Nowhere to go: informal settlement eradication in Kigali, Rwanda.

Emily E Benken

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NOWHERE TO GO: INFORMAL SETTLEMENT ERADICATION IN KIGALI, RWANDA

By

Emily Elizabeth Benken

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Graduation *summa cum laude* and for Graduation with Honors from the Department of Anthropology

University of Louisville

May 2017
NOWHERE TO GO: INFORMAL SETTLEMENT ERADICATION IN KIGALI, RWANDA

By

Emily Elizabeth Benken

A Thesis Approved on

March 27th, 2017

by the following Thesis Committee:

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Thesis Advisor

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother

Mrs. Joyce Graeter

Whose unending support made this thesis possible.
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ABSTRACT

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Emily E. Benken

May 2016

Following the new world order of the post-Cold War era, the rise of developmentalism stressed the moral necessity of installing capitalist models of growth in the global south. The reproduction of narratives of modernity and teleological progression were reproduced in numerous African cities and actualized in policies related to urban development. The consequent trend of urbanization has been the systemic eradication of informal settlements and large-scale displacement to make way for modern, productive urban areas.

One site of this pattern is Kigali, Rwanda. Since the turn of the century, official “vision projects” released by the Rwandan government have reimagined the capital as a modernized city. The manifestation of these policies has displaced thousands of informal housing residents from the more economically desirable parts of Kigali to the periphery of the city. Though national narratives surrounding development push for equity, improved quality of life, and inclusion for all Rwandans, the policies reflect a profit-driven privatization of urban spaces. Reflected in global south cities worldwide, urban spaces have become increasingly exclusive on the basis of socio-economic position.
This research focuses on the emergence of this pattern in Kigali in the Agatare Cell, where the construction of a road stipulated the eviction of 43 informal settlement households. After conducting interviews with all affected households, the qualitative data was interpreted using an inductive coding technique. Alongside quantitative data surrounding the demographics of the area the following themes emerged: significance of place, concerns about compensation, land security, monopolization of information, civic duty associated with development, and safety concerns.
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INTRODUCTION

The government-sponsored promotional video for Vision 2020—a development plan to “transform Rwanda into a middle-income country by the year 2020”—is expertly produced (Ansoms and Rostagno 2012:). A camera pans over an imagined cosmopolitan area with innumerable skyscrapers, pedestrian skywalks, and neatly trimmed parks while a feminine British voice narrates the envisioned city with words like “pristine,” “al-fresco,” and “urbanites” (Niyongabo 2013). Finally, the video displays Kigali in its present state. It briefly scans a wide landscape of crowded informal settlements, only to quickly sweep the sight away with an exaggerated visual effect. A single, large villa-style house is revealed while the accompanying narration states, “existing urban areas will transform into well-planned communities” (Niyongabo 2013). Though the term “slum” is never explicitly used, the homogenous and desolate portrayal of informal settlements suggests a parallel to the prejudice attached to the outdated term.

Figure 1
This seven-minute promotional video provides a concise demonstration of two contradicting narratives at play in Rwandan urban development. One narrative emphasizes inclusivity and the improvement of quality of life for all Rwandans, whereas the other stresses the development of the country and “cleaning” urban areas (Manirakiza 2014:161). This contradiction is best captured in one scene that claims Vision 2020 “will ensure that everyone will have a place to stay,” while focused visually on a sprawling business sector with aesthetically appealing shopping centers, skyscrapers, and expansive parks (Niyongabo 2013). Regardless of its multiple assurances to promote equitable housing, Vision 2020 does not provide an answer to housing Kigali’s current informal settlement residents, which comprise 66 percent of the population (Ansoms and Rostagno 2012:427).

Recent research in numerous disciplines has recognized a regional and global pattern of state-sanctioned informal settlement eradication rooted in discourses of modernity (see Huchzermeyer 2011; Huggins 2010; Sasken 2014). This paper contributes to the growing niche by analyzing the manifestation of this pattern in Kigali, Rwanda.
Specifically, it investigates the theories and practices within urban development that contribute to large-scale displacement.

I approached this topic through ethnographic research conducted in an informal neighborhood in Kigali called Agatare. The area was selected as the result of an impending Vision 2020 project that planned to eradicate over 40 plots for the construction of a road (City of Kigali 2014). Drawing upon a theoretical framework grounded in developmentalism and nationalism, I argue that Rwandan urban development projects promote a narrative of moral responsibility to improve the living conditions of informal settlements, yet the policies themselves prioritize the privatization of settlements to maximize profit. This pattern can be located within the structure of economic globalization and the capitalist values reproduced through the influence of international actors and a strong sense of nationalism.

This paper is divided into five sections: a literature review, an overview of the conceptualization of slums, a discussion of the geographical and social conditions in Rwanda, an overview of informal settlements in Kigali, and data analysis.

The literature review situates exclusionary urban development practices in a wider context of the history of anthropology and the emergence of developmentalism, nationalism, and structuralism. The next section situates Kigali’s informal settlements within an expansive history of “slums” (a term frequently and problematically used interchangeably for “informal settlements”) and the origins of “slum upgrading.

---

1 Though Agatare is actually the name of a cell in the Nyarugenge District, residents and local policy-makers referred to the neighborhood exclusively as Agatare in conversation and documents.
methods.” This section also includes a case study that details the eradication of an informal settlement with similar physical and social conditions to Agatare.

The third section explicates relevant topographical and geographical conditions of the city and how these conditions have influenced urban planning and development over time. It then details the development goals of the Rwandan government, including its smaller, spatially specific plans and all-encompassing visions of development.

The fourth section provides a general overview of informal settlements in Kigali including general conditions and locations, proposed future upgrading, and upgrading mechanisms used in Rwanda. Finally, the fifth section goes into the original data description and analysis, including research methods, emergent themes, and a conclusive analysis.

Applying this theoretical framework to the narratives of informal settlement residents as voiced in the interviews, I critically examine the factors impacting patterns of displacement in Kigali. By contributing to a growing breadth of research, I hope to uncover the normalization of inequality within urban development and potentially influence future development policies. As it stands, the machine of urban modernization in Kigali—and throughout the world—threatens the structure of an equitable urban society. Physically, it continually forces informal settlements to the periphery of the city, which reproduces and often exacerbates existing living conditions and opportunities within informal settlements; ideologically, it endorses the idea of exclusive access to “the city” on the basis of wealth and status.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Evolutionism & Developmentalism

Throughout the history of social sciences, disparate ontological theories have emerged within larger discourses. At certain points in time, specific approaches have been heralded as the accepted truth, only to be rebuked by later academics as problematic or outdated. Although wider discourses have changed over time in order to compensate for new information, accepted paradigmal thought is still influenced by the specter of social sciences past. In anthropology this pattern is especially significant, as many past theories—though no longer ideologically accepted—still have material consequences in contemporary policy formation.

Tracing the history of anthropology back to the nineteenth century, the origins of developmentalism lie with Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) and his theory of cultural evolutionism (Kuper 2005:32). Tylor was heavily influenced by Darwinian thought, as evidenced by his direct application of biological evolutionary concepts to societal differences (Kuper 2005:33). Tylor argued that cultures could be ranked by “relative sophistication” according to a “hierarchical social order” (Kuper 2005:34). On the basis of this logic, Tylor also argued that cultures would progress over time from primitive to advanced, passing through the stages of savagery, barbarism, agricultural, and industrial to finally emerge as a modern civilization (Erickson and Murphy 2013:29).
Many anthropologists of the time viewed culture as naturally progressing through these linear stages of development, and that the surviving “primitive” cultures could be understood as a sort of relic of the past of “modern” cultures (Erickson and Murphy 2013:30).

After decades of championing anthropological research, Tylor’s theories became increasingly outdated with Franz Boas’ (1858-1942) more historically informed theory of cultural relativism (Kuper 2005:115). This approach was central to ethnographic studies until the political climate shifted significantly with the onset of the Cold War. This period brought about the demonization of communism, pitting the ideological constructs of capitalism and communism against one another (Haynes 1996:1080). In 1947, the Truman Doctrine brought the Cold War into an international arena by vowing United States intervention in the case of Soviet Union expansion (Heale 1996:1080). This interventionist approach appealed to the logic of cultural evolutionism by implying the teleological notions of staged progress. Whereas Tylor’s theories applied social evolutionism to cultures, developmentalism applied it to macroeconomics (Pearce 1999:395). W. W. Rostow’s influential “Non-Communist Manifesto” directly mirrored Tylor’s stages of cultural progression, imagining societies as evolving from “traditional” to “age of high mass consumption” rather than from “primitive” to “advanced” (Rostow 1960:4). Similarly to Tylor’s assertion that all cultures followed a singular, teleological progression, Rostow insisted that, in order to reach economic maturity, all economies must grow along the axis of capitalism in order to achieve contemporary comforts and modernization (Rostow 1960:4).
Rostow’s theories extended into other disciplines, fueling developmentalist thought and over time concretizing a perceived binary between capitalist and communist models of growth. The capitalist model stressed the increase of internal productivity, whereas the communist model stressed the redistribution of power and wealth (Oliver-Smith 2010:13). This binary was reproduced in developmentalist theory commonly employed by anthropologist of the time, which emphasized the inevitable progression of the global south as a “universal trajectory […] of a ‘civilizing’ process” (Ferguson 1997:162). In this paranoia-fueled political landscape, cultural evolutionism reemerged, but displaced the evolution of culture to the field of macroeconomics (Haynes 1996:1080). After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new world order declared capitalism “triumphant as the guide to improving human welfare” (Oliver-Smith 2010:15).

In his description of the immediate consequences of the Cold War, Arturo Escobar states “the industrialized nations of North America and Europe were supposed to be the indubitable models for the societies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the so-called Third World, and [now] these societies must catch up with the industrialized countries, perhaps even become like them” (Escobar 1995:3). This call for a specific brand of Western progression gave the global north an assumed authority regarding the welfare of the “Third World” and various international financial institutions sprung up to address this issue. The maximization of productive capability central to capitalism was extended to the built environment, and global north institutions and policies asserted that the expansion of infrastructure was synonymous with economic growth and central to pulling the “Third World” out of poverty (Oliver-Smith 2010:6). Institutions like the
World Bank and the International Monetary Fund began to allot massive multilateral
loans for the development of infrastructure development, beginning a new era of
developmentalism (Ferguson 1997:180).

Though developmentalism is becoming increasingly outdated—especially in the
field of anthropological research—the effects of the ideology are still palpable. Most
notably, many countries in which developmentalist policies were aimed remain in
massive amounts of debt to international financial institutions (Ferguson 1997:147).
Additionally, developmentalist concepts based in capitalist values are still prioritized in
domestics and internationally sponsored development projects. This reproduction of a
capitalist drive for maximum productivity frequently overlooks the needs of vulnerable
members of society, such as the residents of informal settlements.

The “African City” as an Object of Theory

Though most contemporary anthropologists reject the outright use of
developmentalism, interpretive theories rooted in developmentalist thought have
concretized in urban studies. As a result, the conceptualization of the “African city” is
heavily informed by these theories, which in turn shapes urban development policies.
Considering the heavy influences of cultural evolutionism on theories of
developmentalism as explicated above, such policies are rarely beneficial to the
individuals living in these cities.

In Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map, Jennifer Robinson explores
this influence on urban studies, citing that many African cities “do not register on
intellectual maps that chart the rise and fall of global and world cities” (Robinson
That is, there is no defined space for African cities within the parameters of urban studies, which leads to their exclusion from theory. Rather than being conceived of as singular products of a specific time and space, cities in the global South cities are “interpreted […] through the lens of developmentalism” (Robinson 2002:531). This lens relies heavily upon an underlying narrative of modernization that insinuates a teleological pattern of urban growth. Consequently, this pattern portrays African cities as “unfinished” or “undeveloped” because they lack the “qualities of city-ness” that most global north cities possess; namely, exclusively formal housing and a modernized aesthetic (Robinson 2002:531).

This assumed pattern of urban growth presents a major fallacy in its application to African cities. The urbanization process in the global south is profoundly impacted by factors stemming from its detrimental position in the post-colonial, neoliberal global economy (Ferguson 1997:158). Adverse conditions to development, including repercussions associated with foreign occupation, massive debts to the World Bank, and violence incited by past imperial forces, present roadblocks to urbanization that were not a factor in the global north (Ferguson 1997:158). As a result, the axis of growth along which African cities grow is not nearly as linear as that which European and American cities grew.

This reimagining of African cities as developmentalist projects is not just ideologically problematic, but also has serious material consequences informed by structuralist systems. In Claude Lévi-Strauss’ approach to structuralism, the material world is interpreted by means of binary opposition (Lévi-Strauss 2013[1984]:157). That is, all objects derive meaning from their exact opposite: abstract/concrete, black/white,
ideal/material. Binary oppositions are intrinsically interdependent; neither has meaning without contrast of its opposition, yet they can never occupy the same space of meaning (Lévi-Strauss 2013[1984]:157). In the realm of idealism, binary oppositions use language to create meaning from nontangible concepts; in the realm of materialism, however, where objects already exist outside of language, binary oppositions become problematic. If one material derives meaning from its opposition to another material or the absence of another material, normative and deviant values are also inevitably assigned.

As applied to urban development in African cities, structuralism assigns values within the binary of “developed” and “undeveloped.” Using discrete values rather than continuous values, housing becomes informal or formal; legal or illegal; taxed or untaxed. Rather than falling onto a spectrum, informal houses are forced into a singular, homogenous identity. By forcing all housing into such narrow categories, policies are not able to capture the diversity of urban life (Johannesburg 2008:3). In Cities with Slums, Marie Huchzermeyer criticizes this conception of informality as a singular sector of housing, arguing that the diversity and multiplicity of interactions within informal settlements connect different economies and spaces to one another. This entwinement of informal economic structures with the social fabric of a given community constructs unique and subversive peripheral spaces (Huchzermeyer 2011:97). Characterizing this periphery, Simone states “the formal and the informal, and movement and home are brought into a proximity that produces a highly ambiguous sense of place” (Simone 2004:2). Though this sense of place is constructed in part by the marginalization and exclusion of informal settlements, it continues to expand and transform to create meaning from adverse living conditions.
Regardless of this complexity, informal housing is conceived of in policy as the absence of formality and an aspect in African cities that should be “fixed.” Though the developmentalist vision of progress would have the cities growing linearly, the continual creativity produced in informal settlements has created urban growth along unknown axes.

To synthesize these various perspectives of the “African city” as an object of theory, consider Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe’s words from *Johannesburg: the Elusive Metropolis*:

“It is not the material infrastructure or the built form that make the city a city. The city, in a way, exists beyond its architecture. The built form is not, or is no longer, the product of a careful planning or engineering of the urban space. It is, rather, produced randomly as a living space more and more reduced to its most basic functions, that of a shelter, the heterogeneous conglomerate of truncated urban forms, fragments and reminders of material and mental urban elsewhere.” [Nuttall and Mbembe 2008:2]

In consideration of Kigali as an “object of theory,” the country’s current structure of urban development conceptualizes the city in terms of binary oppositions. As evident in the Vision 2020 video referenced in the introduction, informal settlements throughout the country are grouped together and conceived of as a unit; a singular issue to be fixed with one solution.

**Nationalism**

In his theories on nationalism, Benjamin Anderson claims that a nation is an “imagined political community” (Anderson 1983:22). He goes on to explain:

“It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. It is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in
each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”
[Anderson 1983:22, emphasis added]

By Anderson’s logic, though the arbitrary boundaries that make up nations do not inherently ascribe meaning to space, material meaning is derived from the membership to the nation.

Anderson goes on to characterize nations as having three distinct features. All nations are: 1) limited, in that they have defined boundaries that indicate who is and who is not a member, 2) sovereign, in that they are the source of political authority, and 3) community-forming, in that they secure devotion of members to the extent that many are willing to die for their nation (Anderson 1983:6-7).

A nation’s fulfillment of these characteristics, according to Anderson, then produces and perpetuates nationalism (Anderson 1983:7). As one of millions within a population, how is the individual member affected by the collective identity of the imagined community? The influence of collective identity can be positive, such as instigating a sense of belonging and altruism toward other members. Conversely, the implications of a collective identity can be negative. The groupthink that nationalism encourages is inherently exclusionary; if you are not a member of a nation with a specific set of goals and characteristics, you are by default an outsider, who may belong to a nation with contradictory goals. Historically, this atmosphere of exclusion has taken the form of racism, anti-Semitism, and systemic violence (Arendt 1951:2).

As evidenced by conflicts throughout history, the stronger an imagined community is, the more intense nationalism within the community becomes, which in turn increases the likelihood of external conflict. Consider, for example, two neighboring nations as defined by Anderson’s terms: both nations are limited and
have access to different resources; both are *sovereign* and have two distinct sources of political authority; and both are *community-forming* to the extent that the identities of individual members are inseparable from the identity of the nation. Hypothetically, if one nation’s boundary contained a resource considered valuable to the neighboring nation’s political authority, this nation has the ability to take the resource by force simply by mobilizing the imagined community. Under the influence of nationalism, members can be more easily manipulated by political authorities to work towards the wellbeing of the nation. Even if the cause is not clear, the threat of the wellbeing of the collective identity can often be enough to cause violent mobilization.

**Constructed Nationalism in Rwanda**

These constructions of nationalism are uniquely applicable to Rwanda because its most historically significant conflicts have been mostly internal. The systemic killing of over 1 million Rwandans during the 1994 genocide signified the loss of internal cohesion and the perceived loss of a collective identity (Straus and Waldorf 2011:3-4). Following their complete military victory, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took control of the government and sought a solution to the ethnic divisiveness perceived among Rwandans. Conversely to the formation of the European Union that sought to reduce nationalism, the RPF sought to *increase* nationalism by eliminating all identities and labels other than “Rwandan” (Straus and Waldorf 2011:4). As opposed to an organic emergence, nationalism became state-sanctioned, which many scholars refer to as “state building” (Purdeková 2008:502).
To commence this process, the RPF-led government quickly “[undertook] a series of dramatic political, economic, and social projects” to “alter social identities, cultural norms, and individual behavior” (Straus and Waldorf 2011:5). According to the Rwandan government, these actions were meant to prevent future violence, as “the prior social order produced genocide, so radical change is needed to prevent a future recurrence” (Straus and Waldorf 2011:5). Reshaping individual behavior began with prohibiting the use of any perceived divisive identity terminology that was not state-approved. This prohibition began with using prohibited identifiers in public conversation (e.g., Hutu, Tutsi, or any other ethnic or culturally specific label), which was punished by “public shaming campaigns, labeling of individuals as genocidaires, and [...] formal charges” (Purdeková 2008:509). This was followed in 2003 by the adoption of several thought and speech crimes, including “divisionism,” “ethnic ideology,” and “genocide mentality” (Hintjens 2008:10). These “replacement” policies are meant to deconstruct and reform Rwandans’ self-perception and the perception of social categories around them, thereby contributing to a collective identity (Purdeková 2008:510).

Academics have been deeply critical of this state-sanctioned nationalism as a force of homogenization (see Burnet 2012; Sommers 2012; Uvin 1998). The prohibition of nuanced sub-identities limits the representation and protection of marginalized populations in Rwandan law (Straus and Waldorf 2011:11). In interviews with marginalized Rwandans that included “peasants, Hutu prisoners, Tutsi survivors, or youth” Straus and Waldorf describe a trend of “expressions of exclusion and marginalization [...] accompanied by a palpable sense of fear and
alienation” (Straus and Waldorf 2011:11). Rwandan laws are based mostly on the representation of “narrow, elite […] Anglophone Tutsi returnees in in Kigali” (Straus and Waldorf 2011:11). The consequences of this narrow representation are intensified by the social taboo surrounding open criticism of authority in Rwanda (Hintjens 2008:7).

During my time in Kigali, many experiences and conversations alluded to Lars and Waldorf’s description of the fear of dissent and consequent silencing. Even casual conversation with acquaintances became awkward when the topic of government control arose. During interviews, discussions of the government were generally met with no dissent and overall praise; there are frequent references to the goodness of Rwandan government in national media sources, there were multiple political rallies for the majority, uncontested party, and there were photos of Paul Kagame (the RPF military leader who assumed the presidency of Rwanda following the genocide) in most storefronts.
CONCEPTUALIZING “SLUMS”

Locating “Slums” in time & space

In both policy and popular statements, informal settlements are often referred to interchangeably as “slums.” In her exploration of the exclusivity of urban development policies in South Africa, Marie Huchzermeyer traces the conception and consequent erasure of slums throughout time. The term originated in early 19th century Great Britain following rapid urbanization brought on by the Industrial Revolution (Huchzermeyer 2011:20). The etymology of slum is rooted in the word “slump,” which at the time was commonly used to refer to marshy areas—fitting for the “slums” they referred to, which was in “low-lying areas adjacent to canals and […] waterlogged land” (Huchzermeyer 2011:21). The word was first used to regulate the environment in 1875 with the “1875 Housing Act,” which literally designated slums as “Unhealthy Areas” (Huchzermeyer 2011:21). Laws and regulations soon followed this act that were meant to “improve” the lives of “slum dwellers,” but generally displaced many poor urbanites. This term—and the connotations it carries—was transcribed onto multiple regions of Africa during British invasions and colonization. In Huchzermeyer’ discussion of this legacy of colonialism, she states:
“In countries marked by a strong British colonial history, postcolonial authorities and societies have continued to apply the term to a range of conditions that elsewhere may have been referred to as ‘informal settlements’—unplanned residential areas with sub-standard housing, accommodating the urban poor and often absorbing new migrants to the city. […] Most residents are tenants, while many ‘structure owners’ are richer, politically connected, and not residents of these ‘slums.’” [Huchzermeyer 2011:21]

The official use of the term was further proliferated with the UN-HABITAT initiative in 1999 to “improve life for slum dwellers” as part of the Millennium Development Goals (Huchzermeyer 2011:15). This goal was coopted to mean eliminating slums, and the slogan “Cities Without Slums” was quickly attached to the initiative (Huchzermeyer 2011:15-16).² A UNHABITAT report in 2003 solidified the use of the term “slum,” stating that it referred to:

“[any] area that combines, to various extents, the following characteristics […]: inadequate access to safe water; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; insecure residential status.” [Huchzermeyer 2011:23]

The legitimization of the term by the United Nations insinuates a singular experience of “slum dwelling,” and has led to further dissemination in other fields. Singularizing depictions, such as in Davis’ *Planet of Slums*, dangerously “allow[ing] strangers from afar to paint monstrous pictures of huge undifferentiated neighborhoods filled with hopeless underemployed masses” (Angotti 2006:962). In other words, the experience of informal settlement residents in Dharavi, Mumbai is viewed as synonymous to the experience of those in Kibera, Nairobi, even though historical particularities and geographical differences singularize these experiences. Though every

² UN-HABITAT did not create the slogan “Cities Without Slums.” A corollary organization called Cities Alliance conceived the term in 1999 in a “Cities Without Slums” campaign, but it has since been used with frequency by the UN.
informal settlement exists in and was constructed in unique historical and environmental conditions, the post-modern understanding of “slums” becomes urbanization gone wrong; social evolution that should be fixed.

