

# BEING, BECOMING AND CONTRIBUTING IN (AND THROUGH) PLANNING

## THE PLANNER'S QUEST:

**Elsona van Huyssteen**  
**Student no.: 8843783**

**University of Pretoria,  
Department of Town and Regional Planning  
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
qualification  
PhD in Town and Regional Planning**

Supervisor: Prof M.C. Oranje  
Department of Town and Regional Planning  
University of Pretoria

March 2018



**Declaration...**

I Elsona van Huyssteen,  
Student Number 8843783,  
Department of Town and Regional Planning, Univesrity of Pretoria  
Subject of the work: PHD Thesis: Being, Becoming and Contributing in (and  
through) Planning

Hereby declare that:

- 1 I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
- 2 That this thesis is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (wether from a printed source, the internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.
- 3 I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
- 4 I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his or her own work.

Signature:

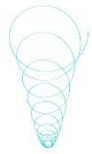
*Elsona van Huyssteen*



*Becoming is a fundamental property of being ...  
Being human involves continuous becoming ...  
(David, G. Benner, 2016:xi)*



Strijdom van der Merwe, Kamiyama Japan



---

***Dedicated to...***

My parents - Sakkie and Aliet Gouws  
with appreciation, respect and awe...  
for you, your journeys and a life-time of living, giving, believing and inspiring

The future generation - Rutger, Stiaan and Jada  
with appreciation, respect and excitement...  
for you, your authentic expression and your contribution in this (and my) world

To every heroine and hero that walked before and with us...  
those that call(ed), challenge(d) and contribute(d)...  
and generations to come

Our collective and unfolding quest of being, becoming and contributing.



# Contents

---

Acknowledgements.....	i
Executive Summary .....	v
1 Introduction.....	10
1.1 Introduction to the quest and thesis .....	11
1.2 The quest of the study.....	12
1.2.1 Introduction.....	12
1.2.2 Underlying premise.....	13
1.2.3 Purpose and focus of the enquiry.....	14
1.2.4 Research approach .....	14
1.2.5 Findings and value .....	15
1.2.6 Contribution.....	17
1.2.7 Summary.....	17
1.3 Roadmap to the thesis .....	18
1.3.1 Introduction.....	18
1.3.2 Use of the quest metaphor .....	18
1.3.3 Structure and outline of the thesis.....	19
1.3.4 Engaging the thesis and the reflexive enquiry.....	21
1.3.5 Summary.....	23
1.4 Reflection and conclusion .....	24
2 Section Two .....	26
2.1 Introduction .....	27
2.2 A personal call to action on this enquiry.....	28
2.2.1 Introduction.....	28
2.2.2 Call to action and initiations into the practice of planning.....	28
2.2.3 Call to action that kicked-started the enquiry .....	29

2.2.4	Summary reflections.....	31
2.3	Capacity challenges and value of enquiry in the South African context.....	32
2.3.1	Introduction.....	32
2.3.2	Post-apartheid challenges for transformed and increased planning capacity .....	32
2.3.3	Challenges and calls to rekindle the ‘spirit of planning’ .....	33
2.3.4	Escalating capability demands on planning as future-orientated practice .....	34
2.3.5	Summary reflections.....	34
2.4	Competency discourses and the value of the enquiry .....	35
2.4.1	Introduction.....	35
2.4.2	Competence and contribution remain important focuses in planning education .....	35
2.4.3	Value of the ‘intangible’ recognised but limited research on shaping it .....	36
2.4.4	The value of an inquiry into ‘being, becoming and contributing’.....	37
2.4.5	Summary reflections.....	38
2.5	Conclusion and reflections on calls to action .....	39
3	Departure and shaping of the research quest.....	42
3.1	Introduction .....	43
3.2	The approach to the quest: Considering challenges of validity and value.....	43
3.2.1	Introduction.....	43
3.2.2	The importance of a ‘whole-person’ and ‘life-span’ approach .....	44
3.2.3	The value of an appreciative approach.....	45
3.2.4	The value of a generative approach to enable exploration and collaborative learning.....	46
3.2.5	A reflexive approach to avoid ‘merely letting everything go’ .....	49
3.2.6	The approach in summary .....	50
3.3	The qualitative research inquiry.....	50
3.3.1	Introduction.....	50
3.3.2	Considerations in an explorative and reflexive research approach.....	51
3.3.3	The value in learning from practitioners .....	51
3.3.4	Work-life narratives as a valuable research method .....	52



3.3.5	Sample design and related considerations .....	54
3.3.6	Reflections on the work-life narrative interview process.....	55
3.3.7	Ethical considerations and reflections .....	57
3.3.8	Approach in production of the thesis.....	58
3.3.9	Summary reflections.....	59
3.4	Meaning making (unfolding) in an explorative enquiry.....	60
3.4.1	Introduction.....	60
3.4.2	Reflexive interpretation, contextualising and reflecting on competencies, drivers and growth .....	66
3.4.3	Expanding interpretation through the lens of the quest metaphor .....	68
3.4.4	Challenges and reflections in meaning making and questioning the enquiry .....	72
3.4.5	Summary reflections.....	73
3.5	Conclusion and reflections on the departure.....	74
4	Shaping and supporting the enquiry.....	75
4.1	Introduction .....	76
4.2	The quest of planning as a practice.....	79
4.2.1	Introduction.....	79
4.2.2	The quest in planning as a practice.....	79
4.2.3	The contested 'good' .....	81
4.2.4	Purpose, practice and practitioners .....	83
4.2.5	Diffused, integrative and pragmatic.....	84
4.2.6	Summary reflection .....	86
4.3	Virtuous planning practitioners .....	87
4.3.1	Introduction.....	87
4.3.2	Calls for change and contribution.....	88
4.3.3	Identities, roles, meta-competencies and virtues.....	90
4.3.4	Challenges for competencies and curriculum development.....	92
4.3.5	Conclusion and gaps in the field .....	95
4.4	Future orientated practices, leadership and career development .....	97

4.4.1	Introduction.....	97
4.4.2	Worldviews and leadership in future- and action-orientated practices.....	99
4.4.3	Leadership competencies and mature stages of meaning making .....	100
4.4.4	Generative growth and learning dynamics.....	103
4.4.5	Summary reflection .....	104
4.5	The world of work, life-long learning and professional development.....	105
4.5.1	Introduction.....	105
4.5.2	Pointers from discourses on competence and meta-competency frameworks, models and definitions for the exploration .....	107
4.5.3	Career development and informal life-long learning processes .....	108
4.5.4	Summary reflection .....	110
4.6	Conclusion and reflections on shaping the enquiry .....	111
PART TWO: Explorations, meaning making, reflections.....		117
5	Explorations and insights: Work-life experiences .....	118
5.1	Introduction .....	119
5.2	The planning ‘world’ of participant work-life narratives in South Africa.....	120
5.2.1	Introduction.....	120
5.2.2	Key events, challenges and areas of attraction .....	120
5.2.3	The participants.....	121
5.2.4	Summary reflections.....	124
5.3	Calls to action, departure and meeting the mentors.....	125
5.3.1	Introduction.....	125
5.3.2	The promise of planning as a personal call .....	126
5.3.3	Shaped by formative experiences, beliefs, perspectives and mentors .....	128
5.3.4	The significance of personal strengths, interests and practice association .....	132
5.3.5	Summary reflections.....	133
5.4	Trials and initiation experiences .....	135
5.4.1	Introduction.....	135

5.4.2	Transformative experiences .....	137
5.4.3	Intense growth experiences .....	138
5.4.4	Identity and practice association.....	140
5.4.5	Summary reflections.....	141
5.5	Challenges, adventures and rewards .....	142
5.5.1	Introduction.....	142
5.5.2	Diverse practice adventures and challenges.....	142
5.5.3	Coherent themes in practice challenges .....	146
5.5.4	Summary reflections.....	149
5.6	Conclusion and reflections on work-life experiences.....	151
6	Explorations and insights from time-span overviews .....	154
6.1	Introduction .....	155
6.2	Golden thread of personal and practice purpose synergies .....	156
6.2.1	Introduction.....	156
6.2.2	Quest example: Advocacy and awareness raising for justice, socio-political change and sustainability ....	157
6.2.3	Quest Example: Shaping space to drive justice and sustainability .....	160
6.2.4	Quest Example: Driving improved quality of life, sustainability and justice through transformative plans, policies and processes.....	160
6.2.5	Quest Example: Contributing to the ‘project’ of development through technical expertise .....	161
6.2.6	The significance of commitment to personal and practice quests.....	162
6.2.7	Summary reflections.....	164
6.3	Strong practice association and purpose driven career choices.....	165
6.3.1	Introduction.....	165
6.3.2	Career time-span perspective .....	166
6.3.3	Identification and association with planning as a practice.....	168
6.3.4	Contributing to planning as a practice and to others in the practice.....	169
6.3.5	Career choices, contribution, costs and rewards.....	171
6.3.6	Summary reflections.....	173

6.4	<i>Creating practice value through personal and relational capability</i> .....	174
6.4.1	<i>Introduction</i> .....	174
6.4.2	<i>Strong foundations as bases for expanding set of ‘T’-shaped competencies</i> .....	175
6.4.3	<i>‘Adding value’/Excellence as attitude and quality</i> .....	178
6.4.4	<i>Driving action in authentic and inter-relational ways</i> .....	182
6.4.5	<i>Summary reflections</i> .....	185
6.5	<i>Learning, growth and transformation</i> .....	187
6.5.1	<i>Introduction</i> .....	187
6.5.2	<i>Practice embedded learning and growth</i> .....	188
6.5.3	<i>Mentors and fellow travellers</i> .....	193
6.5.4	<i>Summary reflections</i> .....	195
6.6	<i>Conclusion and reflections on time-spanning journeys</i> .....	196
7	<i>The rewards of the enquiry – Observations, reflections and meaning making</i> .....	199
7.1	<i>Introducing the ‘rewards’</i> .....	200
7.2	<i>Insights and observations</i> .....	201
7.2.1	<i>Introduction</i> .....	201
7.2.2	<i>The value of practice embedded transition experiences</i> .....	201
7.2.3	<i>Synergies between personal and practice purpose and identities</i> .....	204
7.2.4	<i>Excellence as relational in an unfolding process of becoming</i> .....	205
7.2.5	<i>Significance of coherence in personal and practice perspectives and beliefs</i> .....	207
7.2.6	<i>Practice contribution and internal rewards</i> .....	208
7.2.7	<i>Being and becoming as generative process in personal and practice contexts</i> .....	208
7.2.8	<i>Summary reflections</i> .....	212
7.3	<i>Reflections on validity and limitations</i> .....	213
7.3.1	<i>Introduction</i> .....	213
7.3.2	<i>Reflections on the limitations of the research focus and use of the quest metaphor</i> .....	213
7.3.3	<i>Reflections on the study context, sample and participants</i> .....	214
7.3.4	<i>Reflections on the validity of the research approach</i> .....	215

7.3.5	Reflections on meaning making.....	216
7.3.6	Summary reflections.....	217
7.4	Considering contribution and future research.....	218
7.4.1	Introduction.....	218
7.4.2	Contribution of the enquiry in the field.....	218
7.4.3	Possible future research areas.....	226
7.4.4	Summary reflections.....	229
7.5	Reflections on a personal quest .....	229
7.6	Conclusion and reflections on the rewards of the enquiry .....	231
8	Contemplations on implications for a return to the ordinary world .....	235
8.1	Introduction .....	236
8.2	Valuing the interplay between ‘spirit of planning’, personal transformation and contribution ...	237
8.2.1	Introduction.....	237
8.2.2	The ‘spirit of planning’ might indeed have transformative abilities .....	237
8.2.3	Moving the focus from competence to purpose, practice association and quest commitment.....	238
8.2.4	Summary reflections.....	239
8.3	Considering capacity, competency and capability as non-personal.....	239
8.3.1	Introduction.....	239
8.3.2	Can an outcomes-only focus be detrimental? .....	239
8.3.3	Commitment to the quest of planning as a practice, and to excellence in that practice, is a dynamic capacity but is not personal .....	240
8.3.4	Summary reflections.....	241
8.4	Recognising becoming as a relational process.....	241
8.4.1	Introduction.....	241
8.4.2	A solid foundation to empower a courageous departure and commitment to the quest is more important, than the exact pathway or skill set chosen at the start of the quest .....	241
8.4.3	Can ‘contribution’ and ‘experience’, as well as ‘trusting capacity’ and ‘building confidence’, be likened to different sides of a coin.....	242
8.4.4	The power of perceptions – are we creating a demand or supply attitude, or a contribution attitude? ...	243

8.4.5 Summary reflections..... 244

8.5 Acknowledging the role of practices and role players in planning education and practice associations ..... 245

8.5.1 Introduction.....245

8.5.2 Significance of communities of practice.....245

8.5.3 In planning education – commitment to the quest in planning as a practice calls for heroic practices and heroic practitioners..... 246

8.5.4 In professional associations – commitment to the quest in planning as a practice calls for heroic practices and heroic practitioners..... 248

8.5.5 Summary reflections..... 248

8.6 Conclusion and reflections on implications.....248

Reference List .....254

Annexure A: CHALLENGES AND TRANSITIONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PLANNING CONTEXT

Annexure B: OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT STUDIES RELATED TO COMPETENCE

Annexure C: RESEARCH METHODS AND EXPLORATIONS OF WORK-LIFE NARRATIVES

## LIST OF TABLES

---

Table 3-1: ‘Act/Phases’ summary across work-life narratives.....	179
Table 6-1: Approaches and attitudes enabling contribution across work-life experiences.....	179
Table 6-2 Significant learning and growth influences .....	190

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

Figure 1.1: @Enquiry: Time-span of the research and learning process in relation to thesis outline .....	21
Figure 1.2: Engaging Re-constructed Narratives .....	21
Figure 3.1: Time-span of work-life narrative Example.....	61
Figure 4.1: Time-span process in relation to challenges in a generative study .....	77
Figure 5.1: Participant work-life time-span overview .....	123
Figure 5.2: Participant ‘time spent at type of workplace’ relative to total experience in years .....	123
Figure 7.1: Enabled, impelled and Supported to contribute.....	2121

## LIST OF TEXT BOXES

---

Text Box 3.1: @Jalan_ Work-Life Narrative Reworked as Quest Narrative.....	55
Text Box 3.2: @Dali_1Work-Life Narrative Reworked as Quest Narrative.....	62
Text Box 5.1: @Thai_2 #Call to Action.....	126
Text Box 5.2: @Gaz_1-2: #Call to Action.....	126
Text Box 5.3: @Thai_1: #Call to action.....	126
Text Box 5.4: @Dali_1: #Call to action.....	129
Text Box 5.5: @Bijan_1-2 #Call to action #Initiation.....	129
Text Box 5.6: @Yitzah_1-2 #Call to Action.....	130
Text Box 5.7: @ Daib_2 # Initiation.....	130
Text Box 5.8: @Harold_2 #Initiation.....	130

**Text Box 5.9: @Jalan\_2 #Initiation.....135**

**Text Box 5.10: @Innes\_3 #Initiation..... 135**

**Text Box 5.11: @Niel\_2 # Quest Challenges.....138**

**Text Box 5.12: @Dali\_ #Quest Challenges.....138**

**Text Box 5.13: @Daib\_ #Quest Challenges.....146**

**Text Box 6.1: @Janice\_2 #Quest Challenges.....157**

**Text Box 6.2: @Thai\_2 #Quest Challenges.....158**

**Text Box 6.3: @Jens\_2 #Quest Challenges..... 158**

**Text Box 6.4: Purpose Infused Excellence.....181**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---



We live in a world where our planet and humanity are facing daunting challenges. Where the call to action is clear. Not only to those in future orientated and sustainability sciences and practices, but to every one of us as human beings: To commit to the quest, to pro-actively contribute in our daily practices, our respective local contexts and our collectively evolving future! It is a challenge that can leave us feeling hopelessly overwhelmed. However, as I came to realise during the quest of this study, it is also a challenge through which everyday practice heroine's and hero's, and even more so, communities of practice, can amaze, inspire and galvanize action!

If nothing else, I came to realise that it is not a quest requiring each one of us to merely be equipped as best as we can for our own gain and to 'have' or to 'do'. It is a challenge requiring each one of us to be equipped as best as we can, to be challenged and called to excellence, to be pushed to new depths of mind and soul, to find innovative and collective ways to move forward. It is a process of being and becoming... that is an interplay between inner and outer worlds, but also between the individual and the collective... Of that, even this thesis as a rather mundane 'output' of a deeply challenging and rewarding enquiry, is a testimony in a moment in time... but also a process of being and becoming... in integrity with the quest itself. Whilst words can't do justice, I would like to acknowledge a number of people, without which it would never have happened:

- ⌘ Prof Mark Oranje, as the ultimate visionary, inspiring, authentic, committed (and challenging) practice hero, supervisor, colleague and friend! For calling me to action in the practice of planning... for being a true educator who leads by example and passionate commitment. For wisdom, guidance and relentless motivation, for practice habits and experiences that mad(k)e me believe in the seemingly impossible (even finishing this thesis), and lastly for your trust and yet another 'push over the cliff'.
- ⌘ The CSIR, for the financial support and enabling environment to finalise this study, a working environment encouraging excellence and impact, and the unwavering support of an inspiring team (colleagues, managers and friends). For your organising and providing practical assistance to enable me to take the 'time out', for graciously dealing with my anxieties and fears of missing out, for encouragement, trust and emotional support - ! A special word of thanks to dr Pravesh Debba, Gerbrand Mans, Cheri Green, Johan Maritz, Alize le Roux, Kea Maditse, fellow PhD students and the Stellenbosch Office team! To Zukisa Songoni and Lynn Florist for willingness to help out with "words" and deed, and to Lynn Florist and Jo-Anne Chauvet for going out of your way to take care of project and office details and keeping me connected.
- ⌘ For invaluable support on the journey of writing up the research and finalising the thesis: Anneke Gouws and Ilan Guest for assistance with mountains of transcriptions and many entertaining discussions; Tansy Argue for word smith skills, clarity, attention to detail and a uniquely supportive 'editorial encouragement' ability; Pieter van der Mescht for the willingness to jump in and keep going through cold winter nights, an amazing ability for meticulous precision and inspiring conversations on the essence of being; Olivia Loots for graphic support layered with insight, clarity and efficiency. For Annemarie Loots for sharing a passion for planning, and an inspiring ability and insight to 'see' through complexity and make 'seeing' possible – your support with the visual representation of patterns, ideas and stories not only contributed to the thesis itself but provided much needed impetus and inspiration during times that I lost hope. And lastly... to team 'Loots'

for your incredible support and motivation over many years and during the last stretch, whether through midnight edits, the taming of text boxes or an encouraging glass of wine.

- ⌘ Stephen Norval, mentor and friend, from whom I have learned a new way of seeing... a new way of being. Who always raised the bar of what commitment to authentic inquiry and becoming might call forth, and who (even during his own challenging times) kept the questions towards the thesis and my own break through's, flowing. Andrea van der Merwe, Chrisna du Plessis, Jane Smith, Deborah Nel, Lindy Jordaan and many others over the years (including colleagues and friends from Kessels & Smith, MindStyle Dynamics and the Human Touch Network) – for your willingness to share your wisdom and passion for conscious living, for challenging my own process of being and becoming and contributing, through many conversations and shared growth experiences over years.
- ⌘ An incredible 'clan' of family and friends. My parents Sakkie and Aliet Gouws, Anneke and Rehan Rheeder, Alida and Gustav van Wyk, Johan and Ursula van Huyssteen, my other parents Fanie and Magda van Huyssteen and Rina Venter, my extended Gouws, Van Huyssteen and Venter family including Hessie Adams, Lesley Nobel, Martha Mthimunya and many others. I have been humbled by your support over many years, for believing in me, for being patient through the many missed opportunities and 'kuiers', for your interest and for an incredible amount of emotional support. Your way of living love, your contribution in this world and your guts is inspirational. To my mother Aliet, a special word of thanks! For being here, for helping out with the kids and providing emotional and practical support in our household during the last months of non-stop writing, for many cups of tea late at night and for the warmth of the special design knit-wear and your love during the winter-writing here in the mountains. Also for Melanie and Strijdom van der Merwe, Neil and Amanda Grobbelaar, Charl and Ilchen Kruger for much needed practical support - with logistics, kids, emotional support and off course the appropriate celebrations!
- ⌘ Lastly, the people closest to my heart... who probably paid the biggest price. Jaap Venter, partner in this journey of life and soul, without whom this would not have been possible... A special word of acknowledgement for the significant role that you play in my (and our) journey of being and becoming... for years (in days and nights) of selfless support and the ability to focus on doing what needs doing, for burning the midnight oil together, for listening and listening and listening, for handling family, school and household commitments, for sharing and inspiring insights, and for being there in moments of panic and moments of joy! Your commitment to growth is a bright shining beacon. Rutger and Stiaan van Huyssteen, I will always cherish your steadfast support, your trust, your independence, all the help in and around the house, your patience and encouragement through the many nights behind the computer, your caring, your lightness and your humour. Your dedication in your own unique journeys was (and remain) indeed a source of strength and inspiration. Jada Venter, for the lightness and sense of purpose brought by your sunshine smile, the cuddles on my laptop lap, your wise words and your excitement about the future (and weekends without work).

The thesis is also testimony to an inspiring community of practice of planners in South Africa and internationally, who in many different ways actively contributed to this enquiry. Firstly in inspiring this quest through their dedication to contribute to better quality and more sustainable living, livelihoods

and places, especially during complex, challenging and fast changing times in the planning landscape in South Africa and in the world (where local and global challenges clearly highlight priorities such as high levels of socio-economic inequality, well-being and sustainability)! Secondly as colleagues, team members, mentors, early career managers, project partners, clients, teachers, writers, educators... who called me to action, challenged and supported me into (and through) many intense growth and transformation experiences, raised the bar and called forth commitment to the quest and to excellence in doing what needs doing to contribute in planning practice and specifically in this quest of the study. Thirdly as participants in, and collaborators on this study, whom through their willingness to share deeply and reflect on their own being and becoming provided the opportunity for an exploration into the often un-seen, who challenged my perceptions, inspired me, and in the end who I felt have all become jesters, mentors, team mates and 'magic helpers' in my own journey. Your role is invaluable. In no particular order and with the risk of leaving someone out... credit to:

Sakkie Badenhorst, Louw van Biljon, Mark Oranje, fellow students and work groups (Jan Truter and Gert Roos in particular), Floris Slabbert, Eli Enslin, Diet von Broembsen, Pieter Rossouw, Gawie Viljoen, Rob Smith, Derek Hanekom, John Muller, Alan Mabin, Reinier Minny, Annemarie Loots, Philp Harison, Nancy Odendaal, Vanessa Watson, Alison Todes; Garth Klein, Prof Das Steyn, Drienie Steenkamp, Kathy Furgerson, Piet Claassen, Peter Robinson, Engela Meyer, Theo Rauch, Dan Smith, Mark Feldman, Chippy Olver, Jo-Anne Chauvet, Yusuf Patel, Sithole Mbanga, Yondela Silimela, Rashid Sedat, Parks Tau, Louis Waldeck, Sharon Bierman, Heather Campbell, Patsy Healy, Stan Geertsma, Lega Goss, Sybert Liebenberg, Cathy Meiklejohn, Bob Scholes, Chrisna du Plessis, Alex Weaver, Andrew Merrifield, Hassen Mohamed, Ashraf Adam, Cecil Madell, Clinton Heiman, Theo Pretorius, Peter Dacomb, Andile Skosana, Geci Karuri-Sebina, Mike Kahn, Sugan Moodley, Dave Dewar, Fabio Todeshini, Pieter de Tolly, Hannes Lerm, Clive Forester, Jabu Morema, Riaan Thomson, Lynn Sorell, SJ Pelser, Danie Schoema, Marlene Campbell, Piet de Bie, Izelle Badenhorst, Willem Davel, Patricia Nake, Wilfred Masogo and many students and other colleagues over the years. With an honorary mention to Andries Naude and Maria Coetzee.

May this be a 'celebration' to your contributions in this world, and a call to take that legacy forward...

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---



It is widely acknowledged that we need caring, integrative and future orientated communities of practice to actively contribute towards shaping our unfolding collective future, a task no longer to be left in the hands of “a” few . Amidst an ever louder sounding plea for the training/’making’ of competent planning practitioners and leaders, key questions remain. Not only regarding the core capabilities, competencies and values important for planners, but on what actually underlies and contributes to the success, capabilities and effective contribution of planners and institutions to lead collaborative and strategic intergovernmental planning processes and act as agents of change within complex systems.

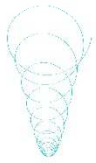
Within the practice of planning, as in many other future orientated and integrative disciplines, challenging questions are being asked about how practitioners could be enabled and supported to contribute “in the creation of a very different society” (Oranje, 2014:1)? A question especially relevant given that challenges in highly dynamic urban and socio-ecological systems are increasingly complex, uncertain and volatile

The thesis, **Being, Becoming and Contributing in (and through) Planning**, provides an overview and reflection on the innovative work-life narrative-based enquiry into personal and professional growth of planning practitioners. The study took as focus the everyday planning practices of effective practitioners in complex and challenging environments. The enquiry reflected upon in this thesis, made use of the quest as metaphor for meaning making into practitioner work-life narratives and explorations of the interplay between internal and outer worlds, between the individual and the collective, and within growth process aimed at impelling, enabling and supporting contribution within complex practice contexts.

The enquiry makes a unique contribution to the field of planning practice and education through its unique, generative, whole-person, longitudinal explorations into the personal and professional development of planning practitioners. The study highlights the significance and generative power of the interplay between personal and professional growth pursuits, the desire to add lasting people and place-based value and practice-based growth and transition experiences.

The thesis makes a clear case for tying the development of competencies in planning to the process of being and becoming a person in and through planning. It highlights the significance of: personal and practice commitments to contribute to the collective future and ‘common good’ through personal and practice commitment; relational value creation and practice excellence; practice embedded transition experiences. It makes a significant contribution by raising questions about the importance of the generative agency in intense practice interactions and transformative patterns and experiences.

The study adds value in addressing a number of gaps, but more so in facilitating insights and an enquiry into a more holistic understanding of the often ‘invisible’ layer of drivers, beliefs, competencies, qualities and growth influences that seem to enable, shape and impel practitioners to contribute in planning as a future orientated practice, facing the demands of challenging and fast changing work-life contexts in the unfolding highly personal and collective process of being and becoming.



*Someone needs to tell those tales.  
When the battles are fought and won and lost,  
when the pirates find their treasures  
and the dragons eat their foes for breakfast  
with a nice cup of Lapsang souchong,  
someone needs to tell their bits of overlapping narrative.  
There's magic in that. It's in the listener,  
and for each and every ear it will be different,  
and it will affect them in ways they can never predict.  
From the mundane to the profound.  
You may tell a tale that takes up residence in someone's soul,  
becomes their blood and self and purpose.  
That tale will move them and drive them  
and who knows what they might do because of it, because of your  
words.  
That is your role, your gift.  
Your sister may be able to see the future, but you yourself can shape  
it, boy.  
Do not forget that ... there are many kinds of magic, after all.  
(Erin Morgenstern, *The Night Circus*, 2012)*





# PART ONE:

## Call to action, shaping the quest, and departure

*While it may be alluring to pretend, forget and just slumber on, giving up on the dream of a better planning profession would be the same as giving up on the dream of a better city a hundred years ago. It would suggest that a profession which has talked about changing the world since its first breath is not interested in, unwilling, or unable to change itself. And so, if one has the passion to see the planning profession change, it surely would be strange if (such a) one could not come up with some ideas as to what it would take ...*

*(Oranje, 2014:8)*

*Since its origin, the ideas and ideals of planning have been deeply rooted in its interventionist nature, associated with notions of bringing about change and taking action, and existential questions concerning the purpose and contribution of planning as practice and for some, also their purpose as practitioners within planning.*

*(Lennon, 2015)*

*If we can increase the likelihood that our change initiatives will accomplish their objectives by developing leaders to be more effective, then we may move humanity increasingly towards global sustainability.*

*(Brown, 2011:8).*

*The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest. Quests sometimes fail, are frustrated, abandoned or dissipated into distractions; and human lives may in all these fail. But the only criteria for success or failure in a human life as a whole are the criteria of success or failure in a narrated or to-be-narrated quest. A quest for what? ... [Without] some or at least partly determinate conception of the final telos there could not be any beginning to a quest. Some conception of the good for man is required ... the kind of life which is a quest for the good.*

*(MacIntyre, 2013:274-275)*



# 1

## Introduction

*This 'new country' needs a far more caring, compassionate profession and far more of a cooperative style of planning and specification of roles and responsibilities in the processes of plan preparation, implementation and review. It needs planners who are both ready and eager to cooperate, as well as drive and lead such processes, as and where required and/or desired, but also willing and able to allow others to play these roles should they be better suited for the task.*

*(Oranje, 2014:7)*

*The virtues ... are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which will also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distraction which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good.*

*(MacIntyre, 2013:276)*

*Planning is a profession; it is a lifetime passion.*

*(Kunzmann, 2015:71)*

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE QUEST AND THESIS

Within the practice of planning, as in many other future orientated and integrative disciplines, challenging questions are being asked about how practitioners can be enabled and supported to contribute ‘in the creation of a very different society’ (Oranje, 2014:1; Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Brown, 2011a; Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2016; Tubbs et al., 2006). A question especially relevant given that challenges in highly dynamic urban and socio-ecological systems seem to be increasingly complex, uncertain and volatile (Snowden, 2007; Johansen, 2012; Petrie, 2015).

The enquiry reflected upon in this thesis makes a unique contribution in these deliberations through a rich process of meaning making using practitioner work-life narratives that suggest the significance of a generative agency in a purpose-infused process of being, becoming and contributing in (and through) planning as a practice.

In a similar fashion as Lennon’s 2015 exploration of a purpose-infused planner’s narrative, it provides “a more nuanced understanding of how, why, and with what effect those involved in planning practice negotiate the inherent uncertainty, complexity and inevitable normativity” (Lennon, 2015:72). The enquiry is essentially an exploration into how planners engaged their practice in ways to add value and contribute, and what they regarded as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest, and in complex and highly challenging practice contexts.

The enquiry is thus less about what competency and ability is required to address specific problems or challenges, but much rather about how those engaged in the practice of planning seem to be encouraged, enabled and motivated to contribute and add value in their practice engagement overtime, and in spite of the lack of short term ‘success’ associated with an action and future-orientated practice.

Making use of time-span work-life narratives and the quest metaphor, the thesis adds value in the field of planning practice and education by pointing towards how practice contribution can be significantly influenced by the generative agency that is present in:

- ⌘ Being impelled to contribute to the collective future and ‘common good’ through personal and practice commitment (where being impelled and empowered to commit in a practice context is more significant than for personal purposes alone);
- ⌘ Engaging the creation of practice value with authentic and relational excellence (where relational value creation and practice excellence is more significant than the sum of personal competencies and meta-competencies); and
- ⌘ Contributing and growing through practice-embedded transition experiences (where practice embedded-transition experiences are more significant than the sum of the parts of personal and professional growth).

The thesis is based on an enquiry conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a PhD in Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria.

The aim of Section 1 is to introduce the quest of this enquiry in terms of purpose, focus, methodology, findings and contributions. The introduction is followed by a brief overview and roadmap for engaging the thesis as a summery reflection of the quest of this enquiry.

## 1.2 THE QUEST OF THE STUDY

### 1.2.1 Introduction

The enquiry is primarily situated within the knowledge field of planning theory, planning education and planning practice. It is central to planning as a practice (or town and regional planning and/or urban and regional planning as it is also known), referred to as the ‘practice of planning’ within the thesis.

Increasing challenges and complexities of local and global contexts, in highly volatile and uncertain situations worldwide, are all contributing to the demand for radical competence (Folke et al., 2006; Petrie, 2015; Johansen, 2012) and the urgency to support practitioners in the practice of planning.

Discourses in the knowledge fields of planning (Lennon, 2015; Sandercock, 2004; Sehested, 2009; Perlstein and Ortolang, 2015), career studies (Schultze and Miller, 2004; Arthur et al., 2005) and sustainability leadership (Blowers, 2013; Bourantas et al., 2014; Boyatzis et al., 2016; Brown, 2012a and b) all recognise the importance of qualities such as being adaptable and agile, being caring and wise, making situated judgements, connecting with others, having a focus on the future, and employing transdisciplinary skills to name but a few.

Whilst the importance of personal development and purpose is evident and also actively pursued by a younger generation of professionals (Potgieter, 2012; Evangelista, 2009), it seems that capacity related discourses have, however, largely remained focused on the ever increasing lists of competencies and the outcomes to be achieved within the relatively limited time spent within formal education or professional development interactions. At the same time, there is a growing need for professionals to adapt, innovate and expand their competencies, to stay motivated, to face challenges and to contribute in bringing about change in complex and large scale urban systems or other multi-stakeholder environments (de Roo, 2012; Kunzmann, 2015; Campbell et al., 2013) – contexts where impact is often difficult to measure owing to intended and unintended consequences, as well as slow but continuous transformation (Cilliers, 2006).

As expressed by Klaus Kunzmann in his address to the Heads of European Planning Schools, contemplating the both excellence and challenges of planning education in a connected and divided globalized world: “The challenges of the future, not those of the past, have to define and guide the learning. What else is essential in planning education? Apart from good interdisciplinary, through planning, addicted and committed staff, it is the spirit, the strength of mind, which has to be communicated to future planners. What makes this spirit? ... [Amongst a number of things, firstly] planners have to be passionate, they should love their job, despite all the frustrations they experience daily, they should identify with their job and the institution, which pays them to address the challenges of urban and regional development” (2015:70-71).

The valuable contributions and challenges related to the development of professionals in the planning domain, whether in the education, professional practice or workplace context, are well recognised (Goldstein & Carmin, 2006; Abbot, 2005; Innes and Booher, 2015). The invaluable, but also limited impact of an assessment and regulatory focus (Lester, 1999; Chivers, 2006; Cheetham and Chivers, 2005), as well as the challenges associated with developing competency frameworks and with the increasing range of competencies and abilities which planners are expected to acquire during formal planning education and continued professional development endeavours are, however, also evident (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015; Faludi, 2013; Flyvbjerg, 2013).

Within the planning education and practice fields, considerable focus appears to remain on identifying the most relevant and right set of competencies and qualification outputs (Christensen, 2005; Rosan et al., 2012; Rydin, 2011; Tasan-Kok et al., 2016) as standards ‘to achieve’, and thus best equip young planners within a practice that is concerned with an evolving future.

Does such a practice only require beacons of light to steer to, or also some light shining out in the dark to chart new ways in uncharted territories? Is there not a danger in us retaining the illusion that impact in the world of complexity (and sometimes chaos) can be controlled and measured? Or in bemoaning the future of education, and the lack of practice enthused mentors who can teach by example and inspire students to identify with the practice (Barnes, 1994; Gunder, 2004:301-302, Edward, 2011), and making passionate pleas for passion and purpose (Kunzmann, 2015; Lennon, 2015; Oranje, 2014), whilst actually remaining within the very system that may be keeping that in place?

The concern is that the drive that formed part of a caring practice characterised by a commitment to doing good and the “vision (of a better world) has been lost” (Taylor, 1992:240 in Oranje, 1997:122). It seems that as the practice of planning became professionalised and increasingly bureaucratized, its vision for change, reconstruction and serving society became overshadowed by the need to regulate, standardise and serve the modern masters of the individual, the market and the state (Oranje, 1997, 2012 and 2014; Hoch, 1994 and Taylor, 1998).

Even though the enquiry ‘speaks’ to these endeavours, it has purposefully not been bounded or designed to contribute to a specific discourse or point of departure. The enquiry was designed to acknowledge the value, but also to look beyond the world of education, learning and professional accreditation, and as such gain a whole-person perspective (again) into being, becoming and contributing to the practice of planning as action and future-orientated practice.

A brief overview of the enquiry is provided here by outlining:

- ⌘ the underlying premise (Section 1.2.2);
- ⌘ the purpose and focus of the enquiry (Section 1.2.3);
- ⌘ the research approach (Section 1.2.4);
- ⌘ the findings and value (Section 1.2.5); and
- ⌘ The possible contribution of the enquiry (Section 1.2.6).

### **1.2.2 Underlying premise**

The premise of this enquiry is that practitioners who contribute and thrive in their practices (and even more so in an integrative, uncertain and future-orientated practice such a planning and the new world of work) illustrate qualities, attitudes and levels of motivation that are not equal to the sum of the most extensive list of competencies or of formal and informal learning outcomes.

Whilst the reality and importance of this statement might be regarded as common sense, and is indeed widely recognised (even amongst the most ardent and well-known developers of competency frameworks and continued professional development programs, see Cheetham & Chivers, 2005; Chivers, 2007), competency and output-driven education and accreditation processes (as well as research that contributes to that) seem to set the tone in endeavours aimed at supporting practitioners to contribute.

On the other hand, passion, purpose and spirit-infused planning seems to be highly valued, but possibly also remains an ambiguous and ‘grey area’ in the domain of scholarly articles (Davoudi, 2015; Oranje, 2014; Gunder, 2004; Sandercock, 2004; Friedman, 1996) and motivational discussions and reflections (Kunzmann, 2017; Stanley, 2007; Fainstein, 2014). Some attempts have been made at opening up views into the heart of the matter (and of planners) through the development of practitioner profiles (see Forester, 2004a,b,c,d), through providing some insights into different pathways and the diverse possibilities that ‘becoming an urban planner’ entails in the recent profiling of planners in Australia by Bayer, Frank and Valerius (2011), and more recently through exploring the role of purpose and commitment to the quest of planning as a practice by Lennon (2015), and the to-be-published collection of engagements with young planners from various countries (Tasan-Kok and Oranje). However, this remains a limited and possibly challenging focus area in empirical research (Lennon, 2015; Forester, 2015 and Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015).

### **1.2.3 Purpose and focus of the enquiry**

The challenge in this enquiry was specifically to venture into this ambiguous and “grey area”, to leave the ordinary world and the comfort of ever encompassing competence frameworks, in order to gain insight and perspective into how practitioners in an action and future-orientated practice such as planning, could be encouraged, enabled and supported to contribute in increasingly complex and dynamic practice contexts.

The research was designed to enable an explorative and whole-person enquiry (not biased towards, or limited by, a competency framework or a formal education or professional registration lens) into how planners engage their practice in ways to add value and contribute, and what they regard as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest within complex and highly challenging practice contexts.

The purpose of the enquiry was not to ask specific questions to generate specific answers, but to enable an exploration into what is really significant in enabling practice contribution within complex and fast adaptive systems of personal and professional development in highly complex practice contexts.

In this, possible insights were not considered as having direct implications or being ‘answers to’ specific practice/discourse questions, or context-specific experience cast as being as relevant to global discourses. But rather the intent is to treat insights as a finger pointing to the moon – not placing the focus of the contemplation on the finger itself, but rather on the direction in which it is pointing to, contemplating potential implications, and/or questions that such insights may raise for current initiatives and frameworks aimed at enabling and encouraging contribution in planning.

### **1.2.4 Research approach**

A whole-person, generative and reflexive research approach (see Section 4) was used to guide the enquiry and a qualitative biographic-narrative research methodology employed to enable the exploration. The enquiry entailed a process of soliciting work-life narratives from a sample of 25 participating planners, identified by peers as making a contribution to the practice of planning in South Africa, during times of major change and socio-political turbulence. Rich work-life narratives and interviews were solicited from two- to three-hour biographic interviews, in which participants reflected on their experiences and the competencies and influences that enabled and encouraged them to contribute, within their work-life contexts.

In an attempt at moving beyond the obvious and holding the tension between appreciating and exploring the richness of the data and individual experiences and perceptions, as well as critically reflecting and making meaning, the enquiry was approached as a learning process imbedded within a qualitative, explorative and reflexive research approach (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007). This entailed an iterative process of exploration, analyses and reflexive interpretation. Myth was used as metaphor to enable an innovative whole person, dynamic and generative meaning making approach.

Within the context of the study, the challenge was threefold:

- ⌘ Firstly, to design an enquiry through which I would not necessarily answer a specific set of narrowly defined questions, but rather create a possibility to learn meaningful lessons from practitioners who are committed to the quest of planning about qualities, competencies and growth experiences that they regarded as significant in enabling, shaping and supporting them to contribute in planning's practice;
- ⌘ Secondly, to ensure that the enquiry would be relevant and add value within the practice context; and
- ⌘ Thirdly, to ensure that the study could make a meaningful contribution to the ever expanding knowledge fields of planning education and planning practice. Knowledge fields in which the spirit of planning (Oranje, 2014; Gunder, 2004) and the 'invisible layer of virtue/competence'; the importance of characteristics, attitudes, roles, ways of knowing, ethical grounding and judgement; and, the range of meta-competencies and commitment to the quest of planning are increasingly featuring in discourses about improving quality, impact and contribution in ways that are locally and globally relevant (Hossain, Scholz and Baumgart, 2015; Gunder, 2011; Lennon, 2015; Watson and Agbola, 2013).

To address these challenges, the enquiry was embedded in a qualitative and generative, biographic research approach that facilitated a deep engagement with practitioners regarding their work-life experiences within the practice of planning (in South Africa), and with a specific focus on learning from practitioners who were regarded as contributing to planning as a practice (see Section 3 for more detail). The enquiry unfolded over a number of years, and supported a rich process of meaning making that afforded a wealth of insights.

### **1.2.5 Findings and value**

Through an exploration of that which enabled participating planners to contribute in their practice, the enquiry highlights the value of a purpose infused, practice committed, dynamically transformational and highly relational nature of 'being, becoming and contributing' to the practice of planning.

Exploration into and reflexive interpretations of participant work-life narratives using the quest metaphor were used to identify significant patterns and coherence in what participants regarded as significant in enabling them to add value and contribute within challenging practice contexts.

Whilst the enquiry confirmed the value of foundational education, as well as the wide range of competence requirements and the importance of ongoing personal and professional development, the focus of the participant work-life narratives was on the significance and generative agency of the following:

- ⌘ Being impelled to contribute to the collective future and 'common good' through personal and practice commitment (where being impelled and empowered to commit in a practice context is more significant than personal purpose alone);

- ⌘ Engaging the creation of practice value with authentic and relational excellence (where relational value creation and practice excellence is more significant than the sum of personal competencies and meta-competencies); and
- ⌘ Contributing and growing through practice-embedded transition experiences (where practice embedded transition experiences are more significant than the sum of the parts of personal and professional growth).

The enquiry confirms the significance and role of commitment to the quest of planning as a practice (as argued by Lennon, 2015); however, it also highlights the importance of synergy between a transformational perspective of the world and future as connected and evolving, a sense of personal purpose and value in contribution, and lastly association with planning as a practice through which to enable such contribution.

The reflection on the unfolding work-life experiences of participants highlights the significance and generative agency (potentially valuable in complex adaptive systems as argued by Snowden (2007, 2013) and De Roo (2012)) that appears to have been created by the deeply personal and highly relational interplay between: (i) a quest that is both context- and future-inspired; (ii) creative tensions in a drive for excellence and value addition; and. (iii) contribution and experience generated through practice-embedded transition experiences.

In contemplating the implications of such insights, the enquiry reminds us that contributing to the unfolding future in complex and highly dynamic urban and development contexts is not merely an individual endeavour, or vested in a set of capabilities. It is much rather – as the unfolding future itself – enabled through dedication, meaningful and often challenging practice interactions and an unfolding process of being and becoming, and facilitated through practice-embedded transition experiences: these being more significant than the sum of the parts of personal and professional growth and learning experiences.

It points to value in the much contested quest for the ‘common good’ in planning as a practice, the critical importance of ongoing personal transformation, and the significance of experience embedded within practice (as practice context, but also in the traditions and transition experiences embedded within a community of practice); not merely to enable continuous learning or adaptation, but whilst actively contributing to crafting innovative ways to move forward into the unknown.

The enquiry illustrates the significance of committed practitioners, highly enthused communities of practice and meaningful interaction in practice contexts (rewards in the outer world). It also suggests the significance of this commitment and intense practice interactions for the uniquely personal journeys of being and becoming of practitioners in the practice (rewards in the inner world).



### 1.2.6 Contribution

The enquiry's contribution to the knowledge field of planning practice can be described as threefold.

Firstly, the enquiry adds value to current competence discourses in the field of planning education and professional development by illustrating and providing some insights into the significance of the deeply transformational and highly relational (practice embedded) nature of 'being, becoming and contributing' to and through planning.

Secondly, the enquiry's more significant contribution can be considered to lie in the questions it raises about the way in which we frame competence discourses in the practice of planning (a practice aimed at intervening in complex adaptive urban and socio-ecological systems). It is a reminder to not merely structure and evaluate our engagements, research and endeavours aimed at enabling radical contribution through the lenses of complicated higher education and professional development frameworks and models, but to also consider the restrictions and limitations of such frameworks and models - especially in complex contexts and times of radical change. It prompts us to consider focusing our attention on:

- ⌘ The potential generative agency in our engagement with planning's purpose, ideals and excellence in value addition in the practice as 'quest like' and a highly relational commitment (as suggested by Lennon, 2015); and
- ⌘ The potential significance of generative agency in intense and practice-embedded transition experiences within such quests (following age-old patterns embedded in myth) and thus the critical importance of active and inspirational communities of practice, practice traditions and practice interaction in order to support that.

Thirdly, the enquiry adds value in terms of the research methodology and approach employed by illustrating:

- ⌘ The possible value in using 'whole-person' biographic narrative research to explore work-life experiences of planners over time: not merely in relation to a specific role, endeavour, project or a 'task', but in relation to, firstly, increasingly complex and dynamically changing roles and work-life contexts; and, secondly, the deeply personal and complex quest of being and becoming in human life, and growth and shaping within practice contexts; and
- ⌘ The value of using a generative and reflexive approach to enable an exploration into the complex adaptive system of competence development through the use of context and relational rich work-life narratives and metaphor.

### 1.2.7 Summary

The research findings pave the way for an appreciation of how participants have driven contribution and value addition in complex practice contexts, through active engagement but also through the generative agency. This with a specific emphasis on the significance of the generative agency: firstly, in personal and practice commitment to the common good in the unfolding future; and, secondly, in creating practice value through personal and relational excellence; and, lastly, in contribution and growth through practice embedded transition experiences.

Whilst the study provides valuable reflections and insights that can be used to strengthen or revive (as some would argue) the practice of planning, its most valuable contribution is probably that it serves as a

reminder. A reminder that contribution to the collective future is probably less about exactly what we do, know and create, and more about the momentum provided through dedicated practice contribution in interaction with others in intense and transformational practice experiences. All of which influence and are influenced by the way in which we practice, grow, believe, and stay committed – in an unfolding process of being, becoming and contributing while contributing to planning's quest and as part of an evolving community of practice.

An outline of the thesis and roadmap to engage the challenges, the growth, the learning and the reflections within the quest of this enquiry is provided in the next section.

### **1.3 ROADMAP TO THE THESIS**

#### **1.3.1 Introduction**

The section serves as a short introduction to the thesis, the use of the quest metaphor and reflexive approach, as well as the structure and outline of the thesis. Whilst illustrating the interrelations between the various sections, as well as between the various processes of meaning making, some pointers and information to navigate pathways through the thesis are also provided.

#### **1.3.2 Use of the quest metaphor**

In this enquiry, 'The quest' is used as a central metaphor to guide our attention, and make our moral stance explicit, as well as to structure and support the qualitative enquiry (Van Hulst, 2012; Forester, 1996) into the intangible and elusive virtues and journey within the context of planning as a practice. In the same vein that Beauregard (1998) argues for the significance of the relationship between writing planning theories and 'writing the planner', it could be argued that a study about planners' contributing to the practice of planning would imply 'writing the planner', demanding an awareness of what kind of planners or 'action initiators' are being imagined, and what kind of quest, purpose, virtues are at play.

The metaphor not only supports the narrative exploration of work-life adventures but enables identification, meaning making and communicating of the inter-related dynamics of relational experiences, moments of transition and growth, contextually different pathways, the value of influences (such as mentors, allies, guardians and even enemies and tricksters) and the respective interplays within the hero's experiences in the quest. The metaphor thus also provides a view on the 'quest' as being relational and not merely personal within the context of the practice of planning (MacIntyre, 2009 and Lennon, 2015).

Framing the enquiry and the quest, utilising metaphors of the 'Hero's Journey' (Campbell, 2008; Vogler, 2007) and exploring planner work-life narratives and 'careers' as games with multiple adventures (Lo Presti, 2009) enables the enquiry to be situated within a highly personal time-span and working-life context; however, also recognising the various transitions in the South African socio-political and planning systems, as well as local and global contexts and challenges.

Using the quest as a metaphor for sense making has a powerful influence in creating a 'unique window onto how we construct knowledge (see Verma, 1993; Andrade, 2013) and reason about complex issues' (as illustrated in experiments showing how metaphors influence reasoning on key social issues in Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 2011).

### 1.3.3 Structure and outline of the thesis

Using myth as metaphor, the thesis is used to provide a reflection on the enquiry, call to action, departure, as well as the challenges, findings and insights in the quest for meaning making. The thesis structure broadly reflects the pattern of the typical quest journey (Campbell, 2008; Vogler, 2007). Whilst the reflection in the thesis is structured in eight Sections, as illustrated in Figure 1.1., this enquiry encompassed a continuous and iterative process of learning and growth (indicated through the spiral) and numerous intense actions and experiences (represented through the numbers on the spiral). The thesis outline can be summarised as follows:

Section One is used to provide a brief introduction to the enquiry.

Section Two is firstly aimed at highlighting the *raison d'être* and value of the quest. The call for action is, on the one hand, explained as highly personal, as illustrated in reflecting on the original and highly personal call to action that kick-started the enquiry. On the other hand, the value of the study is also illustrated by pointing towards continued calls for action, as evident in:

- ⌘ The need for enhanced planning capability within South African and international contexts; and
- ⌘ The many ongoing endeavours within competency-related discourses to improve competency models, qualification frameworks and continued professional development requirements within the practice of planning.

The motivation, value, specific purpose and research focus of the enquiry are also outlined in Section 2. |

The purpose of Section 3 is to provide a brief overview of the qualitative, generative and reflexive research approach and methods selected to ensure credibility and to add value to the enquiry; specifically in conducting the biographic narrative interviews and the various iterations of multi-layered interpretation during the generative process of meaning making.

In Section 4 an overview of some of the most significant framing elements, pointers and insights from the various knowledge fields in relation to the enquiry is provided. Even though, this literature review appears as a snapshot in time once captured, it was developed through an unfolding and iterative process during which the exploration of relevant theoretical perspectives formed an essential part of meaning making over time, and it:

- ⌘ Firstly, assisted in questioning and confirming the relevance and contribution of the study and the findings within a dynamically changing environment;
- ⌘ Secondly, enabled learning from new perspectives in the wide range of interrelated discourses and insights from relevant knowledge fields; and
- ⌘ Thirdly, was an essential part of discovery given the generative and reflexive research approach used.

Sections 5 and 6 are used to share findings and insights generated through the iterative process of meaning making based on explorations and reflexive interpretations on 'being, becoming and contributing' in the work-life narratives of participants.

Whilst Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 are presented in that order in the thesis, they are actually the result of an intensive and highly interrelated and non-linear journey following the departure and several moments of rerouting on the journey towards the special world of the quest, through facing the challenges of

exploration and meaning making, and by finding support from allies, mentors and magical helpers on the road (See Figure 1.1).

In Section 5, participants and the ‘ordinary’ and ‘special’ worlds (with the focus largely on the South African socio-political and planning ‘world’) in which their work-life narratives unfolded are introduced. Following the introductions and context, an overview of explorations and reflexive interpretations into the rich work-life narratives as shared by participants is provided. A specific focus was placed on what was deemed significant in enabling and shaping them to contribute within complex, fast changing and dynamic practice contexts. Given the generative and reflexive nature of the enquiry, the section is not aimed at providing detailed first level analyses and comparisons (examples and summaries of these are set out in Annexure C). By using myth as metaphor, the section is used to highlight coherent patterns, paradoxes and dynamics that seemed to play a significant role in enabling, shaping and impelling as reflected on by participants in the context of their experiences and work-life contexts.

A brief overview is provided of significant and highly inter-related experiences evident in the participant work-life narratives, making use of the lens of the quest metaphor to illustrate coherence, significant patterns and highly transformational and relational experiences in terms of typical:

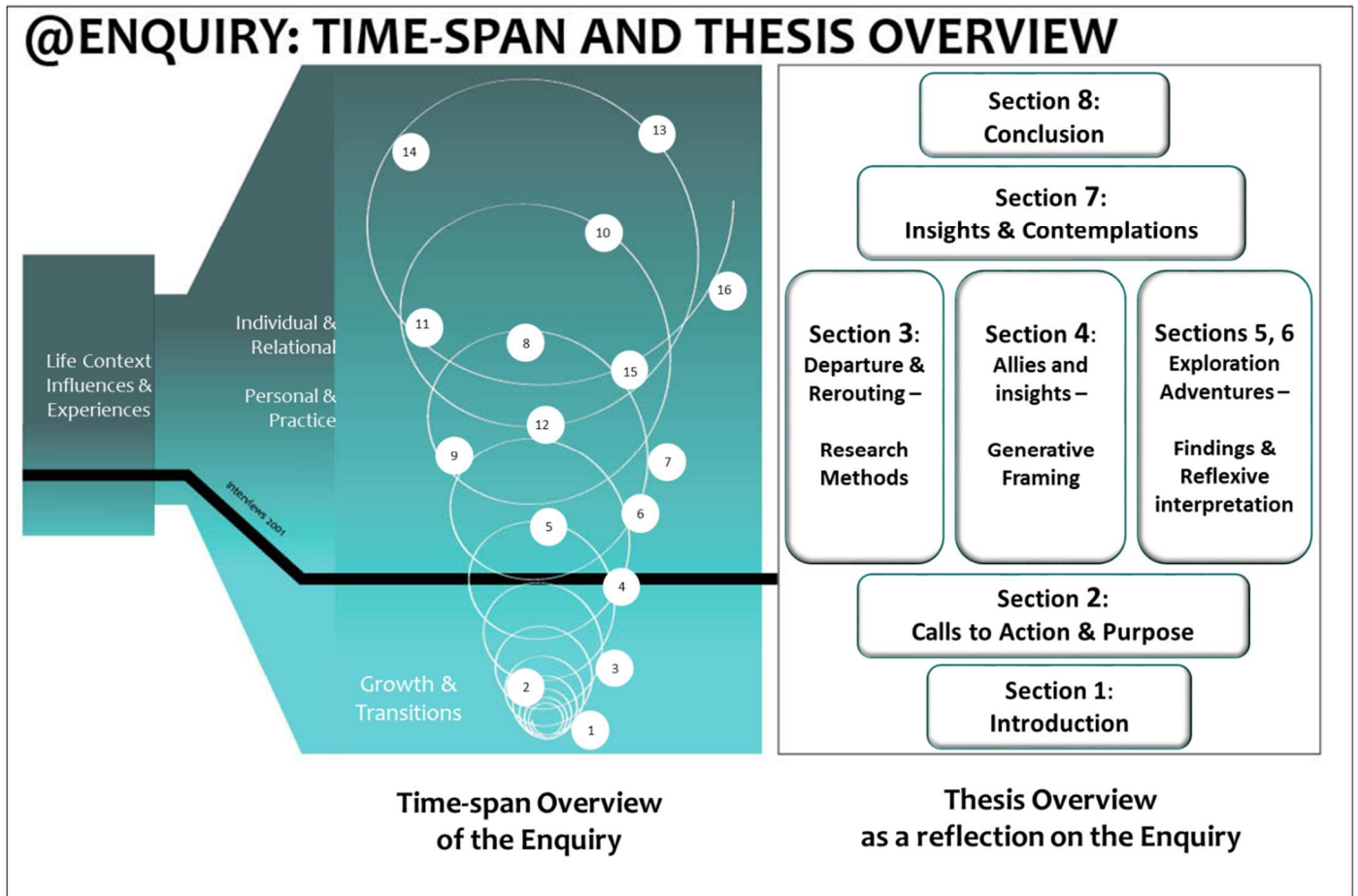
- ⌘ Call to action experiences;
- ⌘ Initiation experiences; and
- ⌘ Adventure challenges.

Section 6 is structured to provide a time-span overview of participants’ work-life narratives, making use of the quest metaphor to explore significant themes and coherency, with specific reference to the significance of:

- ⌘ Participant commitment to highly personal and relational practice quests;
- ⌘ The interplay between transformational perspective, personal beliefs, practice and personal quests as career anchors and association with planning as a practice as drivers in career and practice decisions;
- ⌘ Creating practice value as a driver of participants’ practice engagement, and the personal, highly relational and often paradoxical nature of capabilities that enabled them to create value and remain committed; and
- ⌘ Intense practice-embedded contribution experiences as highly relational experiences of professional and personal growth, learning and transformation.

Section 7 is used to provide a brief overview of the purpose of the quest, reflections on the journey and adventures within the quest of the enquiry, as well as to highlight key observations, reflections and insights from the enquiry in order to reflect on the enquiry and answer the research question.

Figure 1.1: @Enquiry: Time-span of the research and learning process in relation to thesis outline



Lastly, Section 7 provides a reflection on the limitations, validity and ‘rewards’ of the journey both in terms of a ‘PhD contribution’ and personal transformation (what a quest inevitably is about) and, of course, on new calls for action and future research.

The thesis is concluded in Section 8 by a few contemplations and insights brought about by the experiences in the quest of this enquiry and the implications thereof for ‘returning to the ordinary world’. A number of questions are raised about the possibilities that such a simple, but much more dynamic, evolving and relational understanding of being and becoming in (and through) the practice of planning might have in times of radical change – not only for individuals, but more so for communities of practice engaged in planning education and professional development. The potential value of the study for other communities of practice involved in complex and challenging contexts are also highlighted.

For ease of navigation, the thesis is divided into two parts: Part One, reflecting on the design, approach, conducting and framing of the enquiry (Sections 1 to 4); and, Part Two, reflecting on the findings and insights generated through the enquiry (Sections 5 to 8).

### 1.3.4 Engaging the thesis and the reflexive enquiry

At the heart of this research ‘as a provisional rational project’ lies reflection – not just procedure (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2007:288). The thesis has not been written in an attempt at containing, boxing or providing ‘the’ answers in the complex context of ‘being and becoming’ in planning as a practice. It is much rather a

reflection of an enquiry of appreciation and celebration (rather than fear or avoiding) of the unstable, of paradox, and often even opposing relation between reality and rhetoric, between different voices and between different understandings and experiences. The approach allows for the questioning of 'rationality' in research, especially in typical social sciences research, not for the sake of post-modern uncertainty, but for the purpose of allowing a view into the intangible ... to recognise value in research.

Opting for the use of a more reflexive approach (See Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007), as set out in Section 3.2, required recognition of the central part that language, authorship and interpretive meaning making (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2007:168-169) play within the thesis and reflection on the enquiry. Within this approach (See Sections 3.2 and 3.2.5), the process of producing the text is essentially also the process of reflection. As such the thesis has to provide opportunity for, and/or reflect on, the process of reflection within the text. The latter obviously requires sharing explorations as well as reflexive interpretations, less use of empirical material and the courage to share and expose often times personal interpretations and reflections. As such the researchers' (and readers') active involvement in creating meaning making is explicitly recognised (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:271).

A substantial challenge in this study, given the rather intangible enquiry opted for, was the search (quest) for appropriate, sound and value-adding ways to explore this elusive notion in its dynamic and relational context, and to 'see', to 'intuitively feel', to 'make meaning' and to 'share' the insights found.

Thus, capturing and solidifying insights into the 'invisible' layer of drivers, beliefs, competencies, qualities and growth influences that participants regarded as significant in enabling, shaping and impelling them to contribute in planning as a practice over time into neatly packaged paragraphs and mutually exclusive points; but without losing the very 'essence' and spirit associated with that. This can be compared to attempts to hold something as elusive as quicksilver – requiring me to keep it still long enough to be seen but letting it go quickly enough to maintain its dynamic character.

Given the richness of the in-depth interviews and that the work-life narratives were analysed in a time-span context, reconstructed summaries have been used to illustrate certain findings where relevant. Even if not verbatim or directly quoted, wording and tone reflect participant narrations as far as possible. Where it adds value, some specific quotes or snippets from participant work-life narratives are used.

To support easy access to these narratives, some "Reading Assistance" is provided in Figure 1.2 below.

Figure 1.2: Engaging Re-constructed Narratives

**TO ASSIST READING, EXPLORING AND INTERPRETING NARRATIONS IN THE TEXT:**

**NOTE 1:** Narratives reconstructed by myself, based on my interpretation of the self-perception of adventures and insights of participants are indicated as such in grey scale.

