted pattern based on theory and empirical data was that WEHBSO would engage in some form of “decoupling” of its formal structure from its actual day-to-day activities. As I have outlined further in the analysis chapter, WEHBSO is arguably doing this, and this can be seen as strengthening internal validity.

4.4.3. External validity

Establishing external validity implies “*defining the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalized*” (Yin 2009: 40). Critics of the single case study methodology have argued that this is a poor methodology for generalization. This is seen by Yin (2009: 43) and Flyvbjerg (2011: 304) as a critique which does not necessarily hold true. Flyvbjerg argues for instance that strategic sampling of cases can be strong tools for falsification of theory, such as when one selects a case where one would clearly expect to find X, but where in-depth study manages convincingly to show that X is not present. This can be seen as one form of what Yin

(2009: 43) calls *analytic*, as opposed to statistic, generalization, where the aim is to generalize results to some broader theory. It was argued that housing delivery processes in informal settlements would be *expected* to be characterized by tensions between local and institutional demands, and that the organizations involved might be expected to engage in decoupling. In this respect, my findings in this study do not falsify theoretical propositions as much as it nuances and contextualizes them. The domain to which the findings might be generalizable is the literature on housing processes which seems to document a number of similar unintended effects as those sought explained in the analysis.

Had I found other case studies of housing organizations in informal settlements employing the same theoretical propositions, I could have used Yin's replication logic in an attempt to strengthen external validity. However, similarly to what McQuarrie and Marwell (2010) point out in relation to urban sociology, meso-level attention to these organizations has not been seen in these studies as much as micro-level attention to processes within informal settlements or macro-level attention to larger processes. An implication of this is that it could be interesting to follow up on my findings presented in this thesis in case studies of similar organizations.

4.4.4. Reliability

A metaphor often used to explain the difference between reliability and validity is the dart board. The bull's eye represents the concept one is trying to measure, the darts represent the empirical measures. If the darts miss the bull's eye and are scattered all over the board, there is neither reliability nor validity. If all the darts are clustered together, without hitting the bull's eye, there is reliability but not validity. When all the darts hit the bull's eye, there is both validity and reliability. Yin (2009: 40) defines research as reliable when "*...the operations of a study – such as the data collection procedures – can be repeated, with the same results.*" Such an understanding of reliability has been argued by some qualitative researchers for only being relevant in quantitative research or for quantitative researchers within a "positivist" tradition, particularly since findings of qualitative research are highly dependent on a context which is continuously evolving and changing (Marshall & Rossman 1989, in Silverman 2011: 20). However, Silverman (2011: 20) points out that a pitfall of this perspective is that, taken to its extreme, it can imply that systematic research should be dismissed as not useful. In this respect King Keohane and Verba's (1994: 25) understanding of reliability might be useful; "*When a reliable procedure is applied at different times and nothing has happened in the meantime to change the 'true' state of the object we are*

measuring, the same result will be observed'. However, this also highlights the difficulties of assessing the reliability of a qualitative single case study such as mine, where the phenomenon naturally is studied intensively only *once*. In general, in order to address reliability issues in my research, I have attempted to heed Yin's (2009: 45) call for rigor in the research process, continuously making efforts to avoid and reduce biases and error. These efforts were discussed in the above in relation to the interviews that I have carried out and the documents I have collected and analysed throughout the research process. Further, I have attached appendixes listing respondents and questionnaires⁴⁵ in an effort to increase the transparency and reliability of my research.

⁴⁵ The same questionnaire was used for all Witsand residents (Appendix 3). I have further attached an example of the questionnaire used when interviewing a member of WEHBSO (Appendix 4), but these questionnaires varied more between interviews. Notably, the questionnaires were loosely followed, since the focus changed slightly as new topics were brought up that were deemed central to the study.

Chapter 5. Analysis

In this chapter I will discuss empirically the research question of this, which is;

How may the persistent tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in South African informal settlements be highlighted by drawing on theories of conflicting requirements of organizations?

The analysis will draw on observations from Witsand in order to describe the organizational processes, and discuss these in relation to the tensions in housing delivery identified in chapter 3. The organizational processes to be analyzed pertain; firstly, to the formal structure and policies of the community-based housing organization WEHBSO and; secondly, to changes in practices and patterns of organization in Witsand.

5.1. Outline of chapter

In my review of case studies and critiques of housing delivery, I identified various tensions in housing delivery pertaining to the way these projects intervene in patterns and practices of organization in the informal settlements in which they are implemented. The following empirical discussion will be divided into two overall sections corresponding to each of the two broad forms of tension identified in the review, and relating them to my observations of organizational processes which have taken place in Witsand during housing delivery. I will focus on organizational processes among Witsand residents, and on certain aspects of the formal structure and policies of the community-based housing organization (CBHO) called Witsand iEEECO Housing Beneficiary Organization (WEHBSO).

In section 1 I discuss a tension between the values of stability and continuity in housing delivery and the practices of organization in Witsand which are fluid, or continuously changing. In section 2 I describe some organizational processes that have unfolded in Witsand during housing delivery and relate these to tensions argued in the literature to stem from assumptions of participatory discourse. In this section, I will argue that the observed organizational processes in Witsand may be understood partly as unintended effects of housing delivery. Each of these two sections will conclude with a reflection on how my empirical observations may be understood by engaging theory on organizations as exposed to conflicting demands from their environments. In section 3 I will suggest an explanation of how WEHBSO is responding to such conflicting demands in practice, drawing on the concept

of organizational “decoupling”. This final section rounds off with a reflection on broader implications for housing delivery in South African informal settlements, focusing on how the seemingly persistent tensions identified in the literature and observations from Witsand might be highlighted by applying a theoretical framework such as the one in this thesis.

5.2. Section 1: WEHBSO – a “stable entity” in a fluid setting

One tension in housing delivery identified in the literature may broadly be associated with conflicting implications of ideals such as stability and continuity (a normative counterpart might be “rigidity”) and practices of organization in informal settlements which are fragmented, fluid and continuously changing (Roux et al 2009; Charlton & Kihato 2006; Smit 2006; Huchzermeyer 2004; 2009; Oldfield 2002). This chapter will highlight the challenging and contested process of forming a stable organizational structure – WEHBSO – in such a fragmented context. I will begin this section with a discussion of formal aspects of WEHBSO as these have been affected by the guidelines of the PHP policy framework, while looking at how WEHBSO’s role in the Witsand project has been rationalized in interviews by members of this organization and of PA. Then I will relate this to the frictions between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee during housing delivery in Witsand, discussing these in light of the broad type of tension outlined above.

The Witsand project is funded through a mechanism called the People’s Housing Process (PHP), and hence certain aspects of the formal establishment, policies and structure of WEHBSO are prescribed by the PHP policy framework as set out by the South African Department of Housing (2005: 10). One requirement of this framework is that project beneficiaries choose from seven types of organizational forms to function as a support organization (SO) on their behalf, the community-based organization (CBO) being one of these. The PHP policy framework prescribes various tasks for such support organizations. Among those tasks (ibid: 11-2) which seem to have been WEHBSO’s main functions vis-à-vis beneficiaries were; i) to register them; ii) to assist them in “organizing themselves” to work on the project; iii) to inform them about criteria qualifying for a housing subsidy; iv) to assist in resolving internal disagreements; v) to establish a Housing Support Centre in the area; vi) to assist in the establishment of a Housing Support Committee and; vii) to assist in completion, submission and follow-up of subsidy applications. Some of the formal aspects of the PHP framework will be discussed further in the analysis.

Interviews with associates of WEHBSO and PA and the former ward councillor have shed light on how these central actors understand WEHBSO’s role in the project. A number

of these accounts given by interviewees tended to place value on “*stability*”. Interviewees highlighted three different ways in which they saw WEHBSO as contributing towards structuring project-related activities in a way that increased stability, oversight and manageability (for the developers); firstly, by acting as a structure which specializes only on project-related *housing* issues in Witsand; secondly, by reducing the effect of community leaders’ infighting on core project goals and; thirdly, by registering as a formal entity.

The first point, “specialization”, refers to WEHBSO only dealing with issues that residents may have with houses constructed through the project, and not with other (often contentious) issues, such as crime, violence, domestic conflicts etc. Members of WEHBSO have devoted energy towards disassociating themselves as individuals, and their office, from these kinds of more general grievances among residents of Witsand. According to one interviewee, people are still coming to the housing office with ad hoc queries, as this office used to be a place where one could do so. This specialization on housing is seen by interviewees as beneficial in that it reduces WEHBSO’s exposure to negative repercussions that they incur as a result of being seen as “responsible for” various social problems that are hard to solve, as exemplified by these statements respectively by the ward councillor at the time and a member of WEHBSO;

“...what is [WEHBSO’s] mandate?” It’s to build houses. Not to be a social worker. Not to be a nurse. Not to be a fire department. Build houses. Remind them all the time, I’m standing here to help you to get your houses. Once you start undertaking them, soup kitchens, they’re gonna make it your baby.” (‘Simon’ interview, March 13 2012)

“We can’t be sitting at a meeting with housing, somebody can come, ‘that one is raped’, we must (...) leave the meeting and then court rule the rape, ‘somebody is killed other side’, leave, because we not going anywhere. (...) We can’t deal with that – people are told that we only terms of the housing... only.” (‘Thembile’ interview, March 6 2012)

The second reason given by interviewees as to how WEHBSO facilitates stability in the delivery process is that it serves as a permanent structure with which PA can interact so as to avoid getting involved with infighting between different community fractions over local leadership. This infighting is presented as a challenge in PA’s own publications (Guy 2009: 26) and one associate of PA working onsite said in an interview that the developers intended for WEHBSO to act as;

“...a stable body that can run with the development. Without be hindering, and that can be accountable. (...) Because when you only run with community leaders, there is a lot of in-fighting, a lot of mistrust, you know, and the leader who is here today, tomorrow is not here.” (‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

These processes are not unique to Witsand. As described earlier, social networks and organizing practices in South African informal settlements are often fragmented and fragile, due to their historical development (Smit 2006: 114-5; Lemanski 2008: 396-8; Bénit 2002), and it has been claimed that housing allocation processes in these areas tend to exaggerate fragmentation and infighting among local leaders over such things as housing waiting lists (Oldfield & Zweig 2010: 142). In interviews with members of PA and WEHBSO, the latter organization has been seen as facilitating “stability” in that it serves as a permanent formal structure to which the goals of the housing project may be tied, making developers less vulnerable to be affected by rapidly changing organizing structures and infighting in Witsand. It is noted in relation to this point that although WEHBSO’s leaders were initially elected by residents of Witsand according to a system of block committees – similar to the internal hierarchical administrative structure that developed in many informal settlements through mobilization against the apartheid state⁴⁶ – they are not up for re-election. According to WEHBSO’s chairperson this was agreed to by the community after series of meetings wherein PA and WEHBSO members stressed to the residents that the housing process is complex and would involve “...a lot of work...” over a long period of time, and that it would become delayed if the leadership was to be changed every three months (‘Themobile’ interview, March 6 2012).

This brings the discussion to the third element seen by interviewees as facilitating “stability”; WEHBSO’s formalization as a legal entity. Formalization of the SO is prescribed by the PHP policy framework which states that;

“[a] SO must be one of [four] categories of legal entities [, the first of which being a] Company incorporated in terms of Section 21 of the Companies Act, 1973 (Act No. 61 of 1973)” (Department of Housing 2005: 9)

Explaining how he sees the formal registration of WEHBSO as facilitating stability, an associate of PA argued that;

⁴⁶ (Barry et al 2007: 188; Barry 2006: 634; Oldfield 2002: 106; Huchzermeyer 2002: 71)

“...in community life, the life span [of CBOs] maybe is very short (...) because some of them will just stop coming...” (‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

This interviewee said that people tend to drop out of volunteer work in CBOs when, for instance, committee activities consume time that they could spend working to earn money for their household. When registered as a company however, WEHBSO’s members get paid. In the process of formalization, the two local residents who were initially elected as chairperson and co-chair of the CBO WEHBSO on a volunteer basis were formally registered as founders of the *company* called WEHBSO C.C. However, as emphasized by the co-chair of WEHBSO, another reason for formalizing was that it made it made WEHBSO eligible to apply for government tenders;

“And then [after the initial election process] it’s a CBO, community based organization. And then, after that CBO we also formed a company called WEHBSO C.C. We’ve got a company now, WEHBSO also (...) It’s me and [WEHBSO’s chairperson], we are the company founders. (...) Got a company now registered out of this SANCO organization. That we can go and put tenders and get some job.”
(‘Sindiswa’ interview, January 27 2012)

This discussion of accounts given by developers and members of WEHBSO has shown that interviewees tend to see the organization as facilitating stability because it reduces PA’s alignment with fluctuating community structures by acting as a permanent body specializing only on issues related to housing. However, the dynamic social structures in informal settlements often imply that their fragile networks tend to change when intersected and affected by housing and infrastructure delivery projects (Oldfield 2002: 113). It will be argued in the following subchapter that, coupled with the intended “stability” of WEHBSO, a similar process of change in social networks in Witsand, involving individuals with different perspectives taking over positions as local leaders, generated tensions between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee.

WEHBSO and SANCO – conflicting implications of stability and fluidity?