Construction of Policy

The unintended consequence of these homogenized constructs of informal settlements are their actualization in the form of inaccurate policies that aim to “improve the livelihood” of residents in informal settlements (Huchzermeyer 2011:3). “Slum upgrading policies,” as they are commonly called, are overwhelmingly supported by ahistorical understandings of settlements that detach specific residencies from their temporal, geographic, and economic context (Huchzermeyer 2011:19). As a consequence, influential monetary institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund tend to fund upgrading projects that “encourage a reductionist and symptom-oriented approach to poverty and informality, while also unintentionally fueling stigmatization” (Huchzermeyer 2011:39). That is, rather than taking into consideration the built complexities of informal settlements and improving upon current conditions; many national policies—fully legitimized by the United Nations—stipulate their complete elimination.

Why then can informal settlements not just be torn down to build more stable public housing? To begin with, the lack of defined, centralize infrastructure within informal settlements necessitates a highly organized social infrastructure. In People as Infrastructure, AbdouMaliq Simone defines this alternate infrastructure as an, “economic collaboration among residents seemingly marginalized from and immiserated by urban
life” (Simone 2004:407). Simone argues that the highly specialized needs present in informal housing demands the development of equally specialized skills and problem solving (Simone 2004:410). Returning to Huchzermeyer, informal settlements can be understood as “incubators for inventive survival strategies where inhabitants have begun to reclaim available space for multiple uses, develop their own specific forms of collaboration and cooperation and reterritorialize their connections both inside and outside the city” (Huchzermeyer 2011:43).

This idea of highly specialized, yet unseen infrastructure is echoed throughout informal settlements in Kigali. In Agatare, many residents cited their dependence on a network of family and friends situated in their community. These ties have been established over continual interactions between places, people, actions and things (Simone 2004:408). As a result, “particular spaces are linked to specific identities, functions, lifestyles, and properties so that the spaces of the city become legible for specific people at given places and times” (Simone 2004:409).

Though it would be incorrect to label “slum dwellers” as passive victims, many urban development policies funded by international monetary institutions do exactly that. Rather than recognize the complex environment, policy-makers are more likely to “rehearse a set of politically easy choices” by conceptualizing residents as powerless (Huchzermeyer 2011:43). Holston refers to this trend within policy- or law-making bodies to construct constituents for their own benefit as the “formulation of citizenship” (Holston 2008:4). He argues that policy-makers use “social differences that are not the basis of national membership—primarily differences of education, property, race, gender,
and occupation—to distribute different treatment to different categories or citizens” (Holston 2008:7).

As applied to Kigali, the construction of the needs, desires, and fears of specific categories of citizens is frequently manipulated in accordance to the Kigali Conceptual Master Plan. For example, urban development policy frequently requires the completion of social impact studies before construction can commence in a given area (Rwanda Housing Authority 2014:29). The studies—which originated as World Bank regulation “social safeguards”—are meant to identify major concerns of informal settlement residents regarding their living conditions and risks associated with upgrading projects (Rwanda Housing Authority 2014:29).

In analyzing the social impact study conducted by an independent German company called GIS, Urban Planning, Engineering Surveying & Geospatial Mapping Consultants (referred to as GISTech) was hired for the Agatare project. The concerns highlighted by the company did not reflect concerns that residents shared during interviews (GISTech Consultants 2015:17). The risk factors highlighted in the official report were mostly related to hazards regarding the wetland environment. The survey asked in a closed format to prioritize the living conditions by level of hazard, and consequently, the survey produced results that stated that residents were most concerned about street lighting, access to electricity, drainage, and transportation (GISTech Consultants 2015:15-17). Conversely, when the same residents that GISTech interviewed were provided with more flexibility to discuss concerns over construction, the overwhelming majority was concerned about the risks associated with losing their homes and seeking housing elsewhere. As opposed to GISTech’s one-dimensional “formulation
of citizenship,” RISD’s interviews allowed for a wider analysis. This is reflective of the rehearsal of politically easy choices often practiced in urban policy-formation; it is much more difficult to conceive of and improve the livelihood of a dynamic group of people with varying concerns, but it is much easier to provide a solution for a self-constructed citizen.
SPECIFIC CONDITIONS IN KIGALI, RWANDA

Geographical & Topographical Features

Located in the Central Africa region, Rwanda is bordered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda (Lemarchand 2012:3). It is one of the smallest countries on the continent at 10,169 square miles, or roughly the size of the state of Maryland. Topographically, the country is mountainous and hilly, and is aptly nicknamed “the land of a thousand hills” (Republic of Rwanda 2014).

In the center of the country lies its capital, Kigali. At 732.24 square kilometers and a population of approximately 1,135,430, the population is incredibly dense (Rwanda Housing Authority 2014:33). The topography coupled with this population density means that many urban areas are packed into very steep slopes. For governance purposes, the city is divided into three Districts: Kicukiro, Gasabo, and Nyarugenge (RHA 2014:34). The Districts are further divided into 35 administrative sectors, which are then split into 161 cells (RHA 2014:33). For urban planning purposes, development plans are designed for each cell, which generally projects such as the construction of roads, installation of streetlights, or other infrastructure (RHA 2014:57). In 2013, the population density of Nyarugenge was recorded as 2,127 residents/km², whereas Gasabo was 1,237/km² and Kicukiro 1,918/km² (RHA 2014:37).
Topographically, Kigali poses many issues to urban housing. The landscape varies greatly, drastically changing from wetlands and marshes to steep, mountainous areas. All three districts also have high altitudes relative to the country’s rural districts. According to multiple government documents, the high altitude and steep grades make much of the land in Kigali uninhabitable as it stands (RHA 2014:82). Certain grades can allegedly lead to soil erosion, mudslides, and heavy runoff. According to an environmental study conducted by the Rwanda Housing Authority, 6.8 percent of Kicukiro District, 37.5 percent of Gasabo District, and 37 percent of Nyarugenge District is uninhabitable (RHA 2014:82). This study—and others like it—is used to inform development plans and zoning regulations. The implication is the justification of eradicating any houses on land designated “uninhabitable.” These same areas, however, are allocated to development projects that involve housing, making the designations seem malleable to the needs of government projects.
Trends of Urban Planning in Pre-genocidal Rwanda

One of the leading Rwandan academics in the field of urban planning, David Niyonsenga, argues that “despite how informal[ly] it has been practiced, urban planning in Kigali has [a] historical background” (Niyonsenga 2013:11). He traces this background to the early 1960s, when Rwanda was occupied by the French Ministry of Cooperation (Niyonsenga 2013:11). In 1962, Kigali’s population was about 5,500 and was approximately three square kilometers; by 1984, the city ballooned to approximately 160,000 inhabitants and 15 square kilometers (Niyonsenga 2013:2). In an attempt to organize the rapidly expanding city, the French MOC introduced the concept of formalization by enforcing a Conceptual Master Plan for Kigali (Niyonsenga 2013:11). This 1964 plan included extending the boundaries of the city, cutting the hills of Nyarugenge to reduce the grade of slopes, constructing French ministry sites, and delimiting affordable housing plots in Nyamirambo District (Niyonsenga 2013:11). The first two goals were met in 1969, but the last two goals—constructing French ministry sites and delimiting affordable housing plots in Nyamirambo—were met later and
differently than originally planned (Niyonsenga 2013:11). MOC offices were built on Kacyiru hill, a district that is still known for its heavy concentration of foreign organization headquarters and “Embassy Row,” while Nyamirambo was not delineated at all due to the proliferation of informal settlements (Niyonsenga 2013:11).

By 1975, Kigali extended beyond the geographic limits of the proposed 1964 city limits (Niyonsenga 2013:11). The French MOC developed a 5-year development plan that aimed to regulate informal housing and continue expanding urban infrastructure (Niyonsenga 2013:11). With the failure of this plan, a development plan in the early 1980s aimed to delimit affordable housing in cells Nyamirambo, Gikondo, Kicukiro, Remera, Kimihurura, and Kacyiru and construct an industrial area near the airport (Niyonsenga 2013:11-12). This plan produced mixed results. Housing currently available in the Kicukiro, Remera, Kimihurura, and Kacyiru Districts is very expensive, mostly housing elite Rwandans or expatriates (Niyonsenga 2013:12).

Influences of Genocide

The period in Rwanda from 1994 to 1996 has very limited quantifiable data in regards to urban planning and housing. This is generally associated with the chaos and violence of the 1994 genocide, which was heavily concentrated in rural areas that had little to no communication with central powers of government (Lemarchand 2009:90). This pattern of violence influenced the urban development of the country over the next decade, expanding the limits of and more heavily concentrating the population of Kigali in a short period of time.
Taking place over the course of ten months in 1994, the narrative associated with
the genocide is very often reduced to a story of “good and evil” (Lemarchand 2009:90).
This essentialist interpretation comes dangerously close to asserting morality as “running
parallel to ethnic lines,” pressuring scholars to introduce new lenses with which to
understand the conflict that left over 1 million Rwandans dead (Lemarchand 2009:90).

Rather than exclusively reading the narrative of ethnic and class-based
antagonism, the genocide can also be understood through the lens of land-based conflict.
As one of the smallest countries on the continent with the highest population density,
Rwanda is “often considered a perfect example of […] the unavoidable outcome of
overpopulation and environmental limitations” (Uvin 1998:82). According to materialist
scholars like Peter Uvin and Rene Lemarchand, Rwanda’s imperialist past led to decades
of smaller, land-based conflicts. After a succession of circumstantial events tied to ethnic
identity, the mounting tension finally exploded into violence. In crowded rural areas
dependent upon subsistence, land grabbing was a major motivation in killing”
(Lemarchand 2009:94). For many landless rural Rwandans, the genocide became, “a kind
of do-it-yourself land reform: an opportunity to grab land from their neighbors”
(Lemarchand 2009:94).

Niyonsenga’s studies claim that in the late 1990s, the population density and city
limits of Kigali expanded significantly (Niyonsenga 2013:11-12). Alongside this
expansion, the concentration of available formal housing stayed about the same, whereas
the concentration of informal housing expanded exponentially (Niyonsenga 2013:11).
Trends of Urban Planning in Post-Genocidal Rwanda

The population of Kigali has continued to grow at a rate of 8 percent per year (Niyonsenga 2013:12). This growth, coupled with the stability of a consistent ruling party, provided the necessary conditions for the development of a clear housing plan. To start, Kigali abandoned its adherence to the French MOC and its enforced development plans (Niyonsenga 2013:12). With the intention of creating a development plan that could be used for 50-100 years\(^3\) and account for a population growth of up to 3 million, the Kigali Conceptual Master Plan (KCMP) was designated as the “blueprint” for all future urban development in late 1999 (City of Kigali 2010:iii). The KCMP takes into account all districts within the city limits and provides regulations and plans for future development plans (CoK 2010:iii).