**NOTE 2:** The narratives were not necessarily in all cases told to me in the chronological order that it has been reconstructed in the text, as participants would often add or explain some significant growth moment in earlier work-life in their narrations of subsequent experiences. The wording and text has to a large extent been used in line with the way it was used by the participant in the original narration to keep the 'feel'. Direct quotations are indicated as such, using quotation marks: "quote". My own insertions, either words, descriptions, explanations or reflections are indicated as text in brackets: [Text in brackets].

**NOTE 3:** The notations [Ē1]- [Ē12] are used to indicate some of the moments of learning during the "Call to Action" Adventure, which was actually referred to, often interweaved into reflections, in the "Initiation" Adventure narrative.

**NOTE 4:** In order to allow readers and fellow explorers to contextualize narrative examples used within the whole life and contextual realities of the participants to enable meaning making and a more dynamic perspective, where narratives related to specific events, experiences and specifically moments of change have been used in the text it is trace-able as any good twitter feed. Trace to the person using [@Pseudynom\_Exp1] corresponding to the participant name and work-life time line as set out in work-life narrative diagrams (Examples in Overview Diagrams, C.3-C.8).

Traces to significant reflexive interpretations are done by themes with #Call to Action; #Initiation, etc.

Fundamental to a reflexive interpretation approach is the passion of critical reflection. It required me to be aware, and open, about my own role, interpretations and possible biases. Not always easy for a passionate proponent of planning as a practice – but also critical for readers and fellow-adventurers in this enquiry and meaning-making through engagement of the thesis to be aware of. The respective sections of the thesis are also structured to provide (and force) me to include the personal and critical reflections on the enquiry process and findings. You will, therefore, also note and see the (for some) uncomfortable use of the world "I" in my renditions of what was done, why it was done, what the value thereof is, and what I think it means. Hopefully in this way consistently also affording readers and fellow explorers the opportunity for critical reflection (of 'my' interpretations, as well as for others' own personal reflection).

### 1.3.5 Summary

In the above section, a brief outline was provided of the thesis structure, the use of the quest metaphor and the reflexive research approach.

Through the various journey experiences that this enquiry engaged with (as outlined in the structure set out in Figure 1.1 above), an invitation is extended to engage, explore and reflect on:

- ☞ The journey of the enquiry as set out in this thesis;
- ☞ The journeys and experiences of participants as shared in this study;

☞ The meaning making and reflections shared; and, hopefully, in a moment somewhere along the way ... on your own journey and the experiences and influences that stir your soul ...

As explained by Joseph Campbell in his seminal work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (first published in 1949), that is inevitably the real work of the hero – "to retreat from the world scene of secondary effects to those casual zones of the psyche where the difficulties really reside, and there to clarify the difficulties, eradicate them in his own case ..." (Campbell, 2008:12).

#### 1.4 REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

In Section 1, I provide some background to the call to this enquiry, the purpose of the enquiry's quest. I highlight the relevance and value of the enquiry and provide a brief overview of how the enquiry was framed, shaped and conducted in order to add value. I also outline how the quest metaphor has been used to support the exploration and reflective interpretation of work-life narrative histories (spanning an era of change and transformation) of a small group of 'value adding' practitioners in the context of planning as a practice in South Africa.

The enquiry provided an opportunity to make a novel contribution in the field of planning practice. This was done by exploring practitioners' work-life experiences and reflections on the often 'invisible' layer of drivers, beliefs, competencies, qualities and growth influences that seem to have enabled, shaped and impelled them to contribute in planning as a practice over time, facing the demands of challenging and dynamically changing work-life contexts.

Findings in the enquiry point to the central/pivotal role that 'a sense of purpose' played, and the seemingly generative role it has in impacting beliefs, attitude, and dedication, willingness to adapt and learn.

These insights appear very familiar in hindsight ... maybe never 'lost' ... but certainly in need of a proper place in our awareness. To help us remember and honour that which we most probably intuitively know. To provide us with insight and inspiration in our individual and collective endeavours in planning as a practice. And most of all, to shine some light on the significance and generative capabilities in purpose infused, relational and practice embedded processes of being and becoming within and through the quest of this practice.

Section 1 is used to provide a quick introduction to the quest of the enquiry by outlining the original call to action, the value and relevance of the quest, as well as the purpose, focus and approach used within the quest. A brief overview is provided of the findings and value of the enquiry. An overview and roadmap for the thesis is outlined in Section 1.3, providing some indication of the inter-related meaning making process and the way in which the enquiry is reflected upon within the various sections. Some travellers' tips are also provided for engaging in the thesis.

The use of quests in narratives and myth probably dates back as far as humanity, assisting generations to make meaning of individual and collective events, to teach and explore wisdoms, to touch deeply and to inspire. The key elements and experiences typical to quests embedded as symbols in mythology are not only produced and structured in the text but even more so within the human psyche, each encompassing generative capabilities – explained by Joseph Campbell (2008:2) as "each bears within it, undamaged, the germ power of its source."



The journey is essentially always an internal one, mirrored in the outer world, and not merely an action-packed adventure in the outer world without any growth, shifts and catharsis in character (as Vogler explained in his original, notorious notes to screenplay writers at Disney – Vogler, 2007).



the enquiry's quest  
Calls to action and purpose of

*The time for story is most often dictated by inner sensibilities and outer need ...  
For the most part, we tell stories when we are summoned by them, and not vice  
versa ...*

*(Estés, 1992:462)*

*Becoming fully human is a lifelong journey.  
It can also be an incredible adventure.*

*(Benner, 2016:iv)*

*A beginning is a very delicate time.*

*(From Dune, screenplay by David Lynch,  
based on the novel by Frank Herbert in Vogler, 2007:83)*

*As futurists, we are responsible for the restoration of images and languages that  
foster a positive imagination that can help us create better futures ... search for  
the strengths, beliefs, and living forces that inspire and mobilize positive change in  
groups and organizations. By identifying the best of “what is”, it gives space and  
strength to pursue dreams and possibilities of “what could be”.*

*(Algeria, 2005:102)*

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Rapidly growing cities in Africa and across the world are faced with increased complexities, changing dynamics and a range of local and global challenges (United Nations, 2015; Holling, 2004; Shift, 2007). The increasingly important need for climate change adaptation, the potential value for equitable and economically productive urban development, and the growing gap between informal urban realities and many urban planning ideals, approaches and underlying models, not only point to the potential contribution of and need for planning, planners and planning education, but also the need for re-thinking that contribution and adding value through context-specific approaches and reforms (Hossain, Scholz and Baumgart, 2015:148; Watson and Agbola, 2013:2; Bennet and Lemoine, 2014; Freestone, 2012).

The call is made for change, and more so, for "planners who are innovative problem-solvers and willing to collaborate with all parties involved in the development process, including local communities ... [who] need to be informed by explicit and progressive values"; thus, placing a huge onus on planning education and initiatives aimed at enhancing professional development capacity in Africa, such as the Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS) (Watson and Agbola, 2013:2; Watson and Odendaal, 2012).

These challenges are not unique to Africa, with the extraordinarily rapid rate of urbanization in China (Perlstein and Ortolano, 2015:435; Kunzmann and Yuan, 2014) also raising interesting questions about the importance of focusing attention on the role of planning practitioners in relation to city leaders and decisions around the growth directions of China's dense urban areas.

Whilst the specific contexts and increased need for the internationalization of planning education might be more recent (Sykes et al., 2015; Kunzmann, 2015), the demands and calls for planners to contribute, the calls for enhanced planning capacity, for change, action and new forms of global co-production and context relevance have been gaining momentum over recent years (Watson, 2014; Hossain et al., 2015; Gunn and Vigor, 2012; Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011; Hague et al., 2006). In the same way, the much 'bemoaned' theory/planning education and practice gap (as described by Allmendinger, 2009:24, in Sykes et al., 2015:84) has received much attention over the last decade.

The urgency for the planning capacity and shifts called for (Forester, 2015; Sager, 2009; Sehested, 2009; Afshar, 2001) has, as always, critical systemic and resource implications, as well as implications for education aimed at developing new cadres of 'novice' planners.

The call for practitioners and leaders who can make a contribution, who are wise, who can make situated judgements (Campbell, 2006; Fainstein, 2014; Davoudi, 2015; Harrison, 2006; Mengel, 2005), who care and recognize connection, who have a long range focus on the future, who appreciate science that calls forth transdisciplinary skills and leaders with late-stage action logic (Senge, 1999; Lovering, 2009; Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Brown, 2011a; Schein, 2015; Cook-Greuter, 2004), are increasing in planning and many other disciplines concerned with our collective future.

We are challenged to be more mindful (Murphy and Fox-Rogers, 2015), to consider the value of concepts such as finding solutions on alternative levels of reality (Nicolescu, 2002; Lawrence, 2004), to explore our engagement of power and love (as urged by Kahane, 2010 and Senge, 1990). In many future-orientated practices, as in planning, questions are being asked about how we should prepare practitioners and leaders, not only to operate in a complex and fast-changing world, and engage with wicked problems (Rittel and Webber, 1973), but also contribute towards that what can be regarded as the common good. What is

termed ‘the common good’ in the discourses in planning (Murphy and Fox-Rogers, 2014; and Campbell, 2006) also aligns with notions of interconnectedness and the unfolding nature of the future in discourses in sustainability leadership, planning and future studies (Brown, 2011a; Schein, 2015; du Plessis, 2009; Wilber, 2007; Abbot, 2005; Friedmann, 1996; Marris, 2010; Lovering, 2009:4; Myers, 2001).

Contributing to these discourses and endeavours within the knowledge fields of planning practice and education, this quest (as explained in Section 1.1) was essentially designed to add value to the wide range of endeavours aimed at supporting planning practitioners in contributing to the unfolding future in challenging, turbulent and complex local and global contexts.

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the departure and *raison d'être* of the enquiry. This is done:

- ⌘ Firstly, through reflections on the early origins in formative experiences through which I was introduced and called to planning as a practice;
- ⌘ Secondly, through an indication of the need for planning capability in South Africa and internationally, as well as repeated needs expressed not only for improved, but also a radical competency within the practice of planning; and
- ⌘ Thirdly, by providing an overview of the value of the enquiry in relation to ongoing discourses relating to competence and competence development.

In summary, the section illustrates how the call to action gave rise to the specific focus on the study, namely to generate insights and explore the nature, shaping influence and growth of capabilities, qualities and attitudes that seem to play a role in encouraging and enabling practitioners to contribute in the practice of planning (as action and future orientated practice) in complex, dynamic and inter-connected contexts.

## **2.2 A PERSONAL CALL TO ACTION ON THIS ENQUIRY**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

Since I can remember, I have been inspired by the idea that something ‘ought to be’ and ‘could be’ done to change and make things better for people and places. This has always been part of my thinking – probably as the result of a range of early childhood influences including a Calvinistic upbringing, an overdeveloped sense of responsibility (typically associated with elder siblings), an upbringing in the South African socio-political system, and a family that very practically believed in nothing being impossible and ‘making a plan’. A disposition that was fuelled and cemented in the late 1980s when I was introduced to the practice and the quest of planning.

This section is used to introduce the very personal call to action by providing a reflection on some formative and initiation experiences and influences into the practice of planning that probably gave rise to the enquiry (Section 2.2.2), after which a brief reflection is provided on the specific call to action that kick-started the enquiry (Section 2.2.3).

### **2.2.2 Call to action and initiations into the practice of planning**

My first call to the field of planning was brought by an inspirational high school geography teacher, who inspired in me an interest for geography and an interest in spatial and systemic relations, and probably at

the time thought it could be an interesting option for a ‘career-choice-confused’ child who liked a wide range of subjects and wanted to ‘do’ something with significance. It was a call that merely intensified in the first few years of studies in an undergraduate course of ‘Town and Regional Planning’, when I was inspired by big picture questions and rigorously questioned lecturers and authors in the field, and of course experienced the realities of being confronted with the enormous socio-political challenges and struggles for change during the late 1980s and early 1990s in South Africa. Admittedly, quite a rude ‘awakening’ from a sheltered childhood to the harsh realities of the country, of the life-realities of people in the country and the machinery of Apartheid (See Figure A.1: Annexure A, Time-span overview of significant moments in planning in South Africa, PlanSA\_1-13). A time of intense debates and questions about societal futures, ways to address the injustice in apartheid’s spatial legacies, challenges of equity and access to opportunities and material conditions, and the urgency for more democratic and developmental institutions, governance and planning systems (See Figure A.1: Annexure A @PlanSA\_14).

Being involved in an endeavour that could impact people’s lives in strategic ways and being part of a practice in which I was inspired by the rigor, passion and excellence embodied by many of the mentors, managers and inspirational practitioners I have met in those early years, immediately created in me a strong association with the practice and ideals of planning. In hindsight, probably also playing a part was the way in which I intuitively felt that this was a quest in which I was called to apply, question and consistently stretch myself. In this, I felt a sense of meaning and significance in projects and endeavours, and a sense of excitement in every newfound insight and creative challenge.

My belief in planning as a quest and in the possibility to add value to the practice was probably cemented through my intense early work-life experiences. Having joined a unit of a national department that was responsible for regional planning in the fast-growing region of Gauteng (Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vereeniging (PWV)) at the time, I was involved in discussions and changes in the national planning system, and the introduction of land reform in the new South Africa. This experience provided an opportunity to work with and be challenged by inspiring managers and mentors and highly experienced and passionate practitioners to contribute with excellence. This required dedication, lots of hard work (including taking minutes and of course filing in the days before there were electronic archiving systems), as well as the willingness to ask stupid questions and the tenacity not to take things personally (for instance, rewriting letters, inputs and reports; sourcing information; reading and summarising reports until all communicated clearly). It provided excitement, opportunities to brainstorm and engage in serious discussions with direct managers and other practitioners, as well as the satisfaction in being part of the collaborations about the establishment of a new planning system (See Annexure A, Figure A.1: @PlanSA\_15) and a more inclusive profession (See Figure A.1: @PlanSA\_16). This, even though, this was through doing everything but glamorous work in the background, such as organising logistics for meetings and taking minutes. However, being involved and part of the team meant not only exposure to inspiring professionals and networks, but also to my having my perceptions and beliefs challenged, and being trusted to contribute and play a small part in a larger process then underway of negotiating the next part of the unfolding ‘story’ of the practice of planning in South Africa.

### **2.2.3 Call to action that kicked-started the enquiry**

With much excitement, I became involved in planning education as a junior lecturer in the late 1990s and in large-scale national capacity building and training initiatives in the early 2000s. The latter was aimed at raising awareness and building capacity relating to the philosophy, approaches and application of the new

integrated development planning system, introduced to transform the planning system and apartheid's spatial legacies through developmental local government (See Figure A.1: @PlanSA\_17; Coetzee and van Huyssteen, 2004). An endeavour which very soon became muddled, and eventually swamped, by the increasing amounts of bureaucratic and institutional requirements brought by the introduction of an outcomes-based education system (LGSETA, 2006; SAQA, 2007; Cheetham and Chivers, 1998; and Kgobe, 1997).

Two experiences during this time stood out for me. The first was being involved with modularising and developing standards and outcomes for the undergraduate town and regional qualification at the University of Pretoria – an exercise that involved redesigning (which felt more like atomising) a highly integrated course into modules, codes and tables of skills, knowledge, values and general and specific competencies for curriculum development, and as input for the national standards generating process (headed by the South African Qualifications Authority and the Heads of Planning Schools Committee). The second was providing support for the development of accredited short courses for the Local Government and Water SETA (Skills Education and Training Authority) and informing continued education curriculum development. In this initiative, I was leading a team conducting interviews with practicing planners to analyse (and attempt to dissect) and list the competencies required by managers and participants in the new integrated development planning (IDP) processes in municipalities, together with educational specialists, to assist the standard generating processes (Coetzee and van Huyssteen, 2004).

At the same time, a wide range of initiatives, involving many excellent teams from practice and planning schools at the time, all going the extra mile with rigor and excellence to 'gear up' for outcomes-based education and large-scale skills development, were being driven across the country.

However, as progress was being made, I had a growing sense that we were in some way almost dismembering the very 'spirit of planning', cutting it up in parts in order for it to survive in packages of modules and assemble-yourself kits of short courses, but ... unable to reconfigure it in ways that could bring it back to life, or in some cases even resemble that idealistic quest which I come to know – failures and flaws included (See Figure A.1: @PlanSA\_10-13).

It is as if the sum of the parts of qualifications and standards in some way just did not add up to the whole of the spirited and soulful impact of planners (and many non-planners) – especially when reflecting on the practice "heroes" I saw in the realities of everyday practice in less than ideal circumstances and under-resourced municipalities and towns in South Africa, as well as in the history of planning in South Africa (Oranje, 1997; van Huyssteen, 1997). These were people who did not necessarily have all the skills, the full long list of knowledge outcomes, the meta-competencies or exposure to technology, or even the latest discourse in planning theory, but people that added significant value, who made a difference through their commitment. They were practitioners who cared enough to get into the details of regulations and guidelines, who sourced in assistance to do things better, who did everything possible to interact with communities, raise awareness and connect decision-makers. I saw something in these courageous (and often personally costly) moments of taking bold steps into an uncreated future, knowing well that there is no 'right' answer, no guaranteed outcome within a dynamic and complex environment. It is as if there was an intangible ability that went hand-in-hand with a willingness to do what needs to be done in order to learn, to excel, to drive, and to focus on systematic (and often unseen) transformation.

I found myself looking at the lists of well-formulated and structured standards and competency outcomes developed for the IDP training qualifications and at the lists of standards discussed between the higher

education institutions, with a sense of unease, frustration (of course, also with some guilt for not being able to do a better job, with my Calvinistic upbringing probably again at play) and a deep concern. A concern about the possibility of us forgetting, and young or new practitioners perhaps not being afforded the opportunity to become infused with the possibilities held in planning as a practice. Possibilities stemming from a tradition of commitment to the quest in the past, and drawn by a belief in the value and ability to contribute to the unfolding collective future – which in my mind seemed to be more than the lists of qualification outcomes (Lester, 1999; Cheetham and Chivers, 2007, Brown, 2011).

As stated by Oranje (2014:2): "This call to a higher cause not only acted as a dynamo for the zealous proponents of this new urban pursuit (part religion, part 'contained revolution'); it also provided a powerful way of raising awareness, drawing in followers ..., challenging sceptics and non-believers, and making disciples of 'the (planning) faith' (Mackintosh and Forsberg, 2013; Krieger, 1972)."

The concern I had was not about modules and qualification standards that do not capture 'everything' planners needed to be able to know and do; it was actually a concern that something 'more' than a mere good mix of meta-competencies and ethics was essential, and that in the sum of the parts the 'spirit of planning' seemed to be missing. The concern was probably not merely that this missing element was not neatly described, 'captured' and 'put on display' – as it had never really been done before in any case. The concern was more about the possible result of the somewhat 'spirit-less' tick boxes of multiple standards and outcomes which were now being firmly cemented in the bureaucratic machinery to guide, and more importantly to measure, undergraduate, postgraduate, continued education and professional competency and the 'training' thereof.

A concern that led me to numerous discussions, contemplations and the start of a PhD study in the early 2000s. A journey that turned out to be much longer in time, deeper in spirit, wider in reading, tougher in tenacity, but also richer in internal rewards, than I ever anticipated it to be.

#### **2.2.4 Summary reflections**

The call for action to embark on the quest of this enquiry resonated as both a practice and personal purpose and inevitably to the quest of this enquiry. Given the reflexive and interpretative research approach embarked upon (See Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2007 as set out in Section 3), it is useful to acknowledge that the enquiry was indeed initially, and remained over time, close to my heart – not only owing to a vested interest, as it was part of a PhD inquiry, but probably because having been called to action it was (even given a few attempts) not really an option to turn back or abandon the 'quest'. My 'quest' to make meaning and, in a way, find words or a language game in which to frame that which I thought I saw, but was not sure exactly what it is – with of course the danger of being vested in the findings. This probably gave rise to the iterative processes of meaning making on the road, but at least is (hopefully) not treated as an elephant in the room of this enquiry. Having said this, it was of course important to verify that this enquiry was indeed of value for other reasons as well.

## 2.3 CAPACITY CHALLENGES AND VALUE OF ENQUIRY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

### 2.3.1 Introduction

South Africa's apartheid history and the impact thereof on embedding racial segregation in cities and unsustainable rural enclaves is well known and was, together with an emphasis on creating a more democratic and just planning system, a major focus of the post-1996 reconstruction and development transformation (Harrison et al., 2007; van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2008; Oranje, 1997; Oranje and Merrifield, 2010; Turok and Parnell, 2009).

This section introduces the call for action for the enquiry in relation to the need and value for enhanced planning capacity in the context of South Africa's planning fraternity (Section 2.3.2), the practice need for purpose-infused practitioners and a search for the spirit of planning (which seems to be not be a new need or search within the tradition of planning – See Section 2.3.3). Lastly, the section is used to make the case for the value and importance of the study given the rising demands on the practice of planning as future-oriented practice and the magnitude of global challenges faced in an unfolding collective future.

### 2.3.2 Post-apartheid challenges for transformed and increased planning capacity

During the late 1990's and early 2000s in South Africa, much emphasis was placed on establishing a democratic and developmental governance system and institutions, as well as participatory, strategic and integrated development and spatial planning processes (See Figure A.1: @PlanSA\_17). The complete change in approach, innovative policy environment and institutionalisation of these processes went hand-in-hand with a major drive to build the necessary capacity to sustain the rollout of planning within the more than 240 (mostly newly demarcated) local, district and metropolitan municipalities in the country (See Figure A.1: @PlanSA\_18).

On the one hand, "the victorious tale in which planning (and planners) came into the world to create a better world was lost, despite its initial significance and crucial importance in selling and believing in, and institutionally harbouring and funding it" (Oranje, 2014:3; see also Oranje, 1997; Mabin, 1992; Badenhorst, 1995; Odendaal, 2005; Harrison, 2006; Harrison et al., 2003). However, on the other hand (See Figure A.1: @PlanSA\_1 to 16), there was an equally strong belief that planning could indeed contribute to the much needed transformation, reconstruction and development of South African cities and settlements (Oranje and Van Huyssteen, 2011; Oranje and Van Huyssteen, 2007; Oranje and Berrisford, 2012; Todes and Mngadi, 2009; Coetzee and van Huyssteen, 2004). Especially so in recognising the unique promise that planning's transdisciplinary nature holds (Van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2008).

The period from the late 1990s to 2015 saw the toils of much of this belief, a major drive for the delivery of housing and basic services, such as water and sanitation, to millions of South Africans, and the rollout of several new policies and planning instruments (Oranje and Van Huyssteen, 2007; Pieterse et al., 2015; Oranje and Berrisford, 2012; Harrison et al., 2007; Turok and Parnell, 2009). Implementation of this required increased spatial and development planning capacity in municipalities and provinces throughout South Africa, a higher demand for qualified planners and a subsequent increase in enrolments for postgraduate planning qualifications (Oranje, 2014; Merrifield, 2006; Todes and Mngadi, 2007; Coetzee et al., 2006)

Changes within the planning system in South Africa were of course not only influenced by changes in the local governance, socio-political and institutional systems but also by changes in discourses and directions



internationally (i.e. the new public management and communicative action planning approaches and an appreciation for power and complex adaptive systems within which planning operates) (Ovens and associates, 2006; Coetzee et al., 2005; Coetzee et al., 2006; Goss and Coetzee, 2007). It was also during the same time period (as set out in Section 1.2.2) that changes in the higher education and professional registration systems, and increasing internationalisation, required planning schools and associations, as well as professional bodies, to engage with the challenge of developing outcomes for qualifications (Todes and Mngadi, 2007; Adam, 2010; Harrison et al., 2004), to reconsider appropriate curricula and to engage with contextually specific and global relevance (Schoeman and Robinson, 2015a,b,c; Dayomi et al., 2014; Adam, 2010; Berrisford, 2006).

It also heralded the window of opportunity that planning and planners in South Africa have in which to make a contribution. A window of opportunity and responsibility that, probably more than ever, requires the heart and courage to drive local planning processes and actively contribute to the ambitious ideals of this democratic planning endeavour, whilst facing hordes of wicked problems and personal, context specific and global challenges (Oranje, 2014; Oranje and Berrisford, 2012; van Huyssteen et al., 2016).

### 2.3.3 Challenges and calls to rekindle the ‘spirit of planning’

Unfortunately, it seems that the bureaucratisation and professionalization of planning – through an increasing quagmire of regulatory requirements, guidelines, rules (in practice and in education) – and the incredibly heavy burden of intergovernmental collaboration (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007 and 2011; Pieterse et al., 2015) might systematically be contributing to “erode the vision of a better world” – leading to the “shedding [of] the activism” and the ideals of the very same planning endeavour it claims to support (Taylor, 1992:240 in Oranje, 1997:122; Oranje, 2014:4; Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2011).

Within this context, the call to action and concern about the loss of the ‘spirit’ of planning in capacity building and support endeavours in my planning practice experience in South Africa was thus repeated over the years. Some of the key questions and moments and concerns during this time can be summarised as:

- ⌘ A concern about the ever increasing focus to solve local government planning capacity concerns through increased standardisation, regulation and attempt to package complex processes and instruments to address unique challenges in highly diverse contexts in a ‘colouring by numbers’ fashion (Coetzee and van Huyssteen, 2004). Leaving very little room for innovation or calls for local application and adaptation.
- ⌘ The overt focus on increasing performance through intricate systems of strictly monitored personal, departmental and project level performance indicators, in some cases resulting in more time spent on reporting than on contributing value, and tracking only what is measurable, thus discouraging initiative and not rewarding real excellence.
- ⌘ Questioning the numerous attempts at packaging quick-fix, evidence-based tools, automated analyses and planning support kits to assist in filling the capacity gap and to support decision making and intervention in complex urban contexts and planning dilemmas (Tomlinson et al., 2010); all within a system where measurable impact has to be proved within five-year political cycles. Tools that in some way create an illusion that the analyses equal a plan, that capacity is supported by dissecting and simplifying and pre-packaging.
- ⌘ Concerns about the overt emphasis on standards (Stiftel, 2005; Lester, 1999) and continued professional development (CPD) introduced to maintain minimum standards, formal mentoring

relationships (strongly driven through career assessment indicators) and neatly packaged ‘career ladders’ that create the impression and need for fast tracking growth, with measuring instruments geared towards encouraging individuals to generate as many as possible outputs. Processes that seem to almost overlook the importance of personal growth, on being challenged and creating opportunities to question, to connect as part of teams, to build and sustain and grow through meaningful relations, etc.

The concerns as indicated were not merely reactive to guidelines and performance management, but involved raising pro-active questions about the lack of focus and expectation on the unique role of practitioners to make real contributions more informally, but equally intense and the valuable process of ongoing learning, personal growth and confidence building, commitment to planning’s quest, excellence, and attitudes and ‘heart’ evident in practice habits (as *inter alia* set out by National Treasury’s identified need to support professionals in the built environment in this regard).

#### **2.3.4 Escalating capability demands on planning as future-orientated practice**

With the introduction of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) of 2013, spatial planning and land use management is again taking a more prominent role in South African, especially in largely rural municipalities where wall-to-wall land use management has been introduced.

At the same time, cities and towns are faced with complex challenges associated with:

- ⌘ ongoing urbanisation, large scale town-ward concentration and the growth of urban poverty, inequality and household service delivery demands;
- ⌘ a highly mobile population and innovative ‘informal’ system of accessing land, housing and services; and
- ⌘ Increasing uncertainties and resource pressures associated with climate change.

The urgency to support practitioners to add value and contribute to local and collective futures in more resilient and sustainable human settlements and socio-ecological systems is thus merely escalating (Oranje, 2014:1) – not for the sake of revising or maintaining planning as a practice, but for the sake of supporting and rekindling the hope and increasing the momentum to contribute to our collective future (Myers and Banerjee, 2005; Poxon, 2001; Abbot, 2005; Algeria, 2005; Gunder, 2006; Myers, 2001).

#### **2.3.5 Summary reflections**

The section illustrated the need and value for the enquiry given the call for planners with ‘heart and courage’ to drive local planning processes and actively contribute to context specific and increasingly harsh and volatile global challenges.

## 2.4 COMPETENCY DISCOURSES AND THE VALUE OF THE ENQUIRY

### 2.4.1 Introduction

A wide range of discourses and studies (Hossain, Scholz and Baumgart, 2015; Gunder, 2011; Lennon, 2015; Watson and Agbola, 2013) have highlighted the importance of characteristics, attitudes, roles, ways of knowing and ethical grounding and judgement in characterising and enabling practitioners to contribute to the ideals of planning.

In this section the contribution of the study is outlined in terms of its value in relation to the ongoing drive to enhance curricula, as well as learning and education experiences, and continued professional development by having a better understanding of competence and contribution (Section 2.4.2), by recognising the importance that a number of scholars, practitioners and educators have also attached to the intangible notions of purpose and commitment (inherently challenging to explore, see Section 2.4.3), and associated with that, the value of an exploration in the unfolding but tangible process of being and becoming (Levi-Strauss, 1978; Levit, 1992).

### 2.4.2 Competence and contribution remain important focuses in planning education

Over the last number of years, a wealth of contributions was made in the field of planning education and in the professional planning fraternity with regards to:

- ⌘ Exploring the critical capabilities required by practitioners in an increasingly complex and dynamic practice and framing these in terms of competencies, knowledge, skills, and values within the context of outputs to guide formal qualifications in the field (Dewar and Isaacs, 1998; Dalton et al., 1993; Dalton, 2001, 2007; Christenson, 2005; Frank, 2002; Kaufman et al., 1995);
- ⌘ Improving curriculum development (Friedman, 1996; Emanuel, 1993; Edwards and Bates, 2011; Mironowicz, 2015) to include critical competencies and teaching approaches (including online and intensive studio experiences for example) (Klosterman, 2011; Long, 2012) and prepare planners for increasingly globalized (Goldstein et al., 2006; Perlstein et al., 2015; Pezzoli et al., 2001), but also context specific, challenges;
- ⌘ Generating and setting standards for professional registration and to guide continued professional development (Geppert and Verhage, 2008); and
- ⌘ Facilitating various forms of formal and informal, practice-orientated and scholarly- or academic-orientated knowledge sharing in various forms between planning schools, associations of planning schools across the globe (often through conferences, seminars, journals and even student and faculty exchanges), as well as within and between professional planning associations and various communities of practice (Geppert and Verhage, 2008; MacDonald et al., 2014).

Discourses are informed by a wide range of quantitative and qualitative surveys focused on eliciting the perceptions of planners and employers (thus largely in the domain of competencies that planners are explicitly aware of), as well as assessments and comparative studies of planning qualification curricula. The latter has often been specifically designed to inform curriculum development and professional standard setting (Pezzoli, K., and D. Howe, 2001; Friedman, 1996; Baum, 1997, Ozawa and Seltzer, 1999; Edwards and Bates, 2011:181; Watson and Agbola, 2013) or, in the case of Edward and Bates (2011), been used to examine the core curricula of the master's degree programs of thirty planning schools to compare with Friedman's original analyses.

The review of competence and curricula related research illustrates that there is an increased recognition of the inter-relationship between the soul of planning and the soul of the planner, as well as a growing recognition of the importance of qualities such as attitudes, motivation, purpose and other virtues and meta-competencies as part of the ‘whole person’ development propagated for practitioners in the field of planning.

Unfortunately, characteristics, competencies and attitudes are often depicted in the form of isolated, decontextualized and non-dynamic lists (as required to inform outcomes-based qualifications and professional development standards in many fields (Schoeman and Robinson, 2015a, b and c)). Almost as if competencies are being placed on display on a shelf or online catalogue, ready to be picked and added to the shopping cart as and when required. Often almost stripped of the dynamics associated with the complexity of the real-world context, and largely void of passion, purpose and the ‘spirit’ of planning.

### **2.4.3 Value of the ‘intangible’ recognised but limited research on shaping it**

In line with these shifts, there was also recognition of the demands and pressures on, and the integral role played by, those involved within the activity of planning and collaborative sense making within diverse and multi-cultural contexts of complex sustainable developmental and social change challenges (see Hillier & Healy, 2008; Watson, 2003; Kunzmann, 2002; Tasan-Kok et al., 2016). Moving from the premise that planning is in essence not just about land and resources but also about relationships between people (Sandercock, 2004:139), and that it is important to acknowledge that it is the ‘whole person’ (practitioner) that is present in the knowing and doing and deliberation, it is evident that there is much value in emotional and spiritual involvement (Krieker, 2000; Krueckeberg, 1993) “to acknowledge and deal with the powerful emotions that underpin many planning issues” (Sandercock, 2004:139). Importantly, what Sandercock raises in this deliberation is the “possibility of transformation” – not the Band-Aid solution as she herself mentions, but the possibilities for individual and collective growth (being and becoming), possibility of transformation, social transformation and collective learning (Sandercock, 2004:140; Faulconbridge, 2007) and the emergence of a new planning ‘imagination and culture’ within which planners essentially play political, audacious, creative and therapeutic roles (Sandercock, 2004:135; Voughan, 2002; Oranje, 2014; Davoudi, 2015).

Through her discussion Sandercock does not necessarily call for only new ways of doing, but essentially for us to recognise the implications (wittingly or even unwittingly of our choices of doing and being); for example, through recognizing and possibly being more explicit about the political nature of choices of ‘jobs’, strategic choices in processes and the possibilities of impact through collaboration and diverse teams, as well as the wide range of decisions taken in seemingly technical work regarding for instance what to count, what to present, etc. She recognizes the importance for planners to be bravely audacious – willing to take the risk in the search for uncharted ways of making a contribution to issues of global scale within locally negotiated implementation (Sandercock, 2004; Davoudi, 2015).

In spite of the various calls to re-ignite or maybe invigorate this ‘spirit of planning’ or, as could possibly be stated, commitment to the quest of planning (Oranje, 2014; Lennon, 2015; MacIntyre, 2013), very little has been done about ‘how’ this can be done.

In line with these concerns, whilst recognising the importance of skills, knowledge and values, as well as that of institutions and context and process, this enquiry argues that it would be worthwhile to place the focus on the agent, whilst considering a broader and more integrated or ‘whole’ context of ‘planning

competence’ – things often unseen, unspoken or less tangible, but which can be critical to a community of practice such as development and planning. To reflect on that which makes for a caring considerate practice and discipline, of that which could turn a ‘job’ such as planning into a ‘calling’ and a ‘life’, of that which motivates and inspires – of the ‘spirit’ within and between agents involved in this community of language users and practice.

#### **2.4.4 The value of an inquiry into ‘being, becoming and contributing’**

It is evident that the swell in voices (from numerous other disciplines and fields, as well as planners themselves) is not merely calling for ‘having different kinds of tools or technologies’, or for ‘doing’ planning in different ways, but for new ways of living, new ways of doing and practicing, creative and integrative approaches, reflexivity and creative ways of moving towards sustainability. In many facets these voices are also calling for ‘being’ and ‘engaging’, in different ways (Davoudi, 2012; Gunder, 2006; Sandercock, 2004; Forester, 2015; Innes and Booher, 2015; Newig et al., 2007).

Various scholars have contemplated these shifts and creatively positioned and advocated them, largely making use of lessons from rich practice observations and descriptions and well-motivated philosophical and theoretical layering. The relevance of this sense of purpose for practice excellence is also key to the arguments made by Lennon (2015:66) in his explanation of the relevance of MacIntyre’s framework of practice and purpose (as described in Chapter 2) and the major impact that practitioners have in the evolving nature of purpose in practice and how ‘motivation’ of the practitioner is a key issue in defining what counts as a practice. His study is one of only two recent empirical studies that seem to have explored the perception of planners about this inter-relation between purpose, role and practice in a more nuanced and contextualized way. In his study, Lennon uses an in-depth interview to explore the way in which a practitioner made sense of significant events and purpose in his own career within the greater idea of planning (Lennon, 2015:70), and illustrates the symbiosis between how a practitioner locates purpose in practice and how this in turn influences his practice.

In the other empirical study by Fox-Rogers and Murphy (2015) on planners’ self-perceptions of their role, in-depth interviews with planners in the Ireland government system were used to gain insight into how planners view their role. In an attempt to align such perceptions with theoretical perspectives, they pre-selected certain theoretical perspectives on the role of planning that in their assessment relate to the role of government, which they then related to the perceptions of the interviewees (unfortunately, I would argue that this was done in a rather direct and limiting way). However, based on the richness and value of the study, Fox-Rogers and Murphy concluded that there is “a pressing need for planners to become more mindful and more critical of the role they play within the planning process. More specifically, we argue that planners as a professional body must become more vocal of the institutional barriers which may prevent them from acting in accordance with their own professional judgements” (2015:15).

With regards to the limited number of other empirical studies (Knox and Cullen, 1981; Knox and Masilela, 1990; Howe, 1980; Ozawa and Seltzer, 1999; Campbell and Marshall, 2002; Sager, 2009; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015; and Lennon, 2015) that were focused on and added value to this discussion regarding planning purpose and perceptions of roles of planners (See Table B.1 in the Annexure B for a brief outline of studies, methods, findings and comments regarding value and challenges), I would have to concur with the Fox-Roger and Murphy assessment. Whilst results from the studies add value in illustrating how purpose and the perception of planners relate to various theoretical perspectives and roles within the

various study contexts, the quantitative-based methodologies and attitudinal surveys restricted choices and excluded rich and contextualised descriptions. It is only the studies by Campbell and Marshall (2002) that made use of focus group interviews, and the studies mentioned above – by Lennon (2015) and by Fox-Rogers and Murphy (2015) – that respectively make use of in-depth narrative and in-depth interviews to start delving deeper into the perceptions of planning regarding their contextualized roles and purpose.

Lennon (2015:64) notes that "little attention has been devoted to how planning and allied practitioners constitute their professional identities through narrative. This is of particular concern for planning as how we come to know our purpose as practitioners, and the purpose of our practice is intrinsic to how we justify our actions." His study contributed by providing a clear illustration of the value that such narratives can offer in an enhanced understanding of purpose and pursuit of excellence/purpose, with the limitations in the study using only one interview and focused on specific contribution in a career rather than on the broader sets of virtues and development of the virtues that sustain this 'quest'.

Even though limited, the studies definitely highlight the value and need to better understand the challenges, as well as the range of explicit and often implicit capabilities that enables planners to negotiate and add value in the midst of complexity, uncertainty and contestation. It is also evident that there is a gap for, and that much value would be added by, more in-depth understanding of what such competencies and virtues are and how they would relate to, and evolve through, shifting roles and the quest for purpose and excellence through changes and adventures in a working-life history, how planners adapt, and how such virtues and competencies are gained, grown and supported.

#### **2.4.5 Summary reflections**

It is evident from the literature review that research delving into the roles, challenges, capacities and competence implications of planners is often aimed at exploring this role within the context of a particular theoretical approach. There is a wide range of research contributions focusing on the roles of planners within specific project or institutional contexts (e.g. the study of the Ireland government and the range of well know studies by Friedmann). Discourses in planning academia and education mostly make use of such project based or institutional specific observational and other qualitative research findings from studies to highlight the challenges, virtues and contributions of planners, within a specific contextual reality, or in relation to a particular construct whether that is related to different ways of knowing, etc.

The review of existing studies, clearly illustrates the unique and much needed contribution that is brought by this in-depth empirical exploration into the perceptions of practitioners in the field of planning about the virtues, values and meta-competencies that enable them to pursue practice excellence and purpose. It is also clear that in contrast to the wide range of surveys, curriculum analyses, interviews and observations, the work-life narrative analyses in this exploration make a significant contribution in the exploration of such competencies and virtues in an in-depth and contextually situated way.

The question thus remaining amidst the 'calls for higher action' and 'commitment to the quest of planning as a practice' is if these would indeed make a substantial difference in encouraging and supporting practitioners within planning as a practice, and so enrich and improve their abilities (referring especially to the notion of meta-competencies) and contributions (tangible and intangible). If so, can this 'spirit of planning' be called upon to inject some verve into the abilities and contribution of practitioners within planning as a practice to add significant value to our unfolding future?

One way of contributing to these contemplations about re-igniting that spirit (as I set out in the enquiry) is by focusing our attention on recognising, appreciating, exploring and inquiring into the nature, role and shaping of the intangible layers of purpose and meta-competencies in the work-life contexts of planners who are committed to making a contribution, and in whose practice the 'call to a higher cause' indeed seems to 'act as a dynamo' (Oranje, 2014:2) by transforming planning as a practice from merely a "job" or "technical task" to a quest (Lennon, 2015, MacIntyre, 2013).

## **2.5 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON CALLS TO ACTION**

The review of existing studies clearly illustrates the wide and growing list of so-called core competencies or meta-competencies; even though, not tightly defined and implicitly rather than explicitly speaking to meaning-making capabilities and virtues that would enable practitioners to stay committed to the quest. It also points to the importance of planning ethics and ideals and excellence; implicitly highlighting the importance of these virtues. In the ideal world, where the ego-ideals and identities of novice-planners are shaped (Gunder, 2004) to become inspired agents pursuing the quest for excellence in planning, it will be these virtues that will enable practitioners in the practice of planning to sustain that quest (Lennon, 2015).

Within that context, an in-depth empirical exploration into the perceptions of practitioners in the field of planning, and particularly about that which they regard as significant in enabling them to contribute in complex contexts and pursue practice excellence, could clearly (in contrast to the wide range of surveys, curriculum analyses, interviews and observations, the work-life narrative analyses in this exploration) be seen as making a significant contribution.

Such competencies and virtues are investigated in an in-depth and contextually situated way in this study. Work-life experiences, are contextualised in relation to adventures and transitions, collaboration with colleagues, as well as relations with peers, mentors, friends, life events, family and a wide range of other role players and influences. It also is the first study within the field of planning education and practice that sets out to explicitly learn from ways in which practitioners perceive themselves as having managed to adapt, learn and grow within the situated and temporal context of their work-life. Thus, filling the clear gap in understanding of how such capabilities are developed and how they can be supported within the context of work-lives, and associated experiences, adventures and transitions in formal and especially informal and transformative ways.

The need to better understand the nature and shaping of contribution in planning as a practice and dynamically changing practice contexts can probably be described as an age-old and ongoing endeavour, not unique to the practice of planning or a specific time period, as once again illustrated in the recent calls for global and sustainability leadership (McCauley et al., 2006; Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Harris and Kuhnert, 2008; Hochachka, 2006; Johansen, 2012) and radical planning capability (Mironowicz, 2015; Schein, 2014; Tubbs and Schultz, 2006) – all pointing to the need to rethink the way in which we encourage and support ourselves as practitioners in planning (and in other integrative, action and future orientated practices) to contribute in shaping the evolving future.

The section above briefly outlined the way in which formative experiences in my early years in the practice of planning, as well as unfolding capacity challenges in this practice in South Africa and ensuing discourses in the field of competence development, infused the call to action and motivation to depart on this enquiry.

The broader purpose of the enquiry was to gain insight and perspective into how practitioners in an action- and future-orientated practice such as planning could be enabled, encouraged and supported to contribute in increasingly complex and dynamic practice circumstances and the fast changing world of work.

It was contemplated whether we were not missing something essential through the way we ask our questions and the way we use the results thereof, for instance: (1) by an almost all-consuming emphasis on skills, knowledge and values; (2) by narrowing our questions to what the skills, knowledge and values are that planners were practicing, should be practicing, or could be identified as gaps in their practices; and, (3) by directly asking practitioners (or workplace managers) to mention/list such knowledge, skills and values – thus assuming that these are all explicit and that practitioners are actively explicitly aware of them.

Within this context, the research was designed to enable an explorative and whole-person enquiry (not biased towards, or limited by, a competency framework or a formal education or professional registration lens) into how planners are encouraged, enabled and shaped to contribute in practice contexts through the unfolding process of being and becoming within their work-life contexts.

The enquiry's focus and driving question was thus framed as: An exploration into how planners seemed to engage their practice in ways to add value and contribute, and what they regarded as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest, and in complex and highly challenging practice contexts.

This, whether it entailed leading collaborative and strategic intergovernmental planning processes, acting as agents of change in complex systems and/or innovatively support decision makers in dealing with complex problems in sustainable ways (Abbott, 2005; Yorks and Kasl, 2002; Boyatzis et al., 2006; Bourantas and Agapitou, 2014; Billet, 2009; Blowers, 2013; Mengel, 2012; Meyer et al., 2010).

How can we learn from those dedicated to planning's quest about the ways in which they engage in the practice? Learn about 'being and becoming' and the 'invisible layer' of qualities, competencies and growth experiences that participants regard as significant in enabling, shaping and impelling them to contribute in planning's practice, during turbulent and challenging times? Learn about ways in which practitioners were able to obtain, nurture and sharpen such abilities? And possibly, even more importantly, learn how practitioners are able to deal with challenges and complexities in the ever expanding knowledge field, and also remain committed in contexts where challenges were much greater than rewards and recognition?

The purpose of the enquiry was not to consider possible insights as having direct implications or being 'answers to' specific practice/discourse questions, or to cast context-specific experience as relevant to global discourses. It was rather to treat insights as a finger pointing to the moon – not placing the focus of the contemplation on the finger itself, but rather on the direction in which it is pointing.

Within the context of the study, the challenge was thus threefold:

- ∅ Firstly, to design an enquiry through which I would not necessarily answer a specific set of narrowly defined questions, but rather create the possibility to learn meaningful lessons from practitioners who are committed to the quest of planning: about the qualities, competencies and growth experiences that they regard as significant in enabling, shaping and impelling them to contribute in planning's practice.
- ∅ Secondly, to ensure that the enquiry would be relevant and add value within the practice context. and



⌘ Thirdly, to ensure that the study could make a meaningful contribution to the ever expanding knowledge fields of planning education and planning practice.

The research and approach design followed to enable the enquiry, is outlined in Section 3. Given the generative and explorative nature of the enquiry, the considerations and insights from relevant knowledge fields were generated as part of the ongoing process of meaning making. A summary of key insights from the relevant knowledge fields is provided in Section 4.



the research quest  
Departure and shaping of

Our job as analysts of practice is to help our interviewees tell richly revealing, politically complex, socially nuanced stories of their practical work, the tough parts and the satisfying parts, the walls they run into and the opportunities they find they can seize. This means that the interviewees not only co-construct the interview conversations, but the interviewees must bring analytically informed questions to explore.

(Forester, 2006).

Today, scientists are more and more aware that what things are, and what they are doing, depends on where and when they are doing it. If, then, the definition of a thing or event must include definition of its environment, we realize that any given thing goes with a given environment so intimately and inseparably that it is more difficult to draw a clear boundary between the thing and its surroundings.

(Alan Watts, 1989)

Storytellers recreate their world as they see it and as they want to represent it to others. These recreations are not photographically accurate accounts of events and people . . . stories are not facts or evidence waiting for interpretation; they are, from the moment they are conceived through their many telling and retellings, the embodiment of the storyteller's interpretations.

(Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2006:320, in Lennon 2015:65)

There is no final system for the interpretation of myths, and there will never be any such thing. Mythology is like the god Proteus, 'the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth'. The god 'will make assay, and take all manner of shapes of things that creep upon the earth, of water likewise, and of fierce fire burning'. \*\*The life-voyager wishing to be taught by Proteus must 'grasp him steadfastly and press him yet the more', and at length he will appear in his proper shape. But his wily god never discloses even to the skilful questioner the whole content of his wisdom. He will reply only to the question put to him, and what he discloses will be great or trivial, according to the question asked.

(Campbell, 2008:329)

(\*\* From Odyssey IV)

As futurists, we are responsible for the restoration of images and languages that foster a positive imagination that can help us create better futures ... search for the strengths, beliefs, and living forces that inspire and mobilize positive change in groups and organizations. By identifying the best of "what is", it gives space and strength to pursue dreams and possibilities of "what could be".

(Algeria, 2005:102)

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The knowledge and methodological gaps have been highlighted clearly in relation to how they gave rise to the call for action (Section 2); how they informed the framing of the study will be discussed in this section.

As outlined in Section 1.3 above, the research approach formed an integral part of the framing of the enquiry in order to enable a contextual, relational and dynamic understanding of how planners seem to engage their practice in ways to contribute and add value, with a specific emphasis on what they regard as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest.

The purpose of this section is to provide information and reflections on:

- ⌘ Pointers in preparation: the qualitative and reflexive nature of the research and some pointers drawn from the use of work-life narratives in related studies;
- ⌘ Departure: research methodologies of data gathering and participant engagement, the sample, ethical considerations and participants that enabled departure on the quest;
- ⌘ The quest of meaning making: Methodologies to support analyses and synthesis, challenges, transitions, and examples of analyses;
- ⌘ Reflections on credibility, rigour, validity and limitations.

### 3.2 THE APPROACH TO THE QUEST: CONSIDERING CHALLENGES OF VALIDITY AND VALUE

#### 3.2.1 Introduction

From all of the aforementioned, it is evident that in heeding the call for a scientific endeavour and social inquiry to add value, as well as for it to be credible in an environment where systems and social relations appear increasingly complex, elusive, ephemeral, and unpredictable, it is important to rethink methods, approaches and the way in which any framing would inevitably influence exploration and meaning making (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007).

A key question in framing the enquiry was thus considering an approach that would facilitate an enquiry into how planners are able to engage and contribute in complex practice contexts; enabling a view into what can be regarded as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very context and 'quest'. This implied being able to explore the nature and role of the 'invisible' layers of abilities, underlying drivers and growth influences that could be significant in enabling, shaping and impelling planners to contribute in complex and dynamic practice contexts.

In order to do this, the following points of departure were identified as critical in ensuring validity and value addition in terms of the underlying research approach (they are outlined in more detail in the rest of Section 3.2):

- ⌘ A 'whole-person' and 'life-span' approach;
- ⌘ An appreciative approach (exploring contribution);
- ⌘ A generative approach; and
- ⌘ A reflexive approach.

It is argued and illustrated in Section 8 that the approach underlying the research, both in terms of data gathering and meaning making, has not only played a key role in ensuring validity, but also in making a unique contribution to the field in terms of research methodology.

### 3.2.2 The importance of a ‘whole-person’ and ‘life-span’ approach

It was evident that the enquiry would require an integrated, whole person or integral (Wilber, 1997) perspective, in which practitioners in the field of planners are seen as central to their practice (Hillier and Healy, 2008) and that could recognise the engagement with planning ideals, practices and struggles and the evolving of perceptions, attitudes and competencies in unique and contextually influenced ways (considering individual experiences, perceptions, world views, capabilities, attitude, as well as socio-economic and cultural context, etc.).

Cautious of the risk to either over-complicate, or over-simplify and reduce the complexities and richness of the wide range of systems and interdependencies at play (Cilliers, 2000 and 2006), the framing of the enquiry had to enable reflection on: (i) ‘the/a planner’ or the ‘individual I’ as described in terms of attitude, values, identity, roles, competencies and capabilities; as well as, (ii) some interrelationships and influences of the collective ‘we’ and broader systems, within the context of unfolding experiences, challenges and permutations of ‘planning’ as set(s) of ideas, language games, competencies and purposeful action (Wilber, et al., 1997).

Even though the spotlight in this study was primarily on the planner as actor or agent, the importance of not separating ‘subject and object’, external and internal influences, and work-life contexts and interactions was a key consideration within the enquiry (see Fainstein:455, in Hillier and Healey, 2008:143). The value of employing empirical research, as well as sense making methods, that could contextualise the enquiry within the practice reality of the daily planning ‘lives’ of practitioners is also emphasized in the practice movement (Watson, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2004), which propagates the importance of bridging the gap of ‘bifurcation’ between structural/contextual and actors/agents.

Exploring being, becoming and contributing entails taking cognizance of both personal and professional development. This does not only require a whole-person and integral approach, but an approach that considers the temporal dimension and multiplicity of transitions, development, choices, drivers and influences over time (Gardner, 2003).

Arguing for the value of biographic approaches in the field of career studies, Nicholson (2007:568) explains “that it takes cognizance of a variable curiously undervalued in a field that it defines – namely, time ... Taking account of time with respect to the dimensions of a human life has the merit – in a field prone to great abstraction – of dealing with the essential, irreducible, and central elements of career processes”.

In the context of changes in the world of work and thus in traditional notions of jobs and linear career development paths (see Sterner, 2012; Gunz and Peiperl, 2012; Keller, Samuel, Bergman and Semmer, 2014; Nicholson, 2007), biographical research within the field of career studies seems to have lost its allure (See Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007). This is possibly due to the lack of theory development in biographical approaches, as well as the recognition that with fast-changing career landscapes there is less emphasis on traditional career counselling (Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007) and traditional stages and phases.

However, biographic approaches are also argued to have tremendous value in adding a more evolutionary and sharper approach to ‘analysis of lives over time’ (Nicholson, 2007:568) in this new world of work,

considering that in contexts where people do have choice (granted only amongst an elite and small group of professionals worldwide) the following is found:

- ⌘ Meaning, purpose and value seem to play a much bigger focus in their decisions than career opportunities (Sterner, 2012:152, Ghadi, Fernando and Caputi, 2010:1) and that such notions evolve over life-span (Sterner, 2012; Nicholson, 2007).
- ⌘ Career choices seem to have moved from ‘climbing a ladder’ and linear job paths to playing a wilful and more active game within a context where key life events are much more irregular and non-sequential and direction can be changed relatively easily (Lo Presti, 2009:129; Gunz and Peiperl, 2007; Baruch, 2004).
- ⌘ People are, against all odds and in spite of complex and challenging circumstances, able to shape their contexts and careers, in many cases with third party influences in increasingly boundaryless careers (Nicholson, 2007:568).

Exploring that which encourages, enables and shapes contribution in planners’ lives within a whole-person, work-life context over time, is argued to be more valuable than a mere ‘static’ exploration of practice requirements. It not only enables a view of choice and development, but also of transformation.

### 3.2.3 The value of an appreciative approach

In considering value and validity, it was important to acknowledge that the purpose of the enquiry was based on the premise that there is value and validity in acknowledging, focusing and thus exploring the nature, shaping influences and growth of capabilities, qualities and attitudes that seem to play a role in encouraging and enabling practitioners to contribute in the practice of planning (as action- and future-orientated practice) in complex, dynamic and inter-connected contexts.

Whilst the approach can be critiqued as overly ‘positive’, Peters, Grégoire and Hittleman (2004) in their discussion about the importance of “critical, collective reflection with a goal toward social action” point to the promise, but also the potential dangers, of merely using a critical reflection approach which could leave its proponents “demoralized in the face of structural power that seems overwhelming and unchangeable” (Brookfield, 2000:145, in Peters, Grégoire and Hittleman, 2004:3). They call for those involved in critical reflection to practice a ‘pedagogy of hope’, asking the questions about power dynamics and uncovering inherent assumptions, but focused on generating action and not on losing hope.

In spite of its novel ideals and future-oriented outlook, planning itself has often been associated with an overt focus on problems and on ‘all that is wrong’. As such, instead of bringing hope, it may even “have a chance of alienating and disheartening those that will have to bring the dream to fruition through their collective efforts. This method of setting the dial on ‘negative’, while the good waves (or parts) wade/move through, is not very constructive. Even worse so when it is considered that the initial drive for intervention ... was a desire for positive change/improvement, and not the search for and solving of problems. Given the extremity of the difficulties many poor countries find themselves in, such a focus on the negative of course has every chance of generating/raising such a huge number of problems/challenges that it could lead to a feeling of despair, debilitation and even complete stasis” (Oranje, 2005:1).

In the same vein, many studies, especially in South Africa, conducted to determine and better understand planning, as well as planning competencies and capacities, have been designed to determine what the problems are that need to be addressed or to identify the capacities and competencies that can be regarded as ‘lacking’ or ‘inadequate’. Most are focused on what planners ‘should’ be able to do in order to

address the wide range of legislative and societal demands and gaps – in line with what Mellish (1999) describes as a language of deficient and inadequate performance.

To move away from such a ‘deficit’ and ‘lacking’ and ‘gap orientated’ view in framing the enquiry, the value of an ‘appreciative inquiry-perspective’ has been suggested. Rooted in social constructionist thought, this perspective argues that through focusing on past successes, an individual, organisation, community or group “can chart a course of future success by using the entity’s energies in a constructive way” (Hall and Hammond, 1998).

As stated by Reed (2007:2), “AI (Appreciative Inquiry) concentrates on exploring ideas that people have about what is valuable in what they do and then tries to work out ways in which this can be built on – the emphasis is firmly on appreciating the activities and responses of people, rather than concentrating on their problems ... it challenges us to rethink our ideas on how people work, how change happens and how research can contribute to this process”.

From a methodological perspective, appreciative inquiry approaches are associated with the collection, documentation, recognition and celebration of the ‘good news stories’ in a social setting; those stories that enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision (Mellish, 1999). Used as a way of systematically finding and affirming the best and highest qualities (Oranje, 2005) and a novel way of exploring and making sense of complexities, appreciative inquiry is considered a useful approach in ‘thinking, seeing and acting for powerful, purposeful change’ (see Mellish, 1999; van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2008).

In very much the same vein, Friedmann (2005) called for the use of practice stories to learn from practice, and for approaches to be focused on practice stories that reflect ‘good work’, stories from ‘experienced practitioners’ who found opportunities to overcome obstacles, in addition to the magnitude of approaches rooted in critical phenomenology or critical pragmatism. As he eloquently states, there can be much value in learning “from the histories that have been written in the sweat and struggles—written in the deftness and the deeds—community planners and organizers, community builders and urban designers, all seeking a world more free of injustice, a world more full of hope and real possibility” (Friedmann, 1996).

In hindsight, an appreciative approach was central in the enquiry of this thesis. It informed the selection of participants as those planners perceived by peers to be making an impact and contributing in shaping the future and driving excellence in the quest of planning as a practice. It also enabled participants to reflect on the experiences, competencies, abilities and influences that they regarded as valuable and critical in enabling and encouraging their contribution. More so, such reflection, as mentioned by all the participants, enabled them to recognise, value and be inspired (with hindsight) in the value of adventures, contributions and transitions – to sustain the quest for excellence and purpose in personal and practice quests.

### **3.2.4 The value of a generative approach to enable exploration and collaborative learning**

Given the purpose and nature of the enquiry, a major challenge was to frame an enquiry and research approach that would be explorative and generative, rather than restrictive by a predetermined set of questions and/or attempts to contribute to specific competence-based frameworks and models (Mills, Bonner and Francis, 2006). The enquiry had to provide a “basis for generating of knowledge that opens up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes ‘truths’” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:5).

As explained by Flyvbjerg (2004:299), narrative enquiries in the practice of planning are most useful when they do not start with, or are merely aimed at, verifying or proving explicit theoretical assumptions, but rather are driven by a particular interest and the desire to develop rich descriptions and understanding from those involved. 'Good research' in the case of this exploration thus refers much rather to the ability of the exploration to make new meaning and understanding possible and have a 'generative potency', the capacity to challenge assumptions, offer alternatives to patterns of social conduct, and that is liberated both from the press of immediate fact and the necessity for verification (Gergena, 1978).

Pragmatically, the study was thus framed and constructed as an enquiry and exploration into the socially and contextually situated activity of planning, aimed at enabling exploration, raising awareness, soliciting enquiry and alerting us to the often 'obvious' dynamic and generative interactions at play (see triple loop learning – Schön, 1987). Such an approach in the planning context is also propagated by Hillier and Healy as valuable in order to "enhance the critical sensibilities of those involved in planning as a practical activity, suggesting exploratory questions with which to probe understanding and sense-making processes, and offering 'alerts' to issues that may lie behind the visible and noisy flow of present action, or which may be looming over the horizon" (Hillier and Healy, 2008:xvii).

The purpose of the enquiry required the solicitation of explicit as well as implicit knowing through participant self-perceptions and researcher reflections. The enquiry and research approach was thus rather regarded as a learning process to allow for adaptation, to enable a process to make implicit learning explicit, and explicit learning implicit (Verdonschot and Keursten, 2006), instead of being structured to answer narrowly defined questions. However, as argued by Snowden (2007), it is not merely about implicit and explicit knowledge, but about acknowledging the relational nature of learning and knowledge creation – both within the practice of planning and competency related enquiry, as well as in the enquiry process itself. It is in this regard that the use of myth and narrative is seen as playing a valuable role in enabling a 'view' into the relational and paradoxical nature of learning and knowledge generation in complex adaptive systems (Snowden, 2007).

The enquiry was thus framed not "to measure as precisely as possible, nor to find the ultimate truth, but rather to stimulate a learning process that could add value not only for the researcher, but also for the participating practitioners and possibly for planning as a practice through using 'creative and inspiring' research methods that provide an opportunity for knowledge production through reflection" (Doornbos et al., 2008).

The value of research outcomes (its functionality and/or practical or 'technological' value and ability to influence or guide) is thus not equated with the kind of primary information that is: (i) so focused and specific that it can directly inform/lead to concrete action; or, (ii) reduce knowledge as something in service of, or in line within the technocratic approach (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:272).

As strongly argued by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2007:273-275), "it is possible to envisage a more ambiguous, uncertain and mediated relation between theory, researcher (research community), language and data than the naïve variants which positivists and inductivists appear to believe in, without ending up by adopting a linguistic or text-reductionist stance."