Prior to the establishment of WEHBSO, PA negotiated with the local SANCO committee in Witsand about transferring some of its members and authority over housing-related issues to WEHBSO. After a period of negotiation, leaders in the SANCO committee agreed to let some of its members go to work on the PHP project through WEHBSO, and one member was elected as its chairperson. Following these negotiations, WEHBSO was recognized as

certifier⁴⁷ by the Provincial Government, and PA's PHP proposal was approved by the City council in 2002 (Guy 2009: 26). Shortly after, 10 initial display houses, known in Witsand as "Show House Row", were constructed by PA and WEHBSO. Later on, around 2002, the SANCO committee from which WEHBSO's chairperson was transferred from was dissolved after its chairperson was killed and the rest of the committee's leaders "...fell away, they got tired..." ('Simon' interview, March 13 2012), and a new one was elected. This happened during the period of infighting discussed above. The newly elected leaders of the SANCO committee did not agree to the terms agreed to by the previous leaders, and according to the then ward councillor, they were now questioning leadership positions in WEHBSO;

"... 'we [SANCO] don't know what you are doing there. The development is not supposed to come straight in top to you [WEHBSO's leaders]. You are just a housing committee' (...) So the conflict started now. About who's above who."
('Simon' interview, March 13 2012)

The conflict between SANCO and WEHBSO escalated for a period, but eventually calmed down and members of the two committees were integrated under a new "integrated housing committee", still known as WEHBSO (A interview; Guy 2009: 26). There still exists a local SANCO committee in Witsand however, and the then ward councillor who worked closely with WEHBSO and PA said that;

"...they will come from time to time in meetings and raise some questions...of which they know exactly what is the answer (...), but they just try to be trouble."
('Simon' interview, March 13 2012)

Further, one interviewee who used to function as a Community Liaison Officer and who has stayed in Witsand for about 17 years argued that negotiations in Witsand have been marked by persistent and recurring conflict between SANCO and WEHBSO;

"[SANCO] come and go, come and go, come and go all the time... And every time they come back, there is a fight... Every time WEHBSO builds up again, SANCO comes and fights with them." ('Alfred' interview, October 30 2012)

⁴⁷ "The Certifier should be a suitably qualified and experienced person; e.g.an architect, builder, civil engineer or similar professional, should be registered with the relevant professional body, or should be a competent person identified by the SO, should have the ability to provide construction-related technical support to project beneficiaries" (Department of Housing 2005: 16).

One interpretation of the conflict is that it has resulted from two forms of tension that might be understood as falling within the category of tensions referred to earlier as “stability versus fluidity”. Firstly, there was some tension between the *permanency* of WEHBSO’s leadership positions and the fluid, dynamic and continuously *changing* organizing practices in Witsand. I have viewed the frictions between WEHBSO and SANCO following changes in local leadership (in SANCO) as highlighting that WEHBSO has needed to relate to rapidly changing organizing practices while operating in Witsand, an interaction which has been made difficult partly due to the permanency of its own leadership positions. However, this permanency has also been beneficial to the organization, for instance by providing continuity in its relations with PA and local officials. Secondly, one can argue there was some tension stemming from WEHBSO’s formalized specialization on, and “ownership” of, issues relating to housing delivery in Witsand. Although leaders in WEHBSO were elected locally, this does not preclude that other community groups will want to have a say in decisions relating to housing delivery. In this respect, one could speculate as to whether WEHBSO’s specialization on housing issues, while providing oversight and a degree of control for project managers, may be conflicting with some of the organizing practises in informal settlements which relate to their administrative division according to street and area committees⁴⁸, and not according to specialization on particular issues. Here it will briefly be noted that this interpretation is not intended to be normative in the sense that it “takes sides” and places higher value one form of organization than on the other, rather, it aims to be explanatory.

5.2.1. An institutional perspective on the tension between “stability” and “fluidity”

This section will discuss the tensions between “stability and fluidity” and the conflict between SANCO and WEHBSO in relation to theories of organizations and demands from their environments. The emphasis will be on how identifying tensions experienced by WEHBSO between conflicting demands from its environment might contribute towards an explanation of some of the organizational processes observed in Witsand. More specifically, it will focus on exigencies of WEHBSO’s immediate relational networks in Witsand which can be seen as conflicting with certain elements in the organization’s wider institutional environment. The preceding discussion argued that some elements which affect WEHBSO’s formal structure and policies are found in the PHP policy framework and the South African tender system. These elements have influenced the choice of formalizing WEHBSO as a company, a practical consequence of which was that the positions of WEHBSO’s chairperson and co-

⁴⁸ This is briefly explained in chapter 2.

chairperson were not up for re-election. Now I will discuss whether one may understand WEHBSO's formalization into a company as a response to institutional mechanisms, as well as reflect upon what kinds of institutional pressure mechanisms the PHP policy framework and South African tender system might be said to represent.

WEHBSO, stability and the regulatory pillar

Certain aspects of the PHP framework's influence on WEHBSO's formal structure and policies might be seen as characteristic of the "regulatory pillar" of institutions, in that this policy framework sets forth explicit rules, compliance to which are induced by access to government funding and failure to comply (for those receiving PHP funding) may be sanctioned (Scott 2008: 52). It is not suggested here that institutional mechanisms *determined* PA's initial choice of organizational approach in Witsand. This choice can be understood as based on relatively rational considerations within an institutional context. Such a perspective, similar to what Meyer (2008: 790) calls "realist institutionalism", might suggest that PA's organizational approach in Witsand was a rational means to gain access to PHP funding, and that if PA had sought to access a different funding mechanism, other organizational structures and policies than those characteristic of WEHBSO might have been chosen. This relates to a critique that has been directed towards some institutional analyses, namely that they sometimes lack in nuanced explanations of when institutional pressures are relevant and when they are *not*. Although the emphasis in this thesis leans towards institutional explanations, it is emphasized here that any complex organizational process is likely to be influenced to various extents both by agency and by institutional elements, and that the balance between the two are likely to shift throughout different phases of the process in question (Zucker and Tolbert 1996: 176). Thus, while PA's choice can be seen as motivated by "rational" considerations, this does not preclude the possibility that these considerations are affected by underlying cultural-cognitive aspects of institutions. Furthermore, after the initial choice of organizational approach was made, WEHBSO can be seen as exposed to coercive mechanisms of institutional influence through the PHP framework.

As explained earlier, the mechanisms associated with the three "pillars" of institutions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and normative frameworks may for instance serve to legitimate coercive power (Weber 1968 [1924], in Scott 2008: 53; Phillips & Malhotra 2008). In relation to this discussion, it is suggested here that the regulatory pillar is not the only institutional element with explanatory force when discussing aspects of WEHBSO's formal

policies and structure. This pillar might hold explanatory potential to the extent that non-compliance to PHP prescriptions would involve sanctions *since WEHBSO is receiving funding through the PHP mechanism*. However, the insight that the regulatory and normative pillars can be mutually reinforcing brings the discussion to a point that will be elaborated on later in the analysis when looking at the intersection between housing delivery processes and participatory discourse. This point concerns the potential of elements from the normative pillar, such as the prescription of *role* expectations (Scott 2008: 55), to explain certain aspects of WEHBSO's formal policies and structure. Before turning to this in section 2 of the analysis however, the proceeding discussion will focus on the process of institutional isomorphism, followed by an empirical discussion of the implications of this process for organizations when interacting with their immediate relational networks.

As mentioned previously, respondents from PA and WEHBSO viewed formalization as a company as beneficial since such formalization is a requirement for organizations wanting to compete for access to government tenders for housing and infrastructure delivery. Millstein's (2008: 36) study of Concerned Residents of Delft (CRD) documents a similar process of adaptation to formal requirements by a CBO involved with housing in order to access various resources. One notable distinction between CRD and WEHBSO is that while the former was initiated by local residents because of a concern with poor quality of RDP houses, the latter was initiated by a private developer (PA) seemingly in conjunction with local residents because it has built on, and formalized, elements of pre-existing community organization in Witsand. Thus, it might be assumed that CRD's agenda was more "independently" formulated than WEHBSO's, as this agenda was developed together with PA. However, if one were to direct DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) question of what makes organizations so similar at WEHBSO and CRD, one answer might be that these two CBOs display similar features insofar as their work with community issues in the housing process encouraged the adoption strategies that conform to formal institutional requirements in their environments. In WEHBSO's case, this may arguably be seen as a response to regulatory mechanisms as well as normative role expectations embedded in the PHP framework.

WEHBSO and stability – mimetic isomorphism and the cultural-cognitive pillar

A perspective drawing on the cultural-cognitive pillar might suggest an explanation emphasizing a *mimetic* process (DiMaggio & Powell 1983) through which CBHOs formalize and become similar either because there are no "conceivable" alternatives to formally

registered organizations operating on a market, or as a means of reducing uncertainty. Further, one might discuss whether there are certain taken for granted assumptions about “formality” which affect implementation of housing policy in informal settlements. There might be a number of advantages for developers, the state and beneficiaries associated with formalization of CBHOs, such as stability over time which could in some cases facilitate the development of trust relationships between members of housing organizations and beneficiaries. Interviews suggest that this is partly true in Witsand. However, from a cultural-cognitive institutional perspective, the process of formalization might be seen as influenced by certain taken for granted assumptions about the value of formal and stable organization, which may in turn have caused alternative organizational approaches to have been overlooked.

Drawing on insights from the literature on organizations and South African housing, one possible cultural-cognitive explanation of some of the local contestation around housing delivery in Witsand, follows firstly from certain local leaders being given central roles in organizing the participatory process (by virtue of their membership in WEHBSO), whereas others were not, similarly to what was observed in Lemanski’s (2008) study of housing delivery in Westlake Village. Secondly, when these leaders’ positions in WEHBSO were formalized and made permanent, one might see this as an adaptation to institutionalized conceptions of how CBOs involved in housing should structurally reflect values of formality and stability. It was argued above that the permanency of positions held by individuals in WEHBSO conflicted with dynamic and changing patterns of community organizing in Witsand, exemplified by the conflict between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee. It is not argued here that if certain formal positions in WEHBSO had been open for re-election, this would take away the contested aspect of WEHBSO’s relation to the local SANCO committee and Witsand residents, nor that it would provide WEHBSO with a stable basis of perceived legitimacy in Witsand. For such an assumption to be made, there are too many additional variables that may contribute to contested community organization in the settlement. However, the SANCO conflict illustrates that there was a pressure from WEHBSO’s immediate relational networks of adapting to the dynamic and fluid organizational realities in Witsand that was in conflict with the permanency that followed from it having adapted to institutional pressures towards formalization. The conflict with SANCO might thus be seen as arising since the ideals of “formality and stability” were organized into the housing process, not because their implications for practical implementation were thought to be suited to the relational networks Witsand, but because

these ideals had become “infused with value beyond the technical requirements” of the local housing process (Selznick 1949; Meyer & Rowan 1977: 341). Insofar as the desirability of these values, and the practical implications of organizing them into the housing process, is taken for granted, one may talk of cultural-cognitive elements (Scott 2008: 57; Meyer & Rowan 1977) of institutions having contributed to some of the observed frictions.

Such a perspective would suggest that alternative organizational approaches are overlooked because they are “inconceivable”. As seen earlier, the interviewee from PA did not see it as an alternative to negotiate directly with community leaders without WEHBSO acting as a SO;

“Because when you only run with community leaders, there is a lot of in-fighting, a lot of mistrust, you know, and the leader who is here today, tomorrow is not here.”
(‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

One alternative approach however, which might be seen as partly endorsed by the above argument, is suggested by Huchzermeyer (2008: 81), and involves giving government grants to entire settlements rather than to individual households via private developers, arguably providing local organizations with more manoeuvring space for seeking out approaches to housing delivery that are responsive to local demands within a given settlement⁴⁹. Strategies of CBOs that have developed from initiatives of informal dwellers themselves have been observed to reflect the dynamic and fluid characteristics of the relational networks of the settlements from which they emerge. As such, these strategies tend to move pragmatically between adversarial politics and disengagement with state structures to collaboration in governance and engagement with state structures (Habib and Kotzé 2003: 266, in Oldfield & Stokke 2004: 8; Millstein 2008: 36). One might speculate as to whether an alternative approach similar to that forwarded by Huchzermeyer (2008) would allow for such flexibility in the strategy of the elected local housing organization in Witsand. However, while this would perhaps remove some of the tension related to stability and fluidity, it is questionable whether it would remove the tensions to be discussed further in section 2, namely tensions related to politicization and fragmentation of community organization during housing delivery in Witsand.

If there are alternative organizational approaches that would be more suited to local patterns and practices of organization in Witsand, there may be a number of possible

⁴⁹ There are several contingencies on which the success of this approach rests, but these will not be discussed here.

explanations of why these are not pursued in South Africa. However, from an institutional perspective one explanation is that this is partly due to coercive, normative and mimetic mechanisms contributing maintaining the “status quo” of housing organizations’ formal structure and policies, causing them to become isomorphic with elements in their institutional environments.

