

**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS, SPATIAL PLANNING AND
PLANNING LEGISLATION:
THE CASE OF WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

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DECLARATION

I, Wilson Hungiree Billawer, declare that the thesis that I herewith submit for the doctoral degree *Doctor of Philosophy* at the University of the Free State, is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.



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ABSTRACT

Since the independence of Namibia in 1990, the social problems of the low-income areas persist despite the amendments of the laws to improve their well-being. However, planning in Namibia adopted a market-led approach to solve urban problems, and the good intentions of the various new policies and programmes did not reach all the residents in urban areas. The case study of the Havana settlement, a low-income area in Windhoek containing both formal and informal sections, exemplifies the skewed relationships between planning officials and residents. Although planning focuses on the provision of services and housing in low-income areas, the Havana case study demonstrated that there are other pressing needs which planning does not take into consideration. The lack of accessible and useful community open spaces for various sociocultural activities is a major concern. As a result, increased stress levels were observed in the Havana community, with negative consequences for the well-being of both the area and its residents.

Having adopted an indigenous knowledge system (IKS) lens, the study first elaborated on the past planning practices to illustrate how planning was involved in creating such deficits in the low-income areas, and how such approaches were re-adopted by the post-apartheid administrations and continue in different forms, despite amended legislation and policies. The evolution of the conventional modernist planning approaches was elaborated upon, followed by various post-modern critiques raised against planning tools such as collaborative and participatory planning practices.

To foreground IKS as an alternative or complementary planning approach, the study explored various cultural open spaces of two indigenous communities as case studies. The exploration was to identify which spatial IKS, still existing and useful, could be harnessed by planning as important tools that can assist in improving the well-being of the communities in low-income areas. The two cultural open spaces, the *olupale* of the Ovawambo community, and the *omuvanda* with its *okuruuo* of the Ovaherero community, provided important insights in this regard. Aspects such as community respect, well-being, cooperation, environmental respect and care, are all issues which are being taught, lived and experienced at these cultural open spaces; hence their

foregrounding in this study as essential spaces. The spatial IKS aspects revealed that planning, despite being caught up in neoliberal market-led policies, could still engage local knowledges to address the plight of the majority residents in low-income areas. These spatial IKS include cultural frameworks that empower local communities to help themselves and craft a better future for themselves and their long-term well-being. The study thus proposed for these spatial IKS to be included in legislation, policies and practices in Windhoek and the rest of the country.

The study was largely qualitative research. Interviews, informal discussions, group circles (focus groups) storytelling approaches, and participant observation in various traditional events were engaged to obtain as much information as possible. The findings and analysis deduced that planning policies and practices continue to exclude the marginalised urban communities such as those in Havana, some due to reliance on a single rational process of solving problems. The study revealed that spatial IKS does exist and could help planning in addressing the well-being of low-income residential areas and their residents.

It is hoped that the recommendations made in this study will enable, and lead to the improvement of relations through additional IKS input, between planners and their local communities, which could eventually lead to low-income areas such as Havana to be treated differently than in its current practice form. It is in this light, and the low levels of spatial IKS research and awareness in Namibia, that suggestions were made for further research on this topic be given increased consideration.

Key terms: cultural frameworks; cultural open spaces; indigenous knowledge systems; low-income settlements; modernist planning; *olupale*; *omuvanda*; spatial planning

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDA	Critical discourse analysis
Covid-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
HPP	Harambee Prosperity Plan
IKS	Indigenous knowledge systems
NDP	National Development Plan
NDP5	Fifth National Development Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
URPA	Urban and Regional Planning Act
WDUP	Windhoek Development and Upgrading Policy
WOSP	Windhoek Open Space Policy
WSP	Windhoek Structure Plan
USA	United States of America
WTPS	Windhoek Town Planning Scheme

Chapter 1

PREPARING THE SPACE FOR INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS, SPATIAL PLANNING AND PLANNING LEGISLATION INTERACTION IN NAMIBIA

1.1 Introduction

Three decades of Namibia's independence has revealed one important fact about the existing urban and regional planning system, namely that of the settlements not achieving the expected and pursued goals of the various improvement programmes being proposed or implemented. The planning system has to some extent failed to transform the urban areas into fully integrated and inclusive settlements in which all the residents enjoy the benefits of urban living. This is despite the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 1990, which is considered a model for Africa and one of the most liberal and democratic constitutions globally (Ruppel 2010:329). Various amendments to, and the creation of new planning and environmental management legislation and policies were crafted in accordance with the 1990 Constitution for the post-apartheid period to address past inequalities (Republic of Namibia 2018).

Nonetheless, a lack of transformation and integration is largely observed in the low-income and previously disadvantaged urban areas, including the so-called informal settlements. These low-income areas, as observed, display the disjunction that exist between the intended planning outcomes of the officials and policies, and the aspirations of the residents (Chitekwe-Biti 2018; Larsen & Augustus 2020). Almost all segregated African townships in Namibia are depicting this unfortunate situation which can ultimately be translated by this study as displaying a lack of sense of place. In this context, the sense of place refers to the interactions the people have with their residential area, thus a deep-rooted connection between people and their place, which include the perceptions and feelings about that space (Campbell 2018; Erdiaw-Kwasie & Basson 2017). The situation is aggravated by poor service delivery, the deterioration of existing services, the observed 'don't care' attitude of the residents, and the laissez-faire attitude of the administrators and planners towards these low-income areas. Moreover, and in the context of this study, a clear observable absence of spatial local indigenous knowledges in the process of place-making and planning further contributes to

this spatial neglect. However, in the few cases where spatial local indigenous knowledges have been accommodated, they have been largely misplaced in that they do not serve the local residents. The use of the plural *knowledges* in this study, is to emphasise the existence of many diverse cultures with different knowledges, besides the privileged scientific and technical knowledge which dominates current knowing in modern societies (Sandercock 1998:5). It has been proven that the different knowledges exist, and that they play important survival and well-being roles in respective indigenous and local communities (Lam et al. 2020; Simon et al. 2020).

Despite changes to the legislative framework, urban problems in low-income areas persist. The question that comes to the planner's mind is: Why then, despite all these good new policies crafted in the spirit of a progressive Constitution (Ruppel 2010), are the basic living conditions not improving in the low-income areas of the Namibian urban environment? What is missing in the system, the people, and the places that could assist the urban areas to be transformed into acceptable and inclusive settlements that were wished for at independence? What is planning doing or not doing that prevent urban areas from improving towards accepted standards, thus creating a greater sense of place?

It is those post-apartheid unacceptable urban living conditions that lead to a lack of sense of place, coupled with the questions posed above, that have stimulated the author's interest to venture beyond the current planning frameworks and practices, and to explore alternative methods of doing planning. It is argued that alternative planning methods, such as spatial indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and values are still, as before independence, being hidden or stored behind the scenes, and are not visible in practice and theory as far as planning is concerned. A further argument is that current planning frameworks, legislation and policies are quiet about alternative local indigenous knowledge and are still stuck in the Western scientific and conventional planning methodologies. In that vein, Porter (2010:78) argued that for planning to achieve acceptable levels of transformation, it needs to deconstruct itself ontologically and epistemologically to unearth the obstacles in this process. In the context of Windhoek's policies failing to achieve the intended outcomes in low-income areas, Chitekwe-Biti (2018:404) argued for planning to be turned upside down to enable new radical imagining of the city.

Therefore, and in line with the above introduction, this study made three claims that contribute to a lack of sense of place for the Namibian post-apartheid low-income urban settlements:

- Urban planning, since independence, has followed the same trend as previous colonial and apartheid spatial systems by adopting and pursuing the same oppressing rational comprehensive planning systems.
- The planning legislation and the policies in place continue to ignore spatial IKS in terms of settlement planning, and this has adverse effects on the well-being of particularly the low-income areas and their residents.
- Planning practice in Namibia is detached from the local communities' lifestyles, and thus continues to struggle with land use regulations that do not promote inclusive and integrated spaces.

1.2 Problem statement

Since the independence of Namibia in 1990, various measures were implemented to change the apartheid planning legislation to improve the urban situations in the country. The Town Planning Ordinance (1954) and the Townships and Division of Land Ordinance (1963), which have shaped the Namibian spatial planning for a long time, have undergone several amendments since independence, but only managed to be replaced by a new combined law in 2018. The long-awaited Urban and Regional Planning Act (URPA), Act 5 of 2018, is now in place and the Regulations were finalised and published in September 2020.

Scholars from all over the previously colonised world, especially the Southern African part, have written widely and addressed the fact that despite the attainment of independence and the implementation of new planning laws and policies, the colonial and oppressive planning systems that discriminated against certain groups of people in urban areas still persist (Berrisford 2011; Charman, Tonkin et al. 2017; Chigudu 2021; Cirolia & Berrisford 2017; Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016; Nel 2016a, b). These recently revised policies, however, still produce limited and constrained approaches and solutions towards urban socio-economic problems, and most often implemented within little-reformed institutional structures and frameworks (Chigudu 2021:1). As a consequence, some of the well-intended policy objectives have not reached the previously disadvantaged areas where the majority of the urban residents find themselves (Larsen & Augustus 2020). The amended laws and policies, through various adopted implementation strategies, struggle with the creation of acceptable inclusive

and integrated urban areas, as demonstrated in this study by the example of the Havana settlement in Windhoek. Public participation and the *sense of place* atmosphere, especially in the post-apartheid black townships, have not improved despite these *policy fixes*, due to contradictions and ambiguities where regulations and the everyday experience are worlds apart. In fact, reality demonstrates that the post-apartheid period is still dominated by the continuation of previous methods of doing planning as alluded to above (Chigudu 2021; Larsen & Augustus 2020).

In a different context, scholars from the settler states of Canada, Australia and New Zealand have extensively addressed the problem of the persistence of the oppressive colonial planning systems and the manner in which such systems continue to mask or hide other alternative methods of planning by suppressing and degrading other knowledge systems (Barry & Porter 2011; McLeod et al. 2015; Porter 2010; Porter & Barry 2015; Porter et al. 2017). This group of scholars, among many, has provided important lessons and guidelines in terms of the transformation efforts being implemented to address the issue of the lingering colonial planning systems in the context of settler states.

This study is not only concerned with the transformation of the planning system and its practice, but also with the underpinning assumption that if alternative knowledges are embraced and fully understood and utilised, the well-being of the residents and their spaces and places will be improved. Equally, the general feeling of the love of the place, or sense of place and the place maintenance will be greatly enhanced. It is this sense of place, as shown in this study, that can encourage the residents of the low-income areas to look after their places, and better cooperate and participate as confident residents in urban affairs. Various scholars have argued in favour of the *sense of place* aspect that it should be promoted by allowing people to practice their knowledges and create local solutions; that it is an aspect that can increase the people's willingness to engage in sustainability activities in their areas; and that place-making principles should promote conditions under which the experience of the place users is improved (Abbasi et al. 2016; Alyani & Herlily 2019; Ellery & Ellery 2019; Erdiaw-Kwasie & Basson 2017; Jivén & Larkham 2003; Larsen & Johnson 2012; Lewicka 2011).

The neglect or suppression of alternative knowledges, for example spatial IKS, led to planning, excluding important space-making methods that could have helped communities in urban areas, especially previously disadvantaged settlements, to fully enjoy their areas. Important land uses such as sacred and cultural spaces in most urban areas were not included in the various land use schemes and policies in place. This led to a situation where the majority of

the African urban population, particularly the post-apartheid urban areas, are not experiencing urbanity in their way of existence, but to live it as temporal sojourners, as was propagated and implemented by the previous colonial and apartheid governments. Windhoek's low-income areas, and almost all other similar urban areas observed in Namibia, are no exceptions to this lack of sense of place experience.

The focus of this study was therefore to explore the various local indigenous spatial knowledges that have been neglected and hidden, bringing them to the fore, and to propose them for inclusion into the spatial planning systems of Namibia to contribute to the improvement of neglected low-income areas such as the Havana settlement in Windhoek, and consequently lead to an increased sense of place for the residents.

1.3 Research objectives

1. To explore the historical and current information on spatial IKS, practices, and values from two indigenous communities in Namibia, namely the Ovaherero and Ovawambo communities.
2. To determine how these spatial IKS could be of value in urban areas, and simultaneously explore how these spatial IKS could influence the transformations needed to make the current official planning practices and legislation in Namibia more inclusive.
3. To analyse how a shortage of open spaces, including cultural open spaces, in the Havana settlement area affect the well-being of its residents.
4. To explore how spatial IKS could contribute to effective planning and improvement of the well-being of the Havana residents.

1.4 Research questions

1. Do spatial indigenous knowledge systems exist in Namibia?
2. What value do these spatial indigenous knowledge systems have for their (largely rural) communities?
3. Could these spatial indigenous knowledge systems be of value in urban areas?
4. Could the recognition of spatial indigenous knowledge systems lead to inclusive settlements?
5. What are the implications of integrating spatial indigenous knowledge systems with current planning for theory and practice?

1.5 Background to the case studies

The urban case study is situated in Windhoek, the central Khomas region and the country's capital city (see Figure 1.1b). Windhoek is Namibia's largest municipality, and together with Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, are classified as Part 1 municipalities. Part 1 municipalities are those local authorities that are capable of generating their budgets and run their administrative functions as stipulated in the Local Authorities Act, Act 23 of 1992. In terms of Section 3(1) of Act 23, the other local authority levels are classified as towns or villages (Republic of Namibia 1992:11). Windhoek's population grew rapidly since 1990 due to the easing of movement restrictions that characterised the apartheid era (Mitlin & Muller 2004:169). Windhoek had a population of approximately 167 071 people in 1991 (Republic of Namibia 1991:15). The city's population grew to 233 529 people in 2001, while the last official estimates from the 2011 national census put Windhoek's population at 325 858 people (Republic of Namibia 2011:7). Some official documents estimated the capital's current population to be around 400 000 (Municipality of Windhoek 2017:51), while other sources put the total population of Windhoek at around 430 000 people (Fanuel Maanda, municipal planner, personal communication, February 2021; Population Stat 2017–2021).

The other two case studies were carried out in the largely rural areas of Namibia, mainly from the northern regions which included the Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto regions for the Ovawambo communities, and Kunene, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa areas where the majority of the Ovaherero communities reside. Figure 1.1a depicts the various administrative regions of Namibia, where the regions of the two case study communities mentioned above are shown.

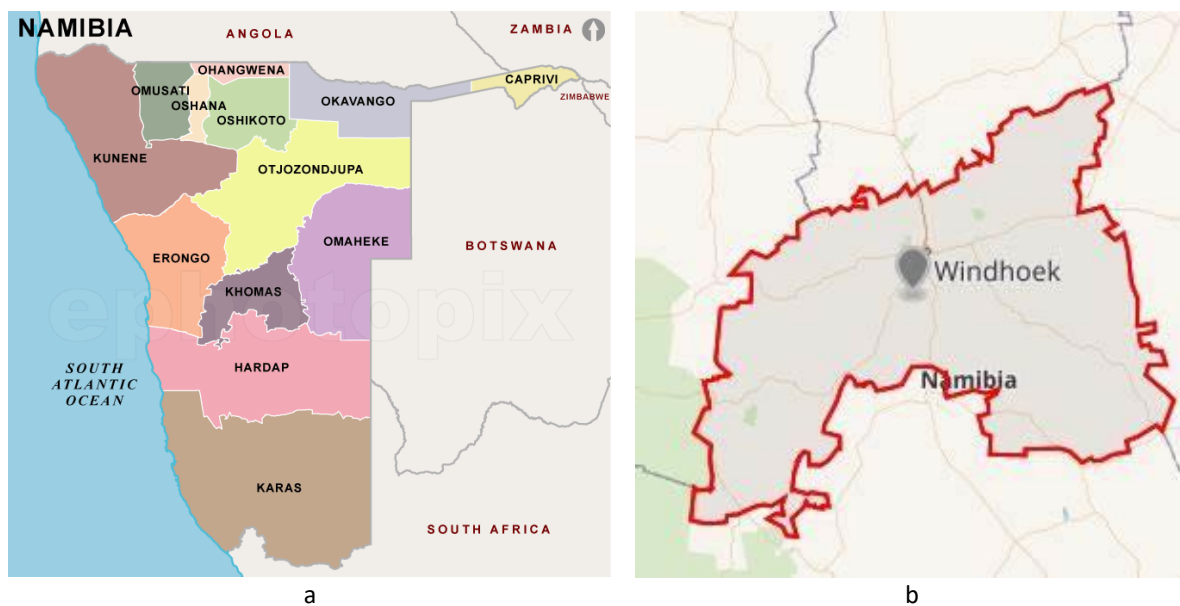


Figure 1.1 a) Namibian administrative regions; b) Khomas region and its capital, Windhoek

Source: Microsoft Bing, Namibia (2021 Tom Tom)

The nature of this study was designed in such a way to visit various areas in the targeted regions to obtain as much information as possible from cultural events. No specific places were earmarked for the observation of community cultural activities, but rather, the opportunities where events took place were included as part of this study. Hence, several urban centres, such as Opuwo in the Kunene region and Okahao in the Omusati region, were visited for certain events, while villages such as Orumana and Otjerunda and other small ones next to Opuwo were visited for mostly the Ovahimba (part of the Ovaherero) and the Ovawambo ceremonial events. Other small villages such as Oruauku, Okaamatutjindo, Okanguindi, Ehungiro in the Otjozondjupa region were also visited for mostly the Ovaherero cultural and ceremonial events. These events were further enriched by observations of some occasional events, although limited, that presented themselves in urban areas such as Okahandja, about 65 km north of Windhoek, and in Windhoek itself.

1.5.1 Havana settlement in Windhoek

The Havana settlement area is one of the extensions that sprang out of the main Katutura township of Windhoek since independence of the country in 1990 (see Figure 1.2). It was first considered an informal settlement, but later evolved into a mixture of informal (unregistered) and formal (registered) parts as per the administrative descriptions of the municipality (Municipality of Windhoek 2018a:46). The rapid urbanisation that marked the independence era with freedom of movement enshrined in the new urban policies led to unprecedented

growth of the city's population that informal settlements became the trend (Chitekwe-Biti 2018:389; Weber & Mendelsohn 2017:72). These informal settlements are presently multiplying incessantly so that municipalities struggle to provide adequate services to these areas, making the inequalities observed during the previous colonial and apartheid eras to deepen further and appear as the norm (Larsen & Augustus 2020:73). At independence, the Namibian urban population was estimated at 28% of the total population, while it was about 50% in 2018, with half of these living in informal settlements (Lühl & Delgado 2018:5-7).

The origin of Havana could be traced to the spontaneous settlement of unemployed people in the northern parts of Katutura due to the impossibility of affording houses and erven in the formal Katutura residential area, and to the municipality's approach of creating reception areas for new migrants with the hope of relocating them to better areas at a later stage when incomes improved or better areas are found (Weber & Mendelsohn 2017:72). This assumption was underpinned by the belief that informal settlement areas that were not tolerated during the apartheid era, could not be viewed as permanent and should be replaced by better developments in future (Peyroux 2001; Weber & Mendelsohn 2017; also see Roy's 2005 elaboration on this attitude).

Havana was one such reception area (Figure 1.3) that was initially earmarked by the Municipality of Windhoek during the 1992–1993 period (Mitlin & Muller 2004:170). However, the economic improvements never materialised for most residents, and the growing socio-economic inequalities prevented the intended spatial transformations set by the municipality to take place (Larsen & Augustus 2020:70). Development continued at a slow pace, while the number of people entering areas such as Havana increased rapidly.

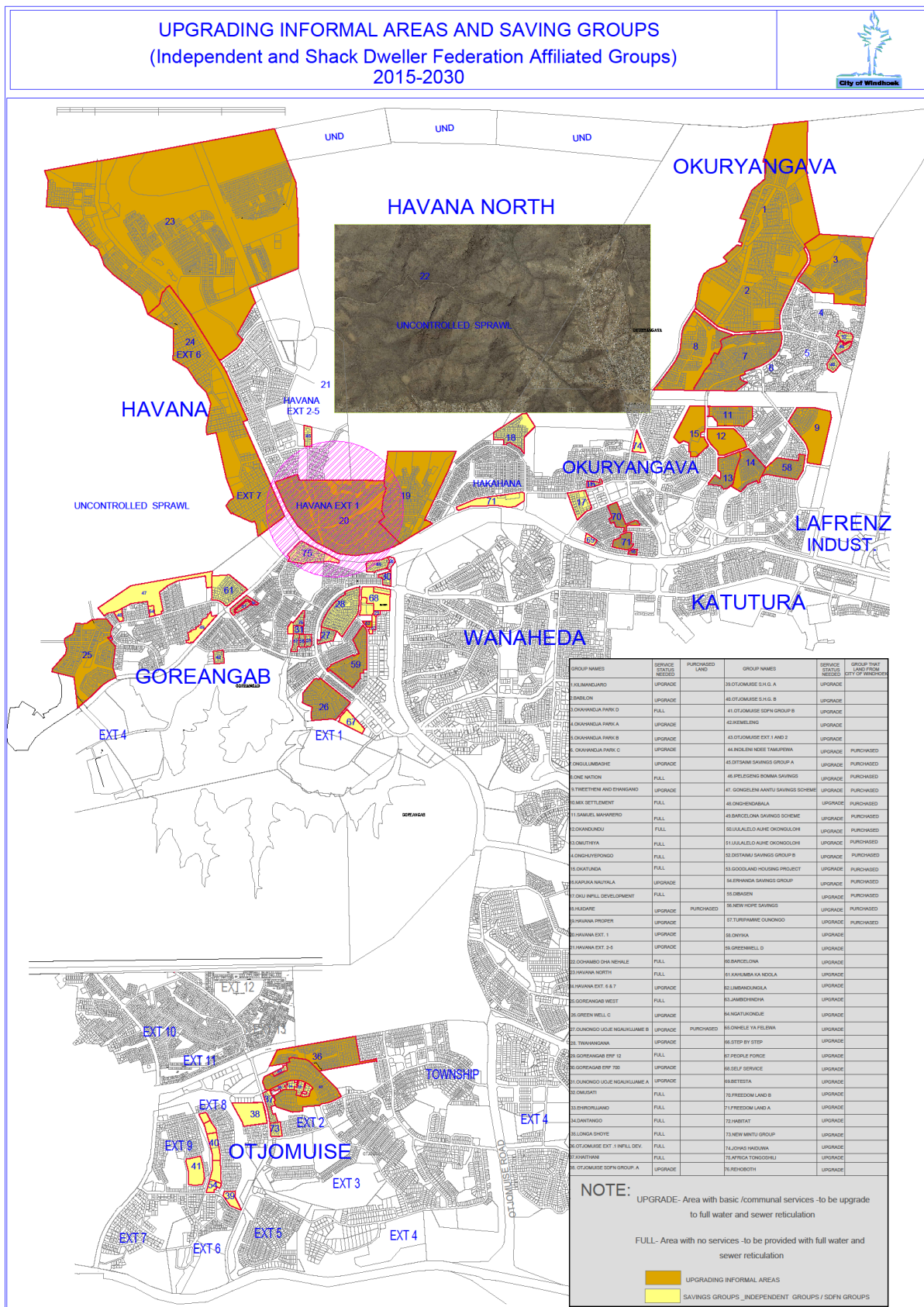


Figure 1.2 Informal/formal settlements around Katutura with Havana to the northwest

Source: Municipality of Windhoek (2020)

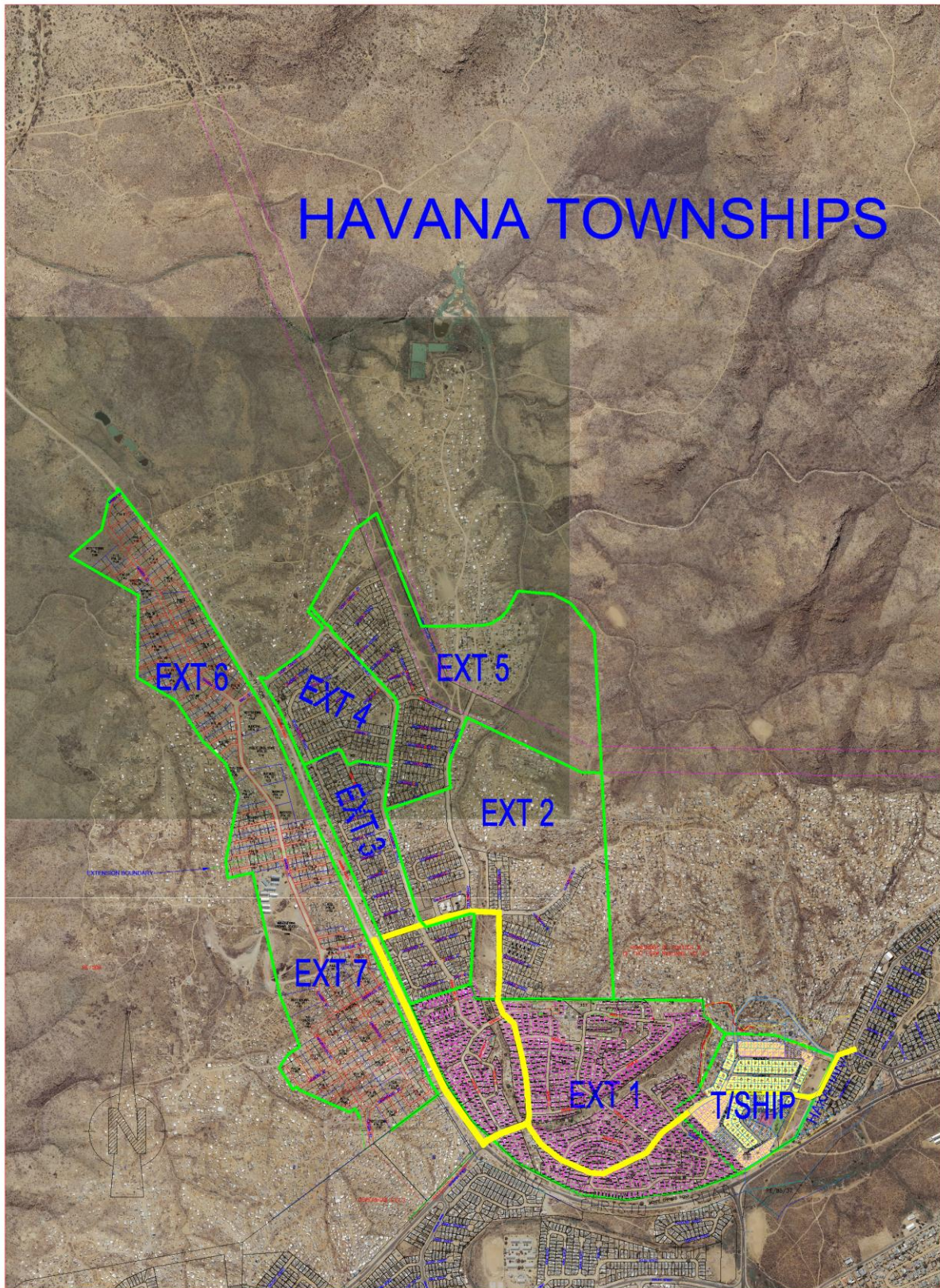


Figure 1.3 *Havana settlement extensions superimposed on an aerial photograph*

Source: Municipality of Windhoek (2020)

Although areas such as Havana have grown faster than those which the municipality could handle in terms of service and land provisions, they nevertheless managed to create motivated social movements (mostly targeting housing and service delivery) that successfully negotiated certain aspects of their well-being with the local authorities (Chitekwe-Biti 2018:387). As planning around Windhoek continued to be directed by paternalistically set standards and policies, such as the Windhoek Structure Plan (WSP 1996), which sets out its parameters of operation that do not differ from the previous administration methods, conformity requirements and progress was slow for the low-income areas (see Chitekwe-Biti 2018:387; Pysklywec 2012:98-102). Nonetheless, certain positive aspects came out of the dialogue processes between social movements, for example, the Namibia Housing Action Group and the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia, and the Municipality of Windhoek, especially in terms of access to land, housing and some services (Weber & Mendelsohn 2017:39). Figure 1.4 shows some of these services and modern developments in Havana. However, other socio-economic ills and shortages still prevail in Havana and similar areas. For one, there is an acute shortage of usable public open spaces in Havana.



Figure 1.4 *a) Part of formalised Havana with some services recently installed; b) Some modern developments (offices, shops, tarred roads) observed in Havana*

Source: Author (September 2020)

Figure 1.5 shows a reasonable number of green spaces for Havana Extension 1, zoned public open spaces, but these consist mainly of river courses and hills that are not favourable to the residents' cultural and other socio-economic practices.

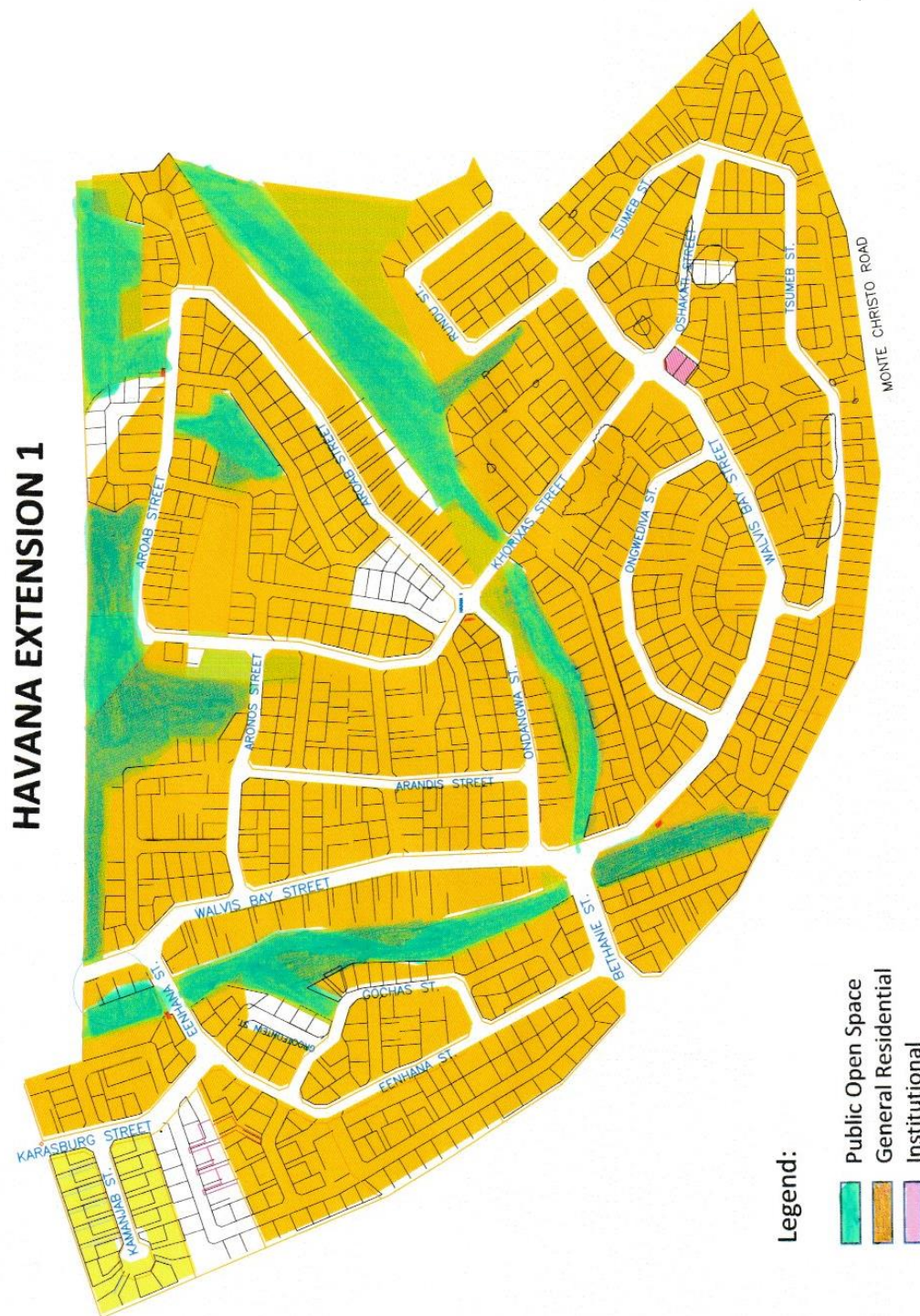


Figure 1.5 Zoning map of Havana Extension 1

Source: Municipality of Windhoek (2020)

In recent years, a family park was planned by the municipality for the Havana area, but this could not be developed because of financial constraints (Municipality of Windhoek 2018a:54). In addition, the Windhoek Municipality reported in its annual report (2018–2019) that low-income areas, including Havana, continued to experience high unemployment, poverty, drug

abuse, health risks and crime rates compared to other areas (Municipality of Windhoek 2018a:46).

In its 2018–2019 annual report, the municipality recognised that its spatial planning and control tools such as the Building Regulations (1968) and the Windhoek Town Planning Scheme (WTPS), (of 1976, amended in 1997) were outdated and were no longer responsive to the needs of the community and should be revised (Municipality of Windhoek 2018a:94-95). The municipality further proposed future ideas to improve the living conditions of the residents through terms such as recreational play parks, smart city, open street concept, e-bikes, and safety and security promotion (Municipality of Windhoek 2018a:30-38). Whether such concepts would reach the residents of Havana was too early to judge at this stage, but literature warns that planning should revise its methodologies and concepts if it is to address inequalities facing low-income settlements such as Havana (Larsen & Augustus 2020:94; Odendaal 2016:20).

However, as explored later in this study, the focus was not so much on the service and housing problems facing Havana and other similar areas. The aim was to explore how municipal policies interact with communities in terms of their potential local knowledge (mainly IKS) that could assist in planning to improve the overall well-being of these areas. It is important to mention that from the observations, most of the Namibian indigenous communities were found to reside within the Havana settlement. These include language groups such as the Ovawambo, Damara, Nama, Ovaherero, Kavango, Lozi and Tswana. The study however did not venture into establishing the total composition of the whole area's population.

1.5.2 Ovawambo rural community

The Ovawambo community are mostly settled in the northern parts of Namibia, particularly in the areas such as Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana and Oshikoto regions (see Figure 1.1a). This was one of the groups chosen as a case study to provide insights in terms of their spatial conceptualisations and practices that could potentially provide answers to the research questions. Their spatial practices, although mostly practiced in the rural areas, are sometimes observed in urban areas but at a reduced level or hidden approach.

In this study, the spatial practices of the Ovawambo people around their cultural/traditional open space, the *olupale*, was investigated for better understanding and possible lessons that planners could draw on. Figure 1.6 shows some of these cultural/traditional practices.



Figure 1.6 Ovawambo cultural/traditional initiation dances

Notes: (a) Initiation into adulthood by Ovawambo elder women taking younger girls through initiation into adulthood and good morals training (Muashekele et al. 2018:20); (b) Traditional Ovawambo male dance (*omupembe*). The traditional Ovawambo male dance is linked to healthy living in the community. Other types of dances exist for females as well (Microsoft Bing, Ovambo Tribe 2021).

1.5.3 Ovaherero rural community

The Ovaherero was the second community case engaged with in this study. They are predominantly found in the Otjozondjupa, Omaheke and Kunene regions of Namibia (see Figure 1.1a). Similarly, their practices are fully experienced in the rural areas, while some are observed in urban areas at certain occasions such as at ancestral commemorations in towns (see Figure 1.7). The investigation done for this study focused on the spatial practices that revolve around their cultural/traditional open space, the *omuvanda* (main open space) with its *okuruuo* (holy fire). Similarly, the aim was to explore possible lessons that planning could potentially adopt in its practices and policies.



Figure 1.7 Ovaherero cultural practices

Notes: a) The Ovaherero *omuvanda* open space usage during a wedding. The hosting men receive lobola items in the kraal, while women (bride's group, left) exchange historical roots of the marrying couple with their counterparts (bridegroom's group, right) (Author, February 2020); b) The Ovaherero *omuhiva* (wedding songs and dance led by men) being performed at the *omuvanda* at a social gathering place (*Omuti woutjina*). These songs contain histories and other important stories of the community (Author, May 2020).

1.5.4 The rationale for choosing the case studies

The main reason for choosing the Havana settlement area as the urban case study was primarily the ease of accessibility for the researcher, the familiarity of the area from work experience and the availability of initial contacts that contributed to the identification of especially the knowledge holders residing in the area. Being part of the capital city, the settlement is host to many diverse people, but display an obvious lack of usable community open spaces. The focus on the Havana settlement was further underpinned by the overriding concern of this study, namely, how to improve low-income areas in respect of lifestyle, well-being and healthy urban living through the harnessing of spatial IKS. This choice was an advantage for the researcher, as he was a resident of Windhoek, and thus an insider to the site being investigated. The strategic location of Havana to the researcher enabled the researcher to complete the study within the available limited budgetary and time constraints and reduced the trips to the rural communities' case study part.

Being the capital city, Windhoek presented an important opportunity to evaluate how planning is responding to recent calls of multiplicity in practice (De Satgé & Watson 2018; Fisker et al. 2019; Manuel et al. 2017; Sihlongonyane 2015a; Watson 2016). The settlement of Havana, in turn, consists of many diverse groups of people from all areas of Namibia, and this presented an opportunity for this study to explore how far these communities are coexisting, and how they foresee coexistence in the future. The main concern of the researcher, that of lack of sense of place in low-income areas and a 'don't care' attitude by both the residents and the institutions, was also an opportunity to evaluate this planning problem and its cause in the Havana area. The 'don't care' expression used here does not refer to the state of mind or feeling of the residents and the officials about areas such as Havana. The expression was used in this study to refer to the physical condition reflected by Havana, with its *longue durée* of unhealthy living conditions despite communities living there. It is this condition that led to the residents and officials and their institutions being viewed as having a 'don't care' attitude towards this place.

As these types of studies are not prevalent in Namibia, the choosing of the two local indigenous communities was to obtain initial insights on cultural spatial formations from only two groups. The rationale was to test whether their cultural open spaces are still existing and being used, and whether they can be replicated in urban areas as potential platforms of participation. Again, one of the groups, the Ovaherero community, is within the area which

the researcher hails from. The Ovawambo community is paternal to the researcher, but having grown up in the other group, this group provided an opportunity to explore spatial IKS concepts outside one's own space.

1.6 Significance of the study

New efforts in planning are being tried through the improvement of spatial planning policies and plans. However, the transformation and integration of urban areas into acceptable settlement areas are moving at a slow pace, and if it does occur, it takes place very timidly. Moreover, major segregation patterns still manifest themselves in the new areas and extensions. Low-income areas are continuously experiencing a lack of basic service provisions, and where they are provided, they are left to deteriorate soon afterwards. Residents and officials appear to have developed a 'don't care' attitude, while the planning and development practitioners, on their part, developed a laissez-faire attitude towards these previously disadvantaged areas. The main goal of what planning is supposed to encourage and achieve, that of a sense of place, is observably absent from the low-income urban areas, and this study highlighted this major concern.

Therefore, this study's significance was partly to emphasise the relevancy of spatial IKS for the improvement of low-income urban areas, and to foreground this knowledge as an important planning alternative. On the other hand, the study attempted to bring together the planning practitioners with the local communities through learning from each other, therefore, to subsequently increase the pool of available spatial planning knowledges.

Another important contribution of this study was to assist planning practitioners to open up to all the urban residents and obtain important inputs from indigenous groups that would enhance the implementation of their planning projects, as public participation will be taken to a higher and more open level. The promotion of processes and concepts such as public participation, collaborative planning and dialogue with the neglected and abandoned communities of low-income areas are a significant step towards area improvement and sense of place, and some scholars have written widely on such concepts (Arnstein 1969; Barry & Porter 2011; De Satgé & Watson 2018; Healey 2003; Innes & Booher 2016; Watson 2009a; Winkler & Duminy 2016).

Nevertheless, this study attempted to demonstrate that planning together with indigenous communities, through the adoption of some of the useful spatial indigenous space-making

skills, would lead to improved and acceptable urban settlements and neighbourhoods, and that residents would find pride in improving their own living spaces as well. Thus, the study was an attempt to address the 'don't care' and laissez-faire attitudes referred to above.

Moreover, this study is significant to the planners, residents and various community and government leaders as it encourages all these people to start thinking differently about planning, and about alternative space production methodologies.

Finally, another significant contribution was the exploration and provision of insights and knowledge on a very little researched area, namely the relationship between spatial indigenous knowledge and conventional planning systems in Namibia, thus enriching and adding missing knowledge to the country's spatial planning literature.

1.7 Limitations of the study

It is important to note that the field of spatial indigenous knowledge in Namibia was rarely documented, and thus existing spatial IKS literature was limited. This was a limitation on its own, but the researcher reduced this concern by gathering much data from the indigenous knowledge holders and elders themselves. In addition, old archival material, especially earlier cultural radio recordings, were added to enrich the understanding of the practices under investigation. A variety of literature from various disciplines was consulted, even if not directly linked to indigenous spatial planning, to add more to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Another limitation related to the reduced IKS literature, was that although a lot of historical documents written by historians or explorers who visited the area during the early years prior to full-scale colonisation, were still available, some of these documents were biased towards a European interpretation of local communities, and the researcher had to read as much as possible to arrive at proper conclusions or proposals.

Another limitation was posed by the researcher himself, who had all along been in contact, through training, with the Euro-American spatial planning systems via South African tertiary institutions, and thus could still overlook some important aspects of indigenous planning. This has been addressed in the research methods to keep this concern to a minimum, and the recent growing literature from the settler states, Latin America and Asian experiences has been consulted for guidance in that regard.

The fact that colonisation has been in the country for a long time (1884–1990) is a problem that some people have lost their knowledge through the years, and those who still possess it

are very few, or very old. Other people have lost their languages, or remained with limited levels for conversation purposes, but the large part was either abandoned or left with the elders. Thus, efforts had to be made to identify the elders known to the community and knowledge holders, both in urban and rural areas, particularly more so in the rural areas where the majority of the indigenous people still reside.

As will be revealed through the study, the fact of being an insider to one of the case study communities led to more time being spent with that group compared to the other. However, more background documentation, including relevant radio programmes, was consulted to gain as much knowledge as possible in both communities. In addition, the coronavirus disease of 2019 (Covid-19) restrictions on the movement of people were imposed at the exact time when the fieldwork for study was about to start. This reduced the freedom of gathering data at free will. The researcher had to arrange movements through special permits to attend certain events. The researcher maximised attending these events (funerals) as much as possible, especially from March to May 2020 when movements had to be undertaken through special permits. These movements were again possible as from September 2020 onwards, and more fieldwork was added as well. Fortunately, the year 2019 and early months of 2020, considered as the piloting phase of this study, was used to attend as many cultural activities as possible, and this turned out to be useful background information.

Another limitation was the fact that 2020 was the year of local and regional authority elections in Namibia. This was different to all previous elections as the ruling South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) party was being challenged by new opposition parties led by its former prominent members. Thus, all actions and events in the urban area, especially Windhoek, were linked to electioneering and campaigning for the November 2020 elections. Thus, appointments with politicians were affected. This was a limitation as the inputs from political representatives were not included in the data collected. However, all efforts were made to meet the main research participants, the planners (practitioners and academics), the residents of Havana and indigenous knowledge holders.

1.8 Definitions and clarifications

1.8.1 Definitions

This section provides definitions to avoid confusion and misunderstandings that are usually linked to the usage of certain terms, as different people interpret words and terms differently.

Contact zone

[The] social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today (Pratt 1991, cited in Barry & Porter 2011:173).

Culture

[A] set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group ... it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2001: Online).

Indigenous knowledge

[C]ommon sense knowledge and ideas of local peoples about the everyday realities of living. IK [Indigenous knowledge] includes the cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and worldviews of local peoples ... Such local knowledge is the product of indigenous peoples' direct experience of the workings of nature and its relationship with the social world. It is also a holistic and inclusive form of knowledge (Dei 1993, cited in Agrawal 1995:8).

Indigenous knowledge systems

[A] body of knowledge and beliefs built by a group of people, and handed down generations through oral tradition, about the relationship between living beings and their environment. It includes a system of organisation, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource use (South Africa Research and Documentation Centre, cited in Mekoa 2018:19).

Legislation

Legislation is another term meaning statutory law. These laws have been enacted by a legislature or the governing body of a country. Legislation can also mean the process of making the law. Legislations are actual laws that are enforceable (Difference Between 2021: Online).

Okuruuo

In the middle of the homestead is the highly valued sacred property, namely the okuruwo (sometimes written okuruuo) (sacred shrine). The sacred shrine and the ondjuwo onene (great house) are regarded as common sacred property of all paternal members. Every person has his or her official place in the homestead, although in some cases this is not strictly adhered to. In every homestead, the priest, the okuruwo and the ondjuwo onene have great socio-religious significance for all the inhabitants (Kavari 2001:123).

Olupale

The olupale is a central place where visitors are welcomed and served a meal and is occasionally used for storytelling and games amongst many other activities in the Ovawambo culture. Other intra-group names for olupale space are oshoto, oshinyange (University of Namibia [UNAM] 2002:9).

Omuwanda

Between the great house and the okuruwo (sacred shrine) there is an imaginary passage known as omuvanda, literally 'flat space'. The whole area between the houses and the okuruwo is known as omuvanda, but the imaginary narrow passage between the great house and okuruwo is the most restricted sacred area (Kavari 2001:126).

Policy

A policy is a document that outlines what a government is going to do and what it can achieve for the society as a whole. It also outlines any and all methods and principles that the government or any entity, for that matter, will use to achieve its directive (Difference Between 2021: Online).

Post-apartheid

[E]xisting or occurring in the time after apartheid and especially after the end of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa (Merriam Webster Dictionary 2021).

The post-apartheid era in the South Africa context is characterized by intensified 'economic apartheid', with increasing lowly or non-serviced informal settlements dominating the urban landscape (Mphambukeli 2019:47).

Postcolonial

Postcolonialism (postcolonial theory, post-colonial theory) is a set of theories in philosophy, film, political sciences and literature that deal with the cultural legacy of colonial rule (AskDefine n.d: Online).

[P]ostcolonialism opens the possibility for considering relations between dominant and oppressed groups and the negotiation that takes place between dominant groups and immigrant groups (Viswanathan 2009:170).

Settler states

Settler states are sovereign states which were colonized by migrant settlers whose descendants remain politically dominant over the indigenous peoples (The Decolonial Atlas 2014: Online).

At their origin, settler states were characterized by the arrival of European migrants, who engaged in the elimination of local populations and land dispossessions, then followed by massive assimilation programs for the remainder of the local indigenous population (Lloyd & Wolfe 2016:111).

Settlers are kept settlers by a form of the state that makes a distinction – particularly juridical – between conquerors [sic] and conquered, settlers and natives, and makes it the basis of other distinctions that tend to buttress the conquerors [sic] and isolate the conquered, politically (Mamdani 1998:1).

Spatial planning

[A] set of governance practices for developing and implementing strategies, plans, policies and projects, and for regulating the location, timing and form of development (Healey 1997:72).

Transformative planning

[A] process of initiating moral actions in the public domain, where such process should constantly be subjected to revisions and corrections through reflective processes of social learning (Friedmann 2011:4).

Ubuntu

Africans are known for their strong orientation to collective values, particularly a collective sense of responsibility. The Ubuntu collective ethic recognises that survival derives from group harmony and all actions are within a collective context, which seeks to maintain the harmony and balance of an interrelated and essentially egalitarian system. It always stresses humanness (ubuntu) which is characterised by generosity, love, maturity, hospitality, politeness, understanding, and humility (Mkabela & Luthuli 1997, cited in Mkabela 2005:186).

Well-being

Well-being is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and ability to manage stress (Davis 2019: Online).

1.8.2 Clarification of the term *indigenous people*

The focus of this subsection is mainly on the clarification of the IKS concept and its various contributions towards the existence of indigenous communities in various contexts. However, it is appropriate at this juncture to highlight what is referred to as *indigenous people(s)* in this thesis. The term is described differently by different people across the world, and at times, tensions exist in how it is applied when addressing issues of development (Hays 2020; Kirby-Reynolds & Gunaratnam 2017). For example, when the term is used on humanitarian grounds, it often becomes political, and thus relational and linked to various institutions of power, and risks omitting a considerable number of people who do need assistance (Bellier & Hays 2020:7; Kirby-Reynolds & Gunaratnam 2017:2). In the context of the settler states of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, for example, scholars working through settler colonial theory argued that the term *indigenous peoples* refers to those people who were colonised, dispossessed and find themselves in a minority setting in relation to the dominant colonising people, and where no formal decolonisation has taken place (Hugill 2017:1; Marek 2020:5). Such a distinction is emphasised to indicate the difference that exist in the use of the term *indigenous people* in the settler states context from other colonial spaces where conditions and claims of indigenous communities may be dissimilar (Jackson et al. 2017:2).

In the Namibian context, the term *indigenous people* and its usage created debates and tensions that currently affect development policy formulation targeting the same people due to different sectors and institutions' understanding and interpretation of the term (Hays 2020). For example, the finalisation of the 2016 Draft Policy on Indigenous Knowledge Systems is now in its fifth year of deliberation due to the undecidability of the involved parties on how the term *indigenous* is to be used (Moses Moses, Manager: Knowledge Management & Intellectual Property Coordination, National Commission for Research, Science and Technology, personal communication, 11 August 2020). Hays (2020:75) observed that, on the one hand and in relation to international descriptions, the predominant view is that Namibians of African descent regard themselves as indigenous due to their colonial relation with Europe. On the other hand, sentiments that the term *indigenous* is a Western conceptualisation to prevent the integration of some groups into the mainstream government systems also featured strongly in the debates (Hays 2020:62). On the local and national level, the development arguments are centred around the use of the terms *indigenous*, *traditional* or *marginalised*, with different governmental institutions, scholars and journalists adopting either one of them or all interchangeably (Anaya 2013; Hays 2020; Hinz 2016; Hinz & Ruppel 2008; Lilemba & Matemba 2015; Mongudhi 2010; Nakuta 2020; Rodil & Winschiers-Theophilus 2015; Weidman 2018). For example, the Office of the Ombudsman prefers to use the term *indigenous*, while the Department of San Development prefers the term *marginalised* for the same programmes (Hays 2020:72). Some scholars prefer the term *traditional* when referring to all African descendants, arguing that definition of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) refers to a particular group of people and not the majority of Africans (Hinz & Ruppel 2008:11-12). Other scholars appear to use the terms interchangeably to refer to all black people in Namibia (Lilemba & Matemba 2015; Rodil & Winschiers-Theophilus 2015). In the Namibian media, the reports present some groups as being indigenous, such as the San community, while others are labelled as marginalised such as the Ovahimba, Ovazemba and Ovatue communities (Mongudhi 2010:1). The latter three communities are subgroups of the larger Ovaherero community. However, these three communities equally appear as one of the three groups generally considered as indigenous people of Namibia, together with the San, Damara and Nama communities (Hays 2020:54).

Although Namibia ratified the international conventions and agreements that define indigenous people, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights of 1981 and UNDRIP of 2007 (Nakuta 2020:157,162), the local confusion and tensions are mainly due to the interpretation of these international definitions, and their application in the local and national contexts (Bellier & Hays 2020:2).

Notwithstanding the impasse in choosing the appropriate term to use for the whole country, the term *indigenous* was generally used in this study to refer to both the people of African descent inhabiting Namibia currently and that were so at the advent of colonialism. The researcher argues that the separation of communities as per the different terms in the debates will mask the inequalities and discrimination brought about by the colonial and apartheid space production methodologies. Moreover, the persisting spatial legacies, which continue to manifest and persist in contemporary post-apartheid urban areas, affect all the communities equally in the former black townships. These latter areas, created during the colonial and apartheid years (1884–1990), and continue to exist during the post-apartheid period (1990 to present), and currently being extended by large so-called *informal settlements*, were the target of this study.

1.9 Thesis outline

This thesis has been arranged in the following manner:

Chapter 1: Preparing the space for indigenous knowledge systems, spatial planning and planning legislation interaction in Namibia

Chapter 1 presents the research background, research problem, research objectives, and research questions. This chapter further describes the background to the methods used, and the background to the case study areas, being the Havana settlement and the two rural communities consulted. It is also in this chapter where the significance of the study, its limitations and scope are discussed. Finally, the working definitions and structure of the thesis are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Evolution of modernist planning

This second chapter discusses the evolution of modernist planning, especially from the late nineteenth century onwards. It presents the context where modernist planning originated, and the early critiques it faced. The modernist planning exportation to the colonised world is

discussed in this chapter as well, where particular focus is placed on Namibia, the context in which this study took place.

Chapter 3: Postmodern critique of rational comprehensive planning

This chapter delves deep into the postmodern critiques directed towards the incapability of the rational comprehensive planning to solve urban problems. The chapter discusses various thoughts that increased critique towards modernist planning such as the communicative turn, the cultural turn and the recent Global South calls for change in planning theorisation and practice. It is also in this chapter that the issues of power in relation to planning have been discussed. The chapter ends with an elaboration on the concepts of transformative planning and sense of place, emphasising their importance in the improvement of urban areas through a multiplicity of knowledges, especially those emanating from IKS.

Chapter 4: Indigenous knowledge systems: Concept in planning

Chapter 4 clarifies and discusses the concept of IKS in relation to planning. An overview of the role and influence of IKS in the local communities are discussed, while spatial IKS examples from Africa and Namibia are presented. The chapter further looks deeper into the relationship between planning legislation and IKS.

Chapter 5: Planning legislative and policy framework in Namibia

The spatial planning legislation and related policies are discussed in this chapter. The chapter discusses how planning is unfolding in Namibia, and how the legislation is evolving in efforts of creating acceptable and inclusive settlements in Namibia.

Chapter 6: Research methodology

This chapter presents the various methods used in this study to gather relevant data. It also presents how the data analysis were carried out, and how and why the study area was chosen to be Windhoek, with the focus on the Havana low-income settlement. The chapter further clarifies why the two indigenous communities and their spatial IKS aspects were chosen to serve as potential insights for space production and improvement for low-income urban areas.

Chapter 7: Research findings and discussion

Chapter 7 discusses the findings obtained. The focus is on the residents of Havana and their perceptions on the effects of a lack of open spaces on their lives. Their viewpoints on the introduction of cultural open spaces have been looked at as well. In addition, the perspectives

of the planning practitioners and academics in Windhoek regarding IKS and its relationship to planning are also presented here. Last, the chapter presents additional information on IKS as collected from the two case study communities, the Ovawambo and Ovaherero, and looked at the viewpoints of these communities on the introduction of their spatial IKS in urban areas.

Chapter 8: Analysis and implications for planning

This chapter discusses the analysis of the findings in Chapter 7 and presents the analysis in a systematic approach that follows the research questions of the study. This chapter further discusses some possible approaches that could be used to introduce spatial IKS into the Namibian planning legislation and policies.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter concludes the study by presenting a summary of the research, the suggestions for further research, and the contributions of the study. It also presents recommendations for consideration by the various power authorities, the planning practitioners and academics, and the residents themselves. A brief general conclusion is then presented.

Chapter 2

EVOLUTION OF MODERNIST PLANNING

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 is presented according to the following structure:

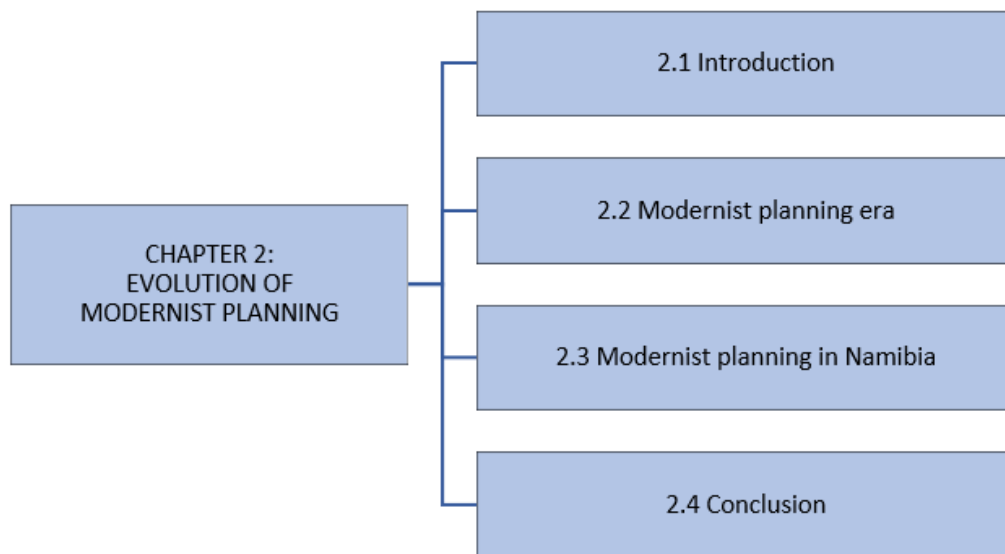


Figure 2.1 Structure presenting Chapter 2

Source: Author (2021)

Planning in Namibia demonstrates a characteristic that so many urban areas in the Global South are grappling with, that of incessant and growing socio-economic ills and unhygienic living conditions in the low-income and informal settlements. Over a couple of years, the researcher worked for planning departments at two municipalities in Namibia, namely that of Walvis Bay and Windhoek. The practical planning experience gained from that employment was that planning practice, unfortunately, ignored important insights from local communities to appropriately address the plight of the low-income and informal settlements in urban areas. Although the initial planning intentions were meant to do good (De Satgé & Watson 2018:45), my experience in Namibia showed that their application was, and still is, made from a Western conceptualised and highly technical top-down approach, and in the process closed itself to indigenous communities' inputs and aspirations. Alternative knowledges such as spatial IKS, which could assist planning in some cases, were seldom considered. It was towards the end of my employment at the second municipality, Windhoek, that serious questions

repeated themselves in my reflections during some site inspections in these low-income areas: What is planning doing that these areas are not improving? Why are the planning proposals that were presented to the politicians – sometimes rejected and sometimes accepted – not improving the quality of life of these residents? How do these people, despite the unbearable living conditions in some areas, still find the “will to survive” (to borrow from Watson 2009a:2269) in such systems?

Heeding the calls of, among others, Sandercock (1998) and Porter (2010) for planning to re-interrogate itself, this chapter therefore elaborates on the history and evolution of planning to understand its origins, transformations and challenges. The long-term historical perspective of planning enabled an increased understanding of the continuities and institutional legacies that influence current space production approaches in urban areas (Harris & Moore 2013:1499; Tjirera 2021:72). This historical exploration is an attempt to respond to the above concerns, and furthermore, to find insights that will enable the study to respond to the main research questions. The chapter aims to highlight planning’s modernist evolution, how it found its way into the colonial world with a focus on Namibia, to illustrate how it excluded other valuable knowledges such as IKS along the way, and how it continues to do so in the current postcolonial era.

2.2 Modernist planning era

This section presents the early planning history as recorded from the eighteenth century by elaborating on the origin of the comprehensive and rational planning approaches. These approaches were inspired by the visions and normative values of those concerned with urban problems at the time, and were underpinned by the aesthetic, efficiency and modernisation aspects (De Satgé & Watson 2018:40; Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016:74; Tapela 2016:78). The various conceptions and descriptions of the term *planning* all aim to emphasise the good intentions of planning practice. For Porter (2010:2), planning is the “social practice of spatial ordering”, while Baeten (2012:205) postulated that the term is generally interpreted as “some kind of state intervention for the betterment of our built and natural environment”.

Modern planning has its origins rooted in the Enlightenment era of the eighteenth century, with reliance on its positivist epistemology which propagated that place can be made better through scientific knowledge (Sandercock 1998:60; Simon et al. 2020:4; Watson 2016:33). Modernity as a concept highlighted the importance of the individual, and his ability and quest to master his natural and social environment, and is therefore described as a reflexive

moment (Wagenaar & Noam Cook 2003:139). According to Berman (1988, cited in Wagenaar & Noam Cook 2003:139), modernity is thus a moment where various historical and social misconceptions could be redeveloped. The emergence of modern urban planning was due to the various undesirable problems that arose in the European and American cities due to the negative social effects of the Industrial Revolution (Adjei-Poku 2018:46; Watson 2009b:165). This early urban planning movement was inspired by an attitude of “setting things right” and was inspired by principles of “compassion, passion and care” to improve living conditions in cities (Oranje 2014:2). The movement was driven by a strong reliance on technical approaches and a belief in a higher spirited calling to create orderly communities (Oranje 2014:3). Thus, from its early beginnings, this movement led to the naissance of the town planning profession, and adopted an attitude to do good through scientific methods (Oranje 2014:3). These early place improvement initiatives managed to insert the accompanying normative ideals into the formal governing structures against the opposing forces of the growing industry (Oranje 2014:2). However, this was a short-lived victory as the dominant industrial forces seized these planning ideals for their own economic advancement and interests, which eventually signalled the end of the transformative power of planning as initially envisaged (Oranje 2014:2-3).

2.2.1 Modern comprehensive and rational planning beginnings

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, planning has become an influential and powerful profession so that planners seemed to “operate freely and far from political interference” (Betty 1979, cited in Hall 2002:357). However, this was not the case as planning was operating under the heavy directing influence of politicians (Kent 1964, cited in Hall 2002:358). Planning was by then a plan-led profession implemented through blueprint plans (Muller 1992:126; Taylor 1999:332). Around 1909, town planning schemes in the United Kingdom (UK) became a requirement for urban areas (Harrison et al. 2007:23). In the context of this study, the economic power overtaking the local initiatives referred to above was an early warning that the latter remained vulnerable and weak (Boelens & De Roo 2016:60).

Notwithstanding the dominancy of the economic power, the realisation of the early town planning schemes proved problematic in the early stages as there was no clear methodological guidelines to follow (Muller 1992:126). This is where the proposal by Patrick Geddes (*survey-before-plan* or the Geddesian Model) provided a clear direction on how to

solve the problem, which later evolved into the comprehensive planning method (Muller 1992:126). However, in its early stages, this method was criticised for being more environmentally inclined than resolving urban problems (Harrison et al. 2007:160; Jacobs 1961:10-11). Jacobs (1961:95) criticised the ways planning, for example, provided badly located open spaces, such as public parks, which turned out to be white elephants and crime infested spaces. Simultaneously in the colonial world, planning engaged in practices that contradicted the good intentions referred to above. In the Namibian context, for example, planning was part of the governing tools that operated on the colonial ideals of extraction and dispossession, where the focus was more on the preservation of forced labour than on the well-being of urban areas (Frayne 2000:53; Tjiriange 2016:17-19).

Critics of the comprehensive planning model have drawn attention to the neglect of the social and later environmental dimensions and labelled the theory (method) as just data gathering based on a scientific and positivist view favouring economic interests (Todes 2011:123). From the 1920s to the 1930s, as technical knowledge increased, master plans and zoning plans were introduced by planners, which consisted of written documents and two-dimensional plans, known as zoning plans or land use plans (Adjei-Poku 2018:45; Cirolia & Berrisford 2017:72). The early proponents of these approaches presented new processes and reasoned that the public interest would be addressed through these plans, as the previous comprehensive model was lacking on treating the social and short-term aspects in urban areas (Klosterman 1985:7; Meyerson 1973:136). Meyerson (1973:129-130) recognised the limitations of long-range comprehensive planning and proposed a “middle-range bridge”, a process that would enable practitioners to deal with short-term, private and public interest issues. The use of the rational planning method would enable the planner to have various means to achieve the expected ends (Banfield 1973:141-142). According to Banfield, a rational decision is made through the listing of opportunities of actions that are open, the identification of all consequences from each action and the selection of actions to be followed through the preferred consequences (Banfield 1973:148). This is how, through the explanation above, rationalism was introduced into planning (Harrison 2002:161).

The problem with the rational approach is that the public interest is equated with *common good* or *public good*, and this led to studies to reveal that planners understood common good to be obviously meant for the whole community in that particular area (Adjei-Poku 2018:47). This was one of the underpinning ideas that motivated this study, as experience in the practice has raised concerns on how planning in Namibia was dealing with the question of

public interest. The introduction of various public interest or common good projects, through progressive and normative policies, still did not alleviate inequalities or create proper communities, instead they exacerbated them (Watson 2003:401; see Larsen & Augustus 2020 for the Namibian context). This is ascribed to situations where institutions and their officials who are supposed to protect the public interest, are themselves “deeply embedded in the hidden exercises of power” that favour certain interests above others (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002:60).

Throughout its early days up to the 1980s, planning has been influenced by various factors such as political (world wars), economic (the Great Depression, oil crisis, planning and market relations), social (feminism, patriarchy; environmentalism, ethnicity, identity and world views, urban inequalities, indigeneity and informality), technological (electronic revolution), colonial and oppressive systems and the neoliberal economic policies (Baeten 2012; Huxley 2000; Porter 2010; Roy 2005; Sandercock 1998; Steyn 2015; Todes 2011; Watson 2006). These factors posed challenges to planners to respond and resolve them in terms of planning’s initial intention of creating common goods for all the residents in urban areas. Early proponents identified shortcomings within the planning systems, formulated critiques, and attempted to propose improvements to planning theory and practice as elaborated upon in the next discussion.

2.2.2 Internal critiques of early modern planning

Critiques and challenges to the incapability of the modernist rational planning approach to solve various social urban problems were widely recognised during the 1960s and 1970s (Adjei-Poku 2018:48; Crowley & Head 2017:541; Sandercock 1998:74; Taylor 1999:336). Initially, the critics were proponents of the internal rational planning model who attempted to improve the process with more refinements such as *satisficing* (Simon 1955), *incrementalism* (Lindblom 1973) and *mixed-scanning* (Etzioni 1967:217) approaches.

The *satisficing* solution of H. A. Simon (1955:108) referred to the search for courses of action that are satisfactory although not the best. The incremental planning of Lindblom (1973:151-153) relied on successive comparisons of policies (or other issues) and to choose the one that attracts the greatest number of supporters, thus ‘muddling through’. The advantage of incrementalism is that the process consciously identifies all the shortcomings in decision-making (Adjei-Poku 2018:48). The limitations of incrementalism are that it neglects other

important outcomes, alternatives or values as the agreement is made on a policy even if it is not the best (Lindblom 1973:155).

However, Etzioni (1967) criticised both the rational and incremental methods of decision-making, claiming that the former consists of too much control over decision-making processes, while the latter mostly favours the interests of the powerful (Adjei-Poku 2018:48). Etzioni (1967) proposed a mixed-scanning approach, which combined both the rational and incremental processes to improve decision-making. A viable approach can be created whereby basic policy directions can be provided by high-order fundamental processes, while fundamental decisions should be informed by incremental processes (Etzioni 1967:385). Etzioni (1967:389) clarified the mixed-scanning model as a procedure of data collection and a strategy for resource allocation, where the two are related through guidelines. Although this method was hailed as a breakthrough in the 1970s, it was caught up in the rational planning discourse and was later described as being “unpersuasive” (Friedmann 2011:218).

Other planning theorists who recognised the weaknesses of the rational planning model and tried to direct it towards a more social focus, are Davidoff (1973) and Klosterman (1978) who insisted on the importance of values in planning processes. Davidoff (1973) raised the awareness in planning that society consists of different groups with different interests, values and choices and that planning should consider all the resultant alternative aspects and knowledges within an inclusive and multidisciplinary approach, and if not, inequalities will be perpetuated. Klosterman (1978) attacked the apolitical attitude of the rational comprehensive planning by insisting that value-free planning could not exist as planners influence policies and actions of government (Klosterman 1978:39). In the 1970s, planners who critiqued rational comprehensive planning as alluded to earlier, formulated alternative methods of doing planning, and looked at, for example, how discourses and interpretations influenced planning, how they should argue coherently and persuasively, how power relations determine outcomes and how the communication process is influencing the planner (Forester 1982:68; Watson 2002a:179). This was a recognition that planning should embrace more interactions and open interconnected systems to address the complex or *wicked problems* (see Rittel & Weber 1973) that characterised urban areas, especially in American society (Crowley & Head 2017:541) where this reformulation was being crafted. Wicked problems refer to those complex, unpredictable, open-ended or intractable problems (Head & Alford 2015:712). According to Steyn (2015:6), the various value-filled evolutionary steps led to planning becoming normative.

Still, planning continued with its adopted set of steps with the planner being the main technical expert to manage the planning processes, and the state the sole provider, especially up to the 1980s, when postpositivist thinking emerged (Allmendinger 2002b:4-6; Klosterman 2011:319; Oranje 2014:8, Taylor 1999:335; Watson 2016:33). The modernist top-down approach demonstrates a clear exclusion of other options/knowledges that may exist to help improve planning processes, or the planning system itself, which could be observed from the colonial parts of the world, as will be elaborated upon in later sections. The conception and production of spaces were dominated by rational scientific models in which planning assumed a sole problem-solving expert under the tutelage of the state (Oranje 2014:1; Watson 2016:35). In such a context, scientific knowledge was privileged over practical experience (Healey 2013:1512). However, the complexity of various problems in urban areas meant that critiques against this modernist project increased, as the next subsection highlights.

2.2.3 Critique towards modernism: A Lefebvrian analysis

Critical theorists such as Habermas, Foucault and Lefebvre inspired many social and planning theorists with the development of diverse critical approaches on how to approach various urban problems that could not be solved by conventional rational planning methods (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002; Healey 1997; Wagenaar 2011). For example, Lefebvre's work on the production of space and the right to the city, although developed in European contexts, were increasingly borrowed by urban researchers and planners elsewhere in attempts to understand and to formulate possible solutions to urban problems (Brenner et al. 2012; Huchzermeyer 2014; Hudson et al. 2019; Kipfer et al. 2012; Marcuse 2012; Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016; Wilson 2013). The emphasis of Lefebvre's critique focused on the question of how certain spaces became dominant over others (Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016; Porter 2010). The notion of the right to the city emphasised urban citizenship, where access is not only guaranteed to the physical space, but also to using and shaping the same space as an equal (Hudson et al. 2019:566). On the space production analysis, the theorists borrowed from Lefebvre's (1974, 1984, 1991) analytical spatial triad, which offered investigative approaches on how spaces are produced in urban areas (Fisker et al. 2019:8; Porter 2010:14; Wilson 2013:367).

Lefebvre (1991:33,38) formulated the three terms *spatial practice*, *representations of space* and *representational space* to analyse space production approaches. The spatial practice (or perceived space) was interpreted as referring to the daily interactions within the urban area

or how we move within and around spaces (Campbell 2018:e25; Porter 2010:14). The representations of space (or conceived space) refer to things such as the space of planners, urbanists, scientists and engineers and thus includes the city plans, architectural plans, and cartographies (Campbell 2018:e25). The representational space represents the everyday experiences and the social expressions of the residents in the urban area and is equally called the *lived space* (Porter 2010:15).

Adopting a Lefebvrian space production analysis approach, the absence of spatial IKS in planning approaches in Namibian urban areas can be assumed to be a contributing factor to various problems experienced in those areas, particularly the lack of community cultural open spaces in low-income areas such as Havana. According to Lefebvre (1991:39), the conceived space is the most dominant in any society. In this study, it refers to the Havana settlement, its zoning and service plans and various development programmes implemented by the central local authorities and government. Although such plans indicate public open spaces as provided, the reality on the ground is the opposite. The absence, and or separation of representational spaces (lived spaces) in low-income areas such as Havana, such as open spaces suitable for community activities, was one of the concerns of this study. Those *cultural open spaces*, as the researcher call them in this study, are akin to the symbolic associations or social expressions referred to in the interpretations above, and thus form part of the lived space (Wilson 2013:367). Rogers (2002), who interpreted Lefebvre's triad through an indigenous knowledge perspective, came to similar conclusions. According to Rogers (2002:40), these "special spaces", for example the traditional campfire, consist of several features (warmth of the fire, non-dominant seating arrangement, social activities around the fire) that, when combined, facilitate the dialogue emphasised in the Lefebvrian lived space. Currently, market-led modes of space production continue to exclude and separate these low-income majority populations from their symbolic expressions, while the latter engage in various self-made or hybrid social formations for their survival (Tapela 2016:82).

The separation of the symbolic and lived spaces from the conceived spaces was one of the mistakes that modern ways of space production created (Merrifield 1993; Yanow 2003; Young 2008). According to Lefebvre (1991:26), social space is a social product and, therefore, the perception, symbolism and imagination are inseparable. Yanow (2003:242) argued that the symbolic is part of the politics, and thus its separation from the politics and policies is an unfortunate situation and misleading. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 explore this symbolic and lived space separation in more detail. For Yanow (2003:242), the purpose of the policies is to

achieve material and expressive outcomes, and therefore the interpretation of the symbolic representation is an important aspect in this regard. In short, the three spaces, as proposed in Lefebvre's triad, are interconnected and dialectically linked (Merrifield 1993:524). The importance of Lefebvre's analytical triad to this study is that it exposes how spaces are created in society and the power relations involved, and how some, such as neoliberalism, patriarchy and authoritarianism become dominant over others (Fisker et al. 2019:9; Holgersten 2015:16). Another importance of the triad is that it enables possibilities for new imaginations to emerge, as well as alternative space production practices to be produced (Fisker et al. 2019:9; Rogers 2002:42). The triad is equally relevant to current postcolonial and post-apartheid conditions, where space production continues along similar lines through inherited Western conceived planning policies that fail to adapt to local complex contexts that are highly socially divided (Harrison 2006:331; Watson 2016:38).