However, in viewing and constructing the research as social activity, it was also then pertinent to ask: 'What constructs those that are partaking in this creation and construction process?' (see Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007) What constructs the researcher, readers and interpreters

(as social constructors)? How do the preconceptions and ideas or boundaries of the researchers and readers influence and restrict or rigidify the construction (of reality)? How, with ‘subjects’ being/becoming ‘participants’, can the interpretations be expanded rather than frozen?

Amongst other aspects, this implied acknowledgement is that ‘truths’ and ‘realities’ are not fixed, that they are a result of creation – and that what is required is obviously to ensure that the options for meaning making to unfold remains open. In a pragmatic sense the researcher (and co-constructors/ readers) is (are) thus, on the one hand, challenged to open the interpretation up (Goulding, C. 1998 and 2002). The dialogue and diversity of the interpretation is thus not merely based on the expression of the researcher, or merely on that of the participants/subjects ideas and meanings, but also introduces other discourses and experiences – in such a way as to challenge the preconceptions of the subjects, as well as that of the researcher (and readers).

In the same vein that Beauregard (1998) argues in respect of the relationship between writing planning theories and ‘writing the planner’, I would argue that writing plans and planning stories, and especially research reports and a PhD thesis with a focus on planning agents, also implicitly involves ‘writing the planner’, and more than that, being aware of oneself as being involved in, and part of, writing the story and the planner. Recognising that the ‘meaning that is being made by the participant is to some degree a function of his/her interaction with the interviewer’ – the approach in soliciting work-life stories was to acknowledge but also ‘use’ the ‘interviewer’ as a flexible research ‘tool’ (Seidman, 2015:23). Interestingly, in his guideline on the interview process, Seidman argues that, “the most profound knowledge can be gained only by the deepest inter-subjectivity” between researchers and participants and exploration (Ferrarotti, 1981, in Seidman, 2015:24).

In line with this view, empirical material (seen as already interpreted reality) was used in the enquiry to generate insights, arguments or modifications in response to theoretical ideas, but was not labelled as clear-cut answers to specific detailed questions, as ‘proof’ or even as representations of reality. The material was rather seen as mirroring various interpretations by multiple interpreters, making an argument and contributing to our efforts at understanding social realities in the context of a ‘never-ending debate’ (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:276). Within the context of this enquiry, a qualitative empirical study was undertaken where the importance of being able to engage variables without limiting the focus upfront (as encouraged in grounded theory) was just as important to keep in mind, as the dangers of ‘slavery to data’ and limitations of a method merely relying on data (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007). Reading and framing were thus done in an iterative way to also explore themes raised in participant work-life narratives and reflections.

Framing the enquiry as an exploration and using work-life and practice experience narratives instead of in-depth questionnaires in the enquiry enabled reflections on the deeply personal, highly relational and dynamic nature of competence and competency development, influences, drivers and especially the complex interaction between making meaning and taking action.

By making use of a work-life narrative approach and reflecting on different stages, experiences, key events and major transitions in their work life histories, practitioners were provided with a creative opportunity to reflect and collaborate in the construction of meaning (Gergen and Gergen, 1991) – an opportunity reflected on with a sense of appreciation by every participant during the research process.



### 3.2.5 A reflexive approach to avoid ‘merely letting everything go’

In order to avoid the trap of merely letting everything go (a critique often raised against post-modern approaches to research), another challenge in the enquiry was to ensure that there was also an element of critical reflection acknowledging “the complex relationship between processes of knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:5). This is set out in more detail in Section 4 in describing the research methodology.

Embarking on such a reflexive approach implied operating at least at two levels in the research, or in other words “paying attention to how one is thinking about thinking” (Maranhão, 1991, in Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2007:5). According to Calás and Smircich (in Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:5) this reflexivity implies constantly assessing the relationship between ‘knowledge’ and ‘the ways of doing knowledge’. This approach is interpreted by Alvesson et al. (2007:5) as paying serious attention “to the way in which different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written.” In the same vein as the reflexivity required by postmodern sociology, critical phenomenology and double hermeneutics (as described by Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), the approach also prompts researchers to recognise that they are part of the social field they are studying, and thus also capable of generating relationships and power conditions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:21) within the study context. Reflecting and considering my own role as researcher and passionate practitioner, and thus bias and perceptions, within the practice of planning is thus openly acknowledged and clearly highlighted within the call to action and framing of the enquiry.

Within this approach, it is important to recognise that the process of producing the text is essentially also the process of reflection. Framing and re-framing the enquiry was thus an essential part of influencing the enquiry, the quest, the research approach and the value thereof. It also requires being quite explicit about the way in which the focus and approach to the enquiry was framed – acknowledging that the text and the discourses selected, or not selected and/or allowed, and the style of discourse and reflection were quite fundamental to the study. This reflection requires consideration of what constructs the researcher, readers and interpreters (as social constructors). How do the preconceptions and ideas or boundaries of the researchers and readers influence and restrict or rigidify the construction (of reality)? (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007)

Proponents of reflexive methodology (see Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:285-286), regard this approach to research as much more demanding than conventional qualitative and quantitative research as it is not just about handling empirical material but also about continual interpretations at various theoretical and meta-theoretical levels, requiring a broad grasp of material and familiarity with extensive literature, having a good memory and cognitive capacity, as well as being intellectually flexible and able to cope with cognitive dissonance. Embarking on such an ambitious project obviously required being cognitive of my own strengths and weaknesses, and most of all adapting the process to that and the research task and theme at hand. Whilst the risk for failure was possibly higher, the advantage was found in embarking on an inspirational learning process: moving away from the boredom of mere data-fixated research or the uncertainty of a pure creative process, to the promise, experience and challenges of practically and creatively engaging reflexivity within a PhD thesis.

### 3.2.6 The approach in summary

The approach followed an integral part of the framing the enquiry, as well as of the process of exploring and making meaning into 'being, becoming and contributing' through planning as a future- and action-orientated practice.

The approach followed in the enquiry was specifically designed to enable a 'whole-person' and appreciative, as well as a generative and reflexive enquiry, enabling an enquiry into a more contextual, relational and dynamic exploration of the way in which planners seemed to engage their practice in ways to contribute, and what they regarded as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest.

## 3.3 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INQUIRY

### 3.3.1 Introduction

The research can be described as a qualitative inquiry, aimed at interpreting and making meaning through an explorative (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:3; Feyerabend, 2010; Paton, 2001) and reflexive approach (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2007) providing emergent design flexibility as well as 'voice, perspective and reflexivity' (Patton, 2001).

On the question whether 'telling stories' is science, Seidman in his guide to qualitative research, argues that the question is not 'if?' but rather 'how best science can actually learn how to tell good stories?' (Seidman, 2015:8; Koro-Ljungberg, 2011).

The enquiry was undertaken through an exploration of rich work-life narratives in which practicing planners reflected on work-life experiences, as well as the qualities, competencies and influences that were instrumental in enabling and encouraging them to contribute in their respective practice contexts, over time.

The purpose of this section is to provide an indication of significant considerations that influenced the design of the qualitative research inquiry, and formed guideposts in the design and the information gathering and meaning making processes undertaken. These were developed through drawing from experiences, reflections and suggestions from:

- ⌘ Scholars and literature in the fields of research methodology;
- ⌘ Studies that used a whole person approach to practice experience in planning as a practice; and
- ⌘ Studies aimed at a more integrated understanding of competence, professional development and career development in other disciplines.

The section provides an indication of:

- ⌘ Considerations in an explorative and reflexive research approach (Section 3.3.2);
- ⌘ The value in learning from practitioners (Section 3.3.3);
- ⌘ Work-life narratives proven to be a valuable research method (Section 3.3.4);
- ⌘ Sample design and related considerations (Section 3.3.5);
- ⌘ Reflections on the work-life narrative process (Section 3.3.6);
- ⌘ Ethical considerations and reflections (Section 3.3.7); and
- ⌘ Approach in thesis production (Section 3.3.8).

### 3.3.2 Considerations in an explorative and reflexive research approach

Whilst opting for a more reflexive approach, the research in no way represents a critical theory or post structuralist approach. There is, however, more recognition, firstly, of the role of language and of authorship as a central part of research, moving from a mere ‘writing down of empirical findings’ to recognising the voice of the author in interpretation and constructing meaning (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:168-169).

Secondly, there is recognition of the subjective role of the researcher and those that participated in the study as practitioners, in terms of meaningful engagement, as well as a common passion and belief in the value, ideals, ideas, identity and the quest of the practice of planning (Gunder, 2011).

Thirdly, the research and narrative interview of work-life experiences (even though focused on individuals) could acknowledge multi-dimensional identities and relational experiences and not merely cast every participant as a ‘practitioner in the field of planning’ only (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:204-209).

The two elements that Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2007:5-6) describe as central to keep in mind within a reflexive research approach are ‘careful interpretation’ and ‘reflection’. The first, ‘careful interpretation’, serves as reminder that empirical data (such as interviews and narrations) is always already the result of interpretation and thus treated as work-life narratives. In line with this approach, there are thus also no attempts at mirroring or coding the narrations and interviews within the research findings or research text. The second, ‘reflection’, directs attention inwards. This not only refers to the person of the researcher but also to the relevant research community, society as a whole, and the relevant intellectual and cultural traditions; inevitably highlighting the significance of language and the research narrative/presentation in the research context.

### 3.3.3 The value in learning from practitioners

A website called “Profiles of Practitioners – Practice Stories from the Field” (once associated with Cornell University but seemingly no longer active) was set up in 2005 to encourage and facilitate the creation, hosting and use of stories and profiles of practitioners in the field of planning, and to provide practical tips for interviewing, transcribing and analysing them (see Forester et al., 2004a and b). Forester, Peters and Hittleman in the opening pages explain that: “Practitioner profiles let us hear directly from planners, educators, and organizers about the practical challenges and opportunities they really face. Crafted from edited transcripts of interviews with experienced practitioners speaking about how they handled specific, memorable projects or cases, these ‘practice stories’ offer intimate windows onto the richness, messiness, and complexity of work ‘in the field’” (Forester et al., 2005).

Fisher (1987) argues that the most important characteristic of stories relates to their coherence and reliability, enabling the comparison of planning stories based on their ‘narrative rationality’. Throgmorton on the other hand provides a warning about the potential conflict between coherent and truthful narratives (Throgmorton, 1992) – a notion which makes sense, especially accepting multiple identities, multiple worldviews and multiple truths (Krueckeberg, 1993), also relevant to this study in particular. Within this context, Throgmorton’s argument is that, in part, the answer lies in ‘the persuasiveness with which we tell our stories’, where those interested in shaping the future become authors and persuasive storytellers (Throgmorton, 1992:19; Lim and Albrecht, 1987). It may be considered that planners, who formed the sample of this study, were probably more likely to be more persuasive story tellers and could

therefore possibly have had a considerable impact on the researcher, as well as on the research findings and interpretations in the enquiry. Internal coherence in the work-life narratives and experiences were thus also reviewed and considered as important in meaning making.

### 3.3.4 Work-life narratives as a valuable research method

The value of exploring the wholeness of our lives and contextualised experiences and transitions through narrative inquiry, in explorations related to competencies, has been extensively argued for in other knowledge fields (Jones, 1983; Musson, 1998; Clandinin and Huber, 2002).

In their research to inform a discussion of competencies in the context of life's artistry, Clandinin and Huber (2002) utilized the value of narrative inquiry as a core research method to explore the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of experience (including that of the researchers themselves). In the same context, researchers in various other disciplines, most notably those within the medical sphere, have engaged in a series of qualitative studies to explore the self-perceptions of various professions; including how general practitioners (Natanzon et al., 2010), pharmacists (Rosenthal et al., 2011), and nurses (Wei et al., 2011; and Howatson-Jones, 2010) view their roles (Leggat, 2007).

The importance of exploring life patterns, choices and career outcomes has also been highlighted in the field of career development: such as in the study of Isenberg (1997) aimed at gaining insight into the perspectives of young professionals and the study by the Australian Youth Research Centre (Dwyer et al., 2003) on life-patterns, career outcomes and adult choices. In the latter report, attention is drawn to the limitation of statistical analyses to enable an enhanced understanding of work-life transitions in the planning practice (Dwyer et al., 2003; 9; Bailey, 1998 and Tassan –Kok and Oranje, 2017).

Studies of 'life worlds' and 'lived experiences' often opt for approaches rooted in phenomenology (Patton, 2001; Alvesson, 2003): as utilised in the 1988 study by Zuboff on the impact of information technology on the working life (see Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2007:43), and in enquiring about the essence of lived experience and the descriptions and meaning of such experiences (Miller and Glassner, 1997; Gambacorti-Passerini, 2014; Lee, 1999 and Hocutt, 1997).

Yorks and Kasl (2002) explain the need for using narratives based on multiple approaches to explore whole-person learning: "Our premise is that most adult educators in North America are grounded in a theory of experience that is influenced by John Dewey and American pragmatism. Our contention is that a theory of experience grounded in radical phenomenology provides an alternative perspective that has important educational implications. We believe that a serious dialogue about the difference between a pragmatic and a phenomenological understanding of experience goes to the heart of the ongoing discourse in adult education about the need for a more holistic theory of learning" (Taylor, 1998 in Yorks and Kasl, 2002:184).

Moving beyond only being interested in the individual as subject, Musson (1998) notes that the life history method is particularly relevant if the research question involves understanding the motivations and influences which practitioners bring to bear on the organizations or contextual realities that they form part of.

In recent studies amongst global leaders and business executives, both Brown (2011) and Schein (2015) used the narratives as a core part of their respective research contributions in the field of sustainability leadership; both arguing for the value of the in-depth narrative approach for deeper inquiry and

exploration versus traditional survey methods. Brown (2011) and Schein (2015) respectively use narratives to explore the complex dimensions of the role of conscious leadership and of world views within the field of sustainability leadership, not with the view of advancing the ‘careers’ of sustainability leaders, but rather exploring their capabilities to contribute towards the unfolding future.

Brown (2011) explains that his choice of utilising the life history method – described by Musson (1998) as a unique method to engage individuals self-perception, theorizing and reflecting about ‘their actions in the social world over time’ – together with a grounded theory approach really seemed like a natural fit for his enquiry into meta-competencies associated with capability for late-stage meaning making in sustainability leaders. Brown states: "I interviewed them about their experience and process regarding sustainability initiative design and engagement. Through thematic analysis of the interview data, and building upon insights from my literature review, I then compiled a set of propositions and findings about this topic" (Brown, 2011:15).

In career-narrations, it is recognised that the ‘story’ is made up of events and significance connected to form a whole (van Hulst, 2012:300), or strings of “wholes”/adventures, not necessarily presented in a linear way: told in sequence and temporally relating that is infused by the value that is bestowed upon them through the perspective of the narrator (Lennon, 2015:72), and isolating “by means of reasoning on what counts as ‘worthy’” (Lennon, 2015:71). It is evident that “this process of narrating one’s unfinished self by ordering significance up through a ‘sense-making spiral’ (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012:55) from the past, present, and concern for the future, induces an ongoing ‘sense of ending’, as the purpose of one’s continually evolving practice unfolds through explaining ‘how’ and ‘why’ one moved from ‘there’ to ‘here.’ (Lennon, 2015:72).

It is through this process of reflection that the ‘reflector’ is able to search for and attach meaning-making and thus purpose to certain actions, choices and events. Through soliciting reflections on work-life experiences and adventures, the role of certain competencies and development of competency becomes the ‘structuring’ or ‘cause-and-effect’ and the theme through the time and meaning dimension, guiding the way in which events and experiences are ‘linked’ in hindsight.

The challenges in the study have of course been numerous. The most evident was the challenge in exploring and making meaning in ways to ensure that the whole remains more than the sum of its parts. To support the meaning-making process, this involved a generative and multi-layered process of reflexive interpretation (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2007).

**Table 3.1: ‘Acts/Phases’ summary across work-life narratives**

Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5	Act 6
Finding feet	Self-discovery	Exposure	Stage of growth and certainty	Phase of maturity	Acceptance
Lighting the candle	Riding the storms	Building a technical base	Finding direction	Broadening horizons	Getting focus
Learning to plan	Stepping stone/breeding ground	Learning	Comfort zone Starting afresh	Teaching & learning	Creating challenges and reviving interests

Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5	Act 6
Self-reflection training and learning	Preparation and courage	Lessons from local government experience	Back in SA city (urban design and city scale projects)	Coming into my own education/study phase	Realizing my potential
Early understanding	Technical training	Immersion into world and peers	Workplace & mentoring	Provincial phase; municipal phase	Olympic bid – Climax phase
Early work and study	Living & working in America	Period of P&DM shifts	Multicultural & planning education	Private practice	Governance & education
Oppositional planning stuff	Rapid change; Period of missed opportunities	Lebowa government	Intense phase of IDP planning	Transformation – where I am able to dictate where I want to be	["I was born to do that"]
Namibia	Activism to academia; IDP planning phase	Getting to know the area	Growing period: shift from planning to project orientation	Dark stage – government restructuring	Innovate & getting clarity – moving
Lopsided, graft and the dishwasher room	Finding my feet	Maturing – travelling, studying abroad, reading	Practice & teaching & research thrust	Communication & writing	Interacting with peers
Undergraduate studies	Engaging with context – social & physical of the city	Part-time work	Early career	Mid-career	Association of Planners
Architecture	Studies				Autonomy
Attraction to subject & Study choice					Management

### 3.3.5 Sample design and related considerations

The sample has been purposefully designed (Patton, 2001) to support an enquiry with practitioners that can be regarded as contributing: as active adventurers, players and participants who are getting their hands dirty and who are figuring out how to handle the complexities and add value within the midst of uncertainty, and making judgements and taking action in normative contested contexts (see Forester, 2006).

The sample was selected from the population of practitioners with a formal qualification in planning in the South African planning practice context and the participants had been identified by their peers (through use of the snowball technique) as adding value and contributing within their practice of planning. As indicated, this allowed for an appreciative approach to be used to explore the nature and role of abilities, drivers and growth influences that enabled, encouraged and shaped contribution (aspects expected to be found in such participants’ work-life histories).

Selecting a sample of practitioners in planning as a practice, sharing a formal education background in planning as a practice, and the context of the practice and the socio-political history of planning in South Africa (of which the time period depended on the age of the participant) also supported contextualizing the enquiry within the practice. Conducting the study amongst participants whose work-life histories unfolded through a period of great change and transition, and the intense dynamics that it brought in relation to feelings associated with planning as a practice in South Africa, was expected to be (and turned out to be) incredibly useful to the exploration in the study (See Annexure A).

Given that the ‘mood’ about planning as a practice at the time of the interview would be expected to influence perceptions (especially relevant in the highly dynamic socio-political and policy context of South Africa during the last two decades), I have opted to only use interviews that were conducted within the space of 12 months – spanning 2001 to 2002.

Whilst these interviews are thus dated in the early 2000s period, they provide invaluable insights into ‘being, becoming and contributing’ to the practice of planning in South Africa at the time and, as argued in the study (See Annexure A), in challenging us to consider the potential transformational and relational nature of being, becoming and contributing in discourses and endeavours in the field of planning education and professional development.

Given a critical reflexive approach, it is important to acknowledge that the selection in itself could of course be seen as ‘exclusionary’. On the one hand, focusing on a so-called ‘elite grouping’ could, for example result in embedding vested interests in maintaining formal education and a practice of professional planners. To avoid elitist solutions through a proliferation of expert narratives and stories (See Pellizzoni, 2001) and in an attempt to engage multiple voices in the construction of ‘truth’ (Gergen and Gergen, 1991), a choice was made to follow up and interview participants identified with the snowball technique in specific geographic areas, instead of merely interviewing a selection of well-known and influential participants with prominent roles in the profession across the country.

Pseudonyms were given in a way such as to maintain symbolic connection to participants’ archetypical family names in order to acknowledge the value brought by each ‘hero’ in their own ‘quest narrative’. For they are the ones that I have learned from in this quest of mine. Most of them are well recognised by many in the South African planning fraternity as inspirational mentors. All of them, now mentors and teachers also to me; and hopefully through this thesis (although faceless but not soulless) to others as well. One of the biggest rewards on this quest is found in their continuously giving elixir of wisdoms.

In no way does the study or selected interviews provide, or attempt to provide, an overview or indication of all virtuous planners in South Africa during a particular time period.

### **3.3.6 Reflections on the work-life narrative interview process**

The narrative method as a process of autobiographical self-reflection allows for deep engagement (Lennon, 2015:72; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2006:115) on that which encouraged, enabled and influences contributions in practice experiences; and with questions that might be termed ‘in-depth phenomenological interviewing’.

The interview focus was not on asking the question directly but rather requesting the participants to reflect on the context of their life and practice experiences, and thereby creating a platform for easy reflection and discussion in the context of their practice/work-lives. I thus had to be aware that the interest, the attentiveness, the timing, the body language, the silences and the deeper questions on those issues ‘I cared about’ would also direct, encourage and provide opportunities to open the ‘story’ up to further understanding (see Forester, 2006).

In recognising participants and the researcher as an integral part of the research (Seidman, 2015:14; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2007), the subjectivity on the part of the participants and researcher is recognised explicitly. Especially so, in a case like this where I have known some of the participants and where I shared a common background and practice with them; this immediately provided an empathetic field and

enhanced understanding of each other's experiences. In a research approach that requires "preconditions of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy (Kasl, Marsick and Dechant, 1997; Mezirow, 1991, 2000)... to find ways of entering the whole-person knowing of others", and which benefits from "a sense of felt connection" (Yorks and Kasl, 2002:184), this was indeed a benefit.

The interview was introduced with a rather broadly defined explanation of the study theme, requesting the participants' participation and their permission to record, transcribe and use the interview material for the purpose of the research study. An undertaking of anonymity was guaranteed. A number of basic demographic questions about place of work, formal education qualifications (related and not-related to the practice of planning) and years of experience were also asked (See Figures C.1-C.3).

Participants were requested, firstly, to provide an overview of their work-life history up to the point of the interview, thinking about it as a 'play' or 'performance' and dividing it in different 'acts', or 'themes' or 'stages' giving a name to every 'act'. They were not asked to divide their 'career' in chronological, or any other specific phases, but many of them (probably given the context of the interview) divided the narrative accounts in to themes with both a temporal and a personal developmental quality to them. Having done this, they were asked to discuss the various 'acts' in terms of significant experiences and elements in each 'act/theme', reflecting on that which distinguished the respective 'acts/themes' that had been identified. Participants were asked to consider and reflect on the abilities and influencing factors that enabled and encouraged them to contribute in their work-life context in their narration.

There was no explicit reference to, or question aimed at soliciting, purpose, quest, beliefs, and meta-competencies and the inter-related dynamic. Reflecting on one's work-life through the lens of 'acts' could, however, provide some impetus for the quest narratives to unfold.

The narrations unfolded quite organically, with many participants visually drawing their work-life experience in terms of the 'acts', and consistently referring back to these during the narration. During the interviews, narrations of events were encouraged and where necessary clarifying questions were asked. Participants would venture deep down memory lane, so the question of 'where were we again?' often arose, in which case the outline of 'acts' or 'themes' developed upfront were quite handy in themselves to keep the interview on track.

Without exception, the interviews enabled 'thick description' (Patton, 2001; Geerts, 1973 in Lennon, 2015:72) and proved to be rich in meaning making and value – both for myself, who had the privilege to engage, listen and be inspired through the many hours of interviews, and the participants. Without fail every person interviewed mentioned that they 'actually/really enjoyed the interview', and the time and space that it created to reflect and make meaning. A sentiment shared, as from my side I really enjoyed the role of the 'listener', the receptive 'audience', and being part of these highly personal and fascinating reflections on work-life experiences, adventures and personal journeys – definitely not a researcher 'detached' from the subject-matter at all.

As Lennon explains in reflection on the work-life narrative process: "self-understanding through narrative is an intrinsically subjective project that requires greater thoroughness than normal on the part of the researcher in recounting the story told so as not to eclipse the unfolding meaning-making processes that invests the narrative with significance" (Lennon, 2015:72).



### 3.3.7 Ethical considerations and reflections

Within the research process, the question regarding use and ethical clearance for use formed the first part of the interview process. One of the biggest challenges in the writing of this thesis, however, turned out to be exactly this ‘impersonalisation’ of people and events and stories – which to a large extent is needed for any level of anonymity in a small planning fraternity such as South Africa (less than 1 500 practitioners in 2011 and less than 900 in 2008 – see Todes and Mngadi, 2007).

I have made use of pseudonyms. Deeply personal stories were not shared verbatim, some quotes are used where relevant, but given the focus on narrative coherence and experiences and not merely coding of words, less focus is placed on quotes than in usual qualitative studies. A few reconstructed and highly summarised snippets of narratives (largely keeping the language and type of wording used) are used as examples in the text.

In hindsight, this is probably one of the things that I would have done differently – to actually ask participants to use and acknowledge their experiences by name. Contradicting the usual effort at maintaining anonymity are an increased number of voices claiming that identity and life stories matter – just as people’s lives matter. In this regard, Anne Grinyer (2002) makes the case of parents of children with terminal illness, when faced with the choice of anonymity or not, actually wanting their children’s stories to be told. Stories and interviews are seen as a monument-memory that can also show the significance of lives. Perhaps, reflecting on it in hindsight, as did Grinyer (2002), I should have considered the likelihood of interviewees and fellow authors actually preferring to be ‘acknowledged in published research thus enabling them to retain ownership of their stories’.

In the many practitioner profiles captured by John Forester and others (featured on the Cornell University website as part of an initiative “Profiles of Practitioners” to encourage learning from profiling as a means to enhance practice and education; and driven by himself, Scott Peters and Margo Hittleman) the profiles and stories are explicitly linked to practitioners. In this way, the profiles not only give recognition to the practitioners, but with some editing and the agreement of the interviewees are published as resources for future use. Similarly, in the book *Becoming a Planner* (Bayer et al., 2011) this notion of giving recognition actually comes to life and thereby gives even more credibility and authenticity (and readability) to the various ways of becoming a planner through education, experience and a multitude of different pathways.

It could be quite useful to explore this with participants in future follow up studies, extending interviews to include latter day planners and also those not included in the first round of interviews but have had an equally profound impact within the practice of planning. This probably would even contribute in acknowledging practitioners and in illustrating the value of considering the transformative, dynamic and relational nature of being, becoming and contributing within an action- and future-orientated practice such as planning.

In pursuit of anonymity, references made by participants to places, peers and mentors have been taken out and/or de-personalised. However, these specific references are highly valuable as they point to the extremely influential role of certain key mentors in the community of practice and the value of proximity, as explained by Snowden (2013), in complex systems, as well as the impact of interaction in bringing about change.

However, with that and the interest and respect for others' stories and lives goes the recognition that we can never understand each other perfectly, or place ourselves in others' footsteps or attempt knowing what others really mean (Seidman, 2015:9; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2007; Corby, Enguidanos and Kay, 1996).

### 3.3.8 Approach in production of the thesis

The thesis has not been written in an attempt at containing, boxing or providing 'the' answers in the complex context of 'being and becoming' in planning as a practice. It is instead a reflection of an enquiry interested in opening up (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2007:288) – rather than closing down or avoiding, allowing paradox and probing insights rather than clear answers about the often unseen, implicit and highly relational. Essentially, it is thus recognised that the finished research text in this thesis thus also bares evidence, and in some ways reflects the process of reflection – including reflections and interpretations within the text.

'Original' authors can no longer be perceived as the only writers or producers of texts, or owners or generators of knowledge and meaning (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2007, Throgmorton, 1992). One of the central questions that came to the fore during this enquiry and in the interpretation of the data was most probably, 'where does the making sense then lie?' Where, and how, and by whom is knowledge then actually created or co-produced within this continued process of interpretation, analysis, and writing-up and (re)interpreting? Especially, given that it is not only about those making sense and producing the stories (or in this case the thesis), but also about the readers of, and the characters and participants in, these stories (who in this case are also potential readers of these stories).

The approach required a greater commitment towards reflection and a more condensed use of empirical material in the research text itself, thus necessitating well-chosen empirical material, or parts thereof, for interpretation in the text. It also required the courage to share and expose, often personal, interpretations and reflections. Through this process, unlike traditional empirical epistemology, there is thus a recognition of the researcher's (and co-authors') active construction of 'reality' throughout the thesis and its co-construction – coming to the fore through perceptions, interpretations, the handling of the language games, as well as the social interaction with those being researched (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2007:271).

Reconstructed (shortened and edited) narratives of selected participant experiences, and work-life time-span diagrams, are interspersed through the text to provide a view into the transformational and relational dynamics between experiences, abilities, drivers, and the range of temporal and contextual influences contained in the richness of the in-depth interviews. The narratives are not directly quoted text; however, wording and the tone used has been chosen to reflect that used in the participant narration as far as possible. Where it adds value, some specific quotes or snippets from participant work-life narratives are used and have been indicated as such.

Capturing and solidifying insights into the nature of 'being, becoming and contributing' in planning as a practice was indeed a challenge, especially so the attempts at generating neatly defined and mutually exclusive categories and descriptions (e.g. of meta-competencies or even types of informal learning experiences), without losing the very 'essence' and spirit associated therewith. This required writing as an attempt to hold something as elusive as quicksilver ... keeping it still ... just long enough to be seen but letting it go quickly enough to maintain its dynamic character.

Science and research is thus treated much more as kaleidoscope than a microscope, where shifting perspectives create “new and unpredictable patterns and hues” (see Eisenstein of the US National Science Foundation, quoted by Klein (2004:5) in Du Plessis, 2009:23).

Given that the process of discovery and meaning making in the quest required multi-layered reflections and was indeed highly personal and transformational, some reflections of a personal nature are also shared, and have been interspersed through the text.

In the same vein that Beauregard (Beauregard, 1998) has identified the relationship between writing planning theories and ‘writing the planner’, it could be argued that writing plans and planning stories also implicitly involves ‘writing the planner’. This demands an awareness of what kind of planners or ‘action initiators’ are being imagined, but more so of the experiences and influences enabling and encouraging them to take action, and as such, reflected in the text.

### **3.3.9 Summary reflections**

This section provided an overview of the research methodologies of data gathering and participant engagement, the sample, ethical considerations and the participants that enabled departure on the quest.

Some key pointers and, especially, the challenges related to other quests and enquiries into work-life and career narratives (as identified from studies that used narrative and biographic research to explore experiences and the perspectives of practitioners in the practice of planning and other disciplines) have been outlined.

Narrative is one of the most well-known ways in which people throughout history have made sense of their experience (Seidman, 2015:8). Within the qualitative study, the work-life history narrative method was identified as the most appropriate and value adding method to solicit reflections of the actors involved in planning and the development of their respective working life adventures and experiences; their engagement with the ideas, practices and struggles of planning; the abilities and competencies they draw on; the drivers of willingness and ability; and the interdependent ways in which these were infused, obtained and adapted over time. “I interview because I am interested in other people’s stories”, stated Seidman (2015:7).

### 3.4 MEANING MAKING (UNFOLDING) IN AN EXPLORATIVE ENQUIRY

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

One of the major challenges within this qualitative study was to find ways in which to deal with empirical data without falling into the ‘trap’ of merely reducing the analysis to common-sense knowledge (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron, 1991).

It was evident, as expected from the start, that attempts at coding or summarising would not add value and merely result in yet another set of non-dynamic lists. It was indeed a challenge to not only conduct, but also to interpret and reflect the research in a way that assisted in opening up the exploration, in undertaking it in a whole-person and contextually-rich way, and to facilitate an appreciative, generative and reflexive interpretation.

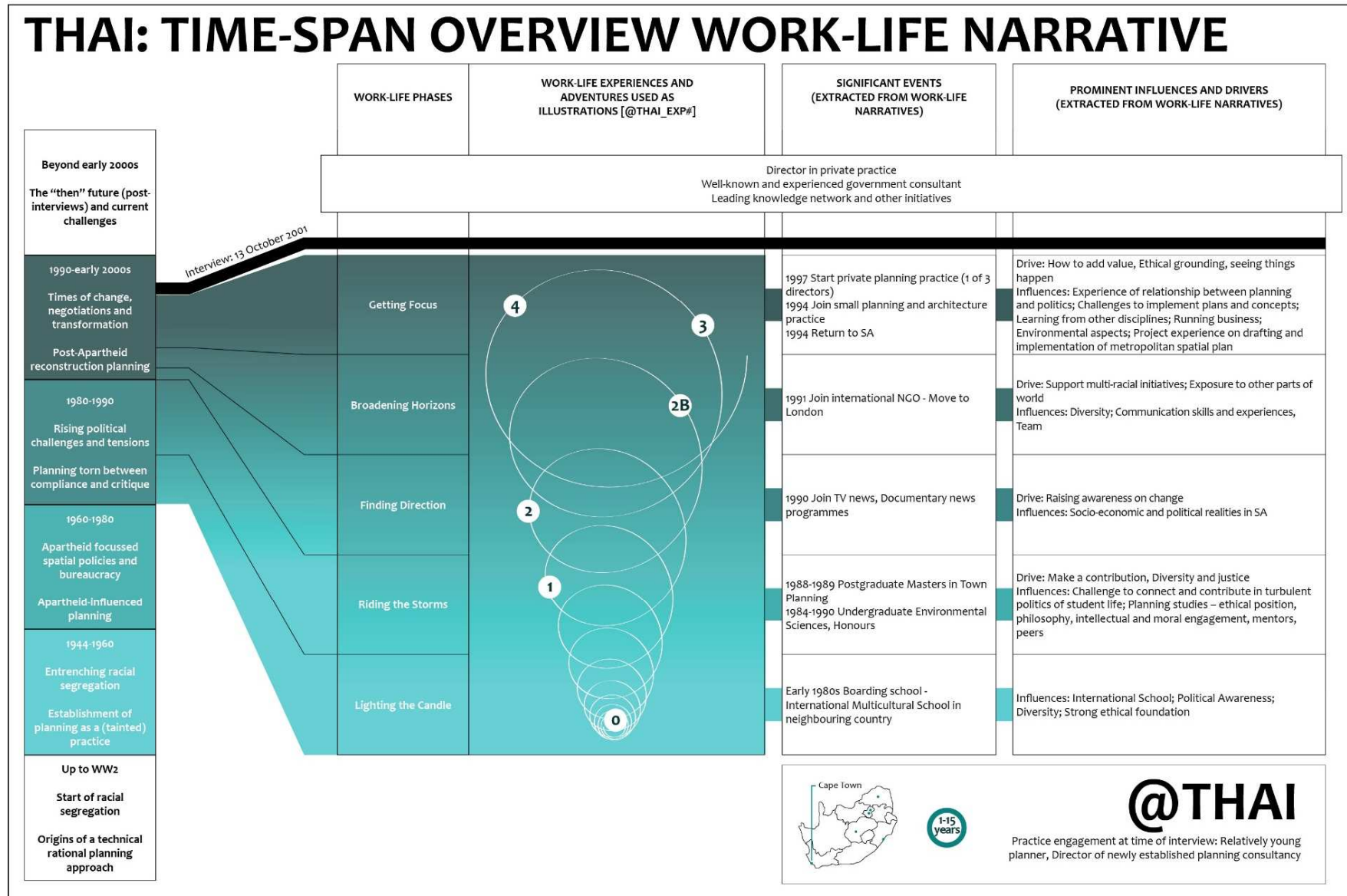
Some of the key reservations about imitating the technical approach and rigor of quantitative methodologies within a qualitative study and merely ‘being led’ by the data were for example that such a method: (i) may become over-reliant on coding (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007); (ii) does not recognise that this kind of qualitative data is actually already interpreted views; and, (iii) risks knowledge isolation contained in an inductive process (Goldkuhl, 2010). Existing pre-conceptions would also in any event have made it impossible to meet one of the key requirements, namely that of being unprejudiced (Glaser, 1992).

The purpose of this section is to provide a short overview of the challenges, growth journeys and transitions in the quest of meaning making in the enquiry. In reflecting on the quest of the enquiry, challenges and transition moments that contributed to meaning making in this enquiry are summarised and outlined as follows:

- ⌘ Reflexive interpretation, contextualising and reflecting on competencies, drivers and growth (Section 3.4.2);
- ⌘ Expanding interpretation through the lens of the quest metaphor (Section 3.4.3); and
- ⌘ Questioning the enquiry and recognising simplicity in complexity (Section 3.4.4).

Examples and summaries of some of the analyses, explorations, comparative overviews, narrative reconstructions and reflexive interpretations in the participant work-life narratives are provided in Annexure C.

Figure 3.1: Time-span of work-life narrative Example



## Text Box 3.1: @JALAN: WORK-LIFE NARRATIVE REWORKED AS QUEST NARRATIVE



#Call to  
action and  
departure

Jalan came into planning by “mistake”. He crossed the threshold from rural South Africa to [the University of] Durban Westville “to go far from home, to the sea, to meet new people, to see...”. He embarked on his studies in law but did not enjoy it ... dropped out and ‘did a bit of work’ for a few years. Still determined in spite of the likelihood of failure and financial challenges to get his degree, he enrolled at Wits [University of the Witwatersrand] for his undergraduate studies. This, he “found quite challenging and interesting... originally with an attitude to say I am not going to pass... (Students at Wits would say they are there more to fail than to pass). But at the end of the year, after writing my exams which was so difficult, the results came... I passed all my courses! So I said: I am going back to Wits were I am going to finish my degree!”. ‘Fortunately’ Wits had by that time phased out the law undergraduate qualification and he did his BA in political studies, realising that he “hated law even more than before”. Spurred on by an experience in which he really “felt insulted” when “looking for a job as a correspondence clerk” and was tested to see if he was able to write a letter in English [and armed with his pride,

tenacity and a new found confidence in his abilities], he decided to do his honours in political studies. Which (together with some student work at the Department where he studied), he “enjoyed... but did not know what [he] was going to do with!”. He thus decided to “try out” the diploma in Business Administration but instead got admitted to the Public Management course. He recounts: “I said..., well let me try this out and see what is has for me. But [then] I [really] enjoyed the diploma -- even though it was very hectic. They used to tell us: ‘NO social life! Social life will come after you completed your final exams’” [Ē1]. It entailed a lot of group work, discussions and building confidence with presentations and communications skills, which came naturally (“... for a person that talks a lot and comes from a family that talks a lot...”) [Ē2]. “The program was hectic and I did my internship [2 months during the year of full time study] with PlanAct... I found that what they were doing, was ... what I want to study! That is when the interest began ... also working with communities, working with local municipalities.” [Ē3]

[It was a call to action in which he participated initially unknowingly... but a call that he heeded and that ended up providing the impetus for the ignition of an interest, a passion, that soon would become the commitment to a quest into a new world (Maricopa Centre for Learning and Instruction (MCLI). 1999 Update. Hero’s Journey: Summary of Steps. Accessed on 27/12/2011 at <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/smc/journey/ref/summary.html>)]



#Initiation  
experiences

He was offered an extended internship, starting to work with PlanAct after finishing final exams and later being employed full time as a project officer. He had to write the proposals, run the project and do research. He was exposed to the field of local government and development – being responsible for local government finance but also had to run with things such as local economic development, IDP [integrated development planning], organisational development and service delivery

[Ē4]: There was “no programme to orientate or develop you... They just threw you into the deep end “to either swim or drown [Ē5]! So one day I was ... accompanying these guys ... facilitating a workshop in Kayalami Metro [an area now part of the City of Joburg]. I was just sitting there ... [when] Anesh [one of the senior guys] who was facilitating the meeting said: ‘We are now moving to the next session and Jalan would be facilitating that’. Wow! What was this guy saying now? And everybody was looking at me. I couldn’t refuse. I just stood up and went to the front with confidence ... the CEO was there, the deputy CEO and high ranking officials! I said wow ... now I have to do my job. I actually did it! And [of course] ... after the workshop they [the team] said it was excellent, ‘He actually just wanted to see how you are

going to react’.” It was to be the start of a lot of facilitation of workshops ... training of trainers ... and developing communication skills, presentation skills, facilitation skills [É6].

“But ... I liked planning! You do not just focus on one thing ... I found that this was the field I was looking for [É7]. Maybe it’s my personal trade. I like working with people. And what I liked was that the job was not mundane. It provided me with mutual opportunities almost every day. ... You get involved ... [doing whatever needs to be done in the wide range of things, and working with a team and many different specialists [É8]] ... you need to know a lot of things. A LOT of things! I was one person at PlanAct who could actually do research on something I didn’t know ... who could facilitate a workshop on something I didn’t know. And it was quite difficult because you get overstressed. But when I left ... I, [who] did not do maths at school but passed the financial diploma ... was actually at some stage [with a change in staff at PlanAct] the one who could deal with local government finance [É9]!”

[His commitment was tested, he met his fears, he extended himself beyond what he thought was possible. He left with the rewards of experience, exposure, networks – but also with confidence [É10]. The knowledge that he has tenacity, that he does not give up in the face of ‘the unknown’, nor when being ‘pushed to his limits’ [É11]. A sense of ‘identity’ and purpose [É12]. Ready to explore new horizons and face the real big challenge of heading up planning and development support for a number of capacity strapped municipalities in his home province Limpopo.]



#Adventure experiences

After 4 years with PlanAct, Jalan decided to expand his horizons, moving to the Capricorn District in Limpopo Province to take up the challenge of heading the PIMS Centre [Planning Implementation and Management Support Centre - set up to provide capacity to newly established and under resourced local and district municipalities to implement the new planning system, establish the democratic and developmental planning approach and adhere to a host of process and other requirements. Staff were in an often peculiar situation, functioning in the District Municipality but being funded by the national government Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG)]. Local development and spatial planning capacity was a huge challenge in the province, intensified by a lack of administrative capacity and “transferred staff lacking commitment and motivation”. In spite of some municipalities sending staff on IDP training they did not know what is really required and “don’t understand the concept”. Even within Capricorn which is supposedly the best capacitated district, amongst the 5 local municipalities, Polokwane municipality is the only one with capacity – “The [biggest] challenge is building the capacity of those local municipalities”.

The mandate was not to plan for, but rather support municipalities to do their own planning. However, “we end up actually doing that because basically they don’t have the capacity.” The challenge was huge, with almost 90% of all the planning needed by the local municipalities, and even the district, in effect happening in the PIMS Centre. Two of the municipalities appointed consultants to support them and also to apply for funding through the DBSA, but that was also a challenge as the process plans [plan stipulating the process designs required according to the Municipal Systems Act (2000)] were done in a very specific and similar way, whilst the dynamics in the areas differed quite substantially [and so required unique processes and interventions]. “So now [with rolling out the new IDP process], we are involved in this complex and frustrating process [where] no one can claim knowledge of knowing IDPs ... as it is really a complete processes [É5]... You need to know a lot of things [É9] [É4]. IDP is cross-cutting over a number of fields ... [such as spatial] planning, infrastructure [planning and budgeting - for all sectors]. You need a lot of people to assist you [É8].”

One of the most frustrating aspects of the PIMS Centre he recalls is at times having authority

and power to do a specific task, but being ‘outside’ the local authorities. Which actually means that in most circumstances you do not have authority at all and have to work with municipalities who often still perceive the office as ‘the servant’ of national government, DPLG, and as being able to provide support with a huge amount of things – that you have not even been appointed to do [Ē5].

However, given the lack of capacity, he stresses that the PIMS team inevitably ends up having to co-ordinate and attend all the IDP meetings, as well as the different sector planning meetings and discussions for all 5 municipalities and the District. “In every meeting of planning ... even with Province, you have to be [there]”. Also present to facilitate IDP Representative Forums and community meetings – where “when you walk out, they [people] see you as the answer to their problem because their local municipality failed to answer their problem [Ē10].”

The frustration is probably heightened at times when he would expect support but he mentions that he realised that he often cannot even count on some of the specialists to be there to contribute and acknowledge the importance of the process – not just laugh it off. In an integrated planning process this obviously requires making a plan to fill the gaps and find the relevant information [Ē9] [Ē4] – “So you need to build experience of that [the various areas of expertise]. But you get [so] overstressed that sometimes you feel like here I am going to break. You are just one person [Ē1].”

“It is quite difficult [Ē5], but I think it can surely take you to new heights. Because if you run the IDP you get exposed to many fields. Whether it is administration, whether it is service delivery ... So if I want to go somewhere, now I can go ... the experience that I have gained here, is quite valuable. You don’t only have bits and pieces of knowledge of different issues ... You get [really] involved.”

In reflecting on what is required, he considers the demands to be quite high: “You need to be able to facilitate workshops ... You need to communicate at various levels [Ē2][Ē6]. You have the province, national, the community.” In

hindsight, “... during my stay with PlanAct, I facilitated a lot of workshops. A lot of them. I also trained trainers. This is when I developed these communicating skills, presentation skills, facilitation skills ... [Ē2] [Ē6]. You need management skills also ... [And of course] the ability to handle ‘hiccups’ [for example related to the issue of powers and functions and lines of reporting]. The job ... and the ways ... can frustrate you. They call at night saying there is a meeting in Pretoria, go there. Then what is that you do? You go [Ē11].” [This call can be from DPLG who is responsible for national oversight, managers at the district with whom the PIMS centres work closely and where they are treated ‘as employees’, and if related to IDP in some way, even high ranking officials or politicians from the municipalities or province].

Another major challenge in his opinion was making inroads in the established networks, especially in driving inter-municipal and intergovernmental planning processes. In the province there “is this thing of these are people who know this province”. Now, after 8 months of really proving himself he is in a position where “I can say: ‘you are out of order’, and they listen ... I have support [Ē10]. Even the minister calls me. So that quite encourages me.” “It is challenging ... but I enjoy doing it”.

With some introspection into what enables this, he reflects: “I am patient and outspoken, and if I have an opinion I just mention it whether you like it or not. I have to live with myself. This is a political environment. You have to be cautious. But I normally survive. ... So you develop, sometimes you make mistakes and you see I have made a mistake. But it is nice if you realise you have made a mistake. You shouldn’t be ashamed to apologise and say I am sorry. And people listen to you. ... You have to be conscious. I think that comes with a skill... [For example] a person will push. Even if it is unreasonable. What do you do? You know if you acknowledge them, they keep quiet, they listen. But if you keep on suppressing them the workshop will go out of hand.”

Even though he reckons that some of the skills might be developed through courses, he is also of the opinion that “if you don’t have them naturally, it could be quite difficult to develop them. It will take you years. ... As a planner you need



to be aware of a lot of things. I know you can't be aware of all the things, but you need to be aware of a lot of things [É4].”

You should also be able to communicate well. Working in a province such as the Northern Province [Limpopo], where there is a high number of illiterate people and a very small number of people that have gone to university: “When you talk to those people you should be mindful of that. Even if you write something to them you should be mindful of that. Even the way you present yourself. People would judge you by the way in which you walk in front of people...”

“It is important as a person to listen to what people want” – Reflecting on the importance to be able to handle a situation ‘on your feet’ and the experiences gain in this regard in school debate teams and the lessons in really listening before responding.

“You know [with regards to planning] content wise we have these nice theories [but] in many instances you find they are not applicable. But you also need to be flexible in your work because you are confronted with a situation you have not read about. Anywhere you need to deal with that.” However, every context is different. A planner who is good in Johannesburg Metro “might fail here [in the more rural Northern Province with huge development issues] because the conditions, the dynamics are different.”

The list goes on ... administration, managing projects ... with exposure to political science, politics, industrial sociology (even if not always consciously thinking about the latter) in earlier years regarded as invaluable, “my political studies were not in vain. Those who were not exposed to that literature, for them it was quite challenging ... I don't regret now [having done] all those courses.”

“Those are the skills, I don't know. Some I picked up along the way, some maybe it is how I was born I don't know ... It is a combination of skills, but also it is about your personality.”

“I am quite interested in working for local municipalities ... something that has to do with the development of our communities. So long as what I am doing

has an influence or impact on communities ... I do it with a cause [É12].”

The interview ends with Jalan telling the story of a visit he made to Thohoyandou [former apartheid homeland area, with scattered but increasingly dense settlements in the north of South Africa], and being deeply touched by communities there ... still collecting firewood, in need of water, electricity and development ... six, seven years after the dawn of the New South Africa. It is in these moments, talking about the people and the communities that his eyes light up. That you can hear his heart echoing in the raising of his voice: “That is the vision here ... at the district ... That is what delivery is about... That is the priority ... So, I am a planner with a cause!”

[By the time of the interview, Jalan was reflecting on the huge challenge and the obstacles faced, in a context where he had to engage new rules and role players, where he had to take the lead. One could argue an ‘adventure and next level of initiation’, where the make or break of rolling out this new process of democratic and developmental planning for 5 municipalities were in many ways resting on his shoulders ... Quite a daunting task indeed ... a process in which he was still in. However, he has faced a few tests ... and is still ‘surviving’ ... it also brought reflections on a process of growth ... already at a personal level reaping the external (acknowledgement, experience, knowledge, respect, opportunities for the future) and internal (growth and personal development, confidence, self-awareness) rewards of commitment to his/’the’ quest... and of course insight(s) and hindsight. It was a path not only of broadening his fields of expertise and expanding on his skill sets, deepening his understanding of development and sharpening his facilitation skills, but also a time of growing as a person and a leader. In hindsight the adventures, experiences and people on the road played a role in confirming his commitment to the quest of planning. Together with increased confidence, and belief in his own abilities, is also a belief in the value, purpose and possibility of bringing about change and contributing to the quality of people’s lives].

### 3.4.2 Reflexive interpretation, contextualising and reflecting on competencies, drivers and growth

In a very practical way Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2007) argue that reflexivity can be obtained by being aware of, and consciously engaging with, at least four key levels of interpretation; but that this does not necessarily need to be separated and can be combined (especially the primary and secondary interpretations when there is more extensive empirical material – as in this study). In the case of the study, this was employed as a way to prompt reflexive interpretation in combination with the use of the quest metaphor.

The first level of reflexive interpretation was the primary (or rough) interpretation of empirical data. It was based on the underlying assumption that a certain amount of interpretation precedes data collation and transcription in all research, as well as the explicit recognition that the interview is an expression of the subjective interaction and perceptions of participant and researcher (See Annexure C, Figure C-3: Examples of primary interpretation reflexive questions). These aspects are considered to be primary influences on the authenticity of the interviews and transcriptions.

Within the reflexive interpretation method, secondary interpretations can be described as interpretations where the understanding of empirical data, such as the interviews conducted, is largely focused on the nature of the statements made (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007). In the case of the narrations and interviews in this enquiry, the emphasis was more on participant perceptions ('present' at the time of the interview) and reflections about events, experiences and motives during their careers (earlier/past events), and less so about 'factual' events in the life worlds of the respective interviewees. The focus of the interpretation includes discursive expressions of thoughts or perceptions of experiences and motives as reflected on by the participants – with the 'advantage' of hindsight.

The focus was not necessarily on actions, contributions or on actual motives, but rather on experiences and the ways in which participants were enabled and encouraged to contribute. Meaning making required a dance between the interviews *per se* and the broader contexts of planning and development in South Africa (see analyses examples outlined in Annexure C, C3.2 and C3.3, and in Figure 3.1: Time-Span Overview of Work-life Narrative @Thai, below and Figures C.3-C.8 in Annexure C).

The third level of interpretation, as proposed by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2007), is much more focused on authority, identity and representation; and, specifically, on how the participants describe themselves and how this identity is actually constituted by the narration itself (Giddens, 1991). This included analysing the narration to determine, for example, the type of narrative, the structure and specific content analyses. Analysing the type of narrative assists in identifying various themes and storylines, and to assist in asking the question of how the work-life narrative is depicted. Analysing the structure and format of the narrative assists to highlight turning points, the structure and character of plot, major actors, the role of 'self' and 'others', etc., whilst content analysis supported insights regarding professional life and a whole-person exploration of being, becoming and contributing

The fourth level of interpretation was that of critical interpretation – requiring an acknowledgement that interviews are about 'moral story-telling' (Silverman, 1985), with interviewees framing their accounts in a politically conscious manner. In this study that was focused on a selection of an extremely privileged portion of South Africans it is particularly relevant; therefore, requiring an awareness that the study actually focused on this group for the purpose of comparability – but with the definite disadvantages and

dangers in, for example, promoting the importance of formal planning education and the planning profession, as the interviewees' narrations obviously belong to a certain economic and cultural context and need to be understood within it. "To thoroughly scrutinize the less obvious consequences of a particular societal institution – rather than accept it at face value and reproduce it in research as something natural and given – is an important ingredient in a critical interpretation" (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:269).

Whilst there were numerous references, both explicit and implicit, to competencies and meta-competencies within the participant work-life narratives, the explorative and reflexive approach solicited meaning making to move beyond a mere identification, description and categorization of competencies, meta-competencies and learning approaches. It enabled an enquiry into, and 'seeing' of how, experiences were described and participant reflections on that. Highlighting, for example, the significance of a strong sense of purpose and association with communities of practice within planning; the impact of intense practice experiences; the growth dynamics inherent in finding the best way possible to engage challenges and contribute; the important role that purpose and interest seemed to play in career choices; the impact of practice habits and the implication of such commitments for costs and rewards in personal and professional work-life contexts. Such themes seemed to form a golden thread within individual work-life narratives over time, as well as resonating strongly between the work-life experiences and narratives of the different participants.

Within the multi-layered reflexive interpretation approach, meaning making thus drew on key themes evident in explicit participant insights (first level interpretations – see Annexure C, Section C.3.2 and Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2007)) into significant work-life experiences and the way that qualities, competencies and influences gained or drawn upon within those experiences, enabled and encouraged contribution in practice.

The interpretation of key themes was expanded through the exploration of explicit and implicit participant perceptions and reflections on drivers, abilities and growth influences within work-life narratives depicting trials, tribulations and growth, as well as influences of contextual realities, personal drivers, major changes, world views, attitudes, growth processes and beliefs regarding the future.

The implicit knowledge within participant work-life narratives about challenges, changes, and non-linear personal and professional development within the context of their practice experiences provided a rich body of insights and opportunities for meaning making through personal reflections and learning (second and third level of interpretation – see Annexure C, Sections C.3.3-C3 and Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2007)).

Explaining that which enables and encourages contribution by confirming expanding and re-grouping competencies and meta-competencies and learning experiences (see Annexure C, Table C.3 for some summary examples) brought a meaning-making challenge of its own, however. Reiterating and regrouping competencies and types of learning experiences (see Annexure C, Table C.3) was not only a challenge, but does not do justice to the dynamic, transformative and highly relational nature thereof. It could probably be regarded as merely keeping the 'knowledge shackled in the pre-scientific conceptual world derived from the actors own life worlds' (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2007:32-33) by only highlighting interpretations originating from a paradigm which viewed competence as a system (such as that of competence frameworks and models, qualification outcomes and professional registration standards – see Cheetham and Chivers, 2005).

Within the context of the generative study and the search to reflect and make meaning of the rich data in the work-life narratives, the quest metaphor was explored and utilized as a way to expand and enrich the interpretation, as outlined in the next section.

### **3.4.3 Expanding interpretation through the lens of the quest metaphor**

As outlined in the section above, what stood out from the analyses and iterative reflection on work-life narratives is that no ability or competency was mentioned in isolation. References to abilities and meta-competencies were made in relation to the importance of handling a particular challenge or in pursuit of driving a specific task and in value addition in that specific context; often involving interactions in a wide range of informal networks.

Many of these ‘invisible’ or deeply intertwined sets of competencies, meta-competencies and attitudes seemed to be related to: a commitment to contributing to the broader good of this world and the future, the drive and willingness ‘to make things happen’, to guide processes, to get people together, to galvanise support – whether from teams, staff, other sector specialists, politicians or communities (Leggat, 2007; Lemieux-Charles et al., 2002). An ability that the participants described in terms of a mix of strategic thinking, organizing, strategizing, and process design.

Through a range of iterative analyses, synthesis and meaning making processes, influenced by on-going discussions with colleagues, valuable feedback in engagements, conference presentations, and several versions of thesis chapters over the last number of years, I realised the importance of reflecting and interpreting participant experiences and reflections in such a way as to share some of the passion, as well as the deeply personal, relational and dynamic nature of evolving competence and the victories and challenges of contributing within planning as a practice.

Employing the quest metaphor in meaning making of the work-life narrative experiences in this regard assisted in a much more nuanced exploration and recognition of participant meaning making as well (See Text Box 3.2 and the analyses summaries as outlined in Annexure C: Sections C.3.5 and C.3.6, and Table C.4).

Experiences related by the participants and work-life narrative structures strongly correlated with the typical quest narrative elements of ‘call to action’, ‘heeding the call’ and points of ‘departure’: experiences of meeting the mentors and allies (inspirational people who they have been challenged and inspired by, and seem to have identified with), experiences that are imbued with the elements of ‘initiation adventure’, and the many references to implicit and explicit rewards, adventures and obstacles (see Annexure C.3.5 for summary analyses).

## Text Box 3.2: @DALI: WORK-LIFE NARRATIVE REWORKED AS QUEST NARRATIVE



### #Departure #Initiation

Having moved “from activism to academia” and finishing his postgraduate studies in 1994, Dali got involved in the establishment and roll-out of the first IDPs [Integrated Development Plans as set in place through the Local Government Transition Act, 1996] with a city council. A time of learning and gaining experience that he described as “lopsided, graft and the dishwasher room”. In hindsight, an experience that served him well in preparing him to embark on an adventure that was to thoroughly challenge him, but also serve as a direction setting initiation in his work-life and the world of planning.



### #Adventure

In 1998, at a fairly young age with ‘some experience’, he was tasked with heading the integrated development planning exercise for the central councils in one of SA’s newly established metropolitan municipality areas. It entailed conceptualising and designing the newly introduced integrated strategic planning process – everything from community participation, to the financial plan, the spatial plan, etc. [The process was aimed at providing direction for the budgeting and prioritisation of capital investment and operational planning of projects and programs of the various line departments within the highly complex central city area. The context was one where black and white local authorities were now merged, where large-scale public participation and stakeholder engagement became a core part of the planning process in the ‘new’ democratic South Africa. Planners, technical specialists, officials, politicians, the public (at ward level and city level) and stakeholders – all entering a completely new and uncharted process of planning, engagement and decision-making.]

“Together with the change in political and administrative leadership ... [the challenge was to] move away from the ways the old white bureaucrats were doing things. It was offered to a new group of younger people that were able to think about development differently.” It was indeed a “steep learning curve” where he was “just thrown into the deep end”, and indeed had to have the tenacity, not only to survive, but to “rise to the challenge”!

Whilst he knew the process brought many shifts and was regarded as ground breaking – “We have utilised public participation, so it’s not just talk. We did the budget very differently in that 80% of it went to the heavily underinvested areas.” He was also modestly reflecting that it was at that time not yet “truly an integrated development plan”.

Following that, in 2000, he was offered the opportunity to be seconded to the inter-city IDP process (an integrated plan to guide strategic planning and collaboration between the smaller municipalities in the larger metropolitan area) - where he became project manager for the first phase of the metropolitan municipality’s IDP process. “Of course that was another challenge ... even though also entailing the design of the IDP and everything that goes with that! Very difficult and stressful dealing with people from different sectors and trying to get them to work together. Everyone wants to know how they fit into the picture, what does it mean for them?”. It entailed

a lot of preparatory work to position the newly elected council for the new political dispensation after the December 2000 municipal elections, developing “an understanding of what the different local councils should do ... to see the bigger picture”. “It was hectic” [to say the least]. As part of the transformation process in the metropolitan area, the IDPs were really done in a different manner [not just a shift from the comprehensive and technical planning processes in the past, but also from the participatory processes in previous years]. He reported directly “to the transformation manager (Mr. D) – who was the father of transformation process [in the city]” and who reported directly to the city manager. This time around, the strategic plan was not written by a group of planners in parallel to participatory processes. It was literally a case where they sat with communities, business, labour and staff to collectively write the IDP. A highly intensive [and of course time-consuming and stressful] partnership approach. A personal experience of what he terms “roll up and graft” that went hand-in-hand with a lot of personal sacrifice to bring about change and transformation. After a strategic planning workshop between his wife and himself, he realised that he had been putting his career first for five years. With changes in his personal life and being a very young father, it was a time to consider the consequences for life “in the ordinary world” and for redirection. At the young age of 31 he felt as if, due to the huge responsibilities he was carrying, he was reaching burnout: “I am 31 now and I am tired”. It was, however, an adventure and experience that brought many “internal” rewards – opportunities of growth and progress to mastery, building confidence, indeed. An experience in line with his call to action and his question: “How can I make a difference?”



### Reflection

As he reflects, it was a challenge requiring “being a dynamic planner [which necessitates that] you must have a certain attitude”; being able to network, and “people skills –how you are able to relate to other people”. Especially given that “I spent my Saturday, Sunday, and Wednesday evenings in the councillor’s office, in the civic offices. I spent Sunday mornings [there], work-shopping from morning till night.”

He reflects that it was a challenge that required him to step into situations and roles where he may not have had experience - but at least a solid base to work from. In reflection on what assisted and shaped his abilities he specifically mentions:

- “Hard work [for which he appreciated (probably in hindsight more than at the time) the experience of hard work, intense engagement and critical thinking provided by the University of Natal post-graduate Town Planning course] (and) with it came the ability to think differently and laterally ... those cognitive skills ... [and being] prepared for hard work”

[These he mentions specifically as some of the key strengths that he was prepared for thanks to the university he attended].