WEHBSO, stability and the “paradox of administration”

In the above subchapter I highlighted some tensions *between* the institutional and immediate relational aspects – the latter pointing to dynamic organizing practices in Witsand – of WEHBSO’s environment. Further, these tensions may be understood as giving rise to a tension *within* WEHBSO’s relation to its immediate environment in Witsand. This will be discussed in relation to the “paradox of administration”. This paradox is seen as arising when organizations’ need to reduce uncertainty in the short run encourages tight alignment with their immediate environment in order to function efficiently, whilst their need for flexibility in the long run encourages decoupling – understood in this respect as freeing themselves from commitments to their environments⁵⁰ (Thompson 1967: 150). Tight alignment with the highly dynamic organizing practices of an informal settlement such as Witsand might require pragmatic and clever manoeuvres in community negotiations, or even rapid changes of personnel in order to “keep up” with changes in the local political landscape, fluctuating patterns of community leadership and power alignments. However, this would greatly reduce what Thompson might understand as WEHBSO’s “*fund of uncommitted capacities*” (ibid.), and thus its flexibility in the long run, as it would make the organization highly dependent on unforeseeable changes in the composition of relational networks in which it is embedded, and on changing local organizing practices such as discussed in the above. Thereby, although requirements of PHP and the tender system may have been central factors encouraging formalization and binding of formal positions to individuals in WEHBSO, it might also be seen as a way for WEHBSO to achieve functional advantages, such as increasing its flexibility in its pursuit of productive goals by reducing its dependence on rapidly changing patterns of community organization. This introduces an element of rationality into the explanation of the tensions experienced by WEHBSO, because it illustrates how both decoupling from, and alignment with, various elements in immediate relational networks might also be influenced by relatively rational calculations of how to achieve flexibility and

⁵⁰ The concept of decoupling will be discussed empirically more in detail later, according to two somewhat different, but closely related, theoretical understandings (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Bromley & Powell 2012).

reduce uncertainty. This encourages a balanced view, acknowledging that the observed social frictions and organizational processes in Witsand should not be seen exclusively as resulting from institutional mechanisms. Statements from members of WEHBSO and PA can be seen as implying that flexibility in the pursuit of productive goals has been a central factor, insofar as these interviewees argue that the binding of positions in WEHBSO has made the organization less vulnerable to infighting and local power struggles. Furthermore, one hypothesis that is partly supported by observations in Witsand, which would require further study to validate or refute, is that the “stability” resulting from this binding of positions in WEHBSO has enabled the development of close ties (and trust relationships) between individual members of WEHBSO, PA and the then ward councillor.

5.2.2. Summary of section 1

This section of the analysis has framed observations from interviews and visits in Witsand informal settlement in relation to a type of critique found in the literature on South African housing projects, centering in various ways on tensions between principles which guide housing delivery processes and the patterns of organization in informal settlements in South Africa. An argument found in this literature is that while housing processes tend to unfold in a manner which reflects values such as stability, continuity and “orderliness”, organizing practices in informal settlements tend to be fluid, fragmented and rapidly changing. The preceding discussion has argued that the conflict between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee can be understood as partly supporting this claim from the literature insofar as WEHBSO’s structure reflects value placed on *permanency* and *continuity*, whereas the organizing practices of Witsand are dynamic and fluid.

It is noted here that the primary aim of this discussion, and of the thesis as a whole, is not to take a normative stance that housing organizations should adapt more closely to organizational realities of informal settlements or vice versa, but rather to attempt to describe and explain some of the organizational processes that have taken place in Witsand. It aims to do so by looking at these processes within a framework of organizational theory, focusing on WEHBSO as an organization exposed to conflicting demands from its environment.

The second section of the analysis will highlight another form of tension observed in the literature, between “participatory” approaches to housing delivery and fragile and fragmented social networks in informal settlements.

5.3. Section 2: The politics of housing delivery in fragile “communities”

The Witsand project reflects a number of the ideals and values of participatory discourse. In this second section of the analysis I will frame descriptions of *organizational processes* such as fragmentation and politicization of community organizing in relation to the critiques in the literature which point to unintended effects of “participatory” housing delivery. It is emphasized at this point that I do not intend to do an evaluation of whether the Witsand project has succeeded in meeting selected criteria for successful beneficiary participation⁵¹. The aim is partly descriptive, partly explanatory. I will attempt to describe and frame organizational processes in Witsand according to the literature on urban planning and housing delivery in informal settlements. This literature suggests that an implicit assumption of participatory discourse is that informal settlements are cohesive “communities”, whereas their social networks are fragile and their organizing practices are dynamic, and therefore tend to change as a result of housing delivery itself. When such assumptions are organized into housing delivery, it is argued, this often has unintended effects such as accentuating fragmentation and politicization of community organization, both in cases where projects are implemented in settlements with relatively unified communities and in settlements that are already marked by internal divisions (Lemanski 2008: 400; Oldfield 2002: 103; Oldfield & Zweig 2010).

I will begin by describing some organizational processes in Witsand during housing delivery; the formation of a parallel and competing CBHO – Masiphumelele – operating alongside WEHBSO as housing SO. Then I will look at how WEHBSO, Masiphumelele, two ward councillors, the SANCO committee and local officials have been drawn into the local “politics” of housing delivery, followed by a discussion of a “toyitoyi”⁵² which took place in 2008. Then I will reflect on how these organizational processes and contested events in Witsand may be shed light on by insights from organizational theory, suggesting that ideals of participatory discourse have been organized into WEHBSO’s formal structure and policies partly as a result of various forms of institutional influence. The explanatory aspect concerns whether the organizational processes and social frictions in Witsand might have come about because institutional pressures on WEHBSO is making it difficult for the organization to

⁵¹ For a recent master thesis focusing on beneficiary participation in Witsand, see Magida (2013).

⁵² The “toyitoyi” is a traditional dance originally from Zimbabwe, with a history of usage in South African political protest. The common understanding of the term in South Africa can be translated with “public protest” (Drivdal, forthcoming; Gerhart & Glaser 2010: 118)

interact with its “immediate relational networks”, or organizing practices, in Witsand (Meyer & Rowan 1977).

5.3.1. Fragmentation and politicization of community organizing

Observations from Witsand suggest that the housing delivery process has politicized and fragmented community organizing insofar as different groupings have formed around contested issues related to housing. Some background information is required to explain the relation between these groupings and WEHBSO. Phase 1 of the Witsand project was completed in June 2010, and 452 houses were constructed⁵³. The first 310 of these houses were constructed by a company called Khaya M5 in 2005, with PA acting as the design developer. The subsidy amount given to each household at that time was R25800, and it covered the construction of a semi-detached unit, structurally connected with neighboring houses. If a beneficiary wanted a free-standing house, the household would need to pay an additional “top-up” amount of about R2000. Many of the beneficiaries could not afford this, but they agreed to set up a savings scheme to generate the money over time (Magida 2013: 84). Some of the residents in these houses experienced problems such as leaks and loose roofing sheets and after an incident where the wall of one of the houses collapsed, a process of arbitration begun between the City (acting on behalf of the residents) and the contractor, with PA withholding payment to the contractor (Luhanga 2012; SABC 2012). A number of the residents of these houses could not afford the top-up payment, and were frustrated when a change in housing policy and increase in the subsidy amount meant that houses that were later constructed during Phase Two of the project were larger, of higher quality and fully subsidized. Housing processes often become contested and marked by suspicion, which has seemingly been accentuated by the events in Phase 1 in Witsand, as exemplified by the following statement from a person who lives in a shack in the settlement. This statement also highlights how the wider political context and history of South Africa affects how housing processes are experienced and interpreted locally;

“No, people do not trust them [housing developers]. They are full of fraud. Take for example those people from phase 1, they are still waiting for re-payment on their houses. You see, they paid for their houses, and now they are waiting to get their money back. [Me]: Do you think it’s wrong that they paid for their houses? Yes. Because the ANC Freedom Charter says that people have the right to houses for free. I think it should be free. We asked for the account number where that money went to. We are still waiting to know on what account it went.”

⁵³ (American Academy of Environmental Engineers 2012)

(‘Eddie’ interview, October 9 2012)

In relation to the conflicts around Phase 1 in Witsand, an interviewee from WEHBSO said that he experienced being caught between changes at policy level and demands from local residents;

“There was lot of people say, you at phase 1, look what you produce for us. This phase, look what better work you produce for other people, why don’t do what you’ve done for us. They need understand that the price subsidy that time was low, and this time the price subsidy is more better.” (‘Themobile’ interview, March 6 2012)

The residents with grievances from Phase 1 decided to form an alternative organization, Masiphumelele, which was eventually registered as a CBO in 2010 (Magida 2013: 102). Currently Masiphumelele and WEHBSO are both operating as PHP support organizations in Witsand and for Phase Two of the project 200 houses have been delivered by the former and 500 by the latter⁵⁴. Phase Two will consist of 1835 houses and is planned to be completed by December 2013. As discussed earlier, increased fragmentation of community organization and development of parallel housing organizations has been observed in other delivery processes (Huchzermeyer 2002: 72-3). The relationship between the parallel housing organizations in Witsand has been characterized more by competition and conflict than by co-operation, and their relations with PA are markedly different. Whereas WEHBSO has close dialogue and cooperation with PA, and often refer grievances from local residents to them, Masiphumelele does not follow this chain of communication, and has on occasions taken grievances from residents of Phase 1 directly to the City of Cape Town or to the ward councillor (‘Roger’ interview, September 21 2011). At the time of Masiphumelele’s formation, a conflict broke out between this organization and WEHBSO. One person who stays in phase 1, but has not experienced problems with his house, indicated that this was a conflict over the position as housing support organization:

*“Masiphumelele came later. Because there were these Phase 1 people, they wanted a subsidy from government, so they elected a committee that side... Then they went to municipality and said that “there must not be one project here in Witsand, but two”. Then there was a big fight between Masiphumelele and WEHBSO...
[Me: Oh, what was that fight about?]
I think it was about power... About who can build...”*
(‘Alfred’ interview, October 30 2012)

⁵⁴ (City of Cape Town 2012)

An engineer with Nadeson Consulting Services, the professional partner of PA in Witsand, indicated that the local organizations involved in conflicts over housing in Witsand – SANCO, Masiphumelele and WEHBSO – each have gotten their own supporters among local residents. This description is reminiscent of that given by Oldfield (2002), who observes that local controversies in a housing process in Green Point (in this case related to delayed funding and partial settlement formalization) led to divisions between house owners and shack dwellers (ibid: 106). She argues that this housing process had the unintended effect of fracturing what used to be fairly cohesive community structures (ibid: 110). In interviews with local residents in Witsand there is some data to support the above account given by the engineer from NSC that local residents have become at least partly “divided” along the lines of competing local housing organizations. One interviewee living in a shack in Witsand, who suspected WEHBSO of owing its key position in the local housing process to close ties with certain public officials in the City of Cape Town’s Blaauwberg Administration, was supportive of Masiphumelele;

“When [Masiphumelele] came it was a wake-up call for WEHBSO, because they got competition. After Masiphumelele built their houses, WEHBSO decided to build new houses. They only did that because they wanted to win over Masiphumelele and get money. I support Masiphumelele.” (‘Eddie’ interview, October 9 2012)

This interviewee further added that he saw it as a problem that these two CBOs were always competing, when they should be cooperating to promote the interests of local residents. However, while there is some indication that the parallel housing organizations have contributed to social fragmentation in Witsand, many of the local residents interviewed seem to have no specific “allegiance” to either organization. Many have registered as a beneficiary with both Masiphumelele and WEHBSO, which has caused some complications for housing waiting lists, and most residents seem to choose their organization on criteria such as pace of delivery and preferred house designs, as exemplified by these statements;

“I like Masiphumelele’s houses. They have big and nice rooms. WEHBSO they only have small rooms.” (‘Thandi’ interview, October 30 2012)

*“It’s WEHBSO and Masiphumelele who are building houses here.
[Me: Oh, and where did you apply?]
I applied to WEHBSO.*

*[Me: Ok. Why did you choose to apply to them and not to Masiphumelele?]
Well, I see that WEHBSO are building many houses here.”
(‘Malcolm’ interview, October 22 2012)*

Politicization of the housing process in Witsand has been evident in the relations between WEHBSO fieldworkers and the former and current ward councillors. Although almost all of the interviewees from WEHBSO stressed their political independence and in general did not wish to associate themselves with local party politics, party politics seems to have played a role in the relationship between the ward councillors and housing fieldworkers. As explained in chapter 2, a large majority of Witsand’s population vote for the African National Congress (ANC), whereas the population of Atlantis largely votes for the Democratic Alliance (DA). Housing fieldworkers in Witsand have expressed that cooperation with the current ward councillor, who represents DA, has not been as beneficial as with the previous one, who represents ANC. One member of WEHBSO claimed that the current ward councillor’s knowledge of the large proportion of Witsand residents being ANC supporters negatively affected her willingness to cooperate with the housing fieldworkers, and that she has (unintentionally) contributed to dividing local residents based on their racial identity;

*“She’s very difficult to us. (...) because she knows that this area vote ANC, everybody here. (...) She acts (...) as if we don’t take care of Coloureds, but we do take care of Coloureds. Some of them they’ve got houses here around. Some of them they never applied. You know... So now this and this, ‘we don’t take care of them’. So we’ve got a challenge. So, it’s like... calling groups of Coloureds every time. (...) Doesn’t come to Witsand, she doesn’t come, we have to go there and give report to her. As a councillor, supposed to come around and walk here. But she doesn’t do that; it’s a challenge for us.
[Me: So do you feel it was easier to work with [the former ward councillor?]
...yes. It was better. Because... He never do that, saying that this is Coloured, this is a Black person. But the lady, the way is it now, she is like dividing us.”
(‘Sindiswa’ interview, January 27 2012)*