The Lefebvrian analysis further highlights how current urban spaces are produced as single objective spaces, with these practices deeply embedded within the planning practice from neighbourhood to national scales (Graham & Healey 1999:626). In these conventional planning approaches, the idealised conceptions lead to methodologies of planning where residents are all allocated or assigned the same disempowered role (Graham & Healey 1999:626), whether able or not able to comply. These analytical approaches influenced planning theorists to diversify their critiques of modernist planning, and to come up with new ideas like those embedded in social science concepts such as postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-positivism (Klosterman 2011:320; Todes 2011:118). From the 1980s to the 1990s, newer planning practice styles such as collaborative planning and communicative planning were given more attention, of which the proponents relied heavily on Habermas's Communicative Action Theory for their motivation (Forester 2009, 2018; Healey 1997, 2003; Innes & Booher 2010, 2016). These new approaches, although not totally opposed, received diverse criticism from the Foucauldian-inspired planning theorists, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

The important point in this section is that the Lefebvrian-inspired critique raised against modernist planning introduced possibilities for the previously excluded, marginalised and suppressed knowledges and groups to be considered in planning. For example, Sandercock's (1998:5) call to listen to other theoretical voices or borderland voices has enabled indigenous perspectives to become visible in urban planning, such as their sacred spaces and religious spaces. This was an important and relevant point for this study, which explored the

importance of these aspects in terms of low-income areas in Windhoek through an indigenous knowledge lens. The call for alternative theoretical insights was seen as a direct challenge to the modernisation project, which is characterised by favouring the exchange values over the use values (Karuri-Sebina & Koma 2015:157; Wilson 2013:366).

Over the last two decades, Global South scholars increasingly called for the diversification of planning theorisation, with a focus on multiple cultural and planning contexts that could contribute to knowledge production in the improvement of spaces and places and planning theory itself (Parnell & Robinson 2012; Roy 2005, 2015; Sihlongonyane 2015a; Watson 2016). Such calls include the engagement of alternative methods of knowledge production in planning (Parnell & Robinson 2012:611), the consideration of informality as no longer exceptions but part of the claims to urbanisation (Roy 2005:155), and the mind shift needed to think in terms of, for example, Africa's local epistemological approaches to problem-solving (Sihlongonyane 2015a:68). In that vein, the World Health Organization (2015:15-16) insisted that research on various cultural contexts and their contribution to the well-being of different communities should be increased in order to create policies and guides that could assist in the improvement of different populations around the world. It is in line with these calls that this study focused on exploring spatial IKS as a potential alternative or complementary knowledge that could contribute to the well-being of low-income areas such as Havana.

However, before arriving at attempts to propose potential useful spatial IKS as additional planning tools, an understanding of how the modernist planning project found its way into the colonial world was deemed important to this study.

2.2.4 Modernist planning in the colonised world

Planning, an important space production tool, accompanied the colonial administrators from Europe to the newly colonised places (Baas 2019; Cocquery-Vidrovitch 2005; Jojola 1998; Myers 2011; Njoh 2009; Obeng-Odoom 2015; Porter 2010). The imposed master plans directed the ordering of spaces, and were inspired by ideas such as gardens, towers, monuments and beautiful cities (see Hall 2002). The new colonial spaces were planned and developed in an exclusionary fashion, with segregation buffer zones between the colonial population and the colonised masses put in place (Mabogunje 1990:128; Njoh 2009:303; Obeng-Odoom 2015:564). Thus, spatial planning was implemented authoritatively in the colonial spaces without any response or critique (Healey 2013:1513). In the South African

context, segregation started early in the 1800s, and the Group Areas Act of 1950 was just an official reinforcing of a continuous process (Mabin & Smit 1997:194; Maylam 1995:22).

These master plan ideas became the dominant influencing approaches to which planning was mostly aligned to, continuing even in the current era in postcolonial and post-apartheid countries as the main development or upgrading tool of low-income and poor areas in urban areas (Njoh 2009:304-311; Todeschini 2015:245-246; Watson 2014a:117). In the process, this dominant planning approach has over the years contributed to the erasure and or suppressing of alternative knowledges through its foundation in positivist, epistemological, privileging, scientific, and technical knowledge (Müller-Friedman 2008:31; Obeng-Odoom 2015:562; Porter 2013:299; Watson 2002b:47). Space production during colonialism was the enacting of dispossession activities, where the erasure of the lived space of the local populations was accompanied by the remaking of that space in European terms, through the spatial cultures that ensued (Njoh 2009:304; Obeng-Odoom 2015:563). The spatial cultures included the knowing, categorisation, seeing, and naming of spaces, and they were shaped by early practices of spatial ordering or planning, such as surveying and selection, mapping, naming and renaming, town building and the intricacies of land policy (Wensing & Porter 2015:1). Sandercock (1998:16) argued that these spatial cultures contributed extensively to the dispossession, exclusion and erasure of the sacredness of indigenous communities.

Planning policies were instruments of the colonial state where they created privileges for the white residents, and black people were kept mostly as temporary workers at the periphery of the early urban areas, with no direct legal participation in urban affairs (Mabogunje 1990:139; Njoh 2009:303). In such cases, urban services were very minimal, and strict building codes were imposed to prevent local communities from using their indigenous material in order to discourage them to stay away from urban centres (De Satgé & Watson 2018:38). This situation was similarly experienced in Namibia, as presented in Section 2.3.

At independence, the colonial influence continued in different forms, for example the creation of new capital cities with master plans influenced and done by European–American experts and influences, and the new elites governing according to inherited policies with local traditional leaders being co-opted (Myers 2011:55; Watson 2009b:173). European planning values were preferred by the new states, meaning that modernist planning as perceived from the Western scientific approach persisted (Obeng-Odoom 2015:563). Consequently, the African values and indigenous activities continued to be unintentionally suppressed and kept

in the background (Obeng-Odoom 2015:564). This contributed, and still continues to do so, to the social and spatial marginalisation of the majority of urban residents in postcolonial urban areas, where settlements grow spontaneously apart from and beyond formal areas (Watson 2009b:175).

In the Southern African experience, colonial urban development processes were underpinned by notions of segregation and apartheid with planning as the driving tool, rearranging the space into native reserves and police zones (areas reserved exclusively for white people) and later Bantustans (ethnically defined homelands) (De Satgé & Watson 2018:69; Kössler 2005:35). Similar experiences were also recorded in the colonial era in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kenya (Chigudu 2021; Mphambukeli 2019:45). As part of the previously colonised world, and contextually part of the Southern African colonial experience, Namibia did experience similar colonial spatial transformations, which are highlighted in the next section.

2.3 Modernist planning in Namibia

This section presents a historical overview of how Namibia's colonial experience shaped its spatial formation. However, before entering into a discussion of the colonial spatial history, Table 2.1 is presented to provide a brief history of some Namibian urban settlements of the precolonial period, but those created just before colonisation. The precolonial period in the Namibian context is the period before the German occupation of the country, the moment when official colonisation was sanctioned through the Berlin Conference (1884–1885) that repartitioned Africa into colonies (Diener & Graefe 2001:21; Lajul 2020:180). Although power in the spatial arrangement was in the hands of the indigenous communities, the prevailing contact and interactions, economically or through war events, did influence how urban spaces were created or arranged. It is mostly these settlements that were later overtaken (or destroyed) by colonial governments and transformed through modernist planning approaches into the spaces existing today.

Table 2.1 Some precolonial urban settlements in Namibia

Place	Spatial planning features	Period of activity	Authors
//Khauxa!nas (Schans Vlakte) Now ruined	• Founded around 1796 • Strong protective wall (±1 km long; 1.5 m wide) • One big room = chamber, as meeting place • Wall = skilful packing of flat-sided sandstone • Proper road with no technology tools at hand	±1796–1908	Dierks (1987)
Omaruru	• Spatial planning steps observed • Land parcels allocated by the Chief to various groups • Area reserved for storage buildings • Area for mission station	±1860s–1870s Early settlements	Rudner and Rudner (2006)
Windhoek	• Residential settlement observed • Orderly township - ±1 200 people • Aesthetics – beautiful gardens • Linked with first proper road with coastal settlement Walvis Bay – 1840s • Grew as trading centre / leader Jonker Afrikaner	±1800s–1830s	Heywood and Lau (1993) Vedder H (1938)
Hoornkrans settlement (no longer exists)	• Equality of all residents • Law based on 10 biblical commandments and church • Discipline for all • Alcohol forbidden • Diverse communities • Begging not allowed • All residents obeyed one leader – Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi	±1888 until early 1890s	Helbig and Hillebrecht (1992)

Source: Author (from various historical documents)

The spatial planning aspects and insights provided by the precolonial //Khauxa!nas, Omaruru, Windhoek and Hoornkrans settlements in Table 2.1 above, are important and useful in the sense that the Namibian post-apartheid spatial planning practice and policies are grappling to a certain extent with similar issues. Moreover, they demonstrate a willingness from the part of the indigenous communities to organise their spaces in a manner that ensured well-being for the residents of the respective settlements. Issues such as alcohol-related criminal activities and their control remained a headache for current urban areas and administrations in Namibia. In the context of this study, spatial planning, as described by Healey (1977:72-73),

refers to the various strategies and practices implemented by the government to ensure the orderly development of spaces, and the localities where development should take place in these localities. Thus, according to Healey (2006:527), spatial planning is “understood as a strategic orientation which emphasizes the spatiality of policy interventions and emphasizes the qualities of places”. In the next three subsections, an elaboration on the evolution of spatial planning in Namibia is presented, which include the period from the colonial to the postcolonial era.

2.3.1 German occupation (1884–1919)

The arrival of the Europeans in Namibia during the nineteenth century colonial period, was characterised by the representation of space through a general colonial attitude of the time called “a vacant land syndrome” (Hege 2015:169), for example *terra nullius* or *empty space* (Baas 2019:5; Rössler 2009:316). Initially, the early explorers and travellers approached the encountered spaces with a ‘view from above’ attitude; thus, excluding and erasing any indigenous knowledge in the description of spaces encountered (Hayes 2009:252; also see Mbenzi 2019), and laying deep foundations for colonial power (Bollig 2009a:20). The subsequent colonial literature and arts such as photography created Western concepts such as *emptiness* and *vastness* to facilitate the dominance of the Namibian space (Hayes 2000, cited in Rössler 2009:316). In this process, any indigenous knowledge of spatial organisation was displaced in order to facilitate the New World Order (Hayes 2009:252).

The vacant land attitude influenced the manner into which modernist planning was introduced into Namibia by the German empire as a tool of reordering space in Namibia (Hege 2015:165). The establishment of urban centres around Namibia, and that of Windhoek as the colonial capital, introduced Western modern planning and organisational forms of urban and regional management, albeit based on dominance, displacements, segregation, and oppression of local communities (Hege 2015:165; Kössler 2005:12).

The German colonial period, which started after the Berlin conference in 1884 and repartitioned Africa with colonial boundaries, introduced racial segregation forms in spatial planning, both in policies and in practice, and was accompanied by brutal force and violence (Kössler 2005:14). On the regional level and inspired by the imaginary of a “vacant land syndrome” (Baas 2019:5; Hege 2015:169), the country was divided into major zones, namely the *police zone* which was open only for occupation by white people, while the rest of the local communities were removed from the police zone and allocated small patches of

reserves to live on (Kössler 2005:14). Accompanying this spatial domination was the replacement of indigenous place names with names originating from Germany (Mbenzi 2019:71). The urban landscapes during the segregationist phase were also arranged according to racial lines, where white people lived in separated areas, while black people had to settle in allocated native *locations* (Gewald 2009:256), or *werfts* on the urban periphery near industrial or mining complexes (Hege 2015:170; Pendleton 1996:24).

The 1890s observed various native locations around important employment areas, later demolished and replaced with new native locations at demarcated sites as from 1908, the year when the German–Herero/Nama genocide war ended (Gewald 2009:259-260). These are the continuities demonstrating that forced removals did not start with the arrival of the South African administration in Namibia but happened well before that moment (see Simon 1991:175). One of these native locations (initially called Main Location, later the Old Location) was placed at what is presently the Hochland Park suburb in Windhoek (Gewald 2009:260; Melber 2016:7). It was established in 1912 by the Windhoek Town Council of the day (Pendleton 1996:26; Tjirera 2021:79). These native locations later became known as the old locations during their demolitions in the ensuing apartheid era in various urban centres of the country (Simon 1991:177).

Figure 2.2 depicts Windhoek’s Old Location, superimposed on the current layout of the city. The indigenous local communities were controlled in terms of their spatial movements and had to carry passes to justify their commuting from one place to another, while their political structures were destroyed (Helbig & Hillebrecht 1992:51).

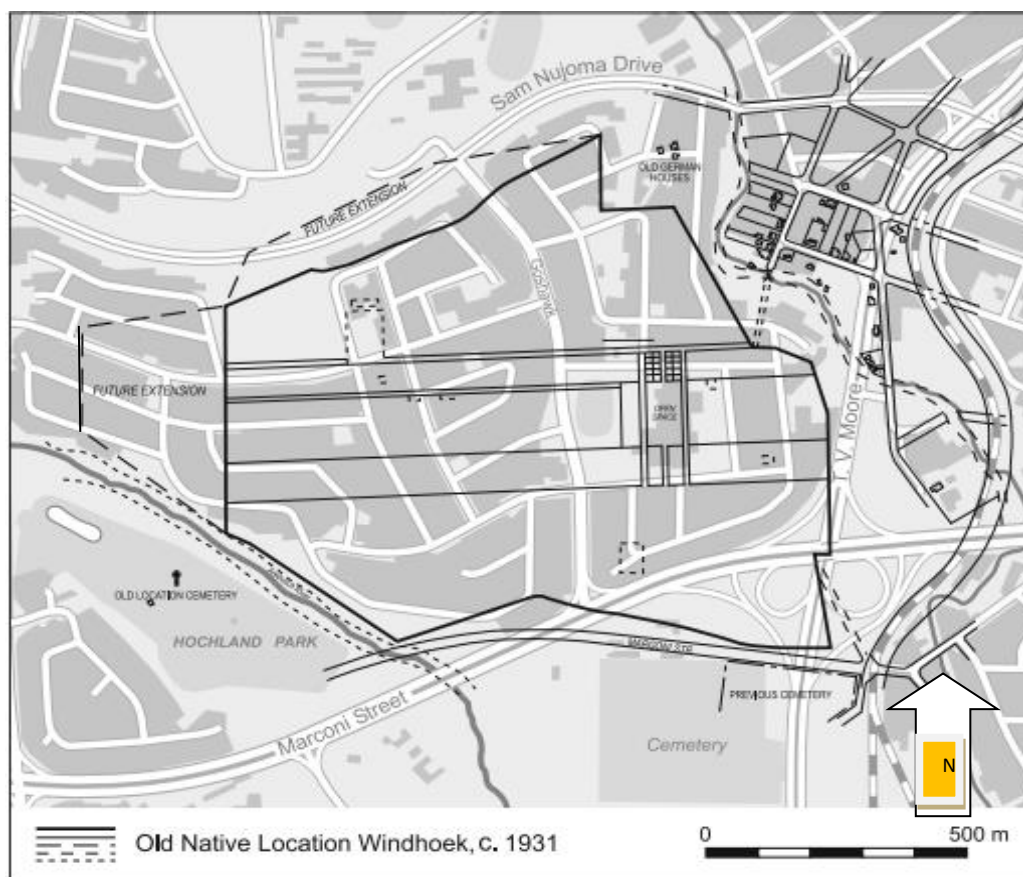


Figure 2.2 *Old Location, 1931, superimposed onto the current Hochland Park suburb*

Source: Gewald (2009:267)

2.3.2 South African occupation (1920–1990)

The German colonial administration of Namibia ended officially in 1919 with the defeat of Germany in World War I, when the country was put under the care of South Africa, via Britain, as a C-Class Mandated Territory by the League of Nations (Gewald 2009:258; Simon 1991:176). Thus, spatial ordering and planning, like in South Africa, was implemented through planning ordinances imported from Britain (Maylam 1995:28; Watson 2009a:2262). This was so as South Africa at the time was a “dominium” under the British Empire, and had defeated the Germans in the then South West Africa during the World War I (Tjirera 2021:79). The spatial consequence of this mandate arrangement is that both Namibia and South Africa later displayed similar physical urban characteristics, as both were exposed to the apartheid urban policy doctrine from 1948 onwards (see Simon 1991:176). Nevertheless, these planning cultures and policies were continuously inspired by the UK planning systems as mentioned earlier under subsection 2.2.4, which were imported into South Africa from the early 1900s (Oranje et al. 2020:6). For one, the WTPS of 1976 had its roots in South Africa’s planning system, which was based on the UK Town and Country Planning Act of 1932 (Frayne 2000:58;

Friedman 2000:19). This latter legislation was based on the principle of zoning land into various uses, which the South African administration readapted to create racially separated residential areas (Frayne 2000:58).

Apart from racial segregation, Windhoek also displayed class distinctions among Europeans through residential differentiation, where the richer groups were living on hillsides, while the poorer sections were to be found on lower lying spaces (Simon 1991:175). This spatial arrangement was systematised through private property rights that were implemented in a capitalistic land market where white people could obtain either individual freehold or leasehold tenures (Simon 1991:175), a situation similarly observed in the neighbouring South Africa during the same period (Mphambukeli 2019:45). Black people were not allowed similar rights, and in the case of Windhoek in the 1930s, they were allowed to build their own houses, sell them, and rent plots, but no land ownership titles were allowed (Gewald 2009:261; Simon 1991:176). Later, during the official introduction of the apartheid system, they were forced to rent houses from the local authorities, while also receiving substandard services in education and health areas compared to their white counterparts in the urban areas (Frayne 2000:57; Simon 1991:176).

Already in 1932, the South African administration recognised the Old Location and reorganised its physical space in line with modern comprehensive planning approaches such as the grid street system, but proper urban services and facilities were withheld as black people were considered as temporary residents (Gewald 2009:261). Despite this discrimination, residents of the Old Location owned their houses (self-built), while paying rent to the municipality for the use of the land (Pendleton 1994, cited in Müller-Friedmann 2000:4). This signified a certain type of contract between the municipality and the residents of the Old Location, but was later considered null and void through the doctrine of the racial apartheid ideology, as will be highlighted later in this section. An attempt at reorganising the Old Location according to tribal and ethnic lines failed as residents did not adhere to such segregation prescriptions (Gewald 2009:261). The South African government thus continued with its colonial predecessor's urban segregation pattern, as it extended segregation policies such as the Natives Urban Areas Act of 1923 into Namibia (Simon 1991:175). The Natives Urban Areas Proclamation of 1924 took the segregation approach further by preventing Africans from acquiring land from white-owned areas (Delgado 2018:9).

The subsequent National Party government (1948) in South Africa modified the government policy to reflect the more racial apartheid doctrine in the urban and regional planning practice and legal documents in the country (Frayne 2000:54; Mabin 1992:17). All the apartheid spatial legislation was applied to Namibia, except the Group Areas Act (1950) which was considered sensitive due to the status of Namibia's political position (Simon 1991:176). However, other policies were in place that ensured that strict racial segregation was implemented without recourse to the Group Areas Act (Delgado 2018:9; Simon 1991:175). This spatial segregation was amplified on a larger national scale with the implementation of the Odendaal Commission of 1964, which repartitioned the country into black reserves (homelands or Bantustans) which were assumed to be politically independent in terms of educational, health, and cultural matters (Delgado 2018:11; Diener & Graefe 2001:22-23). However, such spatial arrangement was not accompanied by the promotion of spatial IKS, as the homelands were managed through sanction of the South African administration, whose aim was to maintain control over these labour reserves through the appointment of chiefs with limited power (Diener & Graefe 2001:22). Just like in South Africa, strict urban residential segregation was ensured through customised policies and the insertion of racial restrictions in the title deeds of properties to control all social aspects of both the white residents in their areas and the black people in townships (Mabin 1992:17; Simon 1991:176). These spatial practices, termed *location strategies* (Robinson 1992:293) or *apartheid strategies* (Baas 2019:158), maintained and inscribed the apartheid ideology onto the physical space.

In terms of space production, two pieces of legislation represented spatial planning and land use control in Namibia. These are the Town Planning Ordinance of 1954 and the Townships and Division of Land Ordinance of 1963. These two pieces of legislation, together with the Natives (Urban Areas) Proclamation Act of 1951 and the prior segregation laws inherited from the German administration, were national legislation and not specifically urban policies (Simon 1991:176). These ordinances shaped the urban and regional places and spaces of Namibia for about 90 years since 1919, thus a little over a century. The two ordinances have finally been repealed in 2018 and replaced with a new law, URPA, Act 5 of 2018.

The old native locations for Black people that were closer and within walking distance to employment areas, for example those in Windhoek, were initially maintained where they were located in the 1920s and 1930s (Simon 1991:177). These locations were destroyed towards the end of the 1950s and reconstructed at great distances from the white areas (Heywood & Lau 1993:22; Simon 1991:177). Those who resisted relocation faced forced

removals, sometimes resulting in massacres. One of these occurred in the Old Location, when the Windhoek massacre took place in December 1959 (Simon 1991:176). The tragedy preceded the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa by three months (Gewald 2009:265; Simon 1991:176). The Sharpeville massacre was the brutal killing of innocent, unarmed residents of the Sharpeville black township of Vereeniging (near Johannesburg) who were demonstrating against the use of passes (through the pass laws), high unemployment rates and harsh labour exploitation strategies of the apartheid state (Maylam 2010:1-2). In Windhoek, the Old Location's forced removals led to the destruction of the social life of the residents, and their effective support systems vanished, accompanied by a loss of a sense of belonging (Jafta et al. 1999:22; Melber 2016:14-17). Harrison et al. (2007:10) referred to similar social breakdowns linked to forced removals in South African townships during the same period.

The Old Location residents were thus forcefully relocated to the new location called Katutura, which roughly translates into "a place where we will never feel settled" (Lau 1995, cited in Gewald 2009:263), or "a place where we do not stay" (Melber 2016:2). Investigation into the Old Location massacre brought forth twisted stories from the colonial urban administrators of Windhoek, where real reasons for resistance such as racial segregation, higher rents in new locations, and higher transport fares were hidden, and instead, the blame was put on foreign instigators (Jafta et al. 1999:22; Gewald 2009:265; Melber 2016:17).

This type of storytelling method from the colonial administrators demonstrates that those in power can manipulate stories to fit their good or bad intentions (Sandercock 2003a; Throgmorton 2003; Van Hulst 2012). This was an important warning in the context of this study, which relied on storytelling approaches from various communities and planning practitioners when addressing its research questions. Van Hulst (2012:311) advised that institutional structure and design largely influence which stories are to be told and which are to be hidden. Planners are warned to be critical of stories they hear and how power shapes such processes, even during cultural translations (Sandercock 2003a:12; Umemoto 2001:26).

In the Windhoek context, the apartheid town planning legislation reinforced differentiated physical racial residential spaces for black, white, and coloured people, while Asians were added in the case of South Africa (see Lemon 1991:7-8; Simon 1991:177). These racial spatial divisions are still visible today, although some of the areas are now more racially mixed. However, this mixing is clearly occurring in the form of economic class integration, where the new rich black people are moving to the former white areas, as observed in Windhoek.

The creation of the new township, Katutura, was marked by a different system of spatial production through segregationist and modernist planning as applied by the apartheid system (Müller-Friedman 2008:34). For example, houses that were provided to both white and black people were different, but both were inspired by modernist ideals (Müller-Friedman 2008:34-35). According to Müller-Friedman (2008:34-35), the provision of small 'matchbox' houses in Katutura, while other areas were supplied with better houses and services, demonstrated the differentiated approach to urban development by the apartheid authorities. The officials involved, planners and architects, demonstrated an apolitical attitude towards development, claiming normative and ideal modernist designs according to lifestyles, affordability and context, an approach which downplayed the overall oppressive system in place (Frayne 2000:56; Müller-Friedman 2008:34-35). During the 1960s period, the planning profession was weakened and deeply co-opted into the state apparatus (Oranje 2014:4). In addition, the apartheid spatial system highly distorted the rational comprehensive planning to suit its racial and separate development ideals through the apartheid master plan blueprints (Muller 1998:290).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, due to various international and local resistance, the apartheid state was weakened and was characterised by processes of various law abolitions or amendments (Peyroux 2001:289; Piermay & Sohn 1999:27). By the early 1980s, Windhoek could be considered "an open city", where anyone could legally reside anywhere, although affordability levels and institutional constraints ensured that segregated spaces remained largely unchanged (see Friedman 2000:2; Mitlin & Muller 2004:169; Simon 1991:179). This trend continues today, where only the black elites can afford to relocate to wealthier suburbs, while the low-income areas still remain as created during the apartheid period.

The Namibian colonial urban experience clearly demonstrates that planning took place in a top-down manner, with the majority black population excluded from the mainstream planning processes. However, the level of inclusion and participation for the white residential areas was apparently not much researched, as no references to any research on this matter could be found. Nevertheless, as attested by scholars such as Harrison et al. (2007:10), the spaces produced by the apartheid state in white areas presented high levels of economic opportunity as well as high-order social facilities. Most black people, in both Namibia and South Africa, were not considered as full legal citizens and were considered as temporary sojourners only (De Satgé & Watson 2018:79). While planning was evolving into different forms of theorisation and practices in the developed world, it was being experienced

differently in the colonised world, particularly in Namibia, where the harsh apartheid spatial planning paid little attention to the emerging normative concerns, nor the evolving communicative processes that were taking shape elsewhere during the 1960s and 1970s.

Therefore, the modernist planning project during the colonial and apartheid eras in Namibia was applied authoritatively with no room for negotiation for the marginalised majority. Public participation was not part of the planning process for the black townships, and the appointed (or elected) advisory boards (established in 1927) were ineffective, with poorly attended meetings and a stigma of being co-opted by the oppressive system (Maylam 1995:32; Melber 2016:11; Pendleton 1996:31; Simon 1991:181). This reveals an important concern for this study, that of the dependency culture originating from the early stages of the colonial era. Although the black residents rejected the colonial and apartheid boards to represent them, these structures were imposed on them with no alternative possibilities to resolve urban problems (Pendleton 1996). The residents were expected, and it was the only way, to resolve their urban problems through the advisory boards of the colonial period (Pendleton 1996:52). This dependency reduces the engagement between the residents and the local authorities, where the former does not regard the latter as equal and accessible partners (Matunhu 2011:70; Mitlin & Muller 2004:179). According to Matunhu (2011:70), the dependency theory is a top-down approach that assumes that the locals do not have the expertise and ability to fight their poverty. In such situations, residents are mostly hesitant to challenge the municipality on any matter that concerns their area (Mitlin & Muller 2004:179) and expect the authorities to solve their local problems. Pieterse (2008:115) argued that in such a developmental approach, the poor and the marginalised are the victims as they are most often bypassed by the development and regulatory systems.

In the South African context, some signs of apartheid's weakening could be observed during the last years of the apartheid era (1980s), such as the focus on more but still limited collaborative negotiations on some urban issues (Lemon 1991:23), but always done through the creation of co-opted community councils, black local authorities, or regional service councils for black areas appointed to ease tensions, yet without much autonomy and financial support (see Lemon 1991:23-25; Maylam 1995:32-33). The same approach was tried in Namibia, where the government put in place new administrative measures for Windhoek where the Katutura and Khomasdal townships became separate municipalities with their own town planning schemes, although headed by an overall head appointed from the dominant apartheid administration (see Simon 1991:179-181).

2.3.3 Postcolonial era: More transformations?

The postcolonial or post-apartheid era refers to the period of postcolonialism and its theories that presented possibilities to reconsider relations between previously dominant groups and the oppressed groups (Viswanathan 2009:170). The postcolonial era in Africa refers to the period when the respective countries attained their independence from the different colonial rulers. In Namibia, the apartheid urban planning system continued until 1990, when freedom was attained after a long-protracted war, through a United Nations Resolution 435, which ensured the independence of the country (Frayne 2000:54; Simon 1991:188). Since 1990, the country has introduced various new laws to address the imbalances created by past legislation, of which some were the amendments to the spatial planning legislation from the previous regime. Since then, the ruling party, SWAPO, prioritised in its development programmes the promotion of healthy urban areas with adequate services and recreational facilities, the creation of new towns and villages through the decentralisation project (SWAPO 2004:13-14). However, the decentralisation project on the regional level was hampered by lack of resources and qualified personnel, as well as fear by central government politicians of losing power (Frayne 2000:60; Töttemeyer 2021:102-103).

The Town Planning Ordinance of 1954 and the Townships and Division of Land Ordinance of 1963, both amended in 2000 to fit the post-1990 independence era, continued to play important roles in the post-apartheid spatial planning practice and space creation, for almost three decades after independence until their repeal in 2018. The first ten to fifteen years of independence can be described as a period of fantasising, romanticism and or 'honeymooning' (to borrow from Sihlongonyane 2015a:60, in the South African context), as the much-awaited peace was being celebrated, and the national reconciliation call of the new national leaders attracted a lot of buy-in from the public in general. Simultaneously, rapid urbanisation was experienced as people were free to move to urban areas. It is important to mention here that in the first two decades of Namibian independence, urban land reform and development enjoyed very limited attention compared to rural land reforms (Lühl & Delgado 2018:3; Delgado & Dempers 2020: Online). As a result, informal settlements burgeoned among the urban spaces of the country (Fjeldstad et al. 2005:14; Weber & Mendelsohn 2017:17), with almost half of the Namibian population now living in informal settlements at the urban peripheries (Delgado & Dempers 2020: Online). Windhoek alone accounts for about 100 000 people living in informal settlements (Töttemeyer 2021:89); thus about a quarter of its total population. The inherited rational planning tools, such as the ordinances mentioned above

and the town planning schemes, coupled with low levels of expertise and lack of financial resources, constrained local authorities in achieving their planning objectives (Fjeldstad et al. 2005:15).

Through the author's experience and observations, it can be argued that rational planning models could satisfactorily handle the former white areas (now increasingly, but slowly, becoming mixed-race suburbs), but not in the low-income black areas and adjacent informal settlements. According to Marais et al. (2019:7), the colonial and apartheid histories left a distinct spatial legacy in the urban areas, where race-based city planning ideologies created low-density and sprawling suburbs, while the majority of the poor residents have been abandoned in peripheral areas. Attempts to bring these low-income areas and informal areas into conformity with the planning policies (for example, the WTPS of 1976, amended in 1997, in the case of Windhoek) proved difficult to achieve, and often faced strong opposition, demonstrations, misunderstandings and misinterpretations due to "deep differences" and "conflicting rationalities" within the new post-apartheid society (Watson 2003:395). The various attempts by the new leaders, new institutions and planning officials through collaborative processes and public participation did not yield satisfactory outcomes (Mijiga 2001:8). The dogged dominance of the apartheid planning legacy, coupled with low levels of finances and skilled personnel, are adding to the inefficiency of the local authorities in planning matters (Frayne 2000:60). Coupled with increasing corruption recently observed in the country, the promises of political leaders made in the first decades of independence, especially the creation of healthy urban environments, remained in the rhetoric phase. Some of these corrupt practices reported in the local printed media included, for example, municipal officials at the Grootfontein Municipality enriching themselves with Council funds earmarked for development projects (Ngutjinazo 2020:5); the Gobabis municipal officials mismanaging service delivery budgets through bribes and wrongful allocation of tenders (Kasuto 2021:1); and the Windhoek municipal officials and councillors involved in corruption and bribery scandals around the awarding of a tender for the development of smart city-related communication technologies (5G partnership with Huawei) for Windhoek (Kathindi 2020: Online).

Besides the problematic apartheid spatial legacy and the high corruption levels explained above, the current post-apartheid planning present signs of continuing in the footsteps of its predecessor. For example, planning continues to partly destroy and erase any sign of indigenous creations in the urban areas such as old graveyards, churches, and any Old

Location traces under the pretext of, for example, beautifying the city (Gewald 2009:268). Similar experiences were observed in contemporary Nigeria (West Africa), where post-colonial worlding ideals contributed to the destruction of historical buildings, shrines and palaces and their replacement with modern buildings (Adekola 2017:54).

The creation and promulgation of URPA in 2018 is intended to create a new spirit in spatial management, planning and practice in the country. However, the persistence of the apartheid legacy in the post-apartheid urban form (see Berrisford 2011, 2013), places various challenges on the table: Did the postcolonial policies introduce any new spatial planning practice and regulation that includes all the residents of the urban areas? Up to what level has that been received by the local communities? How centralised is the planning system in the country? How are the local and indigenous communities participating in the planning of their areas? How, if any, are indigenous knowledges being accommodated or received by the postcolonial planning authorities?

The problems still experienced in Namibian urban areas, thirty years after independence, such as shortages of facilities, neglect and dilapidation of facilities, lack of cultural facilities and open spaces, dual lifestyles of residents where some sections prefer to invest more in their rural homes than in the city, constant public demands for better living environments, are all signs that new approaches to urban places and production of spaces are needed. In the context of this study, the lack (or neglect) of public open spaces in the low-income areas that characterised the colonial era, still continues to be observed and experienced country-wide (see Municipality of Otavi 2015:10; Municipality of Grootfontein 2017:32). The importance of open spaces to the well-being of communities and the health of urban areas is widely recognised (Abbasi et al. 2016; Amin 2008; Faragallah 2018). Those open spaces that are well maintained provide positive social benefits to communities, while those that are neglected and ignored result in negative effects to the local communities (Abbasi et al. 2016:196). For effective and productive open spaces to be provided, aspects such as experience, perception and space use should be considered by spatial planning (Faragallah 2018:3971). However, as experience and values are not visible, they are mostly neglected by planners, although those aspects are essential to the well-being of residents (Richardson et al. 2021:8). They could thus assist in the creation of attractive open spaces. In addition, the availability and accessibility of well-located and well-managed open spaces lead to these spaces becoming part of the everyday life of the local communities, and subsequently increase the sense of belonging and safety for them (Faragallah 2018:3971).

This study argued that the experience, perceptions and use of open spaces of low-income settlements that were largely “suppressed or denigrated” (to borrow from Harrison 2006:325), still continue to be overlooked in current planning practices and policies. The adopted and trusted modernist rational comprehensive planning methodologies are not producing the expected results, and as Marais et al. (2019:7) emphasised, post-apartheid era planning responses are mostly serving to perpetuate the hardships and marginalisation of the past. Todes (2006, cited in Marais et al. 2019:7) contended that in most cases the “cities continued to develop along socially divided lines”, which is contrary to the post-apartheid expectations.

In the Windhoek context, Peyroux (2001:292) has observed the persisting apartheid legacy in urban planning as follows:

[P]lanning in Windhoek continued along the lines recommended in 1980 in the Guide Plan for the Windhoek Basin ..., which set out the development of the city to the year 2010, and in accordance with the 1976 Town Planning Scheme, as amended, which had little impact on the structure of the city.

This translates into the fact that there was no ideological break from the apartheid methodologies of space production into the independent urban environment (Peyroux 2001:293). The continuing modernist urban planning framework means that previously excluded local space production methods are hardly considered, and this leads to confusion and conflicts as argued by this study through an IKS lens. A recent study on Namibian informal settlements by Larsen and Augustus (2020:94) found a similar mismatch or disconnect between the well-intentioned initiatives of local authorities to solve urban problems and the aspirations and concerns of the residents. Some of the reasons attributed to this disconnect is the low level of information exchange and participatory platforms, which leads to miscommunication and conflicts between municipalities and residents (Larsen & Augustus 2020:94). Moreover, studies found that even if the policies are well-intentioned, the municipal approaches of efficiency and cost-recovery to all solutions offered do not meet the expectations of the majority of residents (Piermay & Sohn 1999; Chitekwe-Biti 2018). Calls are out for the planning of Windhoek to be turned upside-down if it is to improve the low-income urban areas (Chitekwe-Biti 2018). This study therefore aimed at exploring, exposing and foregrounding spatial IKS in order to respond to the concerns and research questions presented in Chapter 1.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter identified the different evolutionary stages that planning theory and practice has travelled since the beginning of the twentieth century up to the present day. The modernist planning systems of the era were discussed, followed by a closer look at how it was experienced in the colonised world. The chapter then closely looked at the Namibian colonial planning experience, where it was established that the experience was not different to what other colonial contexts in Africa reflected. It was further established that the Namibian spatial planning system was, and still is, closely related to the South African planning approaches; the latter being the last colonial administrator of the former. The Namibian postcolonial experience demonstrated various efforts being engaged within spatial planning, but the outcomes revealed a continuation of past practices in various forms, which resulted in unintended consequences such as increased poverty, inequalities, and spatial injustices.

The literature consulted in this chapter emphasised that in Africa, and particularly Namibia which was the focus of this study, local symbolic and cultural values were largely omitted from planning practice and spatial policies during the colonial era. This situation continues in the postcolonial period where the adopted spatial planning policies have been poorly transformed to fit the local conditions and aspirations of the residents. The Havana settlement, the urban focus of this study, is a befitting example with its observed lack of much-needed open spaces. However, before coming up with gaps in the literature consulted so far that may inform the direction of this study, a detailed exploration of the postmodern critique towards planning practice and theory will be carried out in the next chapter.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter, which offers a postmodern critique of the rational comprehensive planning theory and practice, is discussed according to the structure outlined in Figure 3.1 below.

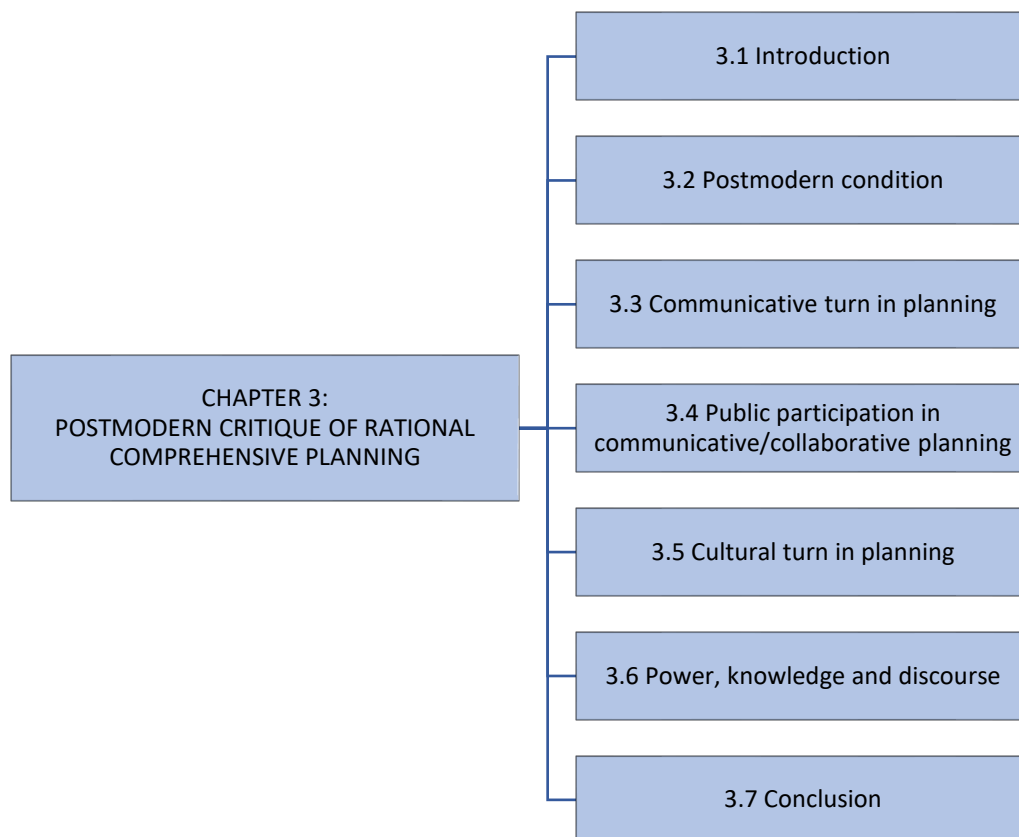


Figure 3.1 Structure of Chapter 3

Source: Author (2021)

3.2 Postmodern condition

The term *postmodern*, as presented in the literature, seems to be a change in the way people reflect on existing universalising and homogenous dominant practices ordering the way of life, and to propose alternative methods to accommodate diversity. Oranje (2002:172-173) attempted to explain the terms *postmodernity* and *postmodernism* as follows:

‘Postmodernity/the postmodern condition’ can be regarded as a collective name for a set of phenomena, an epoch, or a condition that is distinguishable in form, content and intent from modernity/the modern condition. ‘Postmodernism’ on the other hand refers to the consciousness and critique of the condition, and the styles/methods in which this is expressed/done, while ‘postmodern’ simply is a word that is used to describe/label something as belonging to, or being a manifestation or a symptom of, the condition.

Some of the important dimensions of postmodernism include the questioning and critiquing of all aspects of life, questioning common assumptions and thoughts, and keeping interpretations open for all (Allmendinger 2002a:156). Postmodernism is not bounded by rules and is always aiming towards flexibility and multiplicity in knowledge production and practice and is thus emphasising multiple rationalities in contemporary life (Bekker et al. 2021:2; Viswanathan 2009:169). The postmodern approach disentangled the dominant modernist, rational and technical approaches to planning (Watson 2016:32) and enabled the exploration of continuities and discontinuities in historical discursive formations and practices, for example in the African urban context (Bekker et al. 2021; Harris & Moore 2013; Mabogunje 1990; Obeng-Odoom 2015; Robinson 1992). From a spatial perspective, postmodernism extended the spatial questions from technologically inspired methods only towards more open discussion such as how spatial meaning is constructed and how space is represented in such contexts (Campbell 2018:e28). Another characteristic of postmodernism is its rejection of the dominance of one claim or scheme over others (Forester 2009:195; Friedmann 2011:149). Postmodernism therefore opens the doors to consideration of alternative knowledges such as IKS, which are suppressed in planning processes. It is therefore a moment that emphasised the importance of communication, interaction and interconnections between various groups (Viswanathan 2009:176), such as between communities and planning officials. It is through appropriate communication approaches that those alternative knowledges can be known, such as those embedded in spatial IKS targeted by this study. The next section will therefore focus on the communicative turn and its influence in planning.

3.3 Communicative turn in planning

The spirit in which this transformation was taking place, as a result of the inability of the rational comprehensive planning to solve various urban problems, came to be known as the “communicative turn in planning theory” (Forester 1982; Healey 1992 1997; Innes & Booher 2015; Partanen & Wallin 2018). The phrase was mainly used to indicate a “change of direction and emphasis in planning theory” (Harris 2002:25).

The communicative turn, with its roots in highly developed industrial countries, consists largely of the communicative planning ideas of the United States of America (USA), and the collaborative planning approaches in the European context (Watson 2016:33-34). Both theories are often used interchangeably and are based on the Habermasian theory of communicative action, which carries ideals of how power operates and the force of the better argument (Goodspeed 2016:2; Taylor 1999:335). Most communicative planning theorists were influenced by this Habermasian theory (Forester 2009; Innes & Booher 2010).

The communicative action theory is based on the argument that planning decisions should be reached through communicative processes (consensus) involving all stakeholders that are conforming to certain rules to ensure that participation is accessible to all the stakeholders present, and equally avail opportunities to contribute to decisions to be taken (Forester 2009, 2018; Healey 1997, 2003; Innes & Booher 2010 2016).

3.3.1 Communicative planning theorists

The communicative planning theory implies that debates in urban social matters should be balanced and respectful to achieve inclusion in planning (Innes & Booher 2004:426). This is referred to as a collaborative rationality, where the established authentic dialogue should facilitate the inclusion of weaker groups and address issues of dominance (Innes & Booher 2010:9, 2016:9-10). This approach influenced much of current planning in developing countries, and still continues to do so through the various spatial planning legislative frameworks adopted in those areas. However, the decontextualised top-down communication processes defined in the policies of those countries, Namibia included, do not reach all sectors of society, and the poor and the marginalised are victims of such consultation processes (Ngwenya & Cirolia 2020:12). This raises the concern of contextual differences raised by Global South theorists, where realities on the ground differ from those of the Global North, where these theories were initially conceptualised (Watson 2009a:2260). Nonetheless, proponents of the communicative planning processes insist that problems in urban areas can be resolved through dialogue, where techniques such as storytelling could be deployed (Forester 2009:31; Van Hulst 2012:299). According to Wagenaar (2011:301), mutual understanding is no easy task for involved parties, and includes a “willingness and capacity to learn about and from each other”. In this collaborative (or communicative) process, where a balanced (thus comfortable) dialogical platform is established, the multiple stakeholders involved should be able to find common ground on issues, or at least see opportunities for

common ground, even if issues remain unresolved (Forester 2009:31; Innes & Booher 2004:430; Sandercock 2003a:14).

Healey (1997:281) argued that it is essential that an institutional understanding of social relations exist, as this will promote interactive consensus building, which should lead to the creation of acceptable decisions in a collaborative planning process. The argument is that collaborative planning should be seen as a “relational view of institutional capacity”, where the complex relations between institutions and their value systems (and strategies) shape their local practices (Healey et al. 2003:63; Innes & Booher 2016:10). The relational lens adopted and elaborated by Healey (2003:105-106) provides insights on how social relations are played out between planners and their institutions, and how certain planning practices become embedded. Some of these embedded practices hinders collaborative planning to reach its objectives of solving social problems, as they are represented and codified in the various planning policy documents (Barry & Porter 2011:176; Healey 2006:527). Thus, despite innovative ideas such as collaborative planning that have existed for more than two decades, dominant and technocratic structuralist planning still persists (Boelens & De Roo 2016:59).

Recently, planning theorists are calling for more closer interaction between planning practitioners and local communities. Forester (2018:471-472) moved the focus away from the facilitating planners and argued for more balanced communicative platforms where the target audience is drawn closer to the debates. He proposed a “practical dialogue” in collaborative planning, in which joint inquiry should be promoted to deepen partnerships and coalitions to devise courses of action together and suggested that planners should move from an imaginary of “what we can recommend” to an imaginary of “what we can do together” (Forester 2018:472). Although this is an ideal perspective from the theoretical side, it should first overcome the framing of communicative (consultative) provisions in the planning of regulatory policies, especially if targeting a closer collaboration with poorer communities such as those in the Havana settlement in the case of Windhoek.

In summary, the theorists discussed above, agree that communicative (or collaborative) planning is a process that recognises the existence of the multiplicity of social worlds, the coexistence of different rationalities and practices in urban contexts, and the complexity of power relations in planning (Forester 2009, 172; Healey 2003:107; Innes & Booher 2004:422). These planning theorists converge on the argument that in a communicative process, the

multiplicity of differences and knowledges can be harnessed to improve policy and planning problems (Wagenaar 2011:230-231).

3.3.2 Critiques of communicative planning

Besides some of the concerns raised above, the theorists do agree that communicative planning processes are not always successful. The communicative planning theorists indicated that the process can become dominant, oppressive and discriminatory if not properly applied. The obstacles that influence communicative planning negatively are, for example, the skewed dialogue platforms and one-sided control of agendas (Innes & Booher 2004:425), the neglect of different existing social relations (Healey 2006:536), and the distortion of information by planners and other powerful groups (Flyvbjerg 1998:319-324; Forester 2009:33).

Although the communicative planning theory was an attempt to criticise rational planning and to propose new methods of theory and practice (see Forester 1982 2009; Healey 1992 1997; Innes & Booher 2004), there have been several critiques that were levelled against the theory's approach. This has been particularly in the context of power relations where it was said that the theory ignored power and context issues in debates (see Calderon & Westin 2021; Flyvbjerg 1998; Harris 2002; Huxley 2000; Huxley & Yiftachel 2000; Watson 2016; Yiftachel & Huxley 2000). Harris (2002:36) emphasised his concerns regarding communicative planning theory as follows:

The collaborative approach attempts on the one hand to admit alternative methods of knowing and reasoning and to be able to accommodate different cultural standpoints within spatial planning processes. The counterpoint is that in refraining from stipulating elements of the process or of stating desired outcomes (leaving such issues to be determined by participants), the collaborative approach risks enabling narrow instrumental and utilitarian forms to continue to predominate.

The concerns raised by Harris (2002) above are still relevant today. In the context of postcolonial and post-apartheid communities, where rational and technocratic processes that are rationalised through normative collaborative approaches and policies, dictate planning matters. These collaborative processes become too "normative to the point of prescription" (Harris 2002:36), but often always favour powerful groups, and in the process overlook equally important inputs from marginalised groups. The experiences obtained while working for both the Walvis Bay and Windhoek municipalities evidence this policy 'normativisation' processes (also see Müller-Friedman 2006, 2008 for the Windhoek planning policy

description). According to Scott (2014:521), “a societal normative order is the one where social stability is achieved through the integration of the normative coherence on the one side, and of the societal harmony and coordination on the other”. In that vein, critical planning theorist such as Flyvbjerg (1998) questioned the ability of communicative (or collaborative) planning systems to protect all citizens equally and avoid inequalities. For example, this concern was raised in the context that in municipal planning projects, those who have power will engage in processes that favour their interests at the expense of the marginalised (Harrison et al. 2007:156). In the context of policymaking, Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002:52) asserted that styles of presentation are often made to appear technically rational, thus threatening other equally important information or knowledge. This observation is of relevance to this study. For example, municipal-approved ‘worlding’ approaches that include *smart city* and *competitive* terminologies in Windhoek, sound inclusive of all residents, but in reality, the poorest sections of the city struggle to participate in those projects (Burke 2019:272; Saiu 2017:7). Flyvbjerg (1998:325) therefore suggested the following to address power relations:

Instead of thinking of modernity and democracy as rational means for dissolving power, we need to see them as practical attempts at regulating power and domination. Doing this: we obtain better grasp of what modernity and democracy are in practice and what it takes to change them for the better.

Communicative planning theory was thus seen as avoiding conflict and power issues, but which are essential for improved planning deliberations and decisions to be taken (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002:62). Thus, a strong understanding of democracy and the role of planning within it, encourages the elevation of conflict and power at the centre of such a developmental or planning process, something which Habermas had avoided in his ideal communication proposal (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002:62). Huxley (2000:376) contended that conflicts and transformative actions need to be argued and not be assumed, to avoid the bracketing of interests, power and inequalities. In that vein, planning theorists increased calls for planning to critically re-examine itself (Huxley & Yiftachel 2000:336; Porter 2010:155; Yiftachel & Huxley 2000:910), as communicative processes could not properly handle issues of power relations, group differences and meanings in planning processes and outcomes (Watson 2003:398). Some communicative planning theorists (for example, Healey 2003:115; Innes & Booher 2010:78) mentioned the importance of the existence of a multiway collaborative process, where all stakeholders engage in a mutual learning and understanding process in an “authentic dialogue”, where questions can be raised where planning failed. This

still could not properly answer the existence of differences and conflictual contexts such as experienced in Southern Africa. The treatment of stakeholders by conventional planning approaches was, and still is, criticised for excluding some sections of society such as the poor and marginalised groups (Huxley 2000:374; Porter 2010:41).

According to Oranje (2002:175-176), while the planning theory and practice were undergoing challenges and changes in mostly the Northern hemisphere, there were critics from the Global South who were questioning whether all these progressive proposals were really new in the south or whether they existed and practised before the postmodern critique appeared. In the South African case, the theorists were battling with modalities on how to deal with the colonial and apartheid created 'others' and the post-apartheid city (Oranje 2002:176), which by implication, includes Namibia due to similar historical experiences. However, all these planning improvement efforts occurred within the ambit of Global North theories, which excluded other ways of knowing, such as spatial IKS proposed in this study, and still largely continue to do so (Connell 2014:213; Watson 2016:32). In this postcolonial context, communicative planning is still criticised for not addressing power issues. For example, communicative processes ignore the privilege it possesses through the level of education and language use among diverse groups, and the privilege it accords to the technical terms used in planning (Viswanathan 2009:169). Also, in some groups in postcolonial societies may sustain dominant power through the inherited planning frameworks and policies (Viswanathan 2009:169). Due to the above critiques, the calls for the recognition, acknowledgement and inclusion of diverse and multiple knowledge systems into planning frameworks increased in the last two decades, as the next subsection demonstrates.

3.3.3 Recognition of multiplicity in planning

Some planning theorists proposed alternative planning methods that encouraged planning to accommodate multiplicity in practice while downgrading universalising assumptions (Sandercock 1998). Sandercock's work was widely recognised as having broadened planning thought by introducing aspects such as diversity, multiculturalism, respect and recognition of different ways of knowledges (Friedmann 2011:135; Oranje 2002:177; Watson 2003:398, 2016:35). For instance, in her attempt to imagine a utopian city of desire, Sandercock (1998:210) had the following proposal for the city life:

[C]reate public spaces that encourage this parade, that acknowledge our need for spectacle, not the authorized spectacle of the annual parade, but spontaneous spectacle of strangers and chance encounters.

This thesis found resonance with the above statement, as it explores the usefulness of cultural open spaces for the low-income areas as ways of addressing the neglect found in those areas. Sandercock's (1998:65) recognition of multiplicity in planning focused on the importance of social movements and local knowledge, thus similar to Healey's (1997) approach, but differed by insisting on building consensus between groups, even if it is through the mobilisation of direct radical resistance to the central authorities. Other communicative planning theorists, in contrast to Sandercock, based their consensus-seeking process on the state setting the agenda (Watson 2002b:32). However, Sandercock's belief that different groups can reach consensus was criticised, as it relied on the Habermasian conception of power which was mutually questioned (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002:49; Watson 2016:35).

Other theorists, such as Fainstein (the Just City theory), equally supported the recognition of the diversity approach, but were more concerned about democratic and regulatory processes as determinant agents. The just city theorists argued that the emphasis to create better places should be more on equity and outcomes, rather than on democracy and processes as deployed in communicative approaches (Fainstein 2014:1). According to Fainstein (2000:469), those democratic processes are prone to appropriation by powerful groups and are not concerned whether the outcomes are appropriate or not. An example is presented by a recent study on Johannesburg (South Africa), where the minority economic elite diverted redistributive land development programmes to their benefit, thus perpetuating inequalities (Bradlow 2021:1). A study on institutional actors similarly produced the same outcome in a Bloemfontein (South Africa) example. In this context, the leading actors in a stakeholder collaborative planning project reproduced the same dominant attitude of their institutions, which negatively affected the lower-ranked officials (Calderon & Westin 2021:24). This resonates with planning processes in Namibia, where the set standards, for example public participation procedures, are continuously reproduced in every planning project through policies. This unintentionally exclude the poor and the marginalised. Thus, even in highly balanced collaborative approaches, power is always determining who says what and who should remain silent. This aligns with what Healey (2006:536) and Innes and Booher (2004:425) have acknowledged, that collaborative planning processes can be oppressive if not rationally organised around an authentic dialogue. It is with that recognition that some theorists directly argued that policies should specifically address the plight of low-income and

minority groups, rather than democratic processes that are often exclusionary and manipulative (Fainstein 2014:8; Goodspeed 2016:3). These insights are useful for this study, as they emphasise how power is engaged and reproduced in diverse postcolonial contexts, and how it leads to either positive or negative outcomes.

The critique around the Habermasian insensitivity towards power relations during debates prompted some theorists to adopt a more pragmatic approach in that regard (Harrison 2002; Hillier 2002). These pragmatists argued for a move away from ideological positions and argued for the use of instrumental reasoning in some instances and contexts, and also the support of solidarity and successful collaborations above consensus to validate actions (Harrison 2002:171). Pragmatists, according to Harrison (2002:171) “offered a middle way between procedural rationalism and the indeterminacy of a purely inter-subjective process”. In a later work, Harrison (2006:326) emphasised the importance of “zones of exchange” in a postcolonial context, as important spaces where different knowledge systems or modes of thinking can intersect. In addition, the pragmatists contended that reliance on agonistic strategies offer direct resistance to conditions that lead to co-optation that undermines weaker groups, and situations where co-optation may threaten the weaker or marginalised groups (Hillier 2002:132-133). The argument is that, usually, agonistic approaches elevate issues towards the centre of discussion, and therefore are inclusive and simultaneously address tensions among groups (Manuel et al. 2017:11).

However, the modernist revisionist approaches proposed above, including the communicative theory itself, in turn received heavy criticism as they still relied on old analytical approaches, and at times trying to enrich and clarify them (Boelens & De Roo 2016:59; Healey 2003:114; Winkler 2018:267). These old approaches relied heavily on the assumptions of universal normative values that could be applied to all problems to generate solutions, an assumption proving to be problematic in diverse societies and different contexts (Savini et al. 2015:302; Watson 2006:31). These old approaches, filled with improved but homogenising and universalising concepts, are criticised of not fitting theories which embrace social differences (Watson 2016:35). These approaches remain space-blind, as exemplified by postcolonial contexts such as the conditions presented by African cities (Watson 2016:35).

3.3.4 Beyond the impasse: Towards a Southern perspective?

The problem with collaborative (or communicative) planning approaches is that despite the good intentions of plans in the South, as experienced by the researcher in practice and from

literature, is that urban social problems persist (Chitekwe-Biti 2018; Cirolia & Berrisford 2017; Larsen & Augustus 2020). A lack of open spaces is one such sample, particularly in low-income areas, despite these spaces being enthusiastically shown on the scheme maps. Thus, the debates presented in the previous sections, with concepts such as critical reflection, multiplicity, difference and coexistence, are relevant for planning, and more so for Global South contexts. In Namibia, as the author experienced until a couple of years ago, planners have to work with diverse communities with different, sometimes “conflicting rationalities” and “deep differences” (to borrow from Watson 2003, 2006), and also in a different context than that of the Euro-American sphere in which most of these planning concepts have been developed and transformed (Connell 2014; Winkler 2018).

In an attempt to explore and suggest alternative planning approaches in the Namibian context through an indigenous knowledge lens, this study aligned with the debates and arguments for theorising and practicing from a Global South perspective, challenging the assumed Global North universalised approaches to planning and epistemology (Connell 2014:210; Winkler 2018:266-268; Yiftachel 2006:216). However, this study also took the experiences presented in the above Global North into consideration.

The different experiences from different places and spaces of the Global South indicate the complexities that exist in urban areas in this part of the world. The need for new ways of practising planning, and the flexibility to consider multiple viewpoints about the future of places, cannot be overemphasised (Bekker et al. 2021:2). In that regard, Yiftachel (2006:216) proposed a different epistemological conceptualisation about South (and East) cities to attempt preventing planning that engages in the repression of marginalised communities. Scholars argued that planning continues to discursively criminalise informal areas or low-income areas instead of seeing these spaces as claims of *the right to the city* and *becoming* (Roy 2015:4) and should be placed at the centre of planning research for future improvement (Yiftachel 2009:98). In the same vein, Porter (2010:146-147) exposed the ways in which planning continues to stereotype indigenous cultures in the Australian context and how it persists with dominating norms and laws. Furthermore, Porter (2013:291) warned planners to understand the impossible return to a precolonial existence. Scholars such as Delgado (2021:62), Holgersen (2015:18), and Porter (2013:291) further argued that it is important for planning to recognise that mere incorporation of approaches into existing urban policies have limits that perpetuate inequalities. The dangers of mere incorporation are echoed by other scholars, who emphasised that these inclusion strategies only incorporate differences

without challenging the status quo (Green 2018; Miraftab 2009, 2020; Sihlongonyane 2015b). The concern is that any social changes targeted by incorporation approaches always end up being directed by the dominant “master signifiers” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, cited in Porter 2013:289), or end up as “empty signifiers” as they do not transform the dominant structures that produce inequalities (Sihlongonyane 2015b). It is in this vein that scholars increasingly called for spatial IKS and values to be granted special attention in planning (Ernstson et al. 2014; Marek 2020; Matunga 2017; Melore & Nel 2020; Porter 2013; Porter & Yiftachel 2019; Sihlongonyane 2015a, 2015b; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019). For example, Porter and Yiftachel (2019:180) called for the foregrounding of indigenous epistemologies and philosophies to clarify place, belonging and identity. This echoes an earlier proposal by Ernstson et al. (2014:1573) who emphasised the importance of diverse experiences in the crafting of new spatial organisation approaches, centred around the embedding of spatial African features.

In the Southeast and Central Asian approaches, Agustina and Hindersah (2019) and Agustina et al. (2016, 2019) noted the disjuncture between the planning practice and self-made initiatives of local communities to maintain their sociocultural values in urban areas. This process, where local communities search for a sense of place and belonging in the city, is referred to as the indigenisation of the urban space (Perera 2002), or lately referred to as indigenous urbanism (Marek 2020; Nejad et al. 2019). This process involves residents expressing or initiating and practising their traditional lifestyles in their neighbourhoods or urban spaces (Marek 2020:7; Perera 2002:1703). In that vein, Agustina et al. (2016:16) argued that postmodern planning concepts should embrace local values of spatial planning such as local wisdom, as this will enrich spatial planning processes and will improve the understanding of multiple meanings of space. Consideration of multiplicity is important in this case. Communities, even in the same residential area, experience their places differently (Jivén & Larkham 2003:79); hence, the assertion by Massey (1991:28) that there cannot be only one *sense of place*, but many types. This is brought about by the fact that in one community there may be various types of *sense of place* according to men, women and children (Massey 1991:28).

In the South African context, scholars attempted to propose approaches that could open up planning to multiple and diverse practices and knowledges compared to current restrictive policies (Nel 2016a; Sihlongonyane 2015a, 2015b; Williams 2015; Winkler & Duminy 2016). Nel (2016a:89) proposed a transect approach where zoning is relaxed and mixed use is

promoted with only dangerous or noxious activities being prevented. Williams (2015:240) called for a customary cultural zone for rural communities at the urban periphery with mixed land use flexibilities. Sihlongonyane (2000, 2015a, 2015b) suggested that indigenous patterns and epistemologies be promoted, while also warning (2015b:85) against the use of indigenous metaphors that end up being appropriated by private interests as recently observed in the country. Winkler and Duminy (2016) called for more critical explorations on the ethical values, epistemologies and interventions needed for African urban conditions.

The above lessons from the Global South indicate that many ideas and experiences exist on how to proceed with planning in that context. These proposals contribute to the broadening and diversification of communicative planning theory's current universalised and context-blind approaches (see Watson 2016:32). As Winkler (2018:267) argued, this Southern perspective is not a call to replace Western epistemologies, but an urgent demand, stressing that alternative methods of knowledge production do exist in a different spatial context. These knowledges, as the literature has demonstrated, have been largely ignored through the universalising tendencies of the theories developed in the North, which excluded the silent Southern contexts and differences (Watson 2016:39; Winkler 2018:267). According to Connell (2014:210), "Southern theory is not so much about making different propositions, but about different knowledge practices, thus, to start learning in new ways and with new relationships".

It will therefore be appropriate to assess how participation has evolved in the planning process. This will be done in the next section, which will focus on how the postmodern critics have handled it, and what insights were proposed to improve public participation through the communicative (or collaborative) approaches. Participation is an essential element for planning, and if spatial IKS is to be promoted as propagated in this study, then its practical implications cannot be underestimated.

3.4 Public participation in communicative/collaborative planning

Deducting from the assertions by planning theorists in the previous section, it could be argued that public participation in the Global North (Europe and America) started to be foregrounded as an important tool in planning due to various socio-economic pressures and the ineffectiveness of the rational planning model experienced in that part of the world (see for example, Arnstein 1969; Heskin 1980, Taylor 1999). Some main problems to which both of these modernist reformists' comprehensive and rational planning approaches could not

provide answers to, include the outcome of the two world wars with its increased housing supply to participating soldiers; increased population due to the baby boomers of the 1950s and onwards; increased immigration of black people into cities; civil rights demands of the 1960s; the oil crisis of the early 1970s; the rise of feminism; and the environmental crisis (Arnstein 1969:216; Heskin 1980:50; Sandercock 1998:2; Steyn 2015:200).

It was from the 1970s to the 1980s, when the communicative planning theory was introduced into rational comprehensive planning to improve planning decision-making processes, that public participation received increased attention in planning theory and practice (Taylor 1999:336-337). In the postcolonial context, planning and public participation have been influenced by the increasing rural–urban migration, rapid continuous growth of informal settlements and mounting inequalities in postcolonial cities that contributed to planning calling for alternative methods of engagement to the dominating Western universalising processes of decision-making and problem-solving (De Satgé & Watson 2018:221; Sihlongonyane 2015b:94). Although blueprint planning and rational comprehensive planning of the planner-led modernist era were found incapable to solve a variety of complex urban problems in postcolonial contexts (Todes 2011:128), the next subsection presents some insights on how public participation was drawn into planning processes.

3.4.1 Origin and ladder of participation

In the 1960s, when planners critiqued the ineffectiveness of the rational comprehensive planning model, Paul Davidoff (1965:424), with his advocacy planning approach, stated his case for inclusionary participation as follows:

If the planning process is to encourage democratic urban government then it must operate as to include rather than exclude citizens from participating in the process.

Sherry Arnstein (1969), widely quoted on her method, approached the process with a ladder of citizen participation (see Bailey 2018; Ellery & Ellery 2019:238; Steyn 1998:2, 2015:202). The ladder of participation is indicated in Figure 3.2.

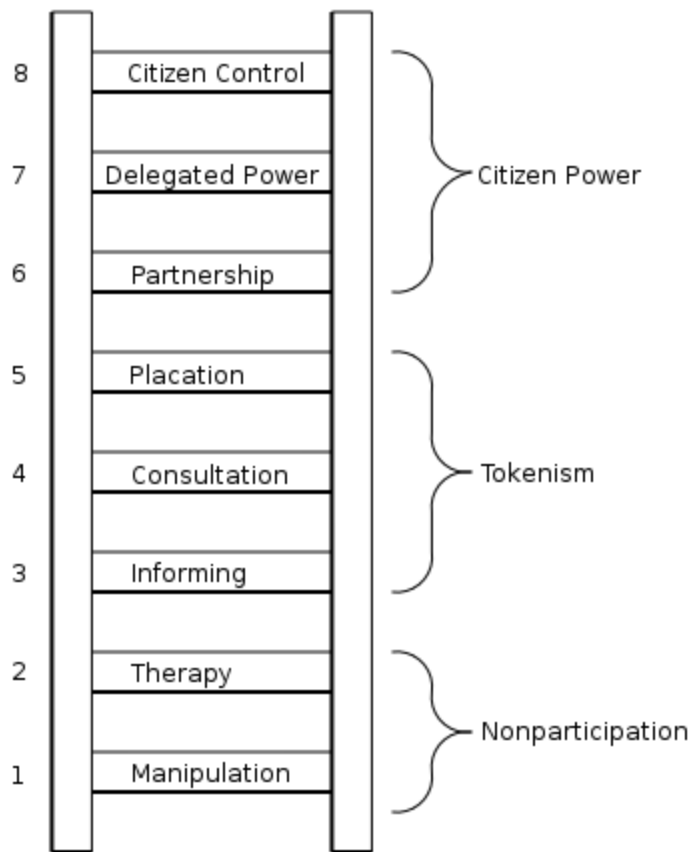


Figure 3.2 Eight-rung ladder of citizen participation

Source: Arnstein (1969)

Arnstein's ladder presents eight forms of participation, where the lowest level indicates low or non-participation, the middle layers indicate moderate/half-hearted levels of participation (tokenism), while the top level refers to more complete control or citizen power. Arnstein (1969:217) described citizen participation to be the following:

It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes to be deliberately included in the future ... In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society.

Although the ladder has been helpful in the understanding of public participation, Arnstein (1969:217) warned about its limitations that it does not clearly explain the roadblocks that might hinder the attainment of genuine levels of participation, and that in reality, there might be more rungs than the eight presented on the ladder. Steyn (1998:3) stated that public participation is influenced by the way planners and society see it as part of a process and presented two perspectives in this regard: First, the administrative perspective, for example, displays the trust which the whole community has put in its government or municipality to manage and lead participation processes. Second is the citizen perspective which indicates

the citizens' demand for full participation and to influence the decision-making process (Steijn 1998:3). Due to various factors such as bad governance linked to corruption observed in many African countries (Goodfellow 2013:89; Huchzermeyer 2014:67), residents may engage in different forms of demand for public participation, such as service delivery protests (Bond & Mottiar 2013).

Referring to Arnstein's ladder, the sixth level, partnership, has been evidenced in some recent planning literature as the most appropriate technique for community participation (Bailey 2018; Porter 2010:78; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:15; Simon et al. 2020:7; Thompson-Fawcett 2019:272; Walker 2008). At the partnership level, power is distributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders, where they agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities, for example in joint policy boards, planning committees and other mechanisms for resolving impasses, and the ground rules are set in a give-and-take approach (Arnstein 1969:221). The partnership approach can work if the community has an organised power base with accountable leaders, financial resources to pay the leaders for their time, and have resources to hire lawyers, technicians and community organisers (Arnstein 1969:221). Examples of partnership successes, although limited, were observed in the settler states of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, especially in cases of joint management boards in conservation areas where the indigenous communities had organised leadership, finance and cultural organisations in place (Porter 2010:123; Walker 2008:22). Partnership initiatives by local authorities and indigenous communities in urban areas have also emerged and have been found to enhance community participation (Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019:272).

The following subsections will contextualise participation in order to highlight that communities in different environments experience participation differently, which was useful for this study when explaining the same experience through an indigenous knowledge viewpoint.

3.4.2 Participation in planning in the Global North

In a survey conducted in the USA between 2000 and 2018, it was found that community organisations and the professionals wished to cooperate in partnership (Bailey 2018). Additional findings showed that the community and the professionals are not at opposite ends as the theory is projecting to be, but can be closer together if participation is carefully mediated (Bailey 2018). This echoes the "authentic dialogue" in a "collaborative rationality

framework” alluded to earlier in Subsection 3.3.1 (see Innes & Booher 2004:419). Although criticised for neglecting the power aspect, the collaborative approach is seen as providing important platforms of listening and learning from each other, and eventually develop shared meanings (Forester 2009:22; Innes & Booher 2016:9; Wagenaar 2011:301-302). Regarding the control of processes, Bailey’s (2018) study further concluded that the community does not wish for citizen control of planning processes contrary to the overriding interpretation of the Arnstein ladder, but rather longs for inclusion and recognition of their values in planning projects.

Another participatory insight, also from the USA, is where Meléndez and Parker (2019) have drawn the attention of planners to the importance of “learning environments” (borrowed from learning sciences). The design of a learning environment should focus on the type of artifacts produced (for example, the arrangement of tables and chairs; tools such as PowerPoint presentations and emails), the producing agent (language used: technical, procedural, legal), and the implications from the anticipated and unanticipated outcomes (Meléndez & Parker 2019:138). The design process of the learning environment should therefore be sensitively done as it can afford or constrain certain social interactions over others, although it can also create meaningful tensions that allow for new possibilities (Innes & Booher 2016:9; Meléndez & Parker 2019:138). In another context, studies from Scandinavian countries present how municipalities are engaging alternative approaches to increase participation. Municipalities there use spaces that scholars interchangeably call “third spaces” or “cold deliberative settings”; these include “charrettes, café dialogues, consultations, deliberative panels, workgroup weekends, forecasts, city walks, interactive websites and art interventions” (Nyseth et al. 2019:6-14). Although these spaces are conceived in a top-down fashion, they attract more participants who could not be reached if invited through formal processes (Nyseth et al. 2019:14).

Planning institutions such as municipalities are argued to be deeply resistant to critical self-reflection and avoid being evaluated in this regard (Bailey 2018). In this context, planning institutions continue to present themselves as offering balanced participatory platforms. Still, the planners are urged to pay attention to the structures in which they work and engage in all efforts that will increase participation, such as designing “learning oriented participatory processes, and foster their sustainability” (Forester 2009:14). If such approaches are ignored, then participants will withdraw, and the trust will be lost as the participatory platforms will be seen as just a degree of tokenism or manipulation (see Arnstein 1969), and not as

progressive (Hacking & Flynn 2017:2-3). Still worse, it can lead to lengthy protests or total public withdrawal that could be avoided if policymaking processes have been carefully designed initially (Hacking & Flynn 2017:33; Hajer 2003:109).

Meléndez and Parker (2019:142) have provided an important insight that the learning process should not be one-way (for instance, only the marginalised to learn), but both ways to prevent manipulation (see also Arnstein 1969). Meléndez and Parker (2019:142) further emphasised:

The goal should not be controlled learning outcomes – or control more generally – but instead agentic engagement whereby participants can change and improve design and intentions, both in the moment and in the future ... introducing designed learning environments as an additional tool in our quest to build more equitable cities.

The above insights indicate that, despite various new planning ideas proposed to improve processes such as public participation, problems of inequalities still remain. Nonetheless, the insights demonstrate that despite the problems, various actors remain encouraged to continue with suggestions to improve. The next subsection briefly highlights how participation in Southern Africa is handled.

3.4.3 Participation challenges in Southern Africa

The existence of organised and financially well-resourced community organisations as a prerequisite for partnership between communities and governance institutions may pose problems to the poorly resourced groups in urban areas of Southern Africa to fully engage in participation (Winkler 2011:1-3). The multiple participation forums that have been created, for example in South Africa, tends to favour the elites (Sihlongonyane 2015b:85; Winkler 2011:2). Coupled with such resource deficiencies among the low-income groups, the promotion and foregrounding of cultural and IKS values for planning within the region will be a challenge. The formation of partnerships, for example between indigenous groups themselves in residential areas and between the residents and state institutions, should be approached with great care and through balanced learning conditions. Lau (2014:1946) warned that the diffused power through partnerships implies many equal partners where accountability can, at times, be reduced.