- “An ability to work with communities ... having a good understanding of community dynamics”. Experience and insights that he reckons is invaluable, and which he gained in his early life as an activist and being involved in voluntary work in grassroots structures “watching people”. This also assisted in understanding community dynamics (also in meetings) and “that you have to be sharp and be able to think on your feet [and] ... have sound negotiation and facilitation skills”.

- In terms of what was needed to work in a metro: “Understanding social realities and the complexity of it all”, “being able to see and relate to the bigger picture” and “the long term picture” and being willing to engage and take action.

- Given that this type of strategic development planning is actually about transformation [and change management and adaptation of people and cities], what really matters is your “attitude; recognising that all the people you are working with do not share the same understanding [in this case being a young radical activist having to deal with old school bureaucrats and technical specialists – most probably requiring virtues such as wisdom,

patience and visions] ... You need to be able to listen, understand and empathise with people and where they are coming from. All the technical skills in the world can't help you with these things. When you are in a meeting with the Executive Director of Water and Waste, he knows exactly what he wants to do, he wants to deliver water to communities, and to tell [convince] him that now he must work as part of a team and think differently, those type of skills are very important”.

- Skills gained while working at the province that also came in very handy are the ability to network with people from various government departments and spheres.

[Thus in effect being able to actively drive intergovernmental collaboration by understanding place-specific complexities and inter-relatedness, the role of different institutions and instruments, how these relate to the area, and also how to influence priorities or better explore synergies (see Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007)]

It is also in this context of attitude and working with people that the important role played by a mentor in his first job with government is reflected on. Not in providing skills or training, but also in inspiring through example. The privilege of “having people like Mr M ... having people that you can look up to, people that you can emulate and learn a lot from, even if you are not working directly and full-time with them. I think having the right people to guide you is very important as well”, such as Mr D. who he regards as “the father [wiser, experienced, holder] of transformation [in the city]”.

In hindsight, he recognises that he is biased towards the focus of the planning school he attended, namely critical thinking, and was of the opinion that there are other planning schools in South Africa that place the focus on teaching good spatial planners. Interestingly, he also reflects on actually really being in need of some hard technical skills, knowledge of layout planning, etc.

Reflecting on his last adventure, he states:

“It was a lucky break ... If it was 10 years earlier I don't think I could have done things the same way! 1998-2000 Dali was known as the IDP guy ... anything

anybody wanted to know about the IDP they would speak to us. Much has been said and written on IDP and we tried to do things differently.” It was an adventure and experience that thus came with a fair share of rewards – not only for the city but also for himself [internal and external]. One of these being the well-earned privilege to “be able to dictate where [he] want[s] to be”. When the opportunity was offered to him to also manage the next phase of the Unicity IDP he thus decided not to take it on, but rather opt for “being seconded to more [of] a support role as part of a team”.

[A role that as he would soon realise ... just facilitated enough of a pause and foundation for the start of a new adventure ... In which he wrote a book on lessons learned from developing a long-term framework and in which his passion to share lessons “and get planners excited about the prospects of city planning and building” and the “need to develop one another” were taken further and where he subsequently (inter alia) played a key role as lead facilitator for the Strategic Planning Master Class Municipal Institute of Learning in one of South Africa's large metropolitan municipalities.]

The reflections on purpose, drivers, motives, influences and abilities in participant life-worlds indeed seemed to converge rather than fragment. Within the process of iterative exploration and reflexive interpretation, these observations not only suggested the seemingly significant role of purpose and commitment to planning's quest in the ability of participants to contribute to this quest, but also enabled insights about:

- ∅ The strong coherence between transformative personal development, perspective, belief, identity and the strengthening of personal and practice commitment and meta-competencies (including reflection, learning, inter-relational knowledge production, etc.);
- ∅ The seemingly highly dynamic and relational nature of competence, excellence, learning and knowledge production; and
- ∅ The challenges in considering the implications thereof within already highly complicated competency discourses and education and professional development systems.

The generative, explorative and reflexive nature of the enquiry, influenced and supported through engagements and interactions with a range of relevant knowledge fields (career development, sustainability and complexity sciences, leadership development, etc.), prompted an interpretation of the narrations and meaning making that pointed to the problematic nature of meaning making within a complicated systems paradigm, in which competence development and professional development are framed as parts of a whole, but in a rather static and individual focused way (see Section 4).

In the process of critical interpretation and reflection, the question arose whether a study such as this, whilst actually generating findings that illustrate the opposite, was not itself 'trapped' in the highly complicated paradigm of standards and competence discourses in the practice of planning. Questioning the paradigm underlying the enquiry and deliberately employing a paradigm that recognises the complex and adaptive nature of urban systems, as well as of contribution in such systems, proved to be highly valuable, as outline in the next section.

#### **3.4.4 Challenges and reflections in meaning making and questioning the enquiry**

The richness of findings and explorations into participant work-life narratives as illustrated in this enquiry could be seen as questioning the value in increasingly complicated attempts at clearly defining, listing, demarcating, describing personal competencies, meta-competencies and characteristics that enables and encourages participants in a practice such as planning to contribute in turbulent times. Let alone, any attempt at isolating and recreating the highly relational and dynamic influences, as well as development, learning and growth processes, encouraging and enabling the contribution evident in the work-life narratives.

In a critical reflection on the research question, it became evident that the original research question could probably be described as a question located or framed within the paradigm of the 'complicated' (see Snowden, 2007 and 2013) aimed at strengthening existing endeavours to dismantle and 're-assemble' competence and contribution. Whilst it was exactly this concern with dismantling and re-assembling the spirit of planning in competence models associated with qualification and professional development outcomes that triggered the original call to action of this enquiry.

In contrast to the 'complicated', the use and simplicity of complexity as paradigm to enable meaning making and action in complex adaptive systems is highly valued in the world of organisational change, leadership and increasingly so in the practice of planning – as clearly illustrated in the Cynefin model



developed by Dave Snowden and colleagues to support leaders in decision making, and the highly cited article published in the Harvard Business Review on that topic (Snowden, 2007). The understanding generated by the enquiry and the challenges for meaning making probably highlight the danger and potential cost in opting for ‘chronic self-deception’ in ‘pseudo-rational models’ (Snowden, 2002:9), and disregarding the dynamics and dependence on informal and transformational interactions, tensions, paradoxes, transformative experiences and highly relational competence dynamics.

Is the focus to probe in order to find out what might be possible, to “see, attend and act” (Snowden, 2007) or merely to add value and expand the static ‘list of requirements’ within the discourses of professional and planning related competency framework and models?

As the enquiry evolved, it was evident that including a paradigm of complexity within the explorative and reflexive interpretations in this study, even though not originally anticipated, would challenge and add an important methodological and framing element, introducing “a new simplicity, without being simplistic, enabling the emergence of new meaning through the interaction of the informal and the formal in a complex ecology of knowledge” (Snowden, 2002:111).

This entailed meaning making by searching for retrospective coherence and weaving patterns of stories (Snowden, 2013) in the exploration, looking for and recognising the value of:

- ⌘ Agency created through patterns (such as in myths that have lasted many years and are regarded as having higher agency in complex adaptive human systems than individuals);
- ⌘ Competence and knowledge not as static but as flowing and created through interaction and informal networks;
- ⌘ Beneficial coherence and significance in transitions, rituals and boundary conditions;
- ⌘ Paradox in experiences and interactions, recognising the value of dynamic tension, challenges and turbulence to bring about action and innovation.

For some examples contrasting the exploration in terms of the different paradigms, see Table C.9 (in Annexure C).

### **3.4.5 Summary reflections**

The section illustrates the explorations and transitions in the quest of meaning making into the nature and role of the ‘invisible’ layers of abilities (attitudes, characteristics and meta-competencies), underlying drivers (beliefs, identities, motivation) and growth influences that could be regarded as significant in enabling, shaping and impelling planners to contribute in complex and dynamic practice contexts.

The unfolding and deepening of the enquiry enabled value adding by contextualising and reflecting on competencies, drivers and growth, expanding the interpretation through the lens of the quest metaphor, and questioning the paradigm underlying the enquiry itself to include an exploration recognising complexity.

### 3.5 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON THE DEPARTURE

In this section the design and approach followed in conducting the qualitative research methodology has been outlined, with a specific emphasis on the value and use of work-life narratives in the enquiry. The departure on the quest of this enquiry has been explained in terms of the sample design, the planners participating in the processes, as well as reflections on the interview process. An indication of ethical considerations and the dilemma of anonymity have been outlined.

The value of narrative in support of the study objective is evident. Conducting a biographic narrative interview created a space for participants to reflect on their work-life histories (avoiding the mere verification or exploration of pre-determined concepts). This proved highly valuable in terms of the richness of findings that also enabled various insights made through a generative approach. This was especially valuable given the exploration into uncharted territory and a search for relations and dynamics not yet defined.

Applying the use of the quest metaphor to the enquiry itself, the section was also used to provide an overview of the approach, challenges and transitions in the meaning making process. Following a reflexive approach required the focus in meaning making to be shifted away from a mere interpretation/reading of the empirical material towards a conscious engagement with the perceptual, cognitive, theoretical, linguistics, (inter)textual, political and cultural settings of/for interpretations. The approach recognised “epistemological concerns about the knowledge interests in varied truth claims about the future” (Inayatullah, 2002:479). An approach that also resonated with discourses and methodologies explored in relation to future studies, such as that of a layered methodology moving towards integrating intellectual, imagination and emotional ways of knowing. The critical challenge in meaning making was described as essentially questioning the question of the enquiry, and more so the paradigm of systems understanding from which the enquiry originated.

Lastly, the section provided a brief reflection on the validity, limitations and challenges associated with conducting the study, as well as meaning-making. As set out in the section above, using an explorative and reflexive approach to conduct an enquiry within a whole-person and time-span context into participant work-life experiences during a time of turmoil and change in South Africa is valuable as such a narrative study can go beyond mere qualitative interviews and soliciting information of which the respondent or interviewer is explicitly aware of. In this case, it facilitated insight into the implicit, transformational, dynamic and relational nature of ‘being, becoming and contributing’ in the practice of planning.

In the next section, a number of key concepts that were significant in framing the enquiry are outlined, highlighting important concepts and ‘gaining help’ from others in the fields of philosophy, planning, planning education, career theory, as well as global and sustainability leadership and other future-orientated practices.



# 4

## Shaping and supporting the enquiry

*The integrity of a practice causally requires the exercise of the virtues by at least some of the individuals who embody it in their activities.*  
(MacIntyre, 2013:248)

*[A] key driver in the birth and rise to prominence of the early town planning movement was the belief of its protagonists in the power of science, reason, creativity and ability, coupled with a belief in the positive outcome of such actions.*  
(Oranje, 2014:6)

*To best understand urban planners and their theory, it is first necessary to view who they are and how they relate to the world about them.*  
(Burchell, 1988:4 in Oranje, 1997:29)

*[N]o line of work can be fully understood outside the social matrix in which it occurs or the social system of which it is part.*  
(Hughes, 1958:73 in Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:19)

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The challenges and the implications of the fast changing and globalizing world for the field of planning, and the need to prepare planners for a globalizing and complex world have been on the agenda in the field of planning for the last 20 years (Albrechts, 1991; Innes 1996; Beauregard 1998; Afshar, 2001; Abbott 2005; Alexander, 2005; Goldstein and Carmin, 2006) – proudly or embarrassingly so.

As set out in Section 1, the purpose of this study was to enable an explorative and whole-person enquiry (not biased towards, or limited by, a competency framework nor a formal education or professional registration lens) into how planners seem to engage their practice in contributing (value adding) ways and what they regard as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest.

The objective was to gain insight and perspective about what practitioners regard as significant in shaping their unfolding ability to contribute in complex, dynamic and uncertain practice contexts. The enquiry entailed an exploration of work-life narratives in which practicing planners reflected on their work-life experiences and that which they regarded as significant in enabling them to contribute in their respective practice contexts.

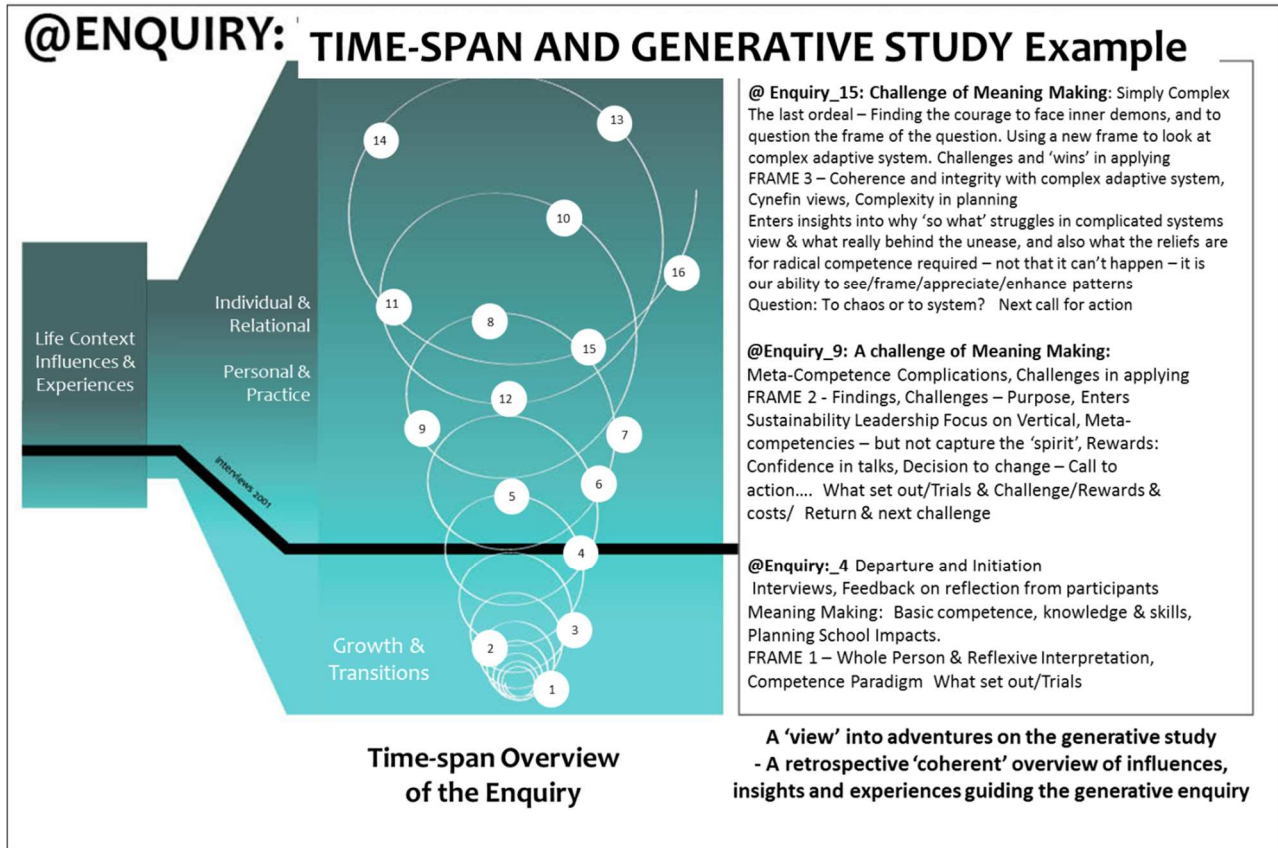
In contrast to framing the research enquiry upfront and developing a framework for the enquiry, the generative, explorative and reflexive nature of the enquiry (as set out in Section 3) entailed an ongoing and iterative process of exploring, meaning making, finding relevant pointers and searching for understanding via engagements and interactions with a range of relevant knowledge fields. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the processes of meaning making unfolded over time. In line with the generative approach, the engagement with relevant knowledge fields unfolded as required by the findings and directed by meaning making. Whilst this entailed introducing a range of knowledge fields, it also entailed extending and updating existing knowledge fields with new approaches and insights as these unfolded over time (See Figure 4.1 where the critical questions and insights in the generative study are linked to the evolving study, as set out in Figure 1.1).

The new knowledge fields such as career development, sustainability and complexity sciences, leadership development, etc. prompted an interpretation of the narrations and meaning making that in turn pointed to the problematic nature of meaning making within a complicated systems paradigm in which competence development and professional development were framed as parts of a whole, but in a rather static and individually focused way.

Firstly, the focus on contribution and point of departure in the enquiry – viewing planning as a practice in relation to its contribution as action and future orientated practice, with ideals that can stir the blood of practitioners – requires framing planning as a practice. Section 4.2 provides an overview of discourses, lessons and research related to the ideals and quest of planning as a practice: positioning it as an integrative future- and action-orientated practice, highlighting challenges, tensions and implications for practitioners that share the quest for ‘common good’. For the purpose of the enquiry (in addition to the focus areas mentioned above), planning was framed as a practice drawing from the work done by Lennon (2015), and using the notion of a practice as described by MacIntyre (2013) in his well-known treatise *After Virtue*. The section is aimed at sharing something of the soul in planning: its ideals and purpose, tensions and normative and action-orientated nature, different ways of knowing, the pragmatic and highly diverse knowledge fields required to frame real-life problems and interventions, and the challenges faced in the world of complexity, uncertainty and ongoing change and the implications of these for practitioners in the

field. The literature review highlights key concepts and also draws on key discourses in the field of planning that point to the intertwined and fused nature of the soul, purpose, quest, ‘ways of knowing’, actions and ability of the practice of planning, and the influence of the ‘spirit of planning’ on choices of practitioners.

**Figure 4.1: Time-span process in relation to challenges in a generative study**



Secondly, in considering what being able to contribute in the practice of planning entails and what that potentially means for planners, the need and demand for the contribution of well-capacitated and ‘virtuous’ practitioners was explored (as outlined in Section 4.3). The emphasis is placed on key themes and shifts in discourses and research essentially concerned with ‘the planner’ (practitioner in planning as a practice) whose identity is often shaped by planning and who has to negotiate the quest for ‘good planning’ through various roles, responsibilities and contextualised ways of knowing and doing (Davoudi, 2015; Lennon, 2015). In order to find ‘travel tips’ for the exploration, the light has been shone on the integral role in the practice of planning: to get a sense of the characteristics, attitudes, competencies, meta-capabilities, drivers, challenges and virtues that are associated with ‘good/virtuous’ practitioners in planning. In this section, the focus on describing the qualities of planners in terms of competencies and meta-competencies, and the initiatives aimed at exploring the ideal set of competencies and the ideal curriculum are also considered.

Thirdly, given the focus on whole-person and work-life contexts, it was also deemed useful to explore experiences, influences and decisions in relation to relevant pointers and focus areas in the field of career studies, an area of limited research in the practice of planning. Section 4.4 is used to provide a basic overview of relevant concepts and directions in the field of competency development and professional lifelong learning, such as integrative learning, value of adaptation, etc., in the field of career development

(and the fast changing new working context) that assisted to inform the exploration. It highlights the value in exploring purpose-driven growth and the importance of purpose in the new world of ‘working’, as well as whole-person approaches to development, and the importance of informal learning as part of professional lifelong learning. It also provides evidence of the value of the narrative method in the identification of explicit and implicit capabilities, and the need for ‘profession’ or practice-specific exploration of lifelong learning processes.

Fourthly, given the significant focus on ways to enable contribution in complex contexts, with long term and global contribution as paramount, as well as the substantial body of work into meta-competencies and meaning making capabilities (in which drivers such as perspective, belief and the value of vertical growth in other integrative and future-orientated practices, such as sustainability and global leadership, act), insights from those fields have been drawn and are highlighted in Section 4.5. The section highlights some of the evolving insights on meta-competencies, the value of transformational leadership and notions such as vertical growth. To illustrate the intertwined influences of meta-competencies, competencies, work-life contexts, horizontal and vertical growth experiences, and the influence of worldview perspectives, beliefs and identity, the relatively simple but well-known cognitive model, Logical Levels Framework (based on the outline provided in the Encyclopaedia of Systemic Neuro-Linguistic Programming – see Dilts and DeLozier, 2000) was used as a model to explain cognitive influences. The section clearly illustrates that the topic of this study is a growing area of research in these practices. It also highlights the value of the narrative method in providing participants with the opportunity to reflect and in exploring ‘implicit’ knowledge regarding virtues and capabilities.

Lastly in Section 4.6, a summary overview is provided of the way in which the different knowledge fields were used to inform and frame meaning-making during the course of the enquiry.

Framing the enquiry in terms of the relevant knowledge fields also served as confirmation of the value of the study and the gap in understanding the range of formal and informal ways that planners and practitioners engage their practice in order to contribute and what they regard as significant in enabling such contribution. It is significant that as the enquiry unfolded, through different iterations and readings of the work-life narratives, challenges in meaning making and renewed searches for ways to make sense (a process not reflected but referred to in the thesis – see Figure 1.1, Section 3.4, and Figure 4.1 in this discussion), the emphasis seemed to shift and thus required some additional meaning making. Major ‘shifts’ from the originally expected ‘frame’ are for example:

- ⌘ The original expected focus on individual capability seemed to shift to the significance of inter-relational capability;
- ⌘ Less focus on norms, values, etc. and significant focus on purpose and perspective world view as significant drivers of decisions and action; and
- ⌘ Less focus on the type of learning activity *per se* and significant focus on transition and transformative experiences.

The literature review clearly illustrates: firstly, the value and need for a deeper engagement in the ‘being and becoming’ of practitioners in the field of planning as a future-orientated practice; and, secondly, the contribution brought by the enquiry to actually explore practice engagement in a way that is not framed to inform a particular framework, but rather illustrates practice and purpose infused relevance.

Whilst Section 4 is thus in no way a reflection of the literature engagement and meaning making embarked upon during the study, it is used as ‘backbone’ in the study – not merely a point of departure, but at least a way to frame key considerations and introduce a range of the aspects considered in meaning making. It is in the light thereof that discussions, reflections and sense making in the various sections are not restricted by Section 4 as ‘frame’, nor used to test or affirm. Section 4 is rather used as a reference point for key themes explored through the meaning making process.

## **4.2 THE QUEST OF PLANNING AS A PRACTICE**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

In Section 4.2 a glimpse is provided into the heart or belly of planning – into ‘the good’, the ideals and the quest, as well as on the often ‘gnarly’ nature of planning and the tensions and challenges faced in a world of complexity, uncertainty and ongoing change. From these discourses, the practice of planning – the focus of the study – is positioned as a future- and action-orientated transdisciplinary practice, and an overview is provided of the practice in relation to its ideals and notions of common good – the “Quest” of planning as a practice.

The section is aimed at highlighting key concepts that served as pointers in the study’s exploration of how commitment to the quest in planning as a practice contributes towards shaping the future. It draws on key discourses in the field of planning that point to the intertwined nature of the soul, purpose, quest, ‘ways of knowing’, actions and ability of the practice of planning to contribute towards shaping the unfolding future. Even more importantly, the section points to how these core aspects and planning’s contribution towards shaping a more just and sustainable future are also deeply intertwined and infused with the evolving inner worlds, sense of purpose, ideals, ways of knowing, motivations, drivers, ‘virtues’, experience, wisdom, action and quests of practitioners in planning. It explores these points of fusion of inner worlds by focusing attention on ‘the good’, the ideals and the quest, as well as on the ‘gnarly’ nature of planning and the tensions and challenges faced in a world of complexity, uncertainty and ongoing change.

### **4.2.2 The quest in planning as a practice**

What is meant by the practice of planning? Whilst there are many shared sentiments about the ‘idea’ and value and significance of planning, and increasing cohesiveness and compactness in discourses around goals and methods in the field (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006), planners themselves often still struggle to explain to others (even to family and friends) what it is that “we are doing” (Friedman, 1996). Descriptions are at most complementary and often still contradictory (see Hudson in Hillier & Healey, 2008:83, Hudson:387), with ‘planning activity’ remaining a continually shifting concept. One of the first commonalities in any search to explain or define the practice of planning is the accepted agreement that there is no such description and that exploring the notion of ‘purposeful action’ (Hudson:387 in Hillier & Healey, 2008:84) could possibly even add more value than an attempt to ‘define’ planning.

Engaging the practice of planning through purposeful action, faith and belief in a ‘higher cause’ (which seems to ‘act as a dynamo’) strongly resonates with the ‘spirited, creative and reason-fuelled’ early days and origins of the town planning movement (Oranje, 1998, and Krieger, 1987a, Oranje 1998 and Lilley, 2004 in Oranje, 2014:2). However, the concern is that this drive that formed part of a caring practice characterised by a commitment to doing good and the “vision (of a better world) has been lost” (Taylor,

1992:240 in Oranje, 1997:122). It seems that as the practice of planning became professionalised and increasingly bureaucratized, its vision for change, reconstruction and serving society became overshadowed by the need to regulate, standardise and serve the modern masters of the individual, the market and the state (Oranje, 1997, 2012 and 2014; Hoch, 1994 and Taylor, 2006).

There was a time "when the pleas for the institution of city planning and the creation of 'a better city' had a connection to a 'higher calling', when the approach, language and metaphors of planning were inspired by religious teaching and belief" (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Oranje 1998; Ward 2004 in Oranje, 2014:2). Whilst it is evident that the practice of planning found much of its strength in modern beliefs in science and reason, it also had a strong foothold in the belief in taking and using such actions and drives to create a better world.

This was a time of idealism (as illustrated in the early town planning movement) when "it was less about professional status and recognition and more about true conviction, impassioned preaching, belief and action, into planning, plans and planners" (Oranje, 2014:1). A time when town planning as a movement and practice was rising with modernism in Europe and North America (late 1800s to early 1900s), where it was for some a quest "about creating a city suitable for a society as envisaged in the Christian teachings of equality, love, care and compassion; for others it was about cautiously building a stage fitting for the return (the 'Second Coming') of Christ (Butterworth 2010; Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Mackintosh and Forsberg 2013)" (Oranje, 2014:2).

According to Oranje, the passion and belief and conviction within the practice of planning at this stage could be equated with 'secular religion' – "a strange coming together of the belief that it is necessary to do something about a fallen/damaged world and the conviction that it is possible to actually do so successfully through human endeavour (hard work, intellectual agility and creativity) (Krieger 1987a) ... purposeful action driven along by faith, by the belief that it is possible to not just repair, but also to build a new and better city, and informed by a thorough understanding of the situation on the ground (Krieger 1987a; Oranje 1998; see Lilley 2004)" (Oranje, 2014:2).

Davoudi (2015) in her exploration of knowing and practical judgement also points to 'purpose' and 'quest'. She argues that when choices are significant (implying significant urgency and/or impact), evidence is inconclusive and that there is an overwhelming appeal of the good – planners would rather choose a belief that satisfies a 'vital good' to one that does not (see Davoudi, 2015:319; Ungar, 1987:33).

Oranje adds: "This spirited, creative and reason-fuelled singularity would over time lead to the creation of a distinct area of work ('urban/town planning') with as its workshop and place of focus the cities of late nineteenth and early twentieth century North America and Western Europe (Cullingworth, 2006; Culpin 1913; Hall, 2002; Jack 1912; Robinson, 1911; Ward 2004)" (Oranje, 2014:2).

A practice marked by elements and a language game that included concepts such as the 'utopian city', 'new Jerusalem', 'fallen city', 'sin', the 'need for remorse and repair'; 'doomsday prophecies', 'salvation' through remorse, a commitment to change, with "protestant virtues in its approach to taking responsibility for failure and for 'setting things right'" (Oranje, 2014:2).

Whilst defining the practice of planning has always been a challenge (as set out in Section 2), defining it very loosely as an 'art and science' is (as stated by Oranje, 1997:75) not exactly 'a bad thing'. As Auster pointed out, it is "exactly the vagueness of the broader notion" of planning within the USA, Britain, and



Australia (and then also in South Africa) that gives it the "potential to be a unifying force" (Auster 1989:207, in Oranje, 1997:75).

Gunder argues that it is exactly this quality of illusiveness, a fuzzy definition embedded in ideals and ideology, that enables planning to inspire belief and action in its 'disciples'. As a master signifier of note within Lacan's theoretical model (Lacan, 1977 in Gunder, 2004) planning seems to remain an enigma, even for planners themselves. Nobody really knows what it means (or can describe it), "but each of them somehow presupposes that others know it" (Zizek, 2002b:58, in Gunder 2004:302) whilst actively engaging the uncertain future. Planners recognize themselves in a shared language game and set of jargon-laden expressions "whose meaning is not clear, be it 'the public good, sustainability, globalization, smart growth, or new urbanism', everyone refers to them ... bounded by levels of ignorance but also sets of knowledge and beliefs, norms and knowledge sets and professional codes and the faith to carry on planning" (Gunder, 2004:302-309).

The pursuit of practice excellence (including ideals such as 'common good', and sustainability) through context specific actions, in the midst of complexity and unknowns, becomes part of the 'purpose', the goal that motivates action, or the 'quest' supported by 'virtues' (MacIntyre 1984 in Lennon, 2015:67) – that could include attitudes, characteristics, behavioural dispositions and capabilities. These will, on the one hand, support the pursuit of excellence in the practice (thus the quest) and, on the other hand, actively shape the evolving concepts of purpose, identity, virtue and the nature of the 'quest' within the evolving practice. Interestingly, these virtues can also be seen as possible sources from where we as practitioners can gain "self-knowledge and an increasing knowledge of the good" (MacIntyre, 1984:219, in Lennon, 2015:67): thus of what is regarded as practice excellence.

There seems an acknowledgement of the value for planning as practice to move its focus from collaboration to co-production (see Helling et al., 1997; Watson, 2014; Albrechts, 2013) – a theme, especially in terms of the co-production of knowledge, that is no new concept in fields such as conservation management (Nel et al., 2016), organisational learning (Hulsebosch, et al., 2009; Doornbos et al., 2008; Kessels et al. 2006) and social capital (Guevara, 2000; Kessels et al., 2004). The enquiry, however, seems to suggest that what is significant is not merely viewing the role of planning and planners in co-production roles, but considering the capability of planning itself as possibly not merely an individual capability, but a highly inter-relational and practice embedded capability.

#### 4.2.3 The contested 'good'

Planning has often been equated with the quest for 'public good' aimed at "moving from individual and community identity to the good of the collective" (Campbell 2006:102) and "premised on the expectation that through intervention and action better space and place based outcomes can be achieved than would otherwise have been the case – the 'soul of planning'" (Campbell 2012:393). The concern with inputs, actions, choices and interventions that could lead to, facilitate, inform, advocate and drive development outcomes that are within 'public interest' and to the benefit of the environment and future generations, whilst addressing real life problems and political realities, has been at the centre of various planning discourses about norms, ethics, value, purpose and judgement (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006).

In her acclaimed book, *Gnarly Planning: Tools for local and global action*, Stanley (2007) also explores the question of 'what is planning?' by highlighting planning's embedded concern with 'public good'. The role of rational planners 'working for the public interest', advocacy planners 'working for those without a voice'

and ‘inclusive planners embracing social and cultural diversity’. Roles that resonate with those outlined over time by many scholars (See Hillier and Healy, 2008).

However, more interesting in the context of this particular study is Stanley’s choice of title for her book: “gnarly planning” – given that ‘gnarly’ refers to the often challenging and unattractive nature of experiences, challenges and adventures in the practice of planning. Especially so, when the call that is made for action (‘not spectating’) in this future-orientated and interventionist practice implies venturing into a world of uncertainty, working within tensions and contested spaces in complex contexts where there are limited, or even no, guarantees. It points to the possibility of intellectually challenging, soul stirring, emotionally laden and conflict ridden experiences and adventures within a personal journey, and to the fair amount of courage, tenacity, hope, commitment, care and wisdom required.

However, this does not imply that planning should be dismissed “because it is constructed of ideologies ... in our linguistically constructed reality”(Gunder, 2004:309). The idea and ideals of planning strongly reflects "society’s fundamental desire for harmony and security in a ‘better’ future” (for certainty, or rather less uncertainty), for the idea that things can be better, thus “planning functions as an important societal lubricant by mediating and resolving conflicting desires in this often-unachievable collective fantasy that is our social reality”(Gunder, 2004:309).

The notion of common good is more often than not, a highly contested notion. As Campbell (2006:92) states: "Notions of what makes for good places and the appropriate distribution of the spatial consequences of governmental, market, and individual decisions are characterized by dissent, dispute, and even violence (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Watson, 2003)". Planning and investment decisions in unequal societies and areas with major development challenges have huge implications on ‘who has’, ‘who gets’ and ‘who does not get’. Even where much agreement exists about problems and backlogs and desired outcomes, major differences about strategies, interventions, prioritization, etc. are found not only in contested worldviews, ideologies and expectations, but also in the pressing realities of needs. In such contexts, the contestation inherent in planning as a resource allocation activity/process is indeed about highly diverse perceptions of threats to, or opportunities for, livelihoods. Much is thus at stake.

In their overview of planning’s core, Edwards and Bates explain that “The answer is not simple or singular but could be summarized as social science knowledge plus action. The core knowledge of planning is not about substantive areas as much as it is about thinking strategically about the future, making decisions, and working collectively to solve problems. Some authors (Howland, 1997:225; Helling and Sawicki, 1997:228) argue that planning is essentially a pragmatic endeavour. According to Helling and Sawicki (1997), the ‘bias in favour of relevance’ is the critical distinguishing feature of planning as a social science and that a focus on collective, not individual, action is different from other professional fields” (Edwards and Bates, 2011:173). As in other action-orientated disciplines, planning’s normative agenda may often be closely related to social and political concerns (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006). Interests, approaches and options are often contending and different rather than necessarily right or wrong, especially so in a world of wicked problems (Rittel and Webber 1973) and uncertainty, where problems and interventions are intertwined in complex systems (Fainstein, 2014; Campbell, 2006:95; Harrison, 2002; Campbell, 2002; Campbell, 2012; Hartman 2012:242).

#### 4.2.4 Purpose, practice and practitioners

Jean Hillier and Patsy Healy, in the introduction to their valuable three volume compilation of seminal articles in the field of planning theory, remind us that debates about planning ideas and concepts (just as planning practices) are always bound to the context of the questions, intellectual discourses, life experiences, and relevant socio-political and planning systems and practices (Hillier, 2008:xii). In this discussion they also highlight another important element – the increased acknowledgement that planners are not outside, but indeed part of planning. Planners are thus essentially part of the so-called ‘messy’ processes through which political decisions are made and the future emerges. In the same vein, planners are thus also not ‘outside’, or merely participating in planning as a practice. They can be seen as playing a key part of the evolving nature of this practice, its purpose and ideals, and the notions of ‘common good’ and ‘practice excellence’.

Given the importance of the contested nature of the ‘common good’ and the central role that ideals and ideas in planning plays in shaping the practice and in the choices and actions that can be regarded as ‘good’ and ‘virtuous’, it indeed makes sense to take a more ‘inward view’ and explore how the motivations and drivers behind perceptions, choices and actions of planners (and thus their notion of ‘purpose’ within the practice of planning) contribute to these evolving concepts.

As Lennon states: “MacIntyre conceives this goal-directed nature of practice as a ‘quest’ and those motivations that support this quest as ‘virtues’: The virtues therefore are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which will also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good . . . and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good (MacIntyre, 1984:219).”(Lennon, 2015:5-6).

Lennon (2015) makes use of MacIntyre’s framework of exploring the concept of ‘purpose’ within the context of planning practice – arguing that such an exploration is not aimed at providing an alternative framework, but rather as a complementary frame to add value to discourses relating to knowledge, purpose and action (Davoudi, 2015).

The argument is essentially that ‘purpose’ within a practice, such as planning *inter alia*, gets shaped by the traditions and actions within the practice, and thus starts influencing what is regarded as a ‘virtuous practitioner’. This argument acknowledges the interconnectedness between agent-action-practice-context and implies something like a triple loop learning process (Le Roux, 2007) where the ‘good’ judgement of virtuous practitioners or actors (described as “practical wisdom that is less about having all the evidence and more about having practical experience and doing” by Davoudi, 2015:321) then influences the ideals and traditions of the practice and, inevitably, the concept of purpose in the practice, and the notion of virtue itself.

Lennon (2015:6-8) explains this well: "In such communities, there is likely to be a range of agents with a spectrum of views. This is especially pertinent to a complex activity such as planning that ‘is owned by everyone who has a vested interest in the land and what happens to it’. Planning is viewed as an intrinsically political endeavour practiced by politicians and a community of planners working with communities of allied practitioners and the broader public to mediate between and order practices. In this context the reference is not to professional planners but rather to ‘any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized

in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.’ (MacIntyre, 1984:187)” (Lennon, 2015:5-6).

What does this mean in the context of this study? It essentially points out that when we engage in a practice, we essentially also engage with the traditions of that practice. “While there is an enduring quality to such traditions, MacIntyre suggests that a tradition is ‘an argument extended through time’ (MacIntyre, 1988:12), evolving as practitioners pursue excellence in their practice, not by rejecting and starting over again but ‘through criticism and invention’ (MacIntyre, 1984:222)” (Lennon, 2015:67). A constant evolving that seems to find resonance in practice reflection (Schön, 1987), collaborative learning and adaptation (Le Roux, 2007).

A wide range of discourses and studies (Hossain, Scholz and Baumgart, 2015; Gunder, 2010; Lennon, 2013; Watson and Agbola, 2013) have indeed over the years highlighted the importance of characteristics, attitudes, roles, ways of knowing and ethical grounding and judgement characterising and enabling practitioners to contribute to the ideals of planning. Numerous efforts (by researchers, institutions of higher learning and professional associations) have also been focused on exploring and identifying the growing lists of competencies and meta-competencies, an ongoing and well-recognized valuable endeavour. Unfortunately, results are often depicted (as required for outcomes-based qualifications and professional development) in the form of qualities and characteristics as isolated, decontextualized and non-dynamic items and categories on a list, seemingly to be picked as/when required from a shelf/online catalogue. Ready to be added to the cart, but stripped of the dynamics associated with the complexity of life-world context, passion and purpose that is captured in the notions of the ‘spirit’ of planning.

#### **4.2.5 Diffused, integrative and pragmatic**

Over the last two decades, the practices and discourses of, and in, planning have also turned from viewing planning as a “‘government activity’, formally pursued through administrative structures and legally authoritative plans and standards, to a practice ‘as actively constituted by groups of people in interaction with each other: of planners continually faced with complex, ethically-freighted judgements about who to listen to, what knowledge to draw on, what roles to enact and how to perform in specific situations” (Hillier, 2008:xv). In this time, much has been deliberated about the challenges and ideals of endeavours in (for instance developmental and collaborative planning, multi-level governance and strategic resource allocation) within ever increasing complex social-ecological and planning systems (De Roo 2012; Edwards and Bates, 2011).

Social diversity and multiplicity became key concepts in planning, associated with the significant move from paternalist politics and biases strongly associated with earlier imperial states and colonial influences towards increasing acceptance of and attention to cultural diversity, multiplicity and marginalised voices (Hillier, 2008). This appreciation of multicultural diversity (as in political science and public policy) challenged and affected a range of aspects that planning is concerned with, including conceptions of quality of place, “what is involved in plural coexistence in the shared spaces of daily life” (Hillier, 2008:xiv), “what counts as valid knowledge”, and “what grounds judgement about the legitimacy of planning actions” (Campbell, 2006; Campbell et al., 2013; Davoudi, 2015).

Planning as a diffused practice has mostly been able to play to its strengths by drawing knowledge, pointers and ways forward from its multi-disciplinary social and rational science foundations, pragmatically moving between often theoretically opposing epistemologies (obviously not so easy said and done for planning theorists – see Innes and Booher, 2015) and knowledge systems (given its role as art, science, and even religion – as framed by some). Whilst there is a shared focus on contributing to greater social equity and the solving of urban and environmental problems, scholarly approaches have always been impacted by a wide range of complex and often contradictory influences (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006:69; and Hoch, 1994 in Goldstein and Carmin, 2006:67) and a pluralism of ideas and discourses (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1996; Friedman, 1987; Goldstein and Carmin, 2006). In an interesting study in 2002 exploring planning related academic publications, Stelzer and Ozawa (2002:77) remarked that: "This is a stimulating time for planning and planning theorists. While planning educators are trying to firm up the status of their field within the university, planning theorists are debating and recasting the very basis for planning itself (Guhathakurta, 1999; Ozawa and Seltzer, 1999; Wiewel and Lieber 1998)". For example, the divides between rational, communicative and phronetic approaches (Innes and Booher, 2015), which of course also provide a productive breeding ground for the publication of scholarly articles. However, such 'divides' and 'debates' are actually 'complementary' and highly useful in the situated realities where planning responsibilities of teams and even individual planners often entail drawing from highly diverse fields and approaches, and playing fundamentally different roles (for instance, providing expert professional advice and guidance, facilitating complex processes and engagements, as well as advocating critical policy implications) (Stanley, 2007; Hossain, Scholz and Baumgart, 2015:141).

Whilst high levels of technical and spatial, economic and statistical skills are an integral part of most planning arsenals, equally so are considerations for 'caring' and for 'trusting of intuition' – increasingly regarded as important by planning scholars (Tasan-Kok, 2016; MacDonald et al., 2014) and as set out above; recognizing the integral connections between planner, practice and the range of complex social, environmental, cultural-political and economic systems in which it operates (see Section 4.3 for more on these skills and capabilities).

Planning's diffused openness and attachment to the future, more than to its roots or to the 'right' approach/method, its concern with local but also with the long-term and large scale, and its embedded experiences of intervention and failure, and adaptation and slow emergence within complex and unpredictable systems is probably part of its 'coherence' (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006:76) and its ability to engage the fast changing realities in everyday life (Harris, 1999, in Chettiparamb, 2006:190; Goldstein and Carmin, 2006; Friedman, 1987). These abilities and a more explicit awareness thereof are probably key to engaging with others in future orientated practices; propagating notions such as 'integral approach' (acknowledging also the "I" and the "we" – see Wilber 1997, 2007), 'transdisciplinarity' (McGregor, 2004), acknowledging the importance of different levels of reality to find solutions that transcend disciplinary language games, and the interconnected nature of our world and importance of such worldviews and notions of complexity and emergence required for leaders concerned with sustainability and the future.

The adaptive nature of planning does not only have implications for approaches and methods to inform problem definition and solution, but also for the demands and wide range of roles and responsibilities for practitioners in the field of planning. As Hillier and Healy (2008:xii-xiii) explain, on the one hand 'inspirations, referents and styles of argumentation' come from the fields of 'economics, political science and management, geography, sociology, anthropology' etc. On the other hand 'waves of intellectual influences' arrived through systems thinking in the 1960s, structuralist political economy in the 1970s, post-

modernism in the 1980s and 1990s, post-structuralism in the 1990s and complexity in the 2000s. Goldstein & Carmin (2006:67) explain how the “adoption of a number of emerging social science methods after World War II (e.g. decision theory, statistical models, mathematical programming, and simulation models) could be viewed as attempts by planners to use and legitimate rigorous social science research in design and policy-invention processes. During this era, architects and designers, engineers, sociologists, political scientists, economists, and natural scientists came together to use their knowledge and expertise toward resolving social problems. Rather than being bound by a particular disciplinary back-ground or training, professionals assumed the mantle of ‘planner’ and engaged in the practice of ‘planning’ as they worked to accomplish common or shared goals”.

Richness and diversity are increasingly seen as valuable given the realities of career, geographic and institutional mobility, as well as mobility between different roles, responsibilities and specialisations within academic and practice careers (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006:69). It, however, also speaks to consistent demands on ‘horizontal’ growth in extending skills and knowledge and application fields, and on ‘vertical’ growth speaking to world views, beliefs and transformation of ego-ideals. Maybe also even ringing a few alarm bells with sounds of ‘demanding’, ‘impossible’, and ‘quest not job’.

The practice and context relevance is evident in the discussions in relation to unique contributions required in specific contexts such as Africa (Watson and Agbola, 2013; Watson and Odendaal, 2013) and China (Kunzmann and Yuan, 2014), and the debates about internationalisation and planning in a global context (Kunzmann, 2015).

#### **4.2.6 Summary reflection**

The section highlights the core ideals and characteristics of the practice of planning, as well as some of the embedded challenges and tensions within this quest for the ‘common good’. The section was not aimed at defining planning but rather at illustrating the nature of planning as a ‘quest’ that inspires its ‘loyal disciplines’ to push the bounds of possibility, to take risks and ‘learn-by-planning’, taking action towards an emerging collective future within a world of complexity, uncertainty and ongoing change.

The focus is not only on the implications that these hold for the evolving practice of planning or the practitioners in planning but on the way in which practitioners actually form an integral part of these complexities, quests, purpose and uncertainties – finding fusion points between the inner worlds, or meta-competencies and virtues of practitioners in planning, and the evolving concepts that form an essential part of the essence of the quest of planning as a practice.

It is evident that existing knowledge in the field supports the underlying premise of the study that the inner worlds of planners, and thus their being and becoming, is integral to the evolving purpose and ability of planning as a practice to contribute in shaping the uncertain future.

The intertwined way in which practitioner and the practice of planning evolves and adapts is evident through narratives that provide a lens into the adventure, experience, quest for purpose and excellence through work-life adventures. In these adventures, struggles, growth and pain are intertwined within their quest for purpose and ‘good’ through their practice of planning in a highly complex and challenging environment. It is argued that the integral role that the quest for purpose and virtues in the practice of planning play in these adventures and growth, are closely aligned to the self-perceptions of planners.

Whilst many other practitioners and scholars refer to the integral part that planners play in the practice of planning and the importance of reconsidering ways of ‘igniting the spirit in planning’ and ‘being’ this has been largely done in scholarly articles, with recent empirical research largely informed by surveys and observations, secondary sources or project specific context. However, it is evident that the call is strong for a focus on behaviour, attitude, evolving inner worlds, sense of purpose, ideals, ways of knowing, motivations, drivers, ‘virtues’, experience, wisdom, action and quests of practitioners in planning, as this exploration sets out to do.

In this section I have highlighted the importance of purpose in relation to the ‘quest within planning as a practice’, as well as paradoxes and contestations in notions of ‘common good’. I have also illustrated the increased importance ascribed to the invisible layer and network of qualities and virtues (but probably also driving forces), such as a sense of purpose, dedication to the quest and the future, wisdom, and practical and integrative transdisciplinary competence that is action-orientated. The acknowledgement of the value and significance of inter-relational practice capability, and the recent challenges faced in relation to planning practice and education to add value in an increasingly complex and fast changing environment are also evident.

### **4.3 VIRTUOUS PLANNING PRACTITIONERS**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

A magnitude of discourses and articles have seen the light since the origin of planning, exploring the role and virtues of practitioners in planning; highlighting the value and need to better understand the challenges, as well as the range of explicit and often implicit capabilities that enables planners to negotiate and add value in the midst of complexity, uncertainty and contestation. Amidst the ever louder sounding plea from planning practice and especially resource constrained countries in the developing world and specifically in South Africa for ‘more and better’ practitioners within the practice of planning, key questions remain. Not only regarding the core capabilities, competencies, attitudes and values which have been a key focus in planning education, but also on what actually underlies and contributes to the success, capabilities and effective contribution of planners and institutions to lead collaborative and strategic intergovernmental planning processes and act as agents of change within complex systems (Abbott, 2005; Bammer, 2005; Mulder, Swaak and Kessels, 2004; Yorks and Kasl, 2002).

In this section, the need and demand for the contribution of well capacitated and ‘virtuous’ practitioners as well as new approaches to planning across the globe and in particular in Africa and the South African context is briefly illustrated, highlighting the importance of research contributing to such evolving capacity. Following that, the emphasis is placed on key themes and shifts in discourses and research essentially concerned with ‘the planner’ (practitioner in planning as a practice), whose identity is often shaped by planning and who has to negotiate the quest for ‘good planning’ through various roles, responsibilities and contextualised ways of knowing (and doing) (Davoudi, 2015; Lennon, 2015). In order to find ‘travel tips’ for the exploration, the light has been shone on their integral role in the practice of planning, in order to get a sense of the characteristics, attitudes, competencies, meta-capabilities, drivers, challenges and virtues that are associated with ‘good/virtuous’ practitioners in planning.

In the last two sub-sections, the need for an enhanced understanding, value acknowledgement and more explicit support of these often “unseen” qualities, drivers, virtues is clearly motivated for and an indication

is provided of the research contributions and the gaps in relation thereto in the area of competency development and planning education.

### 4.3.2 Calls for change and contribution

"Humanity is being called to make significant behavioural and systemic changes in order to prevent potential large-scale catastrophe this century. Some are even challenging us to mobilize to 'save civilization' (Brown, 2008, 2011) and avoid the potential collapse of our complex societies (Diamond, 2005; Tainter, 1993). Albeit slower than many may hope, there is a burgeoning global movement to address these complex and unprecedented sustainability issues (Edwards, 2005; Hawken, 2007). Research and experience suggest that some of our change efforts toward this more sustainable world will work, while many will not (Kotter, 1995). Amongst the myriad success drivers for a change initiative, a key component is the design of the initiative itself (Doppelt, 2010; Kotter, 1996). In turn, one of the most important influences on the design of change initiatives is the worldview of the designer(s) (Doppelt, 2010; Sharma, 2000)" (Brown, 2011:13).

This profound statement in Brown's PhD thesis on Conscious Leadership for Sustainability, provides a very succinct and powerful summary of the challenges, complexities, changes and calls for action with which future- and action-orientated practices such as sustainability leadership and planning are currently engaging. It also clearly positions practitioners 'IN' (seen as part of) these fields, as key leverage points in the unfolding future, not only of the practices, but also of humanity.

The challenges faced by fast growing cities and the increased complexity and changing dynamics world-wide, and specifically in South Africa (SACN, 2016; United Nations, 2015; Van Huyssteen, et al., 2013; van Huyssteen et al., 2009), make the case for the need for planning and planners, as well as new planning systems (as highlighted in the overview of challenges and implications for planning education by Watson and Agbola (2013)).

Given the possibility that inclusive and sustainable planning approaches could contribute to more equitable and economically productive urban development in Africa, they claim that planning "is the most important tool that governments have at their disposal for managing rapid urban population growth and expansion" (Watson and Agbola, 2013). However, as pointed out by Hossain et al., the growing gap between the continuum of planning approaches and underlying urban models and ideals on the one hand and informal urban reality on the other hand, calls for a re-thinking of urban planning in general and for the development of a suitable urban model for African cities and appropriate planning legislation, accordingly. (Hossain, Scholz and Baumgart, 2015:148)

Unfortunately according to Watson & Agbola (2013:2), two views regarding urban and regional planning seem to prevail. One is of a "disengaged, technical and apolitical profession", and the other is deeply political with the "overriding purpose being to further the interest of political and economic elites" – with "little enthusiasm for reform from within" (Watson and Agbola, 2013:2). According to Edgar Pieterse, Director of the African Centre for Cities, "the dominant policy response to the deepening crisis associated with urban growth and expansion [in Africa] is inertia" (Watson and Agbola, 2013:12).

The sad reality, as argued by Oranje (2014:6), is that the "traits of belief, passion and total commitment" are not necessarily recognisable within planning as a practice in the planning fraternity in South Africa (as probably in many other countries) today. In this regard, he points out that the research done amongst



younger planners illustrates that "what excites planners is not 'what is wrong in the world', and 'what needs to be done about it', but rather their careers, salary packages, promotion, moving on in the organisations they work in, and their professional interests (Oranje and Radebe, 2012). In most administrations, planners are not distinguishable by any specific trait from any other public official" (Oranje, 2014:6). In the same vein, Watson and Agbola argue: "While there are many inspirational and progressive planners across the continent, others have few qualms about fulfilling the role of compliant "handmaidens of repression" – governmental or economic. The planning profession in Africa has been choked by acute political, institutional and financial constraints" (2013:12).

The call is made for change, and more so, for 'planners who are innovative problem-solvers and willing to collaborate with all parties involved in the development process, including local communities' in order to bring that about. Planners, who's 'actions will need to be informed by explicit and progressive values'. Of course this 'changing from within' places (as was the case in South Africa) a huge onus on planning education in Africa to rethink methods and curricula (Watson and Agbola, 2013:2), one of the reasons for the formation of the Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS) (Watson and Agbola, 2013, Watson and Odendaal, 2012).

These challenges and the need to consider the role of planning practitioners are not unique to Africa. The extraordinarily rapid rate of urbanization in China also poses critical challenges with regards to planning. In this regard, Perlin et al. (2015:435) raises interesting questions about the importance of also focusing attention on the role of planning practitioners in relation to city leaders and decisions around the growth directions of China's dense urban areas, moving beyond mere high level analyses in the context of the powerful authoritarian state.

The urgency for the planning capacity and shifts called for has, as always, critical systemic and resource implications, as well as implications for education aimed at developing new cadres of 'novice' planners. However, that is not the focus of this study. The focus of this study is probably on the very large part of this call that is not aimed at the 'horizontal growth of capabilities' (extending and adding on to skills and knowledge base), but on the 'vertical growth' (growth in meaning-making capabilities, wisdom and virtues enabling practitioners to creatively contribute to the quest – see Section 2.4). The study is not concerned with the identification and listing of capabilities and translation thereof into curriculums and qualifications or short courses. It essentially is concerned with the qualities of 'being' that is called for – qualities that are not necessarily explicit, that speaks to character and personality and life experience and values and belief systems and world views. Qualities that can be seen to make a difference in the drive for purpose and excellence, qualities in practitioners in the practice of planning that can be described as virtues, drawn on by those in practice (with formal and non-formal planning education) to actively engage in real-life planning problems, even though they may not even be explicitly aware thereof. However, the search for these qualities and virtues, I would argue, is not 'out there' – it is within.

In his discussion about the role of planning in engaging in uncertainty and the future, Abbot (2005:250) makes the following statement: "In a complex social environment, planning that only considers small proposals will have little effect in changing anything. Planning that does not consider significant change cannot be effective in reducing environmental uncertainty – to be effective, planning needs to push the bounds of possibility." He uses this point to call on planners to (citing Guy Benveniste (1989:50)) to sometimes attempt more than what can probably be achieved, to take the risk, to make a 'big and

audacious plan' (in a visionary and inspirational, more than a modernist sense) and to know that effective planning cannot be measured by immediate implementation.

### 4.3.3 Identities, roles, meta-competencies and virtues

The increasingly complex, evolving and expansive range of ideas, practices and scope that characterise the language games of planning and planning competence are obviously raising demands and pressures on this action-orientated discipline, and those involved in it – *inter alia* soliciting a re-imagining of the roles played by planners, and an ever illusive reflection around relevance and influence in an unfolding future. In line with these shifts, there is also a recognition of the demands and pressures on, and the integral role played by, those involved within the activity of planning and collaborative sense making within diverse and multi-cultural contexts of complex sustainable developmental and social change challenges (see Hillier & Healy, 2008:xx).

Illustrative hereof is the change evident in the image of planners: changing from that of “some kind of trusted technocrat above and apart from the messy bustle of the world, (who) could articulate programs and plans which could ‘order’ what would otherwise be the chaos of unfettered and unjust market processes” (Hillier, 2008:xv) to that of a leader, enabler, “‘guiding hand’ or a corrective ‘steering’ mechanism” (Hillier, 2008:xv) and, increasingly so, towards that of a facilitator, collaborator and actor participating in shaping and learning from engaging complex problems and non-linear, and often volatile emergent processes.

Over the last couple of decades a wide range of studies explored the role of planners and shifts in that role as outlined by Fox-Rogers & Murphy (2015:1) in their overview of studies and discussions in this field and in terms of three broad themes of discussion focus areas, namely:

- ⌘ “The evolution of the role of the planner in response to changing institutional and ideological conditions (see Albrechts, 1991; Campbell and Marshall, 1998; 2000; Gunn and Vigar, 2012; Harvey, 1985; McGuirk, 1994)”;
- ⌘ “The roles adopted by planners in everyday planning practice (Albrechts, 1999; Forester, 1989; Healey 1992; Schön, 1983) and how planners’ roles vary with respect to their different socioeconomic and occupational characteristics (see Beauregard, 1976; Dykman, 1973; Knox and Cullen, 1981; Knox and Masilela, 1990; Ozawa and Seltzer, 1999, Schön et al., 1976)”;
- ⌘ “Theoretical and normative debates on the planner’s role in society (see Davidoff, 1965; Kirk, 1980; MacLaran and McGuirk, 2003; Scott and Roweis, 1977)”.

In their extensive exploration of seminal publications in the field of planning, Hillier and Healy (2008:xxi-xxiii) outline the wide range of these discussions through history in terms of the identity, experience and ethics of the planning practitioner. Major discourses and key themes that they identified from this extensive literature overview can be summarized in terms of discussion themes about:

- ⌘ Planners acting as visionaries and leaders – from the early 20th century showing the way towards progressive enlightenment in the guiding of politicians and administrators, in leading modernist infused place- and society-building, finding legitimacy in acting as the upholders and translators of justice and societal values, and in the work of building futures with some ‘evangelistic confidence’;
- ⌘ Planners adding value through technical expertise – from the mid-20th century, disassociating planning from politics in attempts to almost carve out spaces to act, mostly as technical experts acting

as translators of societal values and goals, with legitimacy mostly gained from discipline expertise and political and democratic processes;

- ⌘ Planners contributing through playing different roles – which are dependent on, and also moulded, to more effectively engage with contextual realities and requirements, external systems and process demands and internal strengths and skills. For example as mediators, regulators, facilitators, catalysts, mobilizers of action, co-designers, analysts, advocates, and experimenters (see the well-known work on the role of planners by Albrechts, 1999 and Forester, 1999). With expertise increasingly taking on multiple dimensions, including varied disciplinary knowledge about planning contexts, increased recognition of different forms of knowledge, and with increased specialist expertise to engage the dynamics and complexity that impact place development (i.e. process and strategy production on the one hand and institutional and societal dynamics on the other);
- ⌘ Perceptions, identity and views of the planner – as influenced by character, contextual realities, the nature of skills, values and ethical qualities, relations to others, and also based on and influenced by expectations of others. Interesting to note in these discussions are the differences originating from different points of departure, increasingly shifting though from the viewpoint that planning practitioners are essentially separated from the activity of planning, which is an activity or task that they ‘perform’ or ‘do’, to the viewpoint that planning practitioners form an integral part of planning; and lastly about
- ⌘ Planners’ capacity to shape the future within complex and contested contexts – more prominent since the late 1990s: practice orientated; attention to ethical participation; and the new range of skills and tools required (i.e. practical wisdom, external and internal knowledge, spiritual intelligence/sensitivity, being analytical, competent and intuitively perceptive, capacity to mobilise and facilitate collective momentum, and the ability to adapt, reflect and learn).

Moving from the premise that planning is in essence not just about land and resources but about relationships between people (Sandercock, 2004:139), and that it is important to acknowledge that it is the ‘whole person’ (practitioner) that is present in the knowing and doing and deliberation, it is evident that there is much value in emotional and spiritual involvement “to acknowledge and deal with the powerful emotions that underpin many planning issues” (Sandercock, 2004:139). Importantly, what Sandercock raises in this deliberation is the ‘possibility of transformation’ – not the Band-Aid solution as she mentions herself, but the possibilities for individual and collective growth (being and becoming), the possibility of transformation, social transformation and collective learning (Sandercock, 2004:140) and the emergence of a new planning ‘imagination and culture’ within which planners essentially play political, audacious, creative and therapeutic roles (2004:135).

These shifts in the role, qualities, identity and virtues of the planner increasingly point to the importance and value of purpose, motivation, drive, practical wisdom, courage, etc. of practitioners in planning (the often unseen virtues – see Annexure B, Figure B.1). It brings to the fore the interconnectedness and impact of perception, purpose, values, ideals and virtues of the practitioners in planning on the purpose, quest and impact of planning as practice. I would argue that it points towards the value and need to look inward, considering the role of planners and how we as ‘whole persons’ (with lives, families, varied work-life experiences and transitions, personal motivation, demands, beliefs, struggles, hopes and dreams, and our own ongoing spirals of growth, etc.) are connected to, being shaped by, and shaping our planning practices and collective futures.

#### 4.3.4 Challenges for competencies and curriculum development

Various scholars and practitioners seem to agree that how practitioners in the practice of planning navigate their way is as much a result of learning on the job and the “hands-on daily task of engaging with one’s work” (Lennon, 2015, Afshar, 2001:340) than a consequence of “planning education that pervasively, purposively, and adequately prepares people for a globalizing world. (Afshar, 2001:340; Pezolli and Howe, 2001)

Simin Davoudi in her paper, "Planning as practice of knowing" (Davoudi, 2015), makes a clear case for considering the important relationship between knowledge and action in planning in more depth, regarding it as iterative rather than linear and for extending the focus beyond "knowledge as something that planners have to knowing as something that planners do" (Davoudi, 2015:316). In this view, planning is unpacked as "a process of knowing and learning", referring to knowing what, knowing how, knowing to what end and doing (Davoudi, 2015:318). The practice of knowing is a dynamic process.