Relations between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee have also become fraught with contestation and competition during housing delivery. Members of WEHBSO argue that the local SANCO committee has taken advantage of social tensions in their attempts at claiming settlement representation by arousing suspicion around WEHBSO:

“Especially now they seen these beautiful houses, they were so like, angry. (...) Because they saw the new houses that are building and they say, no, no, we don’t allow this to happen, wasn’t our about to be fixed. So they are still waiting for their house to be done. (...) SANCO is the one that is checking, the one that is going around, saying that

WEHBSO must be checked if they did take money, for the houses. But (...) we didn't take the money. So they checked and they found nothing on us. The money was on PEER's account, or City of Cape Town's account." ('Sindiswa' interview, January 27 2012)

The conflict between SANCO and WEHBSO discussed earlier in relation to the purported tension between the value of stability, as reflected in the approach to housing delivery, and the rapidly changing organizing practices in informal settlements, might also be understood in relation to tension in *participatory* housing projects in settlements where social networks are fragile and organizing practices are dynamic⁵⁵. Informal settlement residents are embedded in different ways in their local social networks. Observations from Witsand suggest that once selected residents were given central roles in the delivery process, it “raised the stakes” of community organizing, making it prone to politicization as various community groups attempted to gain control over the delivery process (a proposition that will be discussed later in relation to institutional and organizational theory). At this point it will be emphasized that around the time when the local SANCO committee challenged the authority given to WEHBSO and its chairperson over housing issues, Witsand was characterized by infighting among different groups over leadership in the settlement. According to the ward councillor and Douglas Guy, during this period some people from the SANCO committee tried to mobilize residents against WEHBSO's chairperson on grounds of him originally having come to Witsand from a different part of the Eastern Cape than the SANCO leaders and certain subgroups within Witsand. Respondents from PA and WEHBSO argued that SANCO has purposefully been attempting to intensify existing divisions between people from different parts of the Eastern Cape and wider Atlantis area. The ward councillor believes this process of politicization of social divisions within Witsand was one of the causes of the toyitoyi which took place in 2008 ('Simon' interview, March 13 2012). Now I will turn to this protest as a particularly visible manifestation of the “politics of housing” in Witsand.

5.3.2. Neglecting “the mandate” – shack demolitions, toyi-toyi and blaming

Oldfield's (2002) study of Green Point suggests that changes at policy level might affect local housing organizations' relations with residents and beneficiaries. This was arguably evident in Witsand, where certain elements beyond WEHBSO's control might eventually have contributed to their office being targeted by local protesters. These events are highly contested and sensitive, so there is reason to be cautious in making clear conclusions about them.

⁵⁵ (Miraftab 2003: 228; Oldfield & Zweig 2010; Oldfield 2002; Huchzermeyer 2002)

However, there was agreement between interviewees, as well as a local news report (Sidumo 2008) about certain details.

The toyitoyi took place on October 15th 2008, when a group of local residents gathered outside WEHBSO and PA's office in Witsand. Some of the residents went inside, grabbed the people that were there, and took them out on the street before they set fire to the office. Many of the folders containing beneficiary registries, application forms and planning documents were lost in the fire, but no one was injured. After this incident, some of the protesters set out to chase the then ward councillor and the chairperson of WEHBSO out of the settlement. They left and stayed away for three days. In the meantime the chairperson's family in Witsand went to stay with a relative, as their shack had been burnt down and their possessions had been looted. Interviews with local residents, WEHBSO and PA associates, some of whom were targeted by protesters in 2008, have given some insight into their perceptions of what led people to toyitoyi. The explanation given by most of these interviewees was an incidence of shack demolition and eviction in Witsand. An online news report also supports this claim, arguing that the protest broke out because a number of "... *shacks were destroyed after the settlement's residents allegedly reneged on a deal with local councillors to stop building more shacks so land could be kept to build proper houses on*" (Sidumo 2008). Due to South Africa's history and the legacy of unequal access to resources, land and shelter, issues of shack demolitions and evictions are sensitive⁵⁶, an issue which is exacerbated by urbanization trends and informal settlement growth (Gie 2011; DAG 2002b, 2003, in Smit 2006: 108).

In 2008, the informal settlement of Witsand was expanding and more shacks were being constructed in the settlement. Spatial constraints resulting from increasing population densities have posed challenges for PA and WEHBSO throughout project implementation, and PA's manager Douglas Guy (2009: 26) argues that was partly due to the City's influx enforcement being ineffective and understaffed. It has been identified as a commonly occurring issue that housing processes generate new "pull factors" (Smit 2006), in that people are encouraged to move to the settlement in question in the hope of being allocated a house, a process which often pose challenges for community leaders and local authorities when there is a lack of space for formal housing (2006, in Barry et al 2007: 172). In an attempt to regulate the growing number of shacks in Witsand, people who wanted to construct or extend an existing shack were encouraged to fill out a permit application. However, the then ward

⁵⁶ (Barry et al 2007; Huchzermeyer 2009: 61; Keepile 2010; Parker 2012; Sacks 2013)

councillor says it became a problem when this system could not keep up with the steady flow of applications;

“I did introduce a system of reforms. Where when you come and say ‘I want to extend my shack’, you must get a form from the official. Fill in that form as an application, then you come back next week then they must give an answer. But now the office was flocked... up to 400-500 people. (...) And then what happened... The guys couldn’t handle in terms of answering people speaking, and then people started to build illegally. To say ‘they are not answering us, this thing, just block us... Now councillor, this thing you said you’re gonna solve it, you can’t solve even yourself. We are just victims where, where our structures is being demolished. The office is not standing for us.’ And remember, the mandate. (‘Simon’ interview, March 13 2012)

Frustrated with the delayed application process, people begun constructing shacks without pre-approval. About six months later, in October 2008, the department of property control demolished somewhere between 20 and 30 of these shacks on the grounds that they were illegal extensions (anonymous property control official, in Sidumo 2008). When the interviewee spoke of a “mandate” in the above, he was again referring to how WEHBSO is held responsible for issues related to housing by the community, because it is “their mandate”. The relationship between WEHBSO and local residents was portrayed by this and other interviewees as a kind of “contract” entered into when WEHBSO’s members were elected;

*“You see, the organization that we have... we’ve been elected by the community. (...) From first, first thing. We didn’t just go; ‘we’re coming into community’.(...) [WEHBSO went] to the community say that ‘ok, we are starting afresh here now... we still need you guys to tell [us] that you still need us to be [in] your community (...) to work for you. So gonna say; ‘we still need you to continue with the houses’.
[Me: So they, ok, so you are in a way accepted from when you started since you were elected?]
Yeah. (...) But there were challenges. Because one time, twenty nine... or eight [2009 or 2008]... our office was burnt.” (‘Sindiswa’ interview, January 27 2012)*

Locally in Witsand there exist many different versions of the story about how local officials came to know the whereabouts of the illegal shacks and shack extensions. The ward councillor at the time and certain leaders associated with WEHBSO were suspected by some shack dwellers of having informed the officials, thus neglecting their “mandate” in relation to the community. So, after the people whose shacks were demolished had thrown rocks at and chased local officials out of the settlement, they turned to the local housing office used by WEHBSO and PA, as well as the private homes of the then ward councillor and local

residents active in WEHBSO. Some of the interviewees in WEHBSO argue that this was because officials from Property Control used the local housing office at an earlier stage, and that the decision to demolish shacks was therefore associated with certain individuals in WEHBSO. This further speaks to the importance of personalized interactions in the organizing practices in informal settlements; the individuals who were blamed for the shack demolitions were people who have had personal contact with the local residents on a day-to-day basis throughout housing delivery. In this regard, my own observations can be seen as supporting the argument advanced in Magida's (2013: 120) case study of Witsand, namely that the situation was made tense largely because the municipality chose to use community members (working for WEHBSO) as gatekeepers to limit settlement expansion, rather than itself locating additional land for the development.

Notably, adding to the discussion in chapter 2 about Witsand residents not partaking on similar terms in "struggles" with the state, it is not the case that residents have converging views regarding the toyitoyi. Most of the residents interviewed did not view the actions of the protesters as legitimate, arguing that they should rather have appealed to local government or engaged in open discussion with the ward councillor and WEHBSO. Two interviewees were sympathetic towards the protest however; one arguing that he might have done the same had his family's home been demolished, another claiming to have been part of the protest himself. The latter was highly critical towards WEHBSO's position in Witsand, firmly believing that its members should be up for re-election, and that the main reason why they have been able to stay in a position of power is their close ties with certain key individuals in the local political administration. Some of the people I interviewed said that a number of the residents who were involved in the process around the toyitoyi have since approached the housing office saying that they were "misled" by certain people in Witsand:

"...they are coming back one by one. Saying 'we are sorry... we were misled... some of them; 'we were afraid.'" ('Simon' interview, March 13 2012)

"And now people are also talking and saying 'hey... hey, no, we were misled. You know, were misled by certain people, you know, that claim to belong to certain organizations', which I won't mention, you know..."
(Phelo' interview, May 23 2012)

Some interviewees from PA and WEHBSO said that the initial negotiations between project managers and local residents were influenced by local “shacklords”⁵⁷ who did not want the settlement to be formalized, because this would expose their activities and lead to a loss of income if shack dwellers were to receive formal housing and no longer depend on renting shacks;

“...when people are doing business and illegal stuff... behind, eh... darkness. When you put a light there (...) this thing will be exposed.”
(‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

The opposing interests of PA and these local “shacklords” were seen by respondents working onsite with housing as having contributed to the contested nature of housing delivery in Witsand. Some linked this to the toyitoyi in 2008, arguing that the people renting out shacks tried to mobilize residents against individuals associated with WEHBSO and housing delivery;

“So now what you say now; ‘I’m a mafia now, I’m loosing my business!’ You see...? Now you buy people, that’s how the thing came up, you know, and then they start using their clan differences, and say, I’m a Bondo, you are what, what, and you are what, what, and it became a clan issue.

[B: To mobilize against PEER Africa...?]

Yes, against (...) the municipality, against the leaders, you know, against the leaders, and then, that is when we came up – they chased [a WEHBSO leader] out, and burned [this person’s] house, burnt [the ward councillor’s] house, they burnt the, the office...”

(‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

“...most of these guys that were leading the toyitoyi (...), they were from a specific tribal. And that tribal was saying ‘it’s that office, and that office head is from another tribal. (...) So it was influenced and fuelled by that.”

(‘Simon’ interview, March 13 2012)

As described in the above, the relationship between those working with housing and local residents has been presented by some interviewees as a kind of “contract”. This was also evident in how a respondent from PA explained the initial negotiations between the company and local residents prior to the formation of WEHBSO, following PA’s arrival in Witsand in

⁵⁷ “Shacklordism” is a term used to describe when local “leaders” receive revenue from informally (and illegally) renting out shacks to shack dwellers. These practices have largely been removed from informal settlements by the civic movement, but have since been re-emerging (Cross 1994, in Huchzermeyer 2009: 62).

1999. The person from PA emphasized how the emergence of Witsand as an illegal land occupation affected these early meetings;

“[The shack dwellers] didn’t trust [the municipality], because (...) they invaded a farm, this was a farm (...) So, what they thought that, if the municipality come and find out how many people who were living there, they would evict them. (...) we came here in like, in 99 towards 2000. (...) And it took us five years to construct the first house. (...) Because we had to do all this you know, eh... communication, you know, we have to engage with them, gaining trust with them, ‘no we are not running, we are not bringing police in here, we are not... we are just trying to better your lives.’ (...) And, we, I mean... we have to be here until late at night. Our meetings were like, meetings that we have to go on and on until at night.”(‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

However, the toyitoyi in 2008 can be taken to illustrate how agreements, or “contracts”, in participatory projects in informal settlements may change and need to be re-negotiated as the social and organizational dynamics in the settlement continuously changes throughout the process.

In the preceding two sub-chapters I have presented some observations from Witsand, suggesting that housing delivery has had the unintended effects of fragmenting and politicizing community organizing in the settlement. The formation of a new CBHO – Masiphumelele – in response to issues related to housing has been taken to suggest the occurrence of organizational fragmentation during housing delivery in Witsand. Politicization refers to how relations between various local organizations, such as SANCO, WEHBSO and Masiphumelele, but also other actors such as local “leaders” and two ward councillors, have been drawn in various ways into the local contested “politics” of housing delivery. The toyitoyi in 2008 can be seen as illustrating the sensitivity of decisions that have large practical consequences for delivery and for shack dwellers. Importantly in relation to the focus of this thesis, it highlights the challenging position of, and at times conflicting expectations towards, CBHOs tasked with mediating between elements in their wider environment and the continuously changing organizing practices in informal settlements. I suggest on the basis of the preceding discussion that these (fragile and dynamic) practices can be seen as having changed partly as a result of housing delivery in Witsand. In the following subchapter I will reflect on how this poses challenges to WEHBSO, which needs to reconcile operating in a continuously changing local environment with demands from its wider institutional environment.