Nevertheless, the Southern African region emphasised the importance of public participation in the various legislative frameworks such as constitutions, national development plans (NDPs), structure plans and town planning schemes (Matamanda & Chinozvina 2020:1; Mautjana & Makombe 2014:52). However, a number of shortcomings have been presented

as preventing public participation achieving its intended aims and objectives, such as the technical and language barriers of planning and its documents (Becker 2013:5; Hammami 2012:7; Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016:78); increased corruption (Siame et al. 2020:8; Zinnbauer 2019:2); lack of skills and finance (Frayne 2000:60); and lack of political will, low capacity and financial mismanagement (Chirisa & Matamanda 2019:15; Nel 2016a:88).

Nonetheless, various participation platforms were created in the postcolonial / post-apartheid period to enhance participation in most Southern African countries, but these were being appropriated by the powerful elite, and mostly used for compliance purposes only (Mautjana & Makombe 2014:65; Oranje 2014:8), and in the process perpetuated inequalities (Sihlongonyane 2015b:84). In South Africa, in the absence of proper participation platforms that reach the poorest groups, residents initiated various service protests and land occupation strategies to be heard (Bond & Mottiar 2013:290; Ngwenya & Cirolia 2020:8). The Malawian case presented what can be referred to as “quiet encroachment” (Bayat 2000, cited in De Satgé & Watson 2018:70) to the question of participation. Although the Malawian legal framework provided the necessary participation platforms, the high corruption and poor economic management restricted participation to the rich elite only (Refstie & Millstein 2019). In this case, the residents engaged legally or illegally in tactics of exploiting “bureaucratic slippages” and “connections” to access services, land and other necessities to demand their citizenship, while the authorities turned a blind eye to such activities (Refstie & Millstein 2019:244). The Zimbabwean experience reflected similar results as its neighbours. In Zimbabwe, public participation, although ensured in the statutes as a right for all, was hijacked by the elite to protect their interests through patronage and clientelism approaches, while the poor and marginalised remained largely excluded (Matamanda & Chinozvina 2020:10).

In Namibia, although participation is a mandatory requirement as per the Constitution and various policies dealing with spatial planning as alluded to above (Mijiga 2001:2), the conventional participatory methods of the planning policies of the past two decades have been found to be ineffective (Tvedten & Mupotola 1995:13). In the first two decades of independence, local authorities were caught in a contradictory situation where the same tools (i.e., cost recovery principles) were applied in the maintenance of an efficient and highly standardised spatial management system based on a private property market approach, while simultaneously attempting to respond to the demands of the poor residents in urban areas (Peyroux 2001:306; Piermay & Sohn 1999:34). This had a negative effect on the

participation levels of the poorer residents in the Namibian urban areas (Piermay & Sohn 1999:41). Moreover, some urban development programmes that could enhance or instil a spirit of public participation among the disadvantaged and poor communities were implemented during the 1990s, but with little or no success (Delgado 2018:15). Some of the obstacles that contributed to the halting or non-success of the projects included the lack of coordination between development agencies (mostly international organisations) and the various government ministries; lack of resources and capacity from the government institutions; and the low to non-existence of community-based organisations that could formulate their collective needs (Peyroux 2001:305; Tvedten & Mupotola 1995:27-28). However, the housing demand inspired community organisations, such as the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia and the Namibia Housing Action Group, managed to increase grassroots participation in housing matters around the country as from the early 1990s (Mitlin & Muller 2004:178-179). For example, these housing community organisations, through own collective savings, managed to buy land for the construction of houses for their members (Muller & Mitlin 2007:428). The initiatives of groups such as the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia demonstrate the capabilities from the low-income sections of society to organise themselves, imagine and design their own layouts for housing and implement their plans (Lühl 2018:7). Despite these limited but important successes, the neo-liberal spirit adopted by the Namibian state and its local authorities meant that participation levels of the poor and low-income residents could not be significantly improved as the underlying market-orientated approaches remained unchanged (Delgado 2018:15).

Currently in urban areas, policy terminologies such as low-density and high-density, describing various residential areas, were found to reproduce class differences and racial segregation inherited from the apartheid period (Lühl & Delgado 2018:9). This further inhibit full participation of the poorer residents in the urban economy as the inherited spatial distances between spaces remain equally unchanged (Lühl & Delgado 2018:9). Thus, regarding participation, similar experiences as those in South Africa (protests and occupations), were observed in Namibia as well. Recent and emerging active social movements engaged in land occupations and invasions to attract the attention of government to the housing crisis (Delgado 2021:58).

Nonetheless, the recently passed URPA, Act 5 of 2018, and its Regulations (2020) promise improvements concerning participation levels (Mabakeng 2020:11). The question to be posed is whether the methodologies to encourage public participation have changed or not. This

will be explored and discussed in Chapter 7. Regarding informal settlements, Mabakeng (2020:11) warned Namibian planning as follows against the perpetuation of exclusion and poverty through URPA 2018:

People in informal settlements ... do have a wealth of ideas on how they can improve their communities. Every town planning office should find means to harness this wealth, and participatory planning is the starting point.

One important tool that Southern Africa possesses that is not fully applied in its participation approaches is that of the *Ubuntu* ethic and principle, a tool which Munyaka and Motlhabi (2009:75) described as “a call to participation” which demands that “a service to humanity must be done in a practical way”, and it should be a “practical communal action to alleviate human suffering”. This echoes an earlier assertion by Muller (1998:299), who reiterated that *Ubuntu* is a concept that implies a “cooperative communitarian concept”, and further stated:

South African planning is thus germinating in the rich soil of African philosophy and is seeking to give tangible expression to that source in the promotion of grass-roots community participation in planning processes.

Although the above assertions are valid, the outright application of *Ubuntu* should consider the differences that exist within Southern African communities. Such consideration should carefully take the conflicting rationalities into account (Watson 2003:395), and then identify different cases of positive knowledges and practices on participation that may be transferable from one group to another, although not in a universalising manner (Flyvbjerg 2011:305; Jojola 2008:117), in order to achieve a common goal of urban area improvement, well-being, and sense of place.

To achieve higher levels of participation levels, the Southern African region will have to pay attention to the dominant neoliberal policy environment in which it operates to create inclusive settlements for all. The World Cities Report (2020) emphasised that inclusivity should be a process whereby the participation and safety of all residents are guaranteed, the access to various urban services for all residents are ensured, and that partnerships with all diverse groups, including the marginalised, are established to ensure that “no one is left behind” (United Nations Human Settlements Programme [UN-Habitat] 2020:53, 63-64). However, the neoliberal planning approaches are more inclined to concentrate on the glamorous planning projects that define urban success, rather than paying attention to the plight of the urban poor (Baeten 2012:209). The contradiction is that increased pride and recognition is given to competitive neoliberal planning projects that appears inclusive of all

residents, while in reality these projects favour market-based investments and elite interests while ignoring the basic needs of the majority of the disadvantaged groups (Huchzermeyer 2014:66; Moroni 2020:258). As a result, and as the scholars in this section observed, the marginalised people will engage in coping tactics of corruption and illegalities to survive and obtain recognition.

The next subsection therefore explores how the Global South planners and theorists are engaging this calling for inclusive participation.

3.4.4 Global South calling for inclusive participation

What is the way forward to improve or transform planning performance in public participation? The challenges are many, and the literature suggests that planning should enter into an introspection phase, engage alternative methods of theorising and practice, while keeping contextual differences and conflicting rationalities in sight (Connell 2014; Miraftab 2020; Porter 2010; Watson 2016). Porter (2010:155) suggested that planning should be able to re-examine itself, accept its past discriminatory approaches, “unlearn its privileges” (see Spivak 1994, cited in Porter 2010), and start recognising other sources of knowledge production, as alluded to earlier in this chapter. Other scholars proposed for planning to open up and become more flexible by listening to local voices, stories and practices embedded in local communities and their structures (Baskin 2008:10; Sandercock 2003a:1; Sihlongonyane 2015b:94; Todes 2011:129). Although stories facilitate participation processes and sharpen critical judgement, planners are warned to identify stories that fit the need and the situation at hand (Sandercock 2003a:19). In terms of the creation of land uses such as public open spaces, planners are reminded of the important role that local social movements and political community structures play in that regard (Qian 2014:837; Roy 2015:9).

However, current planning policy and practices facilitate the creation of different sites of participation, “invited and invented spaces”, with negative consequences at times (see Miraftab 2009:36). Miraftab (2009:36) described *invited spaces* as those actions of the grassroots legitimised by government and other powerful institutions, while *invented spaces* are those created by the marginalised and poor groups to challenge the status quo. Miraftab (2020:437) argued that the powerful institutions often criminalise the invented spaces. This, by implication, criminalises the knowledges coming from those marginalised communities, such as the spatial IKS centred around cultural open spaces explored in this study. For Miraftab (2020:437), this is uncalled for, as the tension involved between the invented and

invited spaces is positively facilitating new ways of seeing, hearing and imagining. It is thus by understanding the diversity and the beliefs of the communities (Harrison 2006:332; Watson 2006:35), and the improvement of their participation levels, that the complex or 'wicked' problems in urban areas can be addressed (Crowley & Head 2017:545).

Although it is not easy to attain full participation by all as required by the Constitution (Bailey 2018), and as experience has shown, examples from recent experiences showed that broadening participatory platforms can improve the situation (see Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019). Scholars in the settler states argued and demonstrated that by including indigenous spatial knowledges and values in the planning process, and by visualising such knowledges physically in urban spaces, the participation levels in urban affairs increased considerably (Barry & Agyeman 2020; Marek 2020; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019). Such success can only be achieved if indigenous communities and their leaders are empowered to participate alongside the professionals in planning projects (Ellery & Ellery 2019:243). This was found to have increased the level of sense of place for participants and equally led to an improved stewardship and responsibility towards public spaces in Australian cities (Ellery & Ellery 2019:243). This speaks directly to one of the concerns of this study: Why do the post-apartheid former black townships, like those in Windhoek's low-income areas such as Havana, appear to lack a sense of place and appear neglected, while policies advocate for inclusive and healthy urban areas?

The above insights on participation demonstrate the various attempts that the planning field has engaged in over the years in the process of improving its application. These efforts were taking place at the same time when postmodern critiques were directed towards modernism and its rational scientific planning models, which still continues today. These critiques were advocating for new methods of doing planning in order to include those excluded from formal processes, thus a drive towards a cultural turn to include the marginalised voices and increase possibilities for genuine transformations (see Sandercock 1998:50). It is this cultural perspective, still being sought today in the Global South, that the next section will focus on, to elucidate reasons of its origin, what it entailed, and how it influenced rational scientific planning critics to consider alternative planning knowledges.

3.5 Cultural turn in planning

UNESCO (2001) defined the term *culture* as follows:

[T]he set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group ... [which] encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

The clarification of the term *culture* as a “way of life” was emphasised by Raymond Williams in the 1950s, who elaborated on the various elements of the term to encompass “a whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual” aspects (Williams 1966, cited in Young 2008:73). Although it could be argued that culture has been in existence since human beings started to wander around this earth, the cultural turn in the context of this study refers to a period or moment when various scholars and philosophers recognised that social problems could not be solved satisfactorily through rational scientific knowledge alone (Bonnell & Hunt 1999:2). Scholars criticising the positivistic rational scientific model stressed elevated terms such as cultural diversity, multiplicity, multiculturalism, coexistence, policy transformation, indigeneity, indigenous knowledge, recognition, inclusion, deconstruction and reflexivity, to draw attention to how exclusion has taken place and to propose new methodologies of creating more integrated communities (see Dunn 1997; Graham & Healey 1999; Kong 1999; Pieterse 2008; Porter 2010, 2013, 2017; Sandercock 1998; Smith 2012; Tuwe 2016; Watson 2016).

3.5.1 Cultural turn and its evolution

According to Bonnell and Hunt (1999:10), the breakdown of the positivistic paradigms cannot be blamed on the cultural turn, but it is their fragmentation that led to the increase of cultural studies. The cultural turn has seen disruptions of established and dominant concepts and approaches, and further witnessed disruptions by radical approaches such as Marxism and feminism (Dunn 1997:3). The constructivist position during this period was that the various categories of humanity, identities and other conceptual orderings are contingent and dynamic, thus not natural and primordial as was assumed (Dunn 1997:3). This period was therefore marked by the “serious questioning of established social categories” (Campbell 2018:e27), and a drive towards a reconceptualisation of these categories that refer to the spatial component of social life (Löw 2013, cited in Campbell 2018:e28).

Planning’s cultural focus became prominent in the 1960s, when ideas of using cultural planners gained an increased interest (Sirayi & Nawa 2014). The years from the 1980s to the 1990s witnessed an increased interest in the importance of culture and cultural policies as essential tools of urban regeneration and residents’ survival (Nawa 2016; Nawa et al. 2014;

Perry et al. 2019; Sirayi 2019; Sirayi & Nawa 2014; Sitas 2018). The destruction of urban areas during World War II in Europe led to culture being harnessed (1940s to 1960s) in the redevelopment of the areas with facilities such as museums, galleries, and recreational parks (Nawa 2016:761). However, these cultural economies did not always result in positive outcomes for the residents of cities in other parts of the world. The cultural industries, promoted within neoliberal agendas, ended up favouring the rich, and displacing some poor communities to the fringes (Sager 2011:155).

The cultural turn equally raised awareness on how text and document-led practices, historical narratives and interpretations were favourable to certain privileged groups in society, while others have been marginalised, hidden or made invisible, thus directly or indirectly promoting oppression (Dunn 1997:2; Porter 2010:105). Porter (2010:17, 2013:294) took the critique further, stating that for coexistence of knowledges to occur, a deconstruction stance on the genealogy of spatial planning cultures is first needed to unravel the different oppressive systems that led to the inequalities in the colonised world. According to Rössler (2009:319), research should continue with detailed case studies in this globalised world in order to gain an improved understanding of the altered relations between place and culture. Thus, during the cultural turn thinking, cultural research for example, has been encouraged to include a policy focus into its research agendas, “as long as the definition of policy is not a narrow focusing on the processes of policy development and government processes” (O’Regan 1993, cited in Dunn 1997:7). Dunn (1997:7) emphasised that in cultural research, policies should be able to highlight power operations, the forces that engender oppressions and the various strategies engaged for resistance. The influences of globalisation on IKS could, for example, be considered during such policy research and analysis processes. Such research can pave the way for the creation of platforms where policies can be crafted that clarify communities, and the values of the social and political uses of their spaces (Karuri-Sebina & Koma 2015:157). This will encourage a move away from current text formulations, where definitions are crafted in ways that are understood by a few dominant members of society (Barry & Porter 2011:178).

3.5.2 Spatial cultures implicated in planning

The critique directed towards planning and its complicity in producing places of inequality and oppression has reached another twist when its space production techniques became the focus of research (see Njoh 2009; Porter 2010). These space production techniques, termed

by Porter (2010:47) as *spatial cultures*, are interpreted to include “activities, readings, desires, philosophies, technologies and regulatory methods” that were utilised to produce colonial spaces. The understanding of these colonial spatial techniques will enable a better understanding of the cultures, colonial and spatial planning processes involved in the colonisation process (Porter 2010:48). In that vein, Njoh (2009:301) argued that a thorough consideration of colonial spatial policies and their understanding is essential in order to prevent a repetition of past oppressive spatial processes that could lead to development efforts to fail. However, postcolonial African countries are struggling to improve on these spatial cultures through current spatial policies. In order to attain a better understanding of these colonial spatial cultures, Porter (2010:44) proposed a few aspects that need to be investigated:

- *the view of the existence of space and human-environment relationship (spatial ontology),*
- *the comportments of people in relation to space (spatial desires and sensibilities),*
- *the mobilization of knowledge towards spatial order and regulation (rationalities of space);*
- *and the modes of activity which operated within and upon space (technologies of space, thus planning practice).*

In the African context, such spatial cultures by colonial powers included desires, imaginations and conceptualisations of spaces as empty or *terra nullius* (Baas 2019:5). These spatial cultures (aspects) led to the creation of a series of policies and regulations to produce the space, mostly through various control power forms such as force, coercion, seduction, manipulation and segregation (Müller-Friedman 2008:32; Njoh 2009:302-303). The schemes that came out of such places, for example in Namibia and South Africa, were additionally based on racialised ideology and the knowledge and power of the colonialists, and thus contributed largely to the spatial ordering through the practice of planning (Barry & Porter 2011:182, also see Chapter 2, section 2.3).

The postcolonial condition reflects a continuation of these discriminatory and oppressive spatial cultures in other forms. The inherited spatial planning policies continue, although amended, to exclude important local knowledges. Planning is strongly regulated and justified to be rational and scientific, and universal, and in the process reproducing colonial spatial cultures or modern Western techniques (Charman et al. 2017:23; Connell 2014:213; Watson 2014b:71). All these reoccur with the framework of collaborative planning processes, which

were conceived to improve planning in the first place. Porter (2010:78) offered a warning in this regard to planners, which is actually of significance to this study as well:

[T]he collaborative turn in planning and management is in danger of missing the key moments of critical transformation unless it is accompanied by a sufficiently deconstructive stance towards its own ontological and epistemological philosophies.

The understanding of colonial spatial cultures is relevant to this study in two senses: First, it will assist in the prevention of repeating past mistakes when making recommendations for creating new spaces, such as the cultural open spaces explored later in this study. Second, it is highlighting the importance of reflection, especially when investigating indigenous space production methodologies where certain cultures may be oppressive or exclusive to neighbouring groups. This second aspect will be elaborated upon in the next chapter and explored further in Chapters 7 and 8. The next subsection attempts to highlight the experience the Southern African region had, and still has, with the cultural turn.

3.5.3 Cultural turn in Southern Africa

This subsection does not delve into the history of African culture, especially how it was, and how it was transformed during the colonisation period, but rather focuses on the dynamics that started to unfold during the independence years of many African countries, zooming in on the various spatial planning changes that took place during these times. The aim is to look at what are the new spatial cultures being proposed or being introduced that are changing the urban spaces and places and what is still being omitted during this emerging cultural turn in the region.

The rise of the cultural turn in Africa can be divided into two phases: the first being in the 1970s when growing emphasis was placed on IKS research and inclusion into development projects, and a break away from “vernacular architecture” to more culturally sensitive studies of African settlement systems and built forms (Tapela 2007:103). The second phase was observed in the 1980s, with an increased international tone emphasising the importance and protection of the world’s diverse cultures, through programmes such as the Local Agenda 21 (Tapela 2007:103), and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations 2008:2,11).

African scholars raised questions surrounding the inefficiency of the modern urban planning systems to solve many social urban problems and called for a refocus of research towards traditionally produced spaces in search of answers (Amankwah-Ayeh 1996; Tapela 2007). The

traditional indigenous spatial settlements and their importance to communities were for long kept in the background due to the negative perceptions maintained in the built and environmental disciplines (Tapela 2007:104), and the modernisation and civilising missions of the colonial project (Njoh 2009:311; Obeng-Odoom 2015:560). In fact, the missionaries who preceded colonialism, were already engaged in the replacement of local settlement patterns by imposing European settlement images on the local communities, using various strategies to transform traditional homesteads into modern planned areas (Japha & Japha 1997:10-14).

This negative view of Africans as chaotic and primitive, deleted or silenced almost all aspects of indigenous spatial knowledges and cultures from urban areas, and replaced them with Western formulated planning, values and place or space management regulations, even if some of these adoptions and transformations had disastrous outcomes (Hammami 2012:1; Tapela 2007:104). The loss of sense of place and indigenous local knowledges were some of the negative consequences of the early “displacement effects” (Japha & Japha 1997:7; Obeng-Odoom 2015:558). However, these trends did not change much after the colonial period, as many postcolonial cities, especially in Africa, were and are still engaged in highly technical master plans as “best practices” of “worlding cities”. This approach, according to scholars such as Friedmann (2010:149), Mabogunje (1990:147), Myers (2011:55), Todes (2011:121) and Watson (2014a:117), paid little attention to the poor or the marginalised in those places. Therefore, the indigenous cultures and the spatial IKS embedded in them, especially in the post-apartheid cities, remain largely hidden.

For example, the Namibian post-apartheid cultural and heritage policies promote formal cultural activities such as museums and art centres, and also landscapes (Gewald 2009:268; Republic of Namibia 2004a:34, 2004b:9) which end up being dominated by the richer groups. The question of different rationalities in planning (Watson 2006) is again evident here, where the priorities of those in power are not linked to the priorities of those on the ground, especially those in low-income areas (Gewald 2009:271; Larsen & Augustus 2020). For Baeten (2012:210), these contradictions should not exist in the first place, as they are against the main motif of planning’s ontology, that of being “integrative in order to come to ‘good’ land use decisions”.

Nevertheless, a change in perceptions is steadily being observed where indigenous spatial planning principles are now being included and recognised in planning policy discourses and practices in some Southern African countries (Hammami 2012; Tapela 2007). This practice

approach has had limited success due to persistence of inherited regulations being implemented by Western-trained African planners, misinterpretations and lack of indigenous knowledge among planners, poor interpretation of policy definitions; and an assumption of planning as an all-problem-solver profession (Amankwah-Ayew 1996; Molebatsi and Kalabamu 2016:69; Tapela 2007:112). Botswana attempted the introduction of local indigenous spatial concepts and features in some towns but has experienced negative outcomes due to misinterpretation of the original socio-spatial meanings of those spaces (Hammami 2012:14).

In cases where indigenous knowledge and cultural values have progressed into urban policy discourses, the focus is more on the marketisation of indigenous cultures to the outside world, through cultural tourism and festivals (Steyn & Roodt 2003; Tapela 2016). In the context of this study, those initiatives are welcomed but they do not reach the large majority of the marginalised groups, and their well-being and those of their neighbourhoods are therefore not addressed. Warnings in this regard draw attention to planners and developers to consider the preservation of the integrity of the local communities (Perry et al. 2019:3), despite the pressures presented by the globalisation processes where city-branding through cultural activities and local economic developments are dominating development discourses (Tapela 2016:102). In this context, the rich dominate the processes, while the marginalised are neglected (Sihlongonyane 2016).

In the last decade, scholars in Southern Africa are increasingly advocating for cultural planning and cultural policies to be embraced by municipalities and other government structures as tools that assist urban planning with improvement of underdeveloped and degenerating cities (Nawa 2016; Perry & Sitas 2019; Perry et al. 2019; Sirayi 2017; Sirayi & Nawa 2014; Sitas 2018). This is in line with the latest World Cities Report 2020, which emphasised the importance of culture in cities for sustainable development (UN-Habitat 2020:174). In that vein, attention is drawn to the importance of cultural or festival activities as potential drawers of diverse groups of people in urban areas, while also generating income opportunities to the low-income, marginalised, or the youth (Myers 2011:183; Perry et al. 2019:10; Sitas 2018:589). The local example is the Windhoek /Ae//Gams Festival, which has been an annual event since 2001, held in both the city centre and Katutura to celebrate different cultures under the theme *unity in diversity* (Becker 2015:32-33). However, a warning is that festivals can erase or suppress local cultures if carbon-copied from elsewhere, for example when cities enter into worlding competitive approaches that neglect local knowledges (Burke 2019:278; Perry et al.

2019:3). The concern is that these competitive worlding approaches are mostly expert-led and favour the neoliberal market logic more than anything else (Ilcan & Philips 2010:867). Nonetheless, properly conceived festivals can become spaces of interaction, where imagination of alternative futures for places can be enhanced and socio-economic problems can be discussed (Perry & Sitas 2019). The view of Perry and Sitas (2019) is important for this study's exploration of the importance of cultural open spaces.

The conclusion is that the cultural turn did indeed influence the way people think of planning and its practice. New ideas, including collaborative and communicative planning, are proposed to improve planning theory and practice. Despite this new thinking, the cultural turn did not change the political economic dominance over planning matters (Harrison et al. 2007:113). It is this outcome that engendered increased critiques against the seemingly appropriate planning approaches (communicative/collaborative planning) on how and with which processes they intend attaining their good normative and inclusive ideals (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002; Harris 2002; Hillier 2002). That critique is still of relevance today. The question that arises is then: What type of transformations are needed to create places and spaces that reflect an increased level of community well-being and sense of place, particularly in the low-income areas of the post-apartheid cities? The diverse knowledges and spatial aspects from indigenous communities that could assist planning in its quest for improved and inclusive places are elaborated in more detail in Chapter 4. The next subsection therefore only attempts to briefly clarify the transformative planning and sense of place concepts, with their related caveats.

3.5.4 Transformative planning and sense of place concepts

The two concepts, transformative planning and sense of place, as evidenced in their use in the writings up to this point, are intricately linked. Their understanding is therefore essential as they are part of the arguments made for the elevation of alternative knowledges in planning, such as the spatial indigenous knowledges promoted in this thesis.

3.5.4.1 Transformative planning concept

Friedmann (2011:4) explained that transformative planning “is a process of initiating moral actions in the public domain, where such process should be subjected to constant revisions and corrections through reflective processes of social learning”. Sandercock (1998:169) argued for planning to open up to and engage alternative knowledge, thus a transformation

of current planning thinking towards an environment of multiplicities through the engagement of “insurgent planning practices”, or what Sandercock (1998:7) aspired to as “togetherness in difference”. In addition, Pieterse (2008:109) argued that “a deeper appreciation of cultural identities and dynamics that play out in the lived realities of daily life and symbolic manifestations is a prerequisite for more appropriate urban transformations”.

Porter (2010) took the transformation assessment further, hence the relevance of her work to this study. She advised planners to engage in *learning* of other knowledges and *unlearning privilege* of bad planning practices in order for the transformation of planning practices to be successful (Porter 2010:156). Porter (2010:156) further elaborated on the meaning of *unlearning privilege* as “historicising the ideological formations of planning, its silences and formative productions, its practices, expressions and rationalities”. For Porter (2010), this translates into a continuous assessment and critique of the structures and institutions in which people find themselves. Furthermore, Porter (2010:2) stressed that it is important “to know the complicity of planning in the colonial process, and to know how the ontological and epistemological basis that gave it its shape and agency, persist”.

Nonetheless, the aspects affecting transformation are varied, and any success will, in addition to the insights above, also depend on the commitment of the local communities to transformative initiatives (Smith 2012:232); and communities, the planners and other actors’ willingness to learn from each other *new* ways of space, and the establishment of community organisations that are sustainable (Nyseth & Hamdouch 2019:4; Pieterse 2008:76). Communities have – sometimes through their cultural frameworks described in previous sections – tendencies that might encourage or discourage collective initiatives (Kennedy 2009:12). For Kennedy (2009:12), transformative community planning entails “overcoming the challenge of choosing the positives over the negatives, constantly expanding the ordinary people’s self-confidence, trust in each other, and ability to understand and strategise about their situation”. This is aimed at coexistence of diverse communities in a shared space, for example. The concept of coexistence refers to the existence of diverse groups with different ways of being, different conceptualisations of spaces and different social structures, for example (Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:6). On the promotion of coexistence of diverse groups around public spaces in urban settings, Sandercock (2003b:322) stressed the importance of institutional frameworks to create platforms that can handle these differences and conflicts and where groups can learn from each other. Sandercock (2003b:322) further argued that

planners need to acknowledge the existence of differences and emotions involved, and then attempt to deal with them in order for coexistence to succeed.

The unwillingness of planners and their institutions to learn from the residents has been at the centre of postcolonial critiques towards planning (see Harrison 2006:332). In that vein, the proposal made by Oranje et al. (2020:8) was of relevance to this study, and for planners as well, and in the context of informal settlements and their informal economies, to practitioners to *learn from below*:

From a spatial planning and spatial transformation approach, learning from below, taking cues from what has been made to work under very difficult conditions, and using this 'grounded ingenuity and wisdom' to guide and inform credible, locally-responsive and effective policy, legislation and planning, may be a far better option than developing generic one-size-fit-all proposals from afar.

The above theoretical insights are relevant and provide strong foundations for the articulation of this study's findings and analysis in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively. Nevertheless, this study sought to add to the discourse of alternative knowledges which planning should open up to. The presentation of spatial IKS was done to provoke current modernist spatial planning practices in Namibia (see Müller-Friedman 2008:40) to recognise it as an alternative or additional tool that can be used to transform low-income and poorer urban areas. Current mainstream planning practices and policies still do not reflect spatial indigenous knowledges, and they are not understood by many residents of the poorer and low-income areas.

3.5.4.2 Concept of sense of place

The *sense of place* concept involves many interpretations on how people form connections with their environment, and various contextual perspectives have been provided from anthropological, environmental, geographical, historical and sociological viewpoints (Ellery & Ellery 2019:237; Erdiaw-Kwasie & Basson 2017:517; Rössler 2009:298).

An anthropological perspective, for example, argues that a sense of place is derived from various factors in different societies with different cultural, historical and environmental circumstances (Rössler 2009:298). As briefly alluded to in Chapter 1, this concept draws attention to the interactions between people and their places, and how these processes contribute to the production of a sense of place (Waterson 1997, cited in Rössler 2009:298). In a place-based approach, the focus is towards the residents' input for the improvement of their area, and also to address social exclusion through the provision of needed public goods

and services (Chand 2018:160). This resonates with the concern raised in Chapter 1 and Section 3.4 of this chapter, that the residents themselves, if provided with appropriate opportunities and participatory platforms, can positively contribute to the well-being of their residential area. However, this is constrained by the predominant view of urban planning to largely consider physical features when addressing issues of sense of place (Alyani & Herlily 2019:40), thus ignoring local people's knowledges and values. This echoes earlier observations by Hay (1998:246), who argued that modernist approaches privilege the aesthetical or touristic aspects of a place over the *insidedness* or *rootedness* (the local everyday form developed over the years). From an indigenous perspective, Walker and Matunga (2013:15) argued that indigenous communities possess cultural frameworks that link people, place, knowledge, values and worldviews with practices that enhance their well-being. However, it is this multiplicity of spatial knowledges that needs to be acknowledged and recognised as argued in this study. Such an acknowledgement and recognition will broaden the possibilities of creating alternative inclusive spaces, currently being restricted by the existing narrow and dominant disciplinary boundaries directing space production practices (Fisker et al. 2019:4; Lefebvre 1991:62; Pinder 2015:33).

3.5.4.3 *Caveat towards sense of place*

The concept *sense of place* is complex and multilayered, as many authors hold different, sometimes conflicting, views about its nature and meaning (Alyani & Herlily 2019:40; Jivén & Larkham 2003:71). A warning in this regard is that there are limitations linked to the analysis of sense of place. The argument is that the sense of place analyst that could be a town planner in this study's context, could be "influenced by his/her pre-existing biases and a lack of innate cultural understandings of places", and this consequently could overlook the real motive behind the local people's actions in their places (Amsden et al. 2010, cited in Erdiaw-Kwasie & Basson 2018:520). Thus, the ensuing lack of clarity on the *sense of place* concept leads to studies and policies being unable to elaborate on place-based emotions, especially on the description why people value what they do (Latham & Layton 2019:9). In practice, this translates in the dominant knowledge to overlook other existing knowledges. From an indigenous knowledge perspective, the sense of place (which includes tangible and intangible aspects) is the main component of all the interconnections among communities, but current practices and policies favour the material culture over the symbolic aspects (Budwa & McCreary 2013:197).

However, the application of spatial IKS in multiple and diverse groups in residential areas need careful consideration as it can become another oppressive tool of the powerful. In some African postcolonial communities, IKS was appropriated by powerful groups to oppress or exclude the less powerful, as in the case of Zimbabwe (Zegeye & Vambe 2006:341-342). In Namibia, although not yet the case, some *place praise* (*omiṭanḁu*) could end up alienating other groups due to some claims in the expressions used (Baas 2019:223; Bollig 2009a:20). In that vein, Zegeye and Vambe (2006:354) agreed that, as memory is a social construct, it has the capacity to exclude or include some facts. This is particularly so in contemporary African political systems, where leadership styles borrowed from Western models are detached from local ethical and moral values (Lajul 2020:179). In this context, the ensuing cultural translations, inappropriately done at times, could lead to widespread corruption by those in power to the neglect of the poor majority (Lajul 2020:179; Umemoto 2001). Planners are therefore encouraged to know and understand the places they are planning, know their histories and cultures by mutual learning, listen to the stories by the local communities, recognise, incorporate and integrate their multiple perspectives, and jointly engage in the planning of their places (Dockry et al. 2016:136; Umemoto 2001:28; Vigiola 2015:211). The joint planning approach will increase the spirit of belonging and sense of place by the local communities, make the proposed plans more acceptable and assist planners in understanding why people attach certain values to some places (Dockry et al. 2016:127; Ellery & Ellery 2019:238). This empowering community involvement approach has the potential to motivate communities to pursue future changes to their areas, to confidently add their voices to urban planning discourses and to foster community stewardship for their place (Ellery & Ellery 2019:246). The focus of planners therefore should be on how the local communities are engaged, and how the locals are given responsibilities in managing solution-seeking steps as important avenue towards forging a sense of place for all (Ellery & Ellery 2019:244).

However, despite the above caveats and possible solutions, the question facing the Global South urban areas is: How will the cities in this context overcome their social problems in the face of a dominant and homogenous knowledge that directs space production processes through well-intentioned collaborative and communicative planning processes? This dominant knowledge has become the main “spatial imaginary” of our everyday lives and is often adopted by planning as representing the past, present and future of our urban areas (Davoudi 2018:7). According to Watson (2014a:117), the current disjuncture between the grand planning policies being implemented (for, example eco-cities, smart cities, world cities)

and the lived realities on the ground, depict a worrisome situation, while the planning profession remain silent on the issue. This situation, if not attended to, will not promote a sense of belonging and sense of place for the majority of urban residents in African cities. In such a context where power relations remain asymmetrical (Harrison 2002:168; Porter & Barry 2015:23), it should then be agreed that the silencing and alienation of spatial IKS will further be enhanced.

The next section will therefore critically explore the various ways how power, knowledge, and discourse intersect, and how this intersection presents itself in policies and in practices. These three aspects play a significant role in determining the outcome of planning practice and policies, and their understanding and clarification is of particular importance for this study.

3.6 Power, knowledge and discourse

The concepts of power, knowledge and discourse are interrelated and exist in all the communities worldwide (see Wagenaar 2011). This study elaborated on these concepts as they are involved in the production of spaces, whether through conventional planning methods or traditional indigenous approaches.

In the postcolonial urban areas, the prevailing neoliberal reform agendas deploy various metaphors to direct the development of places. The neoliberal and market-driven policies use metaphors such as *good governance*, *efficiency*, *competence* or *social capital* (Kearney et al. 2019:23; Watson 2009a:2265). Powerful actors use these metaphors to gain greater legitimacy from communities (Jacobs 2006:44). However, these metaphors do not respond adequately to the aspirations of the poor or low-income residents, even if they are formulated with the best intentions of leading institutions (Bekker et al. 2021:73). In this context, metaphors used in the ordering of spaces assume a powerful role that determines what should or can be done, while at the same time hide some other important aspects (Semino et al. 2016:628; Wagenaar 2011:80). These metaphors dominantly act as representatives of some aspects of everyday life as reality and common sense (Wagenaar 2011:105). It could then be argued that these metaphors, originating from certain privileged knowledge, end up becoming dominant discourses that find their way in the policies that regulate urban development.

According to Nientiend (2016:1), there is a need to develop new metaphors that will creatively improve the thinking of the diversity and complexity of our cities. In addition, recent

studies show the importance of paying attention to the education of planners, where locally contextualised knowledge should be prioritised if the gap between planning theory and practice is to be narrowed (Denoon-Stevens et al. 2020:12). However, such new thinking should be accompanied by a clear understanding of the enabling concepts, namely power, discourse and knowledge, that are central in creating inclusive settlements that address the well-being of all residents in a city, including those in low-income areas such as Havana and other areas around Windhoek.

3.6.1 Discourse–knowledge–power relationship

The following definitions on the three concepts highlight the close relationship among the three concepts:

Discourse

[W]ays of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people (Locke 2004, cited in Mogashoa 2014:107).

[P]ractices that systematically form the objects of which they speak, and therefore, it is through discourse that meanings, subjects and subjectivities are formed (Foucault 1979, cited in Wright 2004:36).

Knowledge

[A] set of statements which are conditional, contingent and arbitrary but which are, either explicitly or implicitly, represented as absolute, universal and necessary in order to achieve the objectives of a particular discourse (James 2004:29).

Power:

[P]ower produces knowledge ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at same time power relations (McHoul & Grace 1993:59).

The above definitions are based on the Foucauldian interpretation of the relationship of the three concepts as attested by the authors. The three concepts are intricately linked and cannot be easily separated from each other in everyday life (Wagenaar 2011:120). The statements in discourses, for example, can include sentences, phrases, exclamations, non-verbal physical acts, practices and visual symbols, and can exist as the laws, policies, institutions, and course descriptions and promotional material of a legal course (James 2004:14; Wagenaar 2011:120), which can be a planning course as well. As a result, and

according to James (2004:35), power is not necessarily repressive but keeps the engines of legal (*or planning*) education (*and planning practice*) functioning (James 2004:35). Another Foucauldian clarification of how power should be analysed, is his emphases that “studies should focus on the practices of power and the various technologies applied as well as their histories” (McHoul & Grace 1993:88-90).

The above insights were relevant to this study as it involved the exploration of Namibian planning legislation. The discourses in these planning documents may comprise numerous words, meanings and images that are presented as reality with powerful effects (Lombard 2014:3). At times, these powerful words in policy texts may comprise hidden oppressive and exclusionary approaches discriminating against certain groups, such as indigenous communities in the context of the settler states (e.g., Australia and Canada) (Barry & Porter 2012; McLeod et al. 2015, 2017; Porter & Barry 2015). In this latter context, for example, textual discourses in the nuisance municipal by-laws in a study of the Canadian city of Ontario revealed benefits towards non-indigenous sections of the urban residents, while indigenous communities were excluded and deemed outside the jurisdiction of the municipality (Dorries 2017:72-74).

From an indigenous perspective, it is argued that a discourse importance is in its role of not only reflecting the characteristics of a certain culture, but also in the construction and transformation of that same culture (Retzlaff 2006:26). Indigenous people possess certain discourses that guide their existence, and that are constantly repeated at events to emphasise not only the power of such discourses, but also their guiding principles (Retzlaff 2006:28). This is akin to what Foucault (1972:128) referred to as the “archive”, which he described as the “general system of the formation and transformation of statements”. Chapter 4 explores this in terms of the spatial IKS approaches of the two communities chosen for this study. This study, therefore, connects with the call to diversify the planning knowledge and discourse by embracing various other conceptualisations existing in a given space and place through an IKS lens (Umemoto 2001:28; Viswanathan 2009:179). Lefebvre (1991:32) has already elaborated on the need to acknowledge the confinement of space production practices to Western concepts, in order to realise what other knowledges are missed.

The above description of the power–knowledge–discourse nexus provides an important understanding, basis and angle for this study in investigating discourses and knowledges that influence indigenous and conventional spatial planning in Namibia.

3.6.2 Role of power–knowledge–discourse in planning

The role of power relations has always been a determining factor in the lives of people since time immemorial, and therefore, and through a Lefebvrian interpretation, social practices and spatial practices are interconnected (Young 2008:81). These interconnections in socio-spatial practices are being explored in this subsection, to obtain clarity on the role of aspects that determine the production of spaces, namely power, knowledge and discourse. These aspects and their understanding are crucial in planning as they are implicated in the everyday spatial activities and processes involving the institutions and actors concerned (Calderon & Westin 2021:16). According to Healey (2003:116), this interrelatedness facilitates inclusive platforms where embedded practices and normative assumptions (thus including discourses, knowledges, powers) of structures and institutions can be challenged for treatment. The concern of the critiques is that powerful groups can dominate the weaker groups through various techniques such as language, education, technical terms in policies, using power, discourses and knowledge to their advantage (Viswanathan 2009:169). According to Flyvbjerg (1998:319), power has the ability to decide which knowledge can be used or which should be discarded.

In the contemporary Global South, planners, including the author of this thesis, have to deal with the professional planning background adopted and imported from mostly Western contexts through their academic training (see Frayne 2000:61; Winkler 2011:267), while at the same time facing various “insurgent grassroots practices” or “will to survive” from the communities (Bekker et al. 2021:37; Miraftab 2020:433). Thus, planning practices become a complex situation as planners must deal with various power structures in different forms. For example, planners have to face the politicians and their visions, the legislation, the officials’ own professional aspirations and the public that is diverse and heterogenous such as that of Namibia.

New insurgent planning approaches, especially in the Global South, insist on a serious look at everyday practices and struggles of squatters, poor women and other marginalised groups in the city (Miraftab 2009:42). Watson (2003:399) explained the complexity of these struggles in the South African context, where residents of a certain area in Cape Town applied a cultural practice aspect to justify their actions to achieve a certain outcome, that of insisting on the firing of officials not deemed receptive of their social problem. It turned out that the cultural practice was opportunistically used, and the real motives were deeper than presented

(Watson 2003:399). This explains that a cultural discourse and knowledge can be misused at times or can be deployed to oppress other groups (Wiredu 1998). According to Umemoto (2001:26), planners need to be aware that distortions and misinformation can also take place during cultural translation communication processes. However, some cultural oral expressions in the Ovawambo indigenous community of Namibia were found to create gender stereotypes that condition women to behave as subordinate to men, for example (Mbenzi 2018). For example, some historical expressions depicted the Ovawambo men as strong and greedy, while women were viewed as weak and powerless, all stereotypes that did and could affect the behaviour of some members in the group (Mbenzi 2018:128). Various current actors are encouraged to deal with these internal contradictions even if their origins are historical (Delgado & Dempers 2020: Online).

Besides the possibility of misinformation during cultural translation, an understanding of local communities, their way of life, their way of conceptualising cultural spaces, and the power relations involved in producing and maintaining these spaces, will provide important insights to expand “epistemological worlds” (Umemoto 2001:17). Such knowledge will eventually assist in planning with different groups in the future. A misunderstanding or ignoring of the multiple worldviews existing in an area can contribute to marginalisation of weaker groups in a planning process (Umemoto 2001:17). However, an important warning has been provided by Porter (2010) on how planners may end up perpetuating inequalities in communication processes with indigenous communities. Porter (2010:148) contended that focusing only on the locals as a different group to be understood, may hide the established discriminatory social facts, sometimes racist or tribalist, that persist, and that will end up being normalised through future planning efforts. This concern is at the centre of Porter’s (2010) call for planning to engage in a self-examination on its spatial cultures, while attempting to create a better future.

By focusing on planning approaches in Windhoek while exploring the indigenous spatial knowledges, the study attempted to create an understanding, and consequently explore possibilities of how to narrow the current gap between two powers that are performed unequally in urban areas. On the one hand, the conventional rational state planning is more dominant and determinant, while on the other hand, the indigenous spatial practices are being hidden or marginalised from the urban planning discourse at the current moment in Namibia and Windhoek. This gap between the two systems will be explored through some aspects of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is clarified in the next subsection.

3.6.3 Critical discourse analysis in planning

Van Dijk (2015:466) defined CDA as follows:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.

The above description is in line with the focus and explorations carried out in this study. Chapter 6 elaborates on how these explorations were carried out. The term *discourse analysis* was used by academics to understand how urban policies are implemented, and also how the policy implementers execute this process (Jacobs 2006:39). The term is also used to capture the regularities of meanings, and to show how these discourses create certain aspects of the communities and the people inside them (Wright 2004:40). This emphasises the fact that not all individuals have the same access to their institutions and cultural resources, and behaviours outside the mainstream are not equally appreciated in social contexts (Van Dijk 2015:469-470; Wright 2004:42).

Portugali and Alfasi (2008:253) suggested that the aim of planning discourse analysis is to obtain an improved understanding on what role communication plays in planning processes, for example to expose the working of power relations and to learn how institutions are involved in performing their duties. Furthermore, CDA enables an increased understanding of “emergent social practices” that are located within existing and broader discourses (Porter & Barry 2015:23). Planning scholars further emphasised that critically analysing planning policies enables one to unearth how power relations are engaged with between planning officials and the residents (McLeod et al. 2017:75; Porter & Barry 2015:23). Thus, CDA and critical theory provides a better understanding of problems within a given community by closely looking at their written text (policies), talk, culture and daily life, thus stressing inequalities produced by present power relations (Barry & Porter 2011:181-182; Mogashoa 2014:104-106). CDA therefore clarifies how a language functions in the formation and transmission of knowledge in social institutions, and also how these social systems are reproduced and transformed (Mogashoa 2014:105; Wodak & Meyer 2009:33).

The Foucauldian-inspired critical theorists agree on the objectives of Foucault’s work on discourse analysis. They converge on the potential that discourse analysis possesses the ability to create platforms to counter-read history (McHoul & Grace 1993:27). This creates possibilities for critique and change, for discovering where power was hidden in social practices, and for seeing why one value dominates others (McHoul & Grace 1993:27;

Richardson 1996:280; Wagenaar 2011:294). In that vein, critical theory, according to Claussen (2019:63), “offers a variety of strategies that allows us simultaneously to disentangle and invigorate present experience”. Claussen (2019:77) asserted that such a critical theory should be inspired by an interest in emancipation or human happiness. Therefore, critical theory is characterised by its ability to question the established status quo but not to replace it, and its objective is the improvement of dominant social structures in favour of more inclusive institutions (Harris 2002:28, Messner & Jordan 2013; Mogashoa 2014). Therefore, critical analysis or critical politics, in the African context, are essential to transformative postcolonial politics and planning systems and practices as they identify the prevailing inequalities and marginalisation processes, as well as offering understanding of current institutions and their actions (Lajul 2020:183). Critical analysis should thus aim for the creation of future possibilities for the improvement of the well-being of the people as well as their environment (Lajul 2020:184).

There are several critiques raised against CDA. Some scholars criticise the CDA as always being indecisive between social research and political argumentation; others attack CDA studies of being too language-orientated, while another claim that it is not linguistic enough (Wodak & Meyer 2009:33). However, Wodak and Meyer (2009:33) argued that such criticisms are welcome as they encourage more self-reflection and inspire the formulation of new responses and new thoughts. Other scholars, also welcoming the criticism, insist that CDA remains an important tool to highlight inequalities produced and reproduced by powerful structures (Jacobs 2006:46; Van Dijk 2015:470).

3.7 Conclusion

Building on the evolution of planning presented in Chapter 2, this chapter elaborated on the various critiques that were raised against the rational comprehensive planning practice and theory. The postmodern ideas such as collaborative and communicative planning approaches intended to improve planning were presented and the critiques raised against their shortcomings highlighted. As communicative (or collaborative) planning ideas were aimed at improving participation levels of all stakeholders in planning, the chapter presented how public participation is treated in different spatial contexts, and how planning struggles to achieve the promised authentic dialogue and balanced communication processes. Different attempts in the implementation of participation processes from various spatial contexts were discussed, looking at the proposed changes and the encountered obstacles. The chapter

further looked at the influence of cultural turn on planning, highlighting how the spatial cultures of planning produced unequal living spaces, especially in the colonised world, and how improved planning approaches continued to reproduce the same spatial arrangement in the postcolonial era as previously.

The chapter further highlighted how the Global South urban areas, besides the negative impacts of the colonial era, presented a struggle with the impact of globalisation processes such as 'worlding' of cities, spearheaded by neoliberal market approaches. Moreover, Global South cities equally need to overcome local obstacles such as corruption, bad governance and the inability to improve legislation and policies. These aspects were variously presented in the literature as hindering planning's ability to respond to the critical problems of the poorest sections of Global South cities, where the institutional frameworks are poorly transformed to address local complex urban problems. Thus, consequently impacting those southern communities' sense of place and well-being negatively. It is with this consideration in mind that the chapter also closely looked at the three concepts that play important roles in the existence and way of life of communities, and by implication in the production of spaces. These concepts, namely power, knowledge and discourse, were presented as playing determinant roles in planning, and their understanding is deemed important if planners are to engage in practices and actions that reduce inequalities in urban areas. It was highlighted that these concepts have the potential to exclude or include what can be done in urban areas, through the application of certain privileged knowledge.

The study therefore identified gaps in the literature that could provide insights on how to proceed with the exploration of the importance of IKS in planning: First, the planning literature is focused on the improvement of planning within existing established conventional planning frameworks, without much reference to local indigenous space production initiatives and knowledges, especially in the Southern African region. However, the few planning literatures encountered that made reference to local IKS in the region did not elaborate on the exact spatial aspects in detail. This literature drew attention to the importance of IKS for planning and other development issues but fell short of providing the ingredients of what it is, where it is found, and how it can be utilised in current urban planning frameworks. This study therefore attempted to address this gap in relation to the current Namibian spatial planning, which is equally poorly researched. Second, planning literature in Namibia on spatial IKS related to urban planning, is almost non-existent. Although there is abundant literature on IKS regarding natural resources and their management, urban

planning related to IKS is not yet prioritised in research. These two gaps are the focus of the next chapter, which seeks to elaborate on the IKS concept and its usefulness for planning.

Chapter 4

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: CONCEPT IN PLANNING

4.1 Introduction

Figure 4.1 sets out the conceptual components around IKS as discussed in this chapter. First, the chapter presents the clarification and background of the IKS concept. Second, the position of IKS in spatial planning and the current trends are discussed, followed by the various planning legislation attempts to accommodate IKS, or the prevention thereof. Last, the treatment of IKS in current planning-related discourses as expressed in the print media is reflected upon. Figure 4.1 emphasises the relationship that exists, or could exist, between spatial IKS and planning, and how this relationship could potentially be harnessed in the improvement of low-income areas such as Havana.

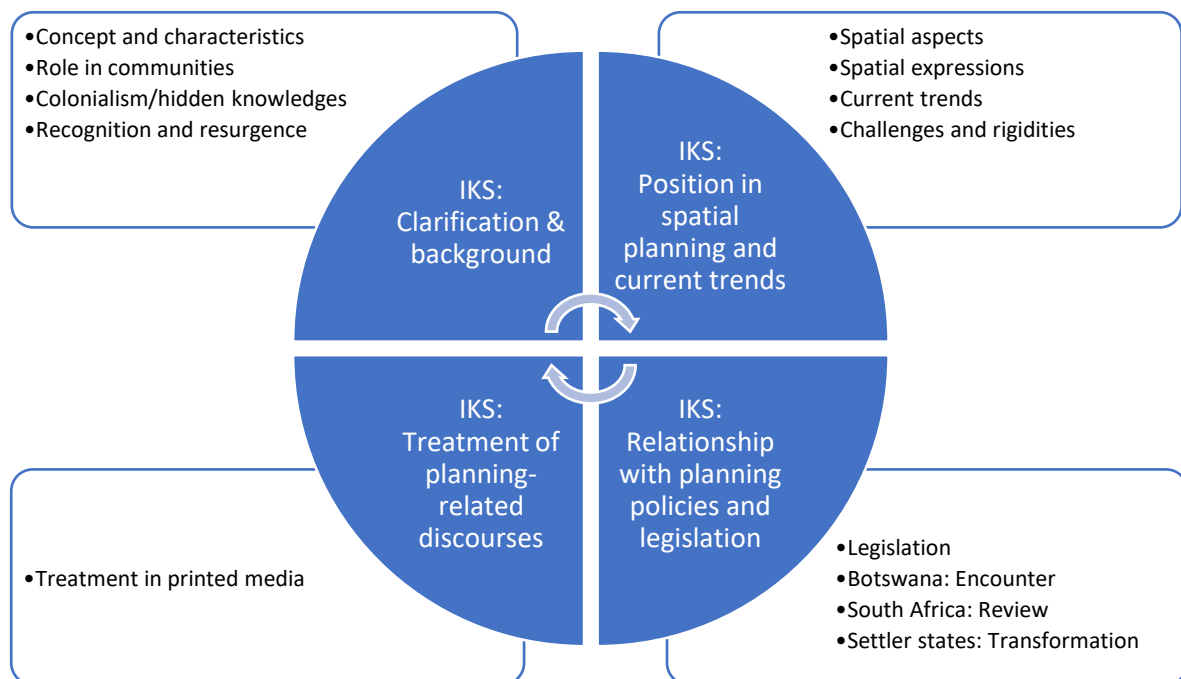


Figure 4.1 Main components of the conceptual framework chapter

Source: Author (2021)

In recent decades, the concept of IKS has gained increased attention in the discourses surrounding sustainable development, including adaptation to climate change in various parts of the world, especially for development projects targeting the majority poor, indigenous and marginalised communities in urban and rural areas (Agrawal 1995, 2002; Anwar 2011; Goduka

2012; Markkula et al. 2019; Mekoa 2018; Melore & Nel 2020; Walker 2008). IKS was previously disregarded in the colonial world and regarded as inferior (Anwar 2011:138; Zegeye & Vambe 2006:352). Currently, despite the recognition of IKS as a potential contributor to livelihoods, it is still threatened by globalisation processes in the postcolonial world where it is overlooked as a crucial source of knowledge (Mekoa 2018:24; Melore & Nel 2020:3). Nevertheless, recent research is increasingly focused on the importance of IKS as a way of life of local communities that encompass their social, physical, and spiritual understanding (Williams 1966, cited in Young 2008:73), which guides their survival and sense of being (Goduka 2012:134). Proper clarifications could enable spatial IKS performing an educative role to planning, while equally challenging globalising practices that privilege some cultures over others (Budwa & McCreary 2013:196; Young 2008:73).

4.2 Clarification and background

4.2.1 Concept and characteristics of indigenous knowledge systems

The focus in this study was on the spatial IKS that the indigenous or local people possess, and the related values attached to such knowledges. Furthermore, it is to ascertain how such knowledges and systems shape the spaces they live in, and how such experience can inform planning in Namibia, in what Anwar (2011:136) calls a “fraternal coexistence”.

Dei (1993, cited in Agrawal 1995:8) defined IKS as:

[C]ommon sense knowledge and ideas of local peoples about the everyday realities of living. IK [indigenous knowledge] includes the cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and worldviews of local peoples ... Such local knowledge is the product of indigenous peoples' direct experience of the workings of nature and its relationship with the social world. It is also a holistic and inclusive form of knowledge.

The South African Research and Documentation Centre (cited by Mekoa 2018:19) defined IKS as follows:

[A] body of knowledge and beliefs built by a group of people, and handed down generations through oral tradition, about the relationship between living beings and their environment. It includes a system of organisation, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource use.

Grenier (1998, cited in Mekoa 2018:19-20), in turn, defined IKS as

the unique, traditional and local knowledge existing within, and developed around, specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area.

The above definitions, although termed slightly differently, indicate some common themes that can be used as the main core values of indigenous knowledge or IKS. For a better understanding of indigenous knowledge, Anwar (2011:137) suggested that the main features and characteristics of indigenous knowledge should be outlined, namely beliefs, practices, innovations, arts, spirituality and other cultural expressions. The main characteristics of indigenous knowledge are listed by various scholars as follows (Agrawal 1995:9; Anwar 2011:137; Goduka 2012:134):

- It is cumulative experience and is passed on from the older to the younger generations.
- It is dynamic and continuously developing.
- It is socioculturally bound to the local.
- It is embedded in its particular community.
- It does not believe in individualist values.
- It does not create a subject/object dichotomy.
- It does not assume a universal truth.

4.2.2 Role of indigenous knowledge systems in traditional/indigenous communities

The various definitions in the previous section stressed the usefulness of IKS in addressing various aspects of livelihoods of local communities (Mekoa 2018:20). IKS provides educational and developmental cultural frameworks that assist communities to collectively solve diverse environmental and social issues while respecting nature (Goduka 2012:135; Mekoa 2018:20; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Zegeye & Vambe 2006:347). Some of these cultural frameworks have been stabilised over so many generations that they have become appropriate forums that encourage collective learning, participation and self-management initiatives among the local communities (Kavari & Bleckmann 2009:478; Mekoa 2018:19; Umemoto 2001:23). For example, Umemoto (2001:23) observed that the approaches and protocols involved in telling a story about a place by a community member did attract the attention of the audience, which led to information and knowledge being clearly transmitted to all. Similarly, and in the Namibian context, Kavari and Bleckmann (2009:478-481) explained that stories that include place praises (*omiṭandu*) and proverbs of the Ovaherero culture not only attract the attention of the audience, but also transmit knowledge about the importance of the place, the place's role in the community and the resources used by the community. This echoes Wagenaar's (2011:210) assertions that meaning from storytelling approaches is constructed in a constant

interaction among the storytellers, the elements of the story, the audience and the space or environment they share. A cultural framework therefore has its value in the community as it links the current situation to the past (ancestors and their lifestyle, stories, place names, place-making, and survival techniques), and thus reinforce a sense of belonging and community cohesion (Kavari & Bleckmann 2009:483; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Rössler 2009:308-310). Geertz (1993, cited by Van Hulst 2012:302) reinforced this line of argument by adding that these cultural frameworks (or system of symbols) act as models that also shape the future behaviours of communities.

Some culture-specific strategies enable local communities to culturally adapt to certain types of areas of their local natural environment (Kathage 2009:470), to adopt a critical reflection of the past while preparing for the future (Kavari & Bleckmann 2009:477; Kimmerle 2000:127), to broaden participation spaces and consider the voiceless, marginalised and powerless while planning for resource use (Brinkhurst et al. 2013:40), and to conserve and manage spaces for the survival of the whole community (Dockry et al. 2016:128). According to Kavari and Bleckmann (2009:496), a cultural collective memory such as place poems (*omiṭangdu*) in the Ovaherero community, presents insights into the locals' worldview where nature and people coexist.

On the spatial development side, Jojola (1998:117) emphasised that planning is in fact not a foreign concept but is deeply embedded in indigenous communities, thus it could be revived through engaging with culturally appropriate solutions to improve local communities' spatial development. Oral history and storytelling via explorers revealed that the North American indigenous communities arranged their living spaces according to clans, then engaged intertribal consensus to form greater regional confederations led by a supreme council, consisting of representatives from each clan (Jojola 1998:100-106). According to Jojola (1998:105-106), the clanship system can be compared to a neighbourhood in planning theory, while the confederation system can be equalled to a regional planning model. Such regional planning approaches in the Namibian context could be compared to what Williams (1994) found in her research among the northern Ovawambo community. Being a community consisting of eight subgroups, the Ovawambo created sanctified spaces at certain points to serve as border markers between themselves, as a mechanism to reduce conflict (Williams 1994:48). This boundary arrangement practice became part of their traditional training and knowledge transfer approach, either in storytelling, or by the elders training those young ones

lined up to inherit the royal leadership to be well versed with the borders of their respective areas (Hatutale 2019:33; Williams 1994:95).

According to the literature discussed above, IKS is performed and lived in diverse ways, and does contribute to the well-being and existence of communities and has the potential to assist with current problems in urban areas (see Mekoa 2018; Umemoto 2001). In that vein, IKS should be seen as an important role player in the strengthening of communities' resilience and adaptations in cases of disasters presented by current environmental problems such as climate change (Goduka 2012:135; Melore & Nel 2020:2). According to Smith (2012:232), "the cultural frameworks have been shown to provide significant potential in enabling people to empower themselves". However, African communities are not homogenous, and their cultural frameworks are contextually different (Zegeye & Vambe 2006:332). Thus, planners engaging IKS for application in various urban development programmes should always consider such contextual differences to avoid unintended and unnecessary conflicts. In that context, the challenge is first to find these hidden knowledges from the communities, and to find a common approach how they can be used in urban areas.

4.2.3 Indigenous knowledge systems under colonialism: Hidden knowledges

Many strategies have been employed in the erasure or suppression of IKS during the colonial period, such as literary fiction and photography (Jojola 1998:101; see Baas 2019:101-104, in the case of Namibia). Literary fiction and photography in the context of colonial era Namibia, as described by Baas (2019:84), refer to those writings where certain spaces are presented and imagined as empty or *terra nullius*, as referred to in Chapter 2. In such a context, the local inhabitants were marginalised, and their knowledges were assumed as non-existent and thus made invisible (Baas 2019:84). Moreover, to dominate the local populations, the colonial administrations adopted paternalistic approaches to repress the local initiatives such as place-making processes, and thus increased the dependency of the communities on the central authorities (Jojola 2017:665). As a result, IKS has been largely ignored in development programmes in the colonised world under the pretext of not being rational enough or being insignificant when compared to modern Western place-making traditions (Anwar 2011:138; Jojola 2017:665). Usually during the colonial era, IKS was associated with terms such as *primitive* or *barbaric* (Hesse & Wissink 2004:49). This, as a consequence, led to the Global South elites adopting a negative stance towards IKS or traditional lifestyles in local

development projects with adverse consequences (Harrison et al. 2007:204; Hesse & Wissink 2004:49).

Most scholars agree that repressive and prolonged colonial political and ideological systems forced people into submission, with the loss of culture and knowledge, and consequently the breakdown of their knowledge systems and adoption of Western knowledge systems as the only way of existence (Anwar 2011; Bollig 2009a; Lilemba & Matemba 2015; Munyaka & Motlhabi 2009; Rössler 2009; Smith 2012; Winkler 2018). The consequence is that almost all traditional practices were relegated to the rural areas (see Munyaka & Motlhabi 2009:79). This is particularly so in the Southern African region where deliberate racial policies declared urban areas as white, while rural reserves were for the black people, as already alluded to in Chapter 2. Elsewhere (for example the settler states and Palestine) and until recent times, urbanity is still considered as a new phenomenon in research around indigenous communities, as similar colonial arrangements relegated them to special reserves created for their residence, while excluding them from urban areas (Blatman-Thomas 2017:5; Fredericks 2013:1; Prusak et al. 2016:441; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:2). The first step, as argued in this study for the Namibian context, is to recognise that such useful spatial IKS exist and still contribute to the well-being of various communities.

4.2.4 Recognition and resurgence of indigenous knowledge systems in planning:

Accepting the other

The observations and recordings of anthropologists, archaeologists, travellers and explorers – although mostly interpreted through a dominant Western analytical approach – provide evidence that spatial IKS in space production did exist in the precolonial world (Amankwah-Ayeh 1996; LaViolette & Fleisher 2009; Wynne-Jones 2013). Indigenous place-making and settlement planning practices existed for many centuries or millennia, before colonisation (Prusak et al. 2016:441). Some examples are presented in Section 4.3. In the African context, this IKS was not only useful but essential to the survival of the local communities in their diverse settlements (Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005; Hull 1976; Obeng-Odoom 2015; Onokerhoraye 1975). Could this spatial IKS then be harnessed to address the various social problems being experienced in low-income areas such as Havana in Windhoek? The response probably lies in the recognition of spatial IKS as a useful tool and knowledge of space production by dominant planning approaches. Recent planning literature calls for a new way of planning that is more receptive to a range of multiple knowledges and sociocultural worlds,

as alluded to in Chapter 2 and 3 (see Melore & Nel 2020; Miraftab 2020; Porter & Yiftachel 2019). This literature, although not exhaustive, demonstrates an acknowledgement that planning has always operated in a divided world characterised by exclusions in different contexts worldwide. Unfortunately, in the postcolonial world, the exclusionary practices and cultures of planning continue to determine and reproduce spaces exclusively without any concrete transformation from the past (see Müller-Friedman 2008:44; Porter 2010:147; Watson 2009a:2260).

The focus of the last two decades turned to a call for planning to listen to other voices and learn from and with them (Harrison 2006:321; Sihlongonyane 2015b:94; Todes 2011:128). This recognition opened the way for planning to have a closer look at alternative ways of knowing and doing, including indigenous knowledge from the local communities (Sandercock 2003a:22; Walker & Matunga 2013:16). In describing the kind of attitude needed to engage in this open and inclusive approach, Sandercock (2004:139) suggested the following:

This kind of planning work, involving dialogue and negotiation across the gulf of cultural difference, requires its practitioners to be fluent in a range of ways of knowing and communicating, from storytelling to listening to interpreting visual and body language.

The above statement is relevant to this study, as it draws attention to the recognition of different knowledges, and the need for planning to learn from these diverse perspectives. In that vein, other scholars called for the foregrounding and “revalorisation” of indigenous management systems (Myers 2011:46) and the recognition of indigenous planning, IKS and spatial practices in planning theory and practice (Walker & Matunga 2013:16; Williams 2015:240). Matunga (2017:644) explored how indigenous planning in New Zealand should be legitimised, and how it could coexist with conventional rational planning. Leaning on the work of Paulo Freire (1970), Matunga (2017:644) proposed a “third space” hybrid, where the coloniser and colonised, oppressed and oppressor, create a space to dialogue reconciliation, emancipation, collaboration, and collective action for the future. These assertions are at the heart of this thesis, where the exploration of spatial IKS in the two chosen Namibian communities is an attempt to bring their mostly rural-based spatial practices into focus. It is an attempt to evaluate how these local knowledges can be harnessed as part of the urban solution urgently needed in the Namibian urban areas, as demonstrated by the current conditions in the Havana settlement in Windhoek.

However, this IKS resurgence will have to face and deal with heterogenous societies (Zegeye & Vambe 2006:332) and different spatial planning techniques (Amankwah-Ayeh 1996:61).

Such differences may be entangled with current neoliberal political and economic discourses leading to “deep differences” and “conflicting rationalities” as currently observed in urban areas of Southern Africa, for example (Watson 2003:406, 2006:37, 2009:2266a). Although Watson used examples from South Africa to demonstrate the urban multiplicities of rationalities and differences, the practical experience from the Namibian context displays similar experiences due to similar apartheid policy experiences, but at reduced intensities. In this regard, the Southern African cities will have to tap into the application of IKS values and aspirations re-emerging in urban areas and in planning in the context of the settler states (see Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019).

Another obstacle which the IKS revival has to face in the context of Windhoek is dealing with the current dominant urban planning policies which lean more towards the market principles of ‘worlding cities’, which tend to exclude the poor and ignore local knowledges (see Frayne 2000:62; Gewald 2009:268). These modernisation planning approaches rely heavily on rationally conceived master plans and vision plans that continue to exclude local knowledges and lifestyles (Sihlongonyane 2016:1621; Watson 2014a:116), thus posing a direct threat to IKS as an important planning tool. It is still early to assess how the recently promulgated URPA 2018 will accommodate alternative knowledges in planning processes. URPA 2018’s reception of alternative knowledges will be discussed as part of the next chapter, and later in Chapters 7 and 8.

Nevertheless, planning should never lose focus of its original intention of improving spaces and crafting a preferred future for all (Forester 2009:6; Friedmann 2011:xi), even in the face of suppressing realities on the ground. Given the harsh and unhealthy environment in which the residents of areas such as Havana in Windhoek find themselves (coupled with a lack of public open spaces in both the formal and informal parts), one should always have a *will to improve* (see Li 2007, cited in De Satgé & Watson 2018:195) attitude at heart. This means the exploration of alternative ways of knowing, such as indigenous knowledges in the creation and maintenance of space and place, should be engaged with incessantly. The next section therefore explores what type(s) of spatial IKS exist or have existed in Africa that could assist this thesis with an improved understanding of how the communities were involved in the production of their living environments.

4.3 Spatial planning and current trends

4.3.1 Spatial aspects of indigenous knowledge systems in different societies in Africa

In African urban and rural settlement formations, power relations played an important role in shaping all types of settlements spaces, both urban and rural (Amankwah-Ayeh 1996:61; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005:317; Hull 1976:388; Obeng-Odoom 2015:570; Onokerhoraye 1975:295; Winters 1983:8). An extensive summary of African precolonial urban settlements and their spatial arrangement and management systems are presented in Appendix 3. The power relations in these precolonial African urban forms were based on a system that supported whole communities, from the most central king's palace in the urban area to the smallest living unit in the surrounding villages (Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005:320-325). In addition, these precolonial forms, including knowledge, were not static but dynamic, with the ability to adapt to new internal or external influences or to combine old and new strategies of living and knowing (see Agrawal 1995:18; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005:317). Although it is not the aim of this study to explore in detail the wholeness of a supporting system mentioned above, it is still an important insight that support the inclusiveness of cultural frameworks such as the *Ubuntu* concept (see Lam et al. 2020:7; Muller 1998:296; Munyaka & Motlhabi 2009:74; Murove 2009:320; Obeng-Odoom 2015, Ramose 2009:308; Williams 2015:154).

In order to obtain extensive information and knowledge regarding various aspects of IKS such as spatial cultural frameworks, this study has engaged in an interdisciplinary literature review. The importance of bridging disciplines to gain a better understanding of sociocultural systems, or to formulate new knowledge in efforts to improve current urban situations, has been widely acknowledged (Bubenzer 2009:43; Budhwa & McCreary 2013:205; De Satgé & Watson 2018:30; Dube & Munsaka 2018:6; Fleisher & Wynne-Jones 2012; Harvey 2009:149; Melore & Nel 2020:3; Pieterse 2008:10; Rössler 2009:301). For example, it is important to understand definitions of certain terms in attempts of solving transformation problems between the environment and communities, but a move beyond one's discipline will be more helpful (Bubenzer 2009:43). In that regard, Tress et al. (2003, cited in Bubenzer 2009:43) argued as follows:

To fulfil such demands, real interdisciplinary studies are required, which combine different academic disciplines with contrasting paradigms, so that disciplinary boundaries must be crossed in order to obtain new knowledge.

This study has consulted sources by anthropologists, historians and archaeologists to obtain information on how precolonial and colonial societies in Africa organised their spaces and places. Such sources provided insights where old practices have either been modified, replaced or are still intact in current situations. This section concentrates on two societies, namely the Swahili precolonial settlements on the east coast of Africa, and the (Tswana) precolonial settlements in the areas today called the North West and Free State provinces of South Africa, as well as Botswana. These cases were chosen due to the increasing attention accorded to these spaces on their precolonial existence. Particularly, the rich literature by archaeologists investigating the urban formations and their attributes in these precolonial settings were of significant importance to this study.

4.3.1.1 Swahili precolonial settlement characteristics

The Swahili precolonial settlements presented were mostly found in East Africa, from areas known today as Somalia to central Mozambique, including the northern parts of Madagascar and Comoros Archipelago (LaViolette & Fleisher 2009:438). Figure 4.2 depicts some of the precolonial urban settlements excavated by archaeologists on the East African coast. Some of these archaeologists combined their research approaches with other disciplines such as linguistics and the involved evolution of certain terms to arrive at more appropriate meanings of certain spaces in precolonial settlements (see Fleisher & Wynne-Jones 2012).

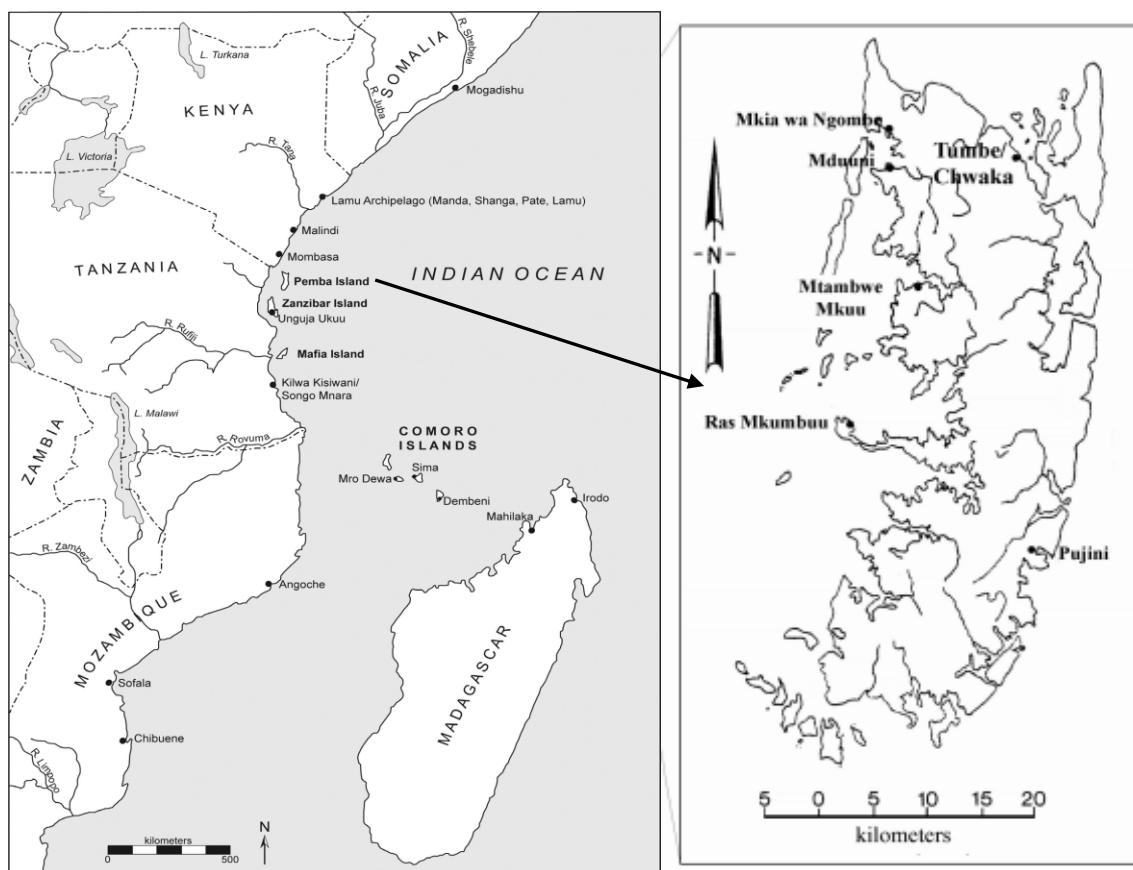


Figure 4.2 East African coastline showing some of the precolonial urban settlements excavated by archaeologists, with Pemba Island enlarged on the right

Sources: Fleisher (2014:2); LaViolette & Fleisher (2009:435)

4.3.1.1.1 Origin and rationale

A better understanding of the Swahili settlements has been enabled through extensive archaeological excavations, and the insights used here came from settlements such as Songo Mnara (south of Tanzania), and Chwaka and Tumbe on Pemba Island (Fleisher 2010, 2014; LaViolette & Fleisher 2009; Wynne-Jones 2013; Wynne-Jones & Fleisher 2016). The archaeological projects to reveal the existence of Swahili villages and towns were an effort to change the negative global dominant view that perceive this part of Africa as having no organised settlement history and neither a complex past (Fleisher 2010:265).