An incredible amount of value, even though often from different orientations, is contributed through the well-established and increasingly consolidated fields of planning practice, planning theory, and the growing and increasingly globalising research contributions in the field of planning education (Edwards and Bates, 2011; Afshar, 2001) to assist practitioners in making sense, preparing, navigating, reflecting and contributing in the world of planning practice (through education approaches as indicated by Grant Long, 2012; Hayden, 2010; Harrison et al., 2003; Griffiths, 2002; Hillier and Gunder, 2003 and 2005).

Questions and debates regarding foundational knowledge and usefulness of skills are often addressed and articulated from completely different points of departure, either from day-to-day experiences in confronting planning challenges, or from a more academic and pedagogic approach characterized by a need to “provide a foundation of knowledge, while at the same time providing useful skills for the professional planner” (Mandelbaum, 1984; Edwards and Bates, 2011:172).

Decisions on relevance, value, improvement and adaptation of core competencies, curricula and teaching approaches within planning education is indeed highly challenging and a quest in itself, especially considering: the diverse and open character of the practice of planning (Friedman; Edwards and Bates, 2011:174); the fast changing and highly complex urban and rural contexts (Pezolli and Howe, 2001); the shifting paradigms (see Chettiparamb’s description of the radical shifts required in planning education in India, 2006; Innes 1997; Dalton, 2001); and, the fast growing list of competencies, skills and knowledge fields (See the shifts and increases from the 1990s to 2011 studies – and the challenges in this regard mentioned by various scholars such as Chettiparamb, 2006; Pezolli and Howe, 2001; Watson and Agbola, 2013).

This challenge is even further exacerbated by, firstly, the need for professional coherence as well as the unique identity of planning schools and professional bodies (Geppert and Verhage, 2008); secondly, with the many options in the practice of planning and thus the wide range of students entering graduate programs in planning from different academic and professional backgrounds and a variety of experiences (Edwards and Bates, 2011:174; Kaufman and Simons, 1995 in Edwards and Bates, 2011:174); and; thirdly, because of the need for planning education and practice to be contextually relevant (Watson and Agbola, 2013; Watson and Odendaal, 2012) as well as increasing global demands (Pezolli and Howe, 2001; Afshar, 2001).

In line with these concerns – whilst recognising the importance of skills, knowledge and values, as well as that of institutions and context and process – this enquiry argues that it would be worthwhile to place the focus on the agent, whilst considering a broader and more integrated or ‘whole’ context of ‘planning competence’: things often unseen, unspoken or less tangible, but which can be critical to a community of practice such as development and planning. Thus, to reflect on that which makes for a caring considerate practice and discipline, of that which could turn a ‘job’ such as planning into a ‘calling’ and a ‘life’, of that which motivates and inspires – of the ‘spirit’ within and between agents involved in this community of language users and practice.

From the overview of the wide range of empirical (survey and curriculum assessment) studies aimed at supporting the identification and development of capabilities and competencies of planning practitioners, it is evident that there is recognition of the value of ‘whole person’ development (Edwards and Bates, 2011:174; Ozawa and Seltzer, 2002; Myers and Banerjee, 2005), continuous growth (Ozawa and Seltzer, 2002), and the need for a wide range of vertical capabilities within planning education and career development (Clearly highlighted by the answers to the open question to planning practitioners in the study by Ozawa and Seltzer, 2002).

Discourses are informed by a wide range of quantitative and qualitative surveys focused on eliciting perceptions of planners and employers (thus largely in the domain of competencies that planners are explicitly aware of) as well as assessments and comparative studies of planning qualification curricula. The latter has often been specifically designed to inform curriculum development and professional standard setting (Pezzoli and Howe, 2001; Friedman, 1996; Baum, 1997, Ozawa and Seltzer, 1999; and Edwards and Bates, 2011:181), and in the case of Edward and Bates (2011) been used to examine the core curricula of the master’s degree programs of thirty planning schools to compare with Friedman’s original analyses.

A brief overview, identifying relevant pointers in relation to meta-competencies, generic competencies and development thereof from a wide range of published (mostly seminal and comparative) studies aimed at identifying, evaluating and informing planning competencies and curriculum development is set out in Annexure B. The literature review obviously did not include the myriad of studies conducted by the various planning schools and professional bodies across the globe. A brief reference is made to the way in which a number of the most well-known professional associations and global initiatives engage with the articulated need to consider whole-person development and highlight the need for virtues required in the quest for excellence and purpose in the practice of planning.

From the review of research conducted to inform the development of planning qualification curricula and related scholarly articles, a few key themes have been identified as relevant to this exploration (see Annexure B for more detail):

- ⌘ “Notion that personal growth and development may be an integral, rather than peripheral, dimension of professional development and training for careers in the new global environment” (Goldstein, Bollens et al., 2006:358).
- ⌘ Contradictions and tensions between what is required from new practitioners at entry level/mid-level (i.e. communications skills, practical skills and knowledge often called for by new entrants into the practice) versus much deeper embedded and higher level analytical and leadership, etc. capabilities required later (termed lofty goals by Edward and Bates, 2011:181).
- ⌘ The importance of an integral approach to education, recognising that, “Students’ experiences with planning education are not primarily about their specializations but are equally influenced by how

planning is presented” (Edward and Bates, 2011:181; Seltzer and Ozawa, 2002); referring to the notion of ‘thick authenticity’ where the means of assessment reflects the learning process, where learning is personally meaningful and relates to the outside world and “provides the opportunity to think in the mode of a particular discipline” (Schaffer and Resnick, 1999:195). “What distinguishes this approach is less what graduates need to know and learn (which should be driven by where and on what issues they plan to practice). It is distinguished more by the tools they use to know and learn – a global frame, comparative method, mutual learning, cross-cultural sensitivity – that is, how they know and learn” (Afshar, 2001:34).

- ⊗ In a similar way, the interaction of students with educators, so-called professors of practice (Edwards and Bates, 2011), inspire and introduce them to master the shifting nature of planning (Lennon, 2015). The importance of role models and mentors to inspire with their behaviour, passion and purpose for practice excellence in the context and complexity and challenged real world environment of pragmatic planning practice, action and practical judgement is clear. However, this can be in conflict with the requirements for faculties to primarily contribute to establishing the legitimacy of the profession and academic institutions (Lennon, 2015; Baum, 1997; Myers and Banerjee, 2005).
- ⊗ Teaching of planning ethics or progressive and reflexive values is about much more than raising awareness or learning, it is indeed about inspiration to identify with the quest of planning, and to sign up to the gnarly nature of the virtues that will sustain us to pursue that quest (Lennon, 2015:67). As Gunder explains: “Planning education supplies epistemic knowledge ... , but perhaps more important, it also shapes the fledgling planner into membership of the profession through integrating into the novice’s ego-ideal a range of identifications, or ‘master signifiers’, constituting the beliefs of the profession”(2004:308-309). Planning educators thus play a pivotal role in reshaping the ego-ideals of the novice planners: “as students gradually acquire the identifications of planners, they are alienated from their own original desires and beliefs and are eventually obligated to reproduce, reinforce, and apply their received planning knowledge and practices on the public. Under this discourse, planning educators seek to produce new planners who are inspired agents of the academics’ own master signifiers and supporting knowledges” (Gunder, 2004:307). An example of this challenge in a very pragmatic context is the recognition of Watson and Agbola (2013:9) in their discussion for shifts in African planning curricula that even though practice may not yet be shifting and “that even though the new knowledge may not be directly applied the importance is that they [students] are exposed to and encouraged ... On graduation, they may be expected to implement outdated planning legislation, or design golf courses or gated communities for the wealthy. But unless planning students are exposed to the prevailing conditions and trends in African cities, and encouraged to consult and interact with local communities to assess how planning may best address these, they will merely advance the marginalisation of the planning profession – and of the poor – in sub-Saharan Africa”.
- ⊗ Given the clear acknowledgement that much of the learning and growth in the practice of planning actually happens within the context of that practice (see Lennon, 2015), I would argue that this identification with the master signifiers probably also stretches (or should at least stretch) beyond the role of educators to that of mentors of young planners, to the role of peers, managers and teams, etc. in shaping and inspiring (or alternatively unwittingly stifling) planners’ beliefs. All contributing to “shaping the future outcomes that these planning practitioners will eventually help to mediate and create within society” (Gunder, 2004:309). This huge responsibility (as it is either done or not – thus having an impact consciously or unconsciously) requires ongoing reflection (Gunder, 2004:309), insight and explicit consideration. As pointed out by Lennon (2015:67) such explicit “goal-directed

narrative unity prompts reflection – ‘in’- action, reflection – ‘on’-action and reflection – ‘for’-action as one seeks practice excellence through experience-informed activity".

Numerous studies have been conducted and huge efforts have been made by professional and practice bodies (e.g. Geppert, and Verhage, 2008; Schoeman and Robinson 2015a, b, c; Hague et al., 2006; Odendaal, 2005) to explore practice requirements, highlight the importance of ethics and values and understand the purpose-knowledge-action nexus and contribute to the development of the required competency frameworks (Holdsworth and Sandri, 2014). These frameworks typically are made up of sets of generic, core and specialized competencies, highlighting the corresponding knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

The review of competence and curricula related research illustrates that there is an increased recognition of the inter-relationship between the soul of planning and the soul of the planner, as well as a growing recognition of the importance of qualities such as attitudes, motivation, purpose and other virtues and meta-competencies as part of the ‘whole person’ development propagated for practitioners in the field of planning.

Interestingly, studies regarding competencies and curricula do mention a rather wide and growing list of so-called core competencies or meta-competencies; even though, not tightly defined and implicitly rather than explicitly speaking to meaning-making capabilities and virtues, which would enable practitioners to stay committed to the quest. Even when that means facing the despondency of uncertainty and unintended consequences in highly complex worlds where time has lapsed and meaning-making interpretations can be shared. However, the repeated reference to the importance of planning ethics and ideals and excellence implicitly highlights the importance of these virtues. In the ideal world, where the ego-ideals and identities of novice-planners are shaped (Gunder, 2004) to become inspired agents pursuing the quest for excellence in planning, it will be these virtues that will enable practitioners in the practice of planning to sustain that quest (Lennon, 2015).

The review of existing studies clearly illustrates the unique and much needed contribution that this in-depth empirical exploration into the perceptions of practitioners in the field of planning of the virtues, values and meta-competencies that enable them to pursue practice excellence and purpose. It is also clear that in contrast to the wide range of surveys, curriculum analyses, interviews and observations, the work-life narrative analyses in this exploration make a significant contribution in the exploration of such competencies and virtues in an in-depth and contextually situated way: within the context of work-life experiences, adventures and transitions and in collaboration with colleagues, peers, mentors, friends, life events, family and a wide range of other role players and influences. It also is the first study within the field of planning education and practice that sets out to explicitly learn from ways in which practitioners perceive themselves as having managed to adapt, learn and grow within the situated and temporal context of their work-life. Thus filling the clear gap in understanding of how such capabilities are developed and how they can be supported within the context of work-lives, and associated experiences, adventures and transitions in formal and especially informal and transformative ways.

### 4.3.5 Conclusion and gaps in the field

The demands that planners are faced with are escalating, equally so are the diverse range of adapting roles they have to fulfil, and subsequently there is a wide range of mental, technical, emotional and spiritual competencies they have to master as agents within this complex and evolving practice.

I do not attempt to summarize the vast body of literature, the richness of discourses nor all the studies conducted that relate to planners in this section. The focus is on highlighting key pointers from the ‘thick and rich’ descriptions pointing towards the importance of the unseen, vertical or meta-capabilities, drivers and virtues of planning practitioners, and on identifying the gap in this field to which this study contributes to.

It is evident from the literature review that research delving into the roles, challenges, capacities and competence implications of planners is often aimed at exploring this role within the context of a particular theoretical approach. There is a wide range of research contributions focusing on the roles of planners within specific project or institutional contexts (e.g. the range of well know studies by Friedman and collaborators). Discourses in planning academia and education mostly make use of such project based or institutional specific observational and other qualitative research findings from studies to highlight the challenges, virtues and contributions of planners, within a specific contextual reality, or in relation to a particular construct whether that is related to different ways of knowing, or other aspects.

The review of existing studies clearly illustrates the unique and much needed contribution that is made by this in-depth empirical exploration into the perceptions of practitioners in the field of planning about the virtues, values and meta-competencies that enable them to pursue practice excellence and purpose. It is also clear that in contrast to the wide range of surveys, curriculum analyses, interviews and observations, the work-life narrative analyses in this exploration makes a significant contribution in the exploration of such competencies and virtues in an in-depth and contextually situated way.

*It should be mentioned that, whilst it may not have been their ultimate aim, there are some excellent write-ups and portraits of planners lives that much more eloquently (even though not as systematic as this exploration) shed some light on the nature and virtues of practitioners and their quest in the practice of planning. These would include the seminal novel New Jerusalem by Peter Morris (1988), the semi-autobiography of Jane Stanley (2007), as well as some biographic and autobiographic career reflections, such as Susan Feinstein’s (2014), and beautiful portraits of great people sketched through interviews conducted in the field of planning history. In the South African context, there are the conference papers on the lives of planning heroes by Mark Oranje and University of Pretoria Town Planning Department students. Many others like these have most probably been done; even though they may not be readily accessible in official journals and conference publications they may exist somewhere in archives.*

*In addition to the stories of well-known planners, the lack of ‘official material’ cannot for one moment negate the magnitude of learnings and experiences from the hundreds and thousands of ‘planners’ that care and that share this quest, or the impact that these have probably had in the lives of peers and students, possible shared in the course of a heated discussion, or over a glass of wine, or in a mentoring conversation, perhaps sometimes through a few tears and moments of frustration, or possibly even through a eulogy.*



## 4.4 FUTURE ORIENTATED PRACTICES, LEADERSHIP AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

### 4.4.1 Introduction

Over the last few decades we have become part of massive changes in information, transport and communication technologies, new worlds of big data and virtual reality, a globally mobile workforce, the recognition of interconnected ecological and economic systems and cultural cross-fertilisation – all “creating a very real experience of the planet as an interconnected and interdependent whole. At the same time science, philosophy and religion are coming together in a way that provides a picture of the world which integrates all its dimensions into an equally interconnected whole” (du Plessis, 2009:114). Thus, prompting the recognition that innovation and sustainability are in many ways deeply intertwined with the spiritual, with notions such as hope and belief (du Plessis, 2009).

The impact of global challenges such as climate change, the energy crunch, fast growing complex urban landscapes, dynamic movement patterns, increased inequalities, uncertainty and complexity, and the reality that humanity needs to make fundamental shifts are, however, well recognized (Brown, 2011:18; Du Plessis, 2009:18) in other future-orientated and integrative disciplines as well.

Fields related to sustainability and development, sustainability leadership, corporate social responsibility and management literature are rife with increased calls for “progress through improvement, evolution and the quest for wisdom” (Du Plessis, 2002:6), for “a transformation that moves towards the appropriate form of being” (Estés, 1992:8; Brown, 2011; Visser, 2010; Schein, 2015), and major shifts in the type of intelligence, knowledge, adaptive and meaning-making ability and leadership required in corporations, nations, politics, social-enterprises, these strongly resonating with the practice of planning (Mengel, 2005; Brown, 2011; Visser, 2010; Davoudi, 2015)

Integrated and future-orientated practices and sciences, aimed at making a contribution in this regard, are re-imagining their foundations, practices and approaches, while new practices and sciences are evolving with major contributions from fields such as global and sustainability leadership (Schein, 2015; Brown, 2011; du Plessis, 2009) and other integrative and implementation orientated practices such as social entrepreneurship (Bammer, 2005; Keogh et al., 1998). Amongst these integrative and future orientated practices, the need to transcend boundaries of traditional disciplines and even knowledge systems, the need for transdisciplinary practices, the value of science and policy interactions and collaborative development are all seen as critical for a new generation of professionals – valuing both strong disciplinary bases and strong sets of integrative skills (Alberti et al., 2003:1177; Weaver et al., 2012;)

Interesting to note are the strongholds of disciplinary ‘cultures’ and possibility of ‘integrative’ rhetoric, within the midst of such changing and shifting contexts that call for and illustrate possibilities in new perspectives and integral approaches even within integrative and future-orientated disciplines such as planning. We see this in scholarly debates seemingly (after many years of criticism – see Bammer, 2005) still steeped in deep divides under the guise of “reflecting contradictions to be embraced as an opportunity for a more robust planning theory” (Innes and Booher, 2015:195), but written from a very biased perspective and not taking any creative leaps. For example, to extend a hand for a joint publication, or positioning alternative shifts in viewpoints in collaborative efforts, or calls being made for new fields of specialization for “Integration and Implementation Sciences” (See Bammer, 2005:1).

In the same vein, it is critical for a study located within the practice of planning not to get stuck in an attempt to search for all the solutions and learning within its own limited field; or pretend that it is only practitioners in this field that deal with the real world problems of complex life worlds and urban and regional systems, the paradoxes of decision-making that need local contextual and global considerations, and a call to practitioners to recognise how deeply intertwined their own growth paths are with the future they are participating in shaping.

As in the practice of planning, many scholars and activist voices in other future- and action-orientated practices are calling for new (and increasingly post-conventional) capacities and paradigms, shifts in worldviews and the urgency for practitioners in these roles to contribute towards major shifts and breaking with the patterns of the past (Senge, 1999; du Plessis, 2009; Brown 2011; Schein, 2015).

Discussions on capabilities, knowledge and wisdom often refer to the balance between knowledge and ignorance. Seen through an integrative lens, it recognizes the interdependence between intelligence(s), knowing, behaviour, character, personality, motivation, skills, knowledge and values. It speaks to an interwoven net of cognitive intellectual capabilities, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence, as evident in the article by Mengel (2005), where the need for wisdom and knowledge in leadership resonates strongly with that of pragmatic judgement (Campbell, 2006a), and different types of knowing and calls for qualities that speaks to spiritual and emotional intelligence (Sandercock, 2004; Kunzmann, 2015; Campbell, 2012; Davoudi, 2015). These notions are expressed in many different ways and concepts by different authors and discourses; however, all pointing towards a fundamental shift in the capabilities and competencies that are regarded as critical for global and sustainability leaders and practitioners in future- and action-orientated practices (see Visser, 2010; Brown, 2011; Schein, 2015).

Given the similarities in terms of the integrative nature, future- and action-orientation and quests between sustainability and planning practices, as well as in the quests, roles, strengths, focus and capabilities that are associated with capabilities of sustainability leaders and change agents (Visser, 2010; Brown, 2011; Schein 2015), and that of practitioners in the practice of planning (see Chapters 3.2 and 3.3), it indeed has proven useful to consider parallels in this exploration into virtues (meta-competencies, characteristics and qualities) of purpose and excellence-orientated practitioners in the practice of planning. It is evident that much can be learned from the interwoven set of competence discourses and competency frameworks. However, in addition to that, the discussions about the qualities and competencies and growth stages of sustainability leadership also incorporate and introduce the importance of so-called meta-competencies, late-state-action logistics and vertical growth (Schein, 2015) of practitioners in these fields. Notions that have not received much explicit, even though definitely implied, prominence in the field of planning, but which have been explored in much more depth in various integrated and future-orientated practices and fields such as sustainability leadership, career development, human development and personal growth theories. These discussions are not only focused on 'what' the qualities are, but also on growth stages that supports the ability of practitioners in these fields to engage with increased levels of complexity and meaning-making (Cook-Greuter 2013; Rogers, 2014; Schein, 2015; Brown, 2011, Visser et al., 2010).

Section 4.4.2 is aimed at sharing some insights, pointers and views from research, studies and practices where researchers have embarked on similar or related explorations in other future-orientated practices, as well as presenting a few key themes in the career development field.

The rest of the section has been structured to highlight key notions and constructs related to the exploration of meta-competencies, qualities and characteristics within the sustainability leadership field;

summarise key themes from the above, and other fields regarding career growth and development through and within late stages of development; and identify relevant pointers for the study from career development and relevant fields. This will be done by providing a brief overview of:

- ⌘ The important notions of worldviews and leadership associated with future- and action-orientated practices of sustainability;
- ⌘ Perspectives on the importance of vertical growth of meaning-making abilities for practitioners in future-orientated practices.

#### **4.4.2 Worldviews and leadership in future- and action-orientated practices**

Given the shared concern with the future, it is evident that the practice of planning shares a concern that is rather about the greater (collective) well-being of society (Arendt, 1958 in Campbell, 2006:101) than just the locality, a concern that requires recognising interconnectedness and interdependence over distance and time, and holding inter- and intra-generational normative positions (Campbell 2006:101). And of course, in the midst of this seemingly overwhelming complexity, there is a belief about the possibility and capability to shape and have an impact on the future.

This ethnocentric worldview requires a different point of departure (Lynam, et al. 2014; Lynam, 2012; du Plessis, 2009), central in the notions put forward in Alberti et al., about integrating humans into ecology, and thus calling for “an integrated framework to test formal hypotheses about how human-dominated ecosystems evolve from those interactions” (Alberti, M. et al. 2003:1169).

The most frequently cited definition of sustainable development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987:8) involves meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

In support of shifts in worldviews, numerous fields of study associated with complex sustainability issues are evolving and sustainability is also becoming a key influence in numerous fields of study. One of these, relevant to the focus of this particular exploration into the perception of practitioners in the field of planning regarding the virtues that sustain their quest for excellence and purposes (which includes ideals such as sustainability), is of course ‘sustainability leadership’ and the relation thereof to the role of practitioners in the field of planning as leaders and change agents.

In his extensive thesis on ‘Conscious Leadership for Sustainability’, Brown positions the practice of sustainability leadership in the context of a wide range of organisations, including business operations and global leadership (Brown, 2011); opting to use the definition by Ferdig (2007:32 in Brown, 2011:63) who defines a sustainability leader as “anyone who takes responsibility for understanding and acting on sustainability challenges ... whether or not they hold formal leadership positions. Sustainability leaders take conscious actions, individually and collectively, leading to outcomes that nurture, support, and sustain healthy economic, environmental and social systems.”

The importance of an ecocentric worldview for such practitioners has been argued by many scholars (du Plessis, 2009). “Ecocentrism is characterized by an awareness and openness to addressing major environmental issues, support for ecologically and socially sustainable development, and willingness to challenge the dominance of an anthropocentric perspective” (Boiral, et al., 2009 in Brown, 2011:71).

Practitioners stepping into the many different forms and shapes of sustainability leadership, arguably also those that are operating as practitioners in the field of planning, are all essentially concerned with the uncertainties of the unfolding future (Abbott, 2005; Brown, 2012) and, as such, essentially concerned with change management and change-orientated leadership (See Senge, 1990; Senge, 2005; Torbet et al. 2004; Brown, 2011; Doppelt, 2010; and Lee and Schaltegger, 2014).

As argued by Brown: “If we can increase the likelihood that our change initiatives will accomplish their objectives by developing leaders to be more effective, then we may move humanity increasingly towards global sustainability” (Brown, 2011:17).

I would argue that as with the integrative and future-orientated practice of planning in working with communities, cities, developers and governments to influence decisions about the future of places, the role of sustainability leaders in guiding (influencing, motivating, nudging, leading) global organisations towards sustainability, fundamentally shifting the orientation of decision-making and operations, is indeed (given equally interesting political, power and decision-making complexities) a tall order (See Brown, 2011; Senge, 2005; Schein, 2015). Aptly described as, requiring “leadership with a big L, rather than sustainability with a big S” (Brown, 2011:75) and a much needed different worldview (du Plessis, 2009) to sustain such a ‘quest’ (Lennon, 2015).

It is indeed a call for what Mengel (2005) describes as the wisdom of values-orientated leadership where quests involve many paradoxes: such as growing and knowing ourselves as well as developing shared values and meaningful perspectives, accepting our limitations and being confident to take action, being prepared to be uncomfortable with not knowing and the unexpected and uncovering understanding in the knowns (Senge et al., 2008), to be capable of shaping and influencing the future through leading and inspiring with ‘presence’ and response-ability.

Leadership theories and leadership of change literature identify a wide range of critical capabilities relevant to sustainability leaders and change agents. Within these fields value driven and ethical leadership, servant leadership which includes service to the environment and future generations, and adaptive leadership focused on engaging complex problems and systems are well established (Brown, 2011), with new focus areas within this domain (Brown, 2011:65) described as:

- ⌘ ‘Generative leadership’ (Senge et al., 1999) with an emphasis on emergence and creative response to move away from path dependencies and address complex challenges;
- ⌘ Transformational and vision-driven leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2006 and Burns, 2006) where the emphasis is on inspiring followers with deeper purpose; and
- ⌘ Transformative leadership (Torbert et al., 2004) with the emphasis on ‘advanced human and organizational capacities that can accelerate progress towards sustainability’.

What is significant in the literature review of competence and competency framework development for sustainability and global leaders, though, is the increasing number of voices that make a clear case that the capability to effectuate change and lead is closely correlated to mature stages of meaning making and mature stages of consciousness.

#### **4.4.3 Leadership competencies and mature stages of meaning making**

Whilst discourses, theories, paradigms and models for leadership, sustainability leadership and change leadership for sustainability are in abundance, as argued by both Brown (2011) and Schein (2015) in recently

published PhD studies; there is, firstly, no common framework for such competency discussion and, secondly, “no field-based studies detail what leaders actually do when they design a sustainability initiative” (Brown, 2011:66). The first is a quagmire that both authors identified as not worth entering, and the second, a void that both these studies regard as critical and to be addressed through in-depth practice-orientated interviews with sustainability leaders who illustrate high levels of meaning making abilities.

Faced with challenges similar to those in the field of planning practice and planning education, the leadership virtues and competencies relate to a broad range of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes; and of course brain profiles, personality types and personal characteristics and strengths. Interesting to note in summaries provided by Brown (2011), references by Schein (2015) and discussions by Mengel (2005 and 2011), Strang (2009), and Potgieter (2012) is that the attempts at ‘capturing’ or ‘identifying’ such competencies include the more traditional and also expanded dimensions in attempts to capture and point to something ‘more’ (Mengel, 2009; Kanni Wignaraja et al., 2006). These include for example references to aspects such as:

- ⌘ reflexive abilities, speaking to awareness, reflexivity;
- ⌘ literacies such as business competencies, people and communication competencies, strategic competencies, technical competencies, critical thinking, creativity and innovation;
- ⌘ technical, conceptual, emotional, spiritual intelligence and skills;
- ⌘ meta-competencies, and the ability to traverse paradoxes and diversity;
- ⌘ core commitments, sources of motivation and action orientation;
- ⌘ ability to engage complexity, adaptation and self-development, learning competencies; and
- ⌘ personality, characteristics and attitudes.

Given the fact that the frameworks for departure and categorization of such competencies differ and that there is no conceptual coherence, a word cloud (Annexure B, Figure B.3) developed as one of the clearest summaries of the identified competencies (Brown, 2011). In Annexure B an overview into the types and emphasis of competencies and competency categories/descriptors used is provided.

As set out above, a clear argument is made that a strong relation exists between effective leadership, the capability to bring about positive transformations and late stages of constructive development and action-logics (Brown, 2011:55-61).

Whilst the thesis and exploration in the case of planning practitioners do not venture into identifying ‘mature stages of consciousness’ or ‘post conventional meaning-making capacities’ *per se*, there is much value in considering these frameworks and ways of thinking as many of the qualities that are called for in leadership theories and in the shifts towards meta-competency discussions in sustainability and change leadership discourses do suggest that late-stage meaning making capabilities can be correlated with abilities to engage increased complexity and uncertainty; to engage and shape the future with a worldview and consideration for the global and local, as well as current and future contexts; and to reshape our own experiences, beliefs, thoughts and interpretations through lenses that increasingly enables us to develop transformative and action-orientated perspectives.

Constructive-developmental theory is described by Brown (2011:11) as “a stage theory within the broad literature on life-span development, or developmental psychology that focuses on the growth and elaboration of meaning and meaning-making processes”.

In a beautiful phrase describing the notion of human development that underlies this approach Cook-Greuter states that it can be seen as “the gradual unfolding of people’s capacity to embrace ever-vaster mental horizons and to plumb ever-greater depths of the heart” (Cook-Greuter, 1999:29 in Brown, 2011:32).

Within this context, human development is described as both horizontal, referring to gradual accumulation of new knowledge and skills (Cook-Greuter, 2004), and vertical development, which implies a change in perspective and an increase in not only of what we are aware of, but also of what we will be able to integrate and influence (Brown, 2011:32-33, Cook-Greuter and Soulen, 2007, Kegan et al., 2001 and 2009). The latter type of growth is seen as transformative and far more powerful as it provides new lenses for ‘seeing’ and ‘being’: impacting the way in which we perceive our external and internal world and our capacity to act (See Berger et al., 2007).

There is increasing recognition of the critical importance of such advance meaning-making capabilities for practitioners involved in future- and action-orientated practices and leadership roles. Key to these seem to be the drivers of purpose and action, provided through an ecological worldview and the motivation for action and abilities to balance global and local perspectives.

Much has been written on meaning and purpose, sources of motivation and levels of meaning making, devotion to cause and caring and ‘commitment’ for a ‘bigger cause’ Including, for example, considerations of Frankl’s categories of meaning (1988) and the actualization of values (creational, experiential, and attitudinal values) as set out by Visser et al. (2010). Theories of motivation that consider intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (considering concepts such as interest and motivation to reach a desired state) and need (drawn from Maslow’s hierarchy of need and all pointing towards the multi-dimensional aspect of drivers and purpose), as well as the theories pointing to the notion of ‘expectancy’, which can be described as the belief that one has the capabilities to produce the outcomes (Kendra Chetty, 2016; Wigfield and Eccles, 2000). The latter thus originating in a tradition where theorists argue that the levels of excellence and performance, as well as commitment to that excellence in their practice (also see MacIntyre in Lennon, 2015) are related to their perceptions and beliefs of their abilities, the feedback received regarding this and the value or purpose within the practice or task, or practice in the case of planning (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000).

Interestingly, this notion of purpose and excellence is also related to the notion of self-concept; a field of interest in which theorists link ability not just to tasks but also to self-concept (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000). As is evident from AshokaU’s list of “Learning Outcomes for Social Entrepreneurs and Change Makers” and stated in the related resource paper, the longing for “harmony between their purpose, education, and profession” is increasingly true for people worldwide, and especially so for the Y-generation (Fornaciari and Lund Dean, 2014 in AshokaU, 2014:43); thus, highlighting the importance of ways of knowing and acting, ways of thinking, ways of interacting and ways of being.

Whilst these perspectives all raise relevant aspects, especially valuable within career development theories, the notion that probably stands out within the context of sustainability leadership and competencies related to increased meaning-making capabilities is that motivation and purpose seem no longer a tension between two sides of a coin, balanced between individual goals and the need to be part of something bigger (see Buss, 2001 in Potgieter, 2012:98). One of the fundamental changes is probably the almost generative and emergent quality in the tension between “I” and “we”, with highly reflective notions of self-actualisation, autonomy, authenticity, ‘response-ability’ and self-transcendence on the one hand; and on the other, breadth of the large scale of concern, ecocentric worldview, global as well as local

considerations, acceptance of diversity and focus on creating space for authentic expression and transformation of others. A generative quality located in a ‘connecting’ versus a ‘separating’ view, and probably a belief located both in possibilities of emergence as well as in the ability to act.

This emphasis on emergence, adaptation, engaging complexity and navigating uncertainty through triple loop learning and collaborative knowledge production endeavours also stands out as a theme in the qualities, behaviours and meta-capabilities of sustainability leaders and change agents (and practitioners in the practice of planning). A high level of meaning making is associated with abilities to engage higher levels of complexity, uncertainty and creative tensions in not-knowing, and in change processes with often limited visible impact or quick wins, often associated with unexpected and unintended consequences, but also with ‘gradual improvement and radical innovation’ (Kessels, 2001; Keursten, Verdonschot, Kessels et al., 2006; Van Poucke, 2005).

#### **4.4.4 Generative growth and learning dynamics**

It is evident from the discussions and studies that navigating these dynamic and highly interconnected systems are indeed critical for sustainability leaders and change agents, and require high levels of awareness of interconnectivity and interplay between different interactions and (once again) the type of meaning-making capabilities associated with late stage action logics (for instance, capabilities to engage complexity, dynamics system interactions and even deep intersystem evolution).

The multiple and generative possibilities, requirements and complexities for networking, connecting, communicating and collaboration are described in a very succinct way by du Plessis in her thesis arguing for shifts in worldviews: “Thus the world consists of and is created through four kinds of relationship: the unifying relationships that connect all that is, from the most fundamental level upwards; generative relationships that call entities into being and define their form and identity; linking relationships that provide the pathways for flows between entities; and transactional relationships that provide the dynamic processes that enable growth and change and which lead to the next fundamental characteristic of the world” (du Plessis, 2009:131).

The frameworks related to stages of action logic and meaning making do highlight the critical importance of the inner world of practitioners within planning as a future- and action-orientated practice, and the value and need to extend our exploration to not only focus on horizontal growth but explore the value of meta and vertical capabilities (and possible ways to support these in the practice of planning). As it is assumed that developmental movement from one stage to the next is driven by vertical growth in practice, it is critical in an exploration such as this to consider how these shifts in creating new ways of making meaning take place – there are many ways in which this can happen; not associated with learning more though, but transformative experiences, or “when increased environmental complexity demands that a person develop a more complex way of understanding themselves and the world” (Brown, 2011:16).

This speaks to the ability of evolving, growing and shifting in our ability to make sense and view ourselves from a perspective of the ‘observer’ – who is intrinsically connected to that which is observed, but not being defined by what is observed. Possibly a highly philosophical or theoretical argument, but with practical application that opens up new ways of sense-making, framing and thus for emergence in the possibility to open up ‘spaces’ for self and others to reflect and re-imagine, to take action in innovative ways, not predetermined by habit or pattern or prior judgement, to hold the tension and paradoxes in

diversity and seemingly contested normative and rational positions, and probably the ‘presence’ (Senge, 1990) to be willing to be wrong while being committed to take action towards an emerging future.

Given that ‘practical judgement’ and ‘wisdom’ are described as critical to normative decision-making and in moving from knowledge to action, the culmination of the knowing what/how/to-what-end and doing in discourses on the practice of planning (which interestingly according to Gunder (2010) is viewed as largely influenced by habits and by knowledge derived from the ‘unconscious’) may be beneficial for those involved in the practice of planning, and a study such as this about the virtues of practitioners in planning related to ‘practical judgement’ – to consider lessons from discourses in conscious leadership.

#### **4.4.5 Summary reflection**

Firstly, it is clear from the introduction and the limited literature review in these fields that there is a world-wide recognition of the key role that leaders in sustainability and change (future) orientated practices play in shaping the unfolding future, and with that an important drive to equip such leaders to develop the relevant capabilities to play this role. The recognition and learning from these studies point to the contribution that this exploration makes to the limited body of research on the virtues that sustain practitioners (leaders of sustainability and change agents) in the practice of planning in their quest for purpose and excellence

Secondly, whilst it is evident that there is value in an enhanced understanding of these competencies and capabilities, it is also apparent that there are a vast number of competency and meta-competency and leadership frameworks, all dependent on their specific focus area, point of departure and sets of questions. It is obvious that taking the route of trying to select a ‘model/framework’ of competencies to test, or of developing yet another ‘model/framework’ of structuring such competencies/virtue, will probably have little value. It is also evident that different types of competencies can be associated with higher levels of complexity and meaning-making, positioned as relating to higher states of action-logic or constructive-developmental stages and life experiences (very simply phrased). However, it is also clear that the proposed approach of the study to explore these competencies in relation to contextual realities and across the time span of work-life experiences, adventures and transitions of practitioners in the practice of planning would thus add a very useful perspective to such studies. The highly limited and thus much needed analyses of what leaders actually do when they actively engage in sustainability and future-orientated planning activities has been extensively motivated by Brown and Schein (see Brown, 2011:66 and Schein, 2015) in recent PhD studies through which they respectively add value to this void with empirical narrative interviews of the perceptions of sustainability leaders who illustrate high levels of meaning-making abilities, regarding their practice experience and critical capabilities. The focus in this particular exploration also adds value in this regard, with a specific focus on the practice of planning, as well as an exploration that crosses different career stages – thus, also uniquely contributing to explore the ‘growth’ in meaning-making and complexity engaging abilities, competencies and action-purpose-behaviour of practitioners through their practice experiences and adventures.

Thirdly, even though the study did not attempt to assess participants in terms of any psychological, personality or late-stage action logic category, the sample selection focused on practitioners regarded by their peers as embodying the purpose impact and excellence of the practice of planning. The value thereof of following the argument that identifying capabilities from the perspective of sustainability leaders that are competent and seemingly at later action-logic stages at least enables the identification of



competencies that are comparable to later stage development and more complex meaning-making abilities.

Fourthly, the dynamics related to the development of meta-competencies in the field of sustainability leadership may be worth exploring – especially those that are associated with meaning making capabilities regarded as key to the ability to act as a change agent within the context of a future and action orientated practice such as planning, that is essentially concerned with local context as well as global social-good and sustainability (for instance an ecological world view, ability to adapt and be reflexive). Not attempting to structure the complexity seems to line up with Senge’s discussion (2005:2) of recognizing complexity, thus knowing that everything is interconnected, and that you are never going to figure out that interconnectedness.

The exploration in this study might even add value to the broader field of competence related research in future-orientated practices. Through the exploration of perceptions of practitioners about ways in which they obtained and developed relevant capabilities, some insight is generated into what (in many of the texts and studies) is handled as a ‘creative leap’ from identified competencies and characteristics to suggestions regarding ways in which to develop and grow such competence (see Brown 2011, and Schein, 2015).

However, given the complexity and vastness of the career, personal growth, psychological and developmental perspectives, as well as the diverse points of departure and variety of frameworks in studies aimed at identifying meta-competencies for the sustainability leadership field, there is no attempt at exploring these fields in-depth or emulating them. Rather what is important is to be aware thereof and draw on them to consider their value and contribution, as well as using them to contextualize and frame this specific study.

## **4.5 THE WORLD OF WORK, LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.5.1 Introduction**

Whilst we could probably argue that work is ‘a central part of life to many people’ (Lo Presti, 2009:128), our experience of work and being involved in the world of work as practitioners in planning, or any other field, has most probably been changing. Influences of aspects such as globalization, the knowledge economy, increase in discipline and specialization formations, more flexibility, notions of work-life balance and purpose are well recognized (Potgieter, 2012; van der Merwe et al., 2007; Lo Presti, 2009). Lo Presti (2009) has introduced a number of new metaphors in a fascinating description of these implications on the notions of career development. Whereas career has been generally depicted in terms of ‘stages of life’ and career stories and narratives, usually with linear progression and major transitions across the life span of practitioners through cycles of transition (see Inkson’s metaphors in Lo Presti, 2009:129), he has positioned them, through the metaphor of board-games, as being much more of a game, with steps and movements and ups and downs (as in snakes and ladders); unpredicted moves, but with career ‘actors’ actively ‘playing’ their careers (Lo Presti, 2009:129). The same has been argued to be the case for younger practitioners; with an outstanding trait of the Y-generation being mentioned as the importance of personal ‘purpose’ and meaning (Fornaci and Lund Dean, 2014 in AshokaU, 2014:43). This longing for meaning and purpose has long been recognised as a key to doorways of understanding and action in many fields (Frankl, 1966, Wong, 1998, Zika and Chamberlain, 1992) and recently also as the driving force behind the notion of social entrepreneurship (AshokaU, 2014:43).

Whilst the metaphors associated with the notion of career is changing, and especially shifting careers away from direct linkages to organisations and even vocations, I would argue that many of the shifts place the practitioner, person and actor increasingly in the centre stage. It is more about growth as a person, rather than linear growth in a career or 'job'. In this new world of work, I would argue that the person more actively becomes the 'hero' of his or her own story and adventure – not only acting out a pre-determined 'hero's journey' but actively narrating and directing as well. And perhaps that the notion of pro-active involvement (even mentioned as a personal characteristic associated with practitioners who seem to be able to effectively engage informal learning and personal growth – see Marisck and Watkins in Chivers, 2007:4) was always the case – just with a different set of competencies, different context, different audiences and different and slower moving story lines.

In her thesis on career development in this new 'world of work', Potgieter shines the light on the increased central role of the practitioner, and describes the interwoven 'dance' between personal dispositions, feelings, beliefs, self-concept, qualities and behaviour as follows: "According to the cognitive social learning paradigm, and in particular the cognitive-affective theories of Mischel (1999), Rotter (1982) and Worline, Wrzesniewski and Rafaeli (2002), behaviour is shaped by personal dispositions in conjunction with a person's specific cognitive and affective processes, which may include perceptions of and feelings about themselves in a particular situation that is meaningful to them. Personality traits, together with the situation, predict the behaviour of an individual (Coetzee, 2005). However, personal qualities (such as people's beliefs about what they can do, their plans and strategies for enacting behaviours, their expectations of success, their self-concept, their positive and negative feelings about themselves, their needs based on their personality preferences and their self-regulating strategies) will override their behaviour in certain circumstances (Coetzee, 2005)" (Potgieter, 2012:3).

The central role that the practitioner plays within discussions of practice and impact is not a new discourse, with the importance of capacities such as judgement, intuition and acumen in a 'competent professional' and the importance of moving from competence to meta-competence (something that can be learned but not taught) having been highlighted by Brown and McCartney already in 1999 (Brown and McCartney, 1995). Whilst competencies is a "catch-all term that includes knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics" (Brown, 2011:76), meta-competence is associated with models that 'go beyond traditional dimensions of competencies' (See Hames, 2007; Wilson et al., 2006 in Brown, 2011:76), with proponents from various practices highlighting abilities to learn, adapt, anticipate and create, as well as notions of self-esteem, self-efficacy, reflection and resourcefulness (see Harden et al., 1999; Evangelista, 2006).

The need to acknowledge career meta-competencies as crucial resources in a context of a global challenges and fast changing technology, demographic and knowledge environment is increasingly recognised and voiced in the field of career development (Potgieter, 2012:2, and Coetzee, 2008 in Potgieter, 2012:2, Baruch, 2004). Consideration of meta-competencies within a career development model is seen as especially important given the argument that personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence can be taught and learnt (Potgieter, 2012:8). This is also an argument for the importance of research on the relationship dynamics between personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence (as a composite set of personality attributes) and individuals' employability attributes (Recognised in the discipline of industrial and organisational psychology, particularly with regard to career counselling practices, see Potgieter, 2012:9). Fox-Rogers & Murphy (2015:1) in their study involving self-perception of planners also noted how "other disciplines, most notably those within the medical sphere, have engaged in a series of qualitative studies exploring the self-perceptions of various

professions including how general practitioners (Natanzon et al., 2010), pharmacists (Rosenthal et al., 2011), and nurses (Wei et al., 2011) view their roles.”

Given these changes in the world of work and the importance of the practitioner, person, professional as actor within this ‘world’, the section is structured to provide:

- ⌘ Valuable understandings related to competencies, purpose, motivation and behaviour (and the fast changing new working context) and the increased emphasis on meta-competencies such as integrative learning, value of adaptation, etc. in the fields of career development and competence development in practices such as planning; and
- ⌘ A basic overview of relevant concepts, research findings and key questions in the field of professional lifelong learning.

The section is used to illustrate the value in exploring purpose driven growth and the importance of purpose in the new world of ‘working’, as well as whole-person approaches to development. The importance of informal learning as part of professional lifelong learning and the related limited research in the field is also highlighted. The value of the narrative method in the identification of explicit and implicit capabilities, and the need for ‘profession’ or practice-specific exploration of lifelong learning processes, are also argued for.

#### **4.5.2 Pointers from discourses on competence and meta-competency frameworks, models and definitions for the exploration**

Whilst there is difference amongst authors and sources in using competence or competency descriptions, and the various frameworks and models associated with the identification and evaluation of competencies and competence, there seems to be agreement on the notion of competence. That is that competency and competencies are associated with research aimed at identifying factors on which good work performance depends on (Parsons, 1909 and McClelland, 1973), relate to personal characteristics and work-related tasks (Evangelista, 2006 and Delamare le Deist and Winterton, 2005), and there are increasing shifts towards multi-dimensional frameworks and the use of the term competencies in relation to a person (characteristics, resources) that can be used within her/his life contexts (not linked to a specific task or job).

In spite of the tensions, the value of having broadly defined notions of competence associated with the worlds of work, career development, organizational development, management, leadership development, various areas of professional and vocational practice development and education are obvious.

Competence is often seen as the “outcome to use knowledge and skills effectively” (Brown, 1993:25) and meta-competence as the “higher-order abilities which have to do with being able to learn, adapt” (Brown, 1993:25), anticipate, create and move from knowing how and what, to knowing as doing, related to practical judgement, intuition, acumen and ‘being’ rather than ‘doing’ (see Brown, 2011:25; Davoudi, 2015; Lennon, 2015; Potgieter, 2012). In an attempt at developing a model to describe this multi-layered whole-person approach, Harden, Crosby, Davis and Friedman (1999:547) describe this notion in relation to the medical profession as doing the right things (what the doctor is able to do), doing the things right (how doctors approach their practice), and being the right person doing it (the doctor as professional) – with the last two categories relating to personal development. Of note is how the meta-competence description in this instance (i.e. the practitioner having appreciation for the role of the doctor as contributor to society and the aptitude for personal and professional development (Harden et al.,

1999:550)) relates to the notions of purpose and excellence in MacIntyre's description of the quest and virtues associated with a practice (Lennon, 2015).

Critics warn against an over emphasis on attempts at identifying and capturing competencies that are actually complex and varied in reductionist ways, on the individual versus company, team and collective impacts, or alternatively on the highly generic approaches and especially the 'troubling notion of ascription' and, thus, restriction in providing access to education and career opportunities in today's increasingly diverse workplaces (Jeris and Johnson 2004:1104 in Le Deist and Winterton, 2005:30). Once such warning is that: "These standards, once developed, find their way into practice through certification of people and processes, through accrediting agencies (public and private) for all sorts of educational programs, and through qualification examinations and licensure requirements ... The commodification of competence into certifiable competencies privileges the KSA (knowledge, skills and attitudes) worldview, and turns what Boon and van der Klink (2002) found to be a somewhat flexible concept into a rigid sorting mechanism that may have grave consequences for marginalized groups" (Jeris and Johnson 2004:1108 in Le Deist and Winterton, 2005:30).

Given the different dynamics added by the more functional and cognitive competency models that are aimed at developing standards and performance indicators from an employment or occupational side, in contrast to the more behavioural orientated models focusing on competence as residing in the practitioner, much emphasis has been placed on more holistic approaches. One of the most well-known frameworks is probably that developed by Cheetham and Chivers (2005) in which competence is viewed as underpinned by five 'sets of inter-connected competencies; including cognitive competence (knowing what), functional competences (skills or know-how); personal competency (related to personal characteristics); ethical competencies (values and ability to make practical judgements); and meta-competencies (the ability to handle change, learning and reflection, etc.). In the same vein, Le Deist and Winterton (2005:40-41) argue for a more holistic and integrated approach viewing competence as multi-faceted and holistic, and recognizing the importance of competence within the conceptual as well as operational domains, with unique and inter-related expression in both occupational and personal contexts, and proposing a focus on cognitive (knowledge), functional (skills), social (attitudes and behaviour) as well as meta-competence (facilitating, learning).

On the one hand, very like the South African situation that sparked the study, there is the host of practical challenges in finding common points of departure between the need for clarity, precision, rationality and linear progression to support the requirements of the various (and diverse) national qualification frameworks and practice specific fields; and, on the other hand, a call for more interpretive and whole-person approaches. Both pose quite a challenge for individuals in an increasing mobile and changing work world, as well as for those tasked with formal curriculum development and probably, even more so, with facilitating and supporting informal lifelong learning approaches.

#### **4.5.3 Career development and informal life-long learning processes**

Since the turn of the century, the importance of research and exploration on the 'border line' of adult development and learning, and the uncharted territory of life-span development perspectives in learning, career development, human resource management, psychology, business and specialised practices (i.e. engineering, planning, conservation, medicine, education and information sciences) have been brought to the fore by scholars and practitioners across the various disciplines (O'Reilly et al., 1999; Demick and

Andreoletti, 2003; Demick and Andreoletti, 2003; Hoare, 2006; Pushkar et al., 2007; Dolores Pushkar et al., 2007; Trodd and Chivers, 2011; Watson 2013, Jovanović and Chiong, 2014; Cheetham and Chivers, 2001; Chivers, 2006; Willis and Martin, 2005). Not even to mention the focus of multi-dimensional growth as key to future-orientated and leadership practices (Visser, 2011; Mendel, 2005; Brown, 2011; Schein, 2015) – discussed in more detail in Section 4.4.

Given the complexity of changes in the world of work, the focus has shifted considerably to personal development, professional growth, etc. vested in the person rather than in ‘a/the career’, influenced by concepts such as reflexive practice, boundaryless ‘careers’, global job market mobility, collaborative innovation, technology advances for interactive learning, social networks, and social entrepreneurship (see Potgieter, 2012; Simeon, 2012; Dall’Alba, 2009; Cheetham and Chivers, 2001; Cheetham and Chivers, 2005; Chivers, 2006). Thus, acknowledging horizontal growth paths for practitioners, various opportunities for specialization, the importance of whole person education, social entrepreneurship, and recognition of new models and processes of life-long and informal learning.

In the same vein, the importance of collaborative and learning-orientated practices, not only in tackling the knowledge and action gap, but in supporting fundamental societal learning and transformations, often through various, complex and informal networks has also been highlighted by various scholars (Kates et al., 2001:302; Barth et al., 2012; Dooris, 2009).

The value of, and ‘great scope in’, understanding learning, development and enhancement of advanced competencies amongst professionals, beyond the qualifying period and through the various career stages has been well articulated (Chivers, 2007; Cheetham and Chivers, 2001; Potgieter, 2012; Leydesdorff, 2010.). Two of the most widely recognized streams of work and influences (on a world-wide basis) on professional development practices and vocational development processes in many professional practices and vocations is the stream of work that gave rise to the ‘reflective practitioner and practice’ concept, primarily associated with Donald Schön’s research and publications on the importance and value of developing a reflective practice (Schön, 1987; Leung, 2008). A second stream of work is that of competency frameworks and professional and informal life-long learning (Leung, 2008), primarily generated/amplified through research conducted by Cheetham and Chivers during the 1990s, “across 20 professions ... on the range of experiences and events that practitioners had found particularly formative in helping them become fully competent professionals; this point often not having been reached until long after their formal professional training had ended” (Cheetham and Chivers, 2001).

Subsequent research in the field of continued professional education highlights the interest of *inter alia* educational institutions and the respective professional bodies in accreditation of continued professional development programs, the importance of informal learning approaches and the lack of focus thereof at the workplace, the non-linearity of growth experiences, new “taxonomies” of learning methods, life-long learning and individualized learning. Methods of informal learning as identified by Cheetham and Chivers (2001) illustrate that: “Although many professionals can identify learning from reflection on practice, they are often equally or more aware of other informal methods of learning, which have not received nearly so much attention from researchers and practitioners in the field of initial or continuing professional development” (Chivers, 2007:1).

Cheetham and Chivers identified and classified a range of informal learning methods, using the acronym PROFESSIONAL, including “practice and repetition, reflection, observation, feedback, extra-occupational transfer, stretching activities, switching perspectives, interaction with coaches and mentors, osmosis

(unconscious absorption), neurological and psychological devices, articulation and liaison and collaboration” (Chivers, 2007:4-6).

According to many scholars, personality characteristics and context are influential in making work-based learning more effective (Chivers, 2007:4) and in identifying the types of learning (i.e. working for qualifications, short courses, materials, special events, consultation and life outside work) and ranking its importance. Empirical research amongst 372 professionals from six professions indicates the importance of “on the job learning, working with experienced colleagues, working as part of a team, reflection, learning from clients, customers, etc., networking with others doing a similar job, learning through teaching, support from a mentor, use of a role model and pre-entry experience” (Chivers, 2007:6). In addition to this, there is also the recognition that different people are inclined towards different ways of learning and the importance of pro-activity, critical reflection and creativity in looking forward and looking back through intuitive and incidental learning experiences (see Mumford, 1995; Marsick and Watkins, 1990; Reber, 1993, in Chivers, 2007:4; and Honey and Mumford, 1989, in Lester, 1999:5). The importance of informal learning is intuitively evident and raises a question about why it does not feature as a more prominent part of learning and development within the various practices and professions. A question that becomes even more relevant when considering the next set of findings from the Chiver’s study. Namely, that in comparing findings among the respected professions, Chivers notes that surprisingly there are ‘significant differences’ between professions, not only in the type of learning, but also in the relevance of certain types of learning in certain career stages (Chivers, 2007:7) – a finding pointing to a huge gap in many practices, leaving many practitioners in fast changing practices faced with a focus on skills and knowledge instead of transformation (Dall’Alba, 2009:135), and “unassisted to contend with perhaps one of the most perplexing aspects of learning professional practice” (Dall’Alba, 2009:139).

Whilst there are many voices calling for reflexive practices (Schön 1987; Davoudi, 2015, Lennon, 2015, Sandercock, 2012; Campbell, 2012) and the importance of meta-competencies (as argued by Sandercock, 2012; Chivers, 2007; Brown, 2011; Carmichael and Stacey, 2006; Potgieter, 2012), and numerous curriculums, professional registration standards and CPD programs specify learning outcomes and credits in detail, these seem to remain focused on formal events and ‘tick-box’ orientated requirements geared towards ensuring that the minimum standards are met and not on ‘ways of being’ (Dall’Alba, 2009:136; Cheetham and Chivers, 2005 and 2001, Lester, 1999; Delamare Le Deist and Winterton, 2005; Mattila et al., 2012). Thus in essence, abiding to professional competence models that seem to remain ill-informed by an understanding of the complexity of multi-layered competence in relation to a whole person and contextually unique growth and development pathways, critical not only to achieve the self-development of the professional but, as is argued in the rest of the text, critical towards engaging the unfolding complex and multi-layered future.

This issue was already identified in 1994 in a study by Gear et al. into informal learning which stated that “whilst the main emphasis for... [p]rofessional bodies is typically on overt, formal and public means, with any informal learning in the background, for the individual it is the informal which looms largest and the formal inputs which play a supporting role” (Gear et al., 1994:71 in Lester, 1999:5).

#### **4.5.4 Summary reflection**

Within the above context, it is evident that the exploration as set out in this thesis to conduct an explorative and whole-person enquiry (not biased towards, or limited by, a competency framework or a

formal education or professional registration lens) into what planners seem to regard as significant in enabling them to strive for practice value and contribute in practice contexts, strongly resonates with the call to have a more integrated and whole person understanding about meta-competencies. It also requires awareness of the range of contextually specific experiences, influences and events that are said to impact life-long learning and professional development in formal and informal ways in other practices and so-called professions. As argued by Herman Stein in the practice of social work (see Stein, 2003:100 in Dall’Alba, 2009:139): “The struggle between conservatism and innovation takes place as much within the practice milieu of [professional] work as it does within the field of [professional] education”.

Key issues in the field of career development (for instance, regarding employability and gearing up for the new world of work, and competencies that would speak to the Y- and Z-generations) seem all to point to the well covered sets of competencies, qualities and growth stages as set out above (van der Merwe et al., 2007). This implies that even if the time period of the research stretched from the year 2001 and lost included a range of planners in the later phases in their working lives, the study is probably more important and significant for young planners/young practitioners. New notions of employability (Potgieter, 2012) are less associated with knowledge and skills that is discipline specific and increasingly associated with competencies required in the so-called 'new world of work' (Potgieter, 2012:54).

Competencies that, in addition to skills, knowledge and occupational expertise, include attitudes and behavioural skills such as motives, traits, self-esteem, self-efficacy, personality factors, social roles and risk taking and adaptability (Sparrow, 1995; Fugate et al., 2004; King, 2004 in Potgieter, 2012:154-155), as well as anticipation and optimisation (implying continuous development and lifelong learning), personal flexibility and ability to handle disappointments, participation in various groups and teams and the ability to self-manage and deal with competing life-work demands (see Van der Heijden and Van der Heijden, 2006 in Potgieter, 2012:162-164, and Kegan and Lahey, 2009 and 2001).

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON SHAPING THE ENQUIRY**

The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the findings from the literature review and share the key lessons and pointers for the exploration that took place. This has been used, firstly, to highlight the relevance and value of this and, secondly, to frame the enquiry.

Key discourses in the field of planning practice and theory clearly point to the importance of the topic of the enquiry, as well as the significance of intertwined concepts (such as purpose and motivation, ‘ways of knowing’, actions and ability, competence and virtues) within the practice quest to contribute to the unfolding future, as evident in Section 4.2. The review illustrates that there is an increased recognition of the inter-relationship between the soul of planning and the soul of the planner, as well as a growing focus on questions relating to the attitudes, meta-competencies and capabilities required by planners.

The review into existing research in the field, summarised in Section 4.3, illustrates that research into the invisible layer of meta-capabilities are often either theme specific (i.e. exploring situated judgement or capabilities required for more communicative practices), or conducted in terms of the competencies required to play a role within specific project or institutional contexts. Related enquiries to highlight the challenges, virtues and contributions of planners, within a specific contextual reality, seem to be largely project-based or informed by institutional specific observational and other qualitative research findings from studies. The study of Lennon (2015) that explores purpose-driven planning within the context of a planning career, but with a focus on one person’s specific contribution in establishing a new field of

knowledge/policy (see Lennon, 2015), points to the value of an engagement with the notions of purpose and practice association and capacity, and the need for similar enquiries – such as in this study.

The value and need to better understand the challenges, as well as the range of explicit and often implicit capabilities that enable planners to negotiate and add value in the midst of complexity, uncertainty and contestation have also been clearly highlighted in Section 4.3. The section also serves to illustrate the gap in knowledge about how such competencies and roles may shift between different contextual realities and career changes and stages, how planners adapt, and how such virtues and competencies are obtained, grown and supported within the context of a work-life and adventure history.

From the reviews conducted, it seems that knowledge about meta-competencies in the field are informed by a wide range of quantitative and qualitative surveys focused on planners and employers (thus largely in the domain of competencies that planners are explicitly aware of) and studies of planning qualification curricula, often related to the drive to reform curriculum development and professional standard setting. It confirms the need to explore ways in which virtues, values and meta-competencies of planners could be developed and supported. It also illustrates that there is a clear gap relating to explorations of how such capabilities are developed within the context of work-life experiences, adventures and transitions and in collaboration with colleagues, peers, mentors, friends, life events, family and a wide range of other role players and influences.

In Section 4.4 it is argued that notions such as integrative learning, purpose driven growth, life-long learning and adaptation are increasingly regarded as critical in the field of career development and the new world of ‘working’. The literature review also confirms the importance of whole-person approaches to development, the value and need for biographic and ‘profession’ or practice specific exploration of lifelong learning processes, and the value in employing narrative methods in identification of explicit and implicit practice related capabilities.

Given the increasing need for creative ways of being and the focus on purpose and contribution in the new world of work (as outlined in Section 4.5), I would argue that a study like this fills a huge gap in that it illustrates the value and contribution possible, in providing hope and in engaging young practitioners with questions around meaning-making that speaks to the heart and soul of being.

Section 4 illustrates that the topic of this enquiry is not only relevant to the practice of planning, but that the notions of purpose, meta-competence, contextual influences and key drivers and anchors are generally recognised as being critical in career decision-making, employability, and the new world of work. A number of frameworks to describe and explore meta-competencies, as well as pointers and possibilities for identifying and growing such competencies, exist; however, this study was not aimed at developing or testing such a framework or model.

Authors in the field seem to agree on the need and value of practice-specific research and the value of biographic and narrative research methodologies to conduct more integrative and holistic explorations about competence and competence development in relation to fast changing notions of a ‘career’.

As set out in Section 1, the purpose of this enquiry was to generate insights about the often ‘invisible’ and ‘ignored’ layers of drivers, beliefs, meta-competencies, qualities and growth influences that seem to play a critical role in enabling and impelling practitioners to add value within challenging, volatile and complex practice contexts.



Whilst, the invaluable (but also limited) impact of the range of competencies and growth experiences which participants are expected to acquire during formal planning education and continued professional development endeavours is acknowledged, the focus in the enquiry is on the dynamic inter-relations, personal and professional meta-competencies, and integrative, informal and ongoing learning and growth experiences

The premise underlying the research was that there are many dimensions of being and becoming that would encourage and enable practitioners to make a contribution in the practice of planning, and that such an exploration needs to be embedded in an integrative, whole-person, time-span and contextually rich understanding. In order to enable such a multi-dimensional enquiry, an exploration was undertaken of practitioner narratives of work-life experiences, with a focus on a specific time-span in the planning practice in South Africa.

To have generated a complete hypothesis would have required enough information about the nature and influence of 'being and becoming' in the working-lives of practitioners in planning as a practice: something not possible at the time of the interviews.