\(^3\) Government documents and academic reports are inconsistent with the span of the project. Some state that the KCMP will take course over the next 50 years; other state 100 years.
Most of the publicly disseminated information related to the KCMP stems directly from the City of Kigali website, rather than the official documents. Here, the CoK outlines the preexisting conditions that necessitate the KCMP, as well as a very general explanation as to what the plan entails. According to the CoK, the KCMP is necessary to provide a “road map” for Kigali’s future growth (CoK 2016). It guides long-term changes in the city, gives “physical form to its strategic vision and values,” addresses proposed projects, opens spaces, and helps city leaders and stakeholders make decisions about planning (CoK 2016). In multiple governmental meetings I attended, the statement “it’s not in the Master Plan,” was frequently used to block new development ideas, indicating that the KCMP is as much about preventing specific developments as it is about guiding new developments. The CoK website also explains that the KCMP will anticipate changing population demographics, the need to provide services to citizens, economic development, and create an environment that fosters business development (CoK 2016).

In a statement on the website that seems to be a direct rebuttal to the aforementioned promotional video, “the Kigali City Master Plan is not about building skyscrapers!” Instead, the CoK asserts, it is meant to answer the following questions associated with positive growth: How should land be used? Where should growth occur and in what form? Where should housing and commercial development be located? How and where should the different building uses be located? What will be the density of the developments?
Projected Development of Kigali Districts

According to some\textsuperscript{4} records, the transformation of Rwanda will be especially geared toward international tourists and businesses. Nyamirambo—a district that is currently one of the most densely populated urban areas in the country—is projected to become the new “sports hub” of Rwanda. Nyarugenge—another heavily populated district—will focus upon “efficient regional and local connectivity. It will promote, “efficient regional and local connectivity,” boasting a large bus system, “green connectors,” restored wetlands, and “adventure tourism” like equestrian clubs. Muhima is projected to become the new commercial hub for local and international businesses. The Vision 2020 video envisions a grand central plaza, a generously sized shopping area, landscape bridges, and numerous skyscrapers to comprise the new Central Business District. The video goes on to explain the heavy presence of 5-star hotels in Kiyovu, along with a revitalized market to replace the old Nyabugogo Market. Noticeably, none of the districts are geared specifically toward affordable housing. This is one of the main concerns of critics of the KCMP.

In one of the more detailed critiques of the KCMP, Ansoms and Rostagno explain that, though the stated central goal of the plan is to build a middle-class society, “the economic growth is concentrated in the hands of a small elite” (Ansoms and Rostagno 2012:428). The critique goes on to say that rural Rwandans—especially farmers—do not seem to fit into the government’s idea of modern Rwanda.

\textsuperscript{4} Again, official records of different Rwandan governmental agencies frequently contradict one another. The City of Kigali records often discuss drawing in international visitors and tourists, where Rwandan Housing Authority tends to focus on creating affordable housing.
Rwandan Land Laws

According to Rwandan law, the Rwandan government “has the supreme power of management of all land situated on the national territory” (Law 43/2013, article 3). This is justified as all land being part of the common heritage of all Rwandan people (Law 43/2013, article 3). As the managers of the land, the Rwandan government leases plots to Rwandan citizens and foreign entities (Law 43/2013, article 3). These lessees can in turn lease the land for profit, but only through emphyteutic lease, which specifies that the lessee must improve the land by construction (Law 43/2013, article 16). That is, if a person leases a parcel of land, they are expected to build upon or farm the land in a reasonable amount of time. All leases are made in contracts ranging from 4 to 99 years (Law 43/2013, article 17). Any lease agreement can be ended and the land returned to the government if the plot is considered more necessary for public use (Law 43/2013, article 12).

According to a study conducted by Rwandan Initiative for Sustainable Development, the majority of land contracts in Kigali are four years (Binda 2012: 4). This gives landowners very limited land tenure and a narrow sense of land security. Though perceived as the “owners” of the land, they remain highly susceptible to expropriation, as purposes of “public interest” in Rwanda are not specifically defined.

As secondhand lessees, tenants of informal settlements have the lowest degree of land security. Not only is this population susceptible to governmental eviction, but they are also vulnerable to the will of the landlord. Because Rwandan land law does not recognize the category of informal settlement tenants, residents are offered no legal protection from unjust eviction. This was reflected in many interviews as a general sense
of uncertainty regarding land tenure. Many interviewees listed trivial reasons as grounds with which to be evicted, such as: the landowner needs their house back; if they landowner is to raise the rent and I cannot pay; if the family of the landowner wants to live in the house; if the homeowner changes the rent agreement without informing me; the house I am living in is sold. Furthermore, the specifics of rent agreements are not bound by law, but instead act as an informal agreement between two people regarding rent fees. As a result, the concept of eviction was fairly normal for most interviewed tenants.

Development and Urban Planning Programs

To understand the context of the development plans underway, it is helpful to consider the individual development plans and governmental and privately funded institutions at play. As outlined above, the division of Rwanda into cells is specifically useful for generating development plans. Along with larger goals for districts (District Development Plans), individual cell development plans are used often. Individual cell development plans must adhere to the larger District Development Plans, which in turn must adhere to the zoning plans of the district. All development plans are technically supposed to follow the KCMP, but as the plan is conceptual, there are no specific laws or regulations ensuring this.

Zoning plans are used to regulate land usage, including the intensity of development and the desired setting and height of buildings in a given area. The purpose, then, of a zoning plan is to clearly explain what can and cannot be developed on a given area.

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5 There are no public records of all cell development plans that I have been able to find. There are at least cell development plans for most cells in Kigali.
plot. The District Zoning plan for Nyarugenge includes a Zoning map and set of zoning regulations. Whereas the map identifies zoning districts within the planning area and the desired intensity and building height for the area, the regulations tabulate land use into categories of permitted, conditional, and prohibited uses. Certain developments are designated as compatible with the zoning plans (permitted use), semi-compatible with the zoning plans, which may require certain conditions to be fulfilled (conditional use), or non-compatible with the zoning plans as a result of safety or other concerns (prohibited use).
INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN RWANDA

Overview of Informal Settlements

Approximately 66 percent of Kigali’s population resides in informal housing (Ansoms and Rostagno 2012:428). In comparison to informal settlements throughout East Africa, living conditions on average in Kigali’s informal settlements are considered to be much better (Huggins 2010:4). For example, many informal neighborhoods in Nairobi are characterized by open sewers, an average density of over 1,000 persons per hectare, and high crime rates (Huggins 2010:4). Informal settlements in Kigali have virtually no open sewers, an average density of 190 persons per hectare, and reported low crime rates (Huggins 2010:4). In an intensive study of informal settlements in Kigali, Huggins reports that a major opinion-survey demonstrated that between 83% and 90% of residents in informal settlements were satisfied with their living conditions and would not want to move (Huggins 2010:4).

In contrast to the relatively positive living conditions, one major concern regarding informal settlements is a lack of land security. Land security is the personal belief that there is little to no chance of being randomly, forcibly removed from your home (Bizimana 2012:89). The lack of land security, then, is the constant fear of forced removal. In Kigali, the lack of land security is multiplied for tenants in informal settlements, who are allotted no protection in the legal framework. A study conducted by the Rwanda Housing Authority found that approximately 85 percent of the residents in informal settlements do not have land security (Rwanda Housing Authority 2014: 36).
Aside from a general feeling of discomfort, a lack of tenure security severely hinders residents’ attempts to improve shelter conditions or plan for long-term housing (Bizimana 2012:87). Additionally, it often allows for the manipulation of land and services (Bizimana 2012:87). This issue is very rarely discussed in government documents or development plans. When land security is addressed, it is not projected as a risk of life in informal settlements. While the main risks addressed in such documents are mostly related to water access, electricity, drainage, and transportation, the most pressing concern of residents as demonstrated in recent qualitative research (see Huggins 2010; Bizimana 2012; RISD 2012) is land security. This shows a major discrepancy in the perception of risk in informal settlements between policy-makers and residents; the risk factors addressed in “improving the livelihood” of residents in development projects do not aim to increase land security, but aim to improve physical conditions. Addressing these risks is a short-term solution to the housing crisis. A long-term solution would be taking measures to increase access to land security.

Overview of Upgrading in Rwanda

According to the Rwanda Housing Authority, informal settlement upgrading includes improving access to basic physical and social infrastructure, economic opportunities, tenure rights, and information and institutions while actively involving “slum communities” during the planning, implementation, monitoring, and management process. Specific upgrading mechanisms are dependent upon the categorization of each informal settlement. Categories are based upon the “level of missing components” in a given area, including: road accessibility, improved sanitation, sufficient living conditions,
surface/storm water drainage, and durability of housing (Rwanda Housing Authority 2014:82). Depending on these components, settlements are categorized by the rubric below:

- **Category 1A**: very critical, high slope areas. Structures in this area are built on slopes higher than 40 degrees are prone to soil erosion, have no storm water drainage, and limited road accessibility. Immediate relocation is suggested.

- **Category 1B**: very critical, wetlands. These areas are prone to shift during heavy rains, have poor sanitation, and lack of sufficient living conditions. Immediate relocation is suggested.

- **Category 2**: missing most components. Residents are in immediate or at high risk of danger as a result of the lack of most components and little access to emergency relief. RHA states that most informal settlements in Kigali are category 2. Immediate relocation is suggested.

- **Category 3**: mainly missing access roads and durable housing. This category requires certain upgrades, but does not require immediate relocation.

- **Category 4**: mainly missing access roads. This category requires certain upgrades, but does not require immediate relocation.

- **Category 5**: mainly missing durable housing. This category requires certain upgrades, but does not require immediate relocation.

- **Category 6**: average condition in all attributes. This category requires certain upgrades, but does not require immediate relocation.
Additional sub-categories include “high risk slope informal settlements (IS),” “flood risk IS,” “worst IS,” “poor IS,” and, “moderate IS.”

![Figure 6](image)

Specific approaches to informal settlement upgrading fall into the broader categories of provider or support model (RHA 2014:108). The provider model dictates the provision of infrastructure and new housing for informal settlement residents, whereas the support model dictates the provision of basic infrastructure and the assumption that residents are able to build new housing for themselves (RHA 2014:110). The following are upgrading strategies within each model:

**Provider Model strategies**

- **Green field**: an undeveloped area is provided with basic plots and housing where informal settlement residents are relocated to.

- **Roll-over approach**: current housing in an area is demolished; new housing and infrastructure is developed in its place.
• Infill development: Redeveloping an “underutilized” space to create new housing.
• Public social housing: government-funded housing is provided.

Support Model strategies

• In situ upgrading: upgrading infrastructure and service availabilities, rather than housing, with the least amount of expropriation possible.
• Core housing: provision of the minimum structure of a house that still needs some construction by residents in a new location.
• Site and services: residents are given a plot and basic infrastructure in a new location.
• Incremental housing: incremental loans are distributed to residents for the gradual construction of a house in a new location.

Though the RHA report extensively discusses the support model, there are no current development plans in place that implement any of the strategies. The strategy used most frequently in upgrading projects is roll-over.