The settlements' origins are estimated between the eighth and sixteenth century, which is also the same time transformations from a rural to an urban existence emerged (Fleisher 2010:265; LaViolette & Fleisher 2009:445; Wynne-Jones 2013:759). The unification of several small villages led to the formation of the Swahili towns, especially where communities accepted the domination of one leadership, which could be a religious leader, as estimated to be the case of the towns in Pemba Island (Fleisher 2010:278). Although the one leadership

approach contributed to the maintenance of the urban area, other aspects such as long-distance trade and craft production were also vital for the long-term existence of these settlements (LaViolette & Fleisher 2009, 440). The Tumbe settlement has been found to have existed for about 800 years as observed from its size changes from about one to two hectares around 1050 AD, to eight hectares around 1100 AD, and finally comprising twelve hectares around 1300 AD (LaViolette & Fleisher 2009:445). Although foreign influence was strong in the Swahili towns, such as the Arab influence during its colonial period in coastal East Africa that lasted for about 350 years, the local communities nevertheless constructed local towns before such influences came to dominate (Fleisher 2010:266; Kusimba 1999:15).

4.3.1.1.2 Spatial arrangement and land uses

The settlements' excavations reflected existence of an organised local management system that ensured that the required productivity and the regional trade systems continued (LaViolette & Fleisher 2009:436). Land uses such as residential areas, the palace complex, religious sites, craft and manufacturing, open spaces and cemeteries have also been found (LaViolette & Fleisher 2009:440; Wynne-Jones & Fleisher 2016:353). Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show the land use arrangements in one of the precolonial settlements (Songo Mnara) on the East African coast based on excavations.

The overall spatial composition of Swahili towns was based on an inclusivity foundation; thus, all residents were envisioned as belonging to the town (Fleisher 2010:280). However, the patterns of these towns revealed a more complex systems of land uses (Wynne-Jones & Fleisher 2016:350). This complexity is explained by the everyday life of the residents in those towns, for example Songo Mnara, where activities were either linked to physical features (tombs, mosques, stables) or defined by natural resources or other physical features (fishing grounds, forests, agricultural zones) (Wynne-Jones & Fleisher 2016:350).

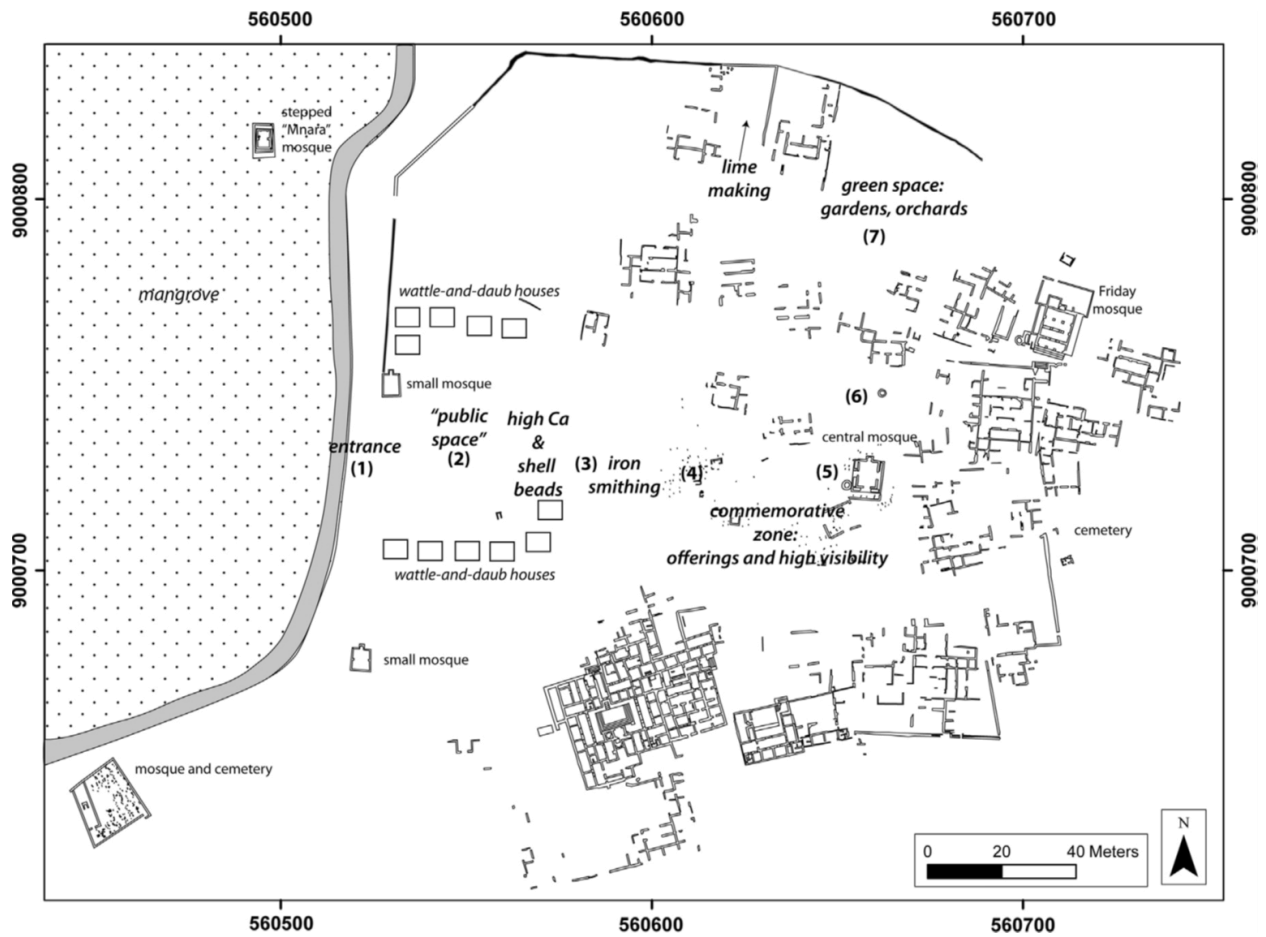


Figure 4.3 Land use pattern at Songo Mnara, a precolonial urban settlement (East African coast)

Source: Fleisher (2014:7)

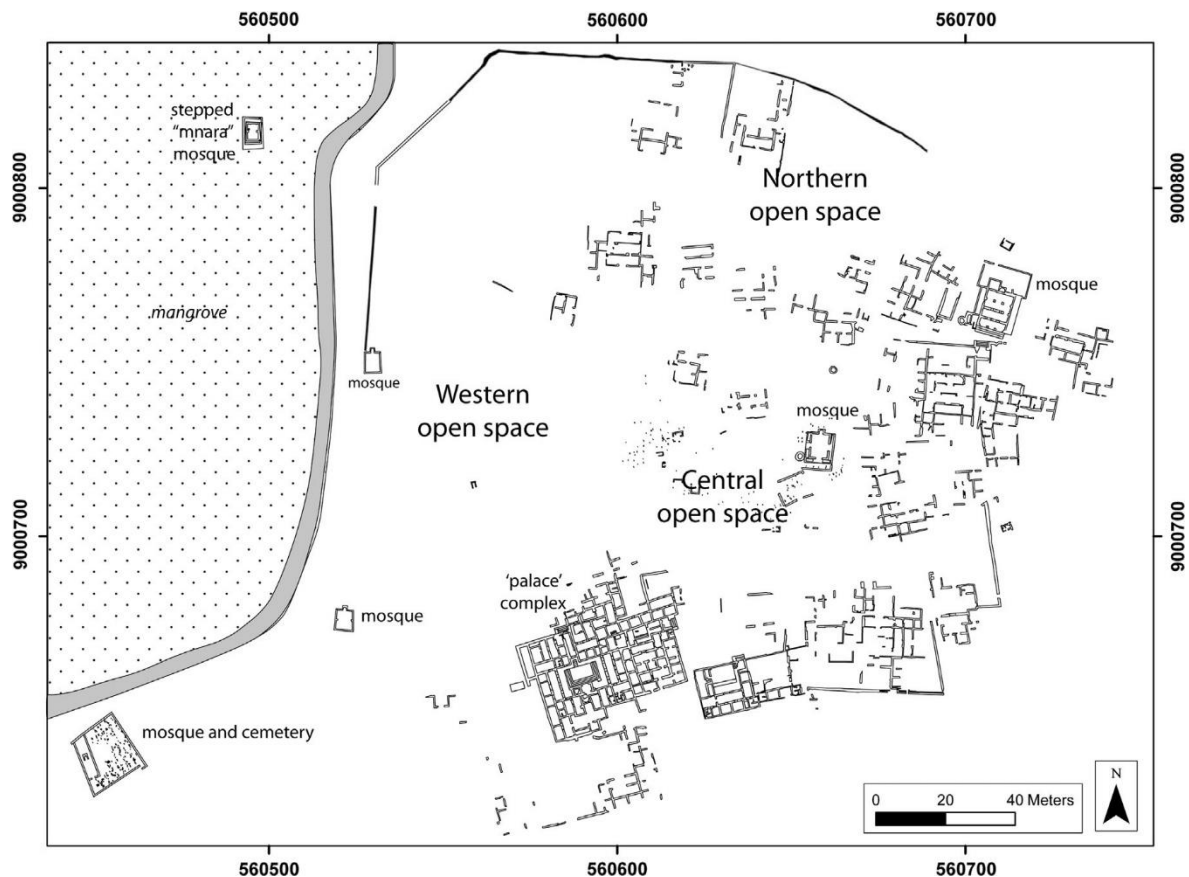


Figure 4.4 Spread of open spaces at Songo Mnara (East African coast)

Source: Fleisher (2014:5)

Although the settlements did display a hierarchical urban form (LaViolette & Fleisher 2009:446), the everyday residents' activities traversing this pattern rendered exclusivity insignificant (Wynne-Jones & Fleisher 2016:350). Understanding these activity interactions (*territories of action*) and overlapping of the spaces involved, provided useful information about the complexity of the everyday life of the residents in such settlements (Wynne-Jones & Fleisher 2016:350). This activity interaction is an important dimension of looking at current living patterns of indigenous communities, as this study explored with the two Namibian case study communities.

4.3.1.1.3 Public spaces

The notions of the public and the private in the Swahili settlements were not finely distinguished (Wynne-Jones 2013:762), as in current conventional town planning schemes of modern town planning. For example, the houses represented a dual activity of both the public and the private, as it contained rooms for private use and manufacturing and also rooms for hosting trading guests as trade negotiation spaces (Wynne-Jones 2013:762). This made a

house an important place from where market activities could be determined, and similar practices have been recorded from the fourteenth century at Mogadishu (Somalia) (Wynne-Jones 2013:763).

Nevertheless, there were various other open spaces for wider use by the residents and visitors, such as the courtyards, mosques, markets and green open spaces (Fleisher 2014:19; Wynne-Jones 2013:770). The cleanliness of courtyards at each house and a larger one at the king's palace, was a constant feature and was thought to be linked to the receipt of guests (Wynne-Jones 2013:770). At residential scale, craft production was discovered in the courtyards (Fleisher 2014:19). Another important public space was the congregational mosque, centrally located, and together with the royal institutions, anchored the settlement (Fleisher 2014:20). According to Madanipour (2003, cited in Fleisher 2014:20), the centrally located congregational mosque, graveyard, cemetery, market and the ancillary courtyard, are public spaces, with the courtyard being likened to an urban square with a religious character. However, other mosques were spread around the urban area to facilitate easy access (Fleisher 2014:20). The centrality of the main open space, its high accessibility, and the widespread location of other public facilities were also features observed in the West African precolonial cities (see Amankwah-Ayeh 1996:68; Stanley et al. 2012:1097).

The open spaces at the entrance of the settlements (*uwanda* in Swahili) showed a reduced level of planning compared to the most central open spaces, and this was probably due to the former being less formal with more diverse activities for everyone, while the latter was more controlled due to its intensely coordinated activities (Fleisher 2014:19). The diversity of open spaces in these settlements illustrate a balanced (planned and unplanned) land use complexity refuting simple dichotomies of elite space producers and commoners' responsive practices (Fleisher 2014:20). This flexibility enabled land use multiplicity on the communal open spaces in the daily life of the settlement (Fleisher 2014:20; Wynne-Jones 2016:357). In this vein, Fleisher (2014:20) advised that "we need to move beyond the dichotomies often used to interpret public space—performative/domestic, planned/unplanned—and approach it with the expectation of complexity".

4.3.1.2 Tswana precolonial settlements

The Tswana precolonial settlements and urban formations presented here, mostly through archaeological records, date from the periods around 1100 AD to 1800 AD (Anderson 2009; Boeyens 2016; Davison 1988; Gulbrandsen 2007; Maggs 1993; Steyn 2011; Steyn & Roodt

2003). These early urban settlement formations include Bangwaketse (± 1790 AD), Kaditshwene (± 1820 AD onwards), Molokwane (1600s onwards) and Marothodi (± 1800 AD). Figure 4.5 shows some of these early settlements.

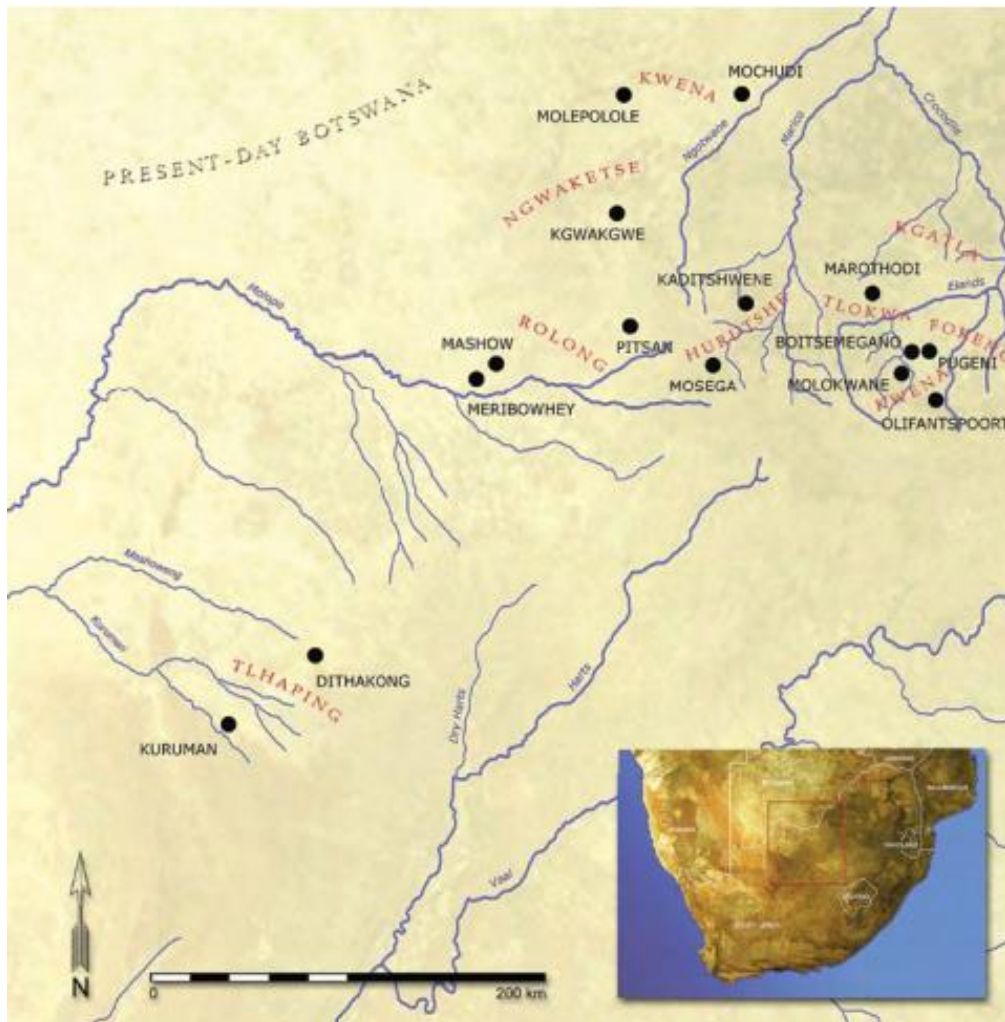


Figure 4.5 Early urban formations of Tswana origin in Southern Africa

Source: Anderson (2009:6)

4.3.1.2.1 Origin and rationale

These settlements, like the Swahili urban areas above, similarly presented a settlement pattern based on a strong spiritual and political system, with the chief and the royal family located centrally (Anderson 2009:67; Boeyens 2016:5; Hammami 2012:3). Besides the allegiance of the residents to their rulers, other aspects such as food production, tool production from mining, and regional trade ensured the *longue durée* of these settlements (Boeyens 2016:22; Steyn 2011:110). Those settlements observed by travellers in the 1800s were found to exist under an organised civic order, with clear-cut responsibilities allocated to both the men, women and children (Gulbrandsen 2007:56). The collective labour in the

construction of homestead structures was still observed around the 1940s in villages around Johannesburg (South Africa) (Dainese 2015:445). The precolonial architecture presented a sustainable interrelation between the environment and the buildings (Dainese 2015:453; Steyn & Roodt 2003:195). Also, some have been found to be densely congregated and ethnically diverse, a situation ascribed to factors such as threatening wars or economic benefits from the iron production industry of the time (Anderson 2009:34). This urban arrangement rationality was also observed in the colonially destroyed Hornkranz settlement in Namibia in 1888, where diverse communities converged to live under one leader (see Helbig & Hillebrecht 1992). Figure 4.6 shows a typical precolonial Tswana settlement, with the centrality of the *Kgotla* open space emphasised.

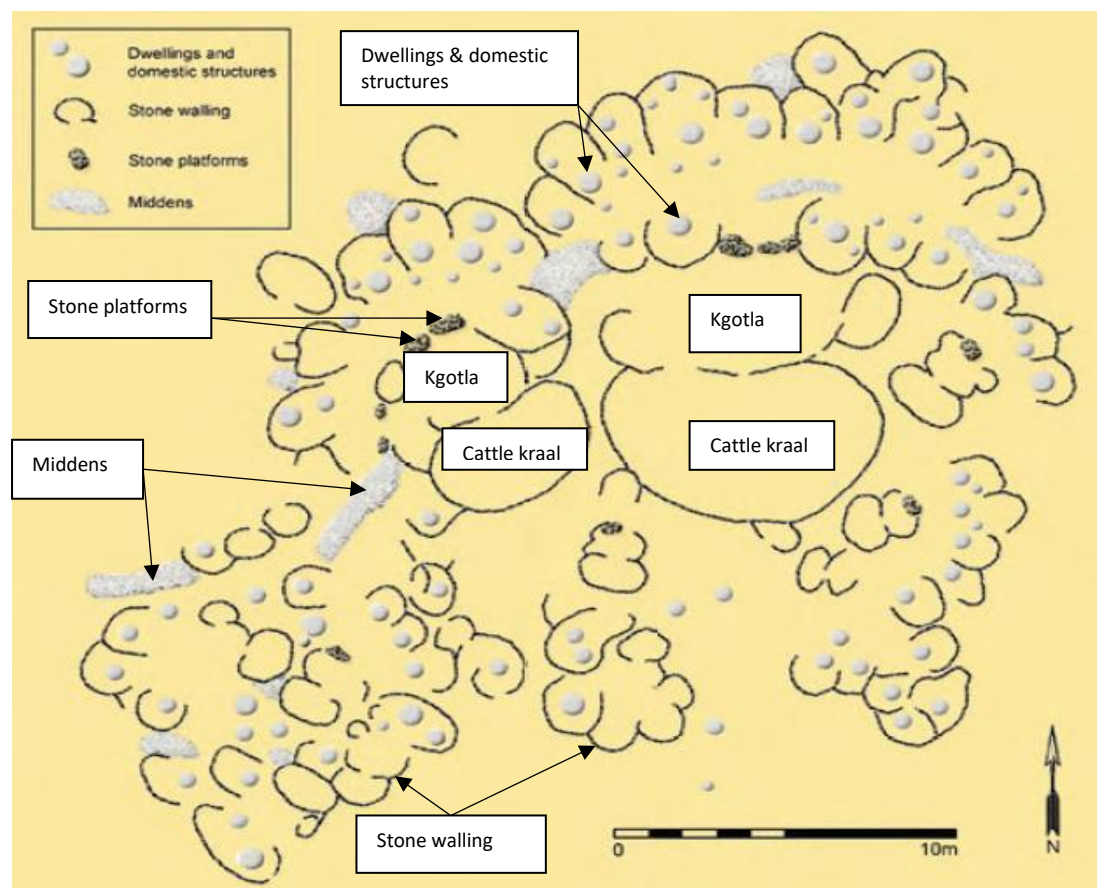


Figure 4.6 *Typical Tswana precolonial settlement with the centrally located Kgotla open space*

Source: Anderson (2009:87)

4.3.1.2.2 Spatial arrangement and land uses

Most of the Tswana settlements had a hierarchical spatial arrangement where the king or chief was centrally located, with the status decreasing towards the periphery (Hammami 2012:3). Most settlements had only two entrances, one for humans and another for animals,

while the king could possess a discreet entrance behind his palace (Steyn 2011:115-117). The centre hosted the cattle *kraal*, the chief's palace and *kgotla* courtyard, with the *kgotla* being the most important place in the settlement (Steyn 2011:110). The chief's *kgotla* (a community meeting open space) was the judicial, political and administrative seat of the settlement where main decisions were debated and taken (Anderson 2009:34; Boeyens 2016:23; Hammami 2012:3). Similar functions were also observed in the Greek's agora central open space (Fleisher 2014:3; Stanley et al. 2012:1092). In the Greek agora, places such as the central market, assembly point for ceremonies and spectacles, temples and sanctuaries, were all situated in and around this open space (Fleisher 2014:3). In contemporary Nigeria (West Africa), a few indigenous public open spaces that survived the colonial suppression and ongoing modernisation projects, were found to contribute to the well-being of local communities in different ways (Fadamiro et al. 2012:56). This well-being could be at the physical, psychological and spiritual levels of the residents (Fadamiro et al. 2012:56). In the Tswana towns, each ward, as per descending order from the centre, had their own minor *kgotlas* where minor localised decisions could be taken (Boeyens 2016:12; Steyn 2011:110).

Other dedicated land uses in the settlements were milking, slaughtering, gardening, leatherworking, iron production, repairing tools and weapons, burial sites and smaller areas for small meetings (Anderson 2009:120; Gulbrandsen 2007:64; Steyn 2011:115). The front and back courtyards at the residential houses were constantly kept clean, and were used by women for food production, raising children and food storage (Anderson 2009:64; Maggs 1993:33; Steyn & Roodt 2003:207). The houses and the entire homestead took principles of safety, privacy and protection of the entire community into consideration (Amankwah-Ayeh 1996:69-70; Anderson 2009:71). There were also waste management systems in place in the form of dedicated court middens (Anderson 2009:69; Boeyens 2016:23). The archaeological records equally show that a reasonable distance between the iron production and residential activities existed (Anderson 2009:65).

4.3.1.2.3 Public spaces

Several open spaces existed in the settlements that had an impact on the lives of residents in these settlements. The centrally located main *kgotla*, with its large court area, performed a pulling effect on the residents as they had to gather there for important discussions and debates concerning the community's problems, harvest festivals and commemorative rituals for the ancestors (Anderson 2009:120; Hammami 2012:14). The events at this level were under the supervision of the king or chief (Anderson 2009:67). All the roads (pathways,

thoroughfares) were interconnected (Maggs 1993:34). In the absence of those main activities, the *kgotla* was mainly used by men, while the women gathered at house courtyards (*lolwapa*) for their activities (Anderson 2009:13; Steyn 2011:109).

The multiple use of structures and open spaces in these precolonial settlements have also been observed in contemporary settlements as observed in the 1930s and 1980s in a Mpondo homestead in South Africa, although modernisation has been integrated as well (Davison 1988:102-103). Concerns of storm water control, dampness, aesthetics, health, ventilation, lighting, trees, privacy and place-naming were all integrated in the traditional spatial planning and building construction of the precolonial era (Amankwah-Ayeh 1996:72). These knowledge and techniques are still observable in some areas, mostly rural, and ironically, they are the same preoccupations of current planning policies such as town planning schemes and building control regulations. Although local IKS was largely ignored, those that are attempting to tap from them are reapplying them through Western conceived interpretations which do not suit the local conditions (Amankwah-Ayeh 1996:72; Hammami 2012:13).

4.3.1.3 Synthesis of the precolonial settlements

The precolonial settlements discussed above demonstrate a complex spatial organisation where the established central authority and general residents' relationships are important determining aspects. The trusted religious leader ensured that important spaces such as burial sites, graveyards, and production sites were in place, and linked to the traditional practices of ancestral honouring. However, the residents were freely engaged in diverse activities acceptable to the set order, in order to ensure the well-being of the community. In contemporary Nigeria, for example, the few existing indigenous public open spaces that survived the destruction of modernisation, are still viewed as symbols of healthy communal living standards and they sustain the local people's value systems and their settlements (see Fadamiro et al. 2012:56).

The level of flexibility allowed by the precolonial open spaces, which enabled multiple usage and movement, is an important insight which current modern planning practices are struggling to achieve through the highly prescriptive town planning schemes (see Charman, Tonkin et al. 2017:3). These insights directed towards the well-being of both the residents and their living spaces have been largely missed by current planning practice. According to Parnell and Robinson (2012:596), planning is more aligned towards the dominant neoliberal policies favouring market-related techniques of space production in the Global South, while the local

contexts are different from those policies originating from the Global North. Steyn (2011:124) argued that the insights from the traditional settlements, such as the Tswana precolonial settlements, are valuable as they challenge current architects and planners to rethink their predominantly European building and urban typologies in terms of their social and historical appropriateness. In conclusion, the archaeologists who enlightened urban planning researchers, such as the author of this study, emphasised the importance of combining disciplines to arrive at better understandings of observed phenomenon. For example, Fleisher & Wynne-Jones (2012:182) emphasised that by combining their discipline with historical linguistics enabled an increased understanding and creation of sense of meaning of spatial arrangements of Swahili precolonial settlements and their spaces. At this juncture, it is appropriate to explore the Namibian spatial IKS, settlement approaches, and insights from the two case study communities targeted by this study. This exploration is carried to avoid the study falling into an IKS homogenising approach, as already warned in the literature above (see Zegeye & Vambe 2006).

4.3.2 Spatial expressions of indigenous knowledge systems in Namibia

This section presents the existing land use approaches from the two Namibian communities, namely the Ovawambo and Ovaherero, which are also the case study communities. It is from these spatial practices that this study attempted, in Chapter 7 and 8, to identify which of these land uses' values and practices are still existing and useful in current circumstances. The literature consulted and discussed in the next two subsections, presents the spatial expressions and rationalities from precolonial, colonial to postcolonial periods, mostly continuous throughout, but with modifications at times due to external influencing factors (Hayes 2009:252; Muashekele et al. 2018:16; Nandi-Ndaitwah 2019:91; Rössler 2009:318; Rukero 2015:46; Symonds 2009:6). Some spatial conceptualisation techniques that existed from the precolonial era, are still highly valued by the local communities in the current era (see Hayes 2009; Kavari & Bleckmann 2009; Widlok 2009). For example, orientation systems are applied by some communities to conceptualise landscapes (Kathage 2009:467), others apply storytelling approaches to spatialise memory onto landscapes (Hayes 2009:251), while other groups use collective memory through place praises to express the aesthetical, historical and political importance of spaces and places (Kavari & Bleckmann 2009:473). In addition, and important for this study, is that some groups appropriated land uses from other groups and modified or adapted them to their lifestyle (Widlok 2009:415).

4.3.2.1 *Ovawambo spatial expressions*

The Ovawambo (consisting of eight sub-ethnic groups) is one of the south-western Bantu groups in Namibia and are based mostly in the northern parts of the country (see Figure 1.1a in Chapter 1), which have been their settlement since arriving in that area around 1600 AD (Williams 1994:ii). Being agropastoral, their settlement patterns were and are still largely determined by their cultivation practices as their main activity, although cattle rearing also forms an important part of their existence (Symonds 2009:18; UNAM 2002:28; Williams 1994:42).

4.3.2.1.1 Settlement origin and rationale

Historically, the Ovawambo constituted a highly centralised community with the king or queen being the ultimate leader around which all socio-economic activities revolved (Symonds 2009:5; Williams 1994:78). The kingdom's land use control systems were organised by the king or queen who consulted and informed the headmen of the various wards to inform their subjects when to clear the lands for crops, when to harvest and when it should end, and when to allow cattle onto the fields for a certain period (Symonds 2009:7).

The wards consisted of various homesteads, under the leadership of a headman, and were considered as the most important spaces in the community (UNAM 2002:3). The homestead (Figure 4.6) was headed by the husband and it had a circular form with various spaces and rooms for a wide range of activities (Muashekele et al. 2018:43; Ndeutapo 2014:59; UNAM 2002:9; Williams 1994:49). Activities that sustained the homestead included food production such as milking, crop cultivation and pounding (processing of millet and sorghum into flour), while bartering with other communities (regional trade) occurred to obtain what the community needed (Symonds 2009:18-19). The cooperation and participation in the preparation of new settlements, in the cultivation and harvesting activities and in the upbringing of children, and maintenance of community traditions were important factors that kept the community practices and knowledge to persist for long periods (Symonds 2009:5; Williams 1994:50). An example of the wedding ceremonies is provided. For a young married couple to start a new home (homestead), they first have to receive blessings from the groom's father, or related paternal relative in the absence of the father (UNAM 2002:4-5). This demonstrates flexibility of the system in the absence of a father. Figure 4.7 shows elderly women uttering blessings through lighting the first fire at a newly-wed couple's new home in an urban setting. Figure 4.7 demonstrates that contemporary indigenous spatial practices (or

indigeneity) do follow, even if not in totality, the people into urban areas and not solely left behind in rural settings as generally believed (see Blatman-Thomas 2017). In addition, the Ovawambo people have a strong collective spatialising memory, displayed in their storytelling (*ohungi/oxungi*) approaches that reveal a rich symbolic cultural tradition that helps them to map their history onto the landscape (Hayes 2009:251).



Figure 4.7 Newly married woman receiving blessings from elders through an initial fire-lighting process

Source: Author's archive (2021)

The creation of the living spaces (including its open spaces) among the Ovawambo community is linked to the whole conception process of the homestead, usually initiated when a newly-wed couple is to depart from the homestead of the husband's father to start their own (UNAM 2002; Williams 1994). The responsibility to survey a site for the homestead that is suitable for agricultural production was entrusted to the father of the husband, aided by the newly-wed young man and other paternal relatives (UNAM 2002:4). The father, or his relatives in his absence, was responsible for mapping out the main land uses in the homestead, as well as providing the tools for construction purposes (UNAM 2002:5). The construction of the main structures was always preceded by the lighting of a fire by the father, at the location of the cattle kraal for blessings, then followed by the erection of the kraal, small open space for boys (usually for preparation for important expeditions), then the main bedroom for the first wife in that order, respectively (UNAM 2002:6). This construction order automatically ensured that the *olupale* (main open meeting place) became centrally located. According to the UNAM (2002) study, the fire started at the kraal is later transferred to the *olupale* and become the sacred fire. However, at the kingdom level, the sacred fire was kept at the king's *olupale* and had to be kept alive as long as the king was alive (Williams 1994:109). After the king's death, a new fire had to be brought in from neighbouring kingdoms, but only from those with

culturally established complementarity. For example, the Uukwanyama obtained their sacred fire from the Ondonga, the Uukwambi from Ongandjera and so on (Williams 1994:109). Cooperation and assistance from members of the family and neighbouring homesteads during construction was very high, and this extended to the agricultural activities as well (UNAM 2002:5; Williams 1994:50). A proverbial expression from the Ovawambo community supporting this neighbourhood solidarity is “the neighbour is a neck-bone”, meaning that “neighbours help each other in many things” (Williams 1994:50).

4.3.2.1.2 Spatial arrangement and land use in the homestead

The Ovawambo homestead (Figure 4.8), just like the precolonial settlements in the previous subsection, has adopted a circular form with the centre playing the most important anchoring role for the community (see UNAM 2002:7; Williams 1994:49). The homestead historically had two entrances: the main entrance for all residents, and an emergency exit in times of crisis. However, a temporal entrance meant for the exit of the dead corpses was made for the occasion and then closed again (UNAM 2002:9). The central area is marked by an open space (*olupale* – the meeting place) that is close to the first (senior) wife’s hut, signifying the importance of the woman as the keeper of the family, although the husband’s hut was also in close proximity (UNAM 2002:10-11).

The homestead had various passageways to reach all sections of the area, and all these passages (streets) led to the main meeting place (*olupale*) (Widlöck 2009:414). The significance of the *olupale* is the anchoring of functions it performed for the community at the king’s palace or at ward or homestead level. Activities such as ancestral and spiritual honouring, festival and ceremonial celebrations, meals for guests and residents, community decision deliberations, dispute and juridical debates, birthing and funeral processions, healing rituals, naming, storytelling (*ohungi/oxungi*), education and physical training for the children, and ancestral and Kalunga’s (God in the Ovawambo community) blessings requests were all performed at the *olupale* (Muashekele et al. 2018:43; Ndeutapo 2014:59; UNAM 2002:9-10; Widlöck 2009:414; Williams 1994:49).

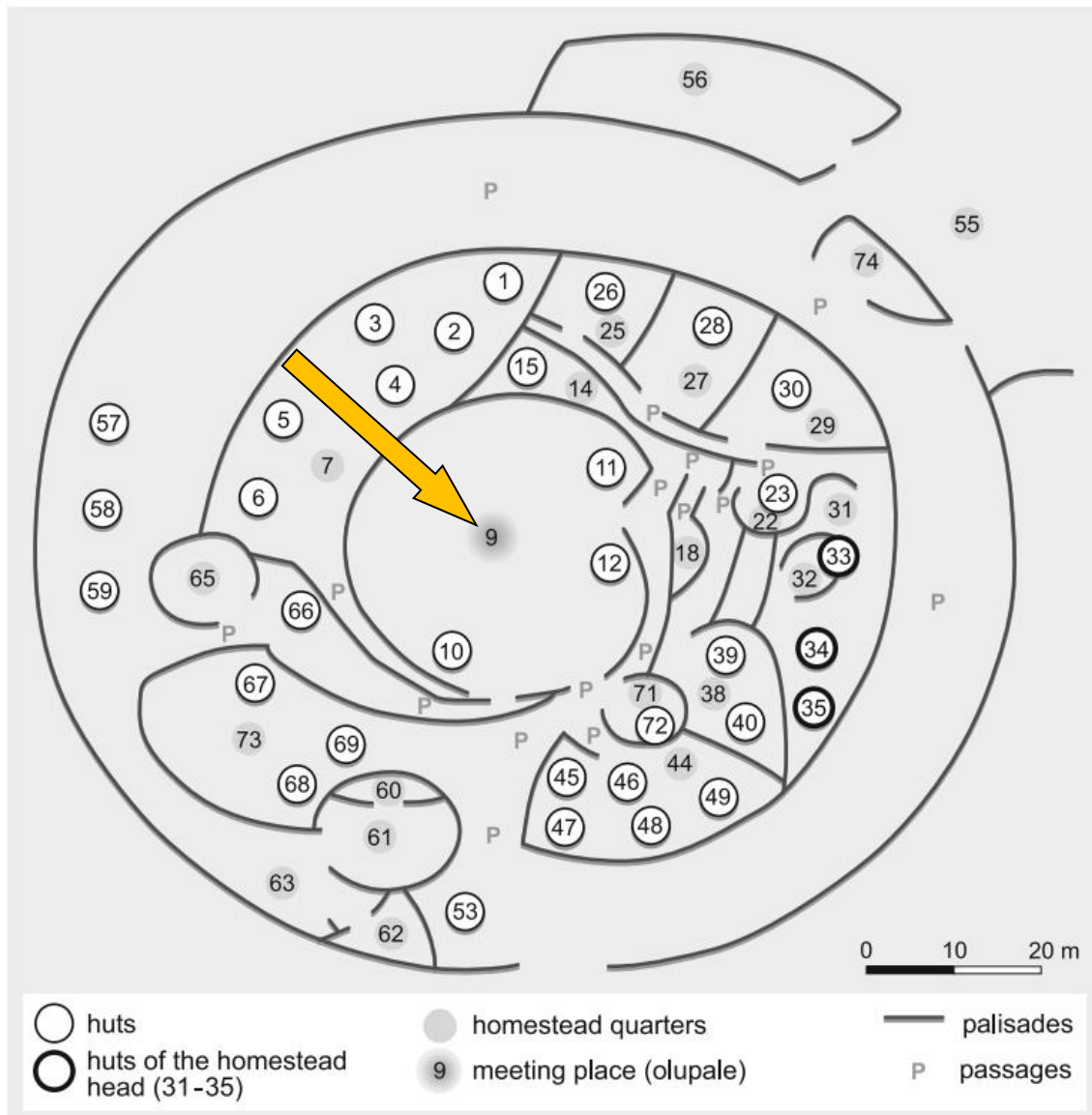


Figure 4.8 Ovambo homestead with the olupale in the centre

Source: Widlok (2009:415)

The elaboration on the numbered structures is set out below as gathered from various sources:

P, passage; 1-7, second wife's quarters; 9, meeting place (olupale); 10-11, shelters, with sacred fire at 11; 12, first (senior) wife's bedroom; 14-15, male visitors' quarters; 18, butchery; 22-23, anteroom and sitting place; 25-26, yard and storeroom; 27-28, girl visitors' quarters; 29-30, woman visitors' quarters; 31-35, homestead head's quarters; 38-40, brewery; 44-49, first wife's quarters; 53, guard's hut; 55, entrance space; 56, cattle enclosure; 57-59, boys' sleeping huts; 60-63, cattle enclosures; 65, cooking place; 66, waiting hut or repair room; 67-69, 73, second or third wife's quarters; 71-72, creamery; 74, stamping place. Other places: Between 10 and 66: urinary area; 56, sometimes a vegetable garden (Widlok 1999, 2009; and UNAM 2002).

Although many activities were performed at *olupale*, some had dedicated areas around the *olupale*, with structures in which activities were performed. For example, the birthing or healing was performed in a dedicated hut; the naming of newborns and ancestral honouring were performed at the shaded area where the sacred fire was also kept. Meal preparation had a dedicated kitchen (*epata*) close to the senior wife's hut, while physical training of

children was done at an open platform (UNAM 2002:9-11). The homestead, contrary to other Bantu groups such as the Swahili described above (Subsection 4.3.1.1), had its cattle kraal not at the centre but at the edge, strategically situated in relation to the boys' huts who were the main herders. Still, the kraals were part of the homestead signifying the importance of cattle to this community. The Ovawambo community appear egalitarian in the settlement arrangement, just like many other African communities were found to display complementary roles for women rather than subordinate to men (Ogunyankin 2019:8). However, some cultural expressions, leaning on patriarchy, could affect gender relations negatively as observed by Mbenzi (2018). This leads to discrimination, and create circumstances where certain sexes have to act secretly in certain spaces to avoid being labelled disobedient through these stereotypes (Mbenzi 2018:129-130).

4.3.2.1.3 Role of the open spaces

The significance of the central open spaces for the Ovawambo had similar effects as found in the other communities discussed in previous sections. They attracted the community to gather for various reasons such as celebrations, ancestral rituals, education and storytelling alluded to above. The *Olupale* is where all the community's traditions, norms and knowledge were, and still are, transmitted, and is therefore an important education and religious institution (Muashekele et al. 2018:47; Nujoma 2019:82; Williams 1994:49). This is where the appreciation and caring of the environment and people are expressed in various forms such as storytelling (*ohungi/oxungi*), praises, poems and songs (Ndeutapo 2014:19-20). This appreciation is performed at occasions such as festivals and other ancestral rituals, and therefore transmits important knowledge to the younger generations (Ndeutapo 2014:20; Nujoma 2019:82).

Although the Ovawambo spatial and religious practices were highly organised during the precolonial period, they were gradually reduced and some were discontinued because of contact with external influences, starting from the missionaries with civilisation and Christianisation projects (Muashekele et al. 2018:16). Further undermining continued during the colonial period, where westernisation and modernisation had an influential impact on the traditions of the local communities, where some practices were deemed inferior, and replaced by the imported Western norms as the ideal ways of living (Nandi-Ndaitwah 2019:91; Symonds 2009:6; Williams 1994:110). However, efforts are currently underway to rescue some of the good practices as important contributors to the socio-economic development of the local communities (Muashekele et al. 2018:82-83). Various traditional

festivals, ceremonies, plays and sacred functions are now being organised on an annual basis (Muashekele et al. 2018; Nandi-Ndaitwah 2019; Nujoma 2019), and spatial planning can tap from the knowledges involved from the group and event organisers to enrich its practice.

4.3.2.2 *OvaHerero spatial expressions*

This largely pastoral community is also part of the Bantu groups in Namibia and are currently settled in the Kunene region (see Figure 1.1a), and also other reserves created during the colonial period in the central parts of Namibia (Kavari 2001:116). Through oral history, this group presents a common ancestry with the Ovawambo group (Kavari 2001:135; Williams 1994:59). This group is religiously attached to their cattle, to the extent that different clans were socially arranged according to the colours of their cattle (Hangara et al. 2020:xiv). The OvaHerero social organisation is based on a double descent system, namely matrilineal (*ejanda*) and patrilineal (*oruzo*), and their spatial systems are determined and led by the patrilineal descent lineage (Bollig 2009b:331; Kavari 2001:123; Williams 1994:77).

4.3.2.2.1 Settlement origin and rationale

The OvaHerero have a decentralised political system established according to the patriclan system, where the chief priest of each clan is the leading religious leader (Kavari 2001:123; Williams 1994:78). Their settlement patterns reflect the most religious space (*okuruuo* – the holy fire) being in the centre of the settlement, with the houses built around it, either in a half-moon formation (Kavari 2001:123), or completely encircling the sacred central space when their population increases. Figure 4.9 depicts the spatial arrangement in the OvaHerero homestead.

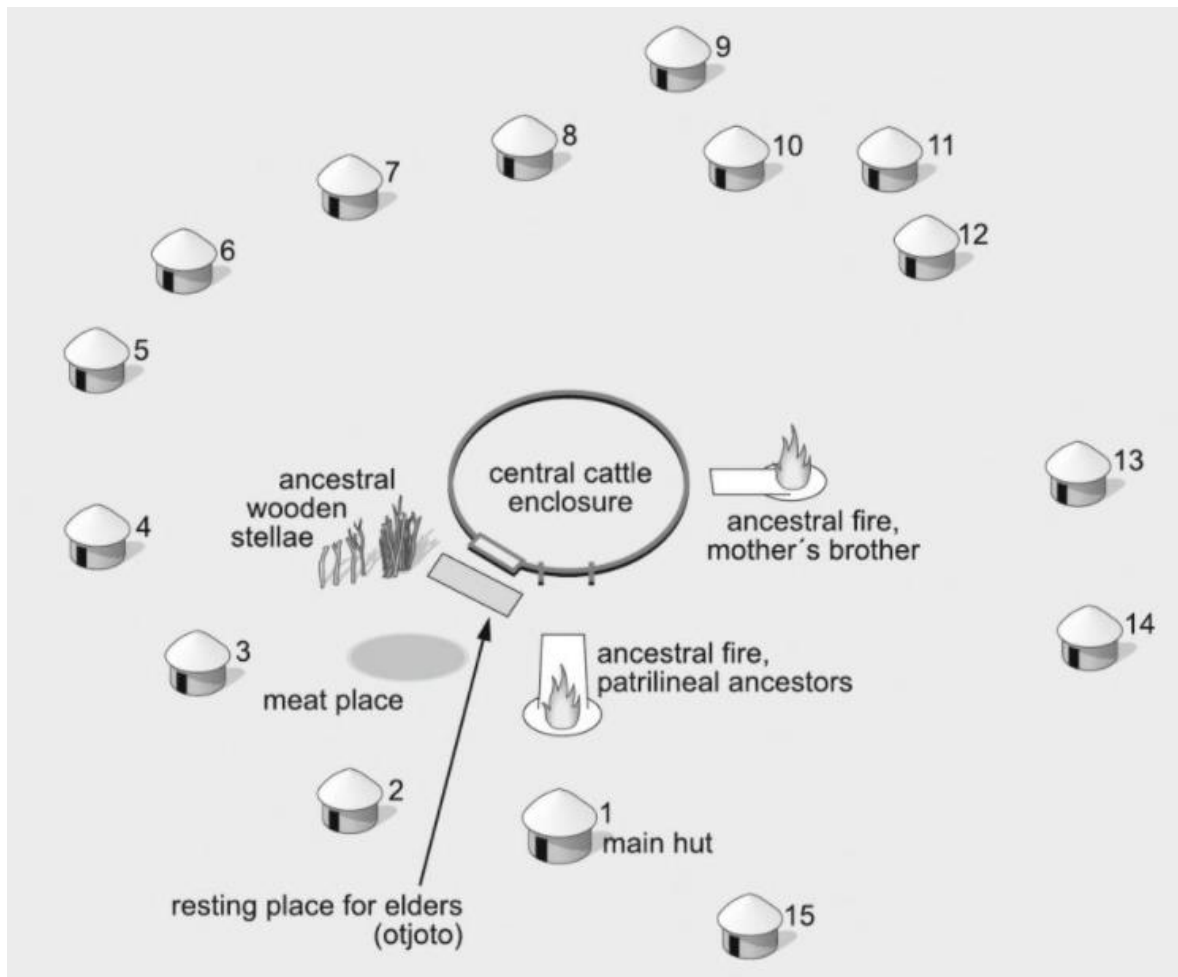


Figure 4.9 *Ovaherero/Ovahimba homestead with the holy fire (okuruuo) between the main house and the central cattle enclosure, kraal*

Source: Bollig (2009:335)

The elaboration on the numbered structures is set out below as gathered from various sources:

1, Main hut (Head and first wife); 2, Head's youngest brother's house (last man in hierarchy); 3, Head's middle brother's house (fourth in hierarchy); 4, Head's other brother's house (third in hierarchy); 5-7, Houses for boys; 9-12, Houses for girls; 13, Head's immediate brother (second in hierarchy); 14, Head's unmarried sister's house; 15, Head's second wife's house (Bollig 2009; Kavari 2001).

The conception of the first space as a living area for the Ovaherero, just like in the Ovawambo group, is led by the father of the young man, mostly newly-wed (Ujeuetu Tjihange, Ovaherero knowledge holder and elder, personal communication, 11 August 2020). After the identification of a site for a new homestead, a fire is kindled there. If the fire burns for a while and does not die out, then the area is considered fit for settling. However, if the fire dies out after a while, then the area is not suitable and the survey continues (Ujeuetu Tjihange, Ovaherero knowledge holder and elder, personal communication, 11 August 2020). After choosing the site, the main house, the kraal and the holy fire (*okuruuo*) in the *omuvanda* between the main house and kraal are constructed in an east–west orientation, with the door

of the main house facing the gate of the kraal in that east–west direction (Kavari 2001:125). Although the main house is the property of the senior wife, the husband remains being the overall head of the homestead (Kavari 2001:127). The main house operates as the official sacred office of the homestead, as most ceremonial and sacred functions are initiated from there before proceeding to the *okuruuo*, with the senior wife serving as the official administrator of that house (Kavari 2001:125).

Cattle have been the main source of sustenance for the Ovaherero and have been used in various socio-economic activities to ensure the community's well-being (Hangara et al. 2020:xiv). Regional trade with neighbouring communities was deemed important to obtain the necessary utensils and equipment not readily available in the community (Hangara et al. 2020:xiv; Williams 1994:79).

4.3.2.2.2 Spatial arrangement and land uses in the homestead

Besides that the religious sacred fire (*okuruuo*) is kept at the centre of the homestead between the main hut and the cattle kraal, the larger open space (the *omuvanda*) around the holy fire is equally valued as an important assembly point of the community for various activities. Although the *omuvanda* is a special space, there is a tiny passage that leads from the main house to the holy fire, which is used by the husband or senior wife and is considered a sacred passage towards the ancestors (Kavari 2001:126; Rodil & Winschiers-Theophilus 2015:84).

The *omuvanda* is used for functions such as wedding rituals, festival ceremonies and burial rituals. It is at the *omuvanda* where social gathering activities are organised at certain times where the men and boys assemble to engage in storytelling, sharing wisdom and discussing serious community matters (Rukero 2015:46). During this social gathering, the women and girls gather at the main house veranda or courtyard to engage in similar matters of concern (Rukero 2015:46). The holy fire (*okuruuo*), located inside the *omuvanda*, is where communication with the ancestors takes place, in cases such as requesting blessings for marrying couples, naming of newborns, preparation for long journeys, blessings for new achievements and acquired equipment (Kavari 2001:130). The achievements and equipment blessed at *okuruuo* are observed to include, for example, new jobs, academic graduations, new cars and new houses. Figure 4.10 depicts an elder blessing a newly acquired car at the *okuruuo*.



Figure 4.10 Elder blessing a new car at the okuruuo (holy fire)

Source: Author's archive (2021)

Other land uses observed in the Ovaherero homestead are slaughtering areas (see “meat place” in Figure 4.9) for cattle and sheep in the *omuvanda*, while goats are slaughtered at another area at the back of the houses. Milking is performed in the kraals, while butter making take place at the main kitchen of the senior wife.

4.3.2.2.3 Role of the open spaces

The open spaces play a significant role in the well-being of the Ovaherero community, just as the previous examples revealed similar importance to those communities. The open spaces, like the holy fire, the *omuvanda* and the courtyard/veranda in front of the senior wife's house, all have the function of attracting many people at a certain time to take part in various activities linked to the everyday life of the local residents.

It is at gatherings such as funerals and weddings where extensive (indigenous) knowledge is transmitted, as the elders have been observed to engage in historical place praises (*omiṭandu*), poems (*omiimbo*), and proverbs (*omiano*) to describe the present homestead where the event is taking place, as well as the invited elders and their places of origin, and the ancestors of both parties involved in a wedding. For example, the *omiṭandu* is described as displaying intricate relations between the landscapes and the memory in the community, and it is thus an important collective memory that highlights important aspects to remember (Kavari & Bleckmann 2009:473). Kavari and Bleckmann (2009:474) argued that praises such as *omiṭandu* provide insights into the perceptions and aesthetic sense of the people, and are thus essential collective memories that code and legitimise a sense of belonging. Their poetic format makes the *omiṭandu* a stable framework to preserve collective memory, and also the

passing of knowledge to future generations (Kavari & Bleckmann 2009:475). In this regard, Rukero (2015:46) asserted:

[It is] not only the weddings and funerals that are important for knowledge transmission, other ad-hoc gatherings such as the omuvanda social gathering (omutwe) are also important knowledge transmission moments, as various issues of concern and the way forward are discussed and debated there.

Good moral behaviours and norms in public were also taught at these occasions (Rukero 2015:46). However, literature issued warnings that if some of the Ovaherero cultural expressions are not made with required sensibilities towards other groups, it may lead to conflict between groups (Baas 2019:223; Bollig 2009a:20). For example, the manner in which some expressions merge Ovaherero memory and genealogy with place may lead to the exclusion of other groups who may have spatial claims to the same place (Bollig 2009b:346-349).

The Ovaherero community has maintained a constant existence of social organisations that were targeting the well-being of the community, despite disruptions of war and globalisation. The *Omakura* (same age groups) from the precolonial period was organised around men who were circumcised around the same time and consisted of laws that provided social support and control for the behaviour of these age groupings (Audio cassette recordings, National Broadcasting Company 2000; Hijangaruu Veseveṭe, Ovaherero elder, personal communication, October 2019). The authority patterns of the age groups were equally observed in other precolonial environments such as Nigeria and Tanzania, and were found to also play a positive role in settlement arrangements (Hull 1976:398; Onokerhoraye 1975:295). In contemporary Nigeria, for example, indigenous communities with cultural centres appointed age groups to maintain the cleanliness of those centres (Fadamiro et al. 2012:54). The *Otjiserandu* (Red Flag organisation) dates from 1923 when the remains of Chief Samuel Maharero, who fled to South Africa during the Herero–German War (1904–1908) and then to Botswana where he died, were returned to Namibia (Becker 2015:25; Förster 2005:16). Since 1923, the chief's grave in Okahandja has been visited annually for commemoration purposes by the Ovaherero, who referred to this town as their religious and prayer place. More chiefs were buried there, and this practice continues in the present. Over the years, two more flags, the White and the Green Flags, were added representing various intra-groupings within the same community.

4.3.2.3 *Synthesis of the spatial expressions of the Namibian indigenous knowledge systems*

The willingness of the communities to gather around their trusted leader, the centrality of the most respected sacred spaces and the high level of cooperation and participation are all features identified in these communities. The manner in which their environment and other places are praised, honoured and respected is also another common feature of these communities.

Another aspect brought forward by the two communities is that missionary and colonial contact had devastating effects on their cultures and knowledges, and that in some cases it was lost, reduced or hidden. All these insights provide important reflections to the current planners when working with local communities. The focus then should be on what type of practices worked in the past, what are still being used, and which can be applied in a multicultural (intercultural) setting such as Windhoek, particularly in the low-income and poorer areas such as Havana emphasised in the introductory chapter. The importance of the cultural spaces, the centrally located *omuvanda* together with its *okuruuo* and the *olupale* with its various dedicated places, was illustrated in the literature consulted. These spaces were essential areas where the knowledges of these communities were transmitted, and actions entailing the well-being of these groups were taken, hence the argument of this study for their consideration in spatial planning matters.

Finally, precolonial Namibian urban settlements have not been well-researched, and little literature was encountered in that regard. The few documents observing urban characteristics are those listed in Chapter 2 (Table 2.1), which recorded urban characteristics and formations by local communities when contact with European travellers and missionaries was under way.

To effectively address the sense of place and well-being of local communities, this study aligns with the arguments that encourage planners to take the lived spaces into consideration, despite the dominance of other factors such as the dominant economic rationalities and globalisation influences that favour the conceived spaces (Alyani & Herlily 2019; Paller 2020; Porter 2010; Watson 2003, 2006). The previous sections elaborated on the precolonial existence of IKS approaches in space production from various contexts. The next section therefore explores several contemporary examples in various contexts where spatial indigenous knowledge aspects were introduced into urban areas and the modalities involved to arrive at such initiatives.

4.3.3 Indigenous knowledge systems in planning: Current trends

The last two decades demonstrate an increasing awareness among scholars on the importance of spatial IKS in space production strategies (Agustina et al. 2016; Caulkins 2018; Hammami 2012; Jojola 1998, 2008; Matunga 2013; Perera 2002, 2019; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017). These scholars, among others, emphasised the importance of the recognition of spatial IKS as part of planning processes. The next two subsections, in line with these emergent calls, explore some of the planning attempts engaged in implementing spatial IKS features in various urban areas of the Global South.

4.3.3.1 Sub-Saharan African experience

Literature focusing on the application of spatial IKS in urban areas in the contemporary Southern African region is limited. As already elaborated upon, research has focused on the precolonial urban organisation through mostly archaeological work. However, the last decade shows that the region's interest is awakened, with a number of scholars starting to stress the importance of indigenous knowledge or culturally relevant frameworks to be considered in planning policy or practice (see Hammami 2012:1; Melore & Nel 2020:2; Nawa 2016:768; Nawa et al. 2014:3; Tapela 2007:113, 2016:99; Williams 2015:137).

Despite limited research and examples, Botswana's planning encounter with spatial indigenous concepts provides an important insight to the region's future planning efforts, and also to this study where the researcher proposes the recognition and inclusion of such indigenous spatial conceptualisations into Namibia's planning framework. Borrowing from Moroni (2020:259), concepts should be understood as "constituting abstract ideals on which all participants in a discourse may agree and which can be developed argumentatively in different ways". On conceptualisation, Kathage (2009:458) posited that it should be understood as "a cognitive process which transforms human experience into mental representations of knowledge".

The Botswanan town planners and developers initiated the integration into some urban areas of the Tswana *kgotla*, a cultural open space traditionally conceived as a space for community discussions, consensus building and decision formulation for their everyday living (Hammami 2012:8-9). This open space existed since precolonial era as described in Section 4.3.1. However, the outcome was not what was intended as the original cultural meaning of the *kgotla* was not fully embraced in the planning process (Hammami 2002:14). This process was

implemented through the framework of the imported British planning systems, which still today is culturally insensitive to local communities (Tapela 2016:98), and the end result was dysfunctional open spaces not responding to the local communities' needs (Hammami 2012:13-14).

The challenge presented here, and which is a warning to this study, is that the interpretation of indigenous cultural frameworks through a Western lens can lead to the unintentional creation of *invited spaces* (Miraftab 2009:38), and which do not respond to the aspirations of the local communities. This echoes the warnings provided in Chapter 2 and 3 on the dangers of cultural translations (Prusak et al. 2016; Umemoto 2001). It is therefore advised that planning should learn from the past (Tapela 2007:112). However, such learning should be accompanied by a proper clarification of cultural concepts, both in their tangible and intangible forms, to avoid misrepresentation and unnecessary conflicts (Budwa & McCreary 2013:210; Sitas & Sadie 2020:26; Wiredu 1998:44), and to avoid IKS claims to become new forms of urban exclusion (Tapela 2016:83).

4.3.3.2 *Settler states and Indonesian context*

Scholars in these contexts provided insights on the theorisation of the intersection between IKS and planning, and how, in practice, the latter is treating IKS in various spatial planning projects, legislation and policies (Barry & Agyeman 2020; Dorries 2017; Hugill 2017; Jojola 1998; Matunga 2017; McLeod et al. 2015, 2017; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019; Walker 2008; Walker & Matunga 2013; Wensing & Porter 2016).

Recent experience from New Zealand indicates progress in the promotion of spatial indigenous knowledge where aspirations in urban design, cultural values and place-making are now being physically reflected in some parts of the urban areas for all citizens to see and experience them (see Marek 2020; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019). Marek (2020:21) argued that such physical manifestation of indigenous aspirations and cultures possess empowering effects to the concerned communities. This IKS physical expressions could further lead to the transcending of current marginalisation and victimhood feelings among indigenous communities towards an increased sense of responsibility (Marek 2020:2). In addition, Thompson-Fawcett et al. (2019:272), observed that this increased visibility of indigenous spatial aspirations has led to the increase in participation of the local communities in urban affairs. Some of these visualised indigenous spatial aspirations include:

- *Constructing a cultural precinct;*
- *Reinstating native fauna and flora valued by local indigenous people;*
- *Making shared histories evident;*
- *Introducing a locally specific Māori symbolism and design ethic;*
- *Making space for Māori ceremonies and events* (Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019:272).

All the positive gains in the above example demonstrate a disruption in the existing prevailing colonial legacies and contested colonial discourses, but still, a lot needs to be done to arrive at more improvements in the planning practice (Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019:279).

Literature on the Indonesian planning approaches shows that spatial practices have been focusing on the indigenising of space (Perera 2002) through the promotion of indigenous spatial conceptualisation (Agustina & Hindersah 2019; Agustina et al. 2016, 2019; Sasongko et al. 2017). The use of local wisdom is increasingly being emphasised as an enriching aspect to planning (Agustina et al. 2016:16). On the spatial transformation side, spaces and old cultural buildings that were previously reserved for royal family uses only, have now been turned into classrooms for traditional and religious dances (Agustina et al. 2019:483). According to Agustina and Hindersah (2019:9), the utilisation of local values in the planning process has beneficial outcomes for the marginalised groups in a settlement, being “the creation of protection and trust between groups, activities being done jointly while the space is also being integrated”. Therefore, spatial planners and other officials are being encouraged to take the understanding of pluralistic meanings of space seriously, while the development plans should be derived from local values (Agustina et al. 2016:26; Sasongko et al. 2017:11).

Other parts of the world are also experiencing urban planning and spatial transformations, and indigenous people are becoming engaged in cultural practices in cities to recreate a sense of belonging previously prevented (Caulkins 2018; Fredericks 2013). Caulkins (2018) presented a Chilean urban experience where local indigenous communities identified abandoned rubbish sites, cleaned them and erected cultural houses on these spaces. This initially small start has now spread to other cities and is providing cultural activities not only to the indigenous communities, but to all the residents in the urban areas (Caulkins 2018:83).

Despite such positive contributions towards the opening up of cities to become representative of all the residents finding themselves inside them, there are challenges and rigidities of current planning systems to be overcome.

4.3.4 Challenges and rigidities facing indigenous knowledge systems in planning

This section presents the challenges facing the application of spatial IKS in the face of rigid space production approaches.

Although various new thoughts and theorisations are being put forward by planning scholars to revisit planning in the face of the Global South realities, planning still continues with its long persistent, powerful, paternalistic and hegemonic practice claim of planning to be an all-problem-solver from different angles (Miraftab 2009, 2020; Porter 2010, 2013; Porter & Yiftachel 2019; Watson 2016). This paternalistic approach has created a dependency population (see Chapters 2 and 3), in which various urban social problems are turned into *needs* and *absences* dimensions so prevalent in Global South cities (Jojola 1998; Pieterse 2008; Porter 2013). These needs and absences deficit discourses are framed in such a way that the local people are seen as the problem, not only by the institutions but also by the residents themselves (Fogarty et al. 2018:vii). In such circumstances, the authorities undermine or overlook important local capabilities, knowledges, and even demands for specific land uses (Porter 2013:290). Moreover, in those deficit models, the leading institutions usually engage and promote Western and normative universalised standards, while equally ignoring the structural inequalities affecting the residents' well-being (Baskin & Sinclair 2015:7; Fogarty et al. 2018:xi; Sihlongonyane 2015a:62).

Other challenges, equally interrelated with the above-mentioned deficit model, include the normative and progressive approaches using concepts such as the worlding of cities, city branding and smart cities that were discussed in Chapter 2 and 3. These concepts, inspired by neoliberal economic ideals that favours the elite, often end up pushing the poor outside the cities by declaring their practices (thus their knowledges) and informal settlements as unfit (Karuri-Sebina & Koma 2015:156; Sihlongonyane 2015c:2140, 2016:1620). In other cases, such as in the allocation of public open spaces, often the best and developable lands are appropriated by the rich, while the wastelands, river courses and hills are coloured as green on urban maps and presented as public open spaces to especially the low-income areas (Sitas 2018:584; Strydom & Puren 2013:36). Planning is implicated in these approaches, as the town planning schemes are the ones compelling municipalities to provide public open spaces in residential areas (Watson 2014a:117). In addition, practical experience shows that some of the open spaces are being overtaken by private interests under the pretext of housing provision, something which lead to loss of much-needed open spaces. Similar private interests

that dominated land appropriations were also observed in Ugandan cities (see Goodfellow 2013:86). The loss of open spaces, especially in low-income urban areas, is an unfortunate situation as these spaces contribute to the communities' social lives and their sense of place (Strydom & Puren 2013:34). These public open spaces, often overlooked, are part of the spaces that could be referred to as "social infrastructure", which plays an important role of connecting diverse people in the city (Latham & Layton 2019:9).

Additional challenges are demonstrated in the democratic platforms, where conflicts often arise when multiple groups are involved in space production, where some eventually dominate others (see Paller 2020). For example, the South African experience shows that a national reconciliation project of creating a post-apartheid memorial space, known as the Ncome project, has become entangled in webs of state and party interests (Dlamini 2001:136). This had adverse effects for mostly the minority or marginalised groups that were not represented in the political structures or development committees, as their aspirations are excluded in development projects (see Dlamini 2001:136-137). A similar experience has been observed in Ghana (West Africa), where the government-conceived programmes of slavery commemoration were appropriated by the dominant groups and their sites, where the minorities with similar experiences and sites were overlooked (Apoh 2020: Online). For Apoh (2020: Online), these discriminatory approaches are examples how exclusion and inequalities are perpetuated in contemporary spatial governance systems. These experiences exemplify Watson's (2003, 2006) reference to the consideration of deep differences and different rationalities in urban areas. To overcome such a challenge, Saiu (2017:17) suggested that the decision-making process should be able to accommodate all the diverse groups with equal voice, thus facilitating a dialogue between the different cultures in the end. This leads us back to the collaborative rationality and authentic dialogue processes (Forester 2018; Innes & Booher 2016).

Another challenge threatening the promotion of spatial IKS is that of unending corruption as discussed in Chapter 2. This obstacle is hampering many development projects on the African continent, and it is currently entangled in the complex differences and rationalities from both the planning institutions and the communities (De Satgé & Watson 2018:23; Zinnbauer 2019:2). This corruption can directly or indirectly contribute to the demotion of indigenous knowledge, as trust and participation will be reduced as a result (Porter 2010:139).

Scholars draw further attention to the role that the existing structures and legal frameworks play in the implementation of planning projects, which could further hamper the deployment of spatial IKS in space production. For example, the institutions and their regulations rigidly prescribe the land uses to which residents have to adhere to, even if it is in contradiction of their aspirations (Barry & Porter 2011:178; Porter & Barry 2015:30; Prusak et al. 2016:441). This brings us to the important question: How then, in such predefined contexts, can transformative practice be engaged with to promote the use of spatial IKS in urban areas?

A final challenge is posed by the interpretations of the various international declarations and conventions which many African countries, including Namibia, have ratified. The understanding and the consequent translation of the terms and definitions in these legal frameworks are creating tensions and lengthy debates among and between the local and national actors (Bellier & Hays 2020; Hays 2020; Hudson et al. 2019). These tensions, which could pose challenges or delays to the application of IKS in spatial projects, are discussed in Chapter 5. The next section will explore the relationship between spatial IKS and the legal frameworks in the contexts where planning attempts were made to narrow the gap between these two domains.

4.4 Relationship of indigenous knowledge systems with planning policies and legislation

This section presents the relationship between spatial IKS and planning policies and legislation, by drawing on the experiences from different spatial contexts.

4.4.1 Spatial indigenous knowledge systems in legislation

Planning policies and legislation are important in determining the type of relationships planners have with local communities (McLeod et al. 2015:2). Some policies are formulated in such a manner that alternative courses of actions are severely restricted or predetermined, and thus result in perpetuating inequalities (Barry & Porter 2011:178). This is the same experience that the researcher in this study had during his employment at both the municipalities of Walvis Bay and Windhoek. One of the biggest problems encountered was in the interpretation of definitions in both the Walvis Bay and the Windhoek Town Planning Schemes, which created constant conflict between the officials and the applicants from the low-income areas who were not highly skilled in the English technical language.

Planning scholars on the African continent, the settler states and East Asian subcontinent, stressed the necessity for legislation review as crucial for a genuine transformation process to occur, which favours inclusion of diverse knowledges and addresses inequalities (Agustina et al. 2016, 2019; Barry & Porter 2011; Hammami 2012; McLeod et al. 2015, 2017; Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016; Nel 2016a; Porter 2010; Sandercock et al. 2004; Sihlongonyane 2015b; Sirayi & Nawa 2014; Sitas 2018; Watson & Agbola 2013; Wensing & Porter 2015; Williams 2015). It is therefore a significant call for planning to improve its interaction with local indigenous communities and to embrace indigenous knowledge, and legislation and policies could assist in this regard, as argued in this study. Elaborate legal reform attempts and experiences have been provided in the literature from Botswana, South Africa, Indonesia and the settler states (Canada, Australia and New Zealand), and this study tapped from that experience to derive some useful analytical frameworks when investigating the Namibian planning law context. These countries provide insights on attempts to integrate spatial indigenous knowledge, planning legislation and planning practice transformation (Hammami 2012; McLeod et al. 2015, 2017), to reform planning legislation to become more inclusive in its practice, in the creation of flexible land uses and inclusive settlement (Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016; Nel 2016a, 2016b; Sihlongonyane 2015). Others are proposing cultural policies and planning policies to be united with the focus being the improvement of both the poor urban localities and their marginalised communities (Nawa 2016; Nawa et al. 2014; Perry & Sitas 2019; Sirayi & Nawa 2014; Sitas 2018).

4.4.2 Botswana's indigenous knowledge system's encounter with planning legislation review

In the case of Botswana, the adoption of the Town and Country Planning Act (2013), suggested an improvement in the community-planner relationships in urban areas as most decision-making approaches were transferred to the local authorities (Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016:62). However, the planning system remains highly centralised as all participation processes are directed by the Minister, with all planning decisions determined through predefined codes and standards (Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016:63-68). Culture is rarely referred to in this legislation, and the related urban policies are silent on cultural issues, an aspect studies attributed to the planners' low consideration of culture in planning projects (Hammami 2012:7). The outcome of such an approach is that participation levels were heavily reduced, and the local wishes and values were not taken into account as the neoliberal market approaches dictated that the exchange value be privileged over the use value (Molebatsi &

Kalabamu 2016:59). The consequences are that marginalisation and inequalities continue as communication between officials and local communities is hampered by the highly technical languages in the policies (Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016:69).

The interpretation of local cultural values, spaces and practices through existing national policies that are culturally insensitive, referred to as “cultural translation”, has the potential danger of producing negative unintended outcomes (Prusak et al. 2016:443). This turned out to be the experience in Botswana. The developed cultural open spaces (the *kgotla*) turned out to be used by local authorities for purposes of contradicting their original conception, thus reducing trust and participation from the local communities (Hammami 2012:13-14). Similar unsuccessful outcomes were also observed in the Zimbabwean experimentation with cultural houses and centres (Chigwada & Chiparausha 2017). In the Zimbabwean case, the legally required cultural houses and centres were established, but without proper guidelines, policies and legislation that guided its implementation and use, which led to these spaces becoming conflicting, as the appointed gatekeepers or guardians eventually dominated events in terms of their own cultural or religious orientations (Chigwada & Chiparausha 2017:510). According to Molebatsi and Kalabamu (2016:78-81), such a planning legislative environment cannot encourage the promotion of inclusive settlements, and further reforms will be required. In the same vein, it is argued that the foregrounding of culture as part of the everyday life can only be achieved by halting planning’s view of culture as merely an object, and rather institutionalise cultural processes and values into space production methods and policies (Hammami 2012:13).

4.4.3 South African planning legislation review

The South African Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) of 2013, which combined various policies into one law, aims at dealing with challenges of redress, social justice, equity and inclusion, community participation and transparent decision-making (Nel 2016a:81). Having maintained the traditional zoning system, SPLUMA was found to be inflexible (Nel 2016a:87) and continuing with rigid technical approaches to address planning problems (Charman, Tonkin et al. 2017:56). According to Williams (2015:219), SPLUMA failed to include local cultural input, making it a non-compliant legislation in terms of the UNDRIP (2007) mentioned earlier. Other policies that were created and filled with cultural metaphors, and those that advocated for smart cities such as the NDP 2030, the Gauteng 2055 and the

Tshwane 2055 NDPs, were found to be in favour of the wealthy elites and ignorant of the existing inequalities (Oranje 2014:5; Sihlongonyane 2015b:84).

Nonetheless, some proposals have been made by scholars to improve the application of SPLUMA in urban areas (Williams 2014; Nel 2016a). Williams (2015:241) suggested that planning should move away from strict zoning schemes towards customary cultural zones, particularly in small rural towns or marginalised peripheral areas, where multiple land uses are permitted, and where the conventional scheme standards are evaluated against local cultural norms. Nel (2016a:90) proposed a transect or split system with a wide variety of control approaches, ranging from maximum to minimum control, which will address issues of flexibility and diversity that are poorly articulated in SPLUMA. The above proposals may be an appropriate start towards opening up the planning system to consider multiple alternative spatial planning methods, such as the indigenous place-making knowledges hitherto still largely absent in Southern African postcolonial urban spaces.

Other scholars in South Africa also recognised the absence of cultural aspects in the country's legislation and proposed further reviews of urban policies and legislation to enable the creation of culture-sensitive development frameworks to reduce the persisting apartheid legacy characterising urban areas (Nawa 2016; Nawa et al. 2014; Sirayi 2019; Sirayi & Nawa 2014; Sitas 2018). Proposals are directed towards the review of all legislation and policies to include culture-sensitive provisions that will guide the spatial development in the country, especially targeting low-income and poor areas (Nawa 2016:766; Nawa et al. 2014:1; Sitas 2018:589). These scholars based their argument on the recognition of culture by UNESCO and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, which aims at making urban areas more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Nawa et al. 2014:166; Perry et al. 2019:4).