5.3.3. An institutional perspective on organizational fragmentation in Witsand

The organizational processes in Witsand discussed in the above might be seen as emphasizing a tension in housing projects that are implemented in settlements where patterns of organization are fragile, and practices are prone to change when intersected by mobilization around housing delivery. Now I will relate this tension to theories about organizations as exposed to conflicting influence from their environments. Whereas the preceding discussion suggests that community organization has become more fragmented, contested and politicized throughout the housing delivery process, the focus will now turn to the question of whether this might be partly explained by viewing WEHBSO's formal policies and structure as having adapted not primarily to requirements of interacting with the organizing practices and relational networks of Witsand, but to certain expectations from its institutional environment. This discussion will be related to elements of participatory discourse and also to the "paradox of participation" outlined in chapter 2, arguing that elements of this discourse can be seen as exerting institutional pressure in various ways through the PHP policy framework.

WEHBSO, participation and the normative pillar

The PHP policy framework might be seen as one vehicle through which institutional pressure mechanisms of the participatory discourse are affecting WEHBSO's policies and structure. It defines "*capacity building*", "*community ownership*" and "*informed participation of beneficiaries*" as its core goals (Department of Housing 2005: 24, 34-5). The framework further prescribes ways in which these goals may be reached (ibid: 5). One of the activities which are intended to build capacity, are "*mass meetings*" with beneficiaries organized by the SO, wherein local residents are informed about the various phases and procedures of the project (ibid: 34-5). The core aim of this process is "...*to allow the community to take full ownership of the project and to understand that they are entitled to full participation in the choices to be made*" (ibid.).

Notably, it is not the case that the PHP framework "instilled" participatory elements in WEHBSO's formal structure and policies in the first place. PA was implementing participatory projects in South Africa prior to the Witsand project, and values of participatory discourse were already reflected in one of its own published case studies from 1997 – of which the "community of Kutlwanong" was listed as one of the authors – where an earlier project in the Northern Cape was presented as "...*a participative process involving frequent community discussions/workshops...*" (the Community of Kutlwanong et al 1997: 2).

However, the PHP framework will be drawn on to highlight and discuss certain institutionalized expectations and prescriptions affecting organizations involved in housing. Furthermore, the earlier participatory project in the Northern Cape was implemented at a time when the notion of participation was already integrated into international development discourse, and was in the early stages of being formulated in the PHP framework in South Africa.

As previously discussed, the so-called normative pillar of work on institutions (Scott 2008: 54-6) emphasizes institutional influence as taking place through normative mechanisms (DiMaggio & Powell 1983). I argue that applying such a theoretical framework may shed some light on the organizational processes in Witsand during housing delivery. This involves viewing WEHBSO's formal policies of beneficiary participation as an adaptation to a normative system; central *values* of which being empowerment of the poor (in international development discourse) and addressing inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime (in South Africa); the *norms* which specify legitimate means to achieve these ends emphasize participation of beneficiaries throughout the various phases of housing delivery projects achieved by organizing community workshops and involving local residents in construction work and/or decision-making processes. One might argue that the normative pressure accompanying the *roles* ascribed to housing organizations are particularly strong when one takes into account international development discourse in addition to experiences particular to South Africa's history.

Compliance in the normative pillar is seen by Scott as induced by social obligation; it is associated with feelings such as "pride and honor", while failure to comply is associated with "shame or disgrace" (2008: 56). According to this perspective, and following Meyer and Rowan (1977: 350), one might argue that compliance of the Witsand project to norms and values of international and South African participatory discourse led to the project being showcased at United Nations Conference of Parties (COP17), designated as a "Flagship Project" by the South African government in 2011 and awarded in 2012 with the "Superior Achievement Award"⁵⁸. The language of participatory discourse resonates in the reasoning behind presenting the latter award to PA and the Witsand project;

"The iEEECOTM methodology requires active participation of project beneficiaries in the full lifecycle [sic] of the program, including planning, construction, and management.

⁵⁸ (American Academy of Environmental Engineers 2012; Kutlwanong Civic Integrated Housing Trust et al n.d.)

This unique methodology uses a bottom-up, self-help approach that results in a sense of ownership and responsibility among the community members.”
(American Academy of Environmental Engineers 2012)

It is noted here that conformity with values of participatory discourse are not seen as the only reason why the Witsand project has received these national and international appraisals. Neither does the institutional perspective applied here, seeing the appraisals as possible signifiers of the project's conformity to institutionalized expectations, imply that they do not point to “real” achievements of the project. Naturally, individuals and organizations involved in activities, in this case of housing delivery in an informal settlement, are motivated in different ways by their own values and by desires to achieve certain outcomes, and the institutional perspective should not be taken to such an extreme as to discard any link between award-giving and such outcomes. Values and outcomes highlighted in my interviews were related to empowerment or bettering of local conditions through service delivery. A number of interviews suggested that members of WEHBSO are motivated by such values. One person from WEHBSO said he joined WEHBSO because he believed organization to be empowering;

“...together [we can] fight (...) and then one can get the power (...) and then you can get strong... [by joining a] committee. You can get the power [to] fight until you are getting the (...) the housing.” (‘Khabane’ interview, December 12 2011)

Furthermore, when I asked towards the end of if the interviewee had anything he/she would like to add, the members of WEHBSO usually emphasized project aspects that resonated with their own motivations and aspirations related to the infrastructural improvement of Witsand;

“For me I will say today we are here, where we are today. We are busy with the houses, 500 houses now that we are gonna finish up with March. And there are still more to build. Like 1000 more houses. For me is I am the community member, it's good to see that today we've got a beautiful Witsand. From where we are coming from. On top of challenges and whatever (...) But today we got a beautiful Witsand, and a successful project.”
(‘Sindiswa’ interview, January 27 2012)

In other words, I am not arguing in this thesis that institutional pressures have “determined” the organizational processes in Witsand during housing delivery. Rather, I am applying such a theoretical framework in an attempt to highlight how CBHOs can experience being caught between pressures of adapting to elements in its institutional environment and pressures to

adapt (pragmatically) to the organizing practices of the informal settlements where they are operating. This will be picked up in section 3, when I discuss organizational decoupling as a response to such conflicting demands. One possible implication of the institutional perspective however, is that one might expect to see awards given more often to projects which conform to “institutional rules” and societal expectations, than to projects which do not. Moreover, I have suggested here that the convergence of values, norms and role expectations in South African housing policy, derived from international development discourse and experiences in South Africa’s history, might imply the existence of influential normative mechanisms affecting the development of WEHBSO’s formal structure and policies.

WEHBSO, participation and the cultural-cognitive pillar

An additional level at which institutions have been understood to affect organizational agency is the cultural-cognitive, through shared understandings, taken for granted assumptions and mimetic mechanisms (Scott 2008: 56-9; DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 149). The reviewed literature on urban planning and housing delivery might be interpreted as forwarding various critiques of taken for granted assumptions in the implementation of participatory housing processes. Two such assumptions will be discussed here.

Firstly, a claim that has been associated with participatory discourse in South African housing is that involving residents in delivery processes will address past injustices by *empowering* historically disadvantaged citizens. However, it has been argued that this claim rests on a taken for granted assumption that the community participation process can be understood as a “positive-sum game”, wherein one party’s power is complementary to, or does not come at the cost of, that of another party (Wilson 1996, in Miraftab 2003: 228). Miraftab (2003) argues that whereas this might be true for housing projects where communities have been involved from the initial planning stages of the process, in many cases the participatory process becomes a “zero-sum game” wherein informal settlement residents only participate insofar as they provide cheap labor in pre-determined delivery projects, in which case “participation” becomes something of a “buzz word”. In the terminology of institutional and organizational theory, this phenomenon might be seen as an example of formal participatory policies held by an organization merely for the purpose of “ceremonial adaptation” to societal expectations, while they are not reflected by the actual day-to-day

activities of the organizations involved⁵⁹. This will be discussed briefly later on in relation to the concept of decoupling. Miraftab's critique is shared by a number of observers of participatory housing projects. It does not seem as if this critique clearly affects the Witsand project to a great extent, as the workshops organized by WEHBSO involved preparing residents for ensuing workshops, explaining the PHP mechanism, discussing the types of houses they preferred and a number of other aspects of housing delivery (Magida 2013: 105-6)⁶⁰. However, it is argued here that this type of critique suggests that South African housing projects and the formal structures and strategies of the organizations involved may be affected by cultural-cognitive institutional elements in that contested assumptions are organized into delivery processes in a taken for granted manner.

Secondly, another closely related claim associated with participatory discourse is that informal settlement dwellers' participation in housing projects strengthens the democratic ideal of *equal* participation by all citizens in South Africa *in practice*. It is not argued here that the literature suggests that this claim is altogether incorrect. As previously discussed, scholars and observers⁶¹ have argued that this claim rests on a (largely mistaken) taken for granted assumption that informal settlements are socially cohesive. In those cases where participatory projects are implemented in a way which assumes fragile and fragmented networks to be cohesive, housing delivery often becomes politicized and may contribute to the fragmentation and politicization of community organizing. I argue that the organizational processes observed in Witsand suggest that this occurred during housing delivery. Delivery in Witsand has been characterized by suspicion between local residents and housing fieldworkers, and the emergence of parallel, competing, housing organizations. This is not to imply that PA and WEHBSO were not aware of challenges related to implementing participatory projects in informal settlements. On the contrary, the current PA associate who has worked onsite alongside WEHBSO and Witsand residents since the initial negotiations with the shack dwellers, originally got involved with PA around 1995 during an earlier housing project in the community of Kutlwanong, outside of Kimberley in the Northern Cape, where he was a community leader and activist in the Kutlwanong Integrated Civic Housing Trust (KICHT);

⁵⁹ (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 341; Scott 2008; Bromley & Powell 2012: 2)

⁶⁰ It is noted here that despite the seemingly broad and thorough participatory aim of the workshops in Witsand, the fact that the process was initiated by the City of Cape Town in conjunction with a private firm (PA), and not by local residents, suggests that it cannot be precluded that it might be vulnerable to some of the critique of so-called "invited spaces" for participation, as opposed to spaces that have been "invented" by informal dwellers themselves (Gaventa 2004: 35; Miraftab 2004; Miraftab and Wills 2005).

⁶¹ (Staniland 2008: 34; Lemanski 2008: 396-8; Bénil 2002; Millstein 2008; Miraftab 2003; Roux et al 2009: 1)

“...to cut a long story short, I, I met PEER Africa in 1995. Yeah. I’m, I’m a community leader of the area called Kutlwanong. (...) I was elected a chairperson there. [Me: Ok, and you met Mothusi [the manager of PA] then?] Yes, Mothusi down there. And I’m a founder member of the, the African National Congress in that area.”

“So from there on, with PEER Africa, because we concluded our project, and they loved the manner in which, eh... I do things. You know, they saw something in me that I, I didn’t know. You know, and, the skill to talk with people. So they brought me to, to Cape Town, you know, and, I became (...) person on the ground, for them, to engage the communities, to gain the trust of the communities.” (‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

This associate of PA can communicate in about nine of the eleven official South African languages, and was hired by PA because of his long experience in community work. However, this thesis has focused on the organization WEHBSO as “caught between” seemingly conflicting demands from its environment, in order to shed light on tensions between South African housing policy and organizational realities of informal settlements. In this respect it is not so much a critique of WEHBSO and PA, as an attempt to highlight such tensions and the dilemmas they create for housing organizations.

If one speaks of institutional influence of housing organizations on a cultural-cognitive level, one might according to Scott (2008: [ref](#)) expect these organizations to display similar features, as this pillar is associated with a process of *mimetic isomorphism*, whereby organizations imitate each other as a response to uncertainty and ambiguous goals (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 151). In this respect, as discussed further in the methodology chapter, a comparative study of multiple organizations could have been fruitful. However, the prior discussion of the tension identified in the literature between “stability” and fluidity, showed that certain experiences seem to be shared between CBHOs, such as various local challenges arising out of their formalization in order to be able to apply for tenders and access resources. This was argued earlier in the thesis to have been the case for both WEHBSO and Concerned Residents of Delft (CRD) (Millstein 2008). Further, the literature I reviewed on (participatory) housing projects suggests that many cases of housing delivery tend to involve similar unintended consequences in informal settlements, such as fragmentation and politicization of community organizing. It has been argued here that these similarities, in addition to contestation and the politicization and fragmentation of community organizing in Witsand, might have been brought about partly by local housing organizations adapting to taken for granted assumptions of participatory discourse, some practical implications of which

conflict with dynamic organizing practices and fragile social networks in informal settlements. These observations suggest the possibility that isomorphic mechanisms are at play, but this should be treated as a hypothesis that it would require further research to support or refute.

5.3.4. Summary of section 2

This section of the analysis has framed observations from interviews and visits in Witsand informal settlement in relation to a second type of critique identified in the literature on South African housing projects, which argues that participatory housing processes are commonly implemented in a way that conflicts with the fragile and often fragmented nature of social networks in informal settlements. It has suggested that similarly to how the urban planning literature argues that participatory delivery processes often have unintended consequences of fragmenting and politicizing community organizing, these processes are also observed in Witsand. Further, it was suggested that additional factors such as ongoing changes in local social composition because of urbanization and settlement growth are contributing to these processes.