World Bank Involvement

As the “second fastest developing country” in the world, Rwanda successfully applied for eight World Bank project loans in 160 different locations for $556.4 million USD in 2015 (World Bank 2017). For any project funded fully or partially by the World Bank, extensive social and environmental impact studies known as Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments (SESA) are required to approve construction (World Bank 2017).
As explicated above, the German company GISTech was hired by the City of Kigali to complete the social impact report. GISTech released the Capital Improvement Plan report in May 2014. Below is the entirety of the data collected by GISTech related to building materials and specific quality of housing:

“Various materials are used in construction in the area. According to RHPC 2012 96% of the population in Nyarugenge use Iron sheet for roofing. This is confirmed by our field survey which showed that over 97% use iron sheet for roofing. For walls most of the households used earth and wood. The survey shows that the floors are mostly constructed with concrete and finished with cement screed. On the lower scale, some of the houses with mud walls also have mud floors. In few instances, some houses are finished with ceramic or granite tiles.” [GISTech 2015:34-35]

This data—coupled with the fact that publicly available GISTech documents do not include research methodology—is indicative of a shallow understanding of the lived experience in Agatare. This information, however, provided the entirety of the data for the social safeguard study.

**Nyarugenge Development Project Details**

After its categorization as a priority-upgrading site in 2014, the Agatare cell was placed on a fast track for the recipient of upgrading projects (Rwanda Housing Authority 2014:92). In the same year, the Nyarugenge Upgrading Project was proposed by the City of Kigali (City of Kigali 2014:1). Using the regulations and plans within Nyarugenge’s District Development Plan (DDP), the project was designed by the City of Kigali, Rwanda Housing Authority, and Nyarugenge District (City of Kigali 2014). It was designed as two phases: Phase 1, to be internally funded, would act as a “pilot” program for Phase 2, a much larger project to be funded by the World Bank. The majority of the
information below is taken directly from personal minutes taken at meetings held with
the City of Kigali, World Bank, RISD, and Rwanda Housing Authority.

Phase 1, funded by various ministries in the GoR, mandates the construction of a
400-meter long, 6-meter wide road connecting the Biryogo market to Rwampara road. If
this project passes the World Bank Involuntary Resettlement Policy safeguard, the World
Bank agrees to fund the second phase. Phase 2 plans to upgrade 86 hectares of land in Nyarugenge, most likely by use of roll-over methods.

![Figure 9](image)

The road will be used mainly for the passing of emergency vehicles (e.g., ambulances, police vehicles, etc.), motorbikes, and pedestrians. It will be constructed with tarmac and will be 16 meters wide and 500 meters long. Construction is set to begin 3 months after the valuation process is completed, estimated to be October or November 2016. The current road construction plan will directly impact 29 structures, many of which contain multiple households.

Though no specific details have been publically released for Phase 2, the World Bank is set to fund the project at $10 million USD for the installment of basic infrastructure as prioritized in the GISTech report. According to the Master Plan Report of Nyarugenge, the main objectives of infrastructure proposed for the Nyarugenge District are: providing an effective water management system, providing an effective waste management system, and providing an adequate energy management system. Meetings have implied that upgrading provisions will fit the provider model, but Vision 2020 stipulates roll-over of the 86-hectare area. To place this in perspective, 84.3% of the
residents of Nyarugenge live within the 86-hectare area, making this area’s population density 4.5 times higher than the remainder of the district.

Upgrading Case Study: Batsinda

The following case study is very similar in geographic and socio-economic conditions to the Agatare Cell. I included the study as an example of the full timeline of upgrading projects, beginning with conceptual development plans all the way to consequences following eradication. This provides a more expansive view of Rwandan urban development with which to situate the Agatare project, as my research ends just before eradication. Due to the numerous parallels between the two projects—including those drawn by many interviewees in Agatare—the consequences of Batsinda can be postulated as possible consequences for Agatare.

The vision of this upgrading project began with the implementation of the 2007 Expropriation Law and the finalization of the Kigali Master Plan and involved the displacement of residents in the Ubumwe cell in lower Kiyovu District (Huggins 2010: 5). Though Ubumwe was comprised mostly of informal settlements, the Kigali City Master Plan envisioned the area as a neighborhood of high-end, houses that will “decentralize key business and recreational activities and minimize road congestion” (Rosen 2015).

Between 2007 and 2008, 362 plots were eradicated for the housing project (Huggins 2010:4). This word choice provides one of the more significant parallels between Batsinda and Agatare. Although “plot” refers to a section of land that can contain between one and seven homes, most literature surrounding the project stated that
362 houses were destroyed (Huggins 2010:5). This word choice may not seem overly significant, but it implies that 362 families were displaced, when in actuality, thousands of families were displaced. Similarly, in Agatare, RISD was told originally that the road would impact 29 houses. When RISD began work on the ground, they found that 29 plots would be affected, but within those plots were 43 houses. Furthermore, many houses contained multiple families. This use of terminology can manipulate the public perception of the impact a project will have.

Landowners were given the choice of accepting the government’s monetary compensation or resettling in a new residence at the city limits (Huggins 2010:5). The housing project was originally undertaken by GIZ and Engineers without Borders, but has since been taken over by the Rwandan Social Security Board (Huggins 2010:5). 126 households elected to live in the newly constructed village, whereas the remaining households chose compensation.6

Although a social impact study indicated that the majority of affected households in Ubumwe were living in poverty (household average monthly income fell below 30,000 Rwandan francs), the most affordable unit in the newly constructed Vision City was a two-bedroom apartment that costs 124 million Rwandan francs (Huggins 2010:5). To further contextualize these statistics, most homeowners expropriated in Batsinda were given under 1 million Rwandan francs. Following the construction, a research study indicated that only 20 percent of relocated households were able to secure equal or higher quality housing (Rosen 2015). According to Tomá Berlanda, “authorities’ insistence on a

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6 Though there is no exhaustive research on the subject, it appears that the majority of displaced residents in a given settlement opt for full monetary compensation rather than resettlement.
top-down push toward formal housing risks causing unnecessary hardship for the city’s-
lower income residents while increasingly excluding them from much of the urban
fabric” (Rosen 2015).

The issues that Huggins recorded during the study mirror the anecdotes that
interviewees shared. To begin with, many compensated residents felt that their houses
and plots were under-valuated by the Kigali City Council (KCC). After mobilizing to
seek independent valuation of their residences, residents found that independent estimates
were far higher than the values given by the KCC. Though the Expropriation law ensures
that residents are given 90 days notice prior to demolition, all houses were demolished in
July 2008 without due notice (Huggins 2010:5). Furthermore, in March of 2009, many
residents had not yet been compensated. This experience was referenced in the fears of
multiple interviewees in Agatare. One interviewee explained their concern that, “in
Muhima, some residents were not given compensation in due time and it took a long time
to get it.” Many residents who chose not to move to the government housing in Batsinda,
therefore, were forced to live in low-quality housing, similar to the area that was
demolished for purposes of development.

Those residents that moved to Batsinda, on the other hand, had separate
complaints. Huggins found through interviews that the Imidugudu was located too far
away from Kigali, resulting in loss of employment or much higher costs of transportation.
Additionally, the types of housing present in Muhima were not accounted for (e.g.,
additional bedrooms, multi-story housing, etc.). Instead, only one type of house was built
in Batsinda, a “simple design with two bedrooms and one living room [and] an external
shower cubicle and toilet. This design, while ignoring the socio-economic surveys
conducted prior to construction, compromised many cultural Rwandan values, such as keeping male and female children in separate rooms (Huggins 2010:5).

The overall negative experiences that many interviewees shared with Huggins was overwhelming. The Rwandan media, however, reported it as “a success story which meets international standards” (Huggins 2010:6). UNHABITAT bestowed the Rwandan government with a Scroll of Honor award for the project. These reports cited information such as newly settled residents in Batsinda receiving access to water and other basic services. The information regarding Batsinda was incomplete and partly incorrect, as Huggins explained that many residents still have not gotten piped water, providing even less access to clean water than their previous living situation. The reports failed entirely to follow up with those residents who chose not to relocate to Batsinda. Huggins explained their situation:

“Those who were unwilling or unable to live in Batsinda, and have relocated to another area of their own choice, may be living in similar or worse conditions to those originally found in Ubumwe. Compensation packages are reportedly low, and do not include the costs associated with relocation. The financing package offered by the Rwanda Housing Bank is unaffordable for many. Some former Ubumwe residents are therefore likely to be living in worse conditions than previously.” [Huggins 2010:6]

Though the negative experiences during the Batsinda project were recorded years prior to the design of the Nyarugenge Upgrading project, many aspects are designed nearly identically. The sensitization and resettlement options for displaced residents remained unsatisfactory; the magnitude of displacement was again not made clear; and the implementation remained heavily top-down. This continual pattern of ineffective development projects is arguably fueled by the constant praise of Rwandan development on international levels. In addition to UNHABITAT, other institutions like the World Bank, foreign governments, and journalists worldwide have promoted Rwandan
development as a rare success story (see National Public Radio 2012; World Bank 2017; United Nations 2014). These narratives are widely framed as an inspirational story of overcoming the atrocities of the genocide; yet the counter-narrative of large-scale displacement alongside such “success stories” is rarely present.
DATA ANALYSIS

Taking into consideration the information presented thus far, the harmful, often unintended consequences of urban development programs in Kigali are clear. Revisiting the original research question of this paper, why then are these upgrading structures still in place? Why are residents of informal settlements continually displaced?

In alignment to these questions, the goal of this research is to more fully understand the experience of informal settlement residents in reference to how policy-makers perceive their experience. More specifically, through the cross-analysis of residential interviews in Agatare and the interviews conducted with various levels of policy-makers, the remaining research intends to identify the most glaring discrepancies in terms of perceptions of informal settlements, locating the discrepancies in anthropological theory with the above background information.

Background of RISD

Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development is a civil-society organization based in Kigali that focuses on research-based advocacy in Kigali, Rwanda. Founded in 1994 to assist with land disputes that were not taken to court, RISD’s work has recently centered on sensitizing vulnerable communities to their land rights, advocating for vulnerable individuals in court and settling disputes outside of court.7

7 For more detailed examples of RISD’s previous work, see risdrwanda.org
The RISD website lists its mission as: to contribute to sustainable development for women and men especially the vulnerable through equitable access and use of land; by means of action research, networking and empowerment of the grassroots. RISD also publishes research studies on issues related to their mission annually.

RISD’s role in the Nyarugenge Upgrading Project has been unclear as a result of inconsistent requests from the CoK and RHA. Originally, RISD entered into a binding Memorandum of Understanding with the CoK and the World Bank. RISD was expected to conduct a detailed social impact report in Agatare to determine the social consequences of the road construction. A separate CSO was set to conduct an environmental impact study. Without prior warning, RISD attended a meeting at the CoK offices where they were told that the social impact study had already been conducted by a German organization called GISTech and that their services were no longer required. Despite this information, RISD carried out the social impact study as originally planned as a result of concerns regarding potential land rights abuses.

From June-August 2015, I regularly traveled to the field site with RISD’s research team to conduct preliminary field visit reports, attend community meetings, and conduct interviews. RISD is currently working to publish their findings in the format of a research paper in Kinyarwanda.