4.4.4 Settler states' planning law transformation

In the context of the settler states (Canada, New Zealand, Australia), studies showed that spatial planning legislation and policies are advanced in terms of accommodating local indigenous knowledges in their provisions. To improve the relationship between indigenous communities and municipalities, McLeod et al. (2015, 2017) suggested improvements to the policies that could enhance dialogues and transformative planning practices. Further investigations looked at the legislation and policies, where amended, how they referred to the indigenous communities, and how the text was used to recognise and enable participation

by indigenous communities (McLeod et al. 2015:3). Moreover, the laws were also explored in how they accommodate the aspirations and interest of indigenous communities in planning processes (McLeod et al. 2017:75). It then requires an understanding of local knowledges and practices of indigenous communities by policymakers. It is this understanding of indigenous epistemologies and ontologies by management and policy domains that will enhance the acceptance of such policies by indigenous communities (Budwa & McCreary 2013:210).

Through studies and evaluations, it was concluded that meaningful changes were observed when amendments to accommodate indigenous knowledges and practices were introduced in both low-order and higher-order policies (McLeod et al. 2015:1). Consequently, this will improve plans to consider indigenous worldviews that are currently excluded from national planning processes (Prusak et al. 2016:441). This echoes Devlin's (2011:147) assertions in the context of New York, that legal reform should be considered if local informal trading activities are truly valued and appreciated. In the context of Canada and New Zealand, the practitioners involved in the evaluation of legislation became more self-reflective on how planning policies restrict or enable planning relations (McLeod et al. 2015:2).

Although that context is different from colonial Africa or Namibia, in particular, still the local planners with their different racial, ethnical and tribal backgrounds can benefit from this approach to investigate their local legislation and suggest transformative improvements in their planning approach. The review of the policies, including planning policies, can serve as a vital and transformative tool in building dialogue and ensuring more equitable planning futures for all in an urban space (McLeod et al. 2017:84). At this juncture, it is important to reiterate that in New Zealand and Canada for example, the indigenous communities in some cities have spatialised their wishes and cultural values for all to see, and this probably can be linked to the progress made in the legislation reviews alluded to above (see Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019:272). McLeod et al. (2017:84) have warned that "getting to common ground" requires cultural changes, including the willingness on the part of non-indigenous people to break embedded cultural assumptions, understandings, relationships and ways of doing. If successfully done, the physical visualisation of spatial indigenous knowledges and spaces, such as the urban marae (New Zealand) and the friendship centres (Canada), will contribute to the improvement of sense of belonging and sense of place for these communities (Marek 2020; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019). As argued in this study, it could consequently assist with the planning practice transformation and physical improvement of these low-income areas in Namibia's urban areas.

4.5 Media treatment of spatial indigenous knowledge systems in current planning-related discourses

The media, particularly the printed media targeted by this study, plays an important role in the dissemination of information, as well as in the general teaching or transfer of knowledge from one person to the next (Gebresselassie 2013; Munyoro et al. 2016). The role of the media in promoting public policies and research results, if properly and objectively done, can have beneficial outcomes in development programmes as it can, for example, impact planning practice (Flyvbjerg 2012:9; Munyoro et al. 2016:8). Besides the function of information dissemination, the media (through journalism) assists with the monitoring of the powerful, while providing a voice to the excluded and marginalised (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007, cited in Gebresselassie 2013:13). According to Moonsammy (2017:30), the media (printed and social) also serves as a policy arena where policymaking communities converge and criticise the policymaking process if their interests are not accommodated or when they feel excluded. Therefore, power relations are present in these policy arenas as they are socially constructed and are linked to power (Moonsammy 2017:30).

Critical scholars warned that the media can equally educate and inform, but also withhold important information at will in attempting to conform to the current power structures (Claussen 2019; Fogarty et al. 2018). Fogarty et al. (2018:viii), for example, stated that the media can highlight issues regarding the local people only when they are controversial, and then remain silent on the positive matters. This approach, referring to the settler states context, leads to the negative framing of the local populations, which in turn reinforces and legitimates government actions and policies even if they are oppressive in nature, thus resulting in negative discourses (Fogarty et al. 2018:x). This reporting of displaying some information while excluding other important information, creates a biased version of the realities on the ground for the readers (Van Dijk 1995:28-29). This equally has an influence on development policy outcomes, as powerful groups determine the processes through their privileged edge of resources and language possession with which they access the policy arena (Gaventa 2006, cited in Moonsammy 2017:30).

The media is equally seen as a tool that creates discriminatory and negative images of places, people and events at times. A study in the Namibian context, for example, found that the media and the state collaborated to depict low-income residential areas such as Havana as “unclean and lawless”, thus using this framing to justify the state’s naturalised paternalistic

and patriarchal systems (Pysclywec 2013:101). In an example from Thailand, political media discourses were found to advance certain gender stereotypes that favoured male political candidates against their women counterparts (Sriwimon & Zilli 2017). Critical discourse studies such as that of Sriwimon and Zilli (2017:141) revealed that the media, through the use of certain linguistic choices in the Thailand context, can convey meanings that potentially contribute to the generation and reproduction of certain dominant ideologies. This in turn, disadvantage certain sections of society such as women, by depicting them as incapable and dependent on men to succeed by using some chosen terms in the media (Sriwimon & Zilli 2017:141). In the context of indigenous knowledge use in the media, Bétrisey (2015) found that dominant actors deploy some IKS aspects to advance their economic interests. In this example, a local community water management organisation used storytelling approaches in the media to highlight the importance of the local area and its indigenous history, linking it to their organisation to increase its support base (Bétrisey 2015:14). The consequence is that organisations of the minority and other smaller indigenous groups were overlooked and marginalised in terms of local support, something that could lead to future tensions and conflicts (Bétrisey 2015:16).

An understanding of the discursive practice of the media in promoting certain policy interests, while excluding other important logics, will assist planners in formulating balanced information and addressing the misinformation (Forester 1982) in the planning profession and public, while also handling controversies and conflicting views through bridging strategies among the various stakeholders (Gebresselassie 2013:iii-iv). According to Flyvbjerg (2012:9), planners need to get their research results publicised widely in mass media, even if they reveal “tension points”, as this has the potential to influence practice for the betterment of communities. The tension points are similar to the Foucauldian virtual fractures discussed in Chapter 3 (3.6.2), which revealed existing power relations where dubious practices or potential conflicts are obscured (Flyvbjerg 2012:9). On the other hand, positive reporting of successful projects in cities through the printed media was found to change the image of the urban area concerned and led to improvement of the governance attitude of the local authorities (Franco & Ortiz 2020:8).

4.6 Synthesis and conclusions informing fieldwork

In this chapter, the study explored the concept of IKS from various angles, especially elaborating on its meaning and role in the indigenous communities around the world.

Although it was highlighted that IKS did exist precolonially, colonially and postcolonially, the impact of the colonial period on IKS had negative consequences, which contributed largely to its erasure, hiding and devaluation. However, this chapter also demonstrated that the postmodernists critiques of the current planning systems, and the search for alternative knowledges, contributed to the resurgence of IKS in various communities around the world, being spearheaded mostly through multidisciplinary research approaches. The calls are out for planning to adapt to a form of multiplicity, in which multiple knowledges are encouraged to coexist. This study joined this request by exploring the existence of spatial IKS and how IKS can contribute to this multiplicity.

In line with the first two research questions of this study, this chapter presented the type of IKS spatial aspect examples from Africa's eastern and southern regions and Namibia, especially looking at what existed from the precolonial period, highlighting how these knowledges contribute to the conception of spaces and places in the various communities, how their spatial cultural frameworks (for example, praise poems, ritual practices, open space uses) contribute to a sense of place in the process. In this context, the emphases were placed on the significant contributions that cultural open spaces make to the well-being of indigenous communities. It was stressed that these cultural open spaces offer appropriate moments where interactions, learning and future actions are designed that influence the communities' well-being, as well as that of their environment. Thus, and from an IKS perspective, cultural open spaces offer similar moments, but directed towards the everyday activities of the residents. However, this chapter stressed the point that although cultural open spaces and other public spaces are important, their provision is being hampered by the dominant neoliberal and patriarchal planning approaches favouring the wealthier residents more than the poor.

The chapter further identified some warnings on the IKS spatial concepts that generally depict an egalitarian system (Ogunyankin 2019), how they may be progressively used, or misused in the planning process, all aspects to be carefully considered during planning transformation processes. Some of the potential pitfalls may be presented by the gender stereotypes found in cultural expressions that may reproduce patriarchal dominance in spatial uses (Mbenzi 2018), or the potential insensitivity arising from dominant spatialisations of memory and genealogy by certain groups (Bollig 2009b). In the same vein, the current trends around IKS, and the inflexibilities and flexibilities of both the current planning system and the IKS were investigated. Despite the rigidities of established planning frameworks, the transformations

involving IKS in certain urban areas were presented to demonstrate that changes are possible and are taking place. This was supported by arguments directed towards the ability of cultural frameworks to also address the past, present and future behaviour of communities.

The chapter further explored the relationship between spatial IKS and spatial planning legal frameworks in order to obtain a better understanding on how the latter do or do not contribute to the masking of the former. The literature presented here demonstrated that the IKS and legal framework relationship is important if local communities' spatial values and aspirations are to be met. This relationship between IKS and legislation should be clear and open to encourage interactions between local communities and their planners from all sectors. This part demonstrated that existing legislation continues to present and manage spaces through Western predefined terminologies and interpretations that prescribe how planning should be (Barry & Porter 2011:183). This framing leads to misunderstandings, misinterpretations and suppressions of local IKS, thus resulting in the unintentional maintenance of inequalities, on the one hand. In order to reduce these inequalities, Yanow (2003:26) made the following assertions:

Had researchers / analysts sought to understand the local communities (their values, beliefs and feelings), and then use that knowledge in designing policy, the ensuing problems would likely have been avoided or at least anticipated and mitigated.

On the other hand, the chapter further demonstrated how different communities, with deep differences and different rationalities, can interpret the legal text (policies) in different ways to reach common or differential outcomes. This part thus links up with the third research question of this study, namely: Could these spatial IKS be of value in urban areas? To improve the relationship between planners and local or indigenous communities, the importance of community organisations and groupings and their knowledges was emphasised.

This study incorporated the media subsection in this chapter just to explore how IKS and other local knowledges are treated in the media in terms of current spatial development conditions in general. The media is deemed an important platform where various components of the urban area residents meet and converse, although the powerful members are in control due to privileged access. The media can equally contribute to the reproduction of certain dominant discourses that maintain inequalities. Nevertheless, the discourses displayed in the printed media, at times including those of the poor and marginalised communities, provide important insights on what the current spatial IKS and spatial planning discourses are, and what they entail.

Finally, with the above synthesis, this chapter informed the research path that was undertaken in the next chapters. The chapter reiterated on the gap that exists between current planning approaches and spatial IKS, as concluded in Chapter 3. The IKS spatial aspects presented in this chapter were used to explore what still exists within the local communities. An exploration will therefore be undertaken in the next chapter to unearth which spatial IKS are still useful, whether from precolonial times or contemporary settings, and could be applicable in current urban conditions such as those found in Havana. This enabled a further investigation on how spatial IKS could be brought closer to the Namibian planning legislation and the Windhoek planning policies, in particular. The aim was to suggest possible community-based planning approaches that could directly target the improvement of low-income and informal settlement areas and their well-being, which are currently not being reached by current conventional methods. However, before engaging in the data collection methodologies, the findings and analysis chapters, the researcher regarded it important to delve into the existing planning legal framework in Namibia and present its current relationship with spatial IKS in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

PLANNING LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK IN NAMIBIA

5.1 Introduction

In the context of this study, the role of legislation in the treatment of spatial planning will be considered in this chapter, with the focus on the laws that are implicated in land use planning and management. The chapter looks at how these laws accommodate and treat land use in terms of the various traditional and cultural practices of indigenous communities. The focus will be on the spatial planning approaches in the policies, what their main focus is, and how they include or exclude local communities, particularly indigenous knowledges in urban areas. The chapter further looks at the different tiers of legislation related to spatial planning, from the national policies and acts to municipal policies, and then ends with an overall insight on why policies are so difficult to change in the Namibian context. A brief consideration will be accorded to the relevant international declarations and conventions ratified by Namibia, to explore to what extent these frameworks enable support and promotion of culture in member states.

5.2 The national policies

5.2.1 Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 1990

The Constitution is the supreme law of Namibia and guides the development of the country and its people. The preamble lays the platform for the provision of dignity and equal rights to all residents. Article 3 established the official language to be English, while the use of other languages is allowed in areas where the majority of the citizens are not proficient in English, although it is stipulated that such a process should not hamper the improvement of the English language for the people.

The aspects of religion and culture have been emphasised in Chapter 3 of the Constitution, which provide various articles that safeguard and protect the beliefs and value systems of the country's citizens as equal. Articles 5, 10, and 13 focus on the protection of the rights, freedom and privacy of the residents. Article 18 ensures that administrative bodies and officials act fairly in all circumstances, while it encourages residents to seek redress if not satisfied with those bodies' decisions.

Culture, an important aspect of this study, has been addressed in Article 19 as follows:

Every person shall be entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion subject to the terms of this Constitution and further subject to the condition that the rights protected by this Article do not impinge upon the rights of others or the national interest.

Article 21 presents various fundamental freedoms, including the one referring to the freedom to practice any religion and to manifest such practice as a right of every citizen. The promotion of the welfare of the people has been addressed in Article 95 under Chapter 11, in which the fair and reasonable access to public facilities and services has been emphasised.

The Constitution addresses the issue of the common law and the customary law, and emphasises that they remain valid where applicable, as long as they do not conflict with the country's Constitution. The Namibian Parliament may, through an appropriate act, repeal or modify such laws when deemed necessary. The structures of regional, local and traditional governments have been provided for under Chapter 12 in Article 102. The modalities on the establishment of regional councils and local authorities have been elaborated on in Articles 103 and 111, respectively.

However, although the Constitution appears to protect all the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens, it seems that some obstacles make the promotion and acceptance of traditional knowledge (i.e., IKS) problematic (Ruppel 2010). The Namibian courts, for example, were found to be reluctant to consider the right to culture as a means to protect traditional knowledge (Ruppel 2010:339). In the context of this study, this means that IKS is not well-protected by the highest law of the country. Currently, cultural interpretations end up favouring the economic values only, while cultural reasons are neglected, which should not be the case (Ruppel 2010:340). There is thus a need to clarify the meaning of culture and traditional knowledge (IKS) in both the Constitution and other spatial planning policies to ensure a better understanding and interpretation of what it entails. The literature in Chapter 4 demonstrated that such legislation reviews have been carried out in other contexts. The ensuing amendments, such as in the context of the settler states of New Zealand and Canada, led to the improvements of relationships between planning officials and local communities (see McLeod et al. 2015, 2017).

5.2.2 Vision 2030

The idea of Vision 2030 for Namibia was brought forward during a cabinet address in 1998 by the first president, Sam Nujoma, when he encouraged his ministers to formulate “a vision that will take Namibia from the present into the future; a vision that will guide us to make deliberate efforts to improve the quality of life of our people to the level of their counterparts in the developed world by the year 2030” (Republic of Namibia 2004a:19).

Vision 2030, adopted in 2004, outlines new ways of thinking in line with its aspiration of achieving an improved lifestyle for the citizens of Namibia. The document promises a shift from a controlled decision-making, outputs-orientated and sectoral planning approach to a more process-based, integrated planning approach emphasising the importance of partnerships and sharing, and a focus on outcomes (Republic of Namibia 2004a:36). Vision 2030 is aimed at providing direction to all sectors of the Namibian society, including regional and local authorities, through NDPs (Republic of Namibia 2004a).

The Vision 2030 document acknowledge that culture and tradition are not static, and constantly change due to internal developments or foreign influences and reaffirms that Namibian cultures should be considered as assets to the country and thus discrimination should no longer be tolerated (Republic of Namibia 2004a:122). In fact, Vision 2030 encourages traditional culture to be blended with modern changes to promote social harmony and economic development, while it urges negative cultural practices that inhibits progress to be discarded (Republic of Namibia 2004a:33-34). The document further envisions that communities live in harmony, share moral values, learn from each other and embrace solutions from each other by the year 2030, while local indigenous spoken languages should be developed in written form (Republic of Namibia 2004a:124). On the spatial planning aspects, the plan encourages the spreading of urban centres throughout the country to avoid the monopoly of one centre only, while the municipalities will have to be strengthened to carry out their duties effectively (Republic of Namibia 2004a:49). In addition, the urban environment should consist of self-sufficient rural areas and well-planned, well-managed, clean, safe, and aesthetically pleasing urban areas, while the latter should be supplied with enough recreational facilities such as parks, monuments and museums, and inhabited by proactive, highly proud citizens that are involved in decision-making (Republic of Namibia 2004a:172). In terms of this study, although culture is supported, it is not precisely outlined which aspects are supported, and which are not. Spatial IKS that could assist with the

development, maintenance and well-being of many of the poorer and low-income areas is not referred to in this vision plan.

Although policy documents such as Vision 2030 formulate well-intended programmes for the improvement of communities, they are criticised as operating under external influences from international agencies such as the United Nations development programmes, including the Millennium Development Goals (see Ilcan & Philips 2010). These international institutions come with their agendas and projects in a framework of a donor–recipient approach, which eventually influences outcomes. In addition, although the documents are well-intentioned, the skewed relationships between international bodies and local elites lead to low inclusivity development outcomes as the rich often capture the wealth and property of the urban areas, or the marginalised are not listened to (Markkula et al. 2019:10; Williams 2015:154). In that vein, Myers and Kitsuse (2000:222) criticised vision plans as focused on technical solutions for problems while simultaneously neglecting realities on the ground. These plans are further criticised of leaning on the neoliberal market dictates that favour the rich, while the poor and their alternative knowledges are ignored (Myers & Kitsuse 2000:222; Sihlongonyane 2016:1620). Ilcan and Philips (2010:868) proposed that research should focus on the mechanisms and tools being deployed to ensure a buy-in into these plans, and not on the programmes themselves. Their argument is based on the increasing embeddedness of these plans in societies and their spatial imaginaries, while they are responsible for also causing tensions and conflicts in people’s daily lives (Ilcan & Philips 2010:868).

5.2.3 Fifth National Development Plan

NDPs are five-yearly policy documents and serve as the main vehicles that the various government ministries and agencies use to attain the long-term objectives of Vision 2030 (Ruppel 2010:347). Namibia is currently at the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5), which comprises the period 2017/2018 to 2020/2021. The NDP5 consists of four interconnected pillars that emphasise sustainable development, namely economic progression, social transformation, environmental sustainability and good governance (Republic of Namibia 2017:7). These pillars, beside Vision 2030, are equally aligned to the ruling SWAPO Party Manifesto of 2014 (Republic of Namibia 2017:7). The Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) of 2016, an initiative of the current president, Hage Geingob, is aimed at enhancing these NDP5 pillars (Republic of Namibia 2017:7). At global level, the NDP5 pillars are also aligned with international development frameworks to which Namibia is committed, such as Agenda 2030,

the sustainable development goals, the Paris Agreement (known as CoP21), the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan of the Southern African Development Community (Republic of Namibia 2017:7).

The NDP5 highlighted the importance of research and innovation, and is encouraging the formation of partnerships between the government, universities and industry to improve the entrepreneurial skills in the country (Republic of Namibia 2017:32). Community well-being aspects to receive increased attention include the support for strengthening social safety nets through improved policy, the increase in health facilities, the eradication of gender-based violence, the coordination of urban and regional development projects targeting housing, and the promotion of self-help approaches in the improvement of sanitation conditions in the country (Republic of Namibia 2017:7). The marginalised communities are to be targeted for programmes that will contribute to their integration into the mainstream economy. Equally, the NDP5 has recognised the marginalisation of the arts and culture in the country, and has set a target that by 2022, the participation in this area by community members will be enhanced so that employment in this sector is increased by 2% (Republic of Namibia 2017:75). The focus of the NDP5 is therefore more on the lack of arts and cultural education infrastructure, and the assumption that an improvement there will result in employment creation and poverty eradication (Republic of Namibia 2017:75). However, local spatial IKS and other local knowledges are not referred to in the NDP5. This is in line with criticism raised against NDPs that their consideration of the social dimension is very reduced, and that they are too technical, top-down and state- and elite-driven (Chimhowu et al. 2019:83). The NDPs have been criticised of being designed for a technically and economically literate audience (Chimhowu et al. 2019:83), and usually, the majority of the residents remain poorly informed about the content. In such a policy framework, the spatial IKS knowledges and inputs remain hidden and cannot be harnessed for the improvement of low-income urban areas.

5.2.4 Harambee Prosperity Plan, 2016

The HPP was released in 2016 by President Hage Geingob during the early stages of his first term as the Namibian president. The term *Harambee*, adopted from Kiswahili (a predominant language in East Africa), means “pull together in the same direction”, and was chosen for this plan to encourage unity and common purpose ideals among Namibians (Republic of Namibia 2016a:4). The HPP is a developmental tool that is complementary to the existing Vision 2030 and the NDPs (Republic of Namibia 2016a:6). The plan proposed the introduction of a

flexibility approach in development programmes, in order to counter negative and unpredictable internal and external influences that may hamper or slow the developed process (Republic of Namibia 2016a:6).

The HPP does not directly address issues such as the local cultures and land use planning, but focuses on issues of economic and infrastructural developments that indirectly have a bearing on spatial planning. For instance, the plan proposes to enhance the process of massive urban land servicing programmes, in which some municipalities with a high influx of people are targeted for government subsidies (Republic of Namibia 2016a:41). However, the HPP was received with mixed feelings, as reported in the various local media. Although praised by the majority of the population due to a renewed spirit of celebrating a third Namibian president since independence, the media raised concerns such as lack of political will, increasing corruption and capacities to implement such a highly technical plan (Guchu 2016:1). Despite the HPP's popular reception, some quarters still questioned its value and the need for a new plan when others, for example Vision 2030 and the NDPs, still existed (Kamwanyah 2016:10). Three years later, in 2019, the plan was criticised as failing, while opposition parties labelled it as just the creation of an euphoria of prosperity (Shinovene & Iikela 2019:1). Harambee II was launched in March 2021 when the thesis was in its final stages. Harambee II was labelled as a recycling of the first promises as it still remains distant from the realities on the ground (Iikela 2021:1).

The Harambee metaphor takes us back to the “empty signifiers of transformation” alluded to in the South African context by Sihlongonyane (2015b). Although the use of metaphors in some cases create sellable images, and thus increase participation levels of local communities, they are not instrumental in changing persisting modernist and globalisation logics (Sihlongonyane 2015b:83). In the same vein, Oranje (2014:8) argued that metaphors in the plans end up projecting the state as sole driver and provider of development, and this can lead to exclusion of potential positive knowledges from the local communities as they are entrapped in a paternalistic relationship with the authorities.

5.2.5 National Policy on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Draft 2016)

In recent years, Namibia has increased its focus on the value and importance of IKS for the economic development of the local communities. In order to enhance and elevate this focus, the Namibian government entrusted the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology to formulate a policy dealing with the promotion of IKS in the country (Republic

of Namibia 2016b:13). Although the resulting draft National Policy on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (2016) has been finalised, the approval of the policy was slowed by ongoing arguments on how the word *indigenous* should be used, or whether it should be replaced with other terms (see the debates raised in Chapter 1 and 4). In this draft policy, the terms *indigenous* and *traditional* were used interchangeably at times, while the terms *indigenous knowledge systems* and *traditional knowledge systems* appear jointly in abbreviated form as IKS/TKS throughout the document.

This policy envisions the recognition and mainstreaming of the various IKS into the NDPs, while its mission is to provide protection and innovation for the benefit of all citizens' socio-economic conditions (Republic of Namibia 2016b:13). The policy advocates closer collaboration between various ministries, agencies, and offices of government, while it will facilitate the infrastructure and capacity provision for an improved documentation, protection and commercialisation of this knowledge (Republic of Namibia 2016b:10). Although focused on the protection and commercialisation side of IKS and the use related natural resources, some of the policy objectives highlight relevant points for the promotion of spatial IKS emphasised by this study. Examples of these objectives include the promotion of public understanding of IKS for nation building, the preservation and maintenance of IKS for the benefit of all citizens of Namibia and the development of an information management system for the protection of IKS (Republic of Namibia 2016b:19). The policy, like the previous policies discussed above, equally emphasise the importance of partnerships in knowledge sharing, especially on the national and international level (p. 24). Aspects that enable a community to obtain a stable livelihood should be respected through honouring the cultural diversity in the country (p. 42). In that regard, the policy suggests that the preservation of indigenous knowledge should recognise indigenous languages, stories, dances, practical skills, buildings, sacred sites, artefacts and the relationship to land as part of the aspects for stable livelihoods (p. 42). These aspects are of relevance to this study as well, as they are important components that were explored for a better understanding of the indigenous communities' spatial conceptualisations when engaging cultural practices in their spaces.

Another important observation from this draft policy is the recognition and emphases it put on increased interdisciplinary research on IKS protection, which must be complemented by the establishment of regional and national indigenous knowledge resource centres as well (Republic of Namibia 2016b:49). This policy is the closest Namibian legislation has come to considering IKS at the level of a legal perspective, and hopefully the legislation emanating

from this exercise will really assist the poor and marginalised as propagated. However, Agrawal (2002:295) already warned that practices such as documentation, databases and protection of IKS may end up appropriated by the powerful; thus further marginalising the poor communities. However, this policy focuses only on the economic side of indigenous knowledges around the utilisation and preservation of natural resources, and the spatial IKS targeted by this study appears not to be a concern of this new draft legislation in its current form.

5.3 Acts of Parliament

5.3.1 Local Authorities Act, Act 23 of 1992

The Local Authorities Act, Act 23 of 1992, was enacted to guide the determination and establishment of local authority councils in Namibia, and also it stipulates the powers, duties and functions of such authorities (Republic of Namibia 1992:1). It is Section 3 of this Act through which the Minister may establish and declare areas as municipalities, towns or villages under certain conditions (Republic of Namibia 1992:11). The Act does not address cultural issues in detail, but it is mainly responsible for the allocation of powers, duties and functions those local authorities must fulfil in their areas of jurisdiction. For instance, Section 30(1)(e) requires the local authority councils to construct and maintain streets and public spaces. In addition, important functions include the establishment, managing and maintenance of museums, libraries and nurseries, as determined in Section 30(1)(k). Section 30(1)(n) expects municipalities to beautify and maintain the neatness of their areas. Although this is achieved to acceptable levels in wealthier areas, the Municipality of Windhoek struggles to keep the low-income areas clean.

Furthermore, although Section 48 authorises local authorities to engage in the development of various types of streets and public spaces, and the accompanying infrastructure in such spaces, this is often not realised in low-income areas. If ever public spaces are established, they are implemented through modernist approaches as observed in most of the Global South cities, where local cultures and traditions are ignored (Faragallah 2018:3969; Mandeli 2019:1). This results in low-income areas, such as Havana, being underprovided with usable public open spaces (see Chapters 2 and 3) with residents left to negotiate their cultural activities on small *invented spaces* (Miraftab 2009). In the cases where a few public open

spaces are provided, they do not include the local communities' aspirations and values and are mostly either strictly regulated or neglected and unsafe.

5.3.2 Urban and Regional Planning Act, Act 5 of 2018

URPA, Act 5 of 2018, was proclaimed as a spatial planning legislation to control all aspects of space creation, use and management in Namibia. The URPA regulations were approved and published in September 2020. URPA has replaced two old ordinances that controlled spatial planning during the colonial period, which were amended in the postcolonial era to fit the new government in power since 1990. These were the Town Planning Ordinance (1954) and the Townships and Division of Land Ordinance (1963). URPA aims to harmonise planning application procedures and cut the process and approval time down from the current two to three years to only a few months according to informal discussions with municipal officials. Still, most decisions have to be approved by the Minister as with the previous legislation.

The objectives (Section 2) and the principles (Section 3) of URPA 2018 focus on addressing the past spatial imbalances in relation to land accessibility and ownership, the promotion of sustainable development, the protection and respect of the environment and cultural heritage, while it further emphasises the importance of public participation in policy review processes. Sections 2 and 3 have brought into planning a new perspective that was missing from the old planning legislation, and all subsequent spatial planning policies to be created in terms of this Act have to comply with these two sections. An Urban and Regional Planning Board will be established in terms of Section 4, and in terms of Section 7, this Board will advise the Minister in all matters related to spatial planning.

URPA requires that a national spatial development framework be established by the Minister and be approved by Cabinet (Section 20). On regional level, the regional council is required to formulate a regional structure plan (Section 26), while the local authorities should prepare urban structure plans for the Minister's approval (Section 31). The regional and urban structure plans must be approved by the Minister, as well as the zoning schemes that must be prepared by local authorities (Section 48). Even though URPA requires local and regional authorities to prepare their spatial planning documents, it still retains the central government as the overall authority. Only municipalities with registered planners are authorised to perform planning functions, while those without qualified planners rely on the assistance of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development for planning decisions (Republic of Namibia

2018:19-20). In practice, many of the weaker municipalities rely on private professionals to perform planning functions on their behalf.

URPA presents the urban structure plans and zoning schemes as the most important development tools for the future of the Namibian urban areas. However, the framework in which they will operate reflects a continuation of current structure plans and town planning schemes in place. The restrictive zoning codes will continue, while the local knowledges (e.g., IKS) are not referred to. These zoning schemes, usually not properly defined and clarified, are criticised as being exclusionary and restrictive, and not open to alternative knowledges (Berrisford 2013:1; Nel 2016b:259; Williams 2015:153). Moreover, public participation in these new planning documents is formulated in a top-down approach, where written comments and objections are mechanisms of demonstrating public inclusion. These unclearly defined participatory platforms exclude the majority poor and low-income residents (Mabakeng 2020:11), who mostly do not understand the technical language involved (Molebatsi & Kalabamu 2016:69). An equally important observation is the low interaction of URPA with the traditional leadership and communities, which possibly means that spatial IKS from those communities could be missed in the urban areas. This will consequently translate in a reduced interaction between planners and the local communities regarding spatial IKS, as the gap between the two remains large (also see McLeod et al. 2015, 2017 in the context of the settler states).

The URPA Regulations (2020) clarified the procedures involved in the implementation of the Act. The Regulations will be evaluated together with the Act in Chapter 7.

5.3.3 Traditional Authorities Act, Act 25 of 2000

The Traditional Authorities Act, Act 25 of 2000, establishes the traditional leadership of a community in a certain area, and in terms of Section 3, also sets out the powers, duties and functions of such an authority. Section 3(1)(c) of the Act encourages the traditional authority to uphold, promote, protect and preserve the culture, language and the traditional values of the concerned community. Sections 3(1)(d) and (e) contain the responsibilities of the traditional authority regarding the preservation and maintenance of cultural sites and artworks, and also the overseeing of traditional ceremonies and functions. Assistance and cooperation with the government, regional councils and local authority councils in the execution of their policies are required in terms of Section 3(2)(b). The relationship between the traditional authorities and government has been clarified in Section 16 of the Act, where

it is expected that the traditional authority shall give support to the policies of government, regional councils and local authority councils, and that it will refrain from any act which undermines the authority of these institutions. It is clear that traditional authorities, in respect of urban areas, are only required to respect the laws and policies of these areas, and not much of an input from them is required. However, their importance as relevant partners in urban development issues was already highlighted in the first decade of Namibia's independence (Tvedten & Mupotola 1995:24).

On its part, URPA 2018 has only made a brief reference to the Council of Traditional Authorities. In terms of Chapter 2, Section 5(xi), the Council of Traditional Authorities has to nominate a member to be appointed as a member of the Urban and Regional Planning Board, as approved by the Minister. This Board has the main function of advising the Minister on all spatial planning matters, including applications for approval of various plans and schemes.

5.4 The Municipal Planning Policy Framework

5.4.1 Windhoek Town Planning Scheme (zoning scheme), 1997

For the purpose of this study, the WTPS (as amended in 1997) will be elaborated upon in much more detail as per the objectives and research questions of this study. In general, town planning schemes were a requirement for all urban areas in terms of the Town Planning Ordinance (1954) as amended through the years, and later through new conditions of an independent Namibia since 1990. The first town planning scheme was introduced in 1976 through the Ordinance of 1954 above. The WTPS (1997) could be considered an apartheid era document with only minor adaptations to fit the post-apartheid condition. Currently, URPA 2018 replaced the town planning schemes with zoning schemes. The then Ordinance (1954) has put the purpose of the town planning scheme as follows:

Every town planning scheme shall have for its general purpose a co-ordinated and harmonious development of the local authority area, or the area or areas situate therein, to which it relates (including, where necessary, the re-construction and re-development of any part which has already been sub-divided, whether there are or are not buildings thereon) in such a way as will most effectively tend to promote health, safety, order, amenity, convenience and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development and the improvement of communications.

The WTPS (1997) is still the main land use control document used by the city; thus being about 23 years without a major update or detailed reviews. However, the latest information

indicated that the Municipality of Windhoek was in the process of reviewing the WTPS. In its current form, the scheme is a very rigid, technical and scientific document and has been found difficult to be understood by the general public, especially from the low-income and previously segregated black townships. The WTPS does not refer to local, traditional or indigenous practices at all, and this is due to its historical origin in the Euro-American (via South Africa) spatial contexts as alluded to in Chapters 2 and 3.

A comprehensive list of definitions has been compiled under Clause 2, while Clause 5 indicates how the land should be reserved for public use or municipal ownership. The various land uses, strictly controlled in terms of primary, consent and prohibited uses, have been set out in Clause 9, and these stipulations are controlling almost every aspect of everyday life of the residents in the city. As per its purpose of a harmonious and safe environment, Clause 21 considers the aspects that may endanger the life, health and amenity of the residents, while Clause 27 deals with the removal processes of injurious conditions (Municipality of Windhoek 1997). Clause 29 handles the conservation issues in the urban area and its surroundings, while Clause 35 considers issues of drainage and stormwater in the urban area (Municipality of Windhoek 1997).

The WTPS equally addresses issues of conflict (Clause 47) and contraventions (Clause 48) in the urban area, while Clause 51 allows residents to appeal any decision of the Council that may aggrieve them to the Minister (Municipality of Windhoek 1997). The WTPS reflects what Oranje (1995:28-29) referred to as a “prescriptive system” in which the focus is more on what can be done, and therefore a system which neglect differences, creativity and local solutions to conflicts, and thus need urgent change.

5.4.2 Windhoek Structure Plan, 1996

The current WSP is another old document that dates back to 1996, and which review has been postponed on numerous occasions, recalling from my years in the service of the municipality. Current information is that the WSP is finally being reviewed, and consultants were appointed with the completion earmarked around two years from 2020 (Fanuel Maanda, town planner, personal communication, June 2020). Technically, this document has reached its 20-year projection already in 2016 and is thus four years behind its predicted review. However, the WSP has at the time addressed serious and important issues, and they still remain pertinent today, such as the improvement of low-income areas, sustainable development and the betterment of the quality of life of all the Windhoek residents.

The 1996 WSP announced the Council's vision as a commitment "to make the City of Windhoek the vibrant, economic and technological powerhouse of Africa in order to enhance the quality of life of all our people" (Municipality of Windhoek 1996:3). The three goals of the Council were focusing on the provision of effective services and infrastructure, the creation of economic opportunities, environmental conservation and an enhanced public participation spirit in the City (Municipality of Windhoek 1996:3). One example that focused on economic opportunity included the planning and promotion of business corridors in various areas in the city (Municipality of Windhoek 1996:6). However, in the low-income areas, the residents' self-created business corridors transformed some prominent streets in Katutura (such as Eveline Street) and surrounding extensions into vibrant business areas (see Charman et al. 2017). This led to Council relaxing its rigid planning approaches to support these job creation community initiatives. Another outcome of the WSP's early objective of densification saw the City's High Density and Office Policy being established around the central areas of Windhoek and other affluent areas, and included into the WTPS as development areas under Table I (Municipality of Windhoek 1997).

Regarding sustainable development, the WSP was influenced by a sustainable criteria report published in *Planning Week*, a London planning journal published in 1996. The *Planning Week* report, and other local research papers and municipal reports, influenced the Council's ideas, which eventually culminated in the town planning branch of the municipality being allocated the power to promote policies that are in line with the Council's vision and objectives, especially those related to spatial planning and land use (Municipality of Windhoek 1996:31,35). Nevertheless, the existing WSP (1996) has been critically assessed by various scholars, and a short review of this critical review will provide important lessons in general, and to arguments developed for the purposes of this study.

5.4.2.1 Critical assessment of the Windhoek Structure Plan 1996

The WSP was criticised for having adopted an apolitical approach to development, where planners and policies remain silent on past mistakes, while urban development continues to favour the wealthier section of the urban residents (Friedman 2000; Müller-Friedman 2006, Müller-Friedman 2008). The WSP has been found to exclude inputs from the local communities from the low-income areas (Friedman 2000:24). The intentional or unintentional exclusion of the poorer sections of the communities in planning legislation has been identified as a shortcoming in the planning process, which is a concern this study

discusses in later chapters. In the South African context, the SPLUMA 2013 amendment process, and the formulation of various spatial development frameworks were marked by a lack of engagement of local traditional communities, and various scholars predicted potential conflicts during the implementation of such plans (Nel & Drummond 2019:108; Williams 2015:218). In this regard, scholars insisted that the flexibility of programmes and plans should be made a priority, focusing on the inclusion, acknowledgement and accommodation of local survival strategies, self-organisation approaches in land use management systems (Charman et al. 2017, Charman, Tonkin et al. 2017; De Bruijn & Gerrits 2018; Nel 2016a, 2019; Oranje et al. 2020). The WSP was formulated in a rational and positivist approach that alternative local knowledges are marginalised, a situation observed in most sub-Saharan African countries (Chitekwe-Biti 2018:404; Müller-Friedman 2006:54). There is no mention of terms such as culture or cultural practice in the WSP. This inflexibility of the modernist planning documents is identified as one of the reasons why collaborative or communicative planning approaches are not achieving inclusive balanced outcomes (Boelens & De Roo 2016:42). In that vein, planning is missing the potential that exists in self-managed or self-made activities that include indigenous cultural spatial practices in this study's context, and have been in existence for long periods. These self-organised activities, existing for long without external influence, could help local authorities, for example, with alternative planning approaches in low-income areas (De Bruijn & Gerrits 2018:310). Nevertheless, Windhoek is in a favourable position to take the warnings above seriously, as the WSP is currently being revised after being 24 years in operation.

5.4.3 Windhoek Development and Upgrading Policy, 2019

The Windhoek Development and Upgrading Policy (WDUP) was first conceived in 1999 by the Municipality of Windhoek (also known as the City of Windhoek), and then amended in 2019 as a response to the increasing phenomenon of the housing crisis and the ensuing burgeoning of informal settlements at the north-western periphery of the city. In the early stage of Namibia's independence, this phenomenon was treated as a temporal issue that will disappear over time (Peyroux 2001:199). The main focus of the WDUP is the provision of services in this low-income and ultralow-income informal settlements in a phased approach, with the lowest level being a reception area only (with communal water points) to the highest level being full individual services at middle-income levels and full planning procedures being completed (Municipality of Windhoek 2019:43-46). The principles of this policy leans towards the continuation of the highly technical requirements as per its predecessor, as it focuses on

technically appropriate solutions based on a full-cost recovery approach (p. 4). The policy emphasises the importance of promoting self-help groups, especially in their efforts to improve their living conditions through their own strategies such as housing provision. This is exemplified by not only encouraging residents to participate in refuse removal assignments in their areas, but also in the municipal provision of training to the residents to upgrade their skills in various fields surrounding their areas (p. 11). The training provided entails knowledge on service use, health education, environmental education, property management and service payment management. In the same vein, vocational training skills such as building design, construction and welding are offered as empowerment skills (p. 12).

Another important observation is that the policy encourages public participation through the encouragement of creating neighbourhood committees that are drawn from various evenly distributed locations of the same area (Municipality of Windhoek 2019:20). The policy aims to encourage empowerment of local residents to manage their own areas, while increasing their participation levels (p. 20). Although the policy strives for increased participation (preferring “partnership” or “citizen control” as per the ladder of public participation, see Arnstein 1969), it nevertheless continues with the old approaches of communication with these low-income residents through the requirement of written objections if they have complaints on land development issues (p. 35). On land uses in the low-income informal settlements, the policy proposed two types of land uses for all, either a fixed or variable land use. The fixed land use are uses reserved for the benefit of the whole community such as schools, clinics, churches and shops (p. 31). The variable land use can accrue to an individual or the whole community and can easily be rezoned to other uses (p. 31). On formalisation of these informal and low-income areas, the policy expects the residents to comply with the requirements of the WTPS and the Building Regulations (p. 29). However, these policies are outdated and still maintain their strict and rigid prescriptions on land uses, and their amendments are long overdue.

Another important observation in this policy is the silence regarding sociocultural matters of the residents, which was a preoccupation of this study due to the rich cultural diversity in areas such as Havana. However, other policies exist that could influence the manner in which space is produced in Windhoek. For example, the Windhoek Institutional Land Policy (2018), which has as objective to address the social needs of the residents, enable residential individuals, groups or traditional authorities to purchase vacant land for the purposes of establishing institutional developments such as day-care centres, pre-primary schools, social

halls and places of worship as per the institutional land use definition (Municipality of Windhoek 2018b:1-3). The land is sold at a reduced price, and the purchasing group should provide proof of registration with any welfare organisation, provide a constitution, and at times proof of registration with relevant ministries is required (p. 4). Development should be commenced within five years, with an extension of two years, after which the land reverts back to the Council if failed to commence with constructions (p. 7). The previous version of the policy strictly prohibited rezoning of these institutional erven to other profit-making land uses, but the newly amended policy makes it possible to do so (Ikela 2020:1). This amendment has been criticised as favouring the profit-orientated elites, who buy land under false pretences for low prices, and then rezone for business ventures (Ikela 2020:1). The Windhoek Transformational Strategic Plan (2017–2022) is another important document that focuses on service delivery and implementation strategies to improve the image of the city from the residents (Municipality of Windhoek 2017). The role of this Strategic Plan in space production is in the emphases it puts on the amendment of the outdated WTPS and the Building Regulations (pp. 47-48). The Strategic Plan also emphasises the urgency in the creation of a spatial development framework, through which all planning endeavours of the municipality are to be conducted (p. 56).

The above policies contribute in one or the other way in the creation of spaces in the City. However, and of equal relevance to this study, is how the open spaces in Windhoek are conceived, defined and managed in the City.

5.5 Windhoek Open Space Policy, 2001

The Windhoek Open Space Policy (WOSP) was formulated with the recognition by the Municipality of Windhoek of the important role open spaces play in the well-being of residents, and the threat that was being posed by profit-driven land developments that disregarded open spaces as assets (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:2). This threat, and the recognition that nature through open spaces contribute to reduced stress levels in urban areas, led to formulation of a policy to create and safeguard public open spaces in Windhoek (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:2).

WOSP was created in 2001 to regulate all open spaces left free of development throughout the urban area of the city. The aim of WOSP 2001 was to preserve various fragile ecosystems, natural areas, aesthetic quality, cultural and historical areas, archaeological areas and many others (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:1). The policy recognised the pressure put on open

spaces by urban development projects under the pretext of providing much-needed houses or offices (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:2). Although the policy envisages many activities to be allowed on open spaces on application such as gardening, nurseries, educational centres, and informal markets (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:2), it fell short of making reference to cultural activities and performances in this list.

WOSP (2001:3) listed eight objectives regarding open space management, and two that are of relevance to this study are quoted below:

- *Raise awareness of special interest groups and the public of opportunities inherent in the City's open spaces for improvement of their environment and individual life styles; and*
- *Raise awareness of opportunities for City-private sector partnerships involving open spaces as elements in promoting social upliftment, recreational development and conservation.*

The importance of the two objectives above is that they focus on the improvement of spaces and social aspects of the residents, which are also of concern to this study. WOSP 2001 further acknowledges that challenges such as pollution, crime and squatting are posing problems to the City in the maintenance of open spaces, hence the creation of various community participation platforms to jointly address issues of improvement and maintenance of these spaces (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:20). In addition, the policy advocates for the establishment of community centres in all neighbourhoods, and the availing of open spaces for community groups that are capable of managing such spaces (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:21).

However, although open spaces are given priority by the policy, it is also in line with the emphasis of the WSP (1996) emphasis on the safeguarding of natural open spaces such as river courses, mountains, valleys and dams as public open spaces (see Municipality of Windhoek 1996:39, 2001b:4). Thus, the emphasis of these two policy documents is more on the natural open spaces for relaxation in the city, rather than on the much-needed everyday life of the residents. As could be deduced from its objectives and literature from elsewhere, WOSP 2001 does indeed recognise the importance of open spaces to the quality of life of the residents, the social interactions involved and the contribution to the well-being of communities (Abbasi et al. 2016:197; Richardson et al. 2021:8). In a recent study in the context of the UK, Richardson et al. (2021) stressed the importance of connection and engagement moments in nature (or public open spaces such as parks). The study by Richardson et al. (2021:8) emphasised that connection and engagement moments are

influencing the well-being of people more than the mere time spent in those spaces. However, it is the non-reference to cultural spaces and related activities that make WOSP 2001 to be seen, at least in the context of this study, as a normative policy document with good intentions, but conceived in the dominant Western design, planning and conceptualisation of open spaces, which for example, exclude IKS spatial aspects (see Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:3, in a settler state context). Equally of concern is that there is no protection offered in the WOSP 2001 against the appropriation of open spaces by private interests, hence the observable reduction of the already few public open spaces in Windhoek's residential areas under the pretext of housing development by private developers.

5.6 International declarations and conventions

This section briefly presents two of the international agreements to which Namibia has ascended to, and which may have an influence on how cultural relationships between indigenous communities and their government institutions can be handled. The two agreements pose some relevant provisions focusing on the promotion of diverse cultures and knowledges of indigenous communities, and this has direct implications on how these aspects could be spatialised in space and place.

First, the UNDRIP of 2007 has contributed to an improved consideration of local communities' knowledges and ways of living (Chigwada & Chiparausha 2017; Wensing & Porter 2016). The UNDRIP requires indigenous people to be empowered to determine and control their pathways to social and economic development (Wensing & Porter 2016:97). Article 31 of the UNDRIP (2007:11) declaration reads as follows:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

The statement above contains practices with spatial implications that require protection by various authorities in order to ensure the well-being of various communities, including indigenous people. However, recent observations indicated that obstacles and tensions arise when different communities worldwide engage in the translation and interpretation of these international statutes, as explained in Chapter 1, clarifying the term *indigenous people* (see

Hays 2020; Nakuta 2020). Namibia already initiated responses to UNDRIP's call by creating a draft policy on IKS as discussed in Section 5.2.5.

The second international law of relevance to this study is the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights of 1967. Article 27 of this law was of significance to this study, as it deals with the respect and recognition of different groups in a given space. Article 27 reads as follows:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.

5.7 Planning legislation and policy impasse

Although Namibian planning laws were revised and new post-apartheid systems put in place, the legacy of the apartheid spatial ordering method still lingers on, where some planning practices still continue to be implemented as before independence. This is largely due to the practices, discourses and knowledges that were created since the colonial era, and that continues unchallenged up to the present day (see Chitekwe-Biti 2018). The external and foreign expertise, and foreign trained planners who adhere to technical approaches (see Frayne 2000:61), are still considered more important compared to local knowledge and input. According to Berrisford (2011:248), the apartheid spatial planning apparatus still continues to influence planning and planning practitioners in their work that planning laws have largely remained unchanged in a post-apartheid South Africa. This reasoning can be extended to the Namibian experience due to similar planning and historical backgrounds (Chitekwe-Biti 2018; Müller-Friedman 2006; Muller-Friedman 2008).

The main planning legislation, URPA 2018, has taken almost two decades of drafting to replace the previous ordinances (March 2021). Windhoek's two principal municipal planning documents, namely the guiding WSP and the statutory WTPS, have been in existence for more than two decades without any proper reviews. These two documents influence the everyday lives of the residents of Windhoek, and their long non-amendment status means that local indigenous knowledges will remain excluded. What is it that makes planning policies so difficult to review in an independent Namibia? Perhaps, the answer has probably been provided by scholars who critiqued that planners did not challenge the status quo, and that it is easier to lean on past practices and remain in a comfortable position of current planning

practice, rather than to tackle the real needs and solutions for the city (see Chitekwe-Biti 2018:404; Frayne 2000:62).

However, the revised URPA provides some hope for the planning profession in Namibia, at least as it attempts to harmonise spatial planning legislation and policies in the country, and at the same time, improve the interrelationship of spatial planning with other sectors. URPA 2018 appears to have adequately addressed the concerns of bureaucracy, timing and efficiency. Whether this will translate in the low-income and formerly segregated black areas, increased participation in spatial planning, coupled with alternative indigenous knowledges, or that the status quo will persist, remains to be seen. The argument presented by Frayne (2000:63) is that it is complicated to transform a planning system to reflect an equity and justice ideology, while there are dominant market economic external pressures that are exclusive of the majority and that have no impact on poverty reduction. In the same vein, Berrisford (2013:6) argued that the ineffectiveness of changing colonial spatial laws is due to the strong grip on the mindsets of the policymakers and practitioners. Nevertheless, the recent emergence of youthful social movements in Namibia, of which some transformed into political parties, the academic reorientation towards research about the needs of the masses and young professionals aligning themselves with the plight of poorer residents, are just some of the potential radical developments that challenge the current discourses that dominates space production methodologies (Delgado 2021:62). Only time will tell if they will be accompanied by fulsome systematic changes and transformations or not.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the main legislation and policies related to spatial planning in Namibia since the adoption of the Constitution in 1990. The Namibian government has been involved in the improvement and creation of new laws where needed, together with accompanying NDPs, with the aim of improving the social cohesion and socio-economic conditions of all its citizens. However, increasing inequalities and related social problems, especially in the post-apartheid urban areas, still persist despite the well-intended amendments. The main problem illuminated by this chapter is that the reviews of the legislation and policies retain much of the embedded cultural planning practices of the past, without much input from the local communities. The legislation and policies adopted a neutral (apolitical) language, which consequently treat all residents as equals through the new terminologies used. The framing of the text in the legal documents involved, renders

them more in favour of the elite and richer residents, to the exclusion of the majority poor and low-income area residents.

In the context of Windhoek, the legislation and policies, old and proposed, retained their technical language according to which developments are to be implemented, and thus remain for the large part inflexible. This thesis is not against the use of scientific planning methods and tools but argues that equally important spatial IKS have been overlooked and undermined by the planning policies and practices. The future envisioned by URPA, for example, appears to continue unchanged from past restrictive planning practices. How will public participation, for example, improve if the legal approach remains the same? These hidden spatial IKS could help in some instances to improve the much sought-after social conditions of mostly the urban poor. However, an IKS understanding is deemed by this study as of paramount importance if it is to be deployed in space production and improvement.

Therefore, in an effort to address the aspects of understanding and exclusion of spatial IKS, this study explored these diverse knowledges from the local rural communities, and sought to find possibilities, where relevant, on how it could be foregrounded in planning policy and practice in urban contexts. However, before arriving at the findings and analysis of the data obtained, the next chapter elaborates on the methodology engaged to obtain the information required to respond to the research questions.

Chapter 6

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology and the methods used to explore the relevancy of spatial IKS to the indigenous communities, and to further explore how these knowledges could be harnessed by current planning policies and practices in the improvement of the well-being of low-income areas in urban contexts. The purpose of the chapter is therefore as follows:

- To explain the philosophical worldview that guided the study.
- To elaborate on the researcher's positionality in the study.
- To describe the research design adopted by the researcher.
- To provide the methods engaged with in the data collection, analysis and validation processes.
- To explain the ethical considerations for this study.

6.2 Philosophical worldview

This qualitative research study, which was done through an indigenous knowledge lens and drawing from a multidimensional design approach, was based on an indigenous worldview, including *Ubuntu*, collectivism, and relationality. The indigenous worldview does stress relationality and collective approaches as essential elements to make sense of the world (Baskin & Sinclair 2015:10; Mkabela 2005:186; Wilson 2001:176). In this worldview that emphasises collectivism, the mutual relationships that exist between the participants are considered as of utmost importance (Baskin & Sinclair 2015:2). The indigenous worldview therefore requires that the researcher should not be situated outside the research inquiry but position himself as part of the issues to be considered in the research process, thus considering himself relationally bounded to the research, together with the participants (Hart 2010:9). One principle of an indigenous worldview, among many, that this study relied on was the recognition of the multiplicity of truths, and that individual experiences are essential in reaffirming these truths (Hart 2010:3).

Besides the indigenous worldview, this study will not entirely divorce itself from other worldviews as some, through navigating the literature and conceptual frameworks presented, are closely linked and interrelated within the context of this study. For example, the storytelling and talking circles (focus groups) research methods, which were main tools for this study, are also found in critical and constructivist theoretical perspectives (Wilson 2001:178). The researcher in this study argued that this indigenous lens study cannot be separated from a postmodernism perspective as both are based on a belief of multiple realities (Gray 2009:28). As this study is equally exploring the gaps in the spatial planning legislation and policies on the treatment of spatial IKS, then the engagement of multiple aspects from other worldviews are justified. For example, the postmodernism approaches can assist with the deconstruction of the text (laws and policies) to identify the points of dominance and oppression, and to see how values and various interests are entrenched in them (Gray 2009:28). Equally taken into consideration was the transformative worldview, which demands that research should include a political agenda for change (Creswell & Creswell 2018:9). In that vein, this research similarly explored the possibilities of reviewing planning legislation and policies in the hope that it will translate in the improvement of the well-being of the low-income residents, such as those in the Havana settlement. The aim is not only to improve the well-being of the residents, but also those of the participants and their institutions, as well as that of the researcher's life (Creswell & Creswell 2018:9). This, according to Creswell (2013:93), is a characteristic of critical ethnography, where researchers advocate for an emancipatory approach for marginalised groups in the society.

6.3 Researcher's positionality

The researcher in this study has been working in a local authority environment for about 20 years. His training and education, and eventually his work experience, have been done and obtained in a Western scientific paradigm. A paradigm has been defined as "a set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that goes together to guide people's actions as to how they are going to go about doing their research" (Wilson 2001:175). The researcher obtained his undergraduate degree in Namibia and did his master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning in South Africa. The researcher initially worked for 10 years in a town planning office in the coastal town of Walvis Bay. His next planning employment was at the Municipality of Windhoek until early 2018. The researcher currently resides in Windhoek's middle-income suburb of Khomasdal, formerly known as a "coloured people" only residential area during the apartheid era. The researcher is a black male, identifying himself as a middle-

class resident of Windhoek, in a country classified as the second most unequal in the world with a Gini-coefficient of 0.591 (2021), after South Africa with 0.601 (National Planning Commission 2018:17; World Population Review 2021: Online).

During the data collection phase, the researcher counted himself as an outsider to the Windhoek Municipality, but there were times when he was seen as an insider by some former colleagues, probably due to the long period of employment spent at the institution, and to the fact that it was only three years ago when his employment at the municipality was terminated. Heslop et al. (2018:2) described an insider researcher as someone who is directly involved within the research setting. A problem with insider research is that acquaintance with the research area (or institution) renders objectivity questionable and can sometimes lead to biased assumptions (Unluer 2012:1). In this study, the researcher countered this problem by clarifying from the start of any interview or discussion what the research is all about, and by allowing participants to engage as much as possible in storytelling approaches to obtain in-depth information.

In this study, the researcher attempted to be as open and clear as possible when introducing the research idea (Heslop et al. 2018:2) to the professionals, local residents and indigenous groups, to erase any idea of uncertainty at the maximum level possible. This approach was adopted to avoid any confusion or wrong assumptions from both the researcher and the community. Another problem with insider researchers is that useful information may not be given to the researcher due to familiarity assumptions by the research participants, or not be seen by the researcher himself (Unluer 2012:2). The researcher engaged in participant observation to reduce this risk, especially as he attended funeral and wedding ceremonies in the local communities where many 'taken for granted' practices were closely observed and followed up with informal discussions.

In the situation of researching within the two local communities, the title of being either an insider or an outsider prevailed. The researcher in this study is biologically partly linked to these two case study groups, although the Ovaherero culture is the dominant lived experience by the researcher due to it being his maternal lineage, and also the culture in which he was raised. The *Aawambo* is the paternal heritage of the researcher, but the knowledge of their cultural practices is very minimal. Both these two communities display what could be described as egalitarian systems of settlement layouts, but are based on predominantly patriarchal sociocultural arrangements, where some expressions display

dominant styles of patriarchy (see Kavari 2001; Mbenzi 2018). In the Ovaherero community where the researcher is hailing from, the insider and familiarity attitude dominated the research spirit, as the participants were easily accessible and approachable, and informed consent was readily given (Heslop et al. 2018:2; Unluer 2012:3-5), without much of the written consent or clearance forms being looked at. On the other hand, in the Ovawambo community, the researcher was seen as an outsider, given the fact that his mastery of the local language was also weak. However, there were ways the researcher could adopt to overcome positionality assumptions that might influence the information gathered. Smith (2012) has proposed some important indigenous research perspectives when researching the local communities. According to Smith (2012:130), in all indigenous community approaches, the process is an important aspect of the engagement. The process is far more important than the outcome, and all community development projects need to be informed by community-based research that respects and enhances community processes (Smith 2012:130). Elders were consulted for their knowledge, and for follow-up verification of data collected to increase the validity of the data from the indigenous communities. Therefore, to avoid the influence of labels such as insider or outsider, the process aspect was taken seriously during the entire research period.

6.4 Research design

First, particular focus was on the exploration of a lack of open spaces in low-income areas such as Havana in Windhoek and how current policies and practices contribute to such a situation. Second, the evaluation of spatial IKS of the two indigenous communities was carried out to identify potential inclusionary spatial practices as identified by the communities themselves, that could be of value in urban areas. Last, the current planning frameworks were explored on how they could be changed to converse with spatial indigenous knowledges. These insights influenced and directed the research design.

This study adopted a qualitative approach, which enabled the researcher to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell & Creswell 2018:4). A critical analytical approach through CDA was adopted for this study to understand the issues and related discourses involved within both the spatial planning approaches and the IKS space conceptualisations of two indigenous communities in Namibia. The aim was to cross boundaries and bring these two systems closer together. The research design discussed in this section has been carefully planned in order to fit or to respond to the

situations on the ground, to address the research questions of this study, and not to disrupt the communities being studied (Vigiola 2015:205). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019:183), the research design is the entire planning for the study and sets out all the actions involved in the research from the formulation of the study's purpose, research questions, data collection and data analysis approaches. In this study, efforts were made not to approach the study participants with preconceived ideas as has been promoted by the rational planning background (Vigiola 2015:205), which is the researcher's educational training as already alluded to. A conscious effort was made to approach the local communities' participants with the consideration that they have values, beliefs, traditions and their own lifestyles, while also keeping in mind to maintain the relational accountability so important in indigenous research (Hart 2010:9). Thus, it is always beneficial to a researcher to arrive with an open mind in order to obtain what is important and relevant for the communities from their own perspective. This approach of understanding the community dynamics and priorities made it clear to the researcher what needed to be addressed in the investigations (Vigiola 2015:205).

The research design for this study consisted of case studies, phenomenological, ethnographic and content analysis approaches in order to obtain the required information that enabled the formulation of responses to the research questions. The background and rationale to the case studies were already discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 1.5). The case study approach enabled the researcher to develop an in-depth analysis of the usage of special cultural open spaces, namely the *olupale* of the Ovawambo community, and the *okuruuo* of the Ovaherero community, by collecting detailed information during specific times and specific activities (Creswell & Creswell 2018:14; Flyvbjerg 2011:301; Unluer 2012:3).

6.4.1 Phenomenological approach

The choice for a phenomenological research design was to obtain and describe a common meaning for the participants' everyday experiences around their cultural open spaces or their residential areas (Creswell 2013:76). This method enabled the researcher to clearly describe what was being experienced, and how it was being experienced (Creswell 2013:76). For the purpose of this study, the focus on the two indigenous communities was two-dimensional. First, the two case study communities were investigated on how they conceive and use their communal special areas such as *olupale* and *okuruuo*, and why they deemed these spaces important. The investigation therefore aimed at unravelling the values attached to these spaces and their uses. Through observation of the techniques involved in how the spatial IKS

is dispatched in managing spaces like *olupale* and *okuruuo* as highlighted in this study, the meaning of these spaces, as well as the behaviour and mindsets of the local people were revealed (Agustina et al. 2016).

Second, using a similar approach, the lived experiences of the residents of the Havana settlement were evaluated in terms of the availability and use of open spaces, and the effects of the absence of open spaces on the residents. Given the indigenous knowledge lens that this study has adopted, the intention was to explore how the residents of these residential areas engaged in their cultural activities, especially those deemed of utmost importance to their existence. The Havana settlement in this study, for example, consists of many different people with different backgrounds. Although they possess collective interests to obtain basic services and housing, they could possess different perceptions on how public or cultural spaces should be provided, or how they should be used (Harvey 2009). It is therefore necessary to explore, through a deconstructive process, the cultural spatial conceptions and perceptions with the communities in order to understand and to arrive at acceptable and inclusive proposals directed towards their well-being, and that of their places (Liebenberg et al. 2019:1).

The observations of the cultural special spaces from the two indigenous communities were followed by interviews with members of the respective communities (elders, men, women), in order to establish the shared experiences of the local people regarding these special spaces. This assisted in the establishment of the important meaning of these spaces to the communities involved – the universal essence – which is an important element of the phenomena being investigated (Agustina et al. 2019:3; Creswell 2013:76). This enabled an understanding of how these IKS spatial knowledges could be useful in urban areas such as Havana.

6.4.2 Ethnographic approach

This method enabled the researcher to describe and interpret shared and learned patterns of values, behaviour, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group (Creswell 2013:90; Creswell & Creswell 2018:13). The main objective of an ethnographic study is the analysis and interpretation of “cultural themes and the patterned regularities” found in the communities as they interact during their everyday activities or at certain events (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:430). In this study, the researcher stayed with the communities for the duration of the activities, while he observed their behaviour during certain events such as weddings and

funerals as well as during religious and leisure activities. He also conducted interviews at certain times in order to explore the shared patterns of the groups in terms of land uses and management.

In addition, the insights of institutional ethnography proved useful in the analysis of municipal planning policies, as it highlighted how the text (town planning policies) interacted with the officials at the municipality (Barry & Porter 2011:172). This study engaged in an institutional ethnography research process to analyse the policies and the planning officials' responses to the questions. Barry and Porter (2011:172) elaborated that institutional ethnography enables a researcher to see, analyse and explain how recognition is constituted, supported and negotiated in the contact zone, for example, in their case being planning in the postcolonial context, which was in line with this research. The term *contact zone* was conceptualised by Mary Louise Pratt three decades ago. Pratt, an American critical linguist, defined the contact zone as follows:

The social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today (Pratt 1991, cited in Barry & Porter 2011:173).

Therefore, engaging the contact zone theory in relation to the urban planning framework in the Namibian context, is an attempt to reveal how urban planning in Windhoek's Havana settlement is recognising and handling social issues from that community. Particularly, the focus is on planning's interpretation of problems and its intentions to solve them through existing policies. It is simultaneously also revealing how the Havana residents themselves interact with or react to the official planning system based on their aspirations and wishes of improvements. Thus, working through a contact zone approach is an attempt to understand the relationship between what is in the text (policies), and what is actually being done in practice (Barry & Porter 2011). This study acknowledges that planning in Namibia is occurring in a neoliberal and strategic managerial logic where efficiency and accountability are important yardsticks for success (Kearney et al. 2019:20; Piermay & Sohn 1999:31). In this vein, the persisting apartheid urban planning legacy, the market-driven inherited legislation dominating urban development alluded to in Chapter 2, and the omission of indigenous knowledge in planning policies, are all aspects that contribute to the current urban form and the related social problems targeted by this study. Thus, the ethnographic approach was brought into this study not only about determining other knowledges from indigenous communities, or to evaluate what is happening on the ground as a result of planning policies,

but also, from an institutional viewpoint, to assess the opinions of the planning officials towards their own policy tools with regard to alternative knowledges.

The institutional ethnography approach allowed the researcher to grasp the planning knowledge (which could be both legal and practical knowledge) within the natural setting of the planning institution itself (Moonsammy 2017:90), and how these “standardised codes of behaviour are created and enforced” (Barry & Porter 2011:177), that sometimes end with negative consequences (Kearney et al. 2019:20). According to Kearney et al. (2019:23), institutional ethnography is an informative tool with transformative potential to tackle social problems in society. In this study, borrowing from institutional ethnography, light is shed on the level of indigenous knowledge awareness and understanding in the municipal planning setting and how it is institutionally perceived. It furthermore assisted in determining whether the planning practitioners are willing to make amendments in the way they do planning, by integrating IKS in their planning policies and practices as a way of improving their profession and the spaces they are planning for.

Investigating the municipal text (policies) through institutional ethnography approaches, allowed the researcher to understand the professional behaviour of the organisation, especially seeing what is possible to be carried out or not, and what is normal or not in the everyday practice (Barry & Porter 2011:177). Therefore, this analysis approach further enabled the researcher to learn what is being said and what is being done at the same time, how they access their sacred text, such as town planning schemes and structure plans, their interpretation of the same text, and the social and ruling relations (Greed 1994, cited in Moonsammy 2017:98). Greed (1994, cited in Moonsammy 2017:98) supported the ethnological approach as a powerful methodology when applied upon the planners themselves, as the tool is able to expose the values of the planning subculture held by its members. Therefore, the institutional ethnography aspect, in this study’s context, is an attempt to respond to some of the main research questions of this study, especially to be highlighted from the third to the fifth research questions.

6.4.3 Content analysis method

The content analysis method has been emphasised by various scholars as one of the qualitative research methods (Crossmann 2020; Gray 2009; Leedy and Ormrod 2005; Prasad 2008). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:142) explained that a content analysis method is a detailed and systematic examination of contents of a particular body of material for purposes of

identifying patterns, themes or biases. The content analysis method, for example, entails the study of the content of policies and it involves the exploration of meanings, references and intentions of the words in the texts (Prasad 2008:173). This method enabled the discovery of how IKS is treated and portrayed in the policies, and how the IKS terms have been used or not (Crossmann 2020).

The content analysis method was used to investigate two types of documents. The first set of documents was the existing planning legislation and policies in Namibia, where they were scrutinised for how they treat indigenous knowledge or not. Subsequently, possible exclusionary gaps where such knowledge on land use and value proposals can fit were identified. The method was applied to the assessment of URPA 2018, and then the Windhoek Municipality's planning policies (the WTPS of 1997; the WSP of 1996, the WDUP of 2019 and the WOSP of 2001). Other legislation assessed were the Local Authorities Act (1992) and Traditional Authorities Act (2000). The planning legislation and policies (or any other legislation in any context) do perform parts of larger stories in society, and therefore, the content analysis applied here was to explore how some of these stories are written, what they allow or not allow (Throgmorton 2003:5).

Regarding the second set of documents, the study attempted to gather newspaper articles containing IKS terms and articles related to urban planning social problems reported during a period of two years (2018–2019). The two newspapers used in this investigation were the *New Era* (state run) and *The Namibian* (private and critical). In this second group of material, the study explored how matters related to indigenous knowledge, alternative knowledge and spatial planning matters are reported, and whether such reporting approaches reveal the type of awareness and power relations existing in terms of planning. In addition, and most important for this study, this type of content analysis was to further investigate how IKS are recognised in the local media. Newspapers, being close to the local context, are considered as part of the platforms that present issues to the public, and in return reflect the communities' views on certain issues (Granner et al. 2010:656). The frequency of matters discussed in newspapers also demonstrate a certain level of awareness about, and the importance of those same issues (Granner et al. 2010:656). The investigation of newspapers in this study did not distinguish between the type of authors of the articles, but rather looked at all different writers, including journalists, academics, letters, commentaries, and news. The aim was to identify and analyse the presence of IKS reference in any form in the printed media, and not to evaluate the contributors.

This type of content analysis research is called “unobtrusive research” and is a part of the content analysis qualitative research method (Gray 2009:27). The content analysis method has recently been used successfully by researchers in the settler states contexts (Canada, New Zealand, Australia) to analyse planning legislation, and the approach allowed them to come up with recommendations highlighting where the laws need to be improved (see McLeod et al. 2015, 2017). A similar analytical framework to that utilised by McLeod et al. (2017) in a local context, was followed in this study when investigating the Namibian legal documents. However, the CDA on the policy documents in this study took the contextual differences between the settler states and Namibia into consideration. This content analysis method applied to the planning legislation further enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of planning’s conflicting relationship with indigenous communities (McLeod et al. 2017:75; Porter & Barry 2015:23). Thus, it can assist with the identification of structural barriers in the legislation and policies that involves conversations between planners and marginalised communities (Jacobs 2006:46; Portugali & Alfasi 2008:253).

In the settler states context (Canada and New Zealand), McLeod et al. (2015:3) applied the content analysis in two ways, namely that of manifest and latent content analysis approaches. In the manifest content analysis, they identified key terms in the planning acts referring to concerned communities such as Aboriginal, First Nations, indigenous, or Indian, which indicated the level of interaction (McLeod et al. 2015:3). The latent content analysis was used to identify phrases and policy sections in order to understand the level of intersections of the policies with the indigenous local communities (McLeod et al. 2015:3). The aim was to identify how such laws recognise indigenous peoples’ rights to participate or to be engaged with, by analysing how themes like “duty to consult, consultation, accommodation and consent” were used in the text (McLeod et al. 2015:3). Thus, the latent content analysis could be seen as an exercise that reveals how for example of a potential conflict has been covered up (Wagenaar 2011:294).

In the context of this study, the policies were evaluated on the manifest level, if they specifically referred to the indigenous communities. Furthermore, the search for other terms such as *alternative knowledge* was used to evaluate whether policies could enable multiple practices to be considered or not. The search for sections and phrases on the latent level, was to evaluate in what relationships the planning officials and the communities exist, and what consequences, positive or negative, such formulations could lead to.

6.5 Methods engaged with in the data collection, analysis and validation processes

6.5.1 How the study areas were entered

The Havana settlement was a familiar site to the researcher as he resided in Windhoek. The time of employment at the Municipality of Windhoek increased this familiarity, as regular site inspections had to be carried out for various land use applications and other community development issues. In that time, various relationships were established, and some of these connections were used as contacts to identify the required participants in the area.

Entry into the rural communities was approached in a similar fashion as in urban areas. However, in the Ovaherero community, and as an insider, it was easier to identify appropriate and knowledgeable elders to talk to during official ceremonies or outside sanctioned events. They in turn, identified other knowledge holders not known to the researcher. In the Ovawambo community, a snowball strategy was used to reach the most appropriate elders and events to attend. Fortunately, some of the well-known knowledge holders and elders resided in Windhoek and were easily contacted for this research.

6.5.2 Data collection process

The data sources for this qualitative study were old historical documents and archival material, semi-structured and conversational interviews, participant observations and municipal and governmental planning legislation and policies. Fortunately, the researcher had in his possession old audio cassette recordings from the period 2000 to 2008 involving elders narrating the Ovaherero cultural and traditional lifestyles. These audio cassettes were important sources of historical data on the Ovaherero community and became an invaluable source for this study. This archival data was cross-examined with the contextual information from participant interviews and discussions (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:330), and thus contributed to the increase of reliability and transparency of this study.

To support the accuracy of data, audiovisual recordings and photography were added where possible as additional techniques of collection. It should be noted at this stage that due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions, some interviews had to be conducted telephonically. New technologies such as smartphones were used, and even some elders managed to record themselves via WhatsApp messages, by narrating stories on cultural

spatial practices, thus overcoming the face-to-face discussions that are essential for qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell 2018:189; Silverman 2015:152).

The participants involved were, first, members of the two case study communities (rural areas) and included the elders and knowledge holders. Second, participants in Windhoek were the ordinary residents of the Havana settlement area, the municipal town planning staff, and the university lecturers. More data was collected from the municipal planning documents, which included the WTPS (1976, amended in 1997), the WSP (1996), the WOSP 2001, the WDUP 2019, the Windhoek Strategic Plan (2017–2022) and URPA 2018. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019:172), document reviews include data from various written artefacts such as policies, legislation, letters and other forms of written text. However, as these documents are written by, and represent ideas and views of writers and organisations, researchers are advised to use the data not only within the context it is written, but to broaden it outside the text as well (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:320).

6.5.2.1 Data from the rural areas

The two indigenous communities from the rural areas were engaged through in-depth conversational interviews, while a participant observational approach was used to come closer to the phenomenon of interest. The conversational interviews enabled the researcher to gain more in-depth knowledge on the behaviours around certain spaces in the communities' own environment. These in-depth open interviews allowed the participants, especially the elders, to express their beliefs, thoughts and knowledge with limited guidance about their places, and these deepened the understanding of the events and spaces observed from the researched sites (Vigiola 2015:206-207). The questions were structured in such a way that the research participants could engage in a storytelling approach. Storytelling approaches, as they are embedded in indigenous communities' ways of transmitting knowledge, are useful and culturally appropriate research tools as they represent diversities of truths (Manuel et al. 2017:7; Smith 2012:146). To gain more knowledge on the importance of the special sacred spaces, attention was given to the various traditional proverbs, praise poems, idioms and other oral expressions and their meanings, as these contain numerous ways and meanings on how these communities conceptualise their spaces and sense of belonging (see Hayes 2009:251; Kavari & Bleckmann 2009:496).