Section 2 has also looked at how the understanding of these processes may be enhanced by looking at WEHBSO as an organization caught between institutional influence mechanisms and exigencies of operating in an informal settlement such as Witsand. The analysis has suggested that these processes might be partly explained by employing a perspective which sees participatory policies of housing organizations as a result not (only) of adaptation to demands from immediate relational networks, but to demands from their institutional environments. The emphasis was on how participatory discourse can be said to influence WEHBSO through normative mechanisms and taken for granted assumptions associated with the cultural-cognitive pillar of institutions. It was thus argued that institutional influence mechanisms and isomorphism might provide some insight into issues of housing delivery in Witsand, when institutional expectations and assumptions are not in tune with patterns of organization in informal settlements.

Section 3 will look at interviews with stakeholders in Witsand to discuss how tensions such as those identified in sections 1 and 2 are coped with by organizations, referring to the concept of organizational “decoupling”. This final section of the analysis will also discuss the implications of the arguments in this thesis for the wider field of housing delivery in in South African informal settlements.

5.4. Section 3: WEHBSO as a “good citizen” – signs of organizational decoupling?

One central insight of organizational scholars is that an organization’s formal structure as spelled out in organizational charts is rarely entirely determinant of the “informal” behaviour of its participants (Selznick 1949: 9). Further, the development of gaps between formal aspects such as structure or policies, and the actual day-to-day activities of organizations have been seen as a response to conflicting demands placed on organizations by various elements in their environments (Thompson 1967; Meyer & Rowan 1977; Scott 2008; Bromley & Powell 2012). Put bluntly, the first form of decoupling to be discussed – policy-practice decoupling – takes place when an organization claims to be doing X, but is in reality doing Y. The second form of decoupling – means-end decoupling – refers to when an organization claims to be doing X, does X, but the link between X and its intended outcome is questionable.

Throughout my data analysis, I have looked specifically at two elements of the organizational environment, namely the institutional environment and the immediate relational networks in which the organization is embedded, and with which it interacts when engaged in activities related to its core productive goals and strategic negotiations. The discussion of these tensions has been related to empirical observations from Witsand, and divided into two sections according to two broad types of tension identified in the literature on housing delivery in South African informal settlements. If the arguments contained in these two sections concerning tensions between pressures from WEHBSO’s relational networks (in Witsand) and its wider institutional environment (exemplified by South African housing policy, participatory discourse and PHP) are valid, and if the aforementioned arguments from the literature on organizational environments and decoupling are also valid, one might expect to see elements of WEHBSO’s formal structure and policies “decoupled” from its day to day activities, as a response to these tensions. There is limited data to test this thoroughly, and this discussion might have been strengthened by for instance observing over a longer period WEHBSO’s day-to-day activities and its rationalization of these activities in relation to its beneficiaries as opposed to in relation to actors in the external environment.

5.4.1. Decoupling of policy and practice

Some of the responses I got from interviewees suggest that there are gaps between formal and informal aspects of WEHBSO which might be understood as a response to some of the tensions between “stability and fluidity” discussed earlier in the analysis. One associate of PA was explaining the formalization of WEHBSO as a legal entity in order to access tenders and

adapt to PHP requirements, when implying that in practice the formalization had led to the creation of a formal structure existing “independently” of WEHBSO’s day-to-day activities as a non-profit CBO;

“[WEHBSO registered as] a company, a legal entity. You have your non-profit one, you know, that is to do the day-to-day running of the community, but you have this one that has to be the core business. And for them able to, to be able to, to, have work, you know, and to generate some incomes for themselves again.” (‘Phelo’ interview, May 23 2012)

As discussed previously, formalization made some positions held by Witsand residents in WEHBSO permanent, and thus certain individuals were not up for re-election. Some interviewees saw this process as contributing towards stability in ways that might be interpreted as implying a “decoupling” of these positions from rapidly changing patterns of leadership and local politics in Witsand. In other words, when one looks at WEHBSO’s formal structure it is a company with permanent members, but in practice (with the exception of some members) it operates as a non-profit CBO; volunteers may leave and new may join without it being reflected in formal organizational charts. One perspective on the tensions between SANCO and WEHBSO is that they arose partly because WEHBSO could not decouple “sufficiently” its formal structure from its actual practices. Following this perspective, the above statement by the interviewee might be interpreted as suggesting that WEHBSO has “two faces”; one which conforms to requirements of the tender system, and one which is adapted to day-to-day interactions with Witsand residents. Taking this interpretation further, it can be argued that the tension in the relationship between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee arose because of one aspect of WEHBSO’s formal structure which could not be decoupled from its activities; when the chair- and co-chairperson of the CBO WEHBSO were registered as owners of the *company* WEHBSO, these positions were made permanent and in this respect practice had to be aligned with formalities. In other words, the same individuals who were registered as owners of the formal entity WEHBSO continued to be leaders of the CBO WEHBSO. This was necessary since WEHBSO was exposed to regulatory pressure from the PHP framework; they needed to follow its prescriptions in order to access funding. However, as settlement leadership positions continued to fluctuate in Witsand, conflicts arose between the local SANCO committee and WEHBSO as roles and positions were renegotiated

5.4.2. Decoupling of means and end

In the literature review I looked at an argument which involves organizational decoupling of *means and end* becoming more prevalent than decoupling of policy and practice in the contemporary world, as a response to increasing expectations of organizations from their environments that their activities should contribute towards the realization of collective goods, irrespective of whether or not these activities are related to the core productive goals of the organization in question (Bromley and Powell 2012). One might understand WEHBSO (and PA) as affected by such institutional mechanisms, as its core goal is to coordinate the construction of houses, while it is also expected to contribute towards realization of such “collective goods” as equality, by strengthening participation in decision-making by historically disadvantaged people in South Africa, and mitigation against climate change, by promoting energy efficiency and renewable forms of energy in informal settlements. Means-end decoupling in this regard would imply that WEHBSO *does* implement its participatory policies and that these do affect their daily activities, while the causal link between these activities and the intended effects sketched in the above, are unclear. This seems supported by my observations in Witsand; community workshops are frequently organized, the housing office is always open for local residents to come with their grievances (which they often do), and these activities seem to occupy a large share of the time of WEHBSO’s members. As seen in the literature review however, participatory processes are often marked by tensions which may negatively affect the extent to which they achieve their goals. This statement by an interviewee highlights that while the participatory process in Witsand is presented to the outside world as harmonious, it is marked by competition and fragmentation internally;

“...you will see pictures there when we were launching the infrastructure development. Two groups that are building houses here; Masipumelele and WEHBSO. They are standing together giggling and laughing and doing everything. In the photo... But tomorrow you will hear stories that WEHBSO ‘da da da da’, Masipumelele ‘da da da da’... That one ‘da da da da’...” (‘Simon’ interview, March 13 2012)

This person is suggesting that what is being presented to the outside world is a “glorified” version of the organizational processes around housing delivery. It further highlights that while housing delivery in Witsand has in reality been marked by organizational fragmentation, and occurrence of competition and suspicion between parallel CBHOs, it is being portrayed to external observers as a process of co-operation and “community building”. Following the theoretical framework of this thesis, one might say that housing delivery is

being presented in a manner which conforms to rationalized myths in the field of housing concerning causal links between implementation of participatory processes and the creation of spaces for equal co-operation and community capacitation. A literature review suggests that it is often the case that the intended effects of housing delivery processes in informal settlements – such as empowerment of the poor and strengthening of “community” and organizational capacity – are not observed after project completion. Some factors contributing to this situation have been discussed, such as a questionable assumption of participatory discourse which is affecting organizational approaches to housing delivery, namely that fragile networks in informal settlements may function as stable bases for further mobilization around housing delivery issues (Oldfield 2002: 113). The case study of the participatory housing process in Witsand has further highlighted some of the challenges and unintended effects of housing delivery in informal settlements, such as intensified fragmentation and politicization of community organizing. However, as argued by Bromley and Powell (2012), despite the causal relationship between implementing a certain program (in this case a participatory housing process), and the realization of a collective good (such as empowerment and “community building”) being hard to identify, and despite widespread disagreement about this relationship (as found in the critical literature on participatory housing processes), showcasing elements that are accepted in rationalized myths as indicators of success may still provide an organization with a certain level of acceptance from its environment. In the case of Witsand and other participatory housing processes, some indicators might be the organizing of community workshops and local elections, and involvement of local residents in construction work and organizational activities.

5.4.3. Summary of section 3

This section has reflected on whether the concept of decoupling may shed light on how CBHOs respond to tensions and contradictory requirements of their environments, related to observations from Witsand. While there is limited data to support this, some responses given by interviews suggest that WEHBSO might be “decoupling” formal aspects related to accessing tenders and informal patterns of behavior by its members, to retain a degree of alignment with social networks in Witsand. It was further argued that to a certain extent one may speak of a decoupling of means and end in Witsand, insofar as there are signs of ceremonial conformity when the participatory process is presented to the outside world as characterized by harmony and cooperation, while the causal link between participatory

mechanisms and their intended effects of capacitation, cooperation and “community building” is in fact unclear.

I will revisit this concept in the conclusion when drawing together the elements of the analysis in order to see how the theoretical framework in this thesis has shed light on tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery. It is suggested that decoupling may highlight the persistence of such tensions, but also the space for organizational agency given institutional constraints. Whereas sections 1 and 2 looked at specific implications of tensions between demands from the institutional environment and immediate relational networks in the housing process in Witsand, the concept of decoupling has been suggested as a way in which organizations intentionally or unintentionally respond to such tensions. As such, the concept of decoupling may offer a partial explanation of how it might be possible for organizations to survive in spite of not being well-suited to demands of its immediate relational networks in the informal settlements where they are operating. Firstly, by decoupling policy from practice housing organizations are able to adapt informal behaviour to demands of local networks even if this behaviour might conflict with the prescriptions of the organization’s formal structure and policies and; secondly, by decoupling means from ends organizations are able to survive in spite of not achieving intended effects, since acceptance from their environments may still be achieved by implementing programs believed to produce these effects. Notably, a purely institutional perspective, viewing organizational survival and acceptance as entirely independent of actual achievements, is not endorsed here. However, it is suggested on the basis of the preceding discussion that the notion of means-end decoupling might provide a useful conceptual tool for further studies of CBOs involved in participatory housing processes in South African informal settlements. I will revisit the concept of decoupling in the following chapter which contains a summary of the main findings of the analysis and attempts to draw them together to shed light on the research question.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The aim of this final chapter of the thesis is to suggest answers to my research question. In doing this I will start by summarizing the core themes and arguments contained in each of the three sections of the analysis of my case in chapter 5. Following this summary, I will suggest answers to the research question and discuss some implications of the study for the wider field of urban planning and housing delivery in informal settlements in South Africa, specifically pertaining to the persistent tensions in local organizational processes during delivery.

6.1. Summary of main findings

The research question which has guided the data analysis and empirical discussions in this thesis is;

How may the persistent tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in South African informal settlements be highlighted by drawing on theories of conflicting requirements of organizations?

The empirical discussion was divided into three sections of analysis in chapter 5. In sections 1 and 2 I related organizational processes in Witsand to two forms of tension identified in the literature, before discussing these in relation to various elements of WEHBSO's institutional environment. Section 3 contained a reflection on how CBHOs maneuver in highly fragmented settings while relating to elements from their wider institutional environments, by drawing on the concept of organizational decoupling.

Organizational processes in Witsand in relation to two broad forms of tension

Section 1 of this chapter framed empirical observations from Witsand in relation to a broadly defined type of tension identified in the literature on South African housing projects. The various specific manifestations of this form of critique stem from numerous case studies of processes of housing delivery and upgrading – some of which are exemplified in chapter 3 – in urban informal settlements in South Africa (e.g. Huchzermeyer 2002, 2009; Bähre 2007; Marais & Ntema 2013). In the review in chapter 3 I argued that a common feature of these critiques is that they point to a specific type of tension in housing delivery. The tension arises out of a discrepancy between certain ideals which guide housing delivery processes and the practices and patterns of organization in informal settlements. It is argued that housing

processes tend to unfold in a manner which reflects values such as stability, continuity and “orderliness”, whereas organizing in informal settlements tend to be fluid, fragmented and continuously changing. I argued that the conflict between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee can be understood as partly supporting this description, insofar as WEHBSO’s structure reflects attempts at achieving stability, permanency and continuity, whereas positions and structures of other organizations in Witsand are dynamic and fluid. From this perspective, tension between WEHBSO and the local SANCO committee stemmed from frustrations among leaders of the latter group concerning the permanency of certain individuals’ positions in WEHBSO and their authority in housing matters. An earlier SANCO committee had approved a transfer of people and authority to WEHBSO, but the continuous interchange of local leadership implied that a new SANCO committee soon formed, and this committee challenged WEHBSO’s authority.