Having drawn from the knowledge field of planning theory, planning education and planning practice, as well as relevant future-orientated practices and insights related to competence, the world of work, life-long learning and personal and professional development, the following key elements have been identified as important in framing the enquiry.

Firstly, an integrative and contextual (situated) understanding of professional and personal competence within the work-life experiences of planning practitioners, not for the sake of developing a model for competence development or a framework for competence evaluation, but to explore:

- ⌘ The nature and interplay in competencies that seem to enable participants to overcome major challenges and contribute in specific contexts, as well as over time; and
- ⌘ Ways in which such competencies are developed, ignited and obtained.

It illustrates the multi-faceted nature of competence that enables personal and professional contribution, but also an ongoing process of learning and 'becoming'.

Secondly, the importance of considering the potential role of 'meaning, purpose and beliefs' within planning as a future-orientated practice aimed at achieving a 'common good'. Whereas, it is evident that the 'quest of planning' might be ambiguous and contentious, the literature review highlights the importance of:

- ⌘ The role ascribed to the spirit of planning in its practice and amongst practitioners;
- ⌘ The importance of personal and practice purpose, meaning and significance in the world of work (and professions such as planning);
- ⌘ The profound impact of transformative and more integrative and long-term perspectives on the questions 'why?' and 'for who?' in the meaning making abilities of leaders, in driving change, in engaging complexity and in the evolving nature of 'becoming'.

Thirdly, the deeply personal, contextually influenced and highly dynamic nature of 'being' as person and practitioner, and of integral and ongoing notions of becoming, growing, learning, adaptation, change and development is important. Whilst the value of formal and informal learning and the different dimensions

of learning brought about by different learning experiences is increasingly being recognised, little conceptual or individual case study-specific understanding is available about the dynamic interplay and feedback loops between experiences, sense of purpose, competence, learning and contribution in planning as a practice.

In considering the potential dynamic inter-relationship between competencies, meta-competencies, beliefs, drivers and this purpose filled 'quest in planning as a practice', the well-known Logical Levels Framework developed by Dilts and colleagues (see Dilts and De Lozier, 2000:667-680; Gillert, 2005 and Kessels and Smit, 2016 for an overview) has been identified as a way to provide insightful and simple perspectives on the important interplay between a number of critical and inter-dependent elements (i.e. between purpose (the 'calls to commit to the quest in planning as a practice'), changes in beliefs and perspectives (world-views as referred to in ecology and sustainability leadership fields), the development of highly personal meta-competencies, and the ongoing endeavour to improve capabilities and skills as part of a dynamic learning network, attitudes and behaviour). It also illustrates that even though we often conceptualise these aspects as isolated parts packed in conceptual categories, they are part of a dynamic and interactive network at play in ongoing personal development (Hoffman, 1993; Hocutt, 1997; Higgins, 2002; Hemingway, 2004; Juarrero, 2002).

Annexure B, Figure B.5, provides a conceptual framing to provide a framework for understanding the above in relation to a time-span and contextually rich context of work-life experiences. This illustrates the importance of horizontal and vertical learning, the impact of notions of purpose, drivers, world-views as drivers, the impact of unfolding practice experiences and contextual influences. The core role that purpose is revealed to play in relation with worldview and identity, and to actively influence belief and abilities also speaks very clearly to the powerful influences of vertical learning and transformational shifts – associated with the ability to change perspectives of the world, self and others (as outlined in Sections 4.4.2–4.4.4).

It is evident from the engagement with literature that an enquiry into work-life histories which touches on notions such as drivers, change, capability, meta-competency and personal development within the context of a career and the new world of work, would add much value to:

- ⊗ Work-life histories within the new world of work, where purpose (also regarded as critical for the – generation) seems to play a central role (e.g. also in giving rise to the growth in the field of social entrepreneurs);
- ⊗ The many other practices where the need to support the development of meta-competencies is clearly articulated, and where the emphasis on vertical growth and capabilities related to late-stage action logic, especially in leadership development, all point to the gap in exploring the time-span and work-life and practice related ways in contribution, personal and professional development; and
- ⊗ Using a whole-person approach, considering contextual influences and different personal and career decision-making influences and the interplay between personal strengths and interests, personal growth and notions of life-long learning and continuous professional development.

Given the search to find meaningful ways to explore the intangible and elusive notion of this quest in planning as a practice, I have elected to use 'the quest' as metaphor and to make it central to the enquiry in the study to aid in the process of meaning making. For this I have drawn from myth and narrative and the timeless works of Joseph Campbell (2008) and Christopher Vogler (2007). In the 'hero's journey' the 'call for adventure' or stage of 'departure' is described as "the point in a person's life when they are first

given notice that everything is going to change" (Lucasfilms, 1999). Most importantly, the 'call to adventure' provides the impetus to the future hero for commitment to the 'quest', to take action and to leave the 'ordinary world' for the 'new world'. Within the world of myth, the hero of a particular journey or adventure, in this case the practitioner in planning as a practice, becomes the central figure through which the 'intangible', the commitment to the quest and its dynamic inter-relations can be explored. The appropriateness of the metaphor is evident given that typically the hero is called to leave the 'ordinary world' for an adventure and quest filled with challenges and has aims of making something 'better', bringing about change or 'saving the world' – most often regarded as outer world problems and inner world challenges (Vogler, 2007:283).

The literature review clearly illustrates the value and need for this enquiry into the 'being and becoming' of practitioners within the field of planning as a future-orientated practice. The review illustrates the illusive nature of, and also confirms, the value and contribution of the study in providing insight into the dynamic interaction between this purpose enthused 'commitment to the quest in planning as a practice' and the influence it seems to have on enriching and heightening the capabilities and contribution of practitioners in planning as a practice.

It points to significant interplays between drivers, beliefs, competence, characteristics, as well as formal and informal learning processes and influences. In addition to this, the importance of the enquiry as highlighted in related future-orientated practices and the field of career studies, and the value and important contribution that the novel research approach is expected to bring to this enquiry are also confirmed.



# PART TWO:

## Explorations, meaning making, reflections

*The modern hero, the modern individual who dares to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom it is our whole destiny to be atoned, cannot, indeed must not, wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalized avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding. 'Live,' Nietzsche says, 'as though the day were here.' It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal – carries the cross of the redeemer – not in the bright moments of this tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair.*

*(Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 2008:337)*

*To paraphrase Wagenaar ..., what planners know is not entirely held in their memory, codified rule books, databases or websites but is embodied in the actions that they are engaged in. Their knowing as embodied, embedded and enacted knowledge allows them to extend beyond what is known, to become 'seasoned' planners capable of making practical judgement.*

*(Davoudi, 2015:322)*

*A life is made up of a great number of small incidents and a small number of great ones.*

*(Roald Dahl, 1986. Going Solo)*

*[A] key driver in the birth and rise to prominence of the early town planning movement was the belief of its protagonists in the power of science, reason, creativity and ability, coupled with a belief in the positive outcome of such actions.*

*(Oranje, 2014:6)*

*To best understand urban planners and their theory, it is first necessary to view who they are and how they relate to the world about them.*

*(Burchell, 1988:4 in Oranje, 1997:29)*

*[N]o line of work can be fully understood outside the social matrix in which it occurs or the social system of which it is part.*

*(Hughes, 1958:73 in Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:19)*



# 5

## Explorations and insights from work-life experiences

*[G]enuine drama and deliberation [occurs] where predictable choice is jettisoned, the presumptions of destiny are challenged, and remarkable transformations are achieved by acts of will and choice. It is curious how uninterested careers theory and research seems to be in these events – which often shape the course of human history – compared with our attention to the more commonplace phenomena of career development.*

*(Nicholson, 2007:571)*

*Kant said that life's three great questions are:*

*What can I do? What ought I do? What can I hope for?*

*(Greyling, 2005:98)*

*[W]hether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration – a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.*

*(Joseph Campbell, 2008:42-43)*

*We must decide what manner of men we wish to be and what calling in life we would follow; and this is the most difficult problem in the world.*

*(Cicero to his son Marcus in On Duties (Book I, Section 32) in: Moore, Gunz, Hall, 2007:21.)*

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section shares some insights into what enabled participants to contribute to their planning practice by making use of the key quest metaphor to explore and reflect on significant work-life experiences identified within the respective work-life narratives.

Given that interviews took place within the context of the work-life adventure as a range of adventures and within a moment in time in an unfolding working life, most participants shared work-life experiences that resonate strongly with high impact experiences of being called to action, departure on the ‘quest’ or entering the practice, facing first trials and embarking on adventures and challenges to add value on their path. A few of the older participants, in reflecting on their work-life experiences, highlighted a specific experience as ‘the (or one of the) most significant’ experiences, or ordeals within their work-life context.

Reflections are based on the explorations of the vast number of experiences and adventures shared by participants in rich work-life narratives, of which only limited examples have been shared and used in the text. Annexure C provides an overview of some of the analyses and key themes identified in work-life narratives, as well as examples of reconstructed narratives.

The brief overview of participants’ work-life narrative elements and the rest of Section 5 are structured as follows:

- ⌘ The planning ‘world’ of participants in South Africa at the time (Section 5.2);
- ⌘ Calls to action, departure and meeting the mentors (Section 5.3);
- ⌘ Trials and initiation experiences (Section 5.4); and
- ⌘ Challenges, adventures and rewards (Section 5.5).

Reflecting on the nature and role of ‘being, becoming and contributing in planning as a practice’, the participants’ work-life experiences, in relation to the respective myth elements, strongly pointed to drivers and motivators that seem to have impelled contribution (why they have been able to do what they do) and supported beliefs that the future can be shaped; revealed prominent ways in which contributions were enabled with multiple reference to how this was done in collaboration with others (how and with whom they have been able to contribute); as well as shaping influences and growth experiences and the significance of a range of key actors (how and through whom they have grown in this process) in enabling contributions.

The work-life experiences also form a key part of the backdrop for the insights shared in relation to the time-span overview (Section 6) as well as the research enquiry and the contemplation on what could potentially be learned from these insights in relation to a number of questions that seem prominent within discourses in the practice of planning (Section 8).

Using the quest metaphor to make meaning of ‘work-life’ narratives does not imply that work-lives are seen or equated to a pre-determined path and one-directional journey. Work-lives are rather viewed as sets of adventures and experiences. The journey of work-life, and adventures within that, is marked by successive calls to adventure: the testing of the hero and communities of practice; the requirement to assert who are allies or who are enemies and rivals; engaging with new rules or games of chance; experiencing significant transitions and facing many ordeals (See the extensive descriptions by Joseph Campbell, 2008 and Christopher Vogler, 2007). The metaphor is used to guide the enquiry (and thus our

attention) and enables meaning making through the identification of agency in coherent patterns, paradoxes and dynamic inter-relationships (Snowden, 2013).

Reconstructed snippets of work-life narratives capturing examples of calls for action, initiation experiences and adventures in the quest are used throughout this section. These supplement the explorations and reflexive interpretations with rich and work-life contextualised examples presented in the text boxes.

## **5.2 THE PLANNING ‘WORLD’ OF PARTICIPANT WORK-LIFE NARRATIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **5.2.1 Introduction**

The section provides an indication of the context, challenges and focus areas in the ‘ordinary’ and ‘special’ worlds (Campbell, 2008; Vogler, 2007) of planning quests in South Africa to which participants were called, as well as an introduction to the participants and their work-life experiences (Section 5.2.3), against that backdrop.

As stated in Part 1, the focus of the enquiry on ‘being, becoming and contributing’ in the practice of planning (within the context of the larger purpose of the study’s quest) was to add value to endeavours aimed at supporting practitioners (such as myself) in planning, and to contribute to the unfolding future in challenging and uncertain practice contexts. The challenges and tensions in the South African planning context were regarded as a potentially valuable backdrop to explore planner work-life experiences and contribution during times of significant challenges, uncertainty and transition.

For the purpose of this exploration, a contextual overview of the South African planning environment that preceded and unfolded in the same geographical and temporal context of the participants’ work-life narratives was developed to provide the context within which to explore the work-life narratives (Section 5.2.2). A summary of the time-span context of planning in South Africa is provided in Annexure A: Figure A.1, with indications of key focus areas in planning in the country and their relation to broader socio-political contexts and international trends in planning.

A brief introduction to participants and their work-life experiences is provided in Section 5.2.3.

The section concludes that the South African planning context as selected in time and space does indeed provide a backdrop of multi-layered complexity and major transitions within participant work-life time-spans. This backdrop is useful in providing some context for the influences, choices and quests that unfolded within the participants’ work-life narratives.

### **5.2.2 Key events, challenges and areas of attraction**

Within the complex and multi-layered practice(s) and experiences of planning, a few of the selected significant shape-shifting moments, calls and events are described in relation to the time-span diagram and a time-line marking significant policy and legislative changes. This provides a glimpse into the modernist origins, the growth journeys, reflections, critiques, adventures, victories and vices of the practice of planning in South Africa. Some ‘key moments’ in the community of practice and in planning education, an indication of significant focus areas in the practice, and an indication of planning roles, and notions of the often contradictory ‘identity’ of planning as practice (highlighting some of the main drivers and perspectives) during the time period are given (See events indicated as @PlanSA\_1-23, on Figure A.1 and



briefly outlined in Annexure A and Oranje's multi-dimensional exploration of planning's unfolding history in South Africa (Oranje, 1997)).

The unfolding of events, challenges, areas of attraction and roles of planners during the last century provide a clear indication of the tainted identity and seemingly parallel focus areas and quests that unfolded in the contexts of working-lives of planners in the practice(s) of planning during that time in South Africa, and more specifically in those of the participants in this enquiry. The 'world' and key issues in planning can briefly be summarised as:

- ⌘ The background and origins of a modernist and technical rational approach to planning in South Africa (Figure A.1 @PlanSA\_1-4). Firstly, associated with the rapid town growth that followed the discovery of diamonds and gold in the late 1800s and for which a foundation was laid for development control and, secondly, with the call for comprehensive town plans in the post-world war periods and the introduction of racial segregation in South Africa.
- ⌘ The establishment of planning as a discipline and practice concerned with improved living conditions and coordinated use of resources but, also, as a strong instrument in entrenching racial segregation (Figure A.1 @PlanSA\_5-7) during the 1950s.
- ⌘ Planning becoming increasingly prominent but also being influenced by the spatial legacies and bureaucracy associated with the Apartheid regime during the 1960s and 1970s (Figure A.1 @PlanSA\_8-11) and a period of increased urbanisation wherein black urbanisation was cast as 'temporary'.
- ⌘ Whilst socio-economic and political challenges and tensions were increasing in cities and across South Africa during the 1980s, the practice of planning was increasingly torn between compliance and critique (Figure A.1 @PlanSA\_12-14), with communities of practice in planning largely divided between those driving development from within, or in critique of, the constraints of the planning system.
- ⌘ Lastly, times of transformation in the 1990s to early 2000s – which not only brought great excitement, change and newly negotiated legal and institutional frameworks but a series of major transformations in the planning system and practice in South Africa, and in communities and associations of practitioners within the practice (Figure A.1 @PlanSA15-17).

As indicated, the enquiry was based on an exploration of the work-life narratives of 25 participants derived from in-depth personal interviews. The participants' work-life narratives spanned a period from the 1960s to 2001.

### 5.2.3 The participants

The sample consisted of 25 participants, whose work-life narratives spanned a period from the 1960s to 2001. The number of years of experience varied from just over five to almost 35 years (See Figure 5.1).

As indicated in Section 4, the aim of the sample was not to be representative of the South African population or planning practice, but it does reflect the largely white and male nature of the planning fraternity at the time, with the exception of four black and eight female planners. Just over half of the participants were aged between 25 and 45, eight between 45 and 60 years of age and four over 60 years (See Figure C.1, Annexure C).

Amongst the participants, the type of work place experience was quite well distributed between private practice, experience in local government, experience in regional government and experience in research,

policy and planning education. The 'other' category includes NGOs, as well as residents and/or community associations (See Figure 5.2).

An interesting characteristic of the participant work-life narratives was the emphasis placed on work-life experiences and not on outcomes or achievements. Even though many of the participants interviewed were involved in endeavours of national and regional significance, the focus in the narratives was on passionately describing experiences, as well as the challenges and growth influences within them, with little reference to personal successes or career positions as such.

By the time of the interviews, six of the participants had at times taken the lead as heads of planning schools during their careers, eight of them had been directors in their own planning and/or architecture firms, and eleven had held senior management positions in local and regional government institutions. Fifteen of the participants had also been involved either in training and capacity building, or lecturing in formal and/or informal ways, and/or actively involved in practice-associations and support to the profession.

Amongst a wide range of significant contributions and achievements, participants in the study were involved in and/or responsible for:

- ⌘ The establishment of two new planning schools (See relation to the time-span overview of planning in South Africa Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_9);
- ⌘ The establishment and heading of research units to evaluate and provide a critique against apartheid government policies and the establishment of non-government organizations to support access to land and housing for black communities in the apartheid years (See relation to the time-span overview of planning in South Africa Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_10; @PlanSA\_13);
- ⌘ The development of two of the most well-known and innovative metropolitan plans in two cities in South Africa during that time;
- ⌘ Internationally renowned city revitalization projects, including spearheading a major waterfront development and a city's Olympic bid;
- ⌘ A wide range of policy and planning guideline development for the new planning system in South Africa established after the 1994 democratic elections (See relation to the time-span overview of planning in South Africa Figure A.1 @ SAPlan\_15);
- ⌘ The establishment of ground breaking metropolitan integrated development and longer term planning processes and plans and, in another case, developing the first integrated development planning process where plans for five newly established rural municipalities and a district municipality had to be combined within the context of the newly established Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (See relation to the time-span overview of planning in South Africa Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_17); and
- ⌘ Authoring and contributing to numerous academic publications (journal articles and books), as well as a wide range of policies, plans, client reports and other publications.

Figure 5.1: Participant work-life time-span overview

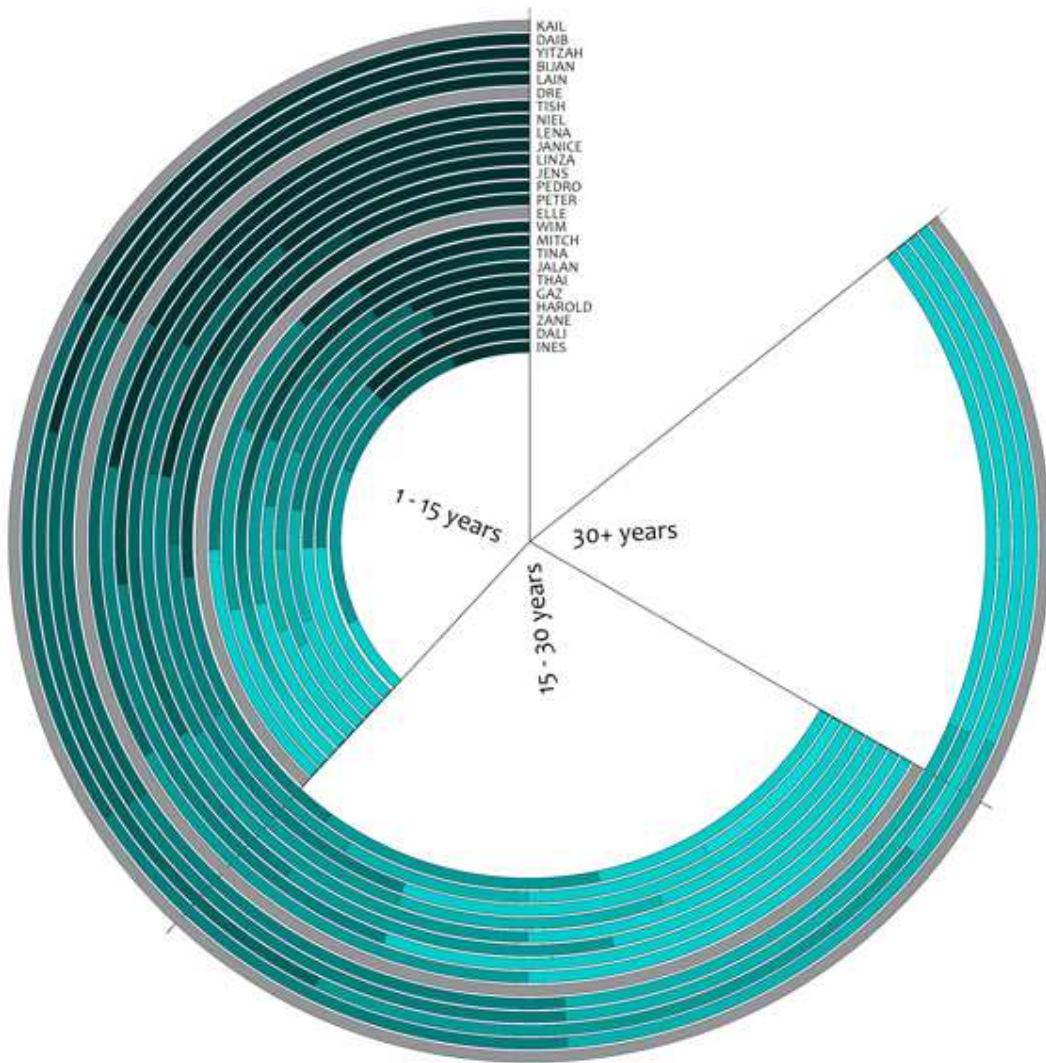
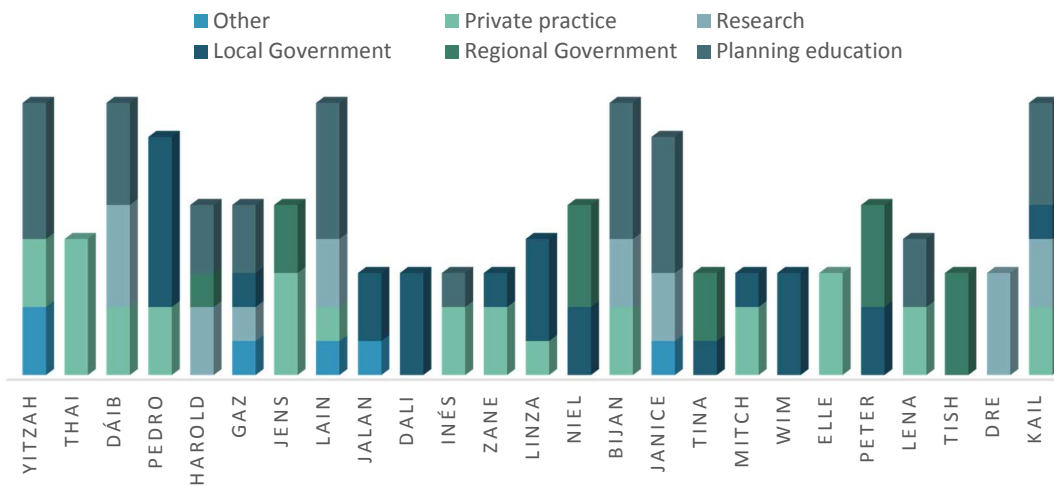


Figure 5.2: Participant 'time spent at type of workplace' relative to total experience in years



#### 5.2.4 Summary reflections

Influenced by the prior time periods, the challenges and focus areas during the latter three time periods (and primarily in the 1970s to 2000s) mirror some of the significant contextual influences and choices that the practice and participants in this study were faced with (See ‘Planning and Planning Education Events’, ‘Roles of Planners’ and ‘Purpose, Drivers and Identity of the Practice of Planning’ summary columns in Figure A.1 @SAPlan, Annexure A). These challenges and focus areas include contextual and personal challenges and options (often contradictory) through engaging in a practice of planning that was highly bureaucratic and technical, as well as extremely political; considerations of a professional career; for many engaging in a quest aimed at enhancing living conditions; and contributing towards a more sustainable future and/or solving complex challenges within quickly changing cities and towns across South Africa.

In reflecting on this overview, a few key aspects have been identified that provide valuable context for the work-life narratives, reflections and experiences as shared by the participants within the enquiry. These include:

- ⌘ Diverse and even contradictory roles played by practitioners (and sometimes by the same practitioner/s) in the field in different eras and in different communities of practice and quests;
- ⌘ The expanding range of focus areas (areas of attention) over time, and the associated challenges and even paradoxes in approaching increasingly complex and intractable problems. It is interesting to note that, for instance, whilst a particular issue in the ‘issue-attention cycle’ (Poulton, 1991:227 in Oranje, 1997:172) is in the public eye, it becomes a central focus in discourse, in policy and inevitably eventually becomes embedded in the regulatory framework. Whilst a ‘new’ or ‘freshly phrased’ challenge becomes the next focal point in the ‘issue-attention cycle’, the layers of issues embedded in policy, regulations and guidelines in (initially intended to be) strategic and integrated spatial and development planning processes, and the accompanying administrative burden, systematically increases. This not only keeps the bureaucratic part of planning in place and increasing over time – in spite of all the attempts at breaking the mould – but impacts on the escalating range of competencies, skills, knowledge fields and focus areas within the practice;
- ⌘ The shifts and increase in role players and education institutions within the practice of planning; and
- ⌘ The embedded and shifting nature of the quest for planning with which practitioners identify (which seem to be advocated and embedded by influential role players within their practices), especially in their role in mentoring, inspiring and shaping the identity and critical thinking processes of new incumbents in the practice.

This section provides a useful context for engaging in the participant work-life narratives, and especially the significant challenges, quests and choices within that. It also illustrates that the South African planning context and unfolding challenges in cities, municipalities, institutions and the planning system during the selected time period could be described as a multi-layered complex context and a time of uncertainty. It is a time indeed where urgency and needs on the ground, complex socio-economic and spatial transformation and long-term sustainability was required and called forth (or rather provided the opportunity for) radical capabilities and contributions from, amongst others, the practice of planning and practitioners in that practice.

## 5.3 CALLS TO ACTION, DEPARTURE AND MEETING THE MENTORS

### 5.3.1 Introduction

In terms of the quest metaphor, calls to action and stage of ‘departure’ experiences can be described as “the point in a person's life when they are first given notice that everything is going to change” (Lucasfilms, 1999). Joseph Campbell describes these moments as either heralded by that which might be dark and associated with anxiousness (Campbell, 2008:44-45), or as a dream and an “atmosphere of irresistible fascination” which, even when the hero returns to his or her original world (which would then lose its allure and sense of value), becomes stronger through increasingly visible signs – until “the summons can no longer be denied” (Campbell, 2008:46) – as experienced by Frodo the Hobbit on his quest for the ring (Tolkien, 1991) or the Handless Maiden setting off on her lonely and sad journey to lead a life of begging in the forest (Estés, 1992:387-453).

Calls to action and departure experiences in the participant work-life narratives seem to have been typically associated with a time in their working lives when they got enthused with a sense of purpose to contribute to society, a bigger cause and/or the unfolding collective future.

The prominence of such experiences in the participant work-life narratives was clearly evident from the explorations and reflections in these narratives (See Annexure C, Table C.6). Using the quest metaphor allowed the study to delve into the significance and nature thereof, identify the differences in the ways in which it unfolded in work-life and practice contexts and, especially, that which seemed coherent between diverse experiences (i.e. the significance of personal purpose, association and commitment with practice purpose, belief, identity, practice association and highly relational practice experiences).

The subsequent section is structured to:

- ⌘ Firstly, provide a brief overview and some examples of calls to action to the practice of planning and some detours or delays;
- ⌘ Secondly, illustrate the significance of personal calls to action, beliefs and perspectives about the world and the role that formative and work-life experiences seem to have had in creating personal calls to action; and
- ⌘ Thirdly, highlight the significance ascribed to association with the practice of planning (not only in terms of alignment between personal purpose and beliefs and the quest and tradition of planning, but also as practice ‘fitting personal interests and strengths’).

As illustrated by some examples in this section, it is concluded that experiences that could be described as calls to action – experiences and transitions as reflected in participant work-life narratives – play a critical role in enabling and driving contribution as they entailed (in many different ways and in no particular order):

- ⌘ A personal call to action and sense of purpose to contribute to the common good of humanity and this world – often kick-started by a heartfelt caring and feeling that the world was unjust, deepened by a transformational change in perspective that includes caring widely (beyond one’s own context), an awareness and appreciation of diversity and different ways of living, and/or seeing the world and future as highly interconnected;

- ⌘ A call to planning as a practice that fits personal interests and strengths, and that would allow space for ‘authentic expression’; and
- ⌘ A call to action to planning’s quest as a practice that essentially shares in the ideals of creating a better world, of contributing to the common good and the future by taking action, and that inspires belief in the possibility that this can be done, or at least that this is a virtuous cause for dedicated practice heroes.

### 5.3.2 The promise of planning as a personal call

Experiences that can be associated with calls to action and departure experiences seem to have played a prominent role in almost all the participant work-life narratives (See Annexure C, Table C.5).

References to early work-life experiences (See Annexure C, Table C.3) include “Finding feet”, “Lighting the candle”, “Training and learning”, “Early understanding”, “Early work & study”, “Self-reflection”, and “Preparation and courage”. The names of ‘acts’ or phases clearly describe the early years of most of the participants as being ‘formative experiences’ (see Mason, 2013 for a more in-depth description of formative experiences). The participants’ reflections on their first encounters with planning, considered as calls to departure on planning’s quest in this section, were in most cases recounted with a sense of excitement, passion and often an ‘a-ha’ moment of confirmation to start engaging with burning questions (See Text Box 5.1: @Thai\_2) and resonating with statements such as:

- ⌘ “I always wanted to be a planner!” (@Gaz);
- ⌘ “(I) had a clear image that I should be in planning practice.” (@Kail); and
- ⌘ A feeling of being impelled to do planning “to implement bold programmes (and) sort out problems” (@Harold).

Participant work-life narratives illustrate a commitment and focus on contributing to the collective good and future, and the promise that planning could be a practice through which to heed calls to action : “to make things happen” (@Pedro), “to bring about change” (@Thai), contributing “towards improving conditions for people” (@Zane), and to be “making a practical difference” (@Lina).

Many of the calls to action within the participant work-life narratives have their origin in a deep rooted social concern with justice, racial inequality, human rights as well as quality of life and poverty. The plight of the poor and the marginalized, terrible living conditions, the uprooting and displacement of families and a lack of opportunities have been deep and heartfelt concerns reflected in many of the narratives. A number of participants mentioned were aware of social injustices at an early age (e.g. @Thai; @Harold; @Jalan; @Tisch; @Mitch; @Dali) and reported being “quite horrified” (@Gaz) with the injustices and resultant implications for certain communities. This obviously raised awareness and many concerns and questions about “how this could be solved?” (@Harold) or “How can we make the world a better place? What are the problems that the world faces? And, how do we lay the right foundations for people to live positive and constructive lives?” (@Harold).

Such concerns and questions seem to have become a prominent driving force as their working lives unfolded, providing an inherent power and agency, which in the context of myth is often associated with commitment to the quest (Campbell, 2008).

### Text Box 5.1: @Thai\_2: #Call to Action

@Thai: “It [Planning] was very challenging and useful to what I thought was relevant... I think that the philosophy of planning and the ethics/values that came with it were a heavy influence and I felt that planning was capable of concrete interventions. In a sense I feel that I am always learning, but I would say watershed events... I would say in about the 8th month of my planning degree it clicked in a sense and I suddenly understood what it was all about... I think it came through asking what lay behind it. What was the core philosophy, and what are they trying to teach us, and why I think I began to recognise the strong relationship between how and urban system works and the patterns of activity that correspond to that... influences... impacts... It was probably a result of the 8 months learning that we had, as well as just going back to some critical reading. I think for me some of my Professor’s introductions to his books and stuff were critical in informing my own basis of understanding... Planning is not for anybody that doesn’t have a desire to understand the processes that affect us, and how we can use that to our benefit. ... I don’t think anybody can full understand these things...”  
(See Figure 3.1: @Thai Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative)

### Text Box 5.2: @Gaz\_1-2: #Call to Action

@Gaz: “I always wanted to be a planner!” In spite of some setbacks in his first year, he did not abandon the call to action and started working with a private planning practice. He reflected how this turned out to be quite a valuable experience, preparing him for what he could expect and making him more determined to continue. He described the first two years of his course as a time of dedication and creativity followed by a time of “immersion into the world”. Arising from his strong stance against the injustices in South African society, he became involved in the Student Representative Council and the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) SRC. Here he was suddenly exposed to and “enthused” by people at the forefront of the struggle against Apartheid; people that were dedicated and passionate, and committed to the quest of equality – such as Helen Joseph, Beyers Naudé and Eddie Webster. Reflecting on this time, he highlighted the major influence of two mentors in planning education: describing the one as “inspiring and passionate”, and the other as “a rigorous educator, even though somewhat more conservative”.  
(See Annexure C, Figure C 3: @Gaz Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative)

### Text Box 5.3: @Thai\_1: #Call to Action

An early childhood call to action was mentioned by @Thai, who spent his high school years in a school in Swaziland: “set up in the sixties sort of in response to the grope of Apartheid... [i.e.] to show South Africa and the South African government, that blacks and whites could work and live together.” In this context he explained how he experienced the realities of Apartheid in challenges encountered in crossing the border post, but more so in being exposed to different perspectives of the world. As he states, “It was a great place to grow up and develop different views on the world with different perspectives. For me it was quite a shock. Coming out of South Africa and quite a privileged schooling system and going into that! ... having everything questioned, having to question and look at different aspects and alternatives, so, that for me was a very important experience and made me question a lot of things about myself, what I believe, what is right or wrong. Also being able to understand that not all things are either right or wrong ... the importance of understanding knowledge, sharing, and differences ... of overcoming difference”.  
(See Figure 3.1: @Thai Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative)

Given that, by the time the interviews were conducted, the social and political agenda and associated changes in South Africa played a prominent role in planning discourses and in transforming the planning system (See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_17-18), these type of concerns and drivers could be expected.

Together with the concerns relating to social justice, the increased concern for sustainability within the context of a much more collective future was also voiced, especially in the reflections of the participants who received their call to action during the 1990s. Even though not described as such within the time period of the interview (at which time sustainability and initiatives related to Local Agenda 21 was the hot topic of the day), the perspectives of inter-connectedness, appreciation for diversity, long term and global caring, etc. can be related to what has subsequently been described (and called for) as an ecological worldview (du Plessis, 2009; Brown, 2011; Schein, 2014).

It is interesting to note that some participants described their call to action in planning as “a blunder [into] an unsuspected world” (Campbell, 2008:42. Own insert in brackets) with life changing consequences. An ‘error’ that Joseph Campbell (and Freud, 1901 and 1963 in Campbell, 2008:41) describes in the context of “The Hero’s Journey” as everything but mere chance, but rather “ripples on the surface of life”, manifested through a calling of the soul.

One such example is mentioned by @Jalan, who explained how he came into planning by “mistake” and then found “that what they were doing, was ... what I want to study! That is when the interest began ... also working with communities, working with local municipalities.” @Yitzah described a similar experience of “stumbling across” planning as possibly one of the biggest “turning points” in his life.

There were also those participants that seem to have heeded the call somewhat reluctantly, either more focused on career than contribution and without much commitment initially (e.g. @Tina, @Lena, @Mitch). However, they later engaged in experiences that provided the impetus for the ignition of an interest and a passion, and that inevitably became the commitment to a quest into a “new world” (Lucasfilms, 1999). As @Lina explained, she started in planning for the sake of being in a professional career but got enthused with the idea of “making a practical difference”.

In other cases the ‘path’ almost unfolded organically over time (e.g. @Niel, @Lain and @Janice) with both @Janice and @Lain recounting how studies in geography and experiences that inspired interests in cities and social-political and economic justice and future sustainability, provided a fertile ground for being called to action and contribution. Taking the next step and heading the call to interact with dynamic mentors in planning, as the case in most of the work-life narratives, thus merely seemed to have led to connecting personal and practice purposes, and their association with the practice and active involvement to bring about socio-economic and spatial transformation in South African cities, as well as changes in the practice of planning in the country.

### **5.3.3 Shaped by formative experiences, beliefs, perspectives and mentors**

As could probably be expected from the fact that the work-life experiences of most of the participants spanned the transition from the Apartheid regime to the democratic South Africa (See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan), exposure to the harshness of poverty and inequality, and the injustices brought about by apartheid not only raised awareness, but seem to have solicited a critical questioning, concern and sense of caring about broader societal issues amongst the participants.



One such example was mentioned by @Harold, who recollected his call to action in the 1970s during his early high school years. His parents were involved with community development organizations in rural South Africa, and he recognised the influence of this “service ethos background” and the “lasting impression” that the impact of a water-borne epidemic in a settlement where there was no service delivery had on him – triggering a profound question of “How could this be solved?” In the same way @Gaz recollected how his early understandings of apartheid resulted in him as a young adult being “... quite horrified because of injustices”, but also clear about the need for action and the call to the practice of planning (Text Box 5.2: @Gaz\_1-2).

A large number of the participants also attested to the influence that their young adult experiences such as traveling, extensive reading and intense study experiences with inspiring mentors and peers, seemed to have had on them. The experiences recounted seemed to have contributed on the one hand to the participants’ perspectives of the world as an interconnected place shifting and broadening (e.g. @Thai, @Dali, @Pedro – See Text Box 5.3: @Thai\_1, Text Box 5.4: @Dali\_1), and on the other in fostering a highly personal belief in the possibility of intervening in the unfolding future (e.g. @Zane, @Yitzah, @Jalan).

Given that planning was not a well-known field of study and practice in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s (See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_6-7), such young adult experiences were specifically relevant to older participants who started their studies and work experiences in architecture and the field of geography, (Text Box 5.5: @Bijan\_1-2) got enthused through travelling and other perspective changing experiences, and embarked on courses and qualifications in the field of planning later in their work lives (@Daib, @Pedro and @Bijan).

Almost as if in another world, but sparking a similar sense of belief in the possibility of large scale intervention, are formative experiences mentioned by some of the older participants (with about 30 years of experience), who grew up in the aftermath of World War II and the associated reconstruction and development drives in Europe.

These early adult experiences and the strong influences of mentors sparked inspiration related to the possibilities that could be unlocked through the modernist endeavour of development as adventure – for some through early exposure to architecture (@Daib, @Kail, @Pedro – See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_3,4), and for others through exposure to the roll-out of large scale infrastructure in South Africa (@Yitzah, @Peter, @Jens – See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_3-7 and Text Box 5.6: @Yitzah\_1-2).

It is acknowledged that some of the formative experiences mentioned in relation to the participants’ decisions to embark on planning’s ‘quest’ might have related more to the courage and belief in the possibility of influencing their personal futures rather than to a call to heed planning’s ‘quest’. For instance, some significant beliefs in pursuing the quest of planning as a practice related to the participants growing up in the post-depression years or in difficult socio-economic circumstances, such as under apartheid, or (as experienced by two participants) as single mothers who had to provide for children – circumstances that required the belief and courage to change their own destinies.

### Text Box 5.4: @Dali\_1: #Call to action

In reflecting on his passion for planning, @Dali recounted what can be regarded as early calls to action during his “early life as [an] activist” and experiences and involvement with civil society as a teenager in the 1980s. Experiences that he regarded as not only having had a major impact on his passion for transformation but also serving him well in later years in terms of skills and attitude – “recognizing that all the people you are working with do not share the same understanding”. Not only inspiring him to act, but also igniting an interest in engaging with communities, civil society, and intense transformation and conflict ridden processes. As he explained, “You just pick it up along the way ... understanding people ... the grassroots structures, you have people and you watch them.”

### Text Box 5.5: @Bijan\_1-2: #Call to action #Initiation

@Bijan explained that his initiation into planning had had a lasting impact on his work-life. It all started when he, as an architect, started to teach and work with an inspiring mentor in an environment where planning projects were undertaken. It was there that he realized the implications that the broader built environment had on people’s living conditions and the importance thereof. This inspired him to pursue a postgraduate qualification in planning and urban design at an international university. With the support of his mentor, he decided to leave private practice and immerse himself in reading and part-time teaching to prepare himself and apply for scholarships. This adventure he embarked on after a year, with a new wife and young stepdaughter at his side ...

“It was an amazing period; there were very good people there, Kahn in architecture and in planning there were some top guys, David Crane and a whole lot of other people. ... Not a very large class though. The joint program never admitted more than 12 people. Most of the work and studio [members were] a small group drawn from quite a wide array of places. India, South America, mostly Americans ... quite a broad spectrum of socio-economic strata.

“However, it was indeed financially challenging as my wife could not work and we had to find schooling for my stepdaughter. I thus had to start working part-time and got a job with a local firm for 20 to 25 hours a week.

“... They were highly experienced and learned people, some of whom were at the forefront of the ecological revolution that was going on at the time ... I worked on a number of projects while I worked full time on the two-year program ... I have never worked so hard in all my life ... So this was really study!”

### Text Box 5.6: @Yitzah\_1-2: #Call to Action

@Yitzah explained how he started his working-life as a young man who finished school in 1957, in a time where it seemed impossible for someone from a rather poor Afrikaans “plattelandse” (rural) family to get into a university. Except of course if you were willing to become a teacher or a pastor, for which you could apply for a bursary from either the church or the government. It was a time though of few people being able to afford to send their children to university. He describes how in hindsight it was “one hell of a thing” and took a lot of courage to take the brave “big step of getting onto a train into a strange world”. It was a time of “finding feet” – arriving in the Free State and starting work at Sasol as an assistant in the laboratory. It took about two years after coming from a remote rural area in South Africa for him to ‘catch up’ with those from the ‘city’. Sasol was then one of the largest employers in South Africa. It was a time that he describes (with the proviso of not wanting to sound arrogant) as one of discovering his own abilities and gaining in confidence. He mentioned how during the 1960s – a highly modernist time, with various big and bold long term initiatives – there was a belief in ‘cause and effect’ and that if you “just provided enough energy and money then we can make things happen”. He for one saw in the practice of planning at that time the possibility to create new possibilities for the country through large scale and bold programs, such as that of the Gariep Dam development, and to intervene in issues associated with large scale white urbanization.  
(See Annexure C, Figure C.5: @Yitzah Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative)

### Text Box 5.7: @Daib\_2: #Initiation

@Daib recounted how whilst overseas after completing his master’s degree in Town Planning, he was asked by the head of an architecture department at one of the universities in South Africa to come back and start the then (new) post-graduate planning qualification with him. “When I arrived... he asked me into his office one day and asked: ‘What do you know about this planning thing?’ So I said: ‘Actually, \*#x^\* all!’ I said: ‘What about you?’, and he said: ‘About the same, so we better start working!’ And that is what we did! And looking back, my education in planning was absolutely useless... We began a major learning process ... an amazing kind of experience where we were starting to teach ourselves. We eventually threw away the question of what planning is and replaced it with: What should planning be if it is to have any use in this bloody world?’”  
(See Annexure C, Figure C.6: @Daib Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative)

### Text Box 5.8: @Harold\_2: #Initiation

@Harold held a bursary when he studied and subsequently joined a provincial planning commission, which was known for being quite progressive, and having a high profile and strong leadership. This provided the opportunity to work with fascinating, knowledgeable and inspiring people on regional planning and integrated rural planning in the province, where the impetus was on developing strong plans and concepts. Unfortunately at that time there were few mechanisms to support implementation, even with the director at one of the province’s regional offices actively protecting staff and refusing to engage with the security police. The planning space was highly frustrating with lots of tensions and the security police wore the planners down. During this time he was asked to head up the policy division. He reflected on the major challenge he faced, having had to engage the realities of change and complex socio-political contexts, but also the value and importance of not merely getting stuck in bureaucracy and prescribed ways, as it requires critical thinking and problem solving capabilities to engage with others and to “find ways through and reach ways to do” that which must be done.  
(See Annexure C, Figure C.8: @Harold Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative)

### 5.3.4 The significance of personal strengths, interests and practice association

The attraction to the profession seemed to be dual: firstly, to a resonance to the quests of planning and personal purpose; and, secondly, to the possibility that the practice seems to have presented to participants to contribute, to extend themselves, to utilise their personal strengths and to thrive by engaging in their interests.

A young dynamic planner (@Dali) explained that the planning school where he studied placed the focus on critical thinking and the ability to think differently and laterally, using cognitive abilities to manage diverse and dynamic environments and that he “fitted [in] very well with that philosophy”.

Examples from the participants were numerous, and in most cases were expressed with conviction while reflecting on early career decisions. Thai explained that planning “clicked very well” with his interests and allowed him to explore that which was always an interest – “[I]t is such a broad subject, and this is why I think I love planning so much. There is always something new to learn and get excited about”. @Jalan reflected, that once he got introduced to planning he realized, “This is the field I am looking for.”

In reflecting on her decision to pursue planning, @Zane explained this “matching” by recounting how she joined one of the metropolitan authorities to conduct urban research and ended up managing the graphic design studio, and, whilst being exposed to a range of departments, realised that “planning ... touched onto the interests [she] had with architecture, ecology and art.” In @Peter’s case, he described how having started his work-life as a geography teacher, he “found planning” as a career that provided an ideal match between his personal interests and his strengths and passion.

@Yitzah stated, “Town planning fitted me like a glove. It was the things in which I had an interest. I had an incredible interest in sociology and of course given my background in surveying I had a very good background in town planning as it was [practiced] ... there were also things that I really found personally enriching such as environmental history ... I also just loved academia, the studies and the field of planning.”

There are those participants who were inspired to study planning by dedicated geography teachers and lecturers (interestingly the same names were mentioned by a number of participants from the same universities – @Lain, @Peter, @Niel, @Janice, @Lena and @Jens) and then also those whose first introduction was because of a good fit via career counsellors (@Ines and @Elle).

Of course it was not merely all altruistic, some participant work-life narratives also attest to the positive influence that planning’s status as a profession had in contributing to their choice of field of study, especially for the younger participants. Interestingly, the themes/stages with which they described their work-life experiences (Annexure C, Tables C2 and C3) also reflect the importance of this and possibly the scarcity of jobs in South Africa during a particular time.

One of the younger planners, @Thai, mentioned that he has never really thought about making a lot of money – but one advantage of planning he considered was that it was a profession “enabling one to be in the market”. A sentiment echoed by @Zane who realized that she “needed something to be more marketable”. She describes how doing the two years master’s course in planning contributed to self-esteem and career development: “It has definitely made me more confident that I have a profession to market. Even though planning is so broad, people recognize me as a planner.”

### 5.3.5 Summary reflections

Being ‘called’ to the adventure of planning as a practice seemed to have been a significant experience for almost all the participants in the study. In most cases this was narrated and reflected on with a sense of excitement, passion and, as set out above, often entailing a moment of confirmation that “this is it!”

For many of the participants in the study a major influence seemed to have been the socio-political realities in the country, and, for a number of participants, the direct circumstances within which they grew up. For others the call to action came in the form of being confronted with the implications of inequality, poverty and apartheid during their student years and for some even within early work-life experiences. Many mentioned the importance of perception-changing experiences. In most cases, the concern for broader societal issues, for communities, places and environments beyond the participants’ direct sphere of influence seemed to have been part of a first call to action. This concern acted as a shared driver and motivational factor for eventually choosing planning as a field of study and practice, through which a contribution to such societal causes could be made.

These experiences seem not only to have marked the ‘start’, but clearly illustrate the role of heeding the call to planning’s quest in encouraging and enabling practitioners to contribute through a seemingly strong association with personal and practice calls to action, which were heeded through commitment to the quest of planning as a practice.

Whilst this confirms the value of using the quest metaphor, it also points to the significance of a specific moment of actively acknowledging the value in the practice of planning, not only as a field of study or career, but as practice that would require a commitment to excellence and a quest that has the greater ideal of contributing to human existence (See MacIntyre, 2013; as well as Lemoine, 2014:1).

It also points to the significance of belief and confidence in personal and practice abilities to encourage action in embarking on this quest in planning as an action and future orientated practice. The strong relation between perspective changes in viewing the world as interconnected and highly relational, thinking long term and acting globally, whilst also taking action in the local practice context, was clearly significant in the work-life narratives. This requires a range of abilities that can be described as critical meta-competencies and post conventional capabilities (Boiral, 2009; Schein; 2014 and 2015, and Brown, 2011:70-78). These capabilities have also been described as ‘the will to act’ (See Kakabadse et al., 2009 in Brown, 2011:78), ‘bias for action’ and ‘passion and resolve to follow their vision’ (Gustafson, 2005 in Brown, 2011:78). Equally significant was the impact of early life influences relating to practice interaction, association and inspiration of early life mentors, planning educators and exposure to practice traditions. The latter echoes what has been argued as being significant in research on significant life experiences (See Payne, 1999; Tanner, 1998).

The overview of what could be regarded as typical call-to-action experiences clearly illustrates:

- ⌘ The significance and the generative nature of purpose and commitment to a quest, and more specifically the significance of commitment to a personal and practice quest through which participants were inspired, infused and supported to contribute to the common good, within very specific practice contexts.

- ⌘ Deeply personal experiences (purpose/motivation) that speak to the heart and the call to ‘be a good human’ and contribute to the much debated ‘common good’ – often related to early or significant life experiences;
- ⌘ Perceptions of the world and future as interconnected, often involving ‘eye opening’ transformational experience in many cases (in terms of perspectives, world view, perceptions of self and the future and as also highlighted as critical for sustainability leaders and in the process of developing a late stage action logic. This being argued by numerous authors, i.e. du Plessis, 2009; Brown, 2012; Schein, 2014);
- ⌘ That in all cases it proved to be a highly relational experience involving being called and supported on ‘the quest’ by allies and mentors on the road, but also in engagement with, exposure to and experiences of planning as a practice. The strong association with what the practice stands for, the ability of the practice as a useful ‘vehicle’ on the ‘journey’, with the habits of the practice, and with those that represent the practice was clear. Evident from these experiences is the significance of a strong personal association with being called to contribute to these quests, as well as the identification with the practice of planning as a way to do so. The value that participants ascribed to finding a practice in which they can utilise and expand critical strengths and interests (such as curiosity, ability to see the bigger picture, future orientation, ability to understand the inter-relatedness of complex systems, ability to engage the unknown, and being intellectually stimulated).
- ⌘ The importance of attitude, willingness and approach to a wide (and ever increasing) range of personal and highly relational practice capabilities evident in facing challenges in call-to-action experiences. Whilst context differed, a few key paradoxical characteristics stood out, namely appreciating diversity and systemic inter-connections, the willingness to engage from head to heart (whole person), being action and future orientated, exploring wide and delving deep, being eager to learn and willing to work hard, having an affinity for autonomy and collaboration, as well as strong reflexive and integrative abilities. However, what is significant is not the range of personal competencies and abilities reflected on, but the focus on how and with whom – often a range of intense challenges and experiences during studies, volunteering and first practice contributions were important and in these mentors and teams played key roles.
- ⌘ The highly relational nature of experiences stood out, with courage and excellence brought by mentors and by peers in example setting, support, challenging, as well as trust and exposure within education and early career contexts.

As could be expected (and as outlined in Section 4) the findings also resonate with key elements highlighted in the field of career development in relation to career choice, employability qualities of young practitioners and early-work and life-space experiences, with dedication to purpose and association with planning as practice in terms of career identity but also personal sense of purpose and role. The findings in terms of drivers and rewards (as set out above), as well as qualities, competence and characteristics strongly relate to the aspects described as influencing career choices and phases of career exploration (Sullivan and Crocitto, 2007:289-299; Marhofer, Meyer and Steyrer, 2007:216-223; Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:20-32; and Gunz and Peiperl, 2007:11).

The relevance of these experiences in bringing about perspective changes and transitions in terms of a more inclusive and wider caring anthropological worldview, a future orientated perspective, and for some also transition to what could possibly be related to more ecological worldviews have been evident. This corresponds to the type of meta-competencies but also vertical growth regarded as critical in the field of sustainability and global leadership (Schein, 2015; Brown, 2011; Brown 2012; Visser, 2010; and du Plessis

2009). The generative nature of this sense of purpose (see Sections 6.2 and 8.2) seems not only significant in these early (or in some cases later) practice experiences, but even more so in later years, encouraging practice contribution, and seemingly anchoring unfolding career and practice decisions (in line with findings in career studies that highlight the importance of work identity formation and career development anchors (Sullivan and Crocitto, 2007:288)).

## 5.4 TRIALS AND INITIATION EXPERIENCES

### 5.4.1 Introduction

The first major adventure and test within a quest is usually associated with an experience of initiation, a time of preparation for the ensuing ordeals, and for the hero to (most often) unwittingly start preparing to face her/his biggest fear (Campbell, 2008; Vogler, 2007). Whilst it is during such times that the hero could be threatened by strange (yet familiar) forces, it is also during such experiences that they encounter fellow travellers, magical aid or helpers and start to realise that the quest is never 'personal'. Rewards in initiation challenges within many timeless myths seem to be about breaking loose from 'worldly mothers and fathers' and even more so from prejudices arising from our own limited rendition of the world (Campbell, 2008:135).

The significance of such initiation experience in the world of planning is shared by Jane Stanley (2007) in her book *"Gnarly planning: Tools for local and global action"*. In the first chapter called *"Putting the Gnarl into Planning: The start of the journey"* (Stanley, 2007:1) she uses the quest metaphor to explain not only the significance of crossing the threshold (literally through the desert) into Ghana, but also the significance of the experience and place that as she states: "... anchors my thoughts about planning... taught me more about the meaning of life ... The universe and everything than anywhere else I have been" (Stanley, 2007:1).

Resonating with the intensity and transformative nature of such initiation experiences are the way in which participants seem to have described intense first work and post-graduate study experiences within their work-life narratives (See Annexure C, Table C.6). Participants seem to have placed emphasis on early (and for some later) 'career' challenges that have kick-started processes in which they (amongst other things) experienced challenging their own limitations, but also experiences of practice exposure and of confirming the value in departing onto the quest of planning.

This section is structured to provide examples of such experiences in work-life narratives and highlight strong coherency and significance with regards to:

- ⌘ The transformative nature of the experiences (Section 5.4.2);
- ⌘ Intense personal and professional growth associated with such experiences (Section 5.4.3); and
- ⌘ How such experiences seemed to have shaped participant association with the ideals and traditions of planning as a practice (Section 5.4.4).

Initiation processes typically indicate the start of a process of breaking through limitations, growing through virtues acquired, a form of transcendence. The latter is (in many myths according to Campbell's studies (2008:135)) exactly what is required to start bridging the polarities between eternity and time, enemy and friend, good and evil, Yang and Yin, subject and object in personal transformation journeys.

### Text Box 5.9: @Jalan\_2: #Initiation

After his postgraduate studies @Jalan was offered an extended internship with an NGO. He started straight after finishing his final exams and later become employed full time as a project officer. He had to write proposals, run projects and do research. He was exposed to the field of local government and development – being responsible for local government finance, local economic development, IDP (integrated development planning), organisational development and service delivery.

@Jalan: [There was] “no programme to orientate or develop you ... they just threw you into the deep end to either swim or drown! So one day I was ... accompanying these guys ... facilitating a workshop. I was just sitting there... [when one of the senior guys] who was facilitating the meeting said: ‘We are now moving to the next session and Jalan would be facilitating that’. Wow? What was this guy saying now? And everybody was looking at me. I couldn’t refuse. I just stood up and went to the front with confidence ... the CEO was there, the deputy CEO and high ranking officials! I said wow ... now I have to do my job. I actually did it! And ... after the workshop the team said it was excellent: ‘He actually just wanted to see how you are going to react’.”

“But... I liked planning! You do not just focus on one thing ... I found that this was the field I was looking for. Maybe it’s my personal trade. I like working with people. And what I liked was that the job was not mundane. It provided me with ... opportunities almost every day ... You get involved ... doing whatever needs to be done in the wide range of things, and working with a team and many different specialists... You need to know a lot of things. A LOT of things! ... I was one person at (the NGO) who could actually do research on something I didn’t know ... who could facilitate a workshop on something I didn’t know. And it was quite difficult because you get overstressed. But when I left... I, [who] did not do maths at school but passed the financial diploma, was actually at some stage (with a change in staff at the NGO) the one who could deal with local government finance!”

### Text Box 5.10 @Innes\_3: #Initiation

@Ines describes her first working experience as almost “life saving”. At the time she was enrolled for a technical qualification in planning, which she describes as “probably the wrong course for the right profession”.

“It was incredibly frustrating on many levels”. I did very well but was not being challenged, and lecturers in the course seemed to have had a highly technical view of planning (mostly from surveying and engineering backgrounds) and were also older than the rest of the students. I went to get a job at a firm of planning associates ... probably the best thing to ever happen to me! It gave me a mentor in the form of Mr. P. He was inspiring and motivating. He gave me the opportunity to grow. Working for him as a technician, I was given tasks that weren’t so-called technician tasks. I also learned a hell of a lot from him. And from about 1989, also working with Mr.T. Working with a black planner and working in an environment and firm that was dedicated to poverty relief ... with principles ... based on equity ... a progressive firm. This helped me grow on a personal level and exposed me to debates that did challenge the political context.”



### 5.4.2 Transformative experiences

Initiation experiences, as described in the participant work-life narratives, seemed to have been highly significant as learning experiences, embedding the value of dynamic and relational innovation, and practice related beliefs and habits. This was accomplished through *inter alia* intense work experiences and exposure, travel and exposure to diverse cultures, reading and association with practice heroes, the influence of managers and organisational conditions and the critical role of mentors (which stood out in all participant work-life narratives).

Intense post-graduate studio courses and/or intense real-life practice or volunteer experiences seemed profound as contexts in which participants were ‘pushed’ by strong teams, mentors, peers or challenging contexts. These included experiences in which participants had (or were pushed) ‘to jump in at the deep end’ and/or were encouraged to take a big step (i.e. start a firm, or take up responsibility for a significant task – See Text Box 5.8: @Pedro\_3; Text Box 5.7: @Daib\_2), as well as intense growth experiences brought about by challenging work-life contexts

Intense practice interactions and facing first trials not only led to changes in participants’ perspectives of what is possible from a personal point of view, but seemed to have also played a key role in providing insight into the practice of planning. Initiation experiences in all the participant work-life narratives were rich in descriptions of intense interactions and collaboration with dedicated and highly regarded mentors, peers, and colleagues. In all cases, practitioners (not always in planning) that were held in high esteem and from which participants explicitly indicated that they had learned a lot.

The impact of such experiences seem to have been profound, described by many in similar terms to @Bijan’s description of it having “had a lasting impact” on his life (See Text Box 5.5: @Bijan\_1-2).

In relation to his intense post-graduate experiences, @Pedro explained this as a time of “major change ... this was like turning the world on its head” (See Text Box 5.8: @Pedro\_3). His challenging experience working with a small number of students as part of a high profile planning project (as a ‘student project’), and the intense learning and figuring out what to do alongside excellent mentors and peers, not only gave him exposure, but also ‘catapulted’ him into the world of planning and public involvement.

Given that a number of the participants’ first practice experiences unfolded within a time of intense political turmoil and transition in South Africa (@Gaz, @Harold, @Thai – See Text Box 5.9: @Harold\_2), it is not surprising that their trials and challenges included exposure to a critical planning fraternity that not only pushed innovative practice and policy under the then Apartheid regime, but also provided for intense experiences of growth and learning. Experiences that often required taking action, defending moral and professional positions, and even facing encounters with the security police.

Initiation experiences are characterised by their intensity, and by the significant role that the participants seemed to have played in such experiences that were ultimately aimed at addressing real world challenges. That is being responsible for settlement planning support to municipalities and communities as young graduates in politically turbulent times (@Gaz, @Lain, @Ines, @Janice); starting up new planning practices and being faced with work and development project pressures and having to make decisions as young practitioners (@Yitzah, @Thai); working with teams responsible for rolling out democratic, integrated and strategic planning processes in some of the largest cities and strategic regions after the fall

of Apartheid (@Daib, @Jalan, @Harold); and providing strategic support in innovative and high impact city redevelopment projects as young planners (@Pedro, @Kail).

### 5.4.3 Intense growth experiences

In a number of cases, experiences entailed being provided with an (usually unexpected) opportunity. This usually required taking responsibility in a situation where the outcome was significant in terms of impact, and where participants had to face demanding tasks or challenges (See Text Box 5.10: @Jalan\_2). Such opportunities seem to have been facilitated by mentors/colleagues who appear to have trusted not only their abilities, but also the dedication and sense of responsibility of the respective participants – impelling them to rise to the occasion.

Many of the participants reflected with much appreciation on their intense initiation and learning experiences in both early work-life (e.g. @Ines, @Gaz, @Janice) and even later work-life (e.g. @Mitch, @Trish, @Yitzah) contexts.

As explained by @Dali, his move “from activism to academia” and the subsequent time of “lopsided graft and the dishwasher room” (intense work and learning) is what prepared him to embark on an adventure that was to thoroughly challenge him but also set the direction for his work-life in the world of planning. In the same vein, with much acknowledgment of the long lasting impact and direction, as well as of the excitement and thrill, and the experience of what is actually possible against all odds, both @Daib and @Harold recounted their initiation into planning – as intensely personal but also highly relational growth experiences (See Text Box 5.8: @Daib\_2 and Text Box 5.9: @Harold\_2).