The participant observation approach was conducted simultaneously with the interviews, although intervals between the two were maintained not to overwhelm the ongoing

traditional ceremonies (weddings, funerals, and commemorations). The participant observation technique requires a researcher to be part of the specific group that is studied, and not to approach a cultural group from a distant lens (Jones 2020:6). The participation observation thus enables a researcher to obtain a better knowledge of the area and the cultural practices being studied to establish relationships with the residents (or communities). Consequently, the researcher is allowed by the locals to join into their religious routines and everyday lives (Vigiola 2015:206). This approach improves relationships with research participants, but most importantly, it enables the researcher to have a better understanding of the sense of place, feelings and meanings of the places from the study area that are related to the research itself (Vigiola 2015:206). The participant observation technique also allows the researcher to take important notes, specific details, and characteristics related to the relationship aspects of the people and their activities (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:318).

In addition to the interviews and observations, during the observation stage, informal discussions were held with the members of the community present, mostly elders and knowledge holders. Informal discussions allow for an increased understanding and interpretation of the phenomena being studied, namely the values, beliefs and sense of place aspects (Vigiola 2015:207), which are crucially linked to the spatial formation and land use pattern of the local communities. According to Tuwe (2016:11), formal and informal storytelling in most African communities take place as interactive oral performances and this is comparable to focus group set-ups. At events such as weddings or funerals, these informal discussions were held with either individuals or with small groups around issues of concern to this study.

To support and strengthen data from interviews, observations and informal discussions, audiovisual recordings and photography can be used to shed more light on the activities taking place at a particular moment at a particular space (Vigiola 2015:207). Recordings and photos enhance proper investigation of relationships and interactions between people themselves and between people and the spaces occupied, and also facilitate the analysis part. The photographs taken during this research were compared with old existing ones of the same places, where possible, to see if any transformations took place, as well as to see different expressions of the people made during different times at the same places (see Vigiola 2015:207). In order to integrate the various movements in space during one activity (for example a wedding), a mental map was drawn to enable a better understanding of the land use. Mental maps are considered as part of qualitative research methodologies, and they

describe various associations, movements as well as revealing most of the aspects of the life of residents on a space (Boelens & De Roo 2016:56; Partanen & Wallin 2018:7). It is through mental maps that people often describe their areas as neighbourhoods (Davoudi 2018:104).

The data gathering from the communities, especially from the elders and traditional knowledge holders, was done with the most care and sensitivity as possible. These special gatherings are highly respected and honoured by the local communities themselves. In this regard, Wilson (2008:69) warned researchers that “for indigenous people research, research is a ceremony, and an integral part of any ceremony is setting the stage properly”. Wilson’s warning is in line with one traditional knowledge holder from the Ovaherero people, who warned the researcher at the piloting stage for this study: “The *okuruuo* is a holy fire and religion, and if something is holy, it must be approached slowly and with utmost respects” (Hijangaruu Veseveṭe, an Ovaherero elder, personal communication, 9 October 2019).

6.5.2.2 Data from the urban space

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with town planning officials at the Municipality of Windhoek, private town planners and university lecturers involved in planning disciplines. However, out of the five academics interviewed, one lecturer was not involved in planning but linked to the languages department. This lecturer was an expert and knowledge holder of the Ovaherero and Ovahimba cultural practices and was identified via other participants. The ordinary residents of the Havana settlement were also engaged through conversational interviews and informal discussions.

6.5.3 Sample size and target groups

Section 6.4 elaborated on the various approaches used to gain information for this study, which consisted of planning and related documents, newspaper articles and research participants. In this section, the focus is on the target groups of people that were selected in terms of the information needed for this study, concentrating on the research questions to be responded to. The target participants were all above 18 years of age. The initial target number for each group was set at five people in each group category, and more were added to attain wider perspectives from the participants. Table 6.1 indicates the target groups and sizes involved in this study.

Table 6.1 Research participants, target groups and sizes

Planning professionals/academics	Indigenous communities	Havana residents
Participants = 17 Plus 1 cultural academic	Participants = 19	Participants = 12

Source: Author (2021)

In the case of the investigation from the planning practitioners' side, the targeted number of interview participants was also five. From the universities' planning and related disciplines, five staff members were consulted for their input regarding their views in indigenous planning, and the possibility of including it in the education curricula. The lecturers consulted were from the University of Namibia (UNAM) (two) and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (three).

As far as the community of Windhoek was concerned, groups targeted for interviews were various resident and cultural group leaders in and around the Havana settlement. These interviews with the communities around Havana were limited to 12 persons (six residents and six cultural group leaders), and the advantage was that the cultural group leaders were mostly composed of different ethnic backgrounds. This contributed to multiple perspectives being obtained, which enriched the analysis part and widened the understanding of the researcher on the everyday lived experience of the residents.

In both the rural and urban communities, a snowball sampling strategy was applied at times, as it allowed the identification of the first small group of initial participants, who in turn assisted identifying other candidates for the interviews (see Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:347). This method was utilised in cases where relevant individuals are not known, especially the elders and historians, women and other relevant residents.

Table 6.2: Composition of the research participants

Participants	Number	Female	Male
Havana residents	12	7	5
IKS communities	19	1	18
Municipal planners	8	3	5
Private planners	5	2	3
University lecturers	5	1	4
TOTAL	49	14	35
Percentage	100	28%	72%

Source: Author (2021)

6.5.4 Data analysis approach

Since the methodology used to collect important and relevant information that could respond to the research questions of this study was multidimensional, so was the analysis of data also following the same route. Multiple approaches were utilised to analyse the data for this research.

On the spatial indigenous knowledge part of the research, the main aim was to establish whether such knowledge still existed, and whether it was still useful and valid in the current urban areas. This was done to respond to the first and second research questions of the study. The interviews, observations and informal discussion methods were deployed to gather the necessary data. The analysis part was done to unravel whether any strong indigenous spatial values and attachments still existed, and to further establish whether they could be used in modern urban environments in multicultural settings.

The type of data that was collected and analysed included the spatial formation approaches of the two special spaces, *olupale* and *omuvanda* with *okuruuo*, of the two case study communities, the activities involved, the relationships of the people with these spaces, the language used in maintaining and ordering these spaces and the traditional oral spatial expressions that might shed light on how the spaces are respected and honoured. Therefore, the analysis involved a process of narrowing the large data sets into a smaller and orderly information structure, summarised in a clear manner (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:374). This process requires the researcher to be patient and reflective while trying to make sense of the data (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:374).

In addition, some of the data, for example the natural narratives and the spatial standard expressions and proverbs, were further analysed through CDA methods (Mogashoa 2014) to gain a better understanding or to highlight differences of meanings in certain cases. Hard questions were directed to the data to highlight meanings, silences and dominant approaches to identify possibilities for transformation to take place, a preoccupation of this study. The CDA was also applied to the interview data from the planning professionals and the resident participants from Havana, in an effort to explore possibilities how indigenous knowledge is perceived and recognised, and what possibilities exist in accommodating it into planning practice and policies. Discourse analysis was employed here when analysing data from the institutional interviews.

Regarding the content analysis of documents, the focus was to find out if the current planning legislation and policies were accommodating and recognising indigenous knowledge, and to what extent that was understood by the indigenous communities and the planning professionals themselves, and consequently, to attempt to identify the gaps that could be improved or informed by indigenous knowledge (see Barry & Porter 2011). This analytic approach, which tried to find responses to the second and third research questions of this study, worked through answers obtained from the interviews and observations from the various planning professionals identified earlier. The approach of grounding the analytical framework in existing literature (legislation, policies) helped to ensure that the implications of the research would link to larger discussions of planning theory and practice, thus making the framework a living document to learn and develop further into the future (McLeod et al. 2017:75).

The content analysis method was also used to further analyse the newspaper articles dealing with urban socio-economic issues in the low-income areas. The articles were analysed in terms of the type of spatial planning discourse which appeared dominant, and to further highlight whether indigenous knowledge and other local initiatives were mentioned or not at all (see McLeod et al. 2017). The aim was to demonstrate whether there was a gap or absence in the media discourses with regard to indigenous knowledge or not. This exploration was used as a validation tool to demonstrate how and to what extent indigenous knowledge was absent from daily urban planning and management discourses as reflected in newspaper articles.

In addition to the above approaches, and for the purpose of his study, a constant maintenance of reflexivity has been maintained by the researcher. Such an approach enabled the researcher not only to identify problems as observed from the outside, but also to self-examine himself in the context of this study, and to realise that some habits and practices of doing planning need to be unlearned if transformation is to occur (Porter 2010:156, also see Richardson 2002:360).

6.5.5 Data validity and reliability

Researchers are encouraged to convey the steps they will take in their studies to establish an acceptable level of accuracy and credibility of their findings (Creswell & Creswell 2018:199). Creswell and Miller (2000, cited in Creswell & Creswell 2018:199) defined and described qualitative validity as follows:

Validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account.

This part of the study was allocated a considerable level of attention throughout the process. One of the approaches was to discuss the findings with the elders and knowledge holders at funeral or wedding ceremonies that could be attended. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, these events were not many, but the few available opportunities at the early stages of the pandemic were used for these informal discussions about the data. More observations and informal discussions were done after the restrictions were lifted from September 2020 onwards, to increase familiarity with the issues being investigated, in order to add to the accuracy and validity of the study (Creswell & Creswell 2018:201).

This study incorporated additional validity strategies into the research. First, as mentioned in subsection 6.5.2, the old audio cassettes were listened to several times and assisted with clarifications of some data. As the researcher had contact cell phone numbers of some of the elders and knowledge holders, constant communication was maintained to clarify issues where needed. Follow-up interviews (informal discussions) were arranged to add more information where needed (Creswell & Creswell 2018:200), especially with the Havana residents. A second method to increase the validity of the findings was to take some of the research participants to the specific site in the case study and allow discussions to take place based on the findings in order to add more perspectives to the findings (Creswell & Creswell 2018:200). This approach was applied in the Havana case study, where revisits could be organised at any time compared to the distant rural areas.

Other methods considered to increase the validity of the findings included the description of the bias the researcher brought to the research through a self-reflection approach, as alluded to in the previous section. The researcher's planning experience was biased towards rational comprehensive and collaborative planning. This was due to current planning education and knowledge being produced in favour of certain Western methodologies and epistemologies that prescribe how planning should be done (Sandercock 2004:140; Watson & Odendaal 2012; Winkler 2018:268). In order to reduce this formal planning bias, the number of spatial IKS activities attended and the number of elders and knowledge holders consulted were increased at every possible occasion, while recordings and photographing of cultural events were engaged to gain as much knowledge and understanding as possible (Heslop et al. 2018:4). The increase in the number of participants meant an increase in stories and

storytelling approaches to be absorbed and analysed. Saturation levels, especially from the indigenous knowledge participants (elders and knowledge holders) were exceeded to increase understanding and avoid misrepresentation (Silverman 2015:148). According to Van Hulst (2012:136), the use of numerous storytelling inputs is part of innovation processes. In the same vein, Wiredu (1998:20) supported multiple perspectives as essential in the analysis and identification of cross-cultural equivalents. Notwithstanding that the researcher was an insider to one of this local IKS communities engaged, the increased input assisted with a more balanced approach on how the interpretation of the results was finally carried out (Creswell & Creswell 2018:200-201; Heslop et al. 2018:4). Finally, a final approach that increased the validity and reliability of the study was the triangulation of data gathered from multiple sources, as previously described, in order to identify converging themes that supported the findings (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:330; Creswell & Creswell 2018:200).

However, the study did not lose focus of being based on an indigenous knowledge lens; therefore, the researcher approached the study as being internal to the communities being studied, and thus the process was approached with a view of building and maintaining respectful relationships with the participants (Wilson 2001:177). Also, the research was done while being conscious of the obligations the researcher had to fulfil as a member of the study participants. Therefore, an indigenous research methodology reminds one that the exercise is not to respond to validity and reliability questions, but to fulfil all the relationships one has in this world, thus finding a balance in all processes (Absolon 2010:85; Wilson 2001:177). Wilson (2001:177) therefore advised that the researcher should then ask himself/herself as follows: *How am I, through this study, responding and fulfilling all the relational responsibilities I have in Windhoek and the Havana settlement, for example?*

6.6 Ethical considerations

The University of the Free State's approval was first obtained before the research could start. The approval is attached as Appendix 1 to this study. The permission to engage the municipality's planning staff for this research is attached as Appendix 2.

All the research participants were well-informed in advance before they engaged in any of the interviews or discussions. They were informed who the researcher was, for what the research results would be used for, and how their anonymity and confidentiality issues would be handled and protected in the document (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019:325; Bos 2020:156). Permission was requested when it came to recording or writing notes on the conversations,

interviews and discussions being conducted. The languages of the participants were respected, and translators were used where possible. Finally, the time and private life of the participants were taken into consideration during the research, to avoid disturbance of their lives and privacy.

6.7 Conclusion

The chapter outlined the various techniques deployed by the researcher to obtain the required data and information for the purpose of completion of this study. To orientate the reader of the thesis, the philosophical worldview and positionality of the researcher were clarified at the beginning of the chapter. The methodology and methods applied were described, providing descriptive backgrounds on the approaches used to design the research, to enter the study areas, and to collect and analyse the data. The descriptions of the methods and tools applied were done in a manner to motivate their usefulness for the purpose of this study.

The chapter continued to highlight the importance of validity and reliability in research, and added that such issues, in an indigenous research approach, are automatically reinforced by always maintaining your “relational accountability” intact (Wilson 2001:177); thus, meaning that researchers, in terms of an indigenous knowledge lens, are always attached to and responsible to all the spaces on which they find themselves. The chapter further looked at the ethical protocols implemented. The next chapter presents the research findings and discussions.

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 1 to 3 presented the Namibian planning history trajectory on how the urban spaces were shaped by modernist and post-modernist thinking up to the present time and highlighted how planning is failing to respond to diverse urban problems. Chapter 4 conceptualised spatial IKS as an important element that could assist current planning practice to better engage the complex problems experienced in the country's low-income urban areas. Chapter 5 presented the legal framework that directs contemporary planning in Namibia, while highlighting the absence of spatial IKS in the policies. Then Chapter 6 elaborated on the methods needed to obtain a better understanding of spatial IKS and its relationship with spatial planning in Namibia.

This chapter presents the findings and discussion emanating from the study's exploration of the issues raised in the previous chapters. The four main issues that make out the presentation and discussion of this chapter are the role of open spaces in the sense of place aspect, the role of urban planning in the provision of cultural open spaces, policy implications with regard to cultural open spaces and the reassertion of the importance of cultural open spaces through IKS. Thereafter, the findings from the four issues are discussed to gain insights that responded to the research questions of this study. The data from the media discourses on IKS were used to support the literature and the findings. As already alluded to in Chapter 1, the motivation for doing this study after many years of being involved in a municipal town planning practice, was the observed lack of sense of place in low-income and informal settlement areas of post-apartheid urban areas in Namibia, particularly in low-income areas in Windhoek. This observation was directly linked to the visible dismal living conditions characteristic of these areas, which negatively affect the health and well-being of the local residents. Besides the usual and much documented focus on lack of services and housing in low-income and informal areas (Mitlin & Muller 2004; Muller & Mitlin 2007; Oranje et al. 2020; UN-Habitat 2020), the concern of this study was why there was an observable lack of care for these low-income places.

Lately, however, an increase in the presence of the local authorities' leadership was observed in these areas, including the Havana settlement. This could probably be attributed to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which further exposed the deplorable living conditions in these low-income areas. Or it could equally be associated with the regional and local authority elections that were held in November 2020, during which the enlivened political campaigns were at their peak. The target of this increased political and municipal leadership presence was mainly directed towards fast-tracking the provision of more services and houses in the fight against the pandemic, but also due to the increased social media campaign platforms which created spaces for more the creation of social movements and participation in political matters. These actions through various new social movements and political formations were significant, as they challenged the institutions of space production to rethink urban development processes (Delgado 2021:55-56). These emergent movements possess the potential to influence planning to explore alternative practices in responding to urban problems. However, it is argued that the new demands are not targeted at the long-term well-being of the entire community due to being bounded and reactive within existing structural and legal frameworks of space production. It is through this angle of observation that this study has adopted an IKS lens, by exploring alternative ways of doing planning or diversifying its practice, with the hope of bringing back the sense of place and belonging and love to these post-apartheid low-income urban areas.

7.2 Sense of place: Cultural open spaces in Havana

The observed increased presence of various leading figures in low-income areas such as Havana – both from the political (leading and opposition parties), governmental and municipal level, especially during the period leading to the regional and local authority elections of November 2020 – was not accompanied by new methods of doing development or improvements in these areas. As observed, the increased political presence was probably linked to enhanced provision of some basic services and housing in some sections of the low-income areas to appease the electorate just before the elections. Nevertheless, this behaviour enhanced the narrowly conceptualised existing service provision methodologies, which some scholars referred to as a more reactive rather than generative modes of practice (Prusak et al. 2016:448). Thus, this reinforces the argument by this study that approaches such as those embracing IKS and their related spatial aspects need to be brought to the fore as they could potentially assist with improvements in the long-term well-being of these areas. The IKS spatial aspects such as cultural open spaces could contribute to an increased sense of

place, belonging, care and love for areas such as Havana. The importance of a sense of place through open spaces for local communities has already been elaborated upon in Chapters 3 and 4. Besides the observation done in the Havana area during this study, the researcher engaged in conversational interviews with 12 residents of Havana and the surrounding low-income areas to explore their experiences and sentiments regarding open spaces and cultural activities in their area.

The findings revealed two interrelated phenomena in Havana. First, the lack of open spaces and the accompanying negative effects on the lifestyle of the residents were identified as a major problem. The problem of lack of open spaces is not unique to the Havana residential area but is a characteristic of most of the post-apartheid urban areas, where low-income areas that were mostly black townships, were neglected, abandoned or under-provided in terms of community facilities, including public open spaces (see Kambaekwa 2021:34; Simon 1991:176; Strydom & Puren 2013:33). Figures 7.1 and 7.2 illustrate the scarcity of open spaces, the unhealthy rubbish lying in the open and the dominant sport activities in the Havana settlement.



Figure 7.1 *Open spaces next to houses in Havana used occasionally for cultural activities*

Source: Author (2021)



a

b

Figure 7.2 (a) Sewage running from a residential street into the open; (b) Soccer activities which are mostly the only events on available open spaces

Source: Author (2021)

The scarcity of open spaces in Havana has been stressed by one resident in the following terms:

We do not have open spaces in this area. We have to think of our own ways to hold cultural events if the need arises. For example, this small open space next to my shack was used several times by fellow residents to hold cultural activities. The children in this area do not have anywhere to play, they play in the streets, sometimes on rubbish sites, and that is very unhealthy (Resident A).

Another resident had this to say:

For my seven years of living in Havana, I have observed no cultural activities in the immediate area, there is only one open space, but that is known as a soccer field, and only soccer takes place there. There is no cultural life here, people wake up, go to work, come back, sleep, and repeat again the same routine. Others who do not go to work spend their time in shebeens. The kids have no playground and play in the streets or passages (Resident B).

The concerns above not only demonstrate a lack of open spaces, but also the appropriation of the few available ones by certain dominant activities, in this case soccer. The one-sided use of space thus limits its accessibility to other residents and excludes other important activities such as cultural social events. This can be described as an unintentional exclusion of some groups by others. The literature in Chapter 4 has emphasised the importance of cultural open spaces for local communities in precolonial, colonial to postcolonial eras; thus a continuous significance of these spaces to their users. It is at such open spaces where these communities determined their course of existence in different ways, such as storytelling or community festivals. Therefore, their availability and accessibility were important components that kept communities together. Examples such as the central mosque and adjacent markets (East

African coast), the few surviving indigenous public open spaces in Nigerian towns, the *kgotla* (Tswana community), the *olupale* with its sacred fire (Ovawambo community) and the *omuvanda* with its *okuruuo* (holy fire/sacred shrine) (Ovaherero community), were discussed in Chapter 4. It should be highlighted here that the two Namibian cultural open spaces investigated, as already noted throughout this thesis, are not the only ones existing in Namibia. For example, the Kavango community in north-eastern Namibia refer to similar open spaces for their cultural and communal activities as *sinyanga* (Resident A). The Damara community, one of the eldest groups to inhabit Namibia, refer to their community or homestead open spaces as *soxa /ais* (Boois n.d:6). These cultural open spaces revealed that they encompassed the everyday life aspects of the various communities in that they were useful, productive and generative (Lefebvre 1991:34). However, for contemporary societies with increasing multicultural or intercultural demands for coexistence (Sandercock 2003b:322; Viola 2012:142), these open spaces need to have well-managed and maintenance programmes (Abbasi et al. 2016; Agboola et al. 2016). In the absence of such aspects, they could easily be reduced to conflict-ridden spaces (Agboola et al. 2016:46), walk-through spaces only (Abbasi et al. 2016:203), pools of sewage and dumping ground (see Figure 7.2a; Kambaekwa 2021) or dominated by powerful activities such as soccer as revealed in this finding (Figure 7.2b).

Open spaces have been described as playing an important role in the integration of diverse communities in cities as well as contributing to the well-being and social inclusion of residents, and their absence can have negative consequences, such as increased stress levels, to the urban residents (UN-Habitat 2015:1; WOSP 2001:2). One of the research participants, a self-employed middle-aged lady living in the Havana area, summed up the negative effects of the absence of social open spaces in the following story:

For the 15 years I have been living in this area, I, and my kids have been leading a stressful life. I watched my kids growing up stressed, as every time their toys and soccer balls hit the neighbours' houses, the neighbours confiscated their toys and yelled at them. Kids grew up stressed and when they became teenagers, they went far from the house searching for open spaces to play. These faraway places are not safe, and that's where they encounter bad habits from other youngsters, like drug and alcohol abuse at a young age. The same goes for our girls in this area, due to lack of areas where they can play or engage in various youth development programmes, they end up wandering around the houses, and they fall victim to high teenage pregnancy due to a high presence of shebeens and alcohol abuse that dominate our residential area. They have nothing else to do, except only to watch people in shebeens consuming alcohol, which is a negative experience for the young kids (Resident C).

On the question whether, in such a harsh environment sketched above, she did witness cultural activities taking place in her residential area, she had this to say:

This does not happen much on a regular basis, but occasionally yes. Sometimes, I witnessed some Ovawambo kids organising themselves in the small passages (streets) close to our houses, they requested permission from elders to close off the street for 2-3 hours, and then do their traditional performing dances. They had their traditional baskets in which they collected money after each performance. I think this was a good idea, but the space is the problem (Resident C).

Although the literature in Chapter 3 and 4 emphasised that the everyday cultural and other indigenous practices are being experienced mostly in the rural areas, the findings above confirm that a certain degree of cultural activities do take place in urban areas even in the absence of appropriate spaces. However, the irony is that there are cultural groups existing in Windhoek, and some in low-income settlement areas such as Havana, which are known to both the government and local authorities. These cultural groups are regular participants of the annual festival – the Windhoek's *!Ae//Gams Cultural Festival*, initiated in 2001 and hosted by the Windhoek Municipality with the help of corporate and international financial assistance with the aim of celebrating cultural diversity in the city (Becker 2015:32-33). This indicates that culture is not only practiced and lived for the social well-being, but also contributes economically to some members of society. However, these top-down festivals do not reach many disadvantaged communities and are dominated by the wealthy members of society (Tapela 2016; Sihlongonyane 2016). However, and through a Lefebvrian interpretation of the right to the city, they nevertheless provide platforms through which possible transformational demands can be made for increased inclusion (Kipfer et al. 2016:6; Perry & Sitas 2019). Such transformative possibilities cannot be argued against. However, in the situation where power relations are largely asymmetrical, such as between planning and the low-income residents of Havana, annual festivals alone are not enough. Such transformative possibilities can be facilitated by an all-inclusive and balanced legislation as well, which accommodate the knowledges and aspirations of the poor majority.

Finding spaces for their cultural training and performance activities is difficult for most of the cultural groups found in Havana and other low-income areas. Nonetheless, they are being invited to perform their talents and activities on national days or cultural days (Resident K). However, their recognition as important cultural ambassadors is not accompanied by the provision of suitable spaces for their activities. The cultural group leaders were important research participants as they were not only leaders, but also residents of these low-income

areas of Windhoek. Thus, their perspectives were invaluable to this study as they are direct users of open spaces for cultural activities. One of these cultural group leaders explained the complexities involved in practicing cultural activities in the low-income areas as follows:

Currently, we are using streets for training our members and youth on performances, and it is very uncomfortable as sometimes we are threatened by municipal city police members asking for permits. But again, the application process at the municipality takes long to obtain permission to perform at a certain identified space, and if not successful as the space is deemed not earmarked for cultural activities, then you leave the whole idea. In order to remain active, we sometimes hold cultural activities in front of the shops, but that is sometimes good but other times we are threatened by criminal elements. But anyway, we are busy looking for suitable spaces like a building complex to ask for consent from the owners to use their space for longer periods, even government youth complex buildings in formal areas. We are still waiting for responses (Resident I).

Another resident emphasised that some official cultural activities to which they are invited are considerate and reward them reasonably, while others end up being more exploitative than sensitive. This resident summed the situation up as follows:

We do a lot of cultural activities for many institutions, government, municipality and so on, but only a few pay us good income, most other companies pay us little and sometimes nothing. They do not value us, but they want us, they need us to promote their official programmes and so on (Resident K).

The two comments above demonstrate a paradoxical situation brought forward by the space production approaches in Windhoek. On the one hand, the cultural performers experience difficulties in finding spaces for their activities. On the other hand, the institutions demonstrate a certain recognition of these activities by inviting the artists and cultural groups to their official programmes. The above findings illustrate that open spaces are perceived by residents as essential for various reasons, ranging from the well-being of their children to being spaces of exercise for various cultural groupings. The physical aspects of locality and safety were highlighted as major considerations not to be neglected. It is in that sense that this study posed follow-up conversations and open-ended questions to the resident participants such as why they think culturally sensitive open spaces are important, and whether they will welcome such integrated spaces for the use of all the residents of a neighbourhood, and why.

This approach was done to test the social relations and tolerance aspects in Havana, as these types of low-income areas are known to have strong community bonding attitudes that assist them in various survival strategies in urban areas (Mitlin & Muller 2004:183; Strydom & Puren

2013:37). For example, strong community bonding attitudes are observed in Namibia through the effective housing saving groups in low-income areas such as Havana (Mitlin & Muller 2004). In the context of this study, it is this strong will to survive (see Watson 2009a:2269) that needs to be harnessed towards place improvement and well-being. Currently, this strong bonding is focused on survival approaches such as informal trade, housing and basic services, while the places themselves lack maintenance and sense of place, as argued in this study. In addition, it was an approach to tease out positive insights from the residents, to harness their imaginations and capabilities in order to move away from the usual negative and deficit discourses characterising everyday policy discussions in these low-income areas (Pieterse 2008:110). The danger of deficit discourses was discussed in Chapter 4 of this study. Deficit discourses, initially aimed at addressing social problems, are framed in a manner that local people are seen as the problem, both by the government institutions and the residents themselves (Fogarty et al. 2018:vii; Pysklywec 2012). The outcome of such a deficit discourse context is that the skills and knowledges of local people remain hidden, while the structural inequalities that maintain their marginalisation are further obscured (Fogarty et al. 2018:xi).

On the question why they think culturally sensitive open spaces will be beneficial, the overall responses were in support of such spaces. The participants' responses are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Residents' evaluation on cultural open spaces

Resident participants	Motivation for cultural open spaces	Aspirations / Goals
Resident C, F, G	• Good for training cultural activities • My ethnic group is far behind and will benefit from such space • Some other groups are far more involved with traditional activities	• People kept close to culture • Children kept away from shebeens • Girls to have play space, currently only soccer dominates
Resident D, E	• Such spaces needed	• Well-known traditional dances to be played regularly, such as "<i>Ephululu lyanaangwali</i>"
Resident A, H	• Space like cultural village needed • Must be for diverse communities	• Lost culture will be rescued
Resident I	• -Urgently needed	• Minority groups will have space • Currently, majority groups dominate
Resident J	• Space needed, but must have storage space for cultural artefacts as well • Halls also needed, with calendars to accommodate all the groups	• Culture not forgotten • Conflicts between residents and municipal officials reduced

	• Despite Covid-19, planning for such spaces should continue	
Resident B, K, L	• Important to cut distance to open space • Good to make cultures visible	• Different groups learn different cultures • Culture promoted, but also economic opportunities

Source: Author (2021)

Although it cannot be assumed that the residents were directly expecting or calling for the local authorities to provide cultural open spaces, such assumptions will not be misdirected since the land in urban areas is under the jurisdiction of municipalities. Most of the answers were provided in such a way that someone else must provide those spaces. Nevertheless, two resident participants stated directly that their political representatives, the regional councillors, should be informed of this need for cultural spaces in urban areas. One responded included the school principals in this category of providers as well. These are legitimate claims in a democracy like that of Namibia, where elected politicians from the low-income areas are expected to represent and protect the interest of the poor and the marginalised. However, this representative democracy expectation rarely happens in reality (Pieterse 2008:92). An elder resident had this to say:

The cultural open spaces are very much needed. This must be brought to the attention of the constituency councillors, also to the school principals, to make spaces available for cultural activities. Even if Covid-19 stopped activities for now, we need to continue planning for those spaces. Things must proceed (Resident J).

7.3 Urban planning at the interface with indigenous knowledge

Although cultural open spaces are not a recognised land use in the Namibian spatial planning framework, some urban areas do have open spaces that the communities use for their cultural activities. A prominent example is Okahandja, 65 km north of Windhoek, where the Ovaherero community gathers annually for their ancestral commemorative practices, an initiative dating back to 1923. However, in most other towns, these community-initiated activities take place on the peripheries of these urban spaces such as the ancestral commemorative events at Opuuo, north-western Namibia, and thus not experienced by the broader inhabitants of the town. These commemorative and celebratory events have the potential to increase the well-being and happiness of not only the involved communities, but also the neighbouring groups and the broader society, including tourists, who attend them (see Caulkins for the Chilean context). In that vein, the Namibian critical scholar Amupanda

(2019:10) argued that for one to ensure happiness in a community, an important focus should be placed on an understanding of such a community's organising principle. They also serve as important learning platforms as the researcher experienced during one of the funerals of an elder and knowledge holder in the Ovaherero community. At this event, some of the observers (non-Ovaherero) of the traditional procession inquired from the researcher why certain activities are being performed as they were seeing it for the first time. Figure 7.3 shows the Ovahimba community (part of the Ovaherero community) gathered at the fringes of Opuuo attending an annual commemoration of their ancestors.



Figure 7.3 *Ovahimba community at a commemorative event outside Opuuo (north-west Namibia)*

Source: Author (November 2019)

The irony is that towns such as Opuuo, Tsumeb and Swakopmund established cultural villages adjacent to their respective urban areas, which consist of various indigenous spatial practices such as homesteads and related artefacts. This study is not against these establishments, as they contribute to the well-being of those involved. Rather, the study is arguing for the presence of such cultural aspects, such as the open spaces found in indigenous homesteads to be placed among the residents, especially those in low-income areas, where they have the potential to contribute to the well-being of a larger group than as currently observed. Such spaces can then also be integrated with the community's survival strategies, such as those practiced by the Okavango woodcarvers and Ovahimba arts and craft sellers in Windhoek. Although municipalities did assist some of these communities with spaces to trade from, many of them find themselves in situations labelled as informal or illegal, and this increasingly reduces their chances of obtaining areas where they can be recognised as legal citizens making a living out of their cultural practices. Figure 7.4 shows the Okavango community woodcarvers at an open space in Windhoek which they identified for increased visibility, while

they have for long tried to engage the local authority for a proper place for their activities, which attract significant attention of local and international customers.



Figure 7.4 *Okavango woodcarvers on a road reserve in the southern parts of Windhoek*

Source: Author (August 2020)

The insights from the residents of Havana in the previous section, and the observations above, provided some important answers to the second and third research questions of this study. The responses also highlighted the type of relationship that existed between the spatial planning intentions and the expectations from the residents. Planning is not paying attention to open spaces in Havana, which are needed by the residents for diverse activities that include both cultural and economic aspects. In order to obtain a wider perspective on how the two research questions can be addressed, additional viewpoints of the planning professionals (13 in total), both in the public and private sector, were sought. Their input, obtained through semi-structured interviews, explored how the planners viewed IKS, what value they attached to IKS, and whether they see potential in IKS to be used in planning as an important tool of space creation. The responses were then explored through three main themes, being awareness, usefulness and recognition.

7.3.1 Awareness and usefulness of indigenous knowledge systems in spatial planning

Although the topic of IKS is not often discussed in planning circles in Windhoek, the majority of the participants were in agreement that IKS exists in the different communities of the city. Some of the participants agreed with an *aha* approach, stating that this is something that exists but are disregarded when it comes to spatial planning. The *aha* moment is mostly used to refer to reactions when something is suddenly recognised as useful or valuable, after having been taken for granted for a long time before that moment (see Innes & Booher

2010:118; Müller-Friedman 2008:37). One of the planning participants had this to say after being introduced to the topic and purpose of this study:

Aha, now that you are talking of IKS, we planners are really guilty in that respect, we really do not consider IKS in our planning (Planner K).

Notwithstanding the *aha* effect, the findings from the planners revealed the dual lifestyles planners occupy in Namibian urban spaces. The researcher, for example, did engage in some of these IKS practices when in the rural areas, but rarely engaged in discussions linking IKS to urban planning in everyday planning activities. Only recently, with the concerns observed in the Havana residential area and the conception of the idea for this study, did this connection become important. The findings revealed a high level of awareness of the existence of IKS by planners, even some demonstrating how it is manifested in urban areas under certain circumstances outside the planning realm. Some research participants had this to confirm in that regard:

Some residents in low-income areas in Windhoek use IKS to produce food for their households to supplement what they cannot afford in the city (Planner A).

I have seen residents in small towns use IKS to improve the internal walling of their houses as part of thermal control of their modern buildings (Planner B).

For me, it is the IKS involved in communities' lifestyles that led to the emergence of economic activities such as the now municipally accepted business corridor of Eveline Street in the low-income area of Goreangab (Katutura), or to the emergence of the community savings groups searching for land for housing (Planner H).

The revival of IKS of transmitting knowledge are slowly being revived in Windhoek. A group of women from the same ethnic origin, the Damara ladies, are now organising cultural evenings, mostly at their homes, where they impart, through storytelling and other methods, their knowledge to younger members (Planner K).

The above remarks are an indication that those who are involved in the planning process are aware of the existence and usefulness of spatial IKS or alternative knowledges in urban areas. The lack of reference to IKS in planning discourse in Windhoek, can probably be linked to the planning education that provides the tools to planners to work with (see Sandercock 2004:140). In this training model for planners, IKS is rarely referred to, and the documents being used by planners, such as town planning schemes and other planning policies, do not refer to IKS at all. In such a model, the training and tools provided are considered the only and best solutions to solve urban problems. This is what Sihlongonyane (2015a:62-63) referred to as a "deficit model", in which a belief is foregrounded that some knowledges are considered as inferior and thus hidden (such as IKS), and that to obtain a better level of

understanding and development in the modern world, education and training should be done in a Western approach. In this context and through a Lefebvrian critique on current space production approaches, planning thus see itself as a specialist discipline, and in the process preventing itself from learning from other knowledges.

7.3.2 Recognition of indigenous knowledge systems as a planning tool

Although it is assumed that all planning professionals have been trained as town and regional planners in the modernist rational comprehensive planning perspective and its variants (communicative or collaborative planning), as is the case with this researcher, the study attempted to establish to what extent the Windhoek planners would be willing to embrace alternative knowledge proposals, such as spatial IKS, in addition to what they have been originally trained. This is in line with calls by Global South planning theorists that planning academics and practitioners need to acknowledge the importance of local specific knowledges in attempts of reducing the gap between theory and practice (Denoon-Stevens et al. 2020). These knowledges could include community self-help organisations and practices deployed as survival strategies by marginalised communities (see Oranje et al. 2020), or the various spatial indigenous knowledges applied by various communities in creating and maintaining their settlements, including cultural spaces, for example (Jojola 1998; Matunga 2013). Other recent emergent initiatives in Namibia that need to be supported include the commitment shown by young spatial planning professionals to engage in knowledge-sharing approaches with residents from low-income areas, and the efforts of academic institutions in upgrading their curricula to respond to the socio-economic conditions of the majority poor urban residents (Delgado 2021:62). One such example is provided by the Namibia University of Science and Technology's Architecture Department. The Department is engaged in the transformation of its curricula by exploring co-production possibilities that involves the application of indigenous architecture in space production initiatives (Lühl 2018:38-40). In that line of understanding, this study further posed open-ended questions to the planners to see to what level they would recognise IKS as a valid and useful tool to be institutionalised as part of the planning knowledges existing in Namibia. The viewpoints of three academic staff members from two Namibian universities (mostly planning academics) were also gathered as discussed later in this section. These are part of the insights this study was exploring to respond to the third research question. On the question whether IKS should be promoted and foregrounded in certain planning practices and projects, particularly in urban areas, and why

this is important, all participants, both private and public planning practitioners, mostly offered positive responses in support. Some of the responses are captured as follows:

Yes I do think this is very important. Planning should respect, understand and recognise cultures, traditions, religion and values of a community in proposed designs, landscapes and structures which people could relate to (Planner M).

I think IKS should be seen as important. There are important socio-economic ways that could help communities to survive in both rural and urban areas. These essential support systems should be considered but are currently disrupted due to various reasons (Planner B).

The potential of IKS to assist communities in urban areas to improve their living conditions and living spaces, and by implication their well-being and sense of place, has been revealed through the responses from the planners. The responses above further revealed a willingness to change their practice, but also a powerlessness in the execution of their duties. The planners are caught between the different and conflicting rationalities within their own system, and between residential groups at times (Ngwenya & Cirolia 2020). There are some activities which the planners think are useful, but which they cannot support as they are not permitted by the existing regulatory structures in which they operate. However, Ngwenya & Cirolia (2020:2) argued, in the Foucauldian view of power, that the powerlessness situation should be seen as a unique opportunity that can lead to opportunities that can encourage the creation of inclusive cities. As this study has revealed, Namibian planning is still lagging behind in the adoption of IKS in planning practice, especially in urban areas. However, examples from elsewhere where IKS has positively influenced recognition, inclusion and participation has been elaborated upon in Chapter 4 with evidence from the settler states (Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019:272; also see Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017). The settler states such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand are contextually different to Namibia in terms of the way how indigenous people are defined (see Chapter 1, Section 1.8.2), and in the way the indigenous people themselves make their claims for their right to the city. However, the similarities in colonial histories such as dispossessions, exclusions from urban areas, and the methodologies engaged in the settler states to address planning transformation render the latter a useful terrain where lessons can be insightful and enriching. For example, the powerlessness mentioned above can be approached through the settler states' indigenous people and authorities' partnership approaches that foregrounded spatial IKS and aspirations in urban areas (see Marek 2020; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019). Another similarity is in the way the settler states' indigenous people struggle for recognition in policies, which is comparable to the majority of the urban majority in low-income areas

such as Windhoek where policies tend to favour the interests of the wealthier residents. According to Du Pisani (2001:224), reconciliation in Namibia appears to be an arrangement between the former colonisers and the new rich black elites, while the majority still have to experience this promise of independence. Nevertheless, the use of ideas and concepts from elsewhere were conducted with care in this study to avoid falling in the trap of sitting with suggestions that are wrapped in conceptualisation origins from those faraway spaces, and that cannot be easily understood and interpreted by the local context actors (Porter 2010; Healey 2013).

Some planners of the Windhoek Municipality identified current planning tools as major stumbling blocks for locally initiated activities, such as the WTPS, traffic regulations and building regulations. This is in agreement with the residents' comments that law enforcement and zoning regulations are hampering the practice of cultural activities in some areas. One municipal planner sympathised with the initiative of some youths of pushing grocery trolleys around Katutura:

These young unemployed youths initiated a service of buying much needed groceries, pushing it in trolleys in the streets of Katutura where residents who cannot go to shops buy from them, and this is something working and appreciated by especially the elderly residents, but they were stopped and informed that they were contravening the municipal traffic regulations (Planner B).

The above comment clearly demonstrates how text (policy) prescribe what people can do or not do in an urban setting (Barry & Porter 2011), and how some positive solutions by the low-income areas' residents are overlooked or criminalised as these are not stipulated in the policies (Dorries 2017; Miraftab 2020). In addition to the support of IKS as a potential tool for planning, some planners went on to provide warnings for the IKS inclusion approach not to become another oppressive tool or dominant system in favour of the elites only (Planners G and I). The literature has alluded to this as well, where the potential existed for those claiming to be experts on IKS (or leaders and translators) who may end up monopolising the system for their own interests (see Agrawal 2002:294; Prusak et al. 2016:441; Umemoto 2001:26). In the case of Zimbabwe, for example, indigenous liberation songs have been appropriated by the ruling elite as their own, thus excluding others who also participated in the independence struggle (Zegeye & Vambe 2006:341). Another study from Zimbabwe demonstrated how cultural houses and centres ended up being dominated by the ruling elite or appointed as the guardians' cultures, excluding minority and poorer groups from these spaces in the process (see Chigwada & Chiparausha 2017:510). In the Namibian context, Baas (2019:20) and Bollig

(2009b:349) explained that indigenous Ovaherero place praises (*omiṭandu*), with their memory spatialisation expressions, have the potential of being exclusive of others as well.

Another concern was directed to past bad experiences of planning, and one respondent warned:

Although bringing IKS into planning is a good idea, we should guard against leading ourselves into segregation planning again, we should think of bringing all different approaches under one space (Planner G).

Another participant was more careful and direct with the use of IKS in planning:

Although it is a good idea, be careful not to impose particular knowledges on others. Knowledges differ from group to group, and also, it might be incompatible with our modern lifestyles. See, even if it works in a modern setup, it does not mean it must be forced upon others. For example, if a weekly gathering with loudspeakers in a street is working for one group, it must not be supported as it is disturbing others (Planner I).

In that vein, another participant explained that the start should be a proper understanding of what is involved or referred to before proceeding with IKS engagement:

First, the terminologies in Namibia on IKS should be clarified and well understood; we should know what is being referred to, and this will help to make all-inclusive urban planning policies (Planner K).

The three planning participants above issue warnings from two angles. First, it is the danger of the dominant narratives of one group to become oppressive of other groups. Literature has already warned on the dangers of nationalising narratives for example, that end up becoming normative frameworks for planning in this context (Hudson et al. 2019; Jackson et al. 2017). Hudson et al.'s (2019:575) observation from the Scandinavian country of Sweden is that the nationalising narrative of 'Swedishness' led to various collective expressions that framed the country as one homogenous people. This dominant narrative led by dominant groups in society, led to minority indigenous groups being excluded from those formulations, thus resulting in the subordination of their cultures (Hudson et al. 2019:576).

Second, the responses move beyond problem identification towards offering hope, that of possibilities that lies in the exercise of dialogue, translation and clarification of terms. These comments echo the call made earlier by Wiredu (1998:43-44) who emphasised the clarification of African concepts as essential, and an ignorance of that aspect leads to long-lasting misinterpretations with negative societal outcomes. In the same vein, the above remark is equally in line with a recent study conducted on the integration of IKS terms into

policies in New Zealand and Canada (see Green 2018). In that context, the IKS terminologies were used next to the English terms within policies, and this led to misinterpretations as the former was not used entirely within its original context, which includes both tangible and intangible meanings (Green 2018:247). On the other hand, Sihlongonyane (2015b:84) has called the integration of indigenous metaphors into South African policies as empty signifiers, as they did not reach the grassroots as intended, but ended up appropriated by the elite in advancing their interest. Therefore, to avoid those pitfalls in the future, proper structures should exist within government and its institutions, and within the communities themselves that will collaboratively work out the meanings of the terms to be used (Green 2018:252).

In Namibia, where indigenous communities are more numerous and different in relation to their former colonising groups, compared to the settler states context, for example. Thus, the situation will be even more complex to find common ground on the use of IKS in urban areas due to different rationalities, for example. The Namibian urban format, with its apartheid legacies and inheritances, has to negotiate not only tensions and rationalities between different racial groups (black, coloured and white), but also between the different ethnic groups. One respondent expressed his views on this issue as follows:

First, it will be important to identify the different values, and evaluate their physical impacts on spaces, then see which ones are still being used today. But differences should always be considered as people have different preferences. Therefore, planning has the potential to open up and investigate the diverse IKS within the communities (Planner J).

In line with the recognition by the planners above, follow-up questions with the participants explored the opinions of the planners whether IKS should be integrated into legislation or policies or not. Although the majority of the planners (10) supported the inclusion of IKS in the legislation and or into the policies, three others raised concerns that it is better to keep the consideration of IKS at the level of the design and planning stage only. Those in support of IKS integration into legislation and policies are in line with the arguments presented by scholars from the settler states and elsewhere. These scholars argued that such an integration will improve planning practice relations with the local communities (Markkula et al. 2019; McLeod et al. 2015, 2017). Another scholar argued that emphasis should be placed on coproduction and place-making, where communities are empowered to lead the process of transformation in their respective areas (Ellery & Ellery 2019:238-246), thus converging with some of the research participants who claimed that IKS should be considered at planning and design stages only without being in the legislation. However, according to Markkula et al. (2019:12), such voluntary processes remain limited and affected by prevailing power relations

as they are not in the legislation. Collaborative planning has been criticised of failing to address this problem (see Chapter 3).

Some of the comments from the planners supporting the integration or incorporation of IKS into legislation and policies are the following:

- *Town planning schemes are currently rigid and too technical, and useful IKS practices are being prevented or excluded.*
- *If IKS is not in legislation, then planning will not implement it.*
- *IKS will be better protected if included in the policies.*
- *Keep it in the regulations, not in the legislation.*
- *IKS inclusion will assist us to think in more diverse ways, currently we are thinking only in Western ways.*
- *It will assist with reduction of conflicts on the ground and will reduce the pressure put on the bottom to always fight the top.*

The findings from the residents and the planners presented up to this point were also confirmed by the academic research participants. The academics were in agreement that current planning is too rigid, and the codes involved do not allow other methods of doing. These codes, for example town planning scheme provisions, become normalised and influence the everyday, often unequal, relations between planners and communities, while preventing alternative solutions to surface (Barry & Porter 2011:177; Huxley 2002:146). In this regard, three academics expressed their views as follows:

Yes, IKS is important and planning should respond to context. But currently, we only respond to political order only, and we neglect the cultural context. In that sense, we contribute to the loss of identities of local communities, especially in urban areas (Academic A).

Planning is ignoring the local knowledges and practices of the residents. For example, in case of urban expansion especially in small towns, municipalities are engaging in the relocation of the local residents with minimal compensation. They do not consider the length of stay of those people, and the sacred attachments and values the people have with those spaces (Academic B).

Planning is too one-sided and based its practice on standards from elsewhere. A good example is how modern shopping malls are being promoted as the only proper economic development approach, while local communities' self-made economic markets, such as the Herero Mall in the centre of Katutura, are seen as informal, illegal and should be replaced by a proper shopping centre. One municipal councillor also supported this view. This is strange because this Councillor stays in Katutura. Thus, planning only saw the negative side, but ignored the positive impact which this place had for the local residents (Academic D).

The academics' comments above are in agreement with the literature assertions that planning in the Global South cities is characterised by the reliance on foreign homogenising concepts that are poorly adapted or unable to address local postcolonial conditions (Connell 2014; Watson 2016). The academics further agreed that there is a lack of cultural open spaces and buildings in Windhoek (Academics A, B, C, D), and they further acknowledged that understanding of alternative knowledges such as IKS is limited in all segments of the residents, practitioners and academics as well (Academics A, B, D). One academic had this to say:

The demand for open spaces, including cultural open spaces, is there in Windhoek. Planning is at fault here. Planning officials' excuses are hiding behind too much work and thus other needs such as open spaces are ignored. The consequence is that the status quo continues (Academic A).

The lack of understanding of different cultures and too much reliance on strict regulations and policies were identified by the academics as some of the factors that led to conflicts in the city. One academic explained this as follows:

The understanding of different cultures and their values, such as the way they greet each other, will improve relations among the neighbours, and the practitioners as well. Also, the provision of open spaces for various activities for various groups, will reduce the conflicts between residents and lawmakers (Academic B).

On the inclusion of IKS into the legislation, the academics supported this approach, and one participant (Academic A) emphasised that it will improve the dialogue between policies and spaces. However, another participant issued warnings to prevent the repetition of past mistakes:

It is important to be aware that cultures are fluid. Thus, putting these knowledges into laws and policies might end up codifying cultures that are fluid, thus be careful not to return to the strict town planning scheme codes. Avoid being too prescriptive and try achieving a balance when venturing into the laws. It is therefore important to have a clear understanding of IKS practices, of what is good and what is bad (Academic D).

The above remark is in line with scholars who described post-apartheid laws policies as very narrow, restrictive and rigid (Charman et al. 2017). In a study on indigenous social security systems in Africa, it was equally found that direct formalisation of IKS could contribute to the weakening of some aspects of this knowledge (Weidman 2018:30). This finding referred to cases where, through IKS integration into the legislation, some indigenous social security aspects that conformed to the government's normalisation approaches thrived, while those that did not conform but are equally important were disappearing (Weidman 2018:31). Similar examples were highlighted in the settler states contexts, where policies, even those

that recognised and included indigenous aspects, were found to be highly circumscribed such that other ways of practicing became impossible (Barry & Porter 2011; Dorries 2017:92). Academics A, C and D agreed that the idea of including IKS into the legislation and policies is supported, but that the clarification of terms and their definitions are equally important. However, despite the enthusiasm of residents, the planning practitioners and academics mentioned above to integrate IKS into legislation and policies, the literature in Chapters 3 and 4 provided insights and criticism on which dangers are involved with integration processes if not properly done collaboratively and dialogically (see Innes & Booher 2015:23; Porter 2010:137). Proper dialogue refers to a situation where communicative approaches lead to opening up emancipatory knowledge between various actors and participants (Hillier 2002:116). In such context, equal opportunities and recognition are granted to all groups to discuss and debate proposals that will assist with the implementation of policies and strategies (see Forester 2009:22; Innes & Booher 2010:viii). Thus, proper dialogue will be needed when discussing and debating the different IKS terms and spatial aspects existing in Namibia, given the diverse and heterogenous communities in this context. Porter (2010:92-93) argued that if the integration of IKS terms and names is not properly clarified and defined, it may end up promoting conflicts and domination. This is in resonance with scholars who argued that many development projects in Africa failed and led to conflicts due to misunderstandings, misinterpretations or overlooking of the indigenous communities' strong beliefs and ways of life (Mkabela 2005:182; Wiredu 1998:43). These warnings are of direct relevance to this study, as some of the cultural expressions could potentially end up dominating others if not properly clarified (see Baas 2019).

As alluded to earlier, Green (2018:247) argued that a non-clarification of terms in the integration of IKS into the policies is an "unspoken invitation to disregard the tangible and intangible meanings of those terms, and thus a participation in one's own cognitive colonization". Green (2018:247) based his argument on the outcome that such processes, for example, lead to the alienation of the same people that were targeted for improvement in the first instance. This experience could be extended to the Botswana context presented earlier, where the misunderstanding of the codes in the policy documents and the misrepresentation of spatial IKS led to outcomes with negative consequences to the targeted residents (Hammami 2012:74). However, in order to ensure that processes of inclusion, incorporation, integration and recognition do not turn out as new forms of oppression, the warning of Porter (2010:17,49) of taking a deconstructive stance towards planning's cultural

genealogy (thus how planning historically produced spaces) remain valid. For example, Porter (2010:147) elaborated that incorporation and integration processes into planning frameworks, without a deconstructive stance, end up being formulated into already established Western conceptualisation that renders IKS subordinate to the dominant rational comprehensive planning culture. In line with these warnings and criticism on integration, one planning respondent had this to say:

There are many different groups in Windhoek, and there is a need to accommodate different views. Thus, compromise will be needed at times. Even though culture is diluted at times, be able to listen to different people, ask them their knowledge and land uses for spaces such as kitchens. If such viewpoints are not asked, then you might allocate uses to a wrong place (Planner A).

The response above is important on three levels of recognition needed in order for planning to progress, namely the recognition of different communities, the need to accommodate such differences, and the importance of compromise in such a heterogenous society. On the question whether cultural open spaces are useful spaces to be introduced into urban areas through local plans and schemes, the responses and motivations of planners and academics were in the affirmative. Table 7.2 presents a summary of their responses.

Table 7.2 Proposals by planners and academics on the implementation of cultural open spaces and expected outcomes

Cultural open space and how it should be implemented	Expected positive contributions towards community upliftment
• Must be inclusive of all groups • Must be accessible to all • Include economic activities/multipurpose • Introduce booking/calendar system if groups are too many • Promote tourism and cross-cultural activities equally • Add “cultural buildings” to store artefacts • Add offices in cultural buildings for each group in the neighbourhood • Prevent dominance of one group over the other • Must be described and clarified in structure plans and town planning schemes • Communities must run it themselves • Maintenance must be highlighted	• Youth training in positive community activities • Learning environment for those with no rural contacts anymore • Cross-cultural exchange and communication improved • Learning spaces for good morals and wisdom • Different groups’ unity promoted • Reduced conflicts

Source: Author (2021)

The comments in Table 7.2 converge with those of the residents, where the need for some buildings to store and display cultural artefacts was identified as equally important. The participants emphasised the importance of “cultural buildings”, which they described as buildings where artefacts of various communities will be stored, for the viewing and learning of the visitors to such buildings. Their idea of cultural buildings is close to the descriptions offered by Chigwada and Chiparausha (2017) for a culture house. For Chigwada and Chiparausha (2017:502), a culture house is generally likened to a cultural house, cultural village or cultural centre. Such cultural houses are host to a library, museum, art and other facilities displaying the history and culture of a certain group, while it can host gatherings for people to enjoy and partake in certain cultural activities while, at times, enjoying foods from certain cultures as well (Chigwada & Chiparausha 2017:502). Of further equal importance from the research participants was the issue of equal sharing of the cultural spaces, with calendars emphasised by all participants as one way of reducing conflicts in the use of space. This is in line with Parkinson’s (2012:26) assertions that for public spaces to be really accessible to all “there must be rules that regulate interactions between individuals”. These concerns are important and the experience from Zimbabwe referred to earlier, where cultural centres were implemented but with limited success, also displayed these conflicts among the different cultural groups (Chigwada & Chiparausha 2017:510). The absence of policies, guidelines and legislation to define the various activities to take place, and how they should be implemented, led to conflicts as the appointed elites who managed cultural houses dominated the usage according to their cultures, thus excluding others (Chigwada & Chiparausha 2017:510).

Although both the practicing and academic planners were in support of cultural open spaces, there were some who voiced concerns towards the creation of such spaces. Their concerns centred around the issues of “capacities to maintain such places; the exclusive use dominance of some groups” (Planner I); “the need for cultural spaces if public open spaces are already provided in the schemes” (Planner M); and “the possibilities that exist for groups to buy land and use it for their cultural activities” (Planner N). These concerns, although in the minority, are serious and, together with those in support of cultural spaces, implicates the positive or negative role that power relations can play in the creation of spaces. However, given the low sensitivity of Namibian planning policies to cultural aspects, especially involving indigenous knowledges, the purchasing of land for cultural activities is not observed in the Windhoek area. Moreover, although an institutional land policy exists (discussed later in this chapter)

that allows residents to buy land for institutional purposes, only the economically wealthy groups make use of this opportunity for their private, and often profit-driven intentions, in contrast to the policy's stipulations. For example, the Municipality of Windhoek sold institutional land at a subsidised price to a prominent government official to develop a community kindergarten as motivated, but the idea has been shifted towards the development of a service station (Iikela 2020:1). On the other hand, the few provided public open spaces are characterised by a lack of a "will to maintain, to care and love", which contribute to their becoming dumping grounds. The *longue durée* of such unhealthy conditions, one of the concerns of this study, unfortunately reflect a "tired image" of the responsible authorities, as observed by Kambaekwa (2021), which should not be the case. This remark ties in with the observations that led to the researcher to describe the appearance of the Havana settlement as reflecting a "don't care" attitude and a "laissez-faire" approach with regard to the management of such spaces.

The issues of spatial dominance by one group refer back to the problems faced by planning, and which many critiques emphasised as the main problem of communicative (or collaborative) planning. Communicative processes have been found to mask this power aspect through various techniques such as the language involved and other rationalising processes (Flyvbjerg 1998; Viswanathan 2009). This concern was also highlighted by one resident participant, who indicated that "under normal peaceful conditions, the powerful and more numerous groups tend to dominate the use of the open space available" (Resident I).

7.4 Planning policies and indigenous knowledge systems: The contact zone

Although the term *contact zone* was borrowed from the settler states literature, as explained in Chapter 6, this study's critical discourse analyses approach was, however, done with full cognisance of the fact that contextual differences exist between these two spaces. For example, in the settler states context, the issues of recognition and coexistence are focusing towards the indigenous communities who are in the minority and claim for their rights to land, to the city and to a self-government system, rather than mere inclusion and incorporation approaches that favour the majority ruling settlers in those countries (Barry & Agyeman 2020; Dorries 2017; Hugill 2017; Jackson et al. 2017; Porter 2013). The contact zone in the settler state context is thus demonstrating the relationship that exists between the state-based planning practice and its policies towards the indigenous communities, and the latter's response to that practice which undermines their claims and aspirations (Barry &

Porter 2011). The Namibian context is characterised by the previously colonised majority communities now being in power, but struggling to solve urban problems through contextually poorly adapted policies. As already stated, the Namibian masses residing in low-income areas, who happen to be the black majority, are struggling to obtain their right to the city, while the ongoing national reconciliation project remains a project of the wealthier citizens (see Du Pisani 2001).

In this section, therefore, the researcher explores the extent to which current planning legislation and policies engaged with IKS, culture and local knowledge; thus, terms considered in this study as indicative of the interaction between the policies and the indigenous communities in general, and those of Havana. The study further attempted to identify exclusionary terms within the policies, which eventually could be described for brevity's sake as *spaces of inclusion*, where IKS could be proposed for introduction in order to improve policy implementation in practice. These potential space openings or enclosures in the policies are argued as having an impact on the Namibian planning contact zone (borrowed from Pratt 1991, cited in Barry & Porter 2011:177). Such an approach enables, through a discourse analysis, an investigation how the text is framed, and how it is interpreted by practitioners to influence practice, thus impacting on the relationship between the officials and the residents, for example. The legislation investigated were URPA 2018 and its Regulations (2020), the Local Authorities Act (1992), the Traditional Authorities Act (2000), and the four urban policies were the WSP (1996), the WTPS (1976, as amended in 1997), the WOSP (2001) and the WDUP (2019). It is important at this stage to mention that the Municipality of Windhoek is currently involved in the revision of its two important planning documents, the statutory WTPS (1997) and the non-statutory guiding WSP (1996).

As already presented in Chapter 5, the supreme law of Namibia, to which all the laws should be aligned to, is the Constitution (1990). The Constitution is the law that provides for the protection of all the citizens in the country equally, including all their cultural practices and beliefs in terms of Article 19, which states the following:

Every person shall be entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion subject to the terms of this Constitution and further subject to the condition that the rights protected by this Article do not impinge upon the rights of others or the national interest (Republic of Namibia 1990:14).

All the acts mentioned above were created in terms of the provisions of the Constitution. However, all the existing spatial planning legislation adopted a neutral language, in English

only as the official language, as a departure to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution are adhered to. The concern of this study is whether such neutral language ensures the protection of all the citizens of the country, especially when referring to their different knowledges and lifestyles that are argued in this study as essential to assist with the improvement of neglected portions of urban areas.

The evaluation whether such laws do indeed speak to the various differential knowledges in the country, including spatial IKS, is a domain not much researched on in Namibia. This study again borrowed the insights provided by the settler states scholarship to venture into such an investigation (Barry & Porter 2011; Dorries 2017; McLeod et al. 2015, 2017; Porter 2010, 2013; Porter & Barry 2015). This scholarship offers elaborate approaches on how planning policies and their relationships with the communities can be evaluated to determine not only progressive avenues, but also oppressive or marginalising moments within them (Barry & Porter 2011:173). The literature also draws attention to the care that must be taken when processes of inclusion and incorporation are engaged with, as most often these changes take place within existing unchanged “master signifiers” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, cited in Porter 2013:289). These master signifiers render the included changes always subordinate to the dominant knowledges, and thus ending up favouring the elite and powerful groups in the city (Porter 2013:303). This borrowing from the settler states was done with full consideration of the contextual differences that exist between the two spaces (settler states and Namibia), and the awareness that “travelling ideas” are not always positive, but could lead to negative outcomes if not properly reconceptualised according to the local context (Harris & Moore 2013; Healey 2013). The emphases were on the improvement of the relationships between planning officials and local communities, between the higher-order legislation and lower-order policies and between the laws and the communities. Additionally, recent studies in South Africa targeting the improvement of spatial planning legislation towards flexibility and openness to other knowledges, also provided important insights (Charman, Tonkin et al. 2017; Nel 2016a; Oranje et al. 2020; Sihlongonyane 2015b; Williams 2015).

7.4.1 Communication between the laws and the communities

The terms explored were selected in terms of the focus of this study, and a search was applied to the identified legislation and policies. The researcher argued that the mention of these terms indicates at least a certain consideration of the mentioned aspect. As this kind of study was nowhere found to have been done in Namibia, this study attempted, relying on the

insights provided by McLeod et al. (2015, 2017), to venture into the contextual use of the terms through manifest and latent content analysis. Therefore, in this study, the researcher explored whether the legislation and policies were at least considering certain aspects that implicate communities or not and the consequences of such consideration. This would assist in understanding whether the mentioned terms were at least directed towards the upliftment of the communities' living conditions or not.

Such an approach led to the identification of, which the author for sake of brevity calls the "sites of inclusion" where certain considerations could be brought forward for further treatment. For the researcher, the sites of inclusion refer to those normalised and progressive terms in the policies, supposedly including all citizens, but nevertheless have the potential to perpetuate inequalities in the way they prescribe actions and solutions. This is borrowed from McLeod et al. (2017:76), who in the settler states context used "sites of recognition" to refer to how planning and the indigenous communities interact to address serious recognition promises that were agreed upon, but never fulfilled such as the amendments within planning itself. In the context of the settler states, the process identifying the "sites of recognition" led to further evaluation of whether indigenous communities were framed as mere stakeholders or as equal partners (McLeod et al. 2017:76; Porter & Barry 2015:33; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:17). The argument presented is that stakeholder settings were found to favour paternalistic tendencies, where indigenous community problems are framed as needs, and planning as the neutral problem solver (Porter 2013:290). In the context of this study, the sites of inclusion will then be the terms used, how often they are used, which was then regarded as a level of interaction between the practitioners and the residents. Following this identification, the latent content regarding these terms will be elaborated on how they treat residents in general, in order to show potential exclusionary framing within them. It was interesting to note that the combined term *indigenous knowledge* does not exist in the legislation and policies discussed here, but only in separate form. The findings are shown in Table 7.3.

The figures shown in Table 7.3 highlight two important aspects as far as legislation and policies are concerned. On the one hand, they explicitly indicate the area of concern and purpose of each document. On the other hand, they also show the areas least treated by these same documents. For example, the Local Authorities Act (1992), URPA 2018, WSP (1996) and the WTPS (1976, amended 1997) refer in one way or the other to *open/public spaces*, while the Traditional Authorities Act (2000) is silent on this aspect. However, the

Traditional Authorities Act mentions *community* 186 times, while *community* is not mentioned in URPA 2018 at all. The low usage of the term *community* is not to say that URPA 2018 is not concerned about communities, but it can assist the planner to reflect more deeply on the issue and analyse how communities are treated by URPA 2018. This will be elaborated upon later in this section. This approach clarifies the relationship that exists between the planner (or another official in another field) and his community, and is one of the contributions that content analysis makes to this kind of exploration (McLeod et al. 2015:1).

Table 7.3 Appearance of certain community-related terms in legislation and policies

Legislation/Policy	Frequency at which community-related terms have been used in policy documents						
	Knowledge	Indigenous	Culture	Open space/ public space/ public place(s)	Community	Residents	Partnership
Traditional Authorities Act (2000)	1	1	7	0	186	0	0
Local Authorities Act (1992)	2	0	0	36	2	25	0
Urban and Regional Planning Act 2018	6	0	7	14	0	1	4
URPA's Regulations 2020	0	0	1	5	0	0	0
Windhoek Structure Plan (1996)	0	0	3	22	16	12	0
Windhoek Town Planning Scheme (1976, amended in 1997)	0	0	1	5	0	0	0
Windhoek Open Space Policy (2001)	0	3	1	98	6	4	3
Windhoek Development and Upgrading Policy (2019)	0	0	0	0	71	1	3

Source: Author (2021)

As this study argued for the promotion of spatial IKS, especially the cultural open spaces, the results in Table 7.3 prompted a further exploration on how open spaces, where they are mentioned, are treated. Are they being defined and referred to in the narrow and reductionist rational planning perspective of homogenous communities? Or are they in line with the open spaces advocated by this study, namely community cultural open spaces where different communities can gather and engage with each other and learn, with the aim of improving not only their living conditions, but also their sense of place and belonging. Table 7.4 shows how some selected policies define open spaces. It shows that open spaces are conceptualised in

the standardised modernist view, with the technical, natural, and aesthetical values being the dominant features ascribed to them, while the local symbolic values, at least from an indigenous lens perspective, are not referred to in the policy documents. Chapters 2, 4 and 5 described how different communities attach different aesthetical and symbolic values to their spaces that increase their sense of belonging and place (see Hay 1998; Kavari & Bleckman 2009; Marek 2020; Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019).

Table 7.4 Definition of open spaces as treated in various policies

Act/Policy	Definition of type of open space
Urban and Regional Planning Act 2018	“Public place means land indicated on a general plan, diagram or map as having been set aside as a public right of way, whether for vehicles or pedestrians or public, of which the ownership is registered in favour of or vests in a local authority in terms of this Act or any other law” (Republic of Namibia 2018:9).
Local Authorities Act (1992)	Public place means any square, garden, park, recreation ground, show ground, rest camp or other open or enclosed space intended for the use, enjoyment or benefit of residents in a local authority area (Republic of Namibia 1992:8).
Windhoek Town Planning Scheme (1997)	Public open space means any land used or reserved in this Scheme for use by the public as an open space, park, garden, playground, recreation ground or square. (Municipality of Windhoek 1997:14).
Windhoek Open Space Policy (2001)	a) Neighbourhood Park: Provide trees, benches, litter bins and pathways. b) Informal playing field: Large open area, levelled with possibly goal posts, or hoops. Provide trees, benches, litter bins, and pathways (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:8-9).

Source: Author (2021)

The omission of the indigenous cultural dimension in the above definitions means that their interpretation will tend to favour the dominant culture represented in the policy, which is the Western conceptualisation of spaces together with current neoliberal tendencies of leaning towards market protection over the use values. Lefebvre (1991) already alluded to this phenomenon in his production of space theory. For Lefebvre (1991:34), such market dominant approaches create a situation where the conceived space always tend to dominate the lived space, thus providing “little justice to the lived experience” of the local communities. One concern of this study was the promotion of indigenous knowledge in planning practice. The combined terms *local knowledge* or *indigenous knowledge* are non-existent in Namibian spatial planning legislation and in the definitions in Table 7.4. When separated, the terms *knowledge* and *indigenous* make their appearance in the policies as was shown in Table 7.3. In that same Table 7.3, the Traditional Authorities Act (2000), surprisingly, refer only once to the term *indigenous* in the definition of a traditional community (Republic of Namibia 2000:3). The term is used to describe a traditional community as follows:

[A]n indigenous homogeneous, endogamous social grouping of persons comprising of families deriving from exogamous clans which share a common ancestry, language, cultural heritage, customs and traditions, who recognises a common traditional authority and inhabits a common communal area, and may include the members of that traditional community residing outside the common communal area (Republic of Namibia 2000:3).

WOSP (2001) uses the same term *indigenous* on three occasions to describe various vegetation types (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:10,11,14). Similar omissions were also observed from policy documents from the settler states contexts. Planning policy documents from that context, although more advanced in recognising and accommodating indigenous knowledge, rather kept that knowledge in the abstracts and cultural historical sections of those documents (Porter 2013:286). Thus, the important spatial planning and place-making practices based on IKS remained omitted from the main content of the policies, and therefore keeping indigenous communities excluded from planning practice (Porter 2013:286-288).

URPA 2018 mentioned *knowledge* six times, but mostly refers to expert knowledge, meaning that local or indigenous knowledge from the diverse communities is currently not of concern in this Act. The Regulations (2020) for URPA 2018 are silent on the usage of the term *knowledge*. Thus, given the current legal and planning framework within which planning officials operate in Namibian municipalities, this expert knowledge mostly comprises Western dominant knowledge. This then is a sign how dominant perceptions of indigenous knowledge as being inappropriate, are perpetuated (Anwar 2011:140). It is this highly circumscribed situation that renders other ways of knowing difficult to be foregrounded, as the law and policies determine the action and direction to be taken (Barry & Porter 2011:182; McLeod et al. 2017:84). Thus, in terms of the approach taken by this study, the term *knowledge* could be considered a site of inclusion which needs further treatment for improvement. Nevertheless, URPA 2018 has shown some improvements compared to its predecessors (Town Planning Ordinance 1954, amended in 2000; Townships and Division of Land Ordinance 1963, amended in 2000) by mentioning the terms *cultural* (seven times), *knowledge* (six times) and *partnership* (four times). The previous laws omitted these terms totally, confirming their reliance strictly on technical approaches. Although the term *cultural* is found in URPA 2018, it is only used in relation to the protection of cultural and natural heritage, and thus not specifically treating the everyday way of life around the diverse cultures in Namibia. This was equally a predominant finding in urban research from the settler states, where cultural heritage from the past eras was deemed more deserving of preservation in the policies than the continuous cultural lifestyles of the indigenous communities (see Porter 2010, 2013). The

Regulations (2020) for URPA 2018 do not use the term *cultural* but *culture*, and only once. Nevertheless, the term *culture* in the Regulations (2020) compels municipalities, in the compilation of the zoning schemes, to list the social services available, such as the arts and culture facilities (Republic of Namibia 2020:11). This is an important requirement, and in the context of this study it could enable the proposed cultural open spaces to be viewed as culture facilities. However, the terms *culture* and *cultural* are argued in this study as an example of *sites of inclusion* that need further treatment. Thus, given the fact that URPA 2018 and its Regulations (2020) do not define both of these terms in their lists of definitions, render them open to different interpretations and implementation, thus subject to dominant expert knowledge discussed above.

The WTPS (1976, amended in 1997) is silent on indigenous terms, which is in line with its wide acknowledgement as a rigid and technical knowledge document that excludes alternative local or indigenous knowledge and value systems (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1; Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1). In such exclusive contexts, alternative knowledges, for example spatial IKS, are viewed as based on feelings and thus illogic (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003:22). However, the inclusion of the emotional dimension into solving the diverse urban problems is being increasingly recognised (Sandercock 2004:139). The content analysis, therefore, enabled this study to highlight the silences, omissions, and exclusions created by the manner how certain words are deployed in the policies. It further enabled the researcher to critically analyse these exclusive statements or discourses with the aim of identifying possible exclusions and proposing where alternative knowledges can be accommodated in the planning policies.

To illustrate another example from Table 7.3, the term *community* does not appear in URPA 2018 and its Regulations 2020, as mentioned above. This draws attention on how URPA deals with communities and participation in urban areas. A closer inspection then leads to the term *public*, which appears 50 times in the Act and 10 times in the Regulations. The treatment of the term *public* in the Act refers to the general public, and treats all people as equal and homogenous, which mask the differences and inequalities on the ground. This approach is not much different from the problematic *stakeholder* identified in the settler states context (Porter 2013), as *general public* can also potentially exclude the majority urban poor. A further evaluation reveals that out of the 50 times, the context of community participation is implicated 21 times, through advertisement and invitations for comments in the Government Gazette and two newspapers, all in the official English language. This reveals that *participation* in Namibia is ensured in the laws but is still done through a technical and top-down approach.

Thus, those communities who cannot access the technical means of participation will continue to be excluded. Thus, even within frameworks of new policies and amendments, planners will continue with the old conceptions of participation imposed by institutional power (Graham & Healey 1999:641). However, this is not to say that participation in Namibia does not include the poor majority in the country due to the practice approaches. Participation exists and continues as highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3. However, it is the manner how it is conducted that is of concern here, especially the prescribed general public and stakeholder approaches. The term *stakeholder*, although not used in URPA 2018, is referred to only once in the URPA 2018 Regulations (2020) in the consultation of stakeholders' comments on the preparation of urban structure plans. In more direct planning practices, similar critiques were raised against contemporary planning concepts in Namibia, with the prevailing usage of the terms *low density* and *high density* in planning policies, which further perpetuate inequalities and prevent full participation by the poor communities in urban economies (Lühl & Delgado 2018:9). This raises questions regarding the fairness of the planning processes at play.