Section 2 framed my empirical observations from Witsand relation to a second broad type of tension identified in the literature on South African housing projects. This tension arises from (particularly participatory) housing processes being implemented in a manner which conflicts with the fragility of social networks and organization in informal settlements (see Oldfield 2000, 2002; Lemanski 2008; Bénit 2002). A common claim in this literature is that participatory housing projects often have unintended consequences of further fragmenting and politicizing community organizing. I argued, based on my observations of changes in organizational landscape, that this has been the case also during housing delivery in Witsand. It was suggested that participatory housing projects may be particularly prone to such unintended effects because they often involve that certain local residents end up in key positions in decision-making processes related to housing delivery in the settlement, whereas others do not. Local residents which are embedded in fragile networks in informal settlements become associated by other residents with a delivery process that is seemingly “in its nature” contested and characterized by mutual suspicion and local competition for key positions. Notably, the organizational processes of increasing fragmentation and politicization in Witsand should be seen in relation to additional factors than housing delivery, such as urbanization trends and resident influx which constantly change the social composition of the settlement.

An institutional perspective on organizational processes in Witsand

In the latter part of section 1 I related the tension between the permanency of positions held by individuals in WEHBSO and the organizing practices in Witsand to the theoretical framework explicating how organizations experience conflicting requirements from their environments (Meyer & Rowan 1977; McQuarrie & Marwell 2009). Various mechanisms of institutional influence on WEHBSO's formal structure and policies were identified by focusing on certain aspects of the PHP policy framework and the South African tender system (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Scott 2008). I argue that while the formalization of WEHBSO can be seen as an attempt at achieving stability, continuity and oversight, it can also be seen as a process of institutional isomorphism whereby WEHBSO organized elements from its institutional environment into its formal structure and policies. Having been formalized partly as a means of satisfying the requirements of the PHP framework and partly in order to access government tenders, it was suggested that WEHBSO's formalization as a legal entity – a company – can be seen as affected by elements of the *regulatory pillar* of institutions (Scott 2008), in that compliance is induced and failure to comply (as long as the Witsand project accesses PHP funding) may be sanctioned. It was further suggested that mechanisms associated with the *cultural-cognitive pillar* of institutions (ibid.) may be at play, in that alternatives to formalization of positions of the SO such as rather negotiating directly with community leaders or freeing positions in WEHBSO up for re-election were not “conceived of” by interviewees.

In *Section 2* I drew on this theoretical framework again in order to shed light on the organizational processes of fragmentation and politicization in Witsand. According to such a framework WEHBSO was seen as caught between institutional influence mechanisms and exigencies of operating in an informal settlement such as Witsand. I suggested that the organizational processes I observed in Witsand might be partly explained by seeing WEHBSO's policy of beneficiary participation as a result not primarily of adaptation to demands from immediate relational networks in Witsand, but to demands from its wider institutional environment. Mechanisms of institutional influence emphasized here were normative and cultural-cognitive (or mimetic). By drawing on insights associated with the normative pillar it was highlighted how normative mechanisms can be seen as influencing WEHBSO through the PHP policy framework, in that it defines beneficiary participation as valued goals, specifies community workshops the establishment of a SO as proper means which of reaching these goals, and systematizes these elements in specific role expectations

towards housing organizations. Discussing the cultural-cognitive pillar, two arguably flawed and taken-for-granted assumptions of participatory discourse were highlighted (Miraftab 2003; Lemanski 2008; Millstein 2008, 2011). I argued that the implicit discursive assumption that social networks and organizing practices in informal settlements may be depended on as stable bases throughout the delivery process, pertains somewhat to the Witsand project. In this project, changes in the organizing practices in Witsand led to challenges for housing developers, and as argued in the above, delivery itself had the unintended effect of changing these practices insofar as a new and competing CBHO emerged and a number of additional actors were drawn into the local “politics” of housing.

In summary, the discussions in sections 1 and 2 suggest that an institutional perspective may shed some light on the organizational processes in Witsand. The formal structure and policies of the community-based housing organization WEHBSO, whose members were from before embedded in local networks in Witsand, have not developed as a result of a rational adaptation to the requirements of operating in the informal settlement, but from adaptation to how organizations involved in housing delivery in South Africa are “supposed” to look. However, as I will return to in the final concluding remarks, the study of WEHBSO also highlights agency, in that the organization manoeuvred in order to cope with the contradictory task of operating in a fragmented informal settlement while adapting to institutional elements in its surroundings.

In the final part of the analysis in *Section 3* I draw on empirical observations and the concept of organizational decoupling (Thompson 1967; Meyer & Rowan 1977; Bromley & Powell 2012) to shed light on how WEHBSO can be seen as responding to the described in sections 1 and 2. I argued that WEHBSO might be seen as “decoupling” certain formal aspects (necessary to access tenders and PHP funding) from the actual day-to-day activities and informal patterns of behaviour of its members, to retain a degree of alignment with changing organizing practices in Witsand. This is seen when the participatory process in Witsand is presented to the outside world as harmonious and cooperative when it has in fact been contested and competitive. It was further argued that to a certain extent one may speak of a “decoupling of means and end” in Witsand. Showcasing (ceremonial) conformity with institutional expectations gives WEHBSO acceptance and appraisal from its environment, although the ability of participatory mechanisms to achieve intended effects of “community building” and capacitation have been questioned, for reasons discussed above. However, this is neither to imply that the participatory process in Witsand has been unsuccessful, nor that

awards are given to organizations purely on the basis of their institutional conformity. There are indicators which can be seen as suggesting that a number of the intended effects of this project have in fact been achieved. My aim has been to highlight how housing organizations can be seen as exposed to conflicting demands from their environments, to discuss some implications of these tensions for project implementation, and to reflect on how these tensions might be coped with by organizations. In the following final section of the thesis I will suggest answers to my research question and reflect around the implications of this study for urban planning and the persistent tensions in organizational processes related to housing delivery in South African informal settlements.

6.2. Concluding remarks and wider implications of my findings

In order to answer the research question, I have sought to shed light on the persistent tensions in organizational processes during housing delivery in South African informal settlements through an in-depth study of such processes in the settlement of Witsand. The study has been discussed in relation to theories which highlight the contradictory relations between organizations and their environments. Two forms of tension were emphasized, as identified in the literature on urban planning, specifically that which discusses housing delivery and upgrading in informal settlements. Firstly, a tension was identified in attempts at achieving stability in highly fluid settings, where organizing practices are continuously changing in unpredictable ways. Secondly, a tension was identified in housing processes reflecting implicit assumptions, particularly evident in participatory discourse, that informal settlements are cohesive, stable communities, when they are usually fragmented and politically sensitive, and therefore delivery processes may easily become politicized.

The case of Witsand has highlighted both of these tensions. Firstly, there was an attempt at withdrawing positions in WEHBSO from local politics by formalizing the organization, making the positions permanent and not up for re-election. This was rationalized by members of WEHBSO and PA as a means of achieving a degree of stability and continuity in organizing housing delivery, as it reduced the dependence of project progress on the organizing practices and local leadership roles within Witsand. Furthermore, I argued that while formalization was rationalized as a means of achieving stability by interviewees, it can also be viewed from a perspective which highlights formalization of WEHBSO as a type of institutional isomorphism. Tensions began to arise as SANCO's leadership positions changed, new individuals were involved in the process, and these individuals were contesting the authority and positions of WEHBSO's leadership. This interpretation points to tension

between ideals of stability and organizing practices which are continuously changing. However, it can also be seen as highlighting the implications of introducing a highly sought after resource – housing – in settlements with latent community divisions. This will be revisited shortly. Secondly, the case of Witsand illustrates that while beneficiary participation in delivery projects is in many respects crucial, certain tensions may be particularly evident in these processes. The initial stages of the process in Witsand were largely focused on arriving at agreements on the conditions of to the project, such as WEHBSO's "mandate" in relation to the community, and the above decision to allow the leaders of the organization to remain in their positions until project completion. This case illustrates the persistence of tension in participatory processes, also where considerable preparatory effort goes in at an early stage. Residents in informal settlements are embedded in various ways in fragile social networks. When some residents acquire central positions in organizations working with the highly contested issues of housing delivery, while others do not, the process is likely to become fraught with local conflicts. This is particularly pertinent when informal settlement residents belong to different groupings with different backgrounds and motivations, and when the social and organizational landscape changes throughout housing delivery processes. Housing delivery in Witsand had unforeseen effects of further fragmenting and politicizing community organizing, in turn politicizing delivery as new community groupings formed and competed for positions in the process. Drawing on the theoretical framework of the thesis, I argued that, due to the history of systematic exclusion of most of the country's citizens from decision-making processes and due to elements of international development discourse, CBHOs in South Africa are exposed to strong normative influence towards implementing participatory programs in the delivery process. Furthermore, I reflected on whether there are certain questionable assumptions of participatory discourse, such as the implicit assumption that informal settlements are cohesive, stable "communities", can be seen as influencing CBHOs on a cultural-cognitive level, in that they are taken for granted in the implementation of participatory housing projects. This framework sheds light on an organizational dilemma; how to adapt formal structure and policies to institutional elements when the practical implications of doing so might be problematic in relation to operating in highly fragmented and fluid settings such as informal settlements. In this respect, work of organizational scholars, most of which from the neo-institutional tradition, was drawn on to highlight the contradictory roles of CBHOs. In the empirical discussion, this organizational dilemma was elaborated on by drawing on Thompson's (1967) "paradox of administration", and possible

organizational responses were considered in relation to the concept of organizational decoupling.

An inverted paradox of administration and the “participatory paradox” in housing delivery

This study has highlighted how the paradox of administration may be particularly pressing for CBHOs in South African informal settlements when mediating between their simultaneous needs for stability and flexibility. Thompson (1967) sees alignment with the environment as a key organizational task in order to achieve stability, and understands this as conflicting with a central task in order to remain flexible, namely close alignment with elements in the environment. However, in the case of WEHBSO the paradox was “turned on its head”. The similar, but inverted, paradox was evident in that WEHBSO attempted to achieve stability by *reducing* its dependence on unpredictable changes in its immediate environment by decoupling positions in the organization from local politics and continuously changing organizing practices. While the efforts to “bureaucratize” and “de-politicize” organizational processes around housing has provided housing developers with a degree of stability and continuity beneficial in interactions between WEHBSO and PA, it has conflicted with WEHBSO’s simultaneous need to remain aligned with the changing organizing practices in Witsand. Hypothetically, a complete alignment might imply opening positions in WEHBSO’s up for re-election, which might have had positive effects on certain community groups’ perceptions of WEHBSO’s role in housing delivery in the settlement. However, the paradox arises when one considers that such close alignment would probably have been difficult to reconcile with the stability and continuity necessary in coordinating organization around, and achieving progress in, housing construction and allocation procedures. The reason for this is that in the fluid and fragmented context of an informal settlement, close alignment might imply continuous changes in WEHBSO’s personnel. In this respect, the case of Witsand can shed light on how the paradox of administration is contrasted with another paradox identified in the literature on urban planning and housing delivery, namely the “paradox of participation”. This refers to how, in spite of seemingly widespread agreement among a number of NGOs and public policymakers about beneficiary participation as key to successful project implementation, the outcome of these processes are rarely as intended. When processes of housing delivery are marked by the conflicting implications of *isomorphism* with institutions of participatory discourse and practical *requirements* of operating in fragmented settings, and when CBHOs are grappling with the (inverted) paradox of administration, these

processes may lead to further fragmentation and politicization of community organizing. While the formalization of physical layout, straightening of boundary lines and building of formal housing may be technical, “straight-forward” tasks, the formalization of organization around these tasks in informal settings may become highly contested when various new groupings form and join the struggle to attain positions in the delivery process. Following Nuijten (1999, 2005), this may illustrate more general challenges related to interactions between the formal and the informal, which tend to have rather unpredictable outcomes as organizing practices in informal settlements become intertwined in various ways in processes of formalization. Notably, while this study has highlighted some implications of the dynamic nature of organizing practices in informal settlements, this is not to suggest that in these settlements there is only change, and no continuity. Although organization tends to change rapidly in these areas, it is acknowledged that there are also stable elements, exemplified in Witsand by the formation and continued existence of organizational structures such as SANCO and Masiphumelele.

Decoupling as a response to organizational dilemmas

In addition to shedding light on tensions in housing delivery, I have also sought in this thesis to reflect on the space of CBHOs to manoeuvre around tensions and contradictory requirements. Two types of organizational decoupling have been discussed in this regard; decoupling of policy and practice and decoupling of means and end.

I have tried to identify some “institutionalized” conceptions of what CBHOs’ formal structure and policies should look like in South Africa. A neo-institutional perspective might suggest that CBHOs become isomorphic with these institutional elements, and that this process may make them less capable of interacting with the organizing practices in informal settlements where housing projects are implemented. The case of WEHBSO seems to suggest that some form of decoupling of formal policies from day to day activities has made it possible for the organization to cope with the tensions such as those described in the above. While conformity with institutional requirements such as formalization and participatory ideals, exemplified by the tender system and the PHP policy framework, has provided WEHBSO with acceptance from its environment, the organization has been able to decouple some of its daily activities in order to respond to pragmatic considerations in Witsand. The notion of policy-practice might shed light on how CBHOs may cope in instances when institutional demands having practical implications that conflict with practices of organization

in informal settlements, because it allows them to adapt their *activities* pragmatically to the requirements of immediate relational networks in informal settlements also in instances where these activities are not aligned with formal policies or structures. Put bluntly, they can “say X, while doing Y”. While this form of decoupling may highlight part of the observations from Witsand, it is not applicable to the extent that WEHBSO can be seen as decoupling its policy of participation from its daily activities. On the contrary, WEHBSO is continuously organizing community workshops and engaging with local residents, and furthermore all of its members are local residents. The concept of means-end decoupling might be more enlightening in relation to participatory delivery processes.