Interview Process

The interview guide used for residents\textsuperscript{8} was designed with the research team at RISD. Taking into account RISD’s local knowledge on the area, the guide was written

\textsuperscript{8} Full copy of the interview guide in Appendix A
with the following questions in mind: What information do you have about the construction of this road? How do you get this information? What are your fears related to this project? What are your hopes related to this project? The guide was then organized into the following sections:

1. **Biographical information** (e.g., range of income, number of individuals in a given household, age ranges)
2. **Land rights** (e.g., tenant status, communication with landlord, knowledge of land rights)
3. **Awareness and communication** (e.g., number of informational meetings attended, known details of construction, where to access more information about the projects)
4. **Potential consequences** (e.g., projected issues with road construction, relocation details, benefits or setbacks to the road construction)
5. **Understanding expropriation** (e.g., knowledge of expropriation process, expectations for compensation, past experiences with displacement)
6. **Dispute Management** (e.g., projected conflicts at the familial, neighborhood, district, and city level)

The interview guide used for local experts\(^9\) was designed to determine the accuracy of the individual’s information regarding the project, the level of communication they had with residents, and their experience with policy-making and expropriation. The guide was organized into the following sections:

\(^9\) Full copy of the interview guide in Appendix B
Research Methods

The data was collected through a series of structured interviews that took place on site through the assistance of a team of four enumerators. Each household that was to be destroyed as noted by the Nyarugenge Development Plan was interviewed according to head of household. The interviews were then translated from Kinyarwanda to English by the staff of RISD. Local “experts” were identified by RHA and RISD, which included individuals at each level of the project (cell level, district level, etc.). The four government employees interviewed from lowest to highest ranking were: Village

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10 I used a direct translator for the interviews I personally conducted.
11 Some structures contained anywhere from 2-5 households inside. Though all buildings were one story, those buildings that contained multiple households were set up as apartments with some communal spaces.
12 Resident questionnaire is in Appendix A; local expert/policy-maker questionnaire is in Appendix B.
Security Officer of Agatare; Social, Economic, and Development Officer of Agatare; District Urban Planner; and Head Architect of Vision 2020.

Additional information was gathered through phone calls, email correspondence, and minutes from various meetings regarding the road project.

Analysis Methods

I analyzed the qualitative sections of interviews using the strategies of grounded theory as explained in *Analyzing Qualitative Data: The Systemic Approach*. This theory uses a set of techniques to induce meaning from “people’s own words,” which was in this case the interviews conducted with residents (Amber 2017:541). The parameter for the selected interviews was dictated by the road construction plan; all 43 interviewees lived in houses that would be razed. After reading these interviews, I employed inductive coding. This coding technique involves defining “codes” that can be used as a key to understanding the data. Each code should include: specificities for inclusion or exclusion, particular meanings to being “in” or “out” of the code, and values possible within the code such as high/medium/low (Amber 2017:543).

Once codes are selected after initial readings of the interviews, a “codebook” is made to keep track of how many interviews demonstrate belonging to the code. For example, one possible “code” in this set of interviews was the concern of tenants over fair compensation. For every tenant interview that expressed a concern over fair compensation, I marked the appearance of the code in the codebook. 18-50 appearances of a code signify that the code is a pattern in the data and can be considered a relevant
theory. Using analytic induction, this process makes the use of a formal method to “build up causal explanations of phenomena from a small number of cases” (Amber 2017:545).

The codes determined as “causal explanations” are not exhaustive. Through the process of coding all 43 resident interviews, I determined the following six themes: significance of place, concerns over compensation, lack of land security, monopolization of information, and safety concerns.

I analyzed the quantitative sections of the interviews using the SPSS Statistics program. After selecting the relevant categories and running the programming, I exported the files into Microsoft Excel to create readable charts. This data was used to provide a richer description of the population of Agatare, including demographic information. All charts are visible following the emergent themes.

Field Visit

The initial field visit took place during a preliminary community meeting held between RISD and concerned residents in Agatare.

Agatare is unique in that it is a decidedly informal area surrounded by formality. To the north is the historic\textsuperscript{13} Biryogo market recently “upgraded” with paved sidewalks and organized vendor booths by the government. A path leading downhill from the market unexpectedly gives way to a stone path, which quickly becomes the wide, worn dirt path that runs through Agatare. This main path forks into narrower side streets, leading from house to house. The effects of the non-permeable surfaces north of this

\textsuperscript{13} Research does not indicate the exact date that Biryogo was constructed, but local information points to it being one of the oldest markets in Kigali. Though Nyabugogo is nearly irrefutably the oldest market in the city, it has been almost entirely renovated and is not recognizable from 25 years in the past.
housing are immediately noticeable; many residents explain that after the upgrading in Biryogo, the water that used to be retained at the high elevation (but now flowed right off the concrete) had nowhere to go but their own plots. The widest dirt path has severely eroded; created a lightning-shaped crack in the ground that rainwater makes deeper and wider every day.

The dirt path cuts off unexpectedly at the newly constructed, two-lane, concrete road. It appears out of place because it drives directly through what used to be a continuous neighborhood. It has been the source of numerous complaints for similar reasons to the Biryogo market’s upgrading—the runoff from the non-permeable surface has destroyed multiple houses and caused similar erosion in pathways.

These two concrete strips of formality leaves a large neighborhood in the center of Agatare. In RHA publications, both upgrading projects—as well as the pending new road project—were justified as making the area easier to drive through for residents. “Not many people in Agatare have cars. Probably something like 5 percent” a RISD coworker who lived nearby explained to me during a walkthrough. Many residents echoed this opinion in interviews; none of the 43 households even owned vehicles.

The houses in the remaining informal neighborhood are constructed with a litany of materials. Most are a combination of bricks and a stucco-like exterior composed of mud bricks and a concrete coating. Many of the houses cannot be viewed from the main street as a result of the placement of tall, hand-constructed fences, as is custom for many informal houses in Kigali to install. These fences are generally wooden planks nailed together haphazardly or large metal sheets hammered into the ground, with the exception of well-off residents who may have a brick or concrete wall dividing their property.
Many residents (especially tenants) expressed that they would not spend the time or money to construct a high-quality fence because of the lack of land security. If a family were renting a 3-bedroom house and could be evicted or expropriated at a month’s notice, why spend money on a brick wall? The fences were also used more for the sake of privacy (many residents washed clothes, spent time, or did other private things in the lot immediately in front of their building) rather than for the sake of security.

Emergent Themes

Significance of place:

One of the most noticeable themes was the significance of place and the meaning that residents ascribed to the neighborhood. There was a notable discrepancy between how the residents and the policy-makers conceptualized the neighborhood. Drawing from the earlier analysis of Simone’s “people as infrastructure,” meaning is continually created through the everyday exchanges that neighbors had with one another and their environment. One interviewee explained, “I cannot go far from my place of birth. It’s where my friends, people, and even my clients live, and it’s not easy to find other clients and friends.” This interviewee constructed space through association to a social and professional network.

Residents’ concerns over the potential loss of place was reflected in their responses to questions such as, “how will you decide where to move?” Many interviewees described finding a place very similar to or remaining in Agatare. Said one, “living conditions in Biryogo are so easy and it’s near my job.” Many other interviewees echoed the concern of remaining close to their work, which is likely based upon the
centrality to other cells. Others noted that their relatives were near the area. Some noted
the closeness to their child’s school. The complexity of this invisible infrastructure can be
further understood through statement from Simone:

“Such infrastructure remains largely invisible unless we reconceptualize the
notion of belonging in terms other than those of a logic of group or territorial
representation. People as infrastructure indicates residents’ needs to generate
concrete acts and contexts of social collaboration inscribed with multiple
identities rather than in overseeing and enforcing modulated transactions among
discrete population groups.” [Simone 2004:419]

Many tenants also put a significant amount of labor and funding into their rented
homes to establish a sense of place. As Burnet discusses in Genocide Lives in Us, the
cultural norm of Rwandans—especially in crowded urban areas—is the desire for
privacy. Privacy is not mutually exclusive to the sharing of information and construction
of social networks, but is achieved in different means. Almost all houses were hidden by
fences, usually constructed out of sheet metal. These fences acted as symbolic and literal
“gates” to a household’s privacy.

The metal sheets are not attractive—they are sometimes jagged, rusty, uneven, or
mismatched. This is a stark contrast to the careful maintenance of the land on the other
side of the fence. Many interviewed tenants meticulously swept their plots to maintain a
tidy lawn. Although the area is dusty, this care taken to keep tidy demonstrates a degree
of pride not usually indicated in much literature about informal settlements. Instead, as
seen in GISTech’s publication, informal settlements are often described as unlivable
urban squalor. Take for example Davis’ characterization of informal settlements as
“embryonic megalopolis[es],” “tragic,” “amoeba[s],” and as “peasant flood[s]” (Davis
2006:4). As discussed in the prior section about informality, this imagery is common—it
is often used to guilt the “first world” into donating money or thinking about
globalization. But every informal settlement is quite different—even from house to house.

There are many different ways that an informal settlement resident may put effort into their home while realizing that they could be evicted with little to no notice. The choice to use poorly constructed fences, for example, could be read from an outsider’s standpoint as careless or lazy. GISTech’s survey inferred that many residents had no real connection to their plot or home because of the visibility of metal sheets. Inside the home, however, is often painstakingly cared for. Many interviewed residents meticulously swept leaves, hair, or even uneven piles of dust from their front plots. Interiors were kept neat. Below, the photos used by GISTech to characterize living conditions in Agatare are very different from the conditions that were evident to RISD on field visits.

Figure 10
The significance of place can be further understood through its importance in marginalized spaces worldwide. In *Landscape of Hope and Despair*, Peteet describes at length the means with which Palestinian refugees continually construct and reconstruct Palestinian identity through physical space. Though certainly not refugees, informal settlement residents face incredibly tenuous situations in which they have little to no agency over their movement or land security. Rather than ownership of space in each scenario holding importance, however, the significance of *place* becomes much more meaningful. As Peteet explains, the production of place regularly occurs through patterned activities and social relationships and the given “cultural rules” affecting them.

Although the RHA can provide new homes for informal settlement residents, the removal of individuals from a sense of place means tearing at the social fabric that has been built since the settlement’s origins. Peteet describes Palestinian identity as being
built upon a sense of belonging to a specific social group. These social groups were physically bound—in this case, to specific refugee camps—and in turn, were transformed by physical boundaries. The relationship between place and identity, then, interact with power that “limits as well as shapes possibilities” for both.

Concerns about compensation:

One of the underlying concerns of all interviewees was the need for compensation, or rather, fear of the lack of compensation. These concerns were rooted in past personal experiences, the experiences of friends, family, or neighbors, or from general hearsay. These concerns were also divided into landowning individuals. One such project noted with frequency was the Ubumwe cell in Muhima, located in the lower Kiyovu area of Kigali. Though interviewees mostly vaguely alluded to the disastrous results of the project, Chris Huggins conducted a detailed study while the expropriation occurred.

The average request of compensation from tenants was 125,000 Rwandan Francs (RWF). According to the Director General of the Rwandan Housing Authority, tenants would not be compensated. Specifically in the case of the Rwampara Road, which is precedent-setting in terms of future expropriation, multiple meetings asserted that tenants would not be given any monetary compensation. The logic behind this decision was that tenants do not own the property, thus, if the landowners were given enough

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14 Though technically all interviewees are lessees of the government, those individuals who rented their land directly from the government considered themselves landowners. Those individuals who rented land from a third party (e.g., those who rent land from the government directly) considered themselves tenants.