Another document evaluated was the WDUP of 2019, transformed from a Windhoek Development and Upgrading Strategy of 2009. The WDUP is a municipal policy dealing directly with the gradual upgrading of informal settlements in Windhoek. The WDUP used the term *community* 71 times, and is showing a high recognition of the residents of these as communities and not just the general public. However, this policy did not refer to terms such as *knowledge*, *indigenous* and *culture* at all, thus leaving these issues to other legislation and policies to take care of. However, overlaps could be found in the support of the policy for increased community capacity building, which could be linked to knowledge creation and development (Municipality of Windhoek 2019:11). However, this empowerment approach is targeting the training of community members in the maintenance of services provided, health and environment management, service payments and the creation of committees to manage these affairs (Municipality of Windhoek 2019:11,20). The policy further supports the creation of partnerships between the municipality and the communities in the domain of development and upgrading (p. 21). It equally indicates a willingness of the municipality to partner with external research institutions such as the Namibia University of Science and Technology and the University of Namibia for increased capacity building (p. 22).

Although the policy provides flexibility for the poor and low-income residents in their land use approaches, it is provided in such a way that once upgrading has reached a certain level,

then full compliance with the WTPS and Building Regulations has to take effect (Municipality of Windhoek 2019:29). Therefore, although the WDUP 2019 shows the municipality's willingness to work with the communities of areas such as the informal parts of Havana, the main participation, development and upgrading approaches are done in a standardised and fixed conceptualisation of development that favours existing knowledges. Thus, although the WDUP 2019 is referring to communities, unlike the URPA 2018 which uses the term *general public*, the end results will not be different from each other as argued in this study. In addition, the WDUP 2019, being a municipal policy and not a statutory document, the engagement with diverse indigenous knowledges will not be prioritised given the neoliberal spirit which the policy adopted by emphasising technical appropriateness, full-cost recovery and user-pay solutions as some of its main principles (Municipality of Windhoek 2019:4). Thus, full participation in urban activities, just like that provided in URPA 2018, will be heavily reduced as the study has observed.

In this vein, one planning research participant had this to say with regard to participation in terms of the main spatial planning law, the URPA 2018:

There is not much new in the new Act, it is more of a combination of the old two ordinances in an effort to make it appear more current, while in practice, the status quo might remain intact. Also, when it comes to the poor, the participation provided in the new Act is not enough. Better for one to go out and include all facets of their lives, look at all their settings, and avoid discrimination (Planner A).

An academic research participant added similar sentiments about URPA:

URPA should have included cultural and IKS aspects in its objectives but is currently silent on it. It should have referred to them contextually on a national level. The regional and local structure plans prescribed by URPA should give IKS more presence. Seems the big question is how to do it. Thus, studies such as this one of yours should guide such processes (Academic A).

The first response above indicates the need to go out and meet communities as the legal platforms are not sufficient. Such commitment and willingness for planners to get out of their comfort zone and demonstrate passion were often found absent in practice due to various reasons such as lack of resources, low budgets or lack of willingness from planners themselves (see De Satgé & Watson 2018:193; Hillier 2002:122; Oranje 2014:6). The above responses were not the only concerns of this study. The omission of some terms is seen as potential exclusionary measures masked by the rationalised inclusionary terms of the neoliberal governance environment in which Namibian planning is situated (Healey 2006:538; Miraftab 2009:41). This study therefore argued that terms that are excluded, but represent other

residents' values within the urban space, must be welcomed as enabling alternative ways of understanding and doing planning, and should be included in the policies. This study argued that such expansions in the policies may contribute to the reduction of the unintentional exclusions identified above. Thus, the sites of inclusion can then become more inclusionary as is currently the case. Examples of these terms include *local knowledge*, *indigenous knowledge* and *local communities*. The researcher was aware of the confusion and the danger of using the term *local*, which could be used by powerful groups to intercept projects aimed at marginalised groups. Thus, planners should pay attention to the context in the formulation of the terms. Some scholars argued that inclusion of diverse terms (indigenous and conventional knowledges) in *higher-order policies* will lead to the creation of *common ground*, for example on issues of settlement improvement, where the resulting dialogue between communities and planning officials and their institutions, can lead to potential transformations (McLeod et al. 2015:15).

7.4.2 Indigenous knowledge in the Urban and Regional Planning Act

This subsection delved deeper into the objectives and principles of URPA 2018 and its Regulations of 2020, as being a recent legislation, it will be responsible for guiding spatial planning into the future. As part of the content analysis approach, this study critically looked at two sections of the Act dealing with the objectives and principles in order to have an understanding of how these two aspects are conversing, or will converse, with alternative knowledges and local and indigenous communities into the future.

Section 2 of URPA 2018 deals with the objectives of the Act, and the selected ones for this study are listed as follows:

- (a) provide for a uniform, effective and integrated regulatory framework for spatial planning in Namibia;*
- (b) provide for principles and standards of spatial planning;*
- (e) ensure that there is equity in the spatial planning system;*
- (f) redress past imbalances in respect of access to land, land ownership and land allocation*
(Republic of Namibia 2018:11).

One of the principles of URPA 2018 reflected upon by this study as described in Section 3(2), is the following:

- (g) policies, plans and laws, at national, regional and local level of government which are dealing with spatial planning must be harmonised and streamlined to the extent possible and those involved in the implementation of such policies and plans and laws must cooperate in*

order to avoid land use conflicts, delays in decision making and to minimise negative financial, social, economic or environmental impact (Republic of Namibia 2018:11-12).

Furthermore, Section 3(3)(c) of the Act explains that if the Minister considers it necessary, he may consult with the general public to develop standards for spatial planning in Namibia (Republic of Namibia 2018:12). First, and as alluded to earlier, URPA demonstrates the potential for change, but just falls short of opening up to include the diversity of knowledges that exist in the country. The objectives as listed above, to which all future plans must adhere to, are important but simultaneously too narrow. In that form, they will perpetuate the current dominance of the expert planner approach to the detriment of alternative methods of doing, and thus exclude the many “lived realities” that exist in our urban and rural spaces (Williams 2015:222). Through practical experience, it was noted that the terms included in Section 2(a), (b) and (e), such as *uniform, effective, standards* and *equity*, are always interpreted in a scientific and objective approach, meaning there is no space for local indigenous approaches. The interpretation of such terms most often tends to favour market-based solutions, and thus excluding use values as the literature in Chapters 2 and 3 outlined. Thus, the contact zone will still remain a conflictual space for Namibian planning and its indigenous communities, especially those in low-income and poorer settlements such as Havana, targeted by this study. This study was not against the existence of conflict; on the contrary, conflicts are important in a democracy as they draw attention to issues that need attention (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002:62; Saiu 2017:3). However, the study argued for unnecessary conflicts as a result of rationalised oppressive policies being maintained by planning principles, hence the advocacy for the inclusion of diverse spatial knowledges in planning. In line with the responses of the research participants, scholars argued that an insufficient or partial understanding of the lived realities of the local people can lead to the creation (and rationalisation) of policies with unintended consequences (Saiu 2017:3; Wagenaar 2011:20). A situation was exemplified by a recent study by Larsen and Augustus (2020) on informal settlements in Windhoek, where they observed contradictions in the service development programmes of the municipality and the realities on the ground.

Second, another positive objective of URPA is the inclusion of the consideration of past imbalances in Section 2(f). Thus, the African dictum based on IKS wisdom compelling one “to always have regard to the past but with a critical eye” (Kimmerle 2000:127), partially is considered in Section 2(f) of URPA. Nevertheless, this is an improvement compared to previous legislation, and some current policies that were conceptualised as apolitical

instruments such as the WSP and the WTPS, and thus only technical documents with no linkage to political issues (see Müller-Friedman 2008:30). The only limitation in terms of this study is that this objective (Section 2(f)) is restricted to “land access, land allocation and land ownership” only. From practical experience and given the top-down arrangement in which planning is operating, these land issues (access, allocation, ownership) may turn to be the only focus of planning practice in the future, with solutions being provided by the experts as emphasised in URPA 2018. Therefore, although in the right direction, for the purpose of this study the omission of alternative knowledges, including spatial IKS, was a worrying factor that still translates in the exclusion of important spatial aspects referred to above.

However, the exclusion of alternative knowledges such as spatial IKS could not be assumed to have been an entirely deliberate exercise. As highlighted by the literature, the exclusion of diverse knowledges in planning legislation and practice could be due to various reasons:

- A lack of understanding and knowledge of local indigenous knowledges (Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Umemoto 2001).
- Unwillingness of planners to learn from the diverse local communities due to a lack of passion at times (Oranje 2014).
- Planners adopting a comfort zone attitude by retaining the status quo (Frayne 2000).
- The adoption of the much-criticised apolitical spirit which enables planners to act as neutral problem-solvers, while urban problems are diverse and complex (Friedmann 2000; Wagenaar 2011).

The above discussion was a critical evaluation of URPA 2018, highlighting some of the hidden issues that could pose problems in the future space production processes in the country, especially in the low-income areas where the need for community spaces is high. The conclusion is that URPA 2018, although normative and progressive, still remain highly prescribed, and exclude alternative knowledges such as spatial IKS that could broaden possibilities in the creation of useful spaces for the residents of Windhoek, and more so in the low-income areas surrounding the city. An in-depth analysis of one section from URPA will be explored in the next chapter to demonstrate how a certain provision in law or policies could be treated for transformation towards the handling of multiplicity of knowledge in planning. This deeper transformative analysis in Chapter 8, will be guided by two subsets of questions to the main third research question, namely:

- How should policies be transformed to facilitate the integration of spatial indigenous knowledges into the current planning system?
- Which specific spaces in the policies could be treated to enable the accommodation of spatial indigenous systems?

Heading the call to consider past experiences as alluded to above, the next section will explore spatial IKS and its various conceptualisations from the elders' perspectives in an attempt to move beyond the critique and provide potential alternatives and transformative possibilities for space creation.

7.5 Elders' perspectives: Indigenous knowledge systems in the conception of cultural open spaces

This section presents the findings obtained from the two case study communities (Ovawambo and Ovaherero) on how open spaces are conceived, and why the local communities viewed these spaces and places as important. This presentation is an exploration of the values attached to the open spaces, and to see whether they are currently still highly valued in the communities. The information gathered were equally cross-checked with the sources used in Chapter 4 (Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2) that dealt with the land uses at the African level and the two case study communities. The aim was to increase their reliability, and to explore any differences and gaps between current data with those from the literature. The findings were then utilised to respond to the first three research questions of this study, which centred around the existence of IKS, its values and usefulness for improving poor or marginalised communities living conditions, and the eventual IKS recognition and promotion in Namibian planning systems and approaches in urban areas.

The research participants in these explorations were mostly the elders (men and women) from the two case study communities, but also those known by community members as knowledge holders such as the holy fire keepers and praise orators. The conversational interviews were conducted between March and August 2020, either through face-to-face communication at important gatherings, or telephonic discussions due to Covid-19 restrictions. The elders' way of transmitting knowledge through storytelling were mostly adopted to allow freedom of the speaker to complete his discussion before asking follow-up questions. The importance of storytelling and stories were elaborated on in Chapters 2 to 4 (see Tuwe 2016; Van Hulst 2012). Fortunately, the researcher benefitted from earlier

preparations and piloting phases engaged in 2019, before the arrival of Covid-19, where various traditional ceremonies (weddings, funerals, commemorations) were attended, mostly as a participant observer with informal discussions, and the insights gained became useful as additional enriching data for this study. In addition, readily available old audio cassette recordings also enriched this data.

The use of elders in this study was deemed essential as they are known to be the knowledge holders of old traditional practices and ways of living, including the creation of living space (Baskin & Sinclair 2015:10; Hart 2010:8; Rodil & Winschiers-Theophilus 2015:80; Williams 2015:56). Scholars are increasingly calling for the inclusion of elders and other knowledge holders in research and decision-making processes (Baskin & Sinclair 2015:13; Hart 2010:11; Mkabela 2005:186). This call was also echoed by some academics engaged with during this research, who emphasised that elders and knowledge holders should be brought on board of research and education programmes regarding IKS (Academic A, D). Some knowledge holders stated that the presence of elders at the envisaged cultural open spaces will assist with knowledge transmission (Knowledge holders 20, 22). These calls for the inclusion of elders are justified as, for example, recent research in a South African context revealed a reduced transmission of IKS from elders to the youth in urban areas, a concern that weakens community resilience in case of environmental threats such as climate change (Melere & Nel 2020:7).

7.5.1 ***Omuwanda* open space and its *Okuruuo* sacred space**

The *omuwanda* is the communal open space of the Ovaherero community which is located between the main house and the cattle kraal, and the holy fire (*okuruuo*) is situated inside this space, also between the main house and the kraal (see Figure 4.9, under section 4.3.2).

Although the *omuwanda* is the larger open space, the *okuruuo* is the religious space where all important homestead or community activities are announced and concluded, through communication with the ancestors and the Ovaherero *Ndjambi* (God) (Kavari 2001:124). Some research participants emphasised the importance of *okuruuo* as follows:

The okuruuo is our traditional religious space, it is where we communicate with our Ndjambi [God] through our ancestors; it is where healing takes place; where blessings are requested for various events and material in the community; where newborns are taken for naming; where the dead are taken for last rituals before funeral; thus, this place is our law as well, although unwritten (Elders 6, 10, 11, 18; Knowledge holders 2, 8, 12).

Other participants explained how the *okuruuo* should be treated.

This place is highly respected in the community; you do not go there if filled with anger, and if angry, you have to wait for the moment when you calmed down to go there. For it to be effective, aspects such as respect, calmness, agreement and consensus are important to be considered. Misbehaviour is not allowed there, as it is linked to inviting bad omen or bad luck, and that include the use of alcohol at that site (Elders 4, 5; Knowledge holders 7, 8).

Thus, the *omuvanda* with its *okuruuo*, according to the responses above, and the literature consulted, demonstrate the principles that surround the foundation of any social space, that of prohibition being at its origin (Lefebvre 1991:35). On the use and maintenance of the *okuruuo*, the following has been emphasised:

Although okuruuo is inherited along paternal lines, it actually belongs to a woman and she maintains it. The man is the custodian only. In our community we say a home is not called a home until it has a wife. Also, all the activities at the okuruuo takes place in the presence of the wife (or main wife if many), and if she is not present then the activities are postponed until she returns. Respect for women was there, unlike today where men are beating women, and show no respect (Knowledge holders 2, 12, 14; Elders 4, 18).

The okuruuo must be lit every day, once before sunrise, and then in late afternoon, and this is a task for the main wife. If the main wife is not there then girls (in order of age), and if those two are not there, then the husband can do that, followed by boys (according to age) if the others are not there. Also, spatial arrangement at the okuruuo is according to gender when activities are being performed there; men and boys sit on the right side, women and girls on the left. But when husband has to communicate with the ancestors, he goes to the left, take off his shoes and do it there (Elders 4, 6, 18).

In addition to the above information, it was observed that the *okuruuo* provides a learning space to the younger generation by attentively listening to the elder *okuruuo* keeper speaking at the site. A lot of history and genealogy surrounding the family or community present is uttered there. Nevertheless, more learning and passing on of knowledge occurs at other platforms such as at the main house, where during funeral ceremonies, various elders are given an opportunity to talk to the audience. The speeches, done in various storytelling techniques (proverbs, place praise poems, chants) are filled with important information surrounding the well-being of the community. Other learning platforms are located in the larger *omuvanda*, where social gatherings such as *omutwe* are occasionally organised for community members to discuss various issues, good and bad, that concern the community (Rukero 2015:46). (See Figure 7.5.)



Figure 7.5 (a) Community bidding farewell to the household head and fire keeper at Okuruuo;
(b) Lining up to blow at a certain piece of meat, signifying the end of the funeral ceremony

Source: Author (2021)

The question on the flexibility of the *omuvanda* and *okuruuo* to accommodate diverse groups that are different to the Ovaherero community has raised varied responses. This question was brought up for various reasons. First, as an insider to the Ovaherero community, the researcher observed differential treatment being applied to various groups at the *okuruuo*, where some groups are not allowed to attend events at that place, while others are deemed compatible and are allowed to attend. Second, as a town planner, the issue of multiplicity in urban spaces is demanding planners to open up to various groups, recognise differences and design spaces that are inclusive to all (Harvey 2009:84; Sandercock 2003b:322; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019:276). Finally, adopting an approach that indigenous research should be seen as a process in which the researcher is directly implicated (Smith 2012:130), the researcher critically and reflexively explored opportunities for improvement of an issue which was a concern not only to this study, but also to himself and other fellow community members.

On the issue of differential treatment, one elder had this to say:

This is an old practice. A stranger, thus someone with different practices and views that does not include an okuruuo (holy fire), was not allowed to attend events at the holy fire, in fear of it being damaged or noise being made there (Elder 18).

Upon further discussions and follow-up queries on intermarriages with regard to the strict rule of the holy fire, the same elder continued as follows:

We are now living modern lifestyles, and this require us to unite. Therefore, if married to a stranger to the Ovaherero community, then the husband should explain the procedures

involved, so that the wife comes prepared and behave within the rules, for example knowing where to sit, which tools and utensils to touch and so on (Elder 18).

Although the last remark appears a bit more relaxed, it still shows tendencies of exclusion and creates an uncomfortable situation for the newcomer. However, another elder, who is an *okuruuo* keeper, had another perspective on the matter.

If you are married to a stranger to your culture, you just have to do a ceremony at the okuruuo, where you inform and request permission from the ancestors, so that your new wife is fully integrated and can perform all required duties expected of her (Elder 4).

This last remark is in line with the views of younger knowledge holders engaged in this study. They voiced their criticism towards this discriminatory differential treatment at the *okuruuo* and offered possibilities for change to occur.

The okuruuo rules are very strict. I am having kids from my previous marriage with an Omuhherero women, and these kids can freely attend events at okuruuo. But my latest kids with my current wife, a Tswana woman, cannot do the same. This is bad and should be revisited! (Knowledge holder 13).

I am a young okuruuo keeper, and I witnessed this differential treatment at other places, the situation did not happen at my place yet. But I do not like it, the elders must explain how it originated, but it should be changed (Knowledge holder 8).

My mother is an Omuzemba [a subgroup of the Ovaherero], but was not allowed to come near the holy fire of the Ovahimba [another subgroup of the Ovaherero] where she was married into. But I remember there was a big ceremony done, only after this ceremony could she now attend and maintain the holy fire of her husband. Therefore, this shows to me that changes are possible to include a mixture of people (Knowledge holder 9).

The findings above emphasised the importance of the *okuruuo* (holy fire) and the larger *omuvanda* open space to the Ovaherero community, which were found to be in line with existing literature around this space (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2). The data reveals that the space is significantly valued in modern times, and is still practiced, mostly in rural areas. Surprisingly, it was observed that the traditional wood being used for sitting at *okuruuo* are now being modernised and replaced with bricks as benches although only one such transformation was observed during the study. Informal discussions during these observations revealed that this is still early changes and are not popular. Some members present in the informal discussions indicated that the traditional woods being used should be respected as is, while the opponents present argued that these trees are becoming difficult to find, and change is needed. It was, however, important to note that, from literature and archival data, the *okuruuo* was initially kept in a tiny enclosed structure (small building) before

evolving into an open place (shrine) inside the *omuvanda* with large stones serving as benches (Kavari 2001:158-159). This large stone data (Kavari 2001) was not known by some research participants as evidenced from the debates centred around wooden benches mentioned above. However, the data equally pointed out that intra-group differences do exist within the same community. The existence of these intra-group differences should be recognised and considered in planning and development projects (Agrawal 1995:21; Kirby-Reynolds & Gunaratnam 2017:6). The neglect of such intra-group differences through assumptions of homogenous approaches (one-size-fits-all) can lead to negative outcomes as various struggles may remain hidden from planning processes (Watson 2006:43).

In concluding this part of the findings from the Ovaherero community, a mental map representing the activities of the group during a wedding ceremony was drawn by the researcher. The usefulness of mental maps was described in Chapter 6, Section 6.6.1. Figure 7.6 (drawn from experience and the participant observation approach during this study) depicts only the main movements that must take place for the wedding ceremony to be completed. Missing some of those main steps may lead to the cancellation of the wedding and will be considered as disobedience. All those ritual movements are related and should follow each other. Experience and the observations done during this study revealed the strong interrelations that existed, and furthermore, being reinforced during the ceremony. Although the sketch depicts only the main movements, the observations revealed that the whole community is involved in the ceremony. All members present perform certain functions that lead to the completion of the wedding ceremony. This reveals that such a wedding ceremony is the responsibility of the whole community present at that time and place. This responsibility community was emphasised in the literature as one of the defining characteristics of *Ubuntu* in Southern Africa (Mkabela 2005:186). It was equally found to be an important defining factor in communities from elsewhere, such as those found in Indonesia (Agustina & Hindersah 2019:7). According to Fleisher and Wynne-Jones (2012:182), it is essential, when exploring how people move in their spaces during ceremonies, to pay attention to the activities, the spatial structuring and the management of access and the routes used to move through such spaces. This attention, combined with related discourses of the local indigenous community, for example, enables us (the observers) to construct a sense of meaning in such spatial arrangements (Fleisher & Wynne-Jones 2012:182). Table 7.5 explains the various ritual movements illustrated in Figure 7.6. This finding enabled the

researcher to have an increased understanding why and how certain spaces and places are highly valued by a community.

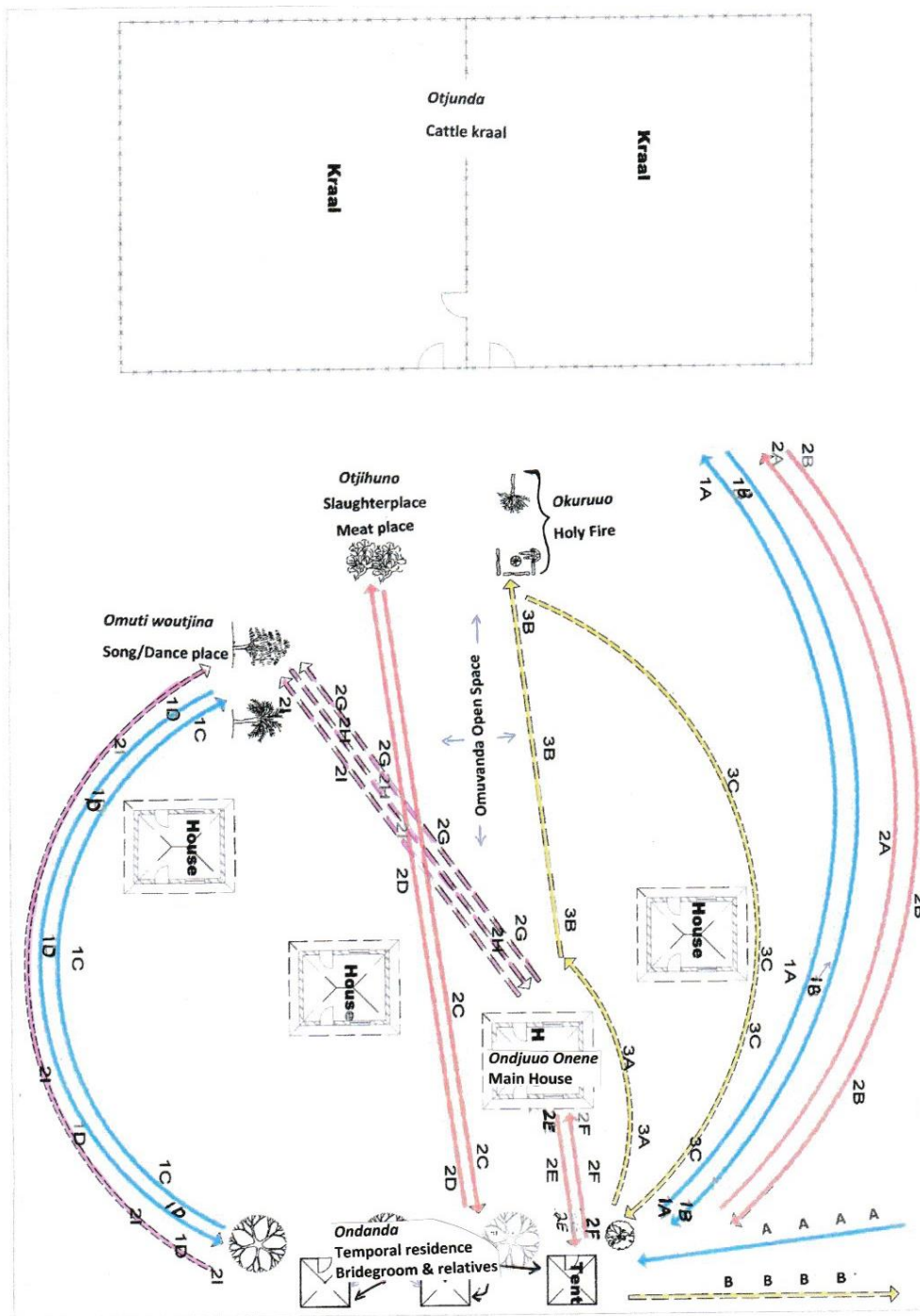


Figure 7.6 Combination of various mental maps on the main ritual spatial movements observed during three days of a wedding ceremony of the OvaHerero community

Source: Author's own mental maps (2021); redrawn by Ellis Kandapaera Kamuinyo (2021)

Table 7.5 Main ritual movements during an Ovaherero wedding ceremony

Movement type	Movement time	Spaces used
First day (blue lines)		
A –	Mid-day around 12:00-14:00	Arrival of the bridegroom at back of homestead mid-day of the first day. Put up tents at allocated site for three days. Must be around 50 m at back of main house of host homestead (<i>Okongotuonganda / Ondanda</i>)
1a to 1b	Afternoon, around 16:00 to 17:00	Guest delegation takes lobola cows to the kraal (<i>Okuhitisa ongombe</i>)/ In modern times, monetary (cash) is also added to the cows.
1c to 1d =	Around 19:00–20:00	Appointed guest delegation goes to social gathering place (<i>Opomuti woutjina</i>) to perform introductory traditional songs/dances, joining the host group, then return.
Second day (red & pink lines)		
2a to 2b	± 07:00 in the morning	Bridegroom with 2 or 3 male age mates (<i>Omakura</i>) slowly march to the kraal to touch a bull / cow, then return. In olden days, the groom had to catch this bull for slaughtering.
2c to 2d	± 09:00	Host send a certain dedicated piece of meat (<i>evango</i>) from slaughter place (meat place- <i>otjihuna</i>) to the guest group. A similar piece of meat is sent from guest group to host group. Signifying reinforcement of future interrelationships between the two groups.
2e to 2f	± 10:30–11:00	A cooked piece of meat brought (<i>orupati</i>) from main house to the guests, but only to be blown on or tasted by the groom, then host return soon afterwards. Then this meat is taken to bride to blow or taste as well. A similar exercise is repeated on Sunday with another piece of meat (<i>oruramwa</i>), but not shown on map. This signifies strengthening the bondage of the couple in marriage.
2g to 2h	± 16:00–17:00	The bride, who is stationed in the main house during the three days, is paraded outside for the first time to the social gathering place, surrounded by bridesmaids, then back into the main house. Procession- (<i>okuwomborora</i>)
2i	± 16:00–19:00	The main encounter of the two groups, host and guest groups, meeting at the social gathering place (<i>Opomuti woutjina</i>) to engage in various praise and wedding songs.
Third day (yellow lines)		
3a to 3c	± 9:00–10:30	3a – The bridegroom delegation marches slowly to the front of the main house (<i>Ondjuuo onene</i>). The two groups, seated, exchange mutual orders (<i>opomaronga</i>) on the rules to safeguarding and protecting the marriage in future. 3b – The two groups march to the holy fire (<i>okuruuo</i>) to request blessings from the ancestors and Ndjambi (God) for the wedding. Proceedings led by the holy fire keeper. 3c – Afterwards, the married couple, together with the accompanying guests, leave to the back, dismantle their tents.
B-	± 12:00	The departure. The guests, including the married couple, leave for the groom's homestead.

Source: Author's own (2021)

The wedding ceremony illustrated in Figure 7.6 need further elaboration in order to gain a better understanding on why the spaces and places involved are highly valued by the community. The choice of using a wedding ceremony as an example, instead of other cultural activities, is that such a ceremony relates to the whole community present, and not to particular individuals (Fleisher 2013:268). The ceremony takes place over three days, and all lived realities (activities and their movements) during this time are considered essential for the ceremony to be recognised as completed. All the places in this space demonstrate high levels of connectivity and participation, whether those meant for entertainment (social gathering place for dances and wedding songs (place of *outjina/omuhiva*), those for slaughtering (meat place, to be eaten by all present – *otjihuno*), those for conversation to determine how and by whom marriage will be protected in future (in front of main house – *opomaronga*), those meant for the bride's group procession (between main house and social gathering place – *okuwomborora*) and those meant for religious purposes (blessings and conclusion of ceremony at *okuruuo*), including those offering supporting roles.

In the Foucauldian interpretation of power, these various places during the ceremony exert power in various forms. For example, at the social gathering place, there are community renowned ritual dance performers who perform several types of dances. They are respected by all present, they lead the dances, but also permit members to join them in the songs, voluntarily and respectfully. The members present, beside those party to the dance, have the choice to either join the dance leaders in the performance or to remain as spectators. The wedding songs themselves contain historical aspects about the places of origin of the marrying couple, their genealogical background and other praises. They are performed in a debating atmosphere, especially when the groom's entourage join the songs and dances at particular times. Thus, they are not only for entertainment, but also play a role as teaching instruments. Similar conclusions were made by archaeologists who studied usage of open spaces in the Swahili precolonial era by combining their discipline with historical linguistics (Fleisher & Wynn-Jones 2012). Fleisher & Wynne-Jones (2012:182) found that studying the evolution of certain words in certain languages, permit a better understanding of how the place came about and why it came about.

7.5.2 *Olupale* open space and its multiple uses

The *olupale* open spaces is the main anchor of all social activities of the Ovawambo community and is centrally located in the homestead (see Figure 4.8, under section 4.3.2). In

times of low activity, it is mainly used by men, while the women are situated in their own space called *epata*, which is the kitchen area (Elders 17, 19; Knowledge holder 20). Most of the research participants on the topic of *olupale* were in agreement of its significant importance to the household, and to the community at large.

The *olupale* accessibility for the visitors was explained as follows:

From the moment you enter the homestead, there is a passage that leads you directly to the olupale, which is the official reception area for the homestead. That is where any person who want to visit the residents is welcomed. It is actually the task of the youngsters to receive guests and determine what they want (Elder 17, Knowledge holder 20).

As with the *okuruuo* above, there are also longstanding protocols to be adhered to when a visitor arrives at the *olupale*. A proper behaviour and a sign of respect is to adhere to the sitting arrangements as determined by the community. Figure 7.5 indicates how visitors are welcomed at the *olupale*. Some elders and knowledge holders had this to say about the sitting protocol at this highly valued open space:

A visitor who is familiar with the sitting protocols, seat accordingly. If you came for arguments, confrontations or want to see an elder, then you sit on the left side. A position when you come in peace is mainly to the right side. Also, the time of day determines the type of problem as well, as a morning visit means you came for serious discussions. For the household gathering, men sit on the right side at the sacred fire, while women sit on the left side. The sacred fire is kept burning daily by the boys (Elders 17, 19; Knowledge holder 21).



Figure 7.7 *Olupale depicting how visitors are welcomed and seated*

Source: Ongula Village Homestead Lodge (Online)

The above responses demonstrate how certain community protocols or “community sanctions” (Kusimba & Oka 2009) have been established, and became the norm which direct

the community's behaviour. Many research participants recognised the *olupale* as an important educational and well-being institution for the community as well.

At olupale, it is where all the social and economic activities of the community are announced and then concluded. All our ceremonies (harvest, burial), birthing and newborn naming, blessings, healing, storytelling (oxungi), kids playing area and exchange of goods with other groups, take place at olupale. This is where we pass on our knowledge to the younger generations (Elders 17, 19; Knowledge holders 20, 21, 22).

But remember, during normal quiet moments when no official activities are taking place, then the olupale is important for men and boys of the household, while the epata (kitchen) is more valuable to girls upbringing and teaching (Knowledge holder 23).

On the openness and inclusiveness of *olupale* to other different groups, participants had this to say.

The olupale is open to anyone, whatever race or tribe you are. It is an open space that is open to all types of visitors (Elder 17; Knowledge holder 21).

To illustrate the spatial practices at the *olupale* during a wedding ceremony could not be done in a mental map as was done for the Ovaherero case for two main reasons. First, being an insider to the Ovaherero culture, and assisted by lived experience and the arrangement of the wedding to bring the two groups, bridegroom and bridal parties, at one space enabled an easier process of mental maps construction. Second, the Ovawambo approach to their wedding, with the two groups not being at one place during the wedding, needed more time that could enable mental maps to be constructed. The wedding in the Ovawambo community similarly last about three days as well, but the groom and bride families engage in various activities linked to the *olupale* at their respective homesteads. Interactions between the two groups do take place during these days at various moments, with the third day being the main moment when the two groups eventually come together to conclude the wedding at the bride's family homestead. After this concluding event, the married couple depart to the husband's father's homestead where further procedures take place to welcome the couple in their new environment.

The main activities related to the *olupale* space during the three days, as partially observed and partially gathered from some elders, knowledge holders and observations, are summarised below. The detailed information, although obtained from various participants, was gathered mainly from Elders 17 and 19, and Knowledge holders 21 and 22. This information, together with observations, enabled the researcher to arrive at the construction of a sense of meaning for the *olupale* during a wedding. On the first day, the bride's elders

gather at *olupale* to discuss the wedding, prepare the woman about marriage life, and dress her with traditional ornaments to be worn at important events in future as a married woman. The same happen to the groom, at his father's homestead at the *olupale* where he is provided with various knowledge (wisdom and advice) about marriage, and the symbolic material (for example, axe, bow and arrow) for future use (Elders 17, 19). On the second day, at the bride's parents' homestead, the bride is further prepared with more guidance in the first half of the day while also being offered various traditional gifts for her future house, mainly kitchen utensils. On the groom's side, the elders prepare the cow that will be offered as part of the *lobola* (a wedding gift offered as a token of appreciation to the bride's parents). The elders, after having identified the cow, gather at *olupale* to communicate with the ancestors, engage in historical expressions and praise oratures about the cow. In the late afternoon, the groom's parents, accompanied by a cultural expert appointed for advice during this whole event, take the cow to the bride's homestead. After a thorough inspection by the bride's elders, the cow would then be accepted and taken to the kraal. There were, however, a few occasions in the past where the cow was refused because of its appearance (Elder 17; Knowledge Holder 21). The third day is the final conclusion of the wedding. The groom's entourage arrive at the bride's homestead singing various songs about the wedding. However, they have to remain outside the homestead until permission is granted. At times, this moment is extended for an elongated period up to three hours or more, allowing more singing and songs celebrating the wedding, but simultaneously begging for their woman to be handed over to the groom's side. It is equally a test of endurance and patience and to confirm the seriousness about the groom's attitude towards the new wife. After a while, entrance into the *olupale* is allowed where the two groups unite and celebrate the wedding, and conclude with ancestral blessings.

The above presentation reveals that the *olupale* served, and still continues to serve as a place of not only entertainment, but also an educational space for those attending events at that place. The *olupale* equally plays a role of high connectivity of people and the places in the homestead, while also contributing to participation of all those present in the wedding ceremony.

The findings from the Ovawambo and Ovaherero groups showed the intergroup differences that existed among the different groups, but also the commonalities they shared. The findings highlighted the pluralism of meanings of spaces and values that are essential for a certain event or ceremony to be concluded. Similar findings were unearthed from research

conducted in the context of the Indonesian indigenous communities (Agustina et al. 2016). According to Agustina et al. (2016:16), these pluralistic meanings of spaces should be properly understood, as they possess potential to enrich spatial planning processes. In the context of the Ovawambo and Ovaherero case study communities, although the two groups shared similar uses of the holy fire, and even welcome each other at these sacred spaces, they differed in the manner in which it was maintained and managed. For example, the holy fire was kept alight by women in the Ovaherero community, while this function was left to the boys in the Ovawambo community.

The examples of the *omuvanda* and its *okuruuo* and the *olupale* with its sacred fire illustrate how social practices contribute to the creation and maintenance of social spaces in a community (Lefebvre 1991:34-35). In this regard, Lefebvre (1991:34), with his production of space theory, raised an important insight which is still relevant for today's spatial planning approaches, which is that "spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized". Unfortunately, contemporary planning practices put more emphases on the conceived spaces, including properties created on market and profit principles, thus undermining the lived realities of spaces (Lefebvre 1991:34). These lived realities, such as those observed in the community open spaces illustrated above, are the actual life aspects overlooked from spatial planning in Namibia as argued in this study, but which possess the potential to improve spaces as they represent the core spatial values of the communities. The precolonial open spaces from the Swahili and Tswana (and the Ovaherero and Ovawambo) communities presented in Chapter 4 demonstrated their importance in the maintenance of unity with their flexibility in usage. Their flexibility allowed various activities to be practised on those spaces, which contributed to increased cooperation, participation and increased interconnectedness between not only the residents, but also the residents and their environment. That was one of the ways how the rulers of that time (kings, chiefs, headmen or queens in some of the Swahili communities) ensured their survival as rulers by allowing this multiplicity of space use, based on sharing practices, which guaranteed the well-being of every community member (Kusimba & Oka 2009:40). Importantly for this study, these precolonial sharing practices (both of spaces and products) were found to prevent inequalities among the communities before their collapse through selfish interests and growth of elites (Kusimba & Oka 2009:51).

Lefebvre (1991:32) argued that this undermining of the lived realities by contemporary planning is partly due to the knowledge created that is largely confined to Western concepts and their strict disciplinary boundaries, that in the process miss other important knowledges

from other spaces and conceptualisations. For Lefebvre (1991:34), for social spaces to exist, certain processes need to occur that are realised through special spaces. Examples of such special spaces can be the traditional campfire alluded to in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.3). In the context of this study, the *omuvanda* with its holy fire and *olupale* with its sacred fire could be referred to as special spaces as, and according to Lefebvre, such spaces with their arrangements, serve as “effective invitations to conversation ... and simultaneously facilitate participation” (Rogers 2002:40). In addition, the other places within the *omuvanda* (see Figure 7.6), or those around it, could also be considered as special spaces during the wedding ceremony. They enable people to assemble and discuss in more detail the event at hand, the wedding, and decide on the course of action to be taken in order to complete it within the cultural protocols. Thus, analysing cultural practices through a spatial framework such as the Lefebvrian triad, could enable a better understanding of how space constrains or facilitates some activities, which eventually lead to transformative possibilities (Rogers 2002:42). In that vein, this study argued that spatial IKS, such as those experienced in cultural open spaces of indigenous communities, are important for the residents’ well-being and should be foregrounded in planning practice and policy. In order to fully understand the lived realities (or lived spaces) around cultural spaces such as those foregrounded by this study, one has to leave or put aside the traditional approaches of thinking about space (Lefebvre 1991:32-34). Thus, this escape from disciplinary boundaries (and the specialists’ conceptualisations) allows possibilities to look at space with new understandings and imaginations (Fisker et al. 2019:5; Lefebvre 1991:62).

The above insights were followed with more conversations with the elders, in a respectful manner, on what their views would be if some of these traditional practices were replicated in urban areas. This exploration was one of the important issues that concerned this study, as the aim was to see how spatial IKS can assist communities in urban areas in terms of their well-being and upliftment of their residential areas. The researcher used the word *respectful* here due to the fact that some of these practices, for example holy fire and sacred fire keeping, are sacred and all respect should be shown when having discussions about them (see Caulkins 2018; Hijangaruu Veseveṭe, Ovaherero elder, personal communication, October 2019). In these communities, elders appreciate respect being shown to their special ancestral and religious land uses.

7.5.3 Cultural open spaces in urban areas

One of the main concerns of this study was that conventional planning as currently practiced in Namibia does not fully address the plight of residents from the low-income areas due to conflicting rationalities, mismatched priorities or indigenous knowledges undermined in problem-solving efforts, as discussed in Chapter 4. Moreover, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and UNDRIP international calls, described in Chapter 5, are important invitations to revisit not only planning practices, but also policies dealing with the well-being of the various diverse indigenous and local communities, and by implication those indigenous communities situated in low-income and informal areas of urban settings. This is therefore a call for transformation, not only of planning practice, but equally of planning theory (including policy and legislation). In the context of this study, the spatial IKS has an important role to play in these planning transformation processes. It can be argued that the harnessing of spatial indigenous knowledge, which is currently omitted from the planning system, can be helpful in elevating the sense of place of these low-income residents. Puketapu-Dentice et al. (2017) demonstrated the importance of this cultural recovery towards the formation of a sense of place in the settler states context. These could be achieved by encouraging the indigenous communities not only to engage in self-made organisational or survival initiatives, but also to spatialise their IKS spatial aspirations. However, for that to happen, other platforms such as the planning legal frameworks, and not only cultural sensitivity and understanding alone, need to be playing their part (Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017; Sandercock 2003b).

Nevertheless, as cultures are lived and experienced differently through various and diverse protocols, this study found it appropriate to pose the question of IKS suitability and applicability in urban areas to the elders and knowledge holders, namely: Can cultural open spaces such as *olupale* and *omuvanda* (with their respective sacred/holy fires) be reproduced in urban areas and why? The responses converged on the support for the approach:

Cultural open spaces should be developed in urban areas, rather than these dominating bars and shebeens. At such places, events that include storytelling (oxungi) should be organised, and they should be areas where different groups in urban areas can learn from each other. There should also be timeslots set aside only for kids to play there, in order to alleviate kids playing in the streets as currently (Elders 17, 19).

Such places will be important for the youth to learn about old practices and morals. Many of the knowledge holders are dying out, and the youth know nothing. It is also where people can learn about difficult known concepts, of which the real deeper meaning is not known. For

example, we know of a traditional dance “Oenana nokanangwali”, till now we are struggling to find the real meaning of that name. To create such spaces, elders will be very happy, and many people will attend the events there. But make these spaces inclusive of all groups in the urban areas. They will provide moral teachings to the youth (Knowledge holders 20, 22, 23).

This is a good idea, think of a cultural village, and knowledge holders should be placed in such spaces to tell and teach the truth and real values. This will help in the protection of cultural knowledge and values, which are currently threatened by new technologies and social media falsification and stereotyping. It will bring economic benefits to the local communities, but rather keep the religious aspects out. The cultural spaces will rescue dying traditions (Knowledge holders 12, 13, 18).

The responses from the elders and knowledge holders do converge with those provided by the other research participants (residents, planners, academics) in this study, especially on the importance of IKS and cultural spaces in urban areas. The elders’ participants indicated that useful spaces such as the discussed cultural spaces (*olupale* and *omuvanda*) are absent from urban spaces, while shebeen and bars are dominating the urban residential areas. The shebeens are home-based businesses where the sale of alcohol to patrons for on-site consumption is permitted. Initially, the shebeens started as important but informal social gathering places for black communities during the apartheid era where issues of community concern and resistance were discussed, while equally providing entertainment to the guests. Although they were limited in the past, they mushroomed after the attainment of independence that most residential properties in the former townships (black areas) are now host to these liquor outlets, creating all sorts of social ills to the communities. Currently, and from practical experience, local authorities are struggling to control the density of shebeens in these low-income areas. The elders also decried the fact that many elders are dying, while the younger generation do not know the important indigenous knowledges. They further support the existence of cultural spaces in urban areas, for both the protection of this important IKS, and equally the protection of this knowledge from some destructive and negative stereotyping on various social media platforms. However, during informal discussions, appreciation was aired by some elders towards social media platforms that were disseminating IKS with the respect it deserves. The responses equally resonate with the Chilean experience in South America alluded to in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3.2. In that example, the younger generation, after having obtained permission from their rural-based elders to replicate their spatial cultural practices in urban areas, indicated that the urban residents’ sense of belonging and participation levels have increased (Caulkins 2018:82-83).

In Namibian urban areas, such as the situation observed from Windhoek, there is an observable absence of highly valued indigenous and still existent cultural, sacred, or religious spaces in most of the urban areas as they are not part of the land uses in the town planning schemes and other policies. Indigenous Namibians must commute to rural areas when they need to engage in religious activities, or when some traditional activities arise, or engage with these activities in urban areas under strict regulations and surveillance in or on temporal or invented spaces (to borrow from Mirafteb 2009). The indecisiveness of the local authorities to provide planning directions with regard to these indigenous practices and ways of survival allowed these *quiet encroachment* (see also Bayat 2000, quoted from De Satgé and Watson 2018:207) to exist, mostly in an air of uncertainty. This, then, demonstrate that there is a will to connect with the symbolic aspects of their lifestyle, but that the needed spaces are limited, and the institutional structures are ignorant of that fact. Is this, then, not contributing to the observed lack of sense of place in the low-income settlement areas in the post-apartheid cities? Is planning adhering to its normative ideals and taking all the residents in consideration? This is the problem Namibian planners face, having to operate within highly technical and managerial policies entrenched within rationalities inherited mostly from Global North contexts, and that have been poorly readapted to the local conditions (Watson 2009a:2268).

The question which this study, out of curiosity, asked was: If there is such support for IKS promotion from the research participants, what is the general discourse around planning and IKS as reflected in the media? This led to the exploration, through content analysis, of the extent on how IKS appears in the Namibian printed media.

7.6 Indigenous knowledge systems planning discourse from the media

As alluded to earlier, not many studies exist around the topic of the relations between spatial IKS and planning in Namibia. The media was deemed an important source of data as it is a platform where various sections of the community converge to express their feelings, ideas and critiques in different ways, and where policies are also disseminated (see Moonsammy 2017:30; Munyoro et al. 2016:8). In the context of this study, the focus on the printed media was to evaluate how frequently the key terms of concern for this study (being indigenous knowledge, spatial planning, alternative knowledge) were utilised in the two main newspapers in Namibia, namely the *New Era* and *The Namibian*, during a period of two years (2018–2019). According to Franco and Ortiz (2020:1), newspapers possess the potential to

portray an area in a certain image, and also to build storytelling approaches on transformations in urban areas.

The study argued that the appearance of the key terms would indicate the type of discourse existing in terms of IKS and planning in Namibia in general. The main idea was to see if spatial IKS was part of the discussions in the larger community than the research participants only, and whether such discourse is in support of spatial IKS, just like the support reflected in the findings from the research participants. The aim was not to compare the two newspapers to each other, but just to see whether they referred to the terms and how for the two-year period explored (2018-2019). The findings from this exploration are reflected in Figure 7.8.

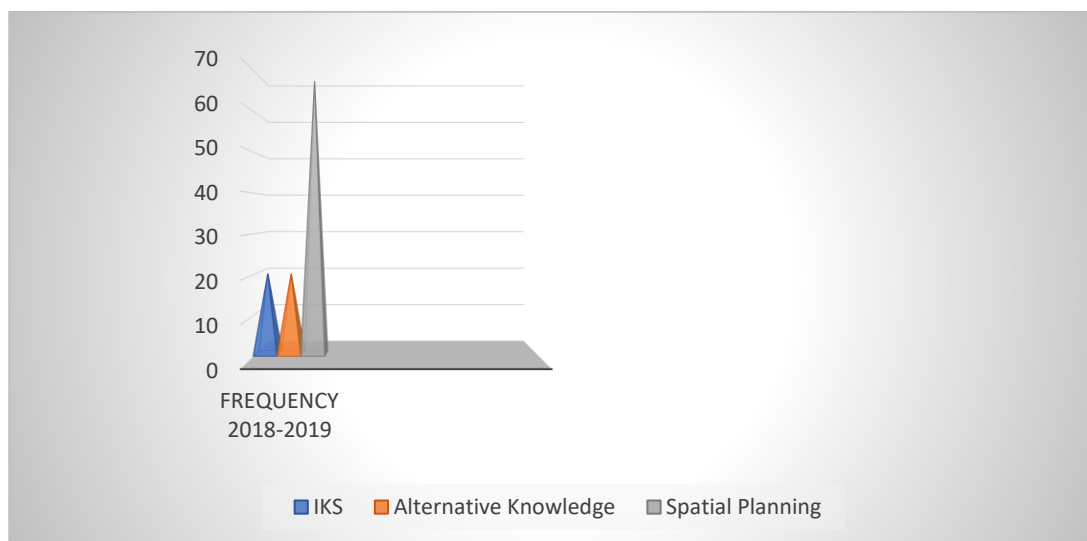


Figure 7.8 Representation of the usage frequency of terms in two newspapers (2018–2019)

Source: Author (2021)

The data in Figure 7.8 was collected through an internet search. The initial search of the combination of IKS and spatial planning (zero results) and IKS and planning (nine results) was found to be too low to determine a discourse. To improve the search, the terms were searched independently, with the term *alternative knowledge* added later on as it was thought to be an important angle which this study has pursued. The total articles retrieved through this search were 108. IKS or related terms appeared 20 times, alternative knowledge 20 times, with spatial planning (or related mentions) reflected in 68 articles as shown in Figure 7.8.

7.6.1 Spatial planning and alternative knowledge references

The articles on spatial planning revealed the type of planning discourse existing within the Namibian community. First, the 68 articles (62.9% of the 108) reflected planning to be a caring and passionate practice as described in the literature to be its original motives (see Oranje 2014:1). However, this passion is being implemented in a top-down paternalistic approach, with local inputs excluded (see Chapter 1, section 1.5). The discussions on the well-being of the communities were highly reflected in the articles, but the results on the ground seemed to be conflictual, with some positive, while the majority seemed to be negative as observed and confirmed in various studies (Chitekwe-Biti 2018; Larsen & Augustus 2020). Almost all the articles, whether from the state, municipalities or from the residents' voices, reflected the dependency syndrome referred to in the literature chapters. There was a willingness from all sectors of society to improve the conditions in the urban areas, but all the solutions should come from the top. Coupled with this willingness, was the curse of corruption that affected the outcomes of the anticipated well-being from the various planning projects as raised in the newspapers. On the search for alternative knowledges, 20 (18.5%) articles were found to refer to this issue. The indication from these articles was the recognition that current methods of solving problems were not working, and alternatives should be sought. Again, the majority of the articles indicated a similar trend of the solutions to be provided by the authorities.

7.6.2 Indigenous knowledge terms

In the category of indigenous knowledge, 20 (18.5% of the 108) of the articles referred in various ways to IKS, sometimes only the term *indigenous knowledge* was used, or IKS in other cases. Also, 12 out of these 20 articles went further than the term IKS only and directly mentioned indigenous terms that implicated spatial planning. These 12 articles (thus 11% of the 108 articles) have been summarised in Appendix 4 to this study. The terms encountered in the 12 articles include *Ubuntu*, *olupale*, *#Aonin* huts, *Owela* festival, *San* environment management, *#Nukhoen* ancestral graves, *Oxungi* festival, *Aawambo* judicial order and *Olufuko* festival.

The two main newspapers in the country reflected that during the 2018–2019 period, the IKS-planning relationship discourse would not be different from what the literature and the research participants drew attention to. The discourse in the newspapers portrayed planning by the higher authorities and officials as the only problem-solver in urban areas. In addition, the search for alternative knowledges, including the use of IKS, were relatively lowly treated

in the discourse. This low treatment of issues in the newspapers indicate either a reduced awareness of such issues, or a no importance sense attached towards those issues (Granner et al. 2010:656). However, the low treatment was in line with the same level of recognition discussed in the literature. This poor IKS inclusion in planning discussions validated the affirmation by Global South scholars of the neglect of non-Western knowledge, and complements the recent calls by planning theorists and other scholars for a need for alternative methods and epistemologies of and for planning to be considered (see Chapters 3 and 4). Nevertheless, the exploration revealed that out of the 12 articles, nine were from the 2019 period while only three were from 2018. Is this an indication that spatial IKS is equally emerging as an important issue of discussion just as the few activities targeting the revival of IKS observed in Windhoek? The issues raised in the 12 articles are emphasising the importance of IKS in problem-solving approaches, while also providing critiques to some structural arrangements, conventional or indigenous, on the use of IKS, or lack thereof. Some of the main points extracted from Appendix 4 are as follows:

- Naming/Renaming important educational institutions with indigenous names without accompanying the context with indigenous knowledge is unhelpful.
- Cross-cultural activities and culture sharing initiatives are important.
- UNDRIP principles should be applied so that important cultural sites be named or renamed with indigenous names.
- The importance of culture preservation in protecting indigenous approaches of festivals and storytelling techniques.
- Applying IKS to prevent gender-based violence and promote happiness. To achieve this, an understanding of society's organising principles, such as the *Aawambo* or *Gciriku* judicial order, is essential.
- Improve ceremonies such as *olufuko* (girls' initiation into womanhood) to be expanded to boys also. This is to improve boys' behaviours in society as well.

7.7 Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter revealed crucial insights for this study. First, from the perspective of a low-income residential area, other than the lack of basic services that are characteristic of many similar post-apartheid urban settings, other local knowledges, values and practices such as community cultural buildings and centres, cultural places, a sense of place and belonging aspects were being neglected, or unintentionally kept hidden due to

planning's reliance on the trusted modernising and rational planning approaches. For example, the area maps on the WTPS revealed a proportionately sufficient supply of green open spaces (zoned public open spaces) defined and meant for the public well-being and cohesion. However, the situation on the ground revealed that real useful open spaces that correspond to the lived realities of the residents were in short supply in low-income areas, as confirmed by the research participants. The greenery on the official maps is a standard compliance approach from practitioners to provide open spaces proportionately to the residents as per town planning scheme requirements (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.3). The end result, as from practical experience and responses from the Havana residents, was that most of these indicated public open spaces turned out to be unusable mountainous areas or river courses. As a result, children ended up playing in the streets or at dumping sites, which have serious stress, health and well-being implications for both the adult and youth groups as alluded to by the residents of Havana. On the other hand, the adults and youth groups dealt with this open space shortage by engaging their cultural activities (or playing activities for kids) on "invented *but uncomfortable spaces*" (Miraftab 2009, 2020, italics inserted).

Second, planning has, for a long time, neglected the opening up of its practice to include alternative methods, such as those embedded in IKS. The IKS responses from the elders revealed that open cultural spaces were not solely for entertainment purposes only but entailed all aspects of community well-being and cohesion. Thus, important aspects in the life of an individual and the community was made and determined on these open spaces, an aspect which planning in Windhoek has overlooked in terms of the low-income areas such as Havana. Fortunately, and during this study, the current planners in Windhoek acknowledged this shortcoming in their planning and demonstrated a willingness to explore IKS for planning as revealed in the findings.

Third, the policies and legislation, which are important components that determine the way we live in urban areas, have been found to be potential stumbling blocks in the utilisation of IKS in planning, as they were mostly silent and inflexible on the use of alternative knowledges in planning. However, URPA, as a recent law, demonstrates the potential for positive change as it refers to the consideration of past imbalances, something which the previous laws and current urban policies, such as town planning schemes and structure plans, are still failing to do. Still, URPA is silent on the reference of alternative knowledges, and it already shows signs of being more of a top-down fine-tuning of the previous laws than anything else. It is inspiring the creation of document-led planning policies through prescriptive processes that ignore

other ways of doing planning, and in the process assumes a homogenous society for Windhoek.

Finally, the elders' views on the status of IKS in general were that it was dying out and needed some kind of protection and rescuing. The elders were fully in support of the application of spatial IKS, especially the introduction of cultural open spaces in urban areas for a variety of reasons (tolerance, learning, entertainment, well-being, cohesion) that are all linked to the upliftment and moral teachings of the younger generations. However, the findings from Havana and some planning practitioners revealed that a resurgence of spatial IKS in urban areas, although limited, is being observed. The discourses in the printed media revealed what the study has demonstrated in the literature and from the research participants, that IKS still largely remains in the background, while planning continues with its paternalistic and dominant approaches of creating spaces.

In summary, the findings from the various research participants in this study converged on one main aspect surrounding IKS and its application, that of its contribution to the well-being of the communities and to the reduction of conflicts. The constant relational and interconnectedness of all the diverse socio-economic practices in urban areas, whether considered formal or informal (or even illegal), have been demonstrated by the findings as existing in one city, but rather in an awkward relationship. Even the hidden or invisible cultural practices of the local communities are sometimes called upon to contribute to the promotion of official events by government or municipal programmes. However, safe and accessible open spaces to accommodate these practices are not envisioned in the official planning documents. The findings call for planning flexibility, both in the laws to accommodate diverse inputs from the urban low-income areas, and among the residents themselves, to tolerate each other and learn from each other.

The analysis in the next chapter will attempt to go deeper into the issues hampering the integration of IKS into planning, and attempt to proffer some potential paths that could lead to the improvement of the situation. This is an attempt to move away from the current one-sided planning approach, or "institutionalised monoculture" (Greenwood et al. 2017:182), towards the opening up of planning towards the many local knowledges existing within the residents of areas such as the Havana settlement. It is within that line of thinking that this study was conducted. The aim was not to replace existing planning formats, but to explore

the transformation of the Namibian planning systems towards practices of multiplicity in space and knowledge production.

8.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings from the study, focusing on the *why* and *how* questions. The aim is therefore to, through a synthesis of the research findings, find responses that best address the research questions as defined in Chapter 1. The starting point, as presented in this chapter, should be to identify the obstacles in the legislation hindering the implementation of alternative knowledges such as spatial IKS. Such obstacles, or exclusionary concepts and terminologies normalised as being inclusionary, are what the researcher called “sites of inclusion” in the previous chapter. One such example of a site of inclusion was treated in more detail with the focus on how to approach the transformation of legislation or policies in this chapter. However, in an attempt at addressing planning transformation in Namibia, this chapter treated the research questions separately in the order as presented in the introductory chapter.

8.2 Research question 1: Do spatial indigenous knowledge systems exist in Namibia?

The limited planning literature and fewer spatial IKS urban transformation examples do not imply that spatial IKS does not exist in the region. This study found that the overlooked spatial IKS does exist within the local communities in Namibia, as demonstrated by the findings from the two case study communities, and also in the literature (Chapter 4). The study further confirmed, through literature and data collection, that IKS existed from the precolonial period up to the present. These spatial IKS aspects and related knowledges have been passed on from generation to generation, mostly through oral methods such as storytelling and culturally accepted frameworks of practice. It was also confirmed that individual groups are not homogenous in their separated areas of settlement, but that intra-group differences do exist within these communities in their rural settings. Nonetheless, despite the differences, the findings revealed that there is a convergence in the overall objective on the space conceptualisation and usage within these communities, namely that of an overall concern of the well-being of the whole community in that particular context. This common overall objective, discussed in Chapter 4 (Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2), demonstrated a strong

interconnection and respect between the communities and their environment, among the individuals in the community, and between the members of the community and their overall leader. It is this type of indigenous knowledge and its applicability that this study was exploring, bringing to the fore and proposing as an alternative or additional tool that could help improve the neglected and abandoned urban areas in Namibia through improved participation using indigenous knowledge approaches wherever possible. However, it was important to take into account that different indigenous groups, even within the *Ubuntu* parameters, perceive land use and participation differently, and thus a closely related approach will have to be proposed that enables all to participate.

The nature of the spatial arrangement of the two case study communities in this study has been exemplified by the emphasis placed on their centrally located open spaces that were confirmed in this study to be the most essential for the existence and cohesion of these communities. These centrally located communal open spaces, called *olupale* with its sacred fire and *omuvanda* with its holy fire (*okuruuo*), respectively by the Ovawambo and Ovaherero communities in Namibia, are where the interconnectedness between individuals themselves, and between them and their environment is strongly reflected and experienced. This interconnectedness reflected the relationship of the spiritual and natural law that direct the communities' existence in their spaces, and it is in line with the overall *Ubuntu* principle ascribed to Southern African communities (see Murove 2009; Ramose 2009). The element of indigenous interconnectedness, with its main aspect of linking the spiritual, emotional, physical and psychological components, should be considered when addressing the multiple problems, inequalities and injustices facing individuals, families and communities (Absolon 2010:85; Baskin & Sinclair 2015:10).

As the study revealed, the central open spaces kept the communities together, and the whole community participated in one way or the other in the maintenance of these spaces. Maintenance of public open space (for example parks) was highlighted as a major concern for current planning practice, both in the literature (see Abbasi et al. 2016; Thompson-Fawcett et al. 2019) and from the research participants, as well as from current discourses in the printed media (see Kambaekwa 2021). The lack of maintenance has often been used as an excuse to allow the appropriation of the already few open spaces by the private sector under the pretext of housing development. However, it is at these cultural open spaces where the people's everyday lives were determined and directed through culturally established protocols. As evidenced by the findings from the communities, these spaces encompassed

life centres and or learning centres for the communities, established and maintained through culturally appropriate frameworks and protocols, all with the aim of ensuring the well-being of the whole community – thus a “wholistic practice” (see Absolon 2010:85). This is therefore a demonstration of high levels of responsibility and caring towards each other and the environment. The central locality of the spaces also ensured the safety of the communities and the users, and the commitment of the members to the cultural protocols ensured that participation in cultural and religious events was emphasised as important, due to the respect accorded to the ancestors and their creator or God (*Ndjambi* for Ovaherero, and *Kalunga* for the Ovawambo community).

What, then, are the implications for current planning practice? Open spaces are not only unique to indigenous communities, but are also important spaces for all communities worldwide (Amin 2008:7; Qian 2014:834). The low distribution of public open spaces in black and low-income areas during the colonial era in Namibia was discussed in Chapter 2. The absence of open spaces in Havana led to stressful social conditions for both parents and children. This problem is not only experienced in Windhoek, but the structure plans of smaller Namibian towns also reported the shortage of open spaces in their respective urban areas (see Municipality of Grootfontein 2017:32; Municipality of Otavi 2015:10). Therefore, planning in Namibia should realise and recognise that a lack of open spaces in general and particularly in low-income and poor areas is a major concern. Moreover, the appropriation of the few existing open spaces for private development exacerbates the problem. This study therefore called for planning to reconsider its approach and attitude towards this problem. In addition, the provision of green-coloured spaces on town maps that are hardly useful to the residents, also contributes to the problem (see Watson 2014a). This study argued that such approaches prolong marginalisation and inequalities for the low-income areas such as Havana and have negative long-term consequences for the well-being of these communities. It is therefore advocated that spatial aspects embedded IKS, such as cultural open spaces (e.g., *olupale* and *omuvanda*), which continues to exist in Namibia, as revealed in this study, should be considered by planning alongside or in coexistence (see Boelens & De Roo 2016; Matunga 2017; Porter 2013) with the usual public open spaces currently privileged in the town planning schemes.

8.3 Research question 2: What value do these spatial indigenous knowledge systems have for their (largely rural) communities?

Despite various historical and current internal and external influences on Namibian spatial IKS (missionaries, colonisation, genocide wars, globalisation, corruption) (Chapter 2, Section 2.3; see also Förster 2005:3), the practices involving these cultural spaces are still being practiced today, mostly in rural areas, and their resurgence is steadily and slowly being experienced in urban areas. Throughout the course of this study, it was argued that cultural open spaces are important spaces that could be deployed in urban areas, especially in low-income areas to assist with community upliftment in these areas where a loss of sense of place or belonging appears to be the predominating spirit.

However, as communities are heterogenous, the findings revealed that cultural open spaces were conceived differently by the two case study communities, although their purpose of community well-being was the same, as already alluded to. Moreover, even in one community, there existed intra-group differences on the utilisation of these spaces. For example, in the Ovaherero community, the *okuruuo*, which is inherited paternally, was operated in terms of paternal lineage compatibility (see Kavari 2001). This happens when, for example, a member of the community has bought a new car, or when the newly-weds need to be blessed in the bridegroom's paternal homestead (see Chapters 4 and 7). In these cases, in the absence of the *okuruuo* (or its head of household or keeper) in a particular village, the closest compatible *okuruuo* keeper can be consulted to perform such functions. However, it is not permitted for incompatible *okuruuo* keepers to perform these functions as it is tantamount to disobedience of the ancestors, and therefore punishable by them (Elder 4). Punishment by the ancestors is one of the good morals and behavioural control mechanisms or guidance in terms of African religion and philosophy (see Murove 2009:319; Wiredu 1998:32).

On the level of the larger communities, intergroup differences have also been observed from the findings and the literature explored. For example, some groups were not allowed at the Ovaherero *okuruuo* religious place, while others were allowed. Some elders indicated that it was difficult to open up due to set principles and beliefs, while others indicated that certain protocols can be performed to allow entrance into the sacred fire (*okuruuo*) practices. However, the findings from the younger knowledge holders (and some elders) revealed a willingness for improvement and change towards more inclusive approaches. These

revelations respond to the concern of this study, which is to create inclusive and safe communal spaces in urban areas, as preconditions for the improvement of especially the low-income areas, but also all urban spaces in general. However, the restrictions practiced at the *okuruuo* sacred fire, for example, were not unique and other world religions also operate within established protocols. In addition, these different religious practices are protected in the Constitution of Namibia, as mentioned earlier. The only problem is that these are not clearly defined in the Constitution, and hence the inability of the courts to protect these practices (see Ruppel 2010). The important thing is that the elders confirmed that the various cultural activities occurring at the larger *omuvanda* open space can be attended by all groups and different kinds of people. This flexibility of the Ovaherero cultural open space was similarly emphasised by the Ovawambo *olupale* open space, where all persons are welcome to attend and participate in any event as revealed by the research participants (elders and knowledge holders).

The maintenance of the interconnectedness of all the community members and their environment was probably the most important aspect of cultural open spaces, as observed. It is at these spaces where elders narrate to the human beings through various storytelling approaches, the importance of being human, the importance of good moral behaviours and the importance of the role of the environment and how people should behave and take care of their environment. This sense of responsibility, somehow lost or hidden in indigenous urban communities due to various external factors mentioned above (see also Marek 2020), is one of the important values to the respective indigenous communities. The special cultural open spaces or “spaces of belonging” (Caulkins 2018:83), contribute to a sense of place, being and belonging among the various local indigenous communities. The significance of these spaces was especially elevated during important events for the community, such as weddings and funerals. Elders and knowledge holders play a prominent role of disseminating knowledge at these events by uttering cultural expressions such as the environmental oral history and totemic expressions (*omapata / omazimo*) in the Ovawambo community (see Hayes 2009; Nandi-Ndaitwah 2019), or the place praise poems (*omiṭandu*) in the Ovaherero community (see Kavari & Bleckmann 2009). These totemic and other proverbial expressions, as found in the literature and from observations, give a human soul to animals, plants and nature and vice versa, and thus demonstrate a strong solidarity between humanity and the environment. Nonetheless, these cultural protocols and expressions could possess oppressive tendencies if not well-understood or misused for selfish interests. However, they could become potential

inclusive tools if properly clarified and defined (see literature discussion in Chapter 3, Section 3.6 and Chapter 4, Sections 4.2 and 4.3). Their characteristic of aiming towards the well-being of the whole community and environment could be used to counter, or at least reduce the effects of the current normalised neoliberal and market-driven planning policies where certain individuals are excluded due to their inability to participate in the available processes and spaces created (see Amin 2008:13; Baeten 2012:209).

Another importance of activities taking place at these cultural open spaces is that they display strong empowering approaches that are all inclusive, where women, youth, elders and men participate (Alfred 2009:57). From participant observations during this study, the activities, for example at a funeral or wedding ceremony, revealed a high level of participation of members present with the aim of concluding the event in a positive, responsible and peaceful manner. (The mental map in Figure 7.6, Chapter 7, illustrates this community affair approach.) The maintenance of the spaces during the wedding ceremony was voluntary, or according to set cultural protocols, such as elders reminding the youth to clean up the area after use, and younger men digging a hole for waste to be covered at the end of the event. Although voluntary, it was done. The researcher experienced a reorientation by any member present who is knowledgeable in cultural protocols (or community sanctions) when stepping out of line due to ignorance, or taken-for-granted, or simply inexperienced in some important protocols. This is in line with the descriptions about the self-correcting characteristics embedded in the *Ubuntu* principles. Regarding the *Ubuntu* countering of negative activities that disrupts the community, Murove (2009:71) argued as follows:

Such acts are disapproved of as manifestations of dangerous elements disruptive to society and undesirable for its functioning and well-being. Frowning upon such actions helps to discipline members and also promotes co-existence.

Thus, these cultural spaces are not only for entertainment purposes, but are also essential learning and dialogue spaces for members present. In his study of Western and non-Western public spaces, Qian (2014:842) concluded that they all display characteristics of uniting and educating the masses. Therefore, given the usefulness discussed above, this study argued that cultural open spaces have the potential of uniting diverse groups at a certain time and educating these groups through dialogue on various issues concerning their spaces and communities. Therefore, despite almost being destroyed through various colonial strategies, and current dominant discourses embedded in neoliberalism and corrupt tendencies, spatial

IKS survived and still continues to contribute to the well-being of indigenous communities in various ways, as explained above. This is experienced more so in rural settings.

The emphasis on spatial IKS importance and resurgence is aimed at identifying the *most appropriate practices* from this knowledge, in terms of the communities' well-being, that could positively influence and transform current planning practices for the acceptance of the multiple communities in which we live. The use of the most appropriate practice here is an attempt to move away from the current discourse in development planning, that of *best practice* to a more people-centred approach. The best practice approaches are often found to conceal dominant and hegemonic purposes under the pretext of providing needed solutions to urban problems (Fainstein 2014:5; Saiu 2017:8). Cultural protocols do not depend on best approaches as observed in this study's research communities, but rather on what the researcher could describe as *appropriate moments*. In these moments, public participation becomes an open and readily available platform where everyone present could attend, participate, learn and perform any required function for the well-being of the whole community present at that time and place. This could be likened to the "learning environments" described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4). It is therefore argued that cultural open spaces, with their useful values as presented in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3) and confirmed in Chapter 7 (Section 7.5), could provide these appropriate participatory moments in urban areas.

8.4 Research question 3: Could these spatial indigenous knowledge systems be of value in urban areas?

The third research question follows up on the previous research question that was based on the values that spatial IKS contribute to the well-being of indigenous communities, particularly in rural settings. This section therefore explores how these useful IKS can be of relevance to urban areas, and analysing how it could interact with the Namibian legal spatial planning system and the urban policies in Windhoek. The underlying focus is thus the transformation of the current planning system to become responsive to multiple planning practices. This is particularly of significance to Namibian urban areas that are still struggling to overcome the spatial injustices left behind by the apartheid regime as well as the continuing inequalities of the postcolonial era. This focus raises two sub-questions to be responded to in order to address the third main question of this study. First, is the concern how policies should be transformed to accommodate this valuable IKS as demonstrated in the

previous section. Second, is the issue of the exact space in the legislation where IKS can be placed in the policies. These two concerns, in the form of sub-questions, will be treated later in this section. The research findings presented in Chapter 7 indicate that IKS is important and should be considered for promotion in urban areas, especially the cultural open spaces. The larger part of this support was centred around the entertainment, educational, cohesion, empowering and IKS preservation values of these spaces. In addition, for IKS to be better known and understood, the participants indicated that improved dialogue, partnerships, integration of IKS into planning education and the use of elders and knowledge holders should be taken into account. The participants further agreed that IKS should be included in the legislation and policies, with a minority indicating that it should be kept at design and planning levels only.

Given the above support for IKS, it became clearer on how to treat and respond to the third research question of this study, which refers to whether spatial IKS could bear any relevance in urban areas. The findings discussed in Chapter 7 provided important insights and evidence to support this question in the affirmative. However, for such spatial IKS to be considered of relevance in urban areas, some obstacles, especially those emanating from the legal planning frameworks, must be overcome. Therefore, in order to fully respond to the third research question, the focus should then be on how planning in Namibia can be transformed to become flexible, so that the lived realities discussed above and in Chapter 7, can contribute to the well-being of the residents of Windhoek, particularly the low-income and poorer areas such as Havana. The researcher argued that the starting point should be the revision of planning legislation and policies to identify the obstacles in them that could prevent a complete implementation of alternative knowledges such as IKS. After the identification of these obstacles, which the researcher called the “the sites of inclusion”, the integration of IKS into the spatial planning policies and legislation can be made. This is to be done with flexibility in how these are implemented in the physical environment. This is not only in line with the participants’ support and the literature consulted, but also with the emphasis by one planning participant who stressed that “if it is not in the legislation, IKS will not be promoted or implemented by planning” (Planner C; see also Markkula et al. 2019, in the context of Finland). In that vein, this study advocates for an approach that will enable a movement beyond the normalised and inclusionary calls for participation and consultation. These democratised and inclusionary calls are usually made through nationalising narratives that most often reproduce inequalities, while further reducing the levels of participation of the

marginalised communities (Barry & Agyeman 2020:30; Hudson et al. 2019:564). The initial identification of these sites of inclusion was done in Chapter 7 (Section 7.4) through a critical content analysis applied to some spatial planning policies. In that vein, this study is not arguing against planning's communicative (collaborative) approaches such as dialogue, partnership, research and education, as these are essential for any spatial development to succeed. The argument is for the expansion of planning knowledges in order to address urban problems from different angles. As was revealed in Chapter 5, most national and local policies are concerned with the improvement of the well-being and social cohesion of the citizens. The framings in those policies, however, remained wrapped in a one-sided technical and rationally comprehensive approach, making other knowledges invisible (Porter 2010), but could assist in such programmes. Thus, the initial step is to propose for the current planning legislation to be reviewed and transformed to create possibilities for spatial IKS to become visible, and to be used as one of the planning tools. The researcher further argued that such spatial IKS elevation and integration should start with national legislation, such as URPA. This could contribute to real impacts and transformation to be observed and felt on the ground, as planning practice is consequently transformed. Taking a Lefebvrian view on the importance of the expansion of knowledge, this study thus argues that learning from the lived realities of indigenous communities, especially their spatial IKS, could influence urban planning transformation from privileging the "conceived space" towards the "lived space" of the residents such as those in Havana (Nejad et al. 2019:417). In addition, referring to the spatial IKS terminologies in the legislation should not end at the terms only, but to also elaborate on the meaning, values and contextual importance of such spatial knowledge. This will reduce misunderstandings, misinterpretations and misuse by powerful interests. It could further reduce tensions brought about by conflicting rationalities and deep differences so prevalent in the Global South cities (Watson 2003, 2006).