WEHBSO *is* implementing its participatory policies. However, the urban planning and housing literature reviewed in this thesis questions the links between participatory mechanisms (in the form these are usually implemented) and their intended outcomes. In this regard, the concept of means-end decoupling may shed some light to how organizations may survive despite inherent tensions in participatory delivery processes in fragmented and fluid settings. From such a perspective, it can be argued that conformity of WEHBSO (and the Witsand project) with rationalized myths concerning the causal links between participatory mechanisms and intended effects of “community building” in informal settlements gives the organization acceptance and appraisal from its wider environment. This discussion suggests some institutional mechanisms which may contribute towards reproducing and maintaining tension in housing delivery in informal settlements. Nuancing this however, I do not argue that the case of WEHBSO and the Witsand project suggests that institutional isomorphism alone, irrespective of actual achievements, ensures appraisal and acceptance for CBHOs in South Africa. Although there is limited grounds on which to make clear conclusions about this, the Witsand project seems to have been less fraught with direct conflict than many of the other projects documented in case studies reviewed during my research.

Some implications and recommendations on the basis of the study

McQuarrie and Marwell (2009) argue that contemporary urban institutional transformations heighten the need to improve the understanding of organizations and their social productivity in urban theory with help from dedicated organizational theories (especially within new-institutionalism). In this regard, it is hoped that this study may contribute to the literature on urban planning and housing delivery by highlighting the role of organizations involved in

these processes. Four implications and recommendations on the basis of this study will be suggested here.

Firstly, it could be interesting to explore the topic of formalization of CBHOs in informal settlements in further studies, in order to refine and test some of the arguments advanced in this thesis and to obtain contextualized knowledge about organizational processes during housing delivery in informal settlements. Secondly, a topic for further study might be the factors which affect CBHOs' space for agency given the wider institutional environment and local organizing practices in South African informal settlements, and perhaps compare this with similar processes in other contexts. Thirdly, this study highlights that policy should recognize existing gaps between ideals of participatory discourse in relation to housing delivery and urban planning in informal settlements, and the practical implementation of projects which seek to realize these ideals. By suggesting how these gaps, or "tensions", may come about, it is hoped that this thesis may contribute in this respect. Knowledge about how tensions in housing delivery are interlinked with the paradox of administration and processes of organizational decoupling can be advantageous for policymaking, in that it can aim to recognize the advantages of decoupling while seeking to address some of the challenges associated with it. Decoupling might be advantageous in housing processes in that it facilitates delivery, stability and makes project progress possible. On the other hand, there are issues of transparency related to decoupling, for instance when organizations claim to be representing a "community" or achieving "full participation" when these terms are buzzwords used to signify conformity with certain elements in the institutional environment. Fourthly, this thesis supports the claims from the urban planning and housing literature that NGOs, CBHOs and policymakers should expect patterns and practices of organization in informal settlements to change throughout, and often partly as a result of, processes of mobilizing around housing delivery. Therefore there is a need to implement mechanisms and support institutions which are responsive to such changes. In this regard, this thesis has highlighted some of the challenges of striking a balance between de-politicizing housing delivery in order for projects to progress, while keeping a space open for local political negotiations and *re-*negotiations of agreements between developers, CBHOs and local residents.

Appendix 1

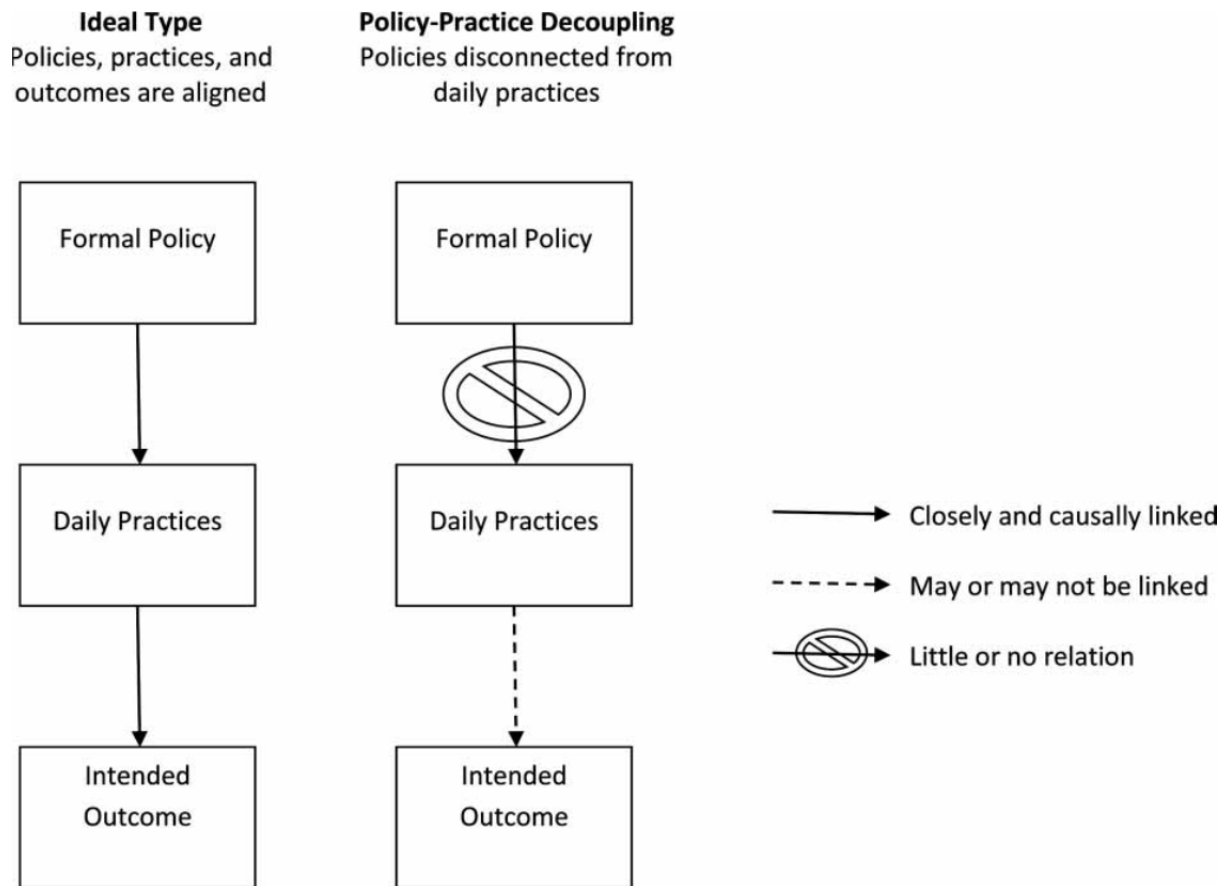
List of respondents

Respondent	Organization/position	Type of dwelling	Date of interview
'Roger'	Project engineer, Nadeson Consulting Services		September 21 2011
'Bongiwe'	WEHBSO		October 20 2011
'Khabane'	WEHBSO		December 8 2011
'Sindiswa'	WEHBSO		January 27 2012
'Thembile'	WEHBSO		March 6 2012
'Simon'	Ward councilor from 2006 to 2009		March 12 2012
'Thando'	Resident / civic member		April 20 2012
'Phelo'	PEER Africa		May 23 2012
'Peter'		House, phase 2	September 27 2012
'Lisa'		House, phase 2	September 27 2012
'Mary'	Retired, living with younger family members	House, phase 2	September 27 2012
'Eddie'		Shack	October 9 2012
'Zukiswa'	Currently unemployed, lives with husband who works at nearby factory	Shack	October 9 2012
'Lulama'	Currently unemployed, lives with husband who works at nearby factory	Shack	October 9 2012
'Lungiswa'	Currently unemployed, lives with husband who works at manufacturing plant	Shack	October 22 2012

'Malcolm'	Seasonal contract worker at nearby manufacturing plant	Shack	October 22 2012
'Thandi'	Lives with two sisters, works nearby with frozen food packaging and storage	Shack	October 30 2012
'Jack'	Lives with his family, works at nearby factory	shack	October 30 2012
'Alfred'	Has a security job, used to be Community Liaison Officer for the housing project	House, phase 1	October 30 2012
'Mandisa'	Lives with her sister, came looking for work, unemployed	House, phase 1	October 30 2012

Appendix 2

Analytical distinction between policy-practice decoupling and means-end decoupling



Source: Bromley and Powell (2012: 9)

Appendix 3

Interview guide for Witsand residents

[This interview guide was followed loosely in the interviews of local residents, but additional topics which arose were also discussed when these seemed interesting for the study. Furthermore, the questions were formulated in keyword format, in order to provide guidance in the interview process.]

Background for interview / information to respondent

I am doing this interview to learn more about what is happening in Witsand. This is one of the interviews I am doing as part of research for the university, and I will write about them in a paper next year. Some of what we talk about, I might write in this paper. I will not write your real name, so no one will be able to know that it is you I have been talking with. I am not allowed to tell anyone about what you have said in the interview. Anonymity and confidentiality will thereby be preserved.

I will be finished with my research next year. The finished paper will be available to the community, and hopefully some of what I find can benefit the community of Witsand in the future.

About the informant

Male Female Shack (no.) House (phase)

Name / Age / language / how long in Witsand / why move here / from where did you move

Witsand

How changed since you came / what think of changes

Community leaders now / then / several

1. Decisions\control\governance

Who decides? 1. Housing and services 2. Crime, violence etc.

Who do you think should decide? Why?

If live in shack: what think of shack / applied for house / what would change if have house

If live in house: what think of house / different from before / changed daily routines

Who decided to divide Witsand into **blocks**? Why? How affect your daily life?

2. Organizations and community \ legitimacy

How many org you know of in W / most important org in W / why

PA: What are they doing in W / why / impression / you often in contact

Has W changed since PA came? How? Impression?

WEHBSO: What are they doing in W / why / impression /you often in contact

SANCO: what doing \ why \ impression \ often contact

‘Space for participation’

How often public meetings/workshops / who organizes / why do you go / what you learned

You or family member building? Why PA want you to build\meetings etc?

Where go with complaint about house/services

Ever in toyitoyi / here / why participate / what think about toyitoyi / why do they happen

Burning housing office – were you here? Why happen? What think about it?

Appendix 4

Interview guide for WEHBSO members

Background for interview / information to respondent

I am doing this interview to learn more about what is happening in Witsand. This is one of the interviews I am doing as part of research at UCT, and I will write about them in a thesis next year. Some of what we talk about, I might write in this thesis. I will not write your real name, so no one will be able to know that it is you I have been talking with. I am not allowed to tell anyone about what you have said in the interview. Anonymity and confidentiality will thereby be preserved.

I will request to use a recorder. The recordings will not be available to anyone without permission.

I will be finished with my research next year. The finished book / thesis will be available to the community, and hopefully some of what I find can benefit the community of Witsand in the future.

About respondent – age, name, when moved to Witsand...

How long live here? Why moved? Where before? Family here? How to be new here?

Witsand

History

First ppl here? Any leaders then?

Biggest chall. now / how can be solved?

Biggest challenges in W / how solved?

Biggest changes in W?

Organization of the community

Nr. of blocks / how divided / who decided?

Leaders/authorities in Witsand?

Any other committees than WEHBSO?

Housing com before WEHBSO?

Elected / who est. / what tasks / members?

Issues in the community

Main political issues in W?

Why challenge w/tunnels – how can solve?

Water situation in W / status of water capture?

How food tunnel organizers elected?

Food situation in W / status of food tunnels?

Why did they leave?

Organizations

What is an org? How many org in W?
Diff/rel. b/w WEHBSO and PA?

Conflicts b/w WE and other org?
Role of SANCO in Witsand?

WEHBSO

How → member? When/why?
How share work with other members?
Volunteer/paid?
Member of other org (now or before)?

What WEHBSO do?
WEHBSO important in Witsand (why(not)?
When/why WEHBSO formed?
Were you 'leader' before WEHBSO?

Legitimacy and participation – Organization and community

How was it to get acceptance in Witsand?
Election -> easier for WEHBSO than PEER?
How WEHBSO/PEER function in com now?
Some ppl in W sup WE/PE more than others?

WEHBSO/PA important in inf.setlm.? Why (not)?
How is communication w local gvt/WC/politicians?
Hard to get acceptance from local govt.?

Representation and participation

WE repr. the interests of beneficiaries?
Also repr. entire community? If not, who does?
How would W be without PA/WE?

Fire – how/why/who/legitimate protest?
Often toyitoyi in W? Why (not)?
What do you think of toyitoyi?
Protests in CT – who org/why/success?
Does the com work with/against WEHBSO?

WEHBSO and PEER Africa

How WEHBSO/PEER different
(activities/size/strategy)?
Who has most support in the community? Why?
How is WEHBSO/PEER rel.ship?
Which members are at meetings?

Main issues you discussed with PEER?
Any disagreements WEHBSO/ other org?
What do you know/think of plans of food garden?
WE have power to choose freely how to fix prob.?
Why not? Should WE get more power?

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