Quite a number of participants recounted initiation experiences (See Text Box 5.8: @Daib\_2) where they had been either “offered”, “hand-picked”, “invited”, and or “appointed” to undertake or participate in an important task, project or initiative. Such experiences typically illustrated their willingness, interest, ability (especially to work hard, do what needs to be done and take responsibility), their dedication to add value to shared ideals and the way in which they seemed to have connected with and inspired trust in managers, mentors, educators and other practitioners. This was evident in participants experiences, such as that of @Kail who was hand-picked to provide support to a renowned architect in some of the first redevelopment projects in South Africa, @Innes who had the “lifesaving” experience of being able to do an internship with an inspirational and challenging mentor (See Text Box 5.10: @Innes\_3). There were numerous similar examples where participants had been selected to start off, or manage, a new unit or department, or even a private practice (e.g. @Wim managing the development control unit in a new municipality at a young age, @Mitch and @Yitzah stepping into private practice as associates, @Thai starting a planning firm, @Harold and @Peter taking on the management of policy and planning units in government, and @Pedro rising to the major challenge of taking the lead in a high profile waterfront development project).

These were typical experiences where the participants’ commitment and abilities were trusted by mentors, managers and peers, enough so as to throw them in at the deep end or encourage them to take on much more responsibility. Initiation experiences typically required participants to be courageous, to be driven by purpose regardless of not by having all the required knowledge or skills, to be willing to face hardship, in most cases to work harder and extend themselves more than they have ever done before, paying the price (often also with costs to family or partners, see Text Box 5.5: @Bijan\_1-2) and trusting themselves in embarking into the unknown.

### Text Box 5.11 @Niel\_2: #Quest Challenges

@Niel explained how initially he was mostly working with technical and legal processes, supporting municipalities with land-use management, drawing up regulations for provincial planning legislation, and how later with a strong team became involved in facilitating development. “We attempted at that stage, even if it was not policy as it is now, to integrate towns and get the White, Black and Coloured townships to grow towards each other instead of further apart”. Being pro-active was about more than just following the guidelines. It resulted in embarking on some of the first participatory process to township development: setting up engagements with communities, state-owned utility companies and various government departments about future growth areas – not yet required by that time. This required knowing vast areas well and developing alternatives that could be discussed with the various representatives – not just merely providing facilities according to prescribed guidelines. It meant preparing suitable visual material to empower community leaders in in-depth discussions about future development. The big question was consistently how to ensure implementation and soften the impact of development legislation under the Apartheid regime. One of the hardest things was probably to handle the relocation of informal houses set up in flood lines. Opting for hands-on involvement in discussions, showing people newly allocated land, assisting with re-locations and taking responsibility throughout the process to make sure that people had security of tenure on newly allocated land, required huge personal commitment.

He decided to make a job change, moving to a local municipality during the latter part of the 1990s which co-incided with the introduction of a new planning system to work more directly with people. His experience with land development processes and expertise acquired through a qualification in property evaluation equipped him to add value to recommendations about municipal property and proposed developments. However, the challenge was formidable in keeping the focus on facilitating development, as well as staying abreast of the vast number of institutional and legal changes, different and even contradictory regulations and laws related to land, several new sectoral policies and regulations – all with different application procedures and implications.

### Text Box 5.12 @Dali: #Quest Challenges

@Gaz: “I always wanted to be a planner!” In spite of some setbacks in his first year, he did not abandon the call to action and started working with a private planning practice. He reflected how this turned out to be quite a valuable experience, preparing him for what he could expect and making him more determined to continue. He described the first two years of his course as a time of dedication and creativity followed by a time of “immersion into the world”. Arising from his strong stance against the injustices in South African society, he became involved in the Student Representative Council and the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) SRC. Here he was suddenly exposed to and “enthused” by people at the forefront of the struggle against Apartheid; people that were dedicated and passionate, and committed to the quest of equality – such as Helen Joseph, Beyers Naudé and Eddie Webster. Reflecting on this time, he highlighted the major influence of two mentors in planning education: describing the one as “inspiring and passionate”, and the other as “a rigorous educator, even though somewhat more conservative”.

(See Annexure C, Figure C 3: @Gaz Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative)

These experiences seemed to place high demands on the participants in terms of skills and knowledge, but also courage, attitude and commitment to venture into the unknown and step up to face the challenges. Many of the initiation experiences shared by participants clearly illustrate some level of excitement, thrill and adventure present in tackling the challenges, in exploring difficult and complex problems, in searching and developing solutions, in venturing into the unknown and even in taking risks.

#### 5.4.4 Identity and practice association

Participant initiation experiences in work-life narratives are rife with descriptions of inspirational, highly respected mentors (in the form of managers, educators and peers). These mentors seem to have played a critical role in challenging the participants in terms of critical thinking, in infusing participants with a belief in the quest, providing an example of dedication and excellence, and in encouraging participants to stretch themselves and gain newfound perspectives in their own abilities and courage (e.g. @Pedro, @Janice, @Dali, @Daib, @Bijan, @Kail, @Gaz, @Ines and @Lain). The importance of mentors is also reflected in setting examples and in calling forth the willingness and courage to stand up for the bigger good in the quest, tenacity, as well as to expand abilities to learn, grow and find creative ways of understanding challenges and drive interventions (e.g. @Pedro, @Daib, @Bijan, @Gaz, @Lain, @Jalan). Initiation experiences serve as confirmation of ‘fit’, ‘purpose’ and ‘practice association’.

Mentors mentioned in these experiences seem to have had a number of things in common, i.e. status or recognition in the practice, high levels of professional expertise and dedication, respect and trust from the participants, and a focus on both the professional and personal development of the participants.

Intense study and practice ‘initiation’ experiences, however, seem to have played a significant role in providing participants with substantial long-term rewards. These were exposure to the field and practice networks; opportunities to learn from ‘masters’ and to meet ‘heroes’; a sense of confirmation of being on the right path in a personal and professional capacity, re-kindling the importance and value of the quest and belief in the possibility to bring about change; as well as laying a foundation of confidence to move forward. Considering impact – as is well recognized in the planning fraternity – is more than often impossible due to unintended consequences, the magnitude of role players involved, and recognition of the viability of settlements supported through planning interventions being long term.

Narratives attest to participants being interested and eager to learn, participate and contribute, and thus being highly attentive and engaged in thinking and questioning and learning through such experiences. The experiences shared illustrated that it was not about being fully prepared or trained, that internships and early career experiences did not merely entail formal training or skills mentoring focused on career enhancement, and that the focus was on working with inspiring and respected mentors and peers, being fully engaged and eager, but also expected and trusted to contribute and add value, thus offering opportunities for creativity, innovation and autonomy. In this regard, initiation experiences most likely played a role not only to prepare participants to gain competence and confidence, but also in fulfilling the requirements that participants raised as important considerations in selecting planning as a field of practice.

Engaging with helpers and allies in the form of colleagues or fellow students or project teams has often been mentioned as being significant, for example in the campus development project described by @Pedro; the innovative inner-city redevelopment described by @Kail; the setting up of new practices or organisations as mentioned by @Daib, @Janice, @Yitzah, @Thai; and strategic planning project teams as

explained by @Dali, @Jalan, @Gaz, etc. It is interesting to note that professional and personal relations forged during these experiences were often quite important, with trusted allies being called forth again in later practice challenges. The value of dedicated teams and the significance of sourcing competence (See Section 6.4) is underscored by this.

It might also be significant that initiation experiences in most instances required engagement beyond practice boundaries. Firstly, most often in the form of direct interaction with communities and people on the ground (for whom project, plan or policy impacts were significant and to whom practitioners were accountable in making a direct difference in their lives, i.e. community representatives and voluntary associations in the case of @Janice, @Pedro, @Dali, @Jalan, and @Lain who were concerned with community representation in processes to name but a few). Secondly, most projects required interaction and engagement with officials and professionals from other disciplines, requiring participants to understand and to be able to articulate implications and challenges within a range of sectors, disciplinary fields and contexts.

#### 5.4.5 Summary reflections

In myth and narrative, initiation experiences are regarded as the start of a process of breaking through limitations, the growth of skills and acquiring virtues – a form of transcendence (Vogler, 2007 and Campbell, 2008). It is exactly by facing the fears, ego and limiting self-beliefs and circumstances that get the hero into the ‘belly of the whale’, through which she/he must ‘work’ and prove themselves – building the courage to survive a succession of trials, tests, ordeals and difficult tasks ... ready to face the real challenges. In conclusion, initiation experiences seem to have been regarded as valuable transition experiences.

In reflecting on the prominent experiences shared in participant work-life narratives with regards to the first trials and practice challenges, the significance of purpose and practice enthused initiation (relational) experiences seemed crucial in providing ‘the first real experience’ of embarking on the quest for contribution in the practice. Possibly quite significant, it also provides the first experience of the satisfaction of doing the right thing, experiencing how the unthinkable becomes possible and the strong camaraderie in many of these experiences; often in spite of high personal costs and often limited direct change or short term results.

The importance of rigor, in-depth knowledge, applying existing strengths, and the willingness to learn, as well as the value of qualities such as accountability, ability to engage with full attention, affinity for adventure, courage, and dedication to have an impact in complex real world situations, seemed valuable in enabling participants to complete tests and trials in initiation experiences. In addition to personal qualities and abilities, much emphasis was placed on the relational nature of initiation experiences, on the significant impact of mentors, managers and also peers, teams and others allies on the road, as well as on the manner in which such experiences seem to have paved the way in highlighting the importance of connecting and collaborating within and outside planning as a practice.

It was not merely about having a mentor, or ‘learning from a mentor’ but, in all cases, about intense collaboration in significant and meaningful projects, in which the mentors were also entering the ‘unknown’ and not only sharing knowledge regarding what to do, but rather about the tenacity of engaging in intense processes of enquiry and hard work. Thus, most probably setting an example of pushing the boundaries, excellence and dedication. The result was that participants seem to have been

exposed to practice habits such as dedication to the cause, commitment to excellence as a way to engage challenges, but probably also to the realities of time investment, hard work and opportunity costs and of course the satisfaction of ‘operating in the zone’ (Young, 1999; Levleva and Terry, 2008) with complete focus and dedication, and doing the right thing (even if it meant working harder, being humble enough to find others who know better, or figuring out what to do at speed).

The participants seem to have valued the rewards in being actively involved, playing a valuable role in teams, having been trusted, having given their all in facing the challenge and thus not only gained a new experience and confidence in the practice, as well as in their own ability to grow, but also earned trust amongst their peers while proving their dedication to others in the practice. These aspects also seemed to have played a role in participants’ beliefs and association with practice.

The significance of the initiation lies in preparing the hero for the next step; preparing the hero for the adventures and ordeals lying ahead. In reflecting on initiation experiences, it is useful to keep in mind that in spite of intensity, the quest has at this stage in most of the participant work-lives merely begun. Within the time-span overviews it was evident that the rewards and elixir were still to be obtained but the experiences had provided courage, confidence and conviction to face the next sets of challenges as they had inevitably (with the benefit of hindsight) unfolded over time.

## **5.5 CHALLENGES, ADVENTURES AND REWARDS**

### **5.5.1 Introduction**

It is only when the threshold has been crossed and initial tests and trials have been passed that the ensuing and often iterative process of ‘mini-quests’ and successive calls to adventure can start to unfold (Campbell, 2008, Vogler 2007). The special world has now been entered, filled with tests and obstacles to be beaten in pursuit of the quest purpose. The stakes are high and the importance of facing fears and shadows, standing up and engaging allies, mentors and making the necessary sacrifices are evident.

In this section some reflections on significant adventure experiences and challenges in participant work-life narratives are shared, by making use of three areas of focus amongst the participants, namely:

- ⌘ Diverse practice adventures and challenges in Section 5.5.2; and
- ⌘ Significant and coherent themes evident within narrated practice challenges in Section 5.5.3.

The section is concluded with a reflection on personal challenges, transformation, costs and rewards within the unfolding adventures.

### **5.5.2 Diverse practice adventures and challenges**

#### **5.5.2.1 Challenges and adventures in facilitation and management of development**

Actively driving and facilitating settlement and land-use management processes and managing such functions in government could probably be seen as more technocratic, often highly bureaucratic, and potentially entailing the more routine type of planning activities. However, it is evident from the work-life narratives of participants, that these activities can be approached in very different ways when they were inspired to assist in creating living spaces and addressing the magnitude of socio-economic, political and

ecological problems in fast growing towns, cities and regions – even within times of much uncertainty and turmoil, amidst an institutional, bureaucratic and capacity conundrum.

In the 1980s (See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_8-14) land development and management challenges included fast tracking and integrating settlement development within the context of highly fragmented land and housing development processes under the Apartheid regime. Major challenges in work-life narratives of some of the older participants included involvement in township development (@Niel, @Jens) and management of fast growing cities, dealing with new urban phenomena such as shopping centre developments on the outskirts of urban areas and innovative first attempts at inner city redevelopment, either by working with municipalities and/or the private sector (@Yitzah, @Kail, @Niel).

Work-life narratives of these practitioners and that of others who joined the practice during the 1990s, indicate how the focus shifted towards active involvement in finding ways to accommodate black communities, facilitating processes to find well located land, supporting community development initiatives and even providing support with land invasion processes, resulting in often being in direct confrontation with the Apartheid government of the time (@Jens, @Niel, @Kail, @Gaz, @Lain, @Janice, @Daib, @Dali, @Mitch – See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_15-17). Whilst participant work-life narratives indicated that such challenges in urban and rural contexts were driven through a range of different government and other institutions, the focus for many participants seems to have been on finding innovative ways to navigate challenging bureaucratic processes, advocate for sustainable socio-economic development and integrated resource and ecosystem planning in environmentally sensitive areas, regions with industrial potential, and specifically in often isolated settlements in former homeland housing areas (@Jens, @Harold, @Peter, @Ines, @Tina, @Dre and @Niel – See Text Box 5.11: @Niel\_2). This was accomplished by stretching the status quo and actively collaborating with practice colleagues as well as a wide range of sector specialists, community activists, etc. By the late 1990s change, excitement and many ‘new’ developmental challenges were in the air (See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_17). The work-life narratives of participants who had been involved in this field at the time, as well as a number who specifically heeded the call to assist in addressing the severe development challenges and injustices that were rife in cities and communities, illustrate high levels of dedication and tenacity in ‘keeping going’, in spite of project failures, implementation challenges and political uncertainty and capacity problems in newly established local government institutions. Participants described the challenges in engaging the highly complicated land development and newly introduced planning system, finding ways to fast-track long awaited government housing and service delivery in contexts of rapidly increasing backlogs, finding their way through new and highly democratic processes, whilst also having to find ways of incorporating former white and black apartheid settlements (@Wim, @Elle, @Tina, @Niel, @Peter, @Ines). Challenges that required active pursuit within unique contexts, a new political dispensation and a range of newly established institutions as well as significant transitions in a planning profession that had to come to terms with a tainted history and the excitement of a reconstruction and developmental agenda (See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_16).

What stands out from the work-life narratives of participants who were involved in these types of activities is the dedication, the commitment to providing support to the best of their abilities, even where that often entailed getting others involved, asking for help and inputs and charting innovative paths. It illustrates the intense efforts, personal costs and hard work that going the extra mile requires and how contributing through an often regarded technical task/role actually entails high degrees of advocacy, awareness raising, negotiation and excellence to bring about change and assist communities (even if that meant taking career

risks). It entailed galvanizing action amongst peers or in development agencies, engaging with multiple role players to make progress (not merely following minimum procedures) – against all odds. It also clearly illustrates the vast difference between such an attitude, ability and dedication to ‘doing the right thing’ or merely giving up in the face of a stifling bureaucracy or complex challenges, or merely following minimum requirements and ‘doing everything right’.

### **5.5.2.2 Challenges and adventures in strategic planning processes and high impact projects**

Given the impact that planning had under the Apartheid government, it could probably be expected that a number of the participants shared a belief about the need and value for strategic and integrated direction, as well as bold and conceptually sound plans and policies to bring about development and transformation in the post-apartheid years (See Annexure A, Figure A.1 @SAPlan\_17).

Whilst participants were involved in the development of strategic spatial plans in cities and strategic regional development planning t all the time periods (@Harold, @Gaz, @Daib, @Thai), this was a major area of contribution and passion reflected in the work-life narratives of participants from the latter half of the 1990s onwards. It included experiences in which participants made significant contributions in setting up and driving strategic planning and collaboration processes to support development, future orientated spatial development frameworks (SDFs) or integrated/strategic development plans (IDPs) for use in newly established metropolitan municipalities (@Thai, @Pedro, @Dali), as well as newly established local and regional municipalities that included big towns and vast rural areas (@Jalan, @Mitch, @Tisch, @Wim).

Some of the biggest challenges were not merely in finding strategies that could support service delivery backlogs and long term transformation and sustainability (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2014), but the challenge to drive strategic processes that required acting as change agents to galvanise all units in newly established municipalities to collaborate and co-ordinate budgets and priorities, as well as to drive a highly participative engagement with communities and newly appointed political leaders, of which many were for the first time actively involved in governance of their areas. As explained by @Dali in relation to being a young planner that had to drive IDP processes and institutional transformation where most units were led by quite senior professionals in a metro: “If you are to be a dynamic planner you must have a certain attitude”, something to which he believed, “your ability to relate and connect with other people and networks are core to.”

This not only required an enormous amount of preparation and exploration of inter-linkages and institutional capacity, etc., but also the recognition that complex urban systems and municipal environments cannot be controlled, decisions and buy-in cannot be guaranteed and the impacts of projects or plans cannot be foreseen. And more importantly – in the face of all that – is the resolve not to abandon the ship (e.g. As illustrated by @Pedro, @Niel, @Peter, @Wim, @Jens, @Thai, @Elle, @Linza, @Zane, @Ines).

The importance of interest, affinity and belief for the practitioners involved in these processes was phrased well by one of the younger planners at the time of the interview: “Planning is not for anybody that doesn’t have the desire to understand the processes that affect us, and how we can use that to our benefit ... I don’t think anybody can fully understand that ... [it requires] the will to have things happen!” (@Thai).

Participants who were actively involved in such processes reflected on the value of dedication to the ‘quest’, eye-opening perspectives in formative experiences that enabled appreciation for diversity, the



support and inspiration of practice ‘heroes’, and confidence gained in earlier experiences enabled and encouraged them to face the challenges (See Text Box 5.13: @Dali\_2). Interestingly, given that these were new processes and approaches in planning, the experience gained and shared was not at all related to having gained experience in doing a particular job. Whilst there was experience, i.e. in facilitation or early life experiences with communities, it was much rather about having had experience and gained confidence in their own ability to step into the unknown, to be stretched in terms of knowledge, capacity and personal development, as well as being willing to actively contribute. As stated by @Dali: “Planning schools prepared us ... to be able to rise to a challenge, to say: ‘I am a planner in a new context, how can I make a difference?’” (See Text Box 5.12: @Dali\_2).

### 5.5.2.3 *Challenges and adventures in urban transformation projects and policy*

There were quite a number of participants whose work-life adventures and experiences reflected their commitment towards contributing to a more just and sustainable urban spaces, i.e. through advocacy work, strong critique of and acknowledging the highly political nature of planning during the apartheid years (@Daib, @Janice, @Lain, @Harold, @Bijan, @Pedro – See Text Box 5.13: @Daib\_3), and driving policies and projects to support transformation of South African cities in later years (@Thai; @Pedro; @Ines; @Linza; @Janice; @Daib; @Lain; @Harold).

The often non-spatial nature of interventions to bring about spatial change, and the non-spatial outcomes that spatial change are hoped to achieve, could indeed be part of the challenge requiring both a strong spatial focus, as well as unbounded enquiry and innovation. In line herewith, having heeded the call to move from architecture to strategic urban spatial transformation initiatives, @Pedro reflected how the urban design and planning course that he decided to embark upon for this task “really shifted ground fundamentally” in terms of his perceptions. He realised that the philosophy was about much more than design. @Pedro\_4: “Urban designers are people who go out and work as developers; they must understand property dynamics and land economics, etc. Yes, they must understand city form, process and structure, but if they couldn't be effective then there is no point to them! The emphasis was not on pretty drawings it was on processes and winning. I realised that this is where my strength lay, not in producing pretty drawings and doing wonderful master plans for things, but actually getting people together and making things happen ... Planning is something that needs to be strategic in nature. It also has to be empowering your clients; essentially your job is to equip them to do their job better than they could do previously ...”

This motivation saw him not only taking on a significant role in volunteer work and acting on behalf of communities, but also playing a key role in a high profile inner city re-development project in Canada. Inspired by making a contribution in South African cities, the drive to “influence the local economy”, stimulate development in black townships, “fight apartheid” and influences from central government, and drive urban sustainability, formed key themes which he pursued through a number of programmes in the city, which he described as an ongoing experience of both “great conceptualisation and actualization” (@Pedro, Also see Annexure C, Figure C.9).

One of the prominent adventure-initiatives reflected upon in participant work-life narratives entailed collaboration with a number of peers who pursued research and policy advocacy work in critique of apartheid’s spatial implications in cities – this resulted in a quest of more than a decade and strong support through a community of practice (e.g. @Daib, @Janice, @Bijan, @Thai, @Pedro).

Whilst this was probably an adventure where much of the learning happened over time and where there has been no quick wins in terms of implementation, an evolving discourse and a cadre of highly enthused young planners are significant achievements in themselves. Interestingly, it was only years later that the principles and proposals were being taken up in policy and planning thinking. This required a lot of dedication at the time, but also points to the challenging nature of defining and acknowledging 'success' in a practice that can merely claim to contribute towards the shaping of the unfolding future and highly complex and fast changing (increasingly chaotic) systems. Unfortunately, as in many myths and quests, some of the most significant (and possibly tragic) aspects to note with regards to 'success' or 'acknowledgement' within the practice of planning is that direct impact (not output) is often not easy to prove and ideas might take time to germinate and become established in the many change management processes. If success does arrive (and can in some way be linked to the initiative, amongst many other things), heroes are usually simultaneously confronted with the next layer of questions regarding implementation and the unfolding complexities of urbanization and the unforeseen consequences of interventions – the start of the next adventure/challenge on the 'road of trials'.

### **5.5.3 Coherent themes in practice challenges**

#### **5.5.3.1 Practice purpose**

In reflecting on the various challenges it was evident that participants often acted as drivers and leaders of change. The emphasis on challenges and adventures in participant work-life narratives was much more on experiences and challenges in relation to context-specific adventures which participants either drove, or were closely involved in, than on project or work-place specific challenges. Participants emphasized specific concerns and priorities, their role in either instigating, or getting involved in, or playing an active part in programs and/or policy directions through a combination of projects, interactions and even awareness raising initiatives –in almost all cases in collaborative ways.

The focus in work-life adventures seemed to be inter-generational, inter-regional and with a context specific focus. Underlying most of the participants' work-life narratives was an interest in complex place-based dynamics, active and deep concern with contributing to a more just and sustainable future in local contexts, but also with a recognition of the interconnections to broader inter-regional and ecological systems, and a passion for collaborating and contributing with communities of practice.

#### **5.5.3.2 Practice capabilities**

Whilst it was evident that most endeavours required participants to play multiple roles (spanning technical, advocacy, facilitative, management roles) and brought forth unique combinations of personal strengths and interests and a willingness to do whatever is required, it was also interesting to note how participants related contribution through team efforts, practice interactions, influences of planning schools and mentors, early career experiences and exposure, contextual realities and pushing the (and their own) boundaries somewhat consistently.

### Text Box 5.13: @Daib\_3: #Quest Challenges

@Daib elaborated on how a group of peers in the late 1960s were so concerned with the way South Africa was heading and the inequalities and unsustainability being embedded in cities that they started a research unit to lobby for changes of policy with the government. This was not just about changing outcomes, but about changing a system and in essence advocating for what they believed the practice of planning was ‘supposed to be about’ – a quest that required courage and commitment indeed.

“The idea of this unit was to say that we are just doing it terribly, terribly wrong if you look at how cities have developed. Everything was deeply political at the time, and planning was trying to argue that it wasn’t political at all. Meanwhile it was entirely political! We were saying that you can’t base a discipline on this way of thinking! ... It was apparent to us, but everyone else thought we were a bunch of nutters! And so we started writing ... the conversations between [us] about the nature of planning [and a lot of related aspects] ... were continuing and continuing and increasingly we started ... a debate going. The philosophy we took was: ‘No way!’

“We simply argued from a professional ethic, and we took the ethic where it took us. Straight into the middle of politics of course! We said we weren’t political but we were a hell of a lot more than some of the politicians! But we could get further in the debate because we were arguing about the substantive, of cities and what was inevitable and what was going to happen. People in a way had to listen. They hated it, but they had to listen ... we never got any government work or anything from any authority at any time ... [but we] were starting to do work [private work and work in other African countries] ... and we were starting to apply that philosophy... [and] research informed by the workers.

“Planning is not a generalist’s thing, it is a highly specific thing where its specialty is space.”

The ‘areas of contribution’ ranged from: highly technical knowledge relating to either engineering, design or legal, bureaucratic and market processes; passion and strengths in advocacy and awareness raising; strong spatial and conceptual strengths relating to the physical shaping of urban places and living conditions; to driving change, strategic processes and innovative ‘instruments, plans, technologies, etc.’ to support planning and development.

### 5.5.3.3 Practice approaches

What stands out about the adventures and experiences is the coherency within the respective narratives regarding the way in which ‘jobs’ and ‘projects’ were approached as quest-like challenges. Most experiences referenced:

- ⌘ The significance of the experience in relation to a broader call for action that is at the same time very personal and absolutely impersonal (generic). For example, policy evaluation and community interaction within the context of driving a new spatial agenda in critique of the Apartheid Government of the time (@Daib, @Janice); or, designing participatory processes in a strategic planning project in ways that could facilitate transformation and bring about development impact beyond what was required in guidelines (@Dali, @Jalan). The latter is of course easier to see in hindsight and could be seen from a critical perspective as way to motivate value.
- ⌘ Taking future orientated action (into the unknown most often) by either crafting and/or embarking on a specific initiative to support the cause, or by using seemingly mundane tasks and opportunities as possibilities to further the cause. For instance, driving the development of new generation developmental orientated strategic and spatial planning through innovative projects and a tenacity in not giving up in spite of power and political struggles (e.g. @Harold, @Thai, @Lain, @Niel, @Wim, @Peter); or, using a city’s interest in submitting a bid to host the Olympics as a way to galvanise interest in large-scale urban restructuring, creating practice think tanks and setting up cross-unit multi-disciplinary teams to develop real possibilities in integrating transport and land development agendas to bring about spatial and socio-economic change (@Pedro).
- ⌘ Generating contribution and keeping going in practice contexts through harnessing, extending and deepening uniquely individual strengths, experiences, passion, dedication, abilities, etc. as well as ‘thick’ and meaningful practice (and trans-disciplinary) interactions and support (i.e. exploring a personal interest in media and communication strategy development to raise awareness on sustainability and developmental issues (@Thai)); and, deliberately drawing on networks and practice interactions to drive visionary transformation agendas through a wide range of research projects, policy evaluation and development processes (@Lain, @Janice, @Harold, @Dali).
- ⌘ An eagerness to share and engage in reflection and learning with peers, students and in practice contexts. This was evident in numerous examples of active involvement in provincial planning associations (e.g. @Linza, @Kail, @Harold, @Wim, @Jens, @Niel, @Tina, @Elle); in involvement in student project support and lecturing or practice orientated awareness raising whilst not part of faculty (e.g. @Gaz, @Pedro, @Bijan, @Daib, @Thai, @Dali); and, a major emphasis on mentoring (e.g. @Yitzah, @Jens, @Kail, @Gaz, @Peter, @Pedro).

### 5.5.3.4 Drivers and rewards

The types of rewards within these adventures can be many (as in myths – See Vogler, 2008; Campbell, 2007). Bringing about change in the ordinary world could, as in this case (and many others in South Africa),

be through rigorous practice enthused debate and changes in the discourses and ideas generated within academia and planning schools, within the community of practice, and within policies and practice.

Within most myths and narratives, the journey reaches its climax with the last ordeal. It is a time when stakes are high, friendships and special relationships are forged, warnings are headed and the hero knows that he or she must face death/the shadow (Lucasfilms, 1999). It is at this stage where heroes usually have to die in terms of their egos through facing one last ordeal or decisive confrontation. A major adventure is followed by the return to the ordinary world – sharing the gifts of the elixir and sometimes, in that it is merely the start of a new circle, having to face another set of challenges. However, as illustrated in the quest metaphor, the journey is not complete without the reward; after the hero has slain the dragon, overcome a big fear, or weathered the crises within (Campbell, 2008 and Vogler, 2007).

There are many examples of participants who wanted to give up after realizing that they might have been too idealistic (@Harold, @Janice, @Lain, @Yitzah, @Jens), or have even temporarily done so (@Gaz, @Linza, @Zane). There are deeply personal reflections of participants who have gone through harrowing ordeals; even facing the shadow of no longer being head of a unit, or being side-lined in an organization, or having to start ‘at the bottom again’ due to a location change or choice made because of a family context (e.g. @Jens, @Pedro, @Harold, @Ines, @Dali, @Bijan, @Daib, @Yitzah). However, all in hindsight were viewed as moments of transition, a process of letting go of ‘ego’, of facing disappointments, of re-assessing commitment to a cause, and of getting involved in new ways, with new insight – as some of the older participants explained (e.g. @Pedro, @Yitzah, @Lain). Also, interestingly, this was a time associated with a willingness to re-consider and adopt strong policy positions and ideas, not in abandoning the cause, but in exploring other options and realizing the value of approaches that may have been previously opposed (See Annexure C, Table C.9).

Rewards in many adventures seemed, however, for many of the participants to have been inner awards, Satisfaction in doing ‘the right things’, in making a contribution (e.g. @Yitzah, @Mitch, @Lain, @Daib, @Janice, @Pedro) and even in merely being a part of a slow process of innovation in practice, transformed perceptions and societal change (e.g. @Thai, @Dali, @Jalan, @Trish, @Kail, @Ines). And of course the ‘gifts’ of self-realisation, ‘authentic’ expression, growth and the thrill of being fully engaged and ‘at the edge’ of possibility (e.g. @Daib, @Dali, @Pedro, @Thai, @Jalan, @Lain). All of which resonate strongly with the reasons participants were drawn to the practice in the first place.

#### 5.5.4 Summary reflections

Planning is indeed a practice that has the ability to “stir one’s juices” (@Harold), and offers opportunities through which it is possible to contribute and find meaning in being and becoming as a human and practitioner. It is evident from the work life narratives of participants that the identification with, and commitment to, the (a) quest in planning form a strong influencing factor throughout the adventures, choices and shifts within their working-lives (which includes volunteering and student work).

An indication was given through the shared participant work-life narratives of a few of their many adventure experiences, significant challenges and ordeals. Commitment to context specific and future orientated practice quests might have been the driving force that encouraged participants to face challenges, pay the price, deal with frustrations, and find satisfaction in contexts where achievements or success were usually difficult to ‘claim’ or isolate.

It seemed from the work-life narratives that participants were encouraged to extend themselves both professionally and personally to find creative ways of adding value as individuals, but often also through connection with others. Explorations of work-life narratives highlighted the importance of a wide range of abilities, characteristics, attitudes and meta-competencies, but even more so the importance of inter-relational and inter-related practice capabilities in enabling contribution.

Interestingly many of the qualities and competencies that seemed significant in work-life adventures can be described as almost opposing or divergent, that indeed also points to the important ability to handle and be comfortable with dichotomies, dualities and paradox. Examples of these are:

- ⌘ Having in-depth, as well as a very broad knowledge base and understanding, embedded in a strong spatial and integrative competence;
- ⌘ The ability to focus and add value in the local context whilst considering the collective future;
- ⌘ The dynamic and contextually relevant nature of evolving competence, almost opposing the notion of expertise;
- ⌘ The eagerness to learn and willingness to adapt, juxtaposed with the incredible value of knowledge in particular substantive fields and of experience; and lastly
- ⌘ The tension of straddling knowing and knowledge, and being comfortable in not-knowing and the ability to innovate.

Given the complexity, context specific and unfolding nature of challenges and quests, practitioners have seldom mentioned taking the next step or embarking on an adventure where the answer was obvious or they have had all the required prior experience. What is evident is that there was no expectation of having all relevant skills or competencies, or need to acquire it in order to face challenges. What seemed important in addition to learning was to care enough and be humble enough to source help, to recognise the value of teams and to find whatever is required to ensure that value is added – in the specific context, as well as to the collective future. Taking action to do what is required to add value, being industrious and remaining committed to the quest, often seem to be the most outstanding quality and capability in the work-life narratives of participants in the study (what MacIntyre (2013) describes as one of the most important virtues – the virtue of being committed to the quest).

From the work-life narratives and adventures it is evident that notions of ‘career’ and career-experiences were characterised by various cycles and phases, or spirals of for instance learning and growth; of internal and external rewards; of contextual, professional and personal challenges and support in work-life contexts. These all seemed bound by a dynamic and generative interaction between choices, dedication, learning, confidence, competence, courage, rewards and challenges. Driving forces, such as a sense of purpose, and beliefs and views of the world, seem to have played a critical role in motivating and influencing attitudes, ethics, behaviour, and competence development and in galvanising action.

The adventures and experiences shared also clearly mirror the value in commitment, not only to the quest, but also to the virtues that enable(d) participants (heroes in the practice of planning) to sustain their commitment to the quest (See MacIntyre, 2013). Excellence was called forth in terms of intellectual intelligence; but also equally important was heartfelt caring, not merely as an emotional endeavour but as a conviction that led to powerful action (in a similar interplay described by Kahane (2010) in his reflection on the interplay and generative agency between ‘power and love’).

In a similar fashion, more important than mere ‘communication skills’ is the ability to connect and relate in meaningful ways to a wide range of people. Personal growth, emotional maturity, wisdom and being mindful are also qualities that are regarded as significant in enabling contribution.

Whilst the ‘call to action’ experiences illustrated the importance of taking action to embark on the journey, the exploration of ‘adventure’ experiences identified the critical importance of dedication and the tenacity to keep going: to burn the candle on both ends, to do what needs doing and to not give up hope.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON WORK-LIFE EXPERIENCES

The purpose of Section 5 was to provide an overview of participant work-life narratives by shining a light on the enquiry into what participants regarded as significant in enabling contribution within the context of their work-life experiences. Making use of the quest metaphor, the exploration and reflection of participant work-life narratives provided a brief reflection on the typical quest experiences in relation to:

- ⌘ The planning ‘world’ of participant work-life narratives and contextual realities within which work-life experiences unfolded (and contributed);
- ⌘ Typical calls to action, departure and meeting the mentors experiences;
- ⌘ First trials and initiation experiences; and
- ⌘ Ongoing challenges, adventures and rewards.

The overview of the planning context in South Africa (See Section 5.2) points to the complex, uncertain and rapidly changing work-life and practice contexts, as well as the nature of many of the challenges that participants were faced with in their working-live contexts. The uncertainty and transitional nature of this time period resulted in numerous challenges and a strong drive for social justice. It probably also provided a context where the transitional phase provided more opportunity for innovation, a ‘sense of adventure’ and a spirit of ‘hope’. This call to contribute to the unfolding future was a theme in most of the participant’s work-life narratives. Even though this theme might be unique in time and space, it might resonate with similar calls, in different times and contexts in local and global contexts, and in ‘the world’ of planning practice (e.g. where cities in Africa are facing ongoing urbanization, and where already vulnerable cities and towns have to deal with increased risks and uncertainties due to possible climate change implications).

Experiences that could be regarded as typical calls to action and departure experiences (Section 5.3) seemed to not only have marked the ‘start’, but clearly illustrate the significance of being called, and of heeding the call to planning’s quest in encouraging and enabling participants to contribute and commit to contribute. The value of real-life and highly relational growth and perception changing experiences seem highly significant in having encouraged participants to heed the call for action, and for practice association in participant work-life narratives. Another critical aspect that seemed highly significant is the role that a strong association with personal and practice quests seems to have played in this regard in participant work-life narratives. The overview of the departure, however, clearly points to the fact that it is not just about a sense of purpose or passion, but also about the belief and confidence in personal and practice abilities to enable action. A decision that seems to be infused both by the possibility to make a contribution to the ‘cause’, as well as by the ‘attraction’ of the practice, its habits, characteristics and most often by inspiring and respected educators, mentors or peers as the ‘face’ of the practice. The generative nature of this sense of purpose seems not only significant in these early (or in some cases later) practice experiences,

but even more so in the way that it seems to encourage contribution, and anchors unfolding career and practice decisions.

In reflecting on the prominent experiences shared in participant work-life narratives with regards to the first trials and practice challenges, the significance of real-life and practice enthused initiation experiences seem to be crucial. These experiences seemed to create substantial personal and professional growth and transformation opportunities to handle significant challenges. It looks like they have a generative role in unfolding work-life experiences, given significance in confirming the value and satisfaction in being dedicated to the challenging quest of contributing to the ‘collective good’. Practice enthused mentors and peers seem to have played a key role in typical initiation experiences, both in calling forth and inspiring excellence, as well as in intense interactions to adapt or craft new ways or paths to add value and contribute to the ‘collective good’. These experiences seem to have created substantial personal and professional growth and transformation opportunities.

An overview was provided of a few of the many adventure experiences, significant challenges and ordeals, as shared in participant work-life narratives (Section 5.5). Commitment to context specific and future orientated practice quests might have been the driving force that encouraged participants to face challenges, pay the price, deal with the frustration and find satisfaction in contexts where achievements or success were usually difficult to ‘claim’ or isolate. In reflecting on work-life narratives it is evident that participants were encouraged to extend themselves both professionally and personally to find creative ways of adding value as individuals, but often also through connection with others. Given the complexity, context specific and unfolding nature of the challenges and quests, practitioners have seldom taken the next step or embarked on an adventure where the answer was obvious or they have had all the required prior experience. What is evident though is that they have had experience of the possibilities that could unfold in being prepared to go deeper, extend themselves and face the challenges and joys of intense interactions. The transformational and highly relational nature of growth experiences is evident through all the work-life narratives.

Participant work-life narratives reflect the significance of highly relational and real-world transition experiences in facilitating, encouraging and supporting personal and professional development and transformation. The enormity and urgency brought by complex practice challenges, as well as the opportunity that practice engagement offered to actually get involved in collaborative co-creation, seemed to have had a generative impact on the participants’ ability to contribute. Such transformation experiences did not only become experiences through which change (as in the quest metaphor) was brought about in the outer world, but seem often to have been experiences in which one can experience oneself differently, bringing about change in the inner world. As stated by McIntyre: “A quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge” (MacIntyre, 2013:276).

Explorations and reflections on participant work-life narratives clearly illustrate that participants have not ascribed contribution merely to static or achieved competences, or indeed formal or informal personal and professional development processes.

What came to the fore was the significance the work-life narratives ascribe to:

- ∅ Why they have been doing what they do – highlighting the significance of purpose, perspective, belief and practice association;



- ⌘ How and with whom they have been able to face challenges in pursuit of that purpose, and the significance of dynamic and inter-relational practice capability in that context; and
- ⌘ How and with whom growth and development took place – with much emphasis on the value of transformative practice experiences in enabling contribution in work-life contexts.

Insights and reflections related to the above themes are discussed in more detail in relation to a time-span overview of participant work-life narratives in Section 6.



# 9

## Explorations and insights from time-span overviews

*The most important task of the hero is to make the right choice. Heroes must put aside their pride, feelings and personal life, using their powers to seek justice rather than dominance, fighting because they must, not because they are consumed by revenge.*

*(Star Wars, 1997:29).*

*The virtues ... are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which will also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distraction which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good.*

*(MacIntyre, 2013:276)*

*We arrive at a genuine sense of becoming only by stripping away our experience of time as succession.*

*(Robin Small, 2013:14)*

*The bottom line is (a) that our lives are finite, (b) that it takes time to acquire the attributes that will underpin our fitness, and (c) that we will use them for the benefit of ourselves and our kin.*

*This is the true meaning of the Latin tag 'Ars longa, vita brevis':*

*It takes a long investment to develop the arts and skills for living, and life is short.*

*(Nicholson, 2007:568)*

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

As much as quests are about the specific experiences and overcoming trials and challenges, they are also about cyclical, ongoing, and evolving processes of facing and making choices, and, often, choices where virtues are tested and the heroes' capabilities expanded (Star Wars, 1997:2). In an attempt to keep the 'vision of the unity of a human life', Section 6 provides a reflection on participant work-life experiences, actions, decisions, capabilities, as well as personal and professional development within a time-span and relational context (MacIntyre, 2013:259).

The exploration of participant work-life narratives in relation to quest experiences in Section 6 specifically highlights:

- ⌘ The significance of purpose ('why' participants have been doing what they do), perspective, belief and practice association as drivers and motivators of action and an attitude to adding value (giving and expecting excellence) – not just in the departures or glamorous challenges, but often also in the tenacity to keep going;
- ⌘ The emphasis placed on how such purpose influenced practice experiences, choices and challenges, collaboration with others, and the willingness to explore and innovate; and
- ⌘ The significance that participants attached to how the respective quest or transition experiences, and more specifically practice mentors and colleagues, challenged them to 'grow' in highly relational and often transformational ways.

Insights and reflections in relation to time-span overviews of participant work-life narratives, as reflected upon in Section 6, in many ways resonate with the findings, reflections and focus areas outlined in Section 5. The time-span reflections on participant work-life narratives in Section 6 are structured to provide a time-span overview of the participants' work-life narratives, making use of the quest metaphor to explore significant themes and coherency, with specific reference to the significance of:

- ⌘ Participant commitment to highly personal and relational practice quests (Section 6.2);
- ⌘ The interplay between transformational perspective, personal beliefs, practice and personal quests and association with planning as a practice, both as anchor and driver in career and practice decisions (Section 6.3);
- ⌘ How the quest to create practice value seems to drive excellence in participants' practice engagement, and the personal, highly relational and often paradoxical nature of capabilities that enable them to add value

A key driver and passion within the work-life narratives of many participants in the study (within the time period of the interviews – both during the apartheid regime and in the time period of the late 1900s and early 2000s) appears to be deeply rooted in a social concern with justice, racial inequality, human rights as well as quality of life and poverty. The plight of the poor and the marginalized; the terrible living conditions of people; the uprooting and displacement of families; and the lack of opportunities for many, resonated deeply, with feelings of care rising from the heart.

In reflecting on participant work-life narratives, it seems that for many participants a strong theme and confluence of life-events (in no particular order) involved the following:

- ⌘ Firstly, a deep sense of caring and justice (emanating from personal experiences and amplified by exposure to harsh realities);
- ⌘ Secondly, the belief in the possibilities and the virtues (regardless of costs) of standing up for that which is right; and
- ⌘ Thirdly, their introduction to the practice of planning as an avenue for actively pursuing personal purpose and contributing to the (much debated) common good, or as MacIntyre (2013:196) explains – “gaining the satisfaction in playing a part and contribute to society as virtuous human being”.

All of the above are evident in, and probably inspired by, the intense work-life experiences as outlined in Section 5.

The purpose of this section is to provide an indication of the significance of this sense of purpose, associated beliefs and perspectives in enabling and actively encouraging contribution.

## **6.2 GOLDEN THREAD OF PERSONAL AND PRACTICE PURPOSE SYNERGIES**

### **6.2.1 Introduction**

Numerous of the participants seem to have found synergy between personal and practice purpose. Their work-life narratives attest to actively driving ‘practice quests’, not bound to project or ‘job’ or institution, but through a commitment to make a contribution. The latter contribution often entailed acting as a change agent in bringing about change within their respective contexts.

Hand-in-hand with a sense of purpose in many of the work-life adventures was the ability and willingness to take action. This seems to be underpinned by a belief in the value of the quest, as well as confidence firstly, in the ability of planning as a practice, and secondly, in the planners’ own abilities and competence.

Many of the adventure experiences as shared in the work-life narratives were tasks, projects or even bureaucratic processes that could possibly have been undertaken and completed in a much easier even though possibly mediocre way. Instead, these tasks were approached with rigor and excellence, in an effort to add value, even though adding value most often required doing more or better than what was originally envisaged. Furthermore, many of these experiences (in spite of challenges) seem to have been (fully or partly) instigated by participants and/or the teams of which they were part, with a specific purpose to add value and/or innovate. As could be expected, the chosen quests and pathways evident in the participant work-life narratives differ. They seemed influenced by context, planning school mentors, early career communities of practice, and the confluence of events, personal strengths and passion. Chosen quests are often supported through communities of practice amongst peers, colleagues, practitioners or academics with a shared purpose.

The impact of these practice quests over time in participant careers, choices, motivation etc. seem quite significant in work-life narratives. Examples of quests (as outlined below) include:

- ⌘ Using advocacy and awareness for justice, socio-political change and sustainability;
- ⌘ Shaping of space to drive equality, justice and sustainability;
- ⌘ Driving strategic policies and processes in service of justice, transformation and development; and
- ⌘ Contributing to the ‘project’ of development through technical expertise.

The section is concluded with an indication of how participants explored different pathways and adapted their approaches in order to contribute to practice quests over time.

### 6.2.2 Quest example: Advocacy and awareness raising for justice, socio-political change and sustainability

For a number of participants acting as a change agent, advocacy, awareness raising and communication about the need for justice, diversity and the long term future seemed to be core to their practice ‘quest’. Many participants were engaged in advocacy work through volunteering as students or as acting as representatives for communities in a voluntary capacity after working hours. There are a substantial number of participants that at some stage opted to work with, and through, non-government organisations to support communities in quests for development and in processes such as land invasion during the Apartheid regime. Equally, many were involved in research where the focus was on raising awareness of the impact of government policy, or key issues to inform policy.

As mentioned by @Daib, advocacy and awareness raising in this context was indeed critical – “Planning is about story telling” (@Daib). However, it was also a major challenge in itself. It required the telling of good stories, with good technical understanding underneath it, but also more: “There are different styles that have to be involved ... when you are trying to change people’s very deep rooted attitudes. There is no way but to confront it” (@Daib). This attitude obviously resulted, as also shared by other participants, in being unpopular and in upsetting people. @Daib explained that this was especially challenging considering that he and his colleagues calculated that as a rule of thumb it takes about seven years to change attitudes. Interestingly, he postulated that it was not the general public that was difficult to persuade about things that appeared quite radical, nor business people, but actually the professionals!

@Thai\_Exp4 explained: “There is a lot of education that has to go with ... [which is] part of being a planner, where you are trying to inform people as to what the issues are... (asking) ‘How can we make the world a better place? What are the problems that the world faces? And, how do we lay the right foundations for people to live positive and constructive lives?’” (See Text Box 6 2: @Thai\_2).

This proved to be a question and a quest that indeed inspired contribution, courage and practice collaboration over time.

“  
Planning is about story telling...  
but, a good story has to have a  
good technical understanding  
beneath it.  
- Daib”

### Text Box 6.1: @Janice\_2: #Quest Challenges

@Janice explained how she started off her practice in planning in South Africa, by primarily being involved in research aimed at lobbying and attacking government policy on urbanization and city planning. She was asked to be part of a research unit which became quite prominent in the early 1980s in putting forward “counterarguments and questions why government policies were particularly negative for the poor”. This was done both within regional and urban contexts, by commenting on for instance apartheid homeland policies, decentralization and city management policies, and attacking the government of the day and putting forward alternative positions. This commitment required very hard work, and had mixed results – but was kept going for almost a decade! Not because of the external reward (as being on a contract appointment meant just ‘existing on a year-to-year basis’), but because of the cause. A cause close to her heart that resulted in her also doing volunteer work for a women’s organization and a non-profit organization at the same time.

The latter required writing articles for grassroots newspapers and spending a lot of time (at night) with civil organizations to explain the impact of apartheid policy on communities and especially where it would be negatively impacting them and where resistance could be taken up against particular policies.

The quest was not ‘easy’ – it required capabilities such as policy interpretation, communication and writing skills; however, more than that ... the ability to phrase an argument and to simplify and “understand the implication of policy and what this would mean for different people... For example changes in housing policy ... which were published by government as reform [but] which had other implications which would actually close up options or make people’s lives more difficult ...”. These implications had to be explained to communities at meetings and be interpreted “into something that civic associations could mobilise themselves around and develop political campaigns”.

Another key aspect is that commitment to the quest was highly relational. She mentioned that during this time with the research unit, she learnt a lot from strong mentors and drew on strengths from different people in the team and their networks (for example even to get green papers slipped to them by an acting councillor). She mentioned that under the lead of one of the key drivers, and at that time a professor in planning, they followed a strong spatial conceptual approach and that individual differences were less important than the need to consolidate against the government line by putting “forward a straight counterline [to ensure that] ... the battle line is quite clearly drawn.”

### Text Box 6.2: @Thai\_2: #Quest Challenges

@Thai explained how after his studies, feeling that he was not ready (or that it would be interesting) to become a planner in local government or with a private firm (yet), he decided to get involved in TV news: “[L]argely because I thought it was a way of communicating on what was going on in the country. I thought it was a very important thing to get involved in, building an understanding around the core issues and problems that we faced.” It was a fascinating year, covering a lot of stuff around the country and all the tensions that were happening at that time. By the end of the year he found out about a job as communications co-ordinator for an international NGO (linked to the school he went to) and got a three year contract in London. This was a passion that through engagement in planning practice back in South Africa in later years he remained committed to – sharing ideas amongst peers, emphasizing the role of plans in communicating and the importance of communication in getting buy-in and finding political will to enable implementation. Admitting that he “never got the skill of doing a nice map”, he reflects how some people have the ability to extract and communicate in fascinating ways through maps and images – “so that it jumps out at you”. His passion for communication was more than just a capability though. “Presenting things and making people aware of things which perhaps they block out. [The latter] I think we do very successfully in South Africa. We have very set ways of categorizing people and situations and positions. Amongst our groups and communities we reinforce positions with each other. Eventually it becomes entrenched and becomes part of reality and is seen as the truth. I think it is those types of situations that one has to challenge! The same is evident in planning. There are certain held truths as to things like, what the market wants and where it is going. Once you begin to dissect these things you find that they are not necessarily true ... or, as true as you might expect... [thus] they rather respond to a situation than challenge it and ask is this really right? To be able to ask and go beyond the obvious – that is very important in planning”.

### Text Box 6.3: @Jens\_2: #Quest Challenges

@Jens\_Exp1: He mentioned how during his career he actually had the opportunity to really “do rural development”. At the time that he was working for a former homeland government, one of the biggest challenges was “to support rural development and provide people with access to housing and land” during a time of large scale urbanization [one of the results of restricting access within the major urban areas]. He described the challenges of managing, driving and coordinating processes of township development in the non-ideal apartheid system, where he had to ensure coordination for physical planning between all the government departments in the former homeland [which had a range of government departments as it was supposed to operate as an independent ‘state’], as well as with political leaders, tribal authority leaders, community members and officials.

The processes entailed all the physical as well as legal components of township development up to the point of ensuring that the relevant financing institutions and development corporations were on board, requiring not only planning and management skills, but the ability to work with people and stakeholders, as well as the commitment to see processes and plans through (even if it meant working till ten at night most evenings). Interestingly the challenge of driving development by doing sound technical work and getting developments approved in spite of not necessarily ‘having the answers up front’ within an intricate legal systems and regulatory context [The abolishment of the Apartheid system and homelands resulted in quite a complicated set of land and planning laws] seemed to have continued when he started his own private practice [With the incorporation of the former homeland governments into the South African system].

### 6.2.3 Quest Example: Shaping space to drive justice and sustainability

A number of participants drove their passion for equality and justice primarily through raising strong critique about the apartheid spatial structure and spatial injustices.

For some participants this entailed being involved in projects or development management that were actively aimed at shaping spaces (e.g. @Pedro, @Kail, @Neil, @Wim, @Lain, @Gaz). Other participants involved in research units and non-governmental organizations to lobby for changes of policy with government (e.g. @Janice, @Daib, @Bijan).

This was not just about changing outcomes, but about changing a system and in essence advocating what the practice (and quest) of planning was ‘supposed to be about’ – a ‘quest’ that required not only hard work and the generation of innovative plans, but also courage and commitment (See Text Box 5.13: @Daib\_3), asking difficult questions, and a lot of learning and tenacity to keep going in spite of no quick wins for more than a decade.

A strong spatial competency and spatial understanding were mentioned by a number of the participants as being a key driver in engaging their work and ‘quests’ in planning. Within a context where Marxist thinking played a big role at the time, some participants were actively arguing for critically re-thinking space, whilst others were arguing that bringing about change in material conditions required alternative processes and institutions.

These seemingly divergent approaches could also be traced back to different planning schools, mentors and practice communities that seemed to actively encourage and pursue them. However, as reflected on by proponents of both ‘camps’, the outcomes were much more important than the way in which they were pursued (Section 6.4), calling forth and inspiring collaboration from a community of practice over time, as well as exploring and creatively engaging in a wide range of different options to contribute to re-shaping cities and creating sustainable livelihoods and places.

### 6.2.4 Quest Example: Driving improved quality of life, sustainability and justice through transformative plans, policies and processes

A number of participants seemed to have been contributing to the future and society at large through setting up and driving strategic planning and collaboration processes in support of developing future orientated SDFs and/or integrated strategic and development plans. A number of participants shared an urgency regarding the need for strategic, bold and conceptually sound integrated plans and strong policies (i.e. @Harold, @Dali, @Jalan, @Lain, @Pedro).

In the work-life narrative of @Pedro, a senior director at one of the larger cities at the time of the interview, the drive to “influence the local economy”, stimulate development in black townships and “to fight apartheid” could be seen like a golden thread through a number of experiences and different initiatives in the city (See Annexure C time-span analyses Figure C9). As he explained, it meant opposing central government and taking on the regional planning function which the city embarked upon, resulting in a time of “great conceptualisation and actualization”.

In @Harold’s work-life narrative a golden thread of purpose runs from an early call to action experience, through to studies where critical thinking and critique against the apartheid system played a big role. The



path included joining a provincial planning commission, getting involved in complex regional planning and the task of managing a policy unit at quite a young age. In this experience he faced huge challenges but was also provided with the opportunity to work with fascinating, knowledgeable and inspiring people on regional planning and integrated rural planning. In reflecting on these experiences @Harold mentioned the challenges associated with such processes and the importance of political will, contextual realities, “powerful connections” and the complexities within various social and political and economic networks. In spite of the realisation that the environment cannot be controlled, decisions and buy-in cannot be guaranteed and the impact of plans cannot be foreseen, the driving of strategic processes and passion to influence policy remained a challenge I was committed to tackle. This he did throughout a later research focus in academia and with a new and inspiring mentor who believed in his abilities. It also included practice collaboration (including with young academic) who challenged him to actively engage the policy world. Stepping up in the world of academia and research opened up other ‘playing fields’ with local and, later, international colleagues. Disappointed about the lack of change and with the limited impact made by the practice of planning, and the fact that planning in the 2000s seemed to have become increasingly ordered and bureaucratized, @Harold reflected how this required practitioners to not give up, but have the tenacity to engage with change and complexity. However, as he mentioned this was done “not in prescribed ways”, but using critical thinking and problem solving capabilities to engage with other to “find ways through and reach ways to do” that which must be done.

In a similar way, the work-life narrative of @Lain provides insight into how commitment to the quest of bringing about change in society got sparked at a young age, how travels opened up his eyes for different possibilities and how engaging with inspiring mentors and peers in the field of planning galvanised his involvement in setting up a non-governmental organisation to support land access for black communities. Numerous struggles in land issues on the ground, together with deep engagement with policy issues and critical research, but also by being willing to take the lead and engage in the challenge of driving a national planning initiative aimed at supporting and informing the establishment of a new planning system in South Africa, required tenacity, the courage to deal with disappointments and the ability to shift roles and approaches. @Lain reflected on how the engagement and collaboration with fellow activists, politicians, and at a later stage also younger professionals and international colleagues, proved invaluable through all of these endeavours. In hindsight, he reflected on the disappointment of opportunities missed and on the lack of tangible results, but his rewards are found in a sense of having done the right thing, in the collective action of bringing about changes in policies and legislation, in the inspiration he finds in seeing a younger generation of planners and academics stepping up, and in the new unfolding challenges and possibilities brought by engaging on critical issues in public policy, academia and in international practice collaborations.

### **6.2.5 Quest Example: Contributing to the ‘project’ of development through technical expertise**

Seemingly more conservative, more modernist and even technical on the first encounter, but probably much more nuanced, is the commitment to the quest of development that was evident within participant work-life narratives. This commitment entailed finding solutions for ways to engage with complex problems such as the phenomena of large scale urbanization and rural development during the 1980s to early 2000s, and the challenges posed to urban and national governments for sustainable development.

The quest to add value through technical know-how interestingly seemed more evident within work-life narrative experiences of younger participants in the form of using the latest technology to do spatial analyses, develop models, or drafting plans or reports.



The constant drive at excellence and contributing through technical expertise, but also dedication to do and ‘figure out’ what needs doing, and willingness to get support and assistance from peers and others, as well as go the extra mile (beyond the requirements of bureaucratic processes) have been especially evident in the work-life narratives of participants engaging in challenges related to development facilitation and management (See Section 5.5.2).

### 6.2.6 The significance of commitment to personal and practice quests

Explorations of participant work-life narratives not only illustrate passionate and strong commitments to such quests, but also how very similar concerns and calls to action (with significant confluence in purpose and motivation) were actually followed through quite different pathways, roles and approaches. These included changing jobs, finding creative ways to pursue the quest for collective good within planning as a practice where circumstances or managers seemed less than supportive, and sometimes even taking rather drastic measures to obtain the capabilities required to make shifts towards the quest that they had been called to. There were many amongst the participants who participated in advocacy work through volunteering whilst being students and even as representatives for community voices in a voluntary capacity after working hours to play their part in ‘fighting for justice’. There are a substantial number that at some stage opted to work with and through non-government organisations to support communities in quests for development and in processes such as land invasion during the Apartheid regime. Equally so there are numerous who used research and were part of academia or other research institutions (either on a full time or part time basis) where the focus was on raising awareness of the impact of government policy or key issues to inform policy.

Of interest in this regard, is that whilst many participants seemed to have been quite passionate about specific approaches or philosophies they had strongly supported earlier in their working-lives, experience seems to have brought significant shifts in opinions over time. In especially the older participant work-life narratives reference is found to experiences and changes in perceptions that seem to have led to participants’ re-assessing their ideas and beliefs of the best way to make a developmental impact that would bring about societal and spatial change. Experience gained in the pursuit of the quest through a specific pathway/approach, struggles and challenges, personal growth and willingness to let go of strong opinions seem to have brought wisdom, insight and appreciation for alternative options. It often provides acknowledgement of the value and need of approaches previously opposed as being, for example, “too technically inclined”, “over emphasising spatial form”, “caught in procedural and regulatory aspects”, or “too focused on critical thinking and policy evaluation”.

In a number of the work-life narratives some significant changes, or perhaps rather a broadening of the range of strategies from spatial to procedural approaches, were evident. These included for example starting off in the world of urban design and strongly spatial orientated planning or even architecture with a conviction that the answer in bringing about change would lie in spatial form. However, in driving more just and sustainable urban form and design, the almost inevitable realisation seems to have been in the

value of the apparently opposing approaches and value in expanding understanding, knowledge and abilities. That is to “understand the market” (@Pedro), engage with the reality of political will (@Thai), and have knowledge of the restrictions and enabling role of technicalities, such as engineering services, (@Janice\_Exp4) and alternative forms of tenure and land values.

Almost on the other side of the coin, a number of participants who had previously strongly valued the critical thinking and socio-political approach and policy analyses skills, and actively denounced the more technical approaches to driving change in their early work-life experiences, voiced a strong recognition of the need to support implementation through sound technical skills, knowledge of land-use management, and infrastructure and engineering services to actually effectuate policy and knowledge about engineering services, and the spatial dimension of urban systems and planning (@Harold, @Dali, @Janice, @Pedro).

What is significant is that commitment to the quest seemed to remain central, even though alternative, better, more appropriate journeys, adventures, collaborators and pathways might have been selected. It also points to the reality that an integrative practice such as planning requires a very broad knowledge base and understanding, but also that practitioners who are committed to the quest and to learning will (and can) actually explore alternative pathways and identify what other sets of understandings and discipline inputs are required. Changing one’s approach and being willing to be ‘wrong’ also illustrate the value of growth, adaptation and transformation that takes place at a personal level, and the important role of well-rounded change agents and leaders within the practice.

In a similar way, participants seem to have adapted, finding new ways to engage and improve their capabilities to respond to (and in some cases actually instigate) changes in policy and legislation, changing technologies and changing personal and institutional contexts, which were particularly pertinent with the major changes in systems, institutions, legislation, approaches and policies in South Africa at the time.

“ We eventually threw the question away of what planning is and replaced it with what planning should ... if it has to have any meaning?  
- Daib ”

The commitment to the quest as it unfolded in the planning work-life narratives seemed to be characterised by contributing to both local context and the collective good.