Various studies demonstrated the risks involved if spatial IKS is limited to policies only. Most of these policies, even those inspired by international conventions, remain voluntary guidelines only, and the potential of IKS being ignored is greater than when it is taken up in national legislation (Devlin 2011:147; Markkula et al. 2019:12; McLeod et al. 2015, 2017). A practical experience from the City of Windhoek (or Municipality of Windhoek) is from a building line dispute between two neighbours that ended up both in the High Court and the Supreme Court (*Municipality of Windhoek & Others v Roland & Others, Case No, 48/2012*). In this case, the final judgement was based on the statutory town planning scheme, and those

other related policies such as the building regulations and other by-laws that clarified the issues in more detail, were not referred to in the judgement. The lesson from this case was that policies, regulations and the legislation should converse with each other and use the same language and descriptions. The problem, in the context of this study, is the manner in which the underlying focus of legislation transformation could be approached. Thus, for spatial IKS to be of value in urban areas, the required transformation needed with regard to the planning system is addressed in the following two sub-questions, presented separately.

8.4.1 How should the planning legislation and policies be transformed to accommodate indigenous knowledge systems?

The recognition that IKS has been omitted in the current planning practice and policies has been established throughout this study. It is also recognised that current planning policies ignore the diverse and conflicting values that exist in Namibia in favour of the scientific rational projects which consider values as mere expressions of feelings that are incompatible with scientific logic (Wagenaar 2011:292). The Namibian planning legislation and policies, in their current form, undermine the fact that some values could exclude others even if their original intentions were meant to do good. The use of the term *public interest* in URPA to represent all residents was identified as one such normalised but discriminatory term. This term tends to favour the elites, as the majority poor and marginalised groups are not able to defend themselves in decision-making processes around public interest (Flyvbjerg & Richardson 2002:60), such as the sale of their few public open spaces to private developers. Indigenous communities, as revealed from the findings in Chapter 7, also possess these conflicting plural values. However, the indigenous communities equally possess conflict reduction processes in cultural frameworks that conventional planning should consider as established in this study. Cultural open spaces and the approaches performed on them are some of the examples presented as potential conflict reduction spaces and strategies (see Chapter 4, Sections 4.2 & 4.3, and the findings from the elders in Chapter 7, Section 7.5). For example, the dances, poems and proverbs performed in debating formats at these open spaces during certain occasions sometimes contribute to the negotiation and contestation of power, or to address current issues of community concern (Fleisher 2013:277). It is within this understanding that this study, through an indigenous lens, has attempted to propose amendments to existing planning legislation in Namibia to become more inclusive of diverse knowledges from various communities. The current stakeholder and consultation approaches stipulated in the legislation most often end up favouring the powerful groups, or those with

access to such documents, thus excluding the majority poor and marginalised in low-income urban areas (Nejad et al. 2019:420). In such transformation attempts, the groundwork should be properly prepared in order to arrive at *common ground* (see McLeod et al. 2017) that could possibly promote a collective problem-solving culture (Matunga 2017:644; Wagenaar 2011:294).

To arrive at this common ground, this study identified certain concepts that need to be taken seriously by planning in order to engage diverse knowledges that exist in the communities. First, there should be a recognition that spatial IKS is missing from practice, and that it has potential to improve conditions in urban areas. Simultaneously, there should be a recognition that planning is currently contributing to the masking or undermining of spatial IKS and a change is needed. This change is what Porter (2010) proposed as the “unlearning” of oppressive practices and the “learning” of new inclusive methodologies. Second, there should be a willingness among the practitioners, community leaders, residents and academics to communicate and deliberate on IKS. In this context where the aim is to improve policymaking and the law, planners need to acquire “passion and humility” skills (Yanow 2003:246). Third, platforms for dialogue should be designed in such a way that everyone is able to participate and to contribute, including, for example, those that cannot attend meetings. The findings on the spatial aspects of IKS provided some insights how dialogue and deliberations were implemented. In addition, in the context of modern lifestyles, Nyseth et al. (2019:6-14) have provided some approaches to contact those that do not attend meetings (see Chapter 3, Subsection 3.4.2). Last, there should be a commitment to research on IKS for increased understanding. In the context of cultural open spaces, for example, an understanding of the residents’ “needs, perceptions and attitudes” are essential (Abbasi et al. 2016:204) in order to provide and protect this needed open spaces or “social infrastructure” (Latham & Layton 2019:9).

The above concerns should be able to pave the way for a proper start to venture into how IKS can find its place in legislation and policies. These concerns, as already discussed, were identified and emphasised by the research participants as important, as well as through the literature consulted in this study. Considering and managing the concerns above could facilitate increased research on IKS, which in turn could improve the essential clarification and understanding processes of IKS terms and concepts implicated in the well-being of the communities (Green 2018; Wiredu 1998). If the clarification of issues is not properly addressed, then implementation problems will persist, where certain important policy

provisions may be ignored or lead to misrepresentation and negative consequences (see Chapters 3 and 4). This study argued that it is by establishing a balance between the concepts *recognition, willingness, dialogue, and commitment to research*, that one can take a planning policy and scrutinise its shortcomings in terms of spatial IKS, and attempt to answer the *how* question.

The following approach was adopted to illustrate how the researcher analysed the municipal policies for possible IKS integration, based on the analytical framework of McLeod et al. (2017):

The limited presence of the terms *culture (cultural)* and *indigenous cultural practices* in the definitions of both the WTPS (1976, as amended in 1997) and WOSP 2001 does not assist the promotion of spatial IKS in urban areas. In fact, the WTPS refers to *cultural purpose* only once, and it is under the definition of *place of instruction* (Municipality of Windhoek 1997:14). The description of open spaces in the WOSP 2001 refers to *cultural*, but it is more in relation to the protection, preservation and aesthetic importance of those spaces in urban areas (Municipality of Windhoek 2001:1). This is an example of how policies are treating urban residents as homogenous groups through universal values (Watson 2006:31). Thus, the researcher argued that the interactions between these policies and the indigenous communities are very reduced and, as a result, important cultural matters to the communities may be totally overlooked. It is this approach of framing and wording terms in current policies that are argued to contribute to the unintentional exclusion and the perpetuation of inequalities in low-income urban areas.

It can be further argued that both the low-order policies such as the WSP (to become an urban structure plan as per URPA 2018), the WOSP and others, should all refer to spatial indigenous knowledges in one way or the other, and this may expand the approaches available to planning to deal with urban problems, such as the unhealthy living conditions experienced in the Havana settlement. The presence of indigenous cultural open spaces in the planning legislation will enhance their realisation, which could then be used by the communities in their neighbourhoods to address social problems in their areas such as maintenance of a healthy environment. This manifestation of indigenous spatial aspects onto the physical urban environment was found to contribute to the well-being, sense of place as well as the responsibility levels of the indigenous communities in the settler states contexts (Barry & Agyeman 2020; Marek 2020). Such a recognition emphasises the importance of the values

embedded in spatial IKS. For example, the central marae cultural building (New Zealand) and the community friendship centres (Canada) of the indigenous communities in urban areas were found to display and maintain the interconnections between the communities, even different groups, and their environments (Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:11). Equally, the significance of these places was that they enabled issues of concern such as human and environmental health to be deliberated on by those present (Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:11-13). Therefore, such physical manifestations in the Namibian context will then enable the necessary reconnection between the symbolic, lived space and conceived space, as advocated by Lefebvre (1991:26) in his production of space explanation, while being conscious of various other aspects that hamper the full implementation of development programmes in countries such as Namibia. Some of these aspects that are currently taking their toll in Namibian urban areas include increasing corruption, bad governance and poor economies, coupled with high unemployment rates. In fact, Namibia's HPP (2016–2020) and the NDP5 (2017/18–2021/22) have identified corruption as one of the threats to be fought against (Republic of Namibia 2016a:7, 2017:93). Such corruption could work against the realisation of spatial IKS aspects in urban areas, as interests will be diverted towards self-aggrandisement (increasing the wealth and power of an individual), rather than community upliftment. The high poverty and unemployment rates are other aspects that equally prevent the majority of the residents to access better socio-economic opportunities such as housing in Namibia (Delgado 2021:54; Tjirera 2021:89). For example, the high unemployment is characterised by 67% of the employable population being active in the informal sector (Lühl & Delgado 2018:8). In such a context, it will thus be an enormous task to convince planning practitioners and their institutions to voluntarily divert and change their space production approaches to include spatial IKS. The low-order policies, which are mostly non-statutory, will not be sufficient to compel officials to change their methodologies (see Markkula et al. 2019).

The higher-order planning policies (government policies and laws) such as URPA, should equally refer to this spatial IKS in order to ensure real transformations in practice to take place. The argument here is that both the low-order policies (municipal policies and by-laws) and higher-order legislation should be able to complement each other so that progress in spatial transformation can take place. Such IKS integration and the resulting policy interactions could ensure that all the spatial planning legislation and policies can have a rightful claim of being inclusive of all and talking to all communities, and being in line with the Namibian Constitution (1990), especially Article 19 (culture) and Article 95 (reasonable access

to public facilities and services). Such a transformation of the legislation should be able to encourage residents to make choices through their knowledges, while simultaneously increasing their responsibility to their neighbourhoods (Marek 2020:2). Such changes should further encourage residents to move from negative discourses of marginalisation and resistance towards positive attitudes of empowerment where they confidently make decisions towards improvement of the settlement areas (Marek 2020:11).

Finally, another additional insight to the *how* question of integrating IKS into the policies is that of improving relationships with the communities targeted by development or transformation programmes. It was observed that in most cases where urban problems are to be addressed, new formal platforms and institutions are created to focus on these issues with possible solutions crafted from above (Budwa & McCreary 2013:210; Oranje et al. 2020:8). However, from an indigenous perspective, it is suggested that indigenous communities have long established structures and platforms that are respected and trusted by these communities that should also be considered in problem-solving (Budwa & McCreary 2013:210). According to Oranje et al. (2020:8), ignoring informal but reliable and credible solutions from the residents in informal settlements, for example, leads to dualistic planning. Such dualistic planning, on the one hand, is characterised by highly formal and bureaucratic planning solutions from formal institutions that are not solving problems on the ground, while the residents, on the other hand, display highly effective approaches to problem-solving but which are deemed informal and are thus not recognised by the mainstream planning practice (Oranje et al. 2020:8). In that vein, the on and off cultural activities taking place in Havana are a demonstration that some kind of self-organisation and structures do exist in this settlement, and are thus a potential starting point not to be ignored by planning, instead of promoting the creation of new structures and committees.

To summarise, the attention here is drawn to the need to change legislation to become more receptive of multiple spatial knowledges, such as those embedded in spatial practices of indigenous communities. The spatial IKS is argued to have played, and still continues to do so, an important role in the maintenance of social unity of the communities studied, aspects which are emphasised by various Namibian development and planning policies but rarely achieved. It is therefore argued that this spatial IKS is of relevance, and is needed in urban areas to address issues that conventional planning methods are failing to address, such as the reduction of low-income area hygiene and stress levels. The wedding ceremony elaborated upon in Chapter 7 (Section 7.5) demonstrated the important connections between the

community and their space, as well as the interconnections between individuals, between individuals and spaces and places, and the linkages of the spaces and their values to each other. An understanding of such cultural practices will enable space production actors to explore how to appropriately integrate indigenous peoples' aspirations and values into urban planning projects of coexistence and policies (Puketapu-Dentice et al. 2017:17). The space production actors as argued in this study, refer to the various official practitioners and academics from various disciplines, and the diverse indigenous communities in low-income areas. Thus, the proposed policy transformations will enable the recognition of various spatial IKS strategies and related organisations that exist within the diverse communities such as those found in Havana. This subsequent recognition could lead to the creation of planning platforms where problem-solving strategies could be formulated for low-income areas, such as the informal settlement services problems. For example, Oranje et al. (2020:8), referring to the context of informal but effective strategies of accessing urban services, concluded as follows:

[O]fficially recognising, studying and using such 'local evidence/insight' could assist in the support and/or creation of viable, credible and truly progressive interventions and institutions that could, in turn, have a significant impact on the functioning, governance and quality of life in rapidly growing urban areas, and in addressing the country's enormous and persisting past injustices.

8.4.2 Where exactly should indigenous knowledge systems be placed in the policies?

After the recognition and clarification process, follow-up questions could be: Where exactly in the legislation should these new concepts and meanings be put? Should IKS terms be put next to the English equivalents in the clauses? Should it be stand-alone clauses and sections? Should it only be defined in the definitions and left there?

Due to the absence of similar studies done in the Namibian context, the researcher relied on the experience from the settler states studies, as already mentioned (Green 2018; McLeod et al. 2017), to tease out one section from URPA, and attempted a description on how it could be opened up to include IKS approaches. The literature consulted has warned against the mere integration of terms by putting them next to assumed English term equivalents in order to attain popularity for the text (see Porter 2010; Sihlongonyane 2015b). Mere integration of terms without deeper meanings leads to truncation, a shortening of real meanings; thus leading to misinterpretation (Green 2018:247). On the other hand, such unexplained integration for the sake of popularity leads to furtherance of inequalities as powerful interests

dominate the use of the terms in the policies to advance their wishes (Sihlongonyane 2015b:85).

In that vein, the researcher proposes the introduction of these terms in both the definitions section and the clauses section of the policies. The elaboration and the context of use of the terms should be explicitly set out to avoid misinterpretations. In addition, such elaboration should capture both the tangible and intangible meanings of the terms (Green 2018:247). From an indigenous knowledge research perspective, the researcher (or the planner) should be able to ask: How will the introduction of IKS terms at this specific definition and clause in the policy contribute to their relationship with this policy, the institution, and with the communities with whom they work? This is what Wilson (2001:177) referred to as “relational accountability”, a reminder that you are in a constant relationship with all things and beings around you. The consequences of such indigenous research and IKS integration proposals, therefore, need to be critically analysed, as planners as well as their communities need to live with them on a daily basis (Smith 2012:138).

It is within this mindset that the researcher closely looked at two objectives as presented by URPA and attempted to analyse it reflexively and critically in terms of the relationship it can enhance from an indigenous perspective. Section 2(b) and (f) of URPA (Republic of Namibia 2018:11) reads as follows:

(b) provide for principles and standards of spatial planning;

(f) redress past imbalances in respect of access to land, land ownership and land allocation.

These two provisions are normative, and at face value they appear to be addressing various urban problems as intended by URPA 2018. However, practical experience reflects that planners, under such provisions act in a manner that is very restrictive, controlling and bounded (a stick to the rules attitude) in efforts of trying to solve urban problems, thus unintentionally treating all residents as homogenous. Such boundedness is not only controlled by the highly circumscribed provisions (texts) in the policies (Porter & Barry 2015), but also by the internalised spatial cultures developed over time by the planners and their institutions (Harvey 1996, cited in Holgersen 2015:12; see Porter 2010:147). For example, through these internalised cultures, decision-makers most often take decisions that are of relevance to them or their institutions (Holgersen 2015:12), developed over a long period of time (Porter 2010:147-148). The town planner, for example, will continue to produce principles and standards that are in conformance with how spatial planning is conceived,

which was done and still continues to be done in a Western conceptualisation approach (Porter 2010:148). In such restrictive approaches, alternative ways of doing planning and space production, like in the past, unintentionally continue to be ignored. Integrating and visualising some spatial IKS-related terms in legislation could go a long way in improving relations between planners and communities, and challenging the dominant and embedded space production methodologies. But where exactly should these terms be inserted? For brevity, the researcher attempted such insertion, underlined, as follows:

(b) provide for principles and standards, contextually inspired by diverse indigenous and local spatial knowledges, of spatial planning;

(f) redress past imbalances in respect of access to diverse indigenous spatial knowledges, land, land ownership and land allocation.

The objectives of URPA are supposed to be adhered to in all future urban policies such as urban structure plans and zoning schemes. The above insertion will enable subsequent policies and plans created through URPA to always consider alternative knowledges. Therefore, as the researcher argued before, and drawing from McLeod et al. (2017), it is imperative that the higher-order legislation also refers to the terms *alternative knowledges*, *indigenous knowledges* and *local knowledges* not only to improve planner–community relationships, but also to ensure increased consideration of diverse knowledges by lower-order policies such as structure plans and zoning schemes. A warning, however, is that this study has made the above underlined insertions for illustration purposes only. It was done so in the absence of similar studies having been conducted in Namibia. If it is to happen, and in line with the indigenous lens adopted for this study, an acceptable and culturally appropriate platform should be created to deliberate on such changes.

The problems that persist and that prevent solutions from being achieved when well-intentioned policy decisions are not reflected in both the higher-order and lower-order policies, are exemplified by the following two practical experiences. First, a building line dispute referred to earlier, demonstrated this policy–legislation gap (see introductory remarks for this section in 8.4, last paragraph). Another practical example came from the efforts of the Municipality of Windhoek that tried to implement new measures in the control of mushrooming shebeens in the city. The Municipality designed a new by-law that reduced the operating hours of shebeens by one hour in the evenings, from 22:00 to 21:00. This was as a result of complaints from the non-shebeen owners about the many social ills, including alcohol abuse and gender-based violence, due to the high number of shebeens and their

operating hours. The Liquor Act Regulations (2001) set the closing business hour at 22:00 (Republic of Namibia 2001:35). During informal discussions, the legal practitioners present advised planners that residents have the right to sue the Municipality for loss of income by reducing business hours in a by-law. Is this probably not one of the reasons why Namibian municipalities struggled to control the shebeen problem for the last two decades? This confirms the concerns of this study, and those of the planners and literature consulted in this study, that higher-order policies and legislation determines what can be done or not.

The implication here is that whatever explanations are contained in the regulations and guidelines should be referred to in the main policy, and further directed by the main legislation. The above content analysis, through a CDA lens, was an attempt to identify principles in URPA that are assumed to be inclusive, but their interpretation and implementation ended up being overtaken by dominant knowledges to the detriment of equally valuable practices. The ensuing proposals made above, as underlined in the selected text, are assumed to be emancipatory in nature. These proposals are therefore attempting to transcend the boundaries that are set in the legislation as unchangeable, and provide platforms that lead to more transformative possibilities (Porter & Barry 2015:37). The proposals suggest the diversification of planning knowledges and practices that could be assumed to be more inclusive, and thus could contribute to the reduction of inequalities (Claussen 2019; Wagenaar 2011:296). This policy transformation could address the concerns of powerlessness and fears raised by planners in their attempts to act beyond the policies and be more flexible. One municipal planner raised this concern as follows:

I could use my discretion and act outside the book and be more flexible. But the danger is how can I defend myself if something happens as a result of my discretion? (Planner D).

8.4.3 Towards a diverse and multiple planning practice

To understand how the findings from the indigenous communities could contribute to the improvement of planning practice, an underlying question had to be answered: How can such diverse methodologies of conceiving space be accommodated into one policy and be promoted as applicable to all groups within a settlement such as Havana in Windhoek? Havana is home to many diverse groups found in Namibia, and not only the two groups used as case studies in this research. Those different groups also have their own views and methods of seeing and conceiving space. The researcher argued in section 8.4.2 that the proposals made to change and improve the possible “sites of inclusions” in URPA, Section 2(b) and (f),

could go a long way in partially responding to the problem of considering diverse knowledges. However, considering is one thing, and unifying and accommodating into one policy, is another process considering the diverse cultures planners have to deal with.

The findings from the various research participants revealed a high level of willingness to accommodate and learn from each other. The underpinning motive for such a willingness by all participants was the desire to improve the well-being of the local communities, in this case the Havana residential area. Thus, the approach of promoting cultural open spaces in the different neighbourhoods, supported by most participants to be inclusive for all groups, should lead to the creation of appropriate platforms where planners and communities can learn from each other, thus widening planning knowledge. These cultural open spaces are argued as potential platforms where the collaborative or communicative planning approaches, such as “authentic dialogue” (Innes & Booher 2010) and “practical dialogue” (Forester 2018), can find space to reach the excluded communities, and not the current participatory approaches inspired by the exclusive best practices. The possibility of including the reference to alternative knowledges in the legislation means that proposals such as cultural open spaces are not to be solely implemented in low-income areas only, but also in other areas such as the wealthier suburbs where cultural diversity is steadily increasing. These wealthier areas, due to new black elites and diverse immigrants moving in, also need to learn to nurture a multicultural or intercultural atmosphere. The proposed cultural open spaces could assist in that regard. These spaces, it is argued, could in turn indirectly nurture what could be called a *national culture* in Namibia. This national culture has been described as non-existent or slowly emerging but hampered by the persistent neoliberal tendencies coupled with dominant aspects found in patriarchal and gender stereotypes, among others, favouring the elite and powerful groups (Du Pisani 2001:229; Hillebrecht 2001:221).

Such cultural open space platforms can assist with increased understanding of indigenous and cultural concepts, which could enhance the formulation of more widely accepted and practical policies through compromise. Planning, in these improved policymaking processes, can then address issues in wholistic and balanced approaches through participation and cultural inputs from diverse communities (Brinkhurst et al. 2013:41). This is in line with most of the research participants’ emphasis on concerns of compromise, flexibility and balanced approaches when introducing IKS-related spatial aspects in urban areas such as Havana. Equally, such an inclusive learning platform can assist in the dilemma of diverse stories coming from the communities. A non-negligible finding from the diverse residents of Havana is the

willingness to share the open spaces. The residents proposed the creation of calendars and programmes to coordinate the usage of proposed cultural spaces, a statement that should be taken seriously by urban policymakers in Windhoek. This willingness was equally shown by the planning practitioners and academics, who did not only indicate their openness to learning such spatial IKS, but also support its inclusion in the legislation. This then underlines the importance of linking diverse knowledge, such as that embedded in texts, policies or even IKS proverbs with practice. In that vein, Sandercock (2003b:321-322) argued that it is not only important for planners to be culturally sensitive, but an understanding of how urban policies are treating cultural differences is essential as well. Sandercock (2003b:322) proposed that planners should be aware that different groups may use the same open space differently, and thus new designs or redesigns will be needed. This is where this study is aimed at reminding planners that by providing solutions such as designing or creating new cultural spaces, it is important that the spatial IKS of indigenous communities should be considered and understood.

Second, after the recognition and the will to learn, the issue confronting planners will be: Whose story or facts are to be taken, whose story is closest to the truth, and whose story dominates proceedings for narrow and selfish interests, and which values are lost in the translation process? (Prusak et al. 2016; Umemoto 2001). This study does not deny that value domination will not reproduce themselves in cultural open spaces. However, as observed during the data collection stage, the communities displayed skills of self-correction to counter negative behaviour or misinformation, while research participants constantly referred the researcher to other knowledge holders to confirm certain information. These sanctions and self-correcting approaches to ensure the well-being of the whole community were elaborated on in Chapter 4. These corrective measures based on *Ubuntu* principles, including those deployed against the abuse of power, were found to exist continuously from precolonial times to the present (Kusimba & Oka 2009:40; Murove 2009:71). During this study, it was observed that if one member was out of line, the others made statements towards the correction of the wrong statement or act. These are skills that could be adopted in planning practice, by constantly recognising that other residents in a discussion possess valid insights and should be listened to. In this regard, planning scholars advised that such knowledge exchange should be done on an equal partnership basis, and not through the current paternalistic planner–expert-led and stakeholder approaches (Green 2018:211; McLeod et al. 2017:83; Porter 2013:290).

From an indigenous perspective, the inclusion of elders and knowledge holders in research and decision-making processes was already emphasised. This could also be extended to planning practice. The research participants confirmed the importance of elders and knowledge holders in knowledge exchange. The literature equally emphasised that elders “possess worldviews that teach and practice how processes are created such as in environmental sustainability” (Baskin & Sinclair 2015:10). It is in this vein that the “unifying ideological factors” (Jojola 2008:45), found in the diverse indigenous communities, could provide important insights to planning and planning practitioners when addressing the persistent urban problems in areas such as Havana. This study agreed that those unifying factors can be equally found in the two case study communities. The Ovawambo “landscape mapping stories” (Hayes 2009) and the Ovaherero “place praise poems” (Kavari & Bleckmann 2009), although used in different contexts, possess overarching concerns directed towards the well-being of both the people and their environment. Equally, the *olupale* (with sacred fire) and *omuvanda* (with *okuruuo*) cultural open spaces also unite at the level of facilitating well-being approaches to the existence of the entire communities, respectively. This study, therefore, argued that such converging factors could be harnessed in collaboration with the elders to inspire more equitable and inclusive urban policies; policies that are concerned with the improvement and sustainability of low-income areas such as Havana in this study. These commonalities in cultural frameworks can equally be deployed to foster improved and informed intergroup dialogue and the overcoming of conflicts, as well as to bridge diverse knowledges (see Chapter 4).

8.5 Research question 4: Could the recognition of spatial indigenous knowledge systems lead to inclusive settlements?

The inclusion of IKS into the policies and the realisation of some of its spatial aspects such as the cultural open spaces may contribute in many ways to the improvement of planning practice, and the creation of inclusive settlements. First, the relationships between planners and the local communities, as alluded to earlier, could be improved as planners will be required through the policies and legislation to obtain the necessary IKS information from the local residents. The presence of IKS could potentially encourage residents to confidently communicate with planners as they have a reference in the policies and on the ground on what to talk about, unlike currently where they feel planning is foreign and not for them.

The visibility of spatial aspects from IKS could further enhance participation in diverse urban affairs such as aesthetic, maintenance and sustainability matters as well as in space production and place-making activities, and not only the participation directed only to the urban services (Porter 2013). Caulkins (2018), Marek (2020) and Thompson-Fawcett (2019) observed the same increased reaction to participation and sense of place in Chile and New Zealand cities. Currently, practical experience demonstrates that meetings are highly attended when issues of discussion involve lack of urban services such as electricity or water. This attitude is justified, as the lack of basic services is a worrying concern for most of the low-income and informal settlements in Namibian urban areas. However, as this study argued, there are other aspects of urban living that could involve communities as initiators or partners with the municipality. Aspects such as neighbourhood hygiene, open space availability, safety and management could be spearheaded by the communities themselves in collaboration with the municipality. These community initiatives were found to be useful in the maintenance of cultural spaces, which in turn, contributes to the well-being of vulnerable groups such as elders, women and children (Fadamiro et al. 2012). Thus, the current problem characterising many urban areas in Namibia about the maintenance and neglect of public open spaces and recreational facilities could be addressed through cultural frameworks.

Furthermore, the increased sense of place and belonging due to the visibility of indigenous spatial aspects alluded to in Chapters 4 and 7, could contribute to improved levels of not only participation but also responsibility levels from the residents. This could further reduce the current dominating paternalistic and dependency attitudes adopted by both the residents and the local authorities, as revealed by this study. Implementing cultural open spaces may assist in transforming this dependency attitude towards more confident self-initiated local problem-solving approaches. Thus, the recognition of spatial IKS could be seen as an empowerment approach that increases various communities to participate in urban affairs. This, for example, could be enhanced by the sense of responsibility to look after one's own environment, which is one of the preoccupations of this study as raised in the introduction chapter. The responsibility to care for one another and the environment was found to be one of the characteristics of various indigenous communities (Porter 2010:24), from precolonial times to the present (Ramose 2009:309). However, although these practices and initiatives were almost suppressed during colonialism (Lilemba & Matemba 2015:283; Symonds 2009:6), and almost totally lost in some communities (Marek 2020:2), some of these characteristics survived that erasure, as this study has substantiated. The aim should now be to harness these

caring and responsibility attitudes for the improvement of low-income urban environments. It is this approach of responsibility that has been suppressed in the past, especially in urban areas, and which continues to be undermined by the current neoliberal policies that dominate space production, which needs to be reactivated. This could alleviate the observance of a 'don't care' attitude stated in Chapter 1. Henceforth, the increased participation and responsibility could lead to more spatial-related intercultural dialogues, for example between various cultural groups. Thus, cultural open spaces could further facilitate and foster the creation of stronger community-based cultural organisations, or expand the existing social movements from solely focusing on housing and land issues, to other equally important matters such as cultural spaces. The absence of a strong community organisation that could formulate their problems in a clear and cohesive manner was found missing in Namibia's low-income urban areas (Peyroux 2001). Nevertheless, social movements focusing on housing and service delivery are on the increase, and with the recognition of spatial aspects, this could as well expand towards cultural matters.

This study therefore argued that the promotion and visibility of IKS in urban areas, such as developing cultural open spaces at various neighbourhoods in areas such as Havana, have the potential of increasing the resident's confidence in taking the lead in the well-being of their places. This will, however, be possible through the recognition of spatial IKS in the planning framework. It is important to note that this recognition should be sensitive to the existence of diverse groups in low-income areas such as Havana. The different spatial conceptualisations of these groups should be acknowledged, and community platforms should be encouraged to discuss these differences in order to arrive at suitable solutions for the neighbourhood areas. Thus, the potential mutual understanding and learning that could emanate from the cultural open spaces could assist urban areas to better address differences and conflicts. It is these agreed upon community suggestions which could encourage the type of spatial aspects that can be promoted. In turn, these could lead to the various residential areas to become more inclusive, one of the preoccupations of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda (Fisker et al. 2019:2; Odendaal 2016:18; UN-Habitat 2020:67). SDG 11 advocates for inclusive settlements in urban areas, while the New Urban Agenda presents frameworks on how to achieve the goals of the former (UN-Habitat 2020:67). However, these international visions do not address the obstacles presented by the dominant profit-driven policy approaches leading the production of space processes (Fisker et al. 2019:2). Scholars therefore argue for a move away from restricting discourses that limits possibilities for

alternative knowledges and spaces to emerge, and rather focus on the protection and promotion of the interests of the marginalised sections of society (Fisker et al. 2019:4; Odendaal 2016:20). It is therefore the argument of this study that alternative spaces such as the cultural open spaces presented in this study and their manifestation in both the policies and onto physical space, could assist the low-income areas, and subsequently the entire urban areas, to become more inclusive.

8.6 Research question 5: What are the implications of integrating spatial indigenous knowledge systems with current planning for theory and practice?

The promotion of IKS into planning aligns with the long-standing postmodern and postcolonial planning theories' critiques of modernist planning (Chapter 3). Spatial IKS, such as those emanating from the *Ubuntu* principle where spatial practices are embedded differently, are undermined by current planning policies and practices, but are still relevant as established by this study. For example, the *olupale* and *omuvanda* as highlighted in this study, could be seen as some of the alternative knowledges to which current planning should open up to (Lam et al. 2020:7; Obeng-Odoom 2015:576). The literature in Chapters 3 to 5 stressed that this recognition should not only end at the practice level, but should also be extended to the curriculum and governance levels. From the findings of this indigenous lensed and multidisciplinary research, this study argued that the promotion and implementation of IKS in the legislation and in the physical spatial arrangement could influence and transform planning theory and practice in many ways. Some of the implications and possible positive outcomes are listed below:

- Foregrounding spatial IKS aspects in planning research, education and practice could increase the awareness of practitioners, academics and residents of the existence of diverse IKS practices. This will enhance a shift in thinking on how to approach spatial planning problems through multiple dimensions. Moreover, with enriched insights, the space production thoughts and methodologies could be expanded to include suggestions and proposals based on indigenous knowledge.
- An increased awareness on the existence and usefulness of spatial IKS will stimulate and encourage the planning curricula to open up to multiple spatial knowledges and practices, and not only focusing on the globalising Western perspectives. This will result in the production of planning professionals with multiple spatial and cultural

skills that will enable them to work with diverse communities such as those found in Havana.

- The willingness to learn indicated by the research participants in this study (residents, academics, practitioners, elders and knowledge holders) could enhance the recognition and acceptance of IKS as an important planning tool for planning practice. Such a recognition could lead to the transformation of current spatial planning cultures and approaches. The willingness and recognition could influence planning practitioners and academics to reflexively revisit their operating systems and initiate changes towards discarding some constraining practices or “unlearning” (see Porter 2010) and adopting new approaches. It was established throughout this study that all communities, even those with deep embedded *Ubuntu* principles, do possess both positive and negative expressions (or proverbs) that tend toward dominant patriarchal approaches (Mbenzi 2018). It is thus emphasised that any recognition efforts should be accompanied by this awareness. Thus, for any transformative exercises to have intended positive outcomes, planners, academics and diverse communities should be able to choose the positive aspects in order to make progress (Kennedy 2009).
- Explicitly displaying spatial IKS in the legislation and policies will not only improve the relationships between the residents and the planners, but also among the communities themselves, as well as among the planners. This will, in turn, encourage a departure from the current universalising one-size-fits-all approaches that characterise communicative and collaborative planning towards the consideration of diverse local and indigenous solutions. This study has established the one-sided outcomes of the communicative and collaborative approaches that most often exclude the marginalised residents of low-income areas. The explicit recognition of spatial IKS in the legislative framework will compel all sections of society in the urban area to reach out to each other in search of the necessary knowledge to produce desirable and much needed spaces.
- The study further established that Namibian planning legislation and policies, including the planning practitioners, are highly prescribed and more focused on maintaining order, standards, and technical solutions based on cost recovery and efficiency. In the process, the poorer residents and their areas are excluded as they cannot afford this neoliberalising approaches (Baeten 2012; Piermay & Sohn 1999; Chitekwe-Biti 2018). However, introducing spatial IKS in the legislative and policy

documents will enhance the “culturalisation” (Young 2008) of not only the planning documents, but also the practitioners involved. It is argued that this will encourage planning practice to move from the usual approach of only considering cultural aspects in terms of heritage and environmental management (Porter 2013), towards a focus on culture as part of the lived realities of the urban residents in which place-making is an important empowering part (Barry & Agyeman 2020; Marek 2020).

However, notwithstanding the potential positive outcomes listed above, there are obstacles identified during this study that can negatively affect the successful promotion of spatial IKS in planning practice.

8.7 Challenges with the promotion of spatial indigenous knowledge systems

In addition to the transformational possibilities presented so far in this chapter on how IKS could influence planning theory and practice, obstacles were equally identified from the literature and the research participants that could affect such a transformation. These obstacles are listed as follows:

- Alternative knowledges, such as spatial IKS, continue to be suppressed by the increasing globalisation processes that operated within current neoliberal policy frameworks (Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7).
- Besides the dominance of the neoliberal economic frameworks, other hegemonic forces such as patriarchy, racism, and authoritarianism persist as well (Chapters 2, 3 and 4).
- Alternative knowledges and practices are further threatened by the alarmingly growing corruption and bad governance (Chapters 4 and 7).
- Another problem is presented by the reluctance of governments and leading institutions to change from established *consistent* and scientific systems towards the *unknown* alternative solutions, despite the latter showing success on the ground. This is exemplified by the institutions’ large support towards science subjects at universities, while neglecting cultural subjects (Chapters 3, 4 and 7).
- Another challenge that was not part of this study but worth mentioning, is the disruptions to all types of lifestyles caused by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The efforts of keeping this outbreak under control affected some of the IKS practices.

During informal discussions at the early stages of the outbreak, communities were finding it difficult to adopt to the new requirements and abandoning their cultural practices. However, as time passed, changes in discussions were observed where some elders and knowledge holders were exploring ways to change and readjust some of the practices. In that vein, one resident from Havana encouraged planning for cultural open spaces to continue despite Covid-19 (Resident J). At the time of writing this thesis, discussions were underway in various communication platforms, mostly by the local communities themselves, on how to improve, change or replace some of the cultural practices that could contribute to the spread of Covid-19.

8.8 Conclusion

The analysis above provided the explanations on important issues for this study that simultaneously enabled the research questions to be answered. The analysis stressed that spatial IKS in Namibia does still exist and is practiced in a wholistic manner which combines spiritual and natural aspects, in line with the *Ubuntu* principle of interconnectedness. The usefulness of IKS for current everyday living was emphasised, but that inter- and intra-group differences exist in its application, something which planning must always consider in practice. The group differences could assist planners in understanding why policies are received differently by residents in one settlement. Despite the differences, IKS practices from cultural open spaces such as *olupale* with its sacred fire and *omuvanda* with its holy fire (*okuruuo*) provided common characteristics of being learning spaces for both case study communities in rural areas. These spaces facilitate the creation of interrelations, interactions and inter- and intra-cultural dialogues among the members, something which current collaborative and communicative planning approaches attempted to achieve but are criticised of falling short of. It should be reiterated that the two spatial IKS examples used as case studies were for exploration and demonstration purposes only, as there exist various communities in Namibia with their own separate space conceptualisations.

Furthermore, the analysis concluded that the appropriate start to promote the use and application of IKS where needed is to integrate it in the legislation, policies, education and practice to avoid its further marginalisation by the current dominant and universalised knowledge. The promotion of IKS was argued to have the potential of creating inclusive settlements in line with the calls of the SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda, but that it equally faced strong and diverse obstacles to its successful implementation. These challenges, as

argued in this study and from literature, could be overcome by all of society to engage in an *unlearning* (see Porter 2010) process where negative habits are shed off (Kennedy 2009), and then useful lessons from various groups are adopted. In this exercise, cultural open spaces are argued to be strategically equipped as important spaces that can fulfil the role of facilitating this mutual learning experience, unlike the current expert-led collaborative and communicative participatory platforms. Nonetheless, despite the challenges, the analysis concludes that positive outcomes with the experimentation of spatial IKS in urban areas have been observed in urban areas in recent years. This should provide hope for planners to continue searching for useful alternative spatial knowledge for the promotion of well-being and sense of place in low-income and poor areas of urban settlements. As this study substantiated the spatial IKS existence, the useful aspects just need to be found or rediscovered and be foregrounded in planning theory and practice. In this regard, scholars warn planners not to rush into the creation of grand but exclusive policies, but to adopt a *start small* approach at neighbourhood level for improvement processes (Friedmann 2010; Lydon et al. 2012:1).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the overall concluding remarks and insights about this study. It begins with an overall summary of the research, starting with an historical overview of planning and its relationship with multiple alternative knowledges, followed by the insights from the research on IKS and its usefulness and implications for planning. The next two sections conclude by providing suggestions for further research, and the contributions this study can make to planning knowledge. A separate section is dedicated to the recommendations emanating from the study findings, ending with a general conclusion.

9.2 Summary of research

This study ventured into a few aspects concerning planning in Namibia, especially in the low-income and informal settlements, to evaluate some of the socio-economic problems through the analysis of the effects produced by a lack of adequate open spaces in Havana, as one of the case studies. In so doing, the study attempted to propose suggestions that could assist urban problem-solving in these low-income areas through an IKS lens. In addition, case studies from two rural communities were used in this exploration to arrive at insights that assisted the study to provide answers to the research questions, through an IKS perspective. Moreover, an exploration of the planning and related legislation, together with the printed media spatial IKS-related discourse, was carried out to assess how spatial IKS is treated, or not, in these documents. These explorations added valuable insights and motivations towards the responses provided to the research questions.

9.2.1 Planning, its evolution, and alternative knowledges

The literature consulted as well as the empirical findings of this research, established that planning in Namibia is still a highly top-down practice that is directed and dependent on various legislated laws and policies to achieve its goals, that of ordering and organising the urban spaces. The literature explored in Chapters 2 and 3 set the evolution of planning in perspective and presented the efforts which planning theorists have proposed to improve planning practice, especially in the Euro-American zone where various conceptualisations

originated (Healey 2003; Watson 2016). This planning evolution and transformation could not be experienced in the colonised world as the political conditions did not permit such critical responses to emerge (Healey 2013:1513). The postcolonial condition was characterised by a poor readoption of planning policies that consequently could not solve the myriad and complex problems of the Global South cities. The study further established that the collaborative (or communicative) approaches that are directing Namibian planning, such as the high importance placed on participation by URPA 2018, remain exclusive and reachable by the residents of the high-income areas only, while remaining a dream for the poor and low-income areas such as Havana. The planning policies, as confirmed by the residents of Havana, the planning officials, and the planning academics, have been found to be rigid and highly prescriptive, and not easily receptive of alternative inputs of knowledge to produce urban spaces. This one-sided application of knowledge affected the low-income residential areas such as Havana negatively, as innovations from these areas are interpreted as illegal, informal, or incompatible with the norms. Thus, methods from the local residents of Havana, such as their cultural spatial knowledges that could assist planning in reducing socio-economic problems in poorer areas, are left out of the planning processes. The planners continue to search solutions from existing scientific frameworks and disciplinary-bounded systems, which are increasingly acknowledged as incapable of solving urban problems (see Oranje et al. 2020).

Although higher-order policies have been changed several times, such as the Ordinances of 1954 and 1963 which were replaced by URPA 2018, other policies remained unchanged for elongated periods (WSP 1996 and WTPS 1976, amended in 1997) due to reasons such as capacity, priority and time constraints. However, where changes and transformations were implemented, inequalities seemed to continue unabated. The changes in URPA 2018 and its Regulations, together with other related legislation and policies, which were critically assessed through a content analysis method, were found to be insufficient to improve the conditions in the low-income areas, unless further changes are made and some spatial IKS references are introduced. Planning in Windhoek is still heavily inclined towards colonial style planning that is oppressive, exclusive, and reproducing spaces as in the past (see Gewald 2009). However, although current planning shares characteristics with its colonial predecessor, it was established in this study, from the literature and the research participants, that most of the injustices and inequalities are reproduced by the adoption of modern rational policies from the Global North, without readjusting them to local contexts. In cases where

reforms were attempted, the changes were made within Western conceptualisation of space production strategies favouring markets over use values, thus further perpetuating the exclusion of indigenous knowledges. These neoliberal, patriarchal and modernising policies encourage strong markets, effectiveness and worlding approaches based on expert knowledge (see Friedmann 2010; Healey 2013; Watson 2014a). In this realm, through the promotion of concepts such as world-class and smart cities, alternative local knowledges, and by implication IKS, are excluded and seen as not sufficient (Karuri-Sebina & Koma 2015:157; Sihlongonyane 2016:1620). The smart city strategy promoted by the Municipality of Windhoek (2018a:32), for example, does not refer to the use of local knowledge. These vision plans are too technically orientated and tend to neglect alternative interpretations of local conditions (Myers & Kitsuse 2000:222). The consequence, as established from the planning practitioner and academic participants in this study, is that these exclusive modern planning values have become deeply embedded in practice that they are seen as the only solutions to proper development. One academic planner supported this view as follows:

Planning in Namibia is focused on destruction and demolition of traditional homesteads adjacent to urban areas to create new settlements. That is not good, and is also not right. Our Western way of planning is destroying people's way of life, and that is not right (Planner J).

9.2.2 Havana settlement and planning

It was established that the Havana settlement, like other post-apartheid urban areas, displays a shortage of public open spaces, including those that are useful to the residents, while the planning focus is mostly aimed, although not satisfactorily, at issues regarding services and housing (see Larsen & Augustus 2020). Although services are important for all residents in an urban area, this study argued that open spaces, especially useful and liveable open spaces, are equally important and deserve similar attention. This study further established that such an absence of open spaces in Havana created mental problems to the residents, who must live with high stress levels, both for children and adults alike. In addition, the safety of the residents to use the few available open spaces was also raised as a major concern. All these shortages contribute to the delay of achieving inclusive settlements. It was argued in Chapter 4 that open spaces have the potential of bringing residents together to deliberate on matters of importance and to collectively carve out possible solutions for their areas (see for example Fadamiro et al. 2012; Strydom & Puren 2013). It was further argued and established, through the adopted indigenous lens for this study, that cultural open spaces being culturally appropriate spaces, could potentially bring the diverse residents of Havana, with their

different space conceptualisations, closer together. Equally, these spaces could enable them to collectively formulate their preferred future despite their cultural differences, including the type of cultural spaces aspired to. However, although the residents would like to have more open spaces in the Havana area, the top-down constraining planning approaches are not facilitating such aspirations to be realised in their current form. The public open space definitions in the policies of the Municipality of Windhoek are not clarified and lean heavily on the Western conceptualisation of public space, which tends to be exclusionary towards local knowledge and cultural practices (see Karuri-Sebina & Koma 2015).

The study further established that, although a strong will to survive exists, there is a strong attitude of dependency among the residents of Havana where all solutions on the well-being of community and space are expected from higher authorities, such as elected local councillors and municipal officials. Solutions such as demanding more open spaces and maintaining important facilities, are constantly expected from higher authorities, while cultural protocols dictate that it can be done by the community themselves in collaboration with their leaders (the institutions). Equally, the authorities, as deduced from the printed media reports and their controlled approach, present an image of being the only problem-solvers, thus furthering the dependency attitude for everyone. However, on this finding, the study argued that the dependency problem is one of the aspects that indirectly lead to the perpetuation of inequalities. Planning will not be able to deliver on its promised purpose, that of designing the preferred future for the residents (Hajer 2003:95; Walker & Matunga 2013:15), in an environment where elected and planning officials are embroiled in embedded Western values of development (Karuri-Sebina & Koma 2015:144), rationalisation of powerful interests to do developments in poor areas, and increased corruption levels among politicians and officials (Zinnbauer 2019).

The residents of Havana, as established in this study and from literature, demonstrated a willingness to share cultural open spaces to learn their various cultures from each other. This sharing approach was confirmed in the literature as being part of the *Ubuntu* principles, which is anchored around concepts of mutual care and sharing (see Kimmerle 2000; Muller 1998; Murove 2009; Ramose 2009). This is a positive aspect to be considered by current planning practice, which sometimes struggle to find solutions to conflicts in urban areas, or present solutions that are incompatible with the residents' aspirations. However, literature warned that *Ubuntu* principles and images are often appropriated by the rich, either through neoliberal policies that favour strong markets, or patriarchal and gender stereotyping

tendencies which could consequently undermine the real meanings of local concepts and thus lead to more inequalities (Mbenzi 2018:128; Sihlongonyane 2015c:2140, 2016:1621).

9.2.3 Indigenous knowledge systems: Usefulness and romanticism

The two case studies in this research established that indigenous communities, the Ovawambo and the Ovaherero, still possess important IKS spatial practices (through their *olupale and omuvanda* cultural open spaces) and still apply these practices in their everyday lives, explicitly more so in the rural areas. However, the residents of Havana emphasised that these aspects, such as cultural open spaces, should be brought into urban areas to not only rescue their dying cultures, but also to provide the necessary learning of different cultures and the associated well-being approaches embedded in them. However, although some residents expressed concerns regarding dying cultures, the researcher observed that some cultural activities, although limited, are emerging around Windhoek. Some planning participants confirmed this observation as well. The findings of this study confirmed what was established in the literature in Chapter 4, that culturally appropriate frameworks such as *Ubuntu* possess principles that always operate towards the collective well-being of the communities and their environment. Thus, the communities still regard cultural frameworks as highly valuable. This finding aligns with the objectives of this study of finding approaches among the local communities that could assist current planning to improve the well-being of low-income areas and indirectly contribute to the sense of place, which was found to be lacking in these areas.

In addition, this study confirmed the literature's assertions that research on IKS should prioritise the involvement of elders and knowledge holders, as they possess various systems of telling stories that reveal unifying aspects of different indigenous cultures (Jojola 1998). Although IKS was found to be useful, the research participants emphasised that clarifications of concepts will be essential to avoid conflicts, as some cultural aspects and knowledges of dominant groups may end up dominating other groups. If clarifications are ignored, then conflicts will continue, as past mistakes could potentially be repeated in different forms.

Although IKS was found to be useful, warnings were abounded not to enter a romanticism or idealist approach with this knowledge. As these spatial IKS came from different indigenous communities, and are conceived and constructed socially in those communities, they are lived differently from one group to the next. These socially constructed different approaches do result in the embeddedness of certain values that may clash with each other (Healey

2003:114). The same applies to spatial IKS, and the research findings established that there existed inter- and intra-group differences among the Namibian communities. The literature brought forward that these differences may be appropriated by the stronger groups to dominate and suppress the weaker groups (see Baas 2019; Zegeye & Vambe 2006). Some of these oppressions may be used in corruption strategies to advance selfish interests, and thus work against the ideals of creating spaces that are aimed at the well-being and inclusiveness of all communities in certain spaces. The residents of Havana alluded to this dominance of powerful cultural groups to dominate open spaces when there is no coordinated and balanced management of programmes. This has also been identified as one of the weaknesses of communicative and collaborative planning models, where the tendency always exists for stronger or well-resourced groups to direct agendas and even to decide who speaks (Flyvbjerg 1998; Calderon & Westin 2021).

9.2.4 Implications for planning

The multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach this study has taken, led to the revelations of several implications for planning. First, planning in Namibia, as determined from the findings of this study, follows established frameworks and policies that are based on Western conceived concepts and epistemologies. The legislation (URPA 2018) reflects universal one-size-fits-all approaches with the consequence that low-income settlements such as Havana are viewed as non-compliant and deficient, and thus need help from above (Pysklywec 2012). This attitude then leads to increased efforts of control and redevelopment from the local authorities through the application of technical expert knowledge, but that has the potential to exclude knowledges from the ground. The Havana residents, on their part, are engaging in various surviving, entertainment or cultural activities to ensure their survival from locally initiated innovations, but still expect the authorities to provide all solutions for their overall well-being and spatial maintenance. This differential approach in efforts to create preferred conditions for the residents, reflects the powers on display in this context, and the result is a “dualistic planning” system, as referred to by Oranje et al. (2020:8). In the Namibian context, Larsen and Augustus (2020:94) observed a disconnect between the authorities and the residents of low-income areas to solve urban problems evidenced by “miscommunication” and “mutual mistrust” in existing power relations. How will planning achieve sustainable and inclusive settlements in such a situation?

Second, based on the above, the exclusion of spatial IKS in planning frameworks and policies has maintained the planning status quo and thus engendered the perpetuation of the dependency syndrome being observed in many urban areas in Namibia. This one-sided approach of, for example, space production approaches, contribute to the narrowing of thought in problem-solving. The provision of services and housing, although urgently needed, remain the only issues directing land development demands and supply, while equally needed facilities such as cultural open spaces are left out. The local authorities, on the other hand, continue with the belief that they are the sole problem-solvers of urban problems. This restricts their capacity to learn from other available knowledges, which could provide possibilities to think of alternative space production methods (Fisker et al. 2019; Lefebvre 1991). The authorities operate in a neoliberal market-based environment where the private sector decides on developmental routes and visions, which exclude local knowledge and realities on the ground (Sihlongonyane 2015c:2140). The urban policies are more orientated towards effective management, cost recovery and global competitiveness, thus in the process neglecting the pressing needs of the majority poor (Chitekwe-Biti 2018; Piermay & Sohn 1999). In this vein, planning practitioners are called upon to rethink their practice by becoming more multiple knowledge receptive, and open to spatial IKS such as the provision of cultural open spaces foregrounded in this study.

However, it should be noted that 2020 was the year for local authority elections held during November. The observations were that community political activists were increasing, and some campaigning as independent candidates or starting new parties, vying for various political positions. These campaigns were characterised by strong critiques and unhappiness about the current ruling SWAPO party, and its weakness in handling various issues such as escalating corruption and urban problems. Although the ruling SWAPO party managed to obtain an overall marginal victory, it lost many local authorities to new parties, especially major urban centres such as Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund. This change, together with the accompanying enthusiasm observed, could potentially change the way urban planning is to be performed in the future. These emergent community and political organisation are directly influencing the way spatial planning is to be addressed, given the raised activism observed from the communities in low-income areas demanding for either better services or land (see Delgado 2021; Delgado & Dempers 2020). Nonetheless, the challenge remains for planning to be convinced that indigenous and other local spatial

knowledges are valuable tools to be deployed in space and place improvement. This study, through the voices of the research participants, attempted to do this persuasion.

Third, the current low provision or absence of open spaces including cultural open spaces, especially in low-income areas, led to some serious socio-economic problems for the residents of Havana. The Havana residents reported increased stress levels experienced in their settlement, which were also experienced by their children due to a shortage of open spaces. These stress levels are linked to tensions and conflicts between neighbours due to children's noisy games, and between the residents and the municipal officials due to non-complying street usage by traders, cultural groups and children alike. Other issues such as crime and safety are also reported as children are searching for open spaces for their games. Conflicts with officials are also experienced by adult residents when engaging in cultural activities for either training or income-generating activities. This is equally due to the same problem of a lack of open spaces for the communities, and planning needs to realise that essential spaces are needed for the well-being of all residents in an urban setup (see Karuri-Sebina & Koma 2015:145). In this regard, planners are reminded that open spaces (and parks) are not only needed in affluent areas but are important in the improvement of living conditions of all urban areas, even if they have to be redesigned to suit the contextual conditions of each neighbourhood (Harvey 2009; Richardson et al. 2021; Sandercock 2003b). This implies that low-income areas such as Havana, and all other areas described as informal, temporal or reception areas, should also be included in this consideration.

Lastly, the exclusion of IKS approaches from mainstream planning frameworks create uncomfortable living conditions to the residents of Havana. Some cultural activities are not allowed due to restrictive regulations at some places, while others take place under difficult circumstances, such as consent seeking procedures or through "invented spaces" by communities. The choice exists to travel to rural areas for obligatory cultural requirements, although this creates another economic stressful situation for the residents. Those who can financially afford to do so, do travel to attend cultural activities in the rural areas. However, those who cannot afford the travelling must wait for the right time, or abandon the idea altogether. The research participants drew attention to this concern. As argued throughout this study, this leads to a reduced sense of belonging and sense of place to the residents, with reduced agency in the maintenance of their spaces.

9.3 Suggestions for further research

The study came up with the following suggestions that need attention for future research:

- The research should be extended to include other indigenous communities in Namibia, to have a wider understanding of spatial IKS aspects within the larger Namibian community.
- Further research could investigate how IKS and current conventional planning could best accommodate each other to enrich the findings of this study.
- More research could investigate other sectors and discipline treatments of IKS in order to find “common ground” among different approaches from those disciplines and planning.
- Research could further explore how the relationship between the planning academics, planning practitioners and the residents could be improved to enhance mutual learning on aspects such as IKS.
- Research is needed to investigate what other community-based organisations, besides those targeting housing and service provision, exist within residential areas such as Havana that could be used for partnership purposes with municipalities and universities.
- More studies can be carried out that probe the impact, positive and negative, of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on IKS, and the adaptation of strategies involved to safeguard IKS from destruction and destructive social media representation.

9.4 Contributions of the study

This study attempted to contribute mainly three aspects of critical importance to planning in Namibia. The first was to explore existing spatial IKS aspects and foreground that as important and relevant knowledge to be considered by planning, especially in the improvement and creation of sense of place in the low-income urban areas. This knowledge creation exercise involved engaging with local indigenous communities (Ovawambo and Ovaherero) and hold extensive conversations with identified elders and knowledge holders to gain a better understanding of their spatial knowledges, while observing as much as possible the traditional important events. Further knowledge discovered that the spatial IKS existed from precolonial, colonial to the present postcolonial era, and does still exist, mostly in rural areas. These

findings revealed that this IKS still contributes to the well-being of the respective communities and is still highly valued by the communities.

The second contribution is the revelation by this study that the indigenous communities, having moved to the urban areas, adapt new strategies to survive and to escape the strict regulations of the municipality. For example, due to the stringent municipal regulations that prevent them to practice their cultural activities on any open space such as streets, coupled with the lack of open spaces in Havana, the residents identified small open spaces between their houses to practice their cultural activities for entertainment, community well-being and income generation. These emergent but empowering IKS-based urban activities still remain invisible from planning policies and practice in Namibia. This finding revealed an important lesson that planning should be aware of, namely: That despite the good intentions of planning trying to craft a preferred future for the residents of Havana, planning unintentionally continues to perpetuate inequalities and injustices by ignoring the residents' local IKS. It was found that spatial IKS was missing from the various planning policies and legislation in Namibia, and that this contributed to undermining of local knowledges that could assist with some of the complex problems in low-income urban areas. In addition, it was further found that spatial IKS was also missing from the planning education curricula, leading to planners doing courses at tertiary institutions having to continue with Western conventional planning methods as the only tools at their disposal. However, despite all the shortcomings, the study found that all research participants (Havana residents, the municipal planners, planning academics, elders and knowledge holders) are in support of spatial IKS to be considered and researched as valid knowledge. The research participants concurred that IKS is existent, useful and is still being applied in certain communities.

Finally, this study is adding to the rapidly expanding calls from Global South researchers for alternative knowledges to current planning theory and practice. The explorations of the *olupale* (Ovawambo community) and *omuvanda / okuruuo* (Ovaherero community) cultural open spaces and their related practices could be considered as part of this alternative knowledge being called for. The study moved beyond a mere call for alternative knowledges as posited by postcolonial and postmodern theories with no solutions being offered (Harrison 2006) by exploring the aspects, the values and meanings, the practices and the management behind the two cultural open spaces in Namibia mentioned above.

9.5 Recommendations

- The Municipality of Windhoek should adopt a policy that encourage municipal planners to become IKS researchers in the local communities to improve their knowledge and improve their working relationships with the residents. Such a policy should equally create space for increased interaction between elders and knowledge holders and municipal planning officials for deliberations centred around various spatial IKS. Nevertheless, during the final stages of this thesis, it was discovered that the new municipal political leadership that came to power after the 2020 elections, proposed the establishment of the Windhoek Institute for Municipal Research (Tötemeyer 2021:77). This recommendation could thus find space in such an institute.
- The Municipality of Windhoek should identify current existing social and cultural organisations in Havana and other low-income neighbourhoods and create a platform for such groups to build on their knowledges and on their experiences on urban problems.
- The Municipality of Windhoek should approach various neighbourhood areas and identify spaces where cultural open spaces can be provided to address the stress levels being experienced in Havana.
- The Municipality of Windhoek and other municipalities countrywide, as well as the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, should revise the planning legislation and policies to include IKS in the formulation of various sections in those documents to improve the relationship between lower-order and higher-order policies.
- The universities should create a course on spatial IKS inside the spatial planning curriculum, increase research on IKS, and simultaneously facilitate partnerships with municipalities and residents (especially elders and knowledge holders) to engage in collaborative processes of producing and formulating useful IKS for inclusion in the curriculum.
- The spatial IKS-related activities and innovations by the residents should be supported by the municipality, especially in low-income and informal settlements, to elevate the confidence levels of the communities to trust their knowledges in solving some of the urban problems they are facing. This will contribute to the reduction of the existing dependency relationships that characterises the low-income areas of the city.

9.6 Conclusion

All along as it progressed, this study has improved the researcher's listening skills, which as a town planner, he thought was already in perfect form. The researcher listened to the stories of many different people throughout this research and the respect for all of them grew with each interview or informal discussion. The stories were enriching, informative and full of wisdom, whether they were from the elders and the knowledge holders, the residents of Havana, the municipal and private town planners, or the planning academics. The stories revealed how the planning policies and practice are constrained by various factors that make planning exclusive and unable to unintentionally consider alternative knowledges. As a result, IKS remain alienated from planning practice, and thus creates a conflictual existence of various approaches to urban living, one considered formal, and the other considered informal and deserving of being hidden or replaced.

However, the stories of the elders and knowledge holders and the residents of Havana revealed that some of this wisdom, considered unsuitable in urban spaces, does exist and still contributes to the existence of the local communities. Having worked in a planning office for a long time, the researcher agrees that planning indeed is exclusive and needs to change to consider valuable alternative knowledges such as spatial IKS. Such a change in thinking and practice is in line with the increasing calls for alternative knowledges from the literature consulted, particularly from the Global South perspectives. Such calls further converge with the voices from the residents of Havana, the elders and planners who participated in this study, and who supported the consideration of IKS in planning. However, such changes in planning practice and policy require an openness filled with compassion, trust and willingness in learning the various spatial lifestyles of local communities in both the urban and rural areas. However, this compassion should overcome the various challenges that prevent alternative knowledges such as spatial IKS to be viewed as useful for and in planning practice and theory. This could assist planners to understand the interconnectedness of various spatial aspects and values of local communities. It is hoped that this understanding could guide planning and other disciplines to come up with more acceptable and inclusive plans, planning practices and planning policies that will transform urban residents' lives and their areas for the better. This is particularly more urgent in low-income urban areas of the post-apartheid city that must survive on their own in certain aspects, due to modern planning approaches that exclude them from fully participating in urban affairs.

Such a commitment from planning will require a serious unlearning process where some long-established planning practices should be shed off or pushed aside to open the way for new learning. Planners, if seriously committed to the improvement of places, need to be self-reflective and identify their practices that can be unlearned, then learn new insights from various indigenous communities by openly and equally engage with all residents. Simultaneously, as demonstrated throughout this study, planning should widen its boundaries and adopt an interdisciplinary approach in order to enrich its space production knowledge. Throughout this study, insights from disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, geography, political science, architecture and others, together with indigenous knowledge, enabled a better understanding of how space and place is conceptualised from various viewpoints. It is through these diverse experiences or multiple viewpoints that tools could be developed that may potentially improve relations between planners, communities and their spaces and places, such as the Havana settlement. Such an understanding could reduce the miscommunication and mutual mistrust identified by Larsen and Augustus (2020) as major contributing factors to the disconnection between the aspirations of local authorities and those of the low-income areas in Namibia's urban development approaches.

Finally, it is hoped that with the recommendations presented in this chapter, and if seriously considered, the interactions between the various indigenous communities, especially those residents in low-income areas, the planners and their institutions and the planning academic community will improve. This will then create an increased hope that planning will start exploring the improvement of entire (not partial) places such as Havana with a wholistic approach inspired by multiple viewpoints that include IKS. By *entire*, the study refers to the residential area, the residents within it, the rivers and the trees within it, the children, the elders, and the whole urban space. This will then be fulfilling the original ideals of the *Ubuntu* principle, which entails wholeness, humaneness, and the interconnectedness of all the things within a space and place.

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Appendix 1

ETHICAL CLEARANCE OBTAINED FROM THE ETHICS COMMITTEE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

17-Mar-2020

Dear Mr Billawer, Wilson WH

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Indigenous knowledge systems, spatial planning and planning legislation: the case of Windhoek (Namibia)

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2019/2179/1703

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Prof Derek Litthauer

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Digitally signed
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Appendix 2

PERMISSION FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF WINDHOEK TO HOLD INTERVIEWS AND OBTAIN THE NECESSARY INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FROM THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Department of Human Capital & Corporate Services

☒ 59
80 Independence Avenue
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA



Tel: (+264) 61 290 2911

www.cityofwindhoekcc.org.na

ENQ: Mr AM Nikanor

PHONE: 061 -290 2630

DATE: 25 June 2020

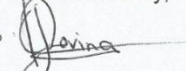
**RE: INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS, SPATIAL PLANNING
LEGISLATION: THE CASE OF WINDHOEK (NAMIBIA) – MR WH.
BILLAWER (STUDENT NO: 2007062231)**

This letter serves as confirmation that Mr WH. Billawer a student pursuing a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of The Free State, Bloemfontein – South Africa has been granted permission to conduct his research on the above subject.

Respondents to the study are therefore requested to render Mr WH. Billawer their cooperation and assistance.

Should there be any queries, please feel free to contact the Organisational & Human Resources Development Division on the above contact details

Yours Sincerely,

PP 

Mr. AM Nikanor

Manager: Organizational & Human Resources Development



Appendix 3

AFRICAN PRECOLONIAL SETTLEMENTS AND THEIR SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Place	Spatial planning features	Period of activity	Authors
Old African towns • Meröe (Kush capital, 560 BC) • Timbuktu (Mali, ±400 AD) • Kumbi-Saleh (Ghana – ancient, 1000 AD; ±15 000 people) • Begho (Ghana, ±1100 AD) • Elmina (Ghana, ±1600 AD) • Kumasi (Ghana, 1800 AD; ±15 000 people) • Mbanza Kongo (Congo, 1500 AD; ±30 000 people) • Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe, Mutapan empire capital, 1400 AD)	• Gathering of people reflect urban characteristics • Leadership – Elders council, mostly by ward formations • Social control/ security, mostly by residents, army presence • Layouts: privacy; courtyards with mixed uses • Market places, community wells for water, worship centres • Broad thoroughfares, wide avenues, community plazas • Begho: high international trade, multicultural, multinational • Kumasi: pedestrian ways with market stalls along curbs; courts with arcades; viewed as paradise • Mbanza Kongo: tall leafy trees; trees removal forbidden in some areas • Timbuktu: Science and human learning centre	Various ages – see column 1	Hull RW (1976) Obeng-Odoom F (2015)
Benin City (Nigeria, 10-1300 AD)	Urbanisation signs: • Centralised political organisation • effective defence • foreign trade • religion • arts and craft • Layout: showed various broad, straight streets intersecting at right angles to each other	±10–1300 AD – Edo capital ± 1602 – Displayed broad streets (Dutch observer Ruiters: “main streets 7-8 times broader than Warne Street in Amsterdam”) ± 1668 – (Dapper: “more straight streets about 120 feet with intersecting streets at right angles to them”)	Onokerhoraye A.G. (1975)
East Africa (Swahili settlements, East coast of Tanzania: Pemba Island)	• Stone-build areas • Local management / town-based • Production activities • Regional trade: indicate town formations prior to colonisation • Town growth around 1000 – 1100s AD • Integrated settlement hierarchies observed • Inclusivity observed	± 500 – 1500 AD	LaViolette A & Fleischer JB (2009)
Swahili settlements (East and Southern Africa); (Engaruka, now Kenya/Tanzania)	Settlements displayed high cleanliness • Settlement consists of stone houses	±14th – 15th century ±1700 AD	Wynne-Jones S (2013) Coquery-Vidrovitch CC (2005)
(Central Africa – Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Congo)	Land uses observed: • Royal hills, residential spaces, public squares (for justice, religious, political activities, festival spaces), • Dwellings of separate rooms (for herders, sanctuary, kitchen and granaries, boys, girls, wives, rooms for visitors) • Trees – some sacred ones planted on graves • Well-maintained roads • Very clean, near houses • Maintenance of quarters by chiefs respectively	1850s – 1908 (observation period by various travellers/ explorers)	Coquery-Vidrovitch CC (2005)

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Tswana settlements (North-western Orange Free State & Central Transvaal)	- Residential buildings – sliding doors, courtyards and plastered with clay - Courtyards kept clean - Huts – decorated and appeared painted; floors hard and polished like; fences separated huts; - Streets observed (± 30-40 yards wide)	± Iron Age ± 1840s–1850s	Maggs T (1993)
Mpondo village (RSA)	Land uses: - Garden / cultivation; Spring for water; residential area; wooden area for medicinal plants; mud brick production area; grass area for thatching uses; uncultivated area for grazing - Houses: various multiple uses	± 1930s–1960s	Davison P (1988)
Zulu towns, e.g. Umgugundlovu	- Rationally planned ±1 400 grasshuts - Drainage; privacy applied	Various precolonial eras	Amankwah-Ayew K (1996)
Tswana settlements	- Density (1/50m²) - Orderly planning		
Ibo areas (Nigeria)	- Strong social, economic, cultures, and physical links - Efficient use of space - Trees – shade and village separation, meeting places - Central marketplace		
Mbanza-Kongo	- Trees important – ecological balance - Conservation and environmental protection		
Congo	Area borders – banana plantations		
Fulani areas	- Public squares - Shade trees - Plazas		
Kumasi	One public space		
KwaZulu-Natal villages	- Stormwater control, houses built against flooding - Aesthetics: nice earthy colour paints - Apron – raised against dampness and sitting area for discussions - Separate medical rooms - Separate prayer rooms - Trees for decoration, ceremonial, gatherings and visitor areas - House finishings allowed ventilation, lighting and privacy - Naming: rooms clusters, named according to wives names	2008 – 2009 (architectural research observation)	Mhlaba (2009)

Appendix 4

SUMMARY OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES MENTIONING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM TERMS IMPLICATING SPATIAL PLANNING

News-paper	Date	Urban development/ place heading	Theme (main remarks/ideas)	Proposals (main future/ advice/idea)	Indigenous / local term used
The Namibian	11/5/2018	What happens when you put African philosophies at the centre of learning (Comment: Waghid Y et al.:1)	• Concepts: <i>Ubuntu</i> and <i>Ukama</i> • Massive open online course (MOOC) • World education systems – more open to local approaches; MOOC – share knowledge; views, claims; Storytelling: offer reasons • Critical reflections: own social, cultural and economic contexts; Problems: dictatorship; famine; hunger; food insecurity; societal violence	Societal and transformation change through collaborative teaching	• Local approaches to education • <i>Ubuntu</i>; <i>Ukama</i>
New Era	15/10/2018	New lodge planned for <i>lipumbu ya Tshilongo</i> conservancy (news: 5)	• Tourism promotion • <i>Olupale</i> (traditional space) experience • Job creation; Economic promotion • Following RSA example of Lesedi and Shakaland cultural villages	Use traditional <i>Olupale</i> for visitor experience; Use local products and artists to participate	• <i>Olupale</i> (NB traditional space in homestead) • Oshivambo culture to be used.
The Namibian	18/12/2018	Good indigenous practices can help business management (Opinion: Ngwangwama M: 13)	• Good indigenous knowledge systems • Bad indigenous knowledge systems • Decolonisation of the mind • <i>Ubuntu</i> – togetherness • Inclusive and cooperative teamwork	Take valuables from colonial and indigenous knowledge systems Dispute resolution: panel of elders To work: written /formalised in organisation policies/ procedures; Relieve expensive legal system	• Indigenous knowledge systems • <i>Ubuntu</i>
The Namibian	25/1/2019	The dilemma of an African University student (Opinion: Kamwanyah J: 10)	• African University: design/architecture-Western • Naming: might be African • Language/food/books/theories/knowledge- Western roots/African input absent • Noticing: Foreign centres/museums—No indigenous studies/history	University: Not only produce universal scholar, BUT also a relevant and localised one in terms of context; Can be done: Not stop at naming only, BUT context also	• Indigenous worldviews mentioned • <i>San</i>, <i>Ubuntu</i>, great Zimbabwe
The Namibian	3/6/2019	Govt does not contribute to Nama chief's funerals – chief Kooper (news: 1)	• Nama cultural festival • Celebrating identity • Looking for state funerals like other tribes' chiefs • Festival: Potential for development	Minister: education and arts: embrace own indigenous cultural identities Equally important engage in cross-cultural activities with other Namibian groups	• Indigenous cultural activities • Cross-cultural activities • Nama
The Namibian	25/6/2019	Sanlam's "My culture is my life" zooms in on Nama culture (p. 3)	• Cultures explored • Spatial uses: separate hut for menstrual period • Clothing and dances	Diverse: music, poetry, storytelling; Rich culture – musical/literary Folklore/tales/proverbs and praise poetry	• Traditional huts for various uses • Nama • #Aonin • !Aman

News-paper	Date	Urban development/ place heading	Theme (main remarks/ideas)	Proposals (main future/ advice/idea)	Indigenous / local term used
The Namibian	7/7/2019	Owela Festival continues this weekend (p. 4)	• More open festival: Owela • Venue: CBD (NAGN) • Look at future of work • Art: see as daily life • Participants: diverse; different tribal/races artists	Propose alternative space: all welcome Art: accessibility to all Open door policy	• Owela: traditional African game
The Namibian	6/9/2019	San chief delivers candid speech at UNAM Cultural Festival (news: 9)	• Chief invited to UNAM • Cultural sharing/awareness raising	San chief said: "Even in our own cultures we have strong moral values, norms and customs that impose a duty to respect elders, take care of our environment that sustains our existence and promote culture of hard work."	• San • Culture sharing
The Namibian	8/9/2019	!Nukhoen clan wants return of stolen artefacts	• Calls recognition of the !Nukhoen according to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.	The king calls for: Indigenous people's rights must be corrected; Access to sacred land and grave sites; Protecting rock art of ancestors, and clicks being attached to meanings. "All names of places, rivers and mountains must be renamed to their original names."	• Indigenous names • Ancestors/graves • !Nukhoen • !Khoaegu • /Nawe!Hub
New Era	13/9/2019	Oxungi longs for Oshiwambo culture preservation (news: 28)	• Namibian cultures – losing values • Oxungi-night discussions • Festival – promotes culture diversity • Oxungi platform – to get together • Invited: elders –musician/ lecturer/author	Activities: Riddles/owela/storytelling Culture alive/preservation Teach about roots	• Oxungi • Owela • Indigenous languages
The Namibian	11/10/2019	Factor happiness in public policy (opinion: Amupanda J: 10)	• Foreign judgements/laws • Absence of local organisation systems in legal courts • Thus, increase crime, for example gender-based violence • Government and City of Windhoek absence	Cannot understand society without understanding its organising principles; Meet needs of people at point of need; Windhoek: possible to seek happiness in development agenda; for example, UAE established Ministry of State Happiness, Tolerance and Future	• Aawambo judicial order • Gciriku Traditional Authority
New Era	21/11/2019	Country needs gender transformative programme (news: 3)	• Gender-based violence • Women and girls targeted • Men and boys left out • Only English used	Target men and boys also Not only don't do this; BUT also, this as solutions is important; use local languages; use traditional and social media methods; Report: NOT only Police; To other institutions as well	• Olufuko: target girls only • Where is similar platform for boys?