15 According to an interview with the Head Architect of Vision 2020.
warning, the tenants would not need any compensation and could simply stop renting the house. According to interviews with tenants, however, compensation is necessary for needs such as: hired help for lifting furniture, taxi fare to move furniture and other belongings, transportation for household members, and money for a down payment on a new rental location. Many tenants explained that renting a new house requires a down payment of three months or more worth of rent. This cost exceeds the limit of what many renting households are capable of paying, which means that compensation from the government is expected.

Land Security

One of the issues that many residents faced and accepted as a natural way of urban life was the extreme tenuousness of land security. Tenants were often shuffled from home to home at the whim of a landowner. A significant amount of tenants stated a reasonable reason to be asked to leave their rent agreement was that “the landowner needed the home.” This constant sense of unease about the security of their living environment contributed to the responses of the road project. Many tenants were expectant that they would be removed from their homes at some point, like the memory and reactivation of a trauma. Many tenants had experienced displacement recently. One resident had even been displaced from Muhima recently, and her house was again going to be destroyed for the good of the country.

The significance of this theme was the assurance of RHA reports that informal settlement upgrading was meant to increase the security of the most vulnerable populations in Rwandan society by helping to “lift” them out of poverty. The upgrading
is having the opposite effect, and is solidifying the idea that tenants are expendable and can live anywhere rather than being dependent on a single area for employment and social needs.

**Monopolization of Information:**

One way that the power dynamic between government officials, landowners, and tenants was maintained and reproduced was the uneven balance of accurate information. The more power that an actor could wield over the road project was directly proportionate to their knowledge—not only of the specific road project, but of other development plans across the country. For example, I spoke to the head architect of the road-upgrading project for over an hour. During this time, she spoke at length about the future of the city’s development with confidence, beginning before the approval of the KCMP. She knew facts regarding the financial actors at play in development projects throughout the city, the specific aesthetic details of future projects, and the ins and outs of land laws. This architect was likely one of the most powerful actors in Kigali in terms of changes to the upgrading plan.

In stark contrast, some interviewed residents had such inaccurate or little information about the road project that they didn’t seem to be discussing the same project as the architect. The size of the road varied from interview to interview; some thought that the road would be a footpath whereas others thought it would be a two-lane road. Similarly, the material of the road varied from interviewee to interviewee. Some were certain that the road was to be made of tarmac, whereas others said it would be assorted stones.
This monopolization of information was tied to the dissemination of information. The spread of accurate information stemmed from multiple “community meetings” that CoK officials organized. These took place during the day and were not well advertised. One tenant explained that he could not go to any of the four meetings (there were actually only three according to District officials) because he had to work from early in the morning to late at night. District officials claimed that they tried to compensate for this by having meetings at different times, but many tenants expressed that they had no choice but to work long hours and couldn’t take breaks. This lack of attendance meant that most information regarding the project came from hearsay, which did not come from any one identifiable source. Other tenants were unaware that there were meetings at all. Some tenants thought that this was funded entirely by the World Bank, one interviewee even asserted that Bill Gates’ organization was funding it. Two tenants did not know that the road would affect their living spaces until the interview.

Homeowners, on the other hand, had somewhat more accurate information. All homeowners knew that a road was being built and that their house was going to be razed. Most were also concerned, however, about the structure and information of these informational meetings. Meetings were not organized to allow for questions and did not allow suggestions for alterations from the homeowners. One stated, “During community meetings, local leaders should listen to the needs, views and concerns of the residents instead of coming and just inform them that you will be given such an amount of money.”

These findings indicated the association of knowledge with power in development projects, or rather perhaps, the access to knowledge with the show of power.
Civic Duty associated with Development:

Although most of the interviewees were aware that the imminent construction would mean the destruction of their homes and their own displacement, many also demonstrated a genuine belief in the benefits of the project and urban development at large. Many of these positive responses expressed national pride and a sense of sacrifice for the common good. One interviewee explained that expropriation was “an activity carried out by the government for the majority of the people.” Another understood the process as “an action that brings benefits to many and others lose, especially the displaced ones.” This general portrait of expropriation reflected the idea that, even though they would obviously not benefit from it, the road project should be accepted. The idea of supporting the larger goals of the country further illustrated by one resident who, when asked why they supported the road project, replied: “Because it’s a government plan that will benefit the majority of residents, you should accept it happily.”

In further support of the road project, many residents (especially tenants) rationalized the need for the road to “clean up” the area. Interviewees described Agatare as “dirty,” “dusty,” even, “not very good.” These characterizations of the area contradicted the overwhelming responses of enjoying the “easy life” in Agatare as a result of its proximity to employment opportunities, easy transportation, education, and other factors explicated in the above section. The common denominator of the negative factors was aestheticism. More specifically, many interviewees demonstrated a concern that their area was too discrepantly different from the surrounding areas, which made the government want to clean it. For the purpose of the road, interviewees stated things like it
would “change the appearance of this area,” “make Kigali city clean,” “improve sanitation and cleanliness,” and “make people build good houses because of the good road.” A few others hinted at developmentalism; one resident justified the construction as, “government […] wanting to modernize housing in this area.”

At its core, the general civic duty reproduced in most interviews was enduring displacement for the benefit of future Rwandans. Of course, the secondary unspoken assumption was that Rwandans in similar social positions would benefit from their sacrifice and would have improved living conditions as a result of development. Many of the interviewees seemed to stress their responsibility as citizens in order to reconcile their displacement and sense of loss. This was a fair assumption judging by the rhetoric employed by many policy-makers involved in the project. The language used in community informational meetings reflected a desire to improve living conditions in the area, most specifically transportation and drainage issues related to the informal road in place. Interviews with local policy-makers mirrored this rhetoric, as many focused on the improvement of residents and the current poor conditions of the area in their interviews. Reasoning for the construction was often backed with statistics about the living conditions in the area, which were exclusively described very negatively. Of course, the improvement of livelihood is a moot point, as the entire area will be flattened for Phase II of the upgrading project, displacing all residents that the interviewees were making a sacrifice for and that policy-makers used to justify displacement in the first place.
Safety Concerns:

Many residents cited the increased risk of injury and crime with the construction of the road. Said one interviewee, “accidents will be many—it will take children—because it is a stopping place amongst many families.” Another interviewee expressed a similar concern: “There will be fears about the security of the children that live near the road.” Many similar statements to this seemed to revolve around the unfamiliarity with the road—specifically children. Many of the children, according to residents, have never lived elsewhere and aren’t used to busy roads or cars. Many parents seemed to worry that their children would run out into the road that would be constructed so closely to the remaining homes.

Other safety concerns revolved around the increased foot traffic in the area and the potential for robberies or other crimes. Many interviewees first asserted that the area was generally very safe, but that the road would attract cars and pedestrians from outside the area. Said one interviewee, “there will be too many passengers which may contribute to the increase of theft.” These concerns can also be tied back to the sense of place, as the general tone was a distrust of the unknown. That is, many safety concerns were not tied to insiders from the community acting out in crime, but to strangers entering the familiar place.
SPSS Analysis

Table 1: How old are you?

Table 2: What is your household average monthly income?
### Table 3: When was this project first introduced to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 month</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 months ago</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 months ago</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 months ago</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 months ago</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: How much time would you propose for relocation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 month</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 months</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 months</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 months</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 months</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Are you a landowner or a tenant?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Land owner</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Do you feel that you have enough information on this project?

Table 7: How long have you and/or your family lived in this neighborhood?

Table 8: Have you had any other experience with expropriation?
Conclusive Analysis of Data

Considering this extensive compilation of data repeatedly pointing to the harms and ineffectiveness of urban development policy as it stands, why do these development mechanisms and plans remain in extensive use? As hypothesized, there are many levels of significant discrepancies between the lived experiences of informal settlement residents as illustrated in interviews and their perceived experiences illustrated by policy-makers. These discrepancies are likely a major factor in the continual irrelevancy of upgrading programs to affected residents. These discrepancies are far from the only factor influencing urban upgrading. The rhetoric surrounding the militant nationalism pervasive in most aspects of Rwandan society is often used to justify exclusion and displacement. Furthermore, this rhetoric pervades many residents’ acceptance of their own displacement, as it is considered “part of the greater good.” The data also alludes to an underlying capitalist structure inherent in many urban exclusionary practices that acts to reconcile mass displacement as a natural course of increased productivity.

One of the more notable discrepancies was regarding the perceived value of informal settlements. This discrepancy came up in the codes “significance of place” and “concerns of compensation.” Oftentimes, the amount of physical and emotional labor that tenants put into their houses was entirely overlooked by policy-makers. For example, the tediously formed earth floors in many settlements were simply listed as “mud floors” in the GIZ study. In one interview, a tenant explained that earth floors were improved upon in most houses in the area by a labor-intensive process of wetting the earth, multiple people beating it down with sturdy brooms,
and repeating the process until a concrete-like, non-permeable surface was created. This indicated a serious lapse in the perception of place between policy-makers and interviewees. Although most households spent hours creating a more livable space by constructing fencing, improving the floors, and building expansions, this experience was brushed aside as simply surviving in a setting of squalor.

This research is part of a growing collection of knowledge on the patterns of informal settlement eradication and displacement, confirming wider findings and adding a unique case study to this important literature. Most notably, the results are reflective of Huchzermeyer’s findings during her ethnographic research in South Africa on the patterns of informal settlement eradication. It also has many parallels to Huggins’ work on urban housing policies in East and Central Africa. One of Huggins’ concluding statements regarding the Muhima upgrading project in Kigali can in fact be directly applied to the collected data from Agatare. Said Huggins about the project:

“Rather than environmental health concerns, an undefined idea of ‘modernisation’ seems to be a prime motivation for the demolition of informal settlements. Aesthetic concerns about the image of the city – particularly tidiness and the use of ‘modern’ building materials – dominate.” [Huggins 2010:6]

Much literature surrounding informal settlement eradication makes note of something similar to Huggins’ statement. The modernizing of urban areas does not generally take into consideration health concerns, but is mostly concerned with aesthetics. The concern with aesthetics can be drawn once again to that great equalizer: global capitalism. Taking into account the previous discussion of nationalism and social evolutionary developmentalism, the increased productivity
of a given space in a “developing country” will prove beneficial to the powerful few.

The current orientation of the “development industry,” as Ferguson calls it, is rooted in the capitalist beliefs of the values of productivity. Applied to urban development, this “industry” assumes that “diverting such resources from ‘inefficient’ use toward more value-producing outcomes with the belief that greater production will increase consumption and well-being at all levels of society” (Oliver-Smith 2010:16). That is, since the value system attached to capitalism places productivity above all else, a capitalistic nation-state will likely continue to prioritize the commoditization of informal settlements over the improvement of living conditions. If an area can be capitalized upon through formalization, it likely will be. This is not because of the helplessness of the residents, nor the indifference of the government; it is because of the oppression inherent in capitalistic globalization.

Development policies must be held accountable from more than a strictly economic basis; rather than assuming all societal levels will reap the benefits of modernization, representation must be built into policy-making. This means dismantling the trickle-down theories that assert that the less powerful will eventually benefit from large-scale infrastructural projects (Oliver-Smith 2010:17). Rather than a capitalist base, the construction of urban development policies from a socialist standpoint could plausibly represent all members of society. Rather than centering a project on enhancing the productive capability of an area, policies should address inequities inherent in resource distribution. On the ground, these policies would likely embrace the
mechanisms associated with in-situ upgrading so as not to uproot the social and cultural complexities in informal settlements.