Using the metaphor of Joseph Campbell’s description of the “hero with a thousand faces” (2008), participant work-life quests could possibly be described as a ‘quest with a thousand pathways’. As would probably be expected within such diverse work-life and socio-political and societal contexts, varied personal interests and backgrounds, a drive to the collective future is driven through a range of diverse pathways.

A clear resonance among personal purpose, planning’s quest, and the promise held in planning for the possibility to contribute is evident. All of the work-life narratives referred to planning’s concern with the future and the continuous interplay with contextual realities and the major challenges in South Africa’s planning context.

Explicit reference is made to ‘purpose’, ‘contribution’, ‘making a difference’, ‘inspiration’, strong feelings of ‘the need for something to be done’, an association with planning’s quest, critical questioning about what can bring about change in the world, commitment to excellence in engaging such causes and caring that is wider than the individuals’ context or circle of influence.

The work-life narratives also illustrate the notions of belief and hope, as well as disillusionment, in relation to this quest and the ability to contribute as a person and within planning as practice. From the context of the time-span narratives of all participants it was evident that the identification with, and commitment to, the quest in planning formed a strong influencing factor throughout the adventures, choices and shifts within their working-lives.

It seems that the quest in search of the higher good strongly relate to the commitment to bring about change, improve living conditions and provide opportunities for the poor and people suffering from injustices and inequality. As stated by Campbell (2006:99) “justice in planning is about situated ethical judgment and practical reasoning”. A dynamic tension is evident in the interplay among the anti-apartheid sentiments, development considerations for local contexts, as well as objectives for universal and longer term sustainability contexts that were voiced by the participants.

Whilst almost all the participants explicitly shared a strong passion for making a contribution to bettering the lives of the poor and in addressing spatial and other injustices and inequalities, quests were not merely singular and were not limited to the examples provided in the text.

Evident in a number of the work-life narratives, as set out above, was not only the causes (reasons) that could be associated with a purpose for the quest, but also a seemingly strong belief or conviction about the best pathway to pursue and add value to the particular quest, and the willingness to re-assess that. This seemed to have driven participants to go the extra mile, search for the best path forward, contribute with excellence to their practice contexts, as well as make significant adaptations and ‘plans’ to obtain or source relevant capability.

The adventure experiences in many cases seem to have been ‘created’ as that: where ordinary day-to-day tasks, projects or bureaucratic processes have been approached with rigor and excellence with the aim to add value – even though that often required doing more and better than originally envisaged in the task itself (not a minimum standard, on budget or ‘just good enough’ approach at all). The goal or objective, the extensive tasks and the adventures of the quest seem to be much better understood within the context of the adventures, dramas and challenges of the quest (MacIntyre, 2013:275).

### **6.2.7 Summary reflections**

Whilst personal and practice quests were inevitably aimed at bringing about change in the outer world, it is evident that they played a key part in participants’ inner worlds. Whilst influenced by aspects such as personal contextual realities, opportunities, personality, age, experience, influential positions, networks, etc. these quests also illustrate a strong commitment to purpose and the willingness to make decisions, adapt positions and do what is needed to contribute (as was illustrated by participants in their working life contexts). The inter-relatedness in narrative with life experiences, growth, shifts, choices and reflections on meaning seems significant.

In conclusion, the section has been used to illustrate that the role of purpose, dedication to that purpose, belief in personal and practice ability, and deeply supportive personal and highly relational practice engagement and transitions seem to have been highly significant in enabling, but also encouraging participants to contribute to the quest in the future, in the midst (and maybe because of), complex and challenging practice contexts.

## 6.3 STRONG PRACTICE ASSOCIATION AND PURPOSE DRIVEN CAREER CHOICES

### 6.3.1 Introduction

Participants' work-life narratives (and the passionate narrations thereof) clearly attest to the important role and influence they ascribe to purpose, drive, beliefs and motivation within their practice contexts, and over the time-span of those experiences. This was noted to be not a once-off, or merely for the sake of external rewards, or only when it was easy, or when practitioners seemed to have all the know-how and capability in hand (mind or heart). To the contrary, it indeed seemed like a quest embarked upon from the first call to action – from bright-eyed belief and idealism in early practice engagements tempered through ups and downs, through disappointments in planning because of not having the desired impact, and through despair in dark personal moments, but with the tenacity to keep believing, to focus on purpose and transfer inspiration to others to do the same.

The section is not aimed at providing a view of careers that can be related to a 'peg-in-hole' approach and searching for statistical matching or predictors of success (Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:21-24). It is also not an attempt to match work-life narratives in phases or in stages to life-span or life-space stage theories along a set of phases during which individuals continually revise themselves and their self-concepts (i.e. Super's life-span theories as explained by Hall and Mirvis, 1995; Smart and Peterson, 1997; Arthur et al., 2005; Sterner, 2012).

It is much rather aimed at illustrating the type of career decisions and transitions, such as self-employment and self-directed 'tourism' between organisations (which as explained by Guest and Sturges (2007:318) is in contrast to upwardly mobile notions of career development of the past). Participant work-life narratives (spanning from the 1970s in many cases) to a large extent also reflect other characteristics associated, firstly, with careers in the new world of work, being described as boundaryless, protean (flexible, self-directed, dynamic and spanning organisations or even industries) and self-instigated, and, secondly, with careers where purpose and meaning in work-life is regarded as a very important consideration (See Chandler and Kram, 2007:241-244; Lo Presti, 2009:128-130; Dwyer, 2003; Arthur et al., 2005; and Baruch, 2004).

Commitment to purpose is not a unique feature to planning and seems likely to play a significant role as a general career anchor and driver (Sullivan, 2007; Guest, 2007) and to be linked to a range of meta-competencies typically associated with the qualities and purpose-driven passion valued in the new world of work (Lo Presti, 2009; Hall and Chandler, 2005; Chandler et al., 2011; Potgieter, 2012).

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the significance of coherent career and practice choices, rewards and costs, in enabling growth, collaboration and practice contribution over the course of time, as evident in:

- ⌘ Time-span perspective on work-life narratives;
- ⌘ Participants' identification and association with planning as a practice;

- ⌘ The significance attributed to contributions to planning and others in the practice; and
- ⌘ Career choices and participant perceptions of contribution, costs and rewards.

The significance of creating practice value and the personal, highly relational and often paradoxical nature of capabilities that enabled them to create value and remain committed are outlined in Section 6.4. In Section 6.5, reflections are shared on intense practice embedded contribution experiences as being highly relational experiences of professional and personal growth, learning and transformation.

### 6.3.2 Career time-span perspective

Taking a time-span perspective of the respective work-life narratives, it is evident that ‘career’ experiences, not only viewed in relation to professional work (Gunz and Peipler, 2007:3) but rather viewed as a ‘sequence of a person’s work experience over time’ (Gunz and Peipler, 2007:4), are characterised by cycles of intensity. For example, these can be in terms of cycles of learning, experience and growth; cycles of excitement, achievement and rewards; as well as cycles of professional and personal challenges in work-life contexts. Just as careers and career experiences could be viewed as the bridge between individual and organisation (Schein, 2007:573) or society (Nicholson, 2007:566), they could probably also be viewed in the context of this enquiry as the interaction space between personal and practice quests, bound by a dynamic and generative interaction between deeply personal and highly relational practice choices, dedication, learning, confidence, competence, courage, rewards and challenges.

Using the time-span dimension, a brief reflection on participant work-life narratives is provided in terms of three categories: namely participants with 5–15 years of work-life experience; participants with 15–30 years of experience; and, participants with 30 or more years of experience. The career time-span view illustrates how experiences are highly diverse and deeply personal, whilst transition and growth seems to form a critical thread over time.

#### 6.3.2.1 Participants with 5-15 years experience

Common denominators evident in the participant work-life adventures of participants with about 5–15 years of work-life experience are:

- ⌘ Intense ‘call to action’ experiences during the time of growing up and formative experiences influenced by an exposure to the injustices of the Apartheid era;
- ⌘ Profound early education and ‘initiation’ experiences, significant impacts of mentors and educators and strong associations with (and expectation of) the possibility of planning to contribute and make a significant short term and long term impact in South Africa and developing contexts, as well as explicit association with specific approaches promoted by educators and planning schools during often intense formal education experiences;
- ⌘ Experiences reflecting rapid growth and work-life stages; in many cases described in terms of a journey of personal growth, but in ways that seemed highly relational given the significance of peers, mentors, managers and communities of practice;
- ⌘ Recognition of a big ‘disappointment’ with the seemingly inability of planning to deliver on expectations at some stage during their work-life experiences, as well as reference to the struggle and

complexity involved in rising to the challenges, keeping committed to the quest and believing in a sense of impact and achievement; and

- ⌘ The value of technical, land-use management, design and land development skills as critical planning tools and capabilities in planning's quest for impact.

“ There is a tension about  
wanting to make a difference...  
and wanting to have a visible  
affirmation of one's work. -  
Harold ”

### 6.3.2.2 Participants with 15-30 years experience

Amongst participants with about 15–30 years of work-life experience, narratives reflect:

- ⌘ A strong thread of ‘purpose’ through various work-life choices and experiences, almost as ‘career quests’; and
- ⌘ A wide range of factors influencing such experiences and significant reflection on qualities, competencies and growth experiences. Interestingly, significant emphasis has also been placed on the relevance of original (and subsequent) ‘call to action’ and ‘initiation’ experiences. As could probably be expected in the South African context, work-life narratives and references to communities of practice were characterised by either being highly critical and outspoken of the Apartheid regime, or having had more of a developmental and technical journey reflecting on impact from ‘within’ the system.

Given the changes in the South-African socio-political and planning contexts, fast changing technology and personal contexts, participants in this group also explicitly reflected on the need and challenges associated with adaptation, and the notions of security associated with careers, especially in the more conservative Afrikaans culture, when they made ‘career choices’.

One such example is mentioned by @Jens, mentioning the significance that registering as a professional planner and being in a professional career as well as the importance of a sense of security and stability played in his career decisions in early years – something he ascribed to his more conservative Afrikaans upbringing, and which he had to face in starting off in his own practice in later years.

The work-life adventures and reflections of participants in this group also included much more reference to the importance of playing a mentoring role, and the challenges of taking up the more ‘mundane’ and ‘boring’ tasks related to management positions. The influences of career anchors in choices leading to change or the creation of own companies were also more prevalent (resonating with career strategies of ‘tourism’ and ‘self-employment’ as identified amongst a range of professionals pursuing professional careers in career study research (Guest and Sturges, 2007:321-322)).

### 6.3.2.3 Participants with more than 30 years experience

Work-life narratives of participants with more than 30 years of experience were more reflective, valuing wisdom, but probably just as (if not more) enthusiastic and motivated about planning as a practice than the other participants. These participants seem to have shared:

- ⌘ A much more modernist upbringing, with huge amounts of experience, contributions, work-life stages, areas of specialisation and changes over the course of time;
- ⌘ Work-life narratives and adventures that were highly reflective, probably more consolidated and narrated in terms of career quests and broad phases, together with more evident societal and socio-economic as well as political influences in focus areas, significant tasks and adventures;
- ⌘ Explicit association with influential educators and mentors during often intense formal post-graduate education experiences; and
- ⌘ An entry into planning from related disciplines.

Participants in this category (as well as a few other participants with less years of experience) obtained post-graduate qualifications in the field of planning later in their work-lives. What was evident was the significance that perspective changing experiences (through travelling, as well as exposure to critical societal issues) seem to have had on participant choices to embark on studies in planning (often whilst working in fields related to the field of planning). Examples of this were recounted by @Daib, @Pedro and @Bijan who started their studies and work experiences in architecture, as well as @Lain and @Lena who started in geography – often in times before planning courses were readily available.

Participants in this group were, in spite of many challenges, disappointments and accounts of delving deep to find hope again, still enthused and encouraged by the quest to add value to the collective future. Whilst they all reflected with some degree of excitement on their original call to action quests and initiation experiences, as well as growth and changes through various cycles of career adventures, it was evident that by the time of the interviews they were placing a significant emphasis on the importance of the growth of others and on contributing to planning education and practice.

### 6.3.3 Identification and association with planning as a practice

‘Call to action’ experiences (as suggested in the use of the metaphor) in participant work-life narratives highlight the role of drivers and beliefs that motivated participants to heed the call to act.. In some cases, ‘call to action’ experiences were instrumental in awakening and soliciting both a personal and professional sense of purpose and motivation. In other cases, these experiences seem to have actually strengthened, reinforced and even validated personal drivers and beliefs (about the world, the future and participants’ own contribution) and aligned personal ‘quests’ with the ‘quests’ in the practice of planning.

Participants mentioned strong identification and association with the practice of planning in two ways.

Firstly, with regards to ‘self-realisation’ and the way in which personal strengths, interests and curiosity, seemed to not only ‘fit’ but be challenged and expanded by the practice evident in many participants’ reference to how they viewed planning as a ‘perfect fit’ or ‘fitting career’ (See Section 5.3); thus linking it to personal strengths, interests and qualities, almost in the same way that career counsellors advise in terms of affinity and ability (which for two of the participants was indeed the case).



Secondly, with regards to ‘contribution’, where identification was notable in the ways in which participants described the practice, with practitioners, educators, mentors and traditions inspiring excitement, belief and purpose-infused action. The belief in planning through practice association with mentors (and even inspiring authors) and the experience (or inspiration) that impact is possible, and action thus valuable, was prominent in the typical ‘call to action’ experiences in participants’ work-life narratives.

Interactions with mentors, managers, first job experiences, hero educators, idols and the spirited, as well as respected peers and colleagues in the practice of planning, seemed to have played a key role in the work-life narratives of all participants in this enquiry and their respective quests.

Experiences highlight the critical role and impact of purpose-enthused and action-orientated planning (and in some instances geography) educators in the variety of ‘call to action’ experiences. Experiences illustrate the value of what Gunder (2004) describes as significant influences on the ego ‘ideals’ of novice planners. Experiences (as outlined in typical ‘call to action’ and ‘initiation’ experiences) illustrate a strong association between personal quests and practice quest, and/or between personal strengths and affinities and the opportunities for expressing and extending such strengths in the practice of planning. There is also evidence of young or novice planners gaining excellent exposure through intense study and first practice experiences. This was related not only to ‘experience’ in the practice, but also to experience of the importance of excellence, and introduction to traditions and habits (i.e. of hard work, caring, contribution and excellence) – a significant part of identification with the practice as argued by Lennon (2015) and MacIntyre (2013) with regards to commitment to the quest of planning as a practice. As MacIntyre explains, “intellectual virtues are acquired through teaching, the virtues of character from habitual exercise. We become just or courageous by performing just or courageous acts; we become theoretically or practically wise as a result of systemic instruction” (2013:201).

The sense of purpose and motivation ignited by these early practice experiences also resonate with the significance of early career association and identity (as outlined by Potgieter (2012:158) and Guest and Sturges (2007) in the field of career studies) in the formation of career anchors that guide decisions, inspire action and lead to occupational embeddedness over time (Ng and Feldman, 2007; Isenberg, 1997). This is especially significant where the career is regarded as a ‘calling’ (Hall and Chandler, 2005; Guest and Sturges, 2007).

The value of such ‘initiation’ experiences in a career context in planning as a practice, resonates with findings in research about career change and commitment which highlights that dedication and association with a practice, its principles, referents and traditions typically increase in accordance with the increased intensity of experiences and relations in that specific practice (See Ibarra and Deshpande, 2007:278-279).

#### **6.3.4 Contributing to planning as a practice and to others in the practice**

A strong driver explicitly mentioned in terms of contribution to society and to the broader practice of planning was the practice engagement and specifically the passion for interaction and for providing growth opportunities for younger practitioners and peers. This was not only evident amongst participants that played senior manager roles, but also amongst a number of participants that volunteered and contributed to professional practice associations.

The passion to add value through providing opportunities for mentoring was especially evident in work-life narratives of older participants (i.e. @Yitzah, @Jens, @Linza, @Dáib, @Kail, @Pedro). As stated by @Pedro\_Exp6: “At this stage in my career I am passionate about providing space for others to do what they need to, or want to do”. This statement also resonated with @Yitzah’s reflection on the last number of years in a management position where he saw the significance of his contribution to “create opportunities for others [students and staff] to grow and achieve excellence, and supporting them to get the best out of themselves.”

It was indeed this same attitude from mentors that participants also often mentioned in their work-life narratives. As stated by @Pedro\_Exp1 in reflecting on his interactions with an education mentor: “He was a brilliant teacher as well because he didn't have an ego in teaching. He understood that his job was to develop you and not put his point of view across to you.” A way of doing which @Pedro explicitly recognised as having inspired himself to remember that “in a managerial sense ... your job is to get the people to get the best out of themselves”. He mentioned that it was a passion of his to share this [ecological understanding of the world] in studio classes where he was also lecturing in planning, to equip students with what they need to engage with in the complexities of planning. He was however, outspoken about the fact that it was not merely about the subject matter but possibly even more about attitude, responsibility, and some level of maturity and understanding from themselves that would enable them to “get beyond their own egos [and] engage in what should be sophisticated and intellectual dialogue ... You want to breed curiosity ... If they can't ask any good questions then, they won't later!”.

Whilst it was evident from participant work-life narratives that planning education was definitely not merely a passion of educators *per se*, participants (which included prominent educators of three of the four biggest planning departments in South Africa at the time of the interviews) also specifically referred to their passion for teaching planning. They mentioned the importance of ‘a core philosophy’, ‘a central question’, ‘a position’ to drive enquiry and teaching – and were all quite critical of planning schools that teach planning merely as a ‘formula’ or technical endeavour.

One of the younger participants reflected that he “always wanted to improve people's lives ... which (he added) might sound very patronising” and that, that was one of the reasons that kept him enthusiastic about improving access to universities for black students and for working with students from deficit circumstances especially. With a similar enthusiasm @Harold reflected: “I always liked trying to understand ideas and explaining it, the research and the challenges to think about the ideas and the use thereof ...” In reflecting on his work-life experiences, he also mentioned the importance and challenge of this commitment in teaching. In his view the tension of ‘wanting to make a difference’ and ‘the visible affirmation of one’s work’ was probably even less visible [in research and academia] than in the practice of planning. In hindsight he reckoned probably one of the reasons why he found influencing international debates and planning practice (through bringing South African context and insights into international debates) quite satisfactory.

As stated by one of them, @Daib: “I work hard!! I have a passion for it. I find it fascinating. Academia is no regular 8 to 5 job. That’s not why you are here ...! The first thing we try to teach is passion! You can’t get involved in this type of discipline if you don’t have a passion for it! It will drive you absolutely nuts ... You have to have passion and you must have belief. You cannot teach what you don’t believe. You have to be able to say that you don’t know ... [And] you have to keep going [referring to rekindling your own passion and purpose], because they [the students] can suck you dry in a flash and spit you out – and that is you,

finished! If you are not growing in your own work [practice] and your research then you will never be a good university teacher [in planning].”

Practice contribution did not seem to refer to acting as a ‘guru’, but rather to the willingness to share ideas and experiences, engage in collaborative practice, as well as to reflect and make meaning through discussions. In the working-life contexts of most participants a motivation seems present to contribute to the practice of planning and/or communities of practice, to engage with students or to support initiatives within the practice. As such contributing with excellence in their own practice contexts, but arguably also to the practice and traditions of what type of practitioner to be and become, in the practice itself.

### 6.3.5 Career choices, contribution, costs and rewards

In terms of work-life experiences and adventures spanning ‘career contexts’, the exploration of participant work-life narratives illustrate, on the one hand, the wide range of focus areas, roles and context-specific challenges that participants faced in their specific ‘quest’ contexts. On the other hand, it pointed to shared attitudes, competencies and growth experiences, as well as shared experiences of paying the personal and professional costs and of gaining internal and external rewards; enabling participants to face the challenges and add value. In spite of vast differences, it does seem that many work-life adventures entailed being an agent or champion of change in some way or another.

Narrations of adventures and events contained explicit explanations and reference to a golden thread connecting purpose, dedication, willingness, growth, experience, confirmation, career choices, and rewards. These aspects can be regarded as strong career anchors.

Significantly, some career shifts were actually purposefully made to pursue new ways of contributing to the quest. For instance, a highly experienced planner employed at one of the large cities resigned in frustration that nothing was really happening in the new South Africa after periods of lengthy restructuring – only to rekindle her passion for adding value to the city’s development through pursuing planning within the private sector. Similarly, the work-life narratives reflect choices about career changes from working for a government agency to becoming more actively involved within planning activism, or from being involved in private practice to rather pursuing a job in academia to contribute to policy debates more effectively.

As stated by one of the older participants (@Yitzah), career and ‘getting to the top’ was probably less important than excellence, tenacity, a “can do” attitude, a belief in one’s own abilities and some measure of “divine intervention” [mentioned whilst re-iterating that he is not a religious person]. “Life is not a planned affair. It is but something that happens on your journey ... You have to throw your bread on the water without any expectation of getting something in return.” [own translation].

Explorations of time-span work-life experiences within the respective participant work-life narratives, as highlighted, clearly point to the importance of socio-economic and political context, not merely in focus areas or societal concerns, but also in personal motivation, beliefs and perceived sense of contribution. In the same way the contextual influences of personal background and history, networks, geography, institutions, colleagues, managers, work-related challenges, family life, personal circumstance, etc. are all significant influencing factors. The impact of contextual influences (whether perceived as positive or negative by participants at the time of the interview) seems to have influenced choices relating to, for instance, work location, working for specific organisations or institutions of higher learning, or many other

practical considerations. The significance of contextual influences in shaping and creating the context (and even building resolution) for contribution in the work-life narratives is clearly highlighted by Maryhofer, Meyer and Steyrer (2007).

Work-life experiences also clearly illustrate how changing contexts, unexpected challenges, political shifts, disappointments and even career rewards (such as a promotion to unit manager, or head of a planning school) might bring new sets of dynamics and consistently requires adaptation. Interestingly, in the participant work-life narratives such changes and choices over time have been explained in the context of purpose as well as in terms of choices made for opportunities to contribute and grow (i.e. through working with – or rather tackling highly complex challenges with – certain individuals, well respected peers and colleagues, mentors and even specific communities of practice).

Research in the field of career studies confirms that it is exactly such motives, values, talents, sense of autonomy, service orientation, need for creativity, spirituality, and importance of purpose-filled work amongst a number of other aspects that are regarded as significant for making choices in individual work-life experiences over time (Schein, 1985; Baruch, 2004 and Sullivan and Crocitto, 2007. 295) and that serve as so-called career anchors influencing decisions, dedication and changes.

Whilst this might once again be the benefit of hindsight, career anchors and commitment to a personal and practice quest could also explain the ability and attitude with which participants seemed to have been able to ‘frame’ work-life experiences over time, having been able to chart a way and keep their focus on what they regarded as significant in spite of circumstances or managers that inhibited or constrained them, whether in the excitement of the spotlight or the dedication that goes with behind the scenes back-room slog, or whether operating as part of a strong team but at other times having had to face personal fears and doing what must be done alone.

The value of such career anchors is not only evident during turbulent times, or during institutional restructuring (mentioned often) and change. The value of these anchors in sustaining commitment and dedication to ‘giving it all’ was even more evident in the participants’ reflections on their personal frustrations and ‘disappointment’ with the seemingly inability of planning as practice (or with institutions or processes or plans) to deliver on the ‘promise’, and in their deeply personal challenges of making meaning, staying committed, and/or redirecting the focus of their quest in order to find value.

The personal costs and challenges of engaging practice quests in terms of time, putting in the long hours to ensure impact, and often making decisions that might not have been ideal in terms of career advancement or income were also prevalent. This points to the much deliberated tensions of straddling personal and family well-being with dedication to practice quests and professional success, with increasingly less emphasis on security and more emphasis on relations and multi-dimensionality of living (Hall et al., 2012; Dwyer et al., 2003:10-12).

The value attained through such dedication can probably be associated with internal rewards and subjective career outcomes such as the satisfaction of contributing to humanity (living a life worth living for as argued by MacIntyre, 2013), accomplishment and passion (Tobergte and Curtis, 2013:1689-1699; Hall et al., 2012), as well as experience in the field, exposure to practice networks, opportunities for rapid growth, opportunities to build strong relations with respected ‘practice heroes’ and networks, to gain confidence, to contribute by meaningful innovation and to expand capabilities to contribute, etc.

Interestingly, the example set by mentors and ‘practice heroes’ in earlier years continued to play a role much later. The experience of mentors that called for excellence from themselves and those they worked with (mentioned by almost all participants), who burnt the candle on both sides, who sourced in help and capabilities that were required, who pursued the ‘quest’ and faced the challenges and placed the focus on rewards that were (in line with the nature of planning) about long term change, about commitment to the ‘common good’ were pertinent to the traditions in planning as a practice (MacIntyre, 2013; Lennon, 2015:72) that the participants had identified with.

### 6.3.6 Summary reflections

The purpose of the section was to share some reflections; acknowledging the deeply intertwined and highly personal experiences relating to the participants’ career and practice choices which unfolded through their work-life contexts. Specific reference was made to:

- ⌘ How this seemed to have differed across time for different participants;
- ⌘ The significance of identification and association with planning as a practice in the participants’ working lives;
- ⌘ The importance of contribution to planning as a practice and other practitioners; and
- ⌘ The way in which purpose, rewards and contribution influenced career choices.

The enquiry can in no way reflect the full depth, nor acknowledge the uniquely personal journeys of participants in this study, nor ‘clarify’ or ‘explain’ the highly intertwined and iterative processes of personal, professional and practice development (being, becoming and contributing). It is aimed though at raising awareness about the significance of some of the uniquely personal and highly inter-relational dynamics that seem to have been at play over time within participant work-life experiences and contexts for an enhanced understanding of what is significant in enabling practitioners to contribute in complex work-life contexts.

Participant work-life narratives and experiences reflected on in the work-life narratives illustrate a high level of association with the ideals, purposes and challenges in the practice of planning. Participants also reflected on how the challenges and opportunities encountered in planning as a chosen field of work or career suited their personal interests and strengths. In reflecting on career choices and experiences, the golden thread of purpose infused action is evident. Whilst ‘connecting the dots’ does not imply a ‘pre-planned career’ and might only have become possible with the benefit of hindsight, this seems to resonate with career experiences where professionals’ development over time “lack hierarchy and may most appropriately be analysed in terms of achievement rather than advancement” (Guest and Sturges, 2007:317).

Such practice associations seem possible where personal perspectives, beliefs and values resonated with practice ideals, perspectives and traditions (as experienced through, and in experiences co-created with, practice mentors). In the case of the enquiry, it seemed that the practice quests and narratives of participants illustrated convergence between contextual ‘need’, personal purpose, the ideals of the practice of planning in general and the quest for the common good of humanity and the future (See MacIntyre, 2013, as also argued by Lennon, 2015).

Most participants were involved in communities of practice and associations, and lectures and talks, as well as being passionate in passing on the ‘torch’ to younger practitioners and others in the practice. Where practice refers to a community of practice rather than only a professional association, and where

the very sense of ‘contribution and collaboration’ mirrors something of the nature of the practice of planning itself.

Whilst it seems that planning as a practice ‘needs’ the heroic quests of its practitioners, it is evident in the work-life narratives that the practice and ‘tradition’ (MacIntyre, 2013; Gunder, 2015) also makes a significant contribution to the lives and the personal quests of practitioners, enabling changes in perspectives and deeply personal transitions and significant growth.

What is clearly evident is the dynamic nature of the unfolding process of being and becoming, and within that, the critical interplay between work-life context, purpose-infused work-life experiences, and practice embedded personal and professional growth and development.

“ *It’s only when you start working with it that you understand how difficult it is to do it properly. I think planning is an old person’s profession because you just keep on learning and learning from looking and doing. You don’t know that in the beginning and you are not going to find it out in theory and things of that kind. You just have to do it. But it is about asking the right questions. And that is asking the hard questions.* ”  
- Daib

## 6.4 CREATING PRACTICE VALUE THROUGH PERSONAL AND RELATIONAL CAPABILITY

### 6.4.1 Introduction

The ever-increasing list of relevant knowledge fields and competencies required to engage in practice context (as set out in Section 4) and the realities of career, geographic and institutional mobility, as well as requirements to engage in a variety of roles place huge demands on planning schools, students and practitioners in the practice of planning (as also argued in Goldstein and Carmin, 2006:69; Dalton, 2007; Davoudi and Pendelbury, 2010; Hillier and Healy, 2008; and Edward and Bates, 2011).

However, contribution as described by participants in this enquiry was less focused on the role of competencies *per se*, or on once-off ‘success stories’. In the exploration and reflexive interpretation of participant work-life narratives it was evident that significance was placed in the narrations on ‘how’ and

‘with whom’ challenges within their respective work-life experiences and contexts were faced; highlighting the significance of the dynamic and relational nature of practice-embedded contribution.

From the reflection on the time-span work-life narratives, the significance in doing things in ways to add value and with excellence, often in relation with others is evident and highlighted in Section 6.3. The work-life explorations identified the significance of:

- ⌘ A strong foundation and quick rate of expanding capabilities (deeper, wider and even inter-relational) to add value (Section 6.3.2)
- ⌘ The focus on adding value through being dedicated to excellence (Section 6.3.3);
- ⌘ The drive to take action (driving, leading, supporting in authentic and/or highly inter-related ways) (Section 6.3.4)

Whilst this does not imply that competencies and capabilities are not important, or that we are necessarily explicitly aware of our competencies and capabilities, it does point to the significance of attitude, willingness, intensity of engagement and interplay between personal, professional and relational competence and the agency (generative nature) that seems to be present in the often paradoxical and seemingly evolving nature of such competencies or capabilities in enabling contribution.

#### **6.4.2 Strong foundations as bases for expanding set of ‘T’-shaped competencies**

Whilst participants have reflected on skills, competencies, important knowledge areas and informal learning experiences they regarded as important, explicit reference thereto was quite limited. Even though the significance thereof is recognised (and was the cause for much learning and detours on the road of this enquiry), the emphasis in this enquiry was not on listing or unpacking the competencies *per se*. The enquiry could probably, even though not designed with that in mind, add value to the identification of context and practice specific meta-competencies.

The value of well-grounded education within the practice of planning was explicitly acknowledged in the participants’ narratives. Where participants’ explicitly mentioned specific skills, competencies, and knowledge fields, coherence was evident in:

- ⌘ The wide range of competencies, skills and knowledge fields required to fulfil multiple roles, and to be able to operate within the wide scope and range of focus areas, local contexts and complex systems required to be navigated in the practice of planning (See Annexure C, Table C.9 and the rest of this Section for more detail). In this regard the demands, but more so the strengths and contributions as evident in work-life narratives, seem to highlight the importance of intense engagement spanning the near extremes of an integrative, technical, analytical, meaning-making, collaborative, visionary, creative, intuitive and procedural practice, which requires a multitude of abilities, intelligences (cognitive, emotional, spiritual, spatial), leadership and innovation, and also the ability to operate within the tensions between local and global, current and future;
- ⌘ The significance placed on personal characteristics, preferences, strengths, and the impact of attitude, leadership abilities, etc. that are more often the focus of fields such as developmental psychology, education, careers theory, leadership theories, etc. as could be expected in a whole-person exploration; and

- ⌘ The importance of ‘standing up’, raising awareness and advocacy on behalf of others, the future, the results of inequality and injustice (with some limited explicit reference to the importance of having an ethical and moral core within the practice, e.g. @Thai, @Harold).

Being highly knowledgeable and skilled in a core knowledge field as part of their formal education within the practice of planning, as well as being able to engage a challenge from an in-depth as well as on a very broad knowledge base were specifically mentioned, together with the importance of critical and rigorous engagement (of which the first taste and challenge was often experienced within foundation education experiences in the planning and urban design fields). From the participant narratives on work-life experiences, it was evident that most participants shared and valued competence in the following two areas:

- ⌘ Firstly, an understanding of the very broad range of influences in complex and interrelated systems and processes that shape and impact the development of cities, regions and settlements is demonstrated. The focus might be either more urban or more rural, but would include spatial, socio-economic, environmental, institutional and regulatory dimensions. Whilst sharing a broad understanding, participants’ strengths in terms of knowledge and skills were in diverse knowledge fields.
- ⌘ Secondly, an in-depth understanding of what Davoudi (2015:327) terms ‘knowing how’ and ‘knowing what’ (especially in relation to the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of complex urban and development contexts) is evident. A broad recognition and knowledge of a wide range of approaches and instruments were part of most of the participant work-life experiences; however, preferences or biases for certain approaches were often strongly articulated by the younger planners (e.g. specific preferences, beliefs and strengths related to policy and strategic planning processes, or processes aimed at shaping urban form, or socio-economic or land development as a critical intervention ‘area’).

As could be expected, such preferences seem strongly related to in-depth knowledge and association with the specific approach propagated by the planning school attended, as well as the influences of personal strengths, early career experiences and exposure. The planning schools attended by the participants had a range of approaches: a critical-theory and policy orientation; a much more spatial and even urban-design orientation; a collaborative planning, process and more theoretical orientation; a focus on urban governance and on spatial and strategic planning; as well as approaches with a more technical land- and settlement-development orientation. This level of association is evident especially in initiation and early career experiences; illustrated through remarks such as those made by @Dali about the value of the critical and lateral thinking, cognitive abilities and the tools to manage diverse, dynamic and changing environments that he acquired and was challenged to expand on in the planning school he attended and how he “fitted very well into that philosophy!” Interestingly, explorations of time-span work-life narratives in the participants’ work-life contexts also provide evidence of notable (and explicitly mentioned) shifts over time, with later work-life experiences often illustrating shifts in

“ The last twenty years I became effective from the basis of 20 years of grounding. ”  
- Bijan

“ Once I had got out (of planning) and got back into it, I was a lot more committed because I had decided that in fact I did enjoy what I did and needed the variety and broad spectrum. I need my brain to be stretched beyond limits. ”  
- Linza



approaches to also include seemingly ‘opposing’ or ‘far apart’ approaches (See Table 6 1: Approaches and attitudes enabling contribution across work-life experiences). The enquiry highlighted numerous examples where the perceived ‘polarity’ inevitably seemed to fade as the focus shifted from the philosophy or competency, and attempts to ‘use’ that as a primary approach, to a recognition of the value of a range of approaches and capabilities that were required for the primary concern of implementation and contribution (Also see Section 6.2.2).

The importance of ability and competence for in-depth perspective and action, as well as the ability to be aware of, recognise and expand a broad knowledge base – described as T-shaped knowledge or competence – has been identified as a skill and competency in itself; not only in planning, but also in business management and other practice fields associated with so-called T-shaped professionals (Barile et al., 2012). Interestingly this ability that seems key to integrative competencies, entailing both a systemic understanding and knowledge of a wide range of knowledge fields, as well as the ability to integrate, was not mentioned as a challenge, problem or requirement by participants. It was rather mentioned as one of the reasons for staying engaged, interested and intrigued within the field – illustrated by the following two examples:

- ∅ @Thai explained that this aspect was a definite attraction to someone that gets bored easily, stating that the practice of planning “is such a broad subject, and this is why I think I love planning so much. There is always something new to learn and get excited about. In my planning career, I would say that there are a lot of areas that I have gotten into and got excited about!” Sentiments echoed by many of the other participants;
- ∅ In reflecting on the wide range of things that he had to be able to do and got involved with in his first job (i.e. research, project management, housing development, local economic development, local government finance, integrated development planning, organizational development, service delivery), @Jalan mentioned that it is exactly ‘this’ that he liked about planning and which made him realise that “this is the field I was looking for ... Maybe it's my personal trade. I like working with people. And what I liked was that the job was not mundane. It provided me with mutual opportunities almost every day ... You get involved ... [Doing whatever needs to be done in a wide range of things, and working with a team and many different specialists] ... you need to know a lot of things. A LOT of things!”

### 6.4.3 ‘Adding value’/Excellence as attitude and quality

The choices made over time and adventures reflected upon in the work-life narratives of the participants show them to be less focused on career growth and external rewards. Even in cases where career development might have been a strong driver for original shifts to planning as a practice as a career move (i.e. @Tisch, @Lena, @Lens, @Mitch) participants’ focus appears to have shifted to the contextual realities they were faced with and a strong sense of consideration for the future. Participant work-life narratives point to the significance ascribed to attitude, willingness and approach as illustrated in Table 6.1 (See Section 5 for some examples).

In a world of instant gratification, attributes that should be fostered are those of the drive to add value, of hope and tenacity, to keep going in spite of incredibly hard circumstances, to stay committed to quests over years, trusting to see impact and results over time in complex systems, and the ability to deal with personal disappointment. The sense of purpose, personal dedication and resultant attitude seem to have a significant influence in terms of approach, willingness, motivation and adding value through the way in which ‘competencies and meta-competencies’ are actually applied and used in practice context. Increasingly, they are recognised as ‘more than’ the sum of the parts of such competencies and are associated with choosing a path to add value to the ‘whole’ through ‘authentic’ contribution (See Ferreira and Coetzee, 2013; Lo Presti, 2009 and Svejnova, 2005).

In this context, the way of engaging practice (or the way of being and doing) is essentially a way of driving value that can be seen as driving excellence. The claim is not made that ‘excellence’ or ‘to excel’ implies linear progress as such, or is only the result of experience – quite the contrary, rather that there are ‘fruits’ or ‘rewards’ in pursuit of practice excellence – as in that pursuit itself is where the most significant growth moments seem to be (MacIntyre, 2013:240).

“ ... we were given the skills  
to adapt... there was no way  
that planning school could have  
prepared us for the challenge...  
it prepared us to be able to  
think differently, ... rise to a  
challenge, to say that I am a  
planner in a new context, how  
can I make the difference?  
- Dali ”

**Table 6-1: Approaches and attitudes enabling contribution across work-life experiences**

Call To Action Experiences	Initiation Experiences	Adventures, Challenges
Motivation, dedication, passion, commitment, purpose	Rigor in applying existing knowledge	Commitment to the quest as generative competence
Valuing diversity & inter-connectedness	Rigor in applying and expanding skills & strengths	Motivation & commitment to local context and global impact, context & future
Caring widely	Willingness to learn	
Willingness to explore & enquire	Dedication & accountability	Willing to make a plan & find best way (adapt, source, humility, ask)
Engage complexity – urban contexts, processes	Excellence	In-depth & broad knowledge base with strong integrative and spatial competence
Intellectual rigor, multiplicity	Willing, eager, engaged	
Action orientated, adaptable	Affinity for adventure & courage	Leading change & driving action
Future orientated	Engage complex real-world challenges in integrative ways	Approach/view competence as dynamic & contextually relevant
Willing to work hard	Capacity to collaborate & connect	Taking local action whilst being future orientated
Independent & accountable		Eager to learn, remain curious, willing to adapt
Connecting & collaborating & communicating		Ability to engage complexity, not-knowing and innovation
Integrative		Growing wisdom, mindful
Generative ability/creative		Care, relate and communicate
Building skills, experience, excellence		Tenacity to keep going in the face of adversity
Belief & courage		

Whilst this seems almost romantic and highly idealistic, the reality is that there were numerous experiences in the work-life narratives that reflected the challenges of keeping motivated when circumstances were actually anything but ideal to make a contribution. In the case of @Pedro, he explicitly mentioned the importance of finding alternative ways of doing things during the time that he was working with a manager that seemed unsupportive and did not share the same dedication to impact in the city. This experience strongly resonates with similar challenges and unavoidable changes in places of work that required adaptation and creativity to find ways to still add value: as mentioned by @Harold in dealing with the disappointment of slow change and the limited impact of planning after the fall of Apartheid, or the more than decade commitment to advocacy work by @Janice and @Daib, the ability to adapt and find new ways to earn a living whilst adding value to the lives of people in rural communities in the case of @Jens, or the courage to keep going and find the value in a range of early career experiences, even when the original four/five years of study eventually becomes ten (when following a technical qualification with a bachelors, honours and master’s qualification in planning as in the case of @Ines).

For many the idealism waned and disappointment mounted. For some this actually resulted in them abandoning planning’s quest temporarily, taking time out and then re-engaging in a new capacity that provided new opportunities for value adding (@Linza, @Gaz). Experiences, however, speak about the transformative impact of perspectives of the world and future as connected, a belief in the need and ability

to contribute to shaping that future and the deeply ingrained identification with the purpose and practice in heeding that call. Experiences speak about hope and a vision for the future, amidst the struggles of remaining committed in less than ideal circumstances. For example, whilst spearheading new undergraduate and post-graduate planning qualifications and departments of planning (@Daib, @Yitzah), in the establishment of private planning practices (@Thai, @Jens), or in facing the institutional machinery of the Apartheid government (i.e. @Lain, @Gaz, @Daib, @Janice, @Harold, @Dre, @Thai).

It is within these contexts that there is recognition for the basic qualities such as willingness, courage, and caring wider and for the future (qualities typically regarded as sustaining heroes in a quest); qualities that seem to grow through experience and confidence in competence – which does not refer to having *a priori* knowledge (as Davoudi, 2015 also notes), but rather experience of ‘knowledge’, as participant work-life narratives seem to point to the importance of experience of self. These include experience gained in first trials and initiation experiences of the ability to stretch, the ability to do what it takes and the practice and personal rewards of contribution. However, also the experience of personal satisfaction as many participants mentioned, such as the reward of being involved in a day-to-day practice that seemingly ‘always’ calls for full engagement, provides the opportunity to remain interested, the chance for adventure, the necessity to innovate, and a ‘job’ through which to do and experience new things – to push the (and one’s own) boundaries (i.e. @Thai, @Jalan, @Daib, @Dali, @Harold, @Lain, @Yitzah, @Bijan, @Zane, @Ines).

“ I work hard! I have a passion for it. I find it fascinating! Its no regular 8 to 5 job. That’s not why you are here!... You can’t get involved in this kind of discipline if you don’t have a passion for it!  
- Daib ”

### Text Box 6.4: Purpose Infused Excellence

An example to illustrate the above, are the competencies associated with 'communication skills'. In all the work-life narratives and most experiences, participants' reference (explicit or implicit) regarding the value of 'communication skills' was evident; however, with clear evidence of the nuanced approach thereto given the purpose and context driven significance.

In the context of work-life experiences, what stood out more than 'capability' was the emphasis on effective networking and connecting with people, as well as the care and consideration that went into finding the best way to undertake such communication. The context illustrates that what enables contribution is about much more than 'having good/excellent writing, meeting, facilitation and presentation skills'. Examples of these are:

- Spending hours in discussions with community members to make meaning of, translate and explore the impact of new policy development, even if that has to be at night (See @Gaz, @Dali, @Jalan; @Janice; @Pedro);
- Pulling a rabbit out of a hat in shaping effective presentations, even if that means finding ways to get it done in different languages over a weekend in order to promote project ideas that might benefit the city as a whole (See @Pedro);
- Spending time deeply engaging and debating with students, young practitioners and peers to develop new understanding or project ideas (See @Yitzah, @Dáib; @Gaz, @Bijan);
- Dedicated time to write and rewrite policy evaluations to increase the chances of having an impact on government decision makers (@Harold, @Alain, @Dáib);
- Preparing technical inputs of high quality and going beyond the call of duty to ensure quality inputs in order to support and facilitate development (@Innes; @Yitzah; @Adrian;@Jens); or
- Making the effort to personally engage officials from other units and/or institutions (and disciplines) in order to better understand sector specific inputs in integrated planning processes, instead of merely setting up a meeting (@Dali; @Jalan).

The same set of qualities can of course be ‘packaged’, categorised and discussed in many different ways, and as categories of meta-competencies in their own right, for example in terms of:

- ⌘ The ability to sustain growing wisdom as described in the core character strengths and virtues identified across fifty-four nations and fifty American States by Park, Peterson and Seligman (2007:119);
- ⌘ The ability to reflect as argued in the many references to Schön’s notion of the ‘reflective practitioner’ and, for example, in Cheetham and Chiver’s professional competence development framework even being outlined as a ‘competency’ above the rest; and
- ⌘ The call for leading and learning in a context requiring adaptation and agility (and good measures of justice, connectivity and courage) to move forward in a world (read cities, city-regions, fast changing rural contexts) characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (See Doherty, Nagali and Weig, 2012 in Bennet and Lemoine, 2014:1; and as posited by Petrie 2014, 15a and 2015b).

However, I would argue that more important than agreeing on the ‘correct’ way of framing, packaging and listing such highly inter-related personal and professional ‘meta-competencies’ and qualities, is the recognition of the so-called ‘skills’ associated with underlying individual attributes, such as motives, traits, self-esteem, drive and resolve for new learning. This underlines the importance of perspective and the drive to ask good questions whilst not necessarily finding the ‘right answers’; the value in being curious enough to stand in the discomfort, and pay the price, of enquiring and engaging in creative and rigorous explorations.

What is more significant than the ‘perfect packaging’, competency model, core curriculum, qualification framework or accreditation outcomes is the question of what type of education and practice experiences and influences actually support the transformational and highly inter-relational capabilities that seem significant in enabling practice contribution.

#### **6.4.4 Driving action in authentic and inter-relational ways**

Whilst planning has often been described as ‘controlling uncertainty’ (Marris, 1988), participant experiences illustrate that to be effective, planning also needs to push uncertainty and as such the bounds of possibility (Abbot, 2005). This most probably not only implies the willingness to take risk and the possibility of failure and some disagreement, but also a willingness amongst practitioners to explore, adapt, innovate and act.

In many of the narratives, a golden thread (which in some cases was explicitly mentioned and in all of the adventure experiences implicitly applied) is the passion and an ability ‘to make things happen’ and ‘to bring about change’. Strategic thinking, organizing, strategizing and process design have often been mentioned as personal strengths and explicitly identified by many of the participants in the study as critical competencies in meeting the challenges in work-life adventures.

What was implicit in many of the work-life narratives and adventures, however, was the way in which these qualities were applied with equal measures of passion and the ability to guide processes, to get people together, to galvanise support – whether from teams, staff, other sector specialists, politicians or communities. This in effect meant leading change with strong measures of interpersonal and emotional strengths, social intelligence, team work, courage and a perspective on the future.

The most evident examples are probably from the narratives of those participants that played active roles in driving change through working with communities, as volunteers and with non-governmental organisations (@Lain, @Pedro, @Gaz, and @Tish). For the more technical inclined, it ranged from aspects such as a drive to deal with housing challenges, through to driving township or rural development (@Yitzah, @Jens, @Wim, @Elle). For quite a number, it was mentioned as a passion to drive transformation processes in planning and institutions to bring about changes in investment and development priorities, and more integrated and strategic decision-making in cities or municipalities (@Dali, @Jalan, @Janice, @Lena). For some it was about introducing new concepts and a different engagement with spatial planning and sustainability in practice (@Daib, @Bijan, @Janice, @Thai, @Pedro).

Amongst participants, a major initiative was the drive to bring about a shift in policy and academic debates (@Harold, @Daib, @Ines, and @Lina). The latter can be seen from the drive to shift government policy (@Daib, @Bijan, @Janice) to enable people to look differently at society (@Thai). And also, of course, the primary driving change of socio-economic and structural inequalities and access to opportunities (@Harold, @Peter, @Lain, and @Lena).

Through the participant work-life narratives it is evident that the attitudes of participants have not been that of on-lookers, but rather as active participants driving, leading and advocating for change – very often by being influential but not necessarily from being in a management or authority position as such. To act as a change agent and to take responsibility and work autonomously were some of the key reasons that participants explicitly mentioned for ‘loving’ planning, for being able to make a contribution, as well as for being able to grow and innovate. The frustration of not having such ‘action-space’ is

“ Planning requires engaging with complexity, not in a prescribed way, but by engaging and finding ways through... reaching a way to do.  
- Harold ”

interestingly one of the things mentioned as a challenge. In reflecting on his work-life adventures, a senior planner in one of the large cities in South Africa highlighted the major differences in being able to lead and drive action and implementation in a situation where you have the autonomy and support to do that (as he experienced leading a major city-wide development project in a context that he describes as having had “a hell of a lot of autonomy”), versus the frustration of not having political support and leadership or supportive senior managers and having to find clever and alternative ways to get things done.

As reflected on by @Yitzah (one of the older participants): “Every person has a number of things in him/her, qualities that you have to provide an opportunity for them to blossom. That is what I experienced in my life. People gave me the opportunity to take initiative and run with it ... That is one of the things that I hope I have also done for others ... It is about trusting people. Trusting that they will do the right thing. I have always felt the need not to disappoint and I trust that it is a feeling inside that you would not like to disappoint the trust that others have vested in you” [Own translation].

Being afforded the opportunities to carve out her/his own ‘action space’ and autonomy to operate are indeed critical to highly motivated individuals, and play a significant role in growth and the opportunity to extend themselves and their own capabilities (Methorst and Van Dierendonck, 2004). What is significant is that even though this might seem as being a highly individualistic capability – often mentioned hand-in-

hand with a participant's need for autonomy and drive to 'run with' initiatives and projects – it is a drive that galvanises collaboration.

It is clearly evident that practice contribution is more often than not highly relational, that is where 'to make a plan' to address a problem or face a challenge often entails collaboration, team work and/or sourcing the required abilities. Such as when a large-scale urban investment provides opportunities for spatial transformation (@Pedro, @Daib, @Thios, @Lain), or to 'make a plan' to get the best team together when the plan at stake could change the future of many in a city (@Pedro, @Dali). This is also seen in experiences: 'to make a plan' to figure out what must be done to ensure a process really adds value to strategic planning and transformation and that the best methods are followed to engage the critical role players, regardless of the minimum requirements as set out in the guidelines (@Jalan, @Dali).

Having the ability to drive and lead, being able to harness support, to set up the best teams, to connect with practice 'gurus', to choose association (whether through studies, through work place or through teams), to engage with well-respected colleagues – who can challenge and with whom breakthroughs can be created – also seemed to be a strong undertone in most of the narratives. This is not only raised as one of the attractions for selecting planning as a practice and career field, but also as a reason to continue in spite of challenges and the limited visibility of having a short-term impact. This is regarded as a multi-faceted but highly relational ability that seems strongly associated with both career satisfaction and well-being (Ibarra and Deshpande, 2007; Keller et al., 2014).

It is evident from explorations of the work-life narratives that participants seem to share a drive and resolve for new learning, to gain perspective and ask good questions (although, not necessarily to find the 'right answers'), and being curious enough to stand in the enquiry and engage in creative and rigorous explorations (strongly related to the notion of wisdom as described by Seligman, 2007 and Davoudi, 2015). Terms are used such as "going back to causes" and "back to first principles" – you can never solve a problem if you do not understand its cause, just as you cannot offer a way forward without "clear vision and principles", "to be able to ask and go beyond the obvious is very important in planning" and "to question how real is real".

Strongly correlating with an attitude of adding evident participant work-life narratives, was their willingness to engage in what might seem impossible, as well as their ability to push for authentic and innovative approaches and galvanise support and excellence from others. Some examples are:

- ⌘ Tackling a city-wide strategic planning and transformation process (@Dali, @Jalan);
- ⌘ Starting a unit to conduct research to campaign for a new policy direction (@Daib, @Ines);
- ⌘ Driving the development of a new strategic plan or unit (@Harold, @Thai, @Wim, @Linza);
- ⌘ Supporting communities in developing radical processes to access land (@Lain, @Gaz); and
- ⌘ Exploring ways to do things never done in a specific context before, for example starting shopping malls (@Kail), or driving an international Olympic bid (@Pedro).

Interwoven into such experiences was not only a paradox between knowing and not-knowing, but the significance of purpose and willingness to face the challenge, the humility in acknowledging not knowing, an attitude of soliciting the best help possible, as well as the willingness to enquire, explore and take risks. At the same time such experiences also seemed to reflect a measure of excitement and satisfaction in figuring out what to do in collaboration with mentors, colleagues, peers or others involved in the process. Interestingly, the excitement of engaging in a task for which there is no clear cut answer or method or



even example was explicitly mentioned by a number of participants as one of the reasons that kept them intrigued and as a reason for enjoying the practice of planning (@Thai, @Ines, @Dre, @Linza, @Daib).

Being committed to the quest never seem to be about the ‘easy way’ out. It is much rather an ‘action-generating quest’ – an ongoing enquiry and willingness to step into the unknown and to go the extra mile (See Annexure C3.5 for practice examples).

As Kahane states so eloquently: “I can see now that what we are doing is co-creating a new reality ... It’s like that poem of Antonio Machado: ‘Walker, there is no path. The path is made by walking’” (Ana Teresa Bernal during Colombia Project 2009 (Peace Activist), in Kahane, 2010:139).

#### 6.4.5 Summary reflections

The unfolding of events, challenges, areas of attraction and roles of planners during the last century provide a clear indication of the conflicted identity and often contradictory histories within the practice(s) of planning during the time. These range from serving the interests of the poor or the elite, being focused on bettering livelihoods or on embedding a culture of non-critical bureaucratic procedural and technical compliance, being viewed as art or science, or as mental and/or spiritual endeavour. Challenges and shifts over the different time periods mirror some of the choices that the practice and practitioners in planning during the recent past had to face (See the last two columns referring to ‘Significant Events’ and ‘Prominent Influences and Drivers’ in Figures C3 to C8 respectively, Annexure C). Contextual and personal challenges and options (often contradictory) to engage with the practice of planning as a highly bureaucratic, an apolitical and technical endeavour, a professional career, or as a quest aimed at enhancing living conditions, contributing towards a more sustainable future and/or solving complex challenges within fast changing cities and towns across South Africa.

In reflecting on the dynamic and inter-relational nature of personal and practice capability and contribution, an overview was provided of:

- ⌘ The strong foundation (in education and personal strengths) and expanding set of T-Shaped competencies;
- ⌘ The value of participants’ attitudes, qualities and transformational abilities; and
- ⌘ The significance of authentic and inter-relational drive on action, exploration of the unknown, pushing of boundaries and innovation.

It is evident that having a solid foundation to operate from, and through which to extend capabilities and knowledge, is critical in enabling contribution. However, equally so, is the unfolding process of facing challenges within the ‘quest’. What stood out from the explorations and reflections on participant work-life narratives was the focus on how contribution was enabled, not only through uniquely personal abilities, qualities, attitudes, and strengths, or through paradoxical and evolving competence, but specifically by the role that approaching challenges in a purpose driven, contextually dynamic and highly relational way played in this regard.

In addition to a range of competencies and abilities, explorations of adventure experiences clearly illustrate the importance of attitudes, belief in the future and the practice, as well as of virtues such as courage, tenacity and creativity, and the importance of building character – resonating with McIntyre’s statement: “A quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge” (MacIntyre, 2013:276).

Whilst contribution required utilisation of personal strengths pointing to personal growth and transition that enabled practitioners to be more intrigued by contribution than by ego, achievement or disciplinary bounds, significant prominence was given to meaningful engagement in practice rather than to ‘the competence’ itself. For example, more important than ‘communication skills’ was the ability to connect and relate in meaningful ways with a wide range of people, being aware of the type and quality of communication required and the dedication to ensure that it is done in that way (See Table C.9 Annexure C).

‘Call to action’ experiences reflected on in Section 5.3 illustrate the importance of purposefully taking action to embark on the journey, the trials, challenges and exploration of ‘adventure’ experiences. Section 5.5 also illustrates the importance of being audacious enough (as Sandercock (2004) termed it) to engage the unknown.

Interestingly many of the qualities and competencies that seem to significantly impact the ‘being and becoming’ of participants (Table C.9 Annexure C) can be described as almost opposing or divergent, which indeed also points to the important ability to handle and be comfortable with dichotomies, dualities and paradox, that is:

- ⊗ Having in-depth, as well as a very broad knowledge base and understanding, embedded in a strong spatial and integrative competence;
- ⊗ The ability to focus and add value in the local context whilst considering the collective future;
- ⊗ The dynamic and contextually relevant nature of competence, almost opposing the notion of expertise;
- ⊗ The eagerness to learn and willingness to adapt, juxtaposed with the incredible value of experience; and
- ⊗ The tension of straddling knowing and knowledge, and being comfortable in not-knowing and the ability to innovate.

What is clearly evident in the participant work-life narratives is that none of the experience reflected any notion of ‘minimum requirements’, or references to contribution with the ‘least effort possible’. On the contrary, work-life narratives reflect countless experiences that could be described with terms such as ‘to the best of ability’, ‘giving it all’, ‘paying the price’, ‘do what is required’, ‘walking the extra mile’, ‘managing to do the seemingly impossible’, ‘creative tension’. This clearly reflecting what MacIntyre (2013) and Lennon (2015) describe, not merely as excellence in practice, but “commitment to excellence” in practice. Excellence is explained by MacIntyre as being created by “participation in the attempts to sustain progress and to respond creatively to problems” (2013:242).

Excellence is called forth in terms of intellectual intelligence; however, equally important is heartfelt caring, not merely as an emotional endeavour but as a conviction that leads to action (See Kahn, 2010; Mengel, 2012).

Within the above context, the work-life narratives of participants clearly indicate that participants very often did not have ‘a’ or ‘all’ the required competencies and meta-competencies in hand to do what needed to be done to add value (not merely to tick the boxes of guidelines or process requirements). One of the simplest, but quite significant reminders in the exploration of work-life narratives, is not to have the perfect answer or all resources (including capabilities at hand) but more often than not, to do what planners are supposed to do best, namely be prepared ‘to make a plan’! As stated by Davoudi (2015:321-322): “ a virtuous actor (i.e. accomplishing practical wisdom) is less about having all the evidence *a priori* and more about having practical experience and doing.” I would argue that from the participant work-life narratives it is evident that this does not necessarily mean being able to understand a particular complex environment and know what to do (as argued by Davoudi, 2015:322) but indeed being exposed to a practice and habits of practice through mentors and a range of transition experiences, where the examples and experience of stepping into action and commitment to ‘a way of being’ instead of ‘knowledge’ to guide ‘doing’, is more significant than we often acknowledge.

“ I find we learn best through the challenges that we face. We lose sight and skills when we take the short and easier route. I have decided in my life that those ways are not the way to go and the greatest challenges I have faced have taught me the best lessons. I now prefer projects that pose serious challenges.

- Linza

”

A time-span overview allows an indication of the end as the beginning, lost battles, new cycles and the value in participants stepping into different roles (being able to play the lead but also the supportive cast in being an ally and mentor over time) and illustrating the value in keeping going, faith, attitude, courage, etc. The section highlighted the significance and nature of a dynamic and inter-relational practice capability. It clearly illustrates the interplay between personal and relational competence, the agency present in the tensions of seemingly opposing capabilities and paradox, and the generative agency in inter-relational capability that seemed to play a significant role in enabling contribution within participants’ work-life narratives over time. In Section 6.5 some reflections are shared on such learning, growth and transition experiences.

An attitude and drive to add value in practice context and with others in practice seemed prominent in the work-life narratives. This attitude and focus on practice value (contextually relevant, value/excellence based and inter-relational) is in stark contrast to a focus on practice engagement based on (and limited by) competencies and meta-competencies only. This attitude and focus on practice value (contextually relevant, with excellence and in inter-relational ways) is in stark contrast to a focus on practice engagement embedded in (and limited by) approaches that are individualistic, aimed at doing as little effort as possible and making use of pre-existing competencies (and meta-competencies) only.

## 6.5 LEARNING, GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

### 6.5.1 Introduction

The purpose of Section 6.5 is to highlight the significance ascribed to intense transformative practice experiences – versus a focus on personal and professional development – in instigating, cementing and sustaining practice contribution in work-life contexts (how and with whom growth and development took place).

What came to the fore in the exploration and reflection on the respective participant work-life narratives was the coherence in the substantial focus placed on intense and transformative practice experiences and the highly relational nature of learning and growth in such experiences (See Section 5 and Section 6.2).

In reflecting on participant work-life narratives, the critical question never seemed to be ‘How can we quickly acquire all the competence and skills required (as if picking it off shelves)?’, but much rather as Tom Wright (2012:220 in Bennet and Lemoine, 2014:3) puts it: “How can we acquire that complex ‘second nature’ which will enable us to grow up as genuine human beings?” A question and endeavour that requires “paying attention to: the wisdom of the past; human life stories or myths; rituals which reinforce connectivity and commitment; community which reaffirms individuals’ self-worth” (Bennet and Lemoine, 2014:12).

“ I feel that I am always learning. ”  
- Thai

In myth and quest experiences, a refusal of the ‘call to action’ could be viewed as detrimental to the cause, as well as to the hero, who might be (as Campbell describes it) “Walled in boredom, hard work”, whose “flowering world” could become “a wasteland of dry stones”, or whose life might even become meaningless (2008:49). Interestingly, Campbell equates such a decision to “not to head the call for action”, with “not believing in the future as an unfolding possibility”, with “making of choices” in the present as if current contexts and significance of “ideals, virtues, goals, and advantages were to be fixed and made secure” (Campbell, 2008:49). In contradiction, heeding the ‘call to adventure’ seems to go hand-in-hand in opting for the uncertain and dynamic; a generative decision that signifies the first step towards transition.

The significance attributed to intense transformative practice