As far as solutions to this increasingly bleak phenomenon, some scholars are turning to theories of resistance. Oliver-Smith suggests a Foucauldian understanding of resistance as “the irreducible opposite of power.” We might read it as the capacity of the oppressed to “traverse a field of action in new and creative ways.” Rather than one large resistance movement, Oliver-Smith explains that small acts of resistance that originate “around specific local community issues,” can, over time, “engage with both individual interests and broader, more ideological agendas” (Oliver-Smith 2010:17). Though overthrowing the oppressive forces of capitalism is a broad, unrealistic goal for resistance, local land-right advocacy organizations such as RISD have the capacity to interfere in those “specific local community issues.” If Oliver-Smith and his peers are correct, these small acts of grassroots-led resistance can culminate in resisting the ideological agenda of global capitalism.
CONCLUSION

Clearly, there is no singular way to answer the question: why are harmful, exclusionary urban development policies still in place in Kigali? Any attempt to do so in a single statement would be hugely problematic. Making the assumption that this is an “African” problem that naturally occurs during urban development buys into a developmentalist, social evolutionary critique. Understanding the issue, however, as a singular phenomenon in which the cruel oppression of vulnerable populations by a repressive Rwandan government results in displacement is xenophobic and racist; the complexities of the Rwandan government are informed by an imperialistic past and similar patterns of displacement are happening worldwide. Attempting to answer the question by characterizing informal settlement residents as passive victims that need international intervention is patronizing and doesn’t credit the ingenuities with which such residents approach their less-than-ideal living situations.

How then should this multilayered, global issue be addressed? From a historical particularist standpoint, Rwanda’s urban development practices are rooted in a heavily nationalist, post-colonial nation-state. Unpacking this statement, Rwanda’s violent past precipitated the conditions necessary for a militaristically nationalist state. This nationalism is mobilized by the RPF-controlled government and used to justify displacement as being a small sacrifice for the whole.
As a postcolonial state, Rwanda’s urban development strategies are heavily informed by the constructs of modernism and developmentalism. Ties to international monetary institutions like the World Bank influence policy-making and thereby, urban development.

Although these particularities of Rwanda certainly inform the conditions on the ground and the ways in which residents experience displacement, the question is still not fully addressed. What causes these conditions is rooted much more deeply than the 1994 genocide. Global capitalism is the strongest force at play in these patterns of exclusion worldwide, and the only lasting move toward change is active resistance at the grassroots level and the dismantling of global capitalism.

As Huchzermeyer fiercely advocates, a right to the city is something that must be made available to all people. The continual eradication of informal settlements worldwide is a symptom of capitalistic oppression that will always value productivity over the quality of human life. Until then, I yearn for Huchzermeyer’s vision of the future, in which all cities provide all inhabitants with, “the right to shape the city and its public space, the right to permanently inhabit meaningful locations within the city, and the right to participate in decision-making.” [Huchzermeyer 2011:32]
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World Bank Group


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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Residents

(Please introduce yourself and the purpose of the research and inform the respondent about the code of conduct)

0.1 Name of interviewer:

0.2 Date of interview:

0.3 Interview start time:

0.4 Interview end time:

Section 1: Biographical Information

(Please explain to the respondent that name and phone number are confidential and will only be used by RISD in case of further questions)

What is your name?

What is the number of your household in this project (1-29)?

What is your phone number?

1.1 Gender:  male  female

1.2 How old are you?
<18-20  21-30  31-40  41-50  51-60  61-70  71-80  81-90  >90

1.3 What is your civil status?
Single  Divorced  Widowed
Married  Partner
### Household members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Immediate /Extended Family or employee</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Time to work</th>
<th>Method of traveling to work</th>
<th>Any special needs (e.g., extremely old age, disability, etc.)?</th>
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1.3. Which member is the head of household?

1.4. What is your household average monthly income?

- Up to 10,000 RWF
- 10,001-30,000 RWF
- 30,001-50,000 RWF
- 50,001-70,000 RWF
- 70,001-90,000 RWF
- 90,001-110,000 RWF
- 110,001-130,000
- 130,001-150,000
- 150,001-170,000
- 170,001->200,000

1.3. How long have you and/or your family lived in this area?

- <1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36-40 years
- 41-45 years
- 46-50 years
- >50 years

1.4. If you moved here, where did you last live?

- District:
- Sector:
- Cell:
- Village:

1.5. Why did you move to this place?
1.6. Is someone in your household a member of a cooperative or association in this area?
   Yes    No

   **Only if YES**
   1.6.1. If yes, what kind of cooperative or association is it (e.g. agriculture, market)?
   1.6.2. What are the requirements for joining the cooperative or association?
   Age    Gender    Profession    Cash contribution    Other

1.7. Is someone in your household a member of any committee in this area?
   Youth Committee    Abunzi    Opinion leaders
   Women’s Council    Akagoroba k’ababyeyi
   GBV Committee    Other

**Section 2: Land Rights**

2.1. Are you a landowner or a tenant?  Landowner    Tenant

   *If a tenant, discuss questions 2.5-2.11; if a landowner, discuss questions 2.7-2.12*

   **Only if tenant:**
   2.2. Do you have a rent contract?  Yes    No
   2.2.1. **If yes,** for how long is the contract?
   2.2.2. What are the conditions to cancel the contract?
   2.2.3. How long is the termination notice period?

2.3. How long have you rented your current property from your landlord?
   <1 year    16-20 years
   1-5 years    21-25 years
   6-10 years    26-30 years
   11-15 years    >30 years

2.4. How do you communicate with your landlord?
   Do not communicate    Email
   Phone call    In person
   SMS    Send a messenger
   Letter    Other
Only if land and property owner:

2.5. Do you have a land lease title? Yes No

2.6. What is the duration of your lease according to your title? Years

2.7. Do you have a title deed? Yes No

2.8. How did you acquire your land?
Inheritance Land Sharing
Purchase Land Compensation
Gift Land allocation by government
Ascending partition Other

2.9. How big is your land (in square meters)? meters squared (If the landowner doesn’t know at all, ask him to check the land title(s))

2.10. Do you have any other property in this area? Yes No

2.10.1. If yes, what are you using these properties for? renting other

2.10.2. How much monthly rent do you collect from all of your properties along the road? RwF

2.11. What are your rights as property owner or renter in case your land or plot is affected by road upgrading project

Section 3: Awareness and communication
3.1. What do you know about the upgrading program of this road, and how/where did you first hear about it?

3.2. Why do you think this road is being upgraded?

3.3. Have you held any community meetings to discuss this upgrading project?
3.4. How many meetings about the road did you or a household member attend?

3.5. What are the different official messages about the project?

3.6. When was this project first introduced to you?
   - Less than 1 month ago
   - 1-2 months ago
   - 3-4 months ago
   - 5-6 months ago
   - 7-12 months ago
   - More than a year ago

3.7. During those meetings, were you or anyone in your household given the space to openly express your own concerns and needs?

3.8. Do you feel that you have enough information/knowledge on this road project? Why or why not? If you have enough information, tell me what you know about it.

3.9. Do you know of any other official government development plans for your area? For Kigali? Tell me what you know. *(Don’t read them out)*
   - Vision 2020
   - EDPRS2
   - City of Kigali Master Plan
   - District Development Plan
   - Land Use Master Plan

**Section 4: Potential Road Project Consequences**
*(Refer to section 2, question 2.1. If interviewee is a renter, skip to question 4.3)*

4.1. Will this road upgrading project affect your plot directly?
   - Yes
   - No
If yes, how?

4.2. Are you a business owner? Yes No
   4.2.1. What will be the impact of this road project to the overall business in this community (If respondent is a business owner, also ask about their specific business)?

4.3. What are the benefits of this road-upgrading project to the community?

4.4. What are the negative impacts of this road on the community?

4.5. If upgrading required you to move from your current location, would you know where to relocate?

   District:
   Sector:
   Cell:
   Village:
   I don’t know

4.6. How would you decide where to move?

4.7. What will you require to move, and how much will that cost approximately?

4.8. How much time would you propose for relocation?

Section 5: For people identified for expropriation
5.1. How do you understand the process of expropriation?

5.2. Are you happy with how the expropriation process is being handled in relation to this road-upgrading project?

   Yes No
   5.2.1. If yes, what is the process like and what do you like about it?

   5.2.2. If no, what do you think is not being done correctly?
(Refer section 2, question 2.1. If renter, refer to question 5.4.1)

5.3. How much do you think is the value of this property?
    RwF / I don’t know

5.4. Do you know what you will be given in compensation for your property?
    Yes   No

    5.3.1. If yes, what will you be given?

    5.3.2. If no, what do you think you should be given as compensation?

5.5. Do think you will be compensated fairly?  Yes   No   I don’t know

    5.4.1. If yes, why do you think that is a fair compensation?

    5.4.2. If no, why do you think this is an unfair compensation?

    5.4.3. What do you think should be done for fair compensation?

5.6. Do you have any other experience about expropriation in this area or your neighborhood?
    Yes   No

5.7. If yes, can you share your positive experiences?

5.7. Negative experiences?

Section 6: Dispute management

6.1. What do you see are the likely land-related disputes from the expropriation process of this road-upgrading project?

6.2. In case of land related disputes that may arise from this project, describe the dispute management process that may be followed.

6.6. Do you have any additional comments or concerns before we end our conversation?
APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for local experts

0.1 Name of Interviewer:

0.2 Date of Interview:

0.3 Location of Interview:

0.4 Start time of interview:

0.5 End time of interview:

What is your name?

What is your phone number?

Section One: Biological Information

1.1 At what level are you working/based in?

1.2 What is the name of the sector in which your work is based?

1.3 Do you live in the same sector? Yes No

1.4 What cell do you live in?

1.5 What village do you live in?

1.7 What is your job title?

Section Two: Understanding of Development Projects

2.1 What do you know about the Agateare road-upgrading project?

2.2 What do you think are the benefits of this project?

2.3 What do you think are the weaknesses of this project, if any?

2.4 How is the Nyarugenge upgrading plan related to the Kigali City Master Plan or other development plans?
2.5 Do you have any other experience with upgrading or expropriation?

2.5.1 If yes, can you share your positive experiences and what was done correctly in the process?

2.5.2 If yes, can you share your negative experiences or what could have been done differently?

Section Three: Role in Planning Projects

3.1 What was your role in planning the road-upgrading project?

3.2 What is your role in implementing the road-upgrading project?

3.3 Did you participate in planning meetings related to the project?

3.3.1 If yes, how many meetings did you attend?

3.3.2 If yes, what did these meetings involve and how did you contribute?

3.3.3 If no, why did you not participate in planning meetings?

3.4 What still needs to be done before the implementation of the upgrading project?

Section Four: Communication with Superiors/Community Members

4.1 When and how did you learn about the Road Upgrading Project?

4.2 How do you get information on this project from your supervisors?

4.3 How regularly do you meet community members for discussions on the Road Upgrading project?

4.4 What are the best methods to sensitize community members about their land and housing rights during the implementation of the Agatare upgrading project?

Section Five: Landowners’ and Tenants’ Rights

5.1 What are the rights of landowners in regards to upgrading processes and expropriation?

5.2 What are the rights of tenants in regards to upgrading processes and expropriation?

5.3 How should landowners be compensated in case of public interest?

5.4 How should tenants be compensated in case of public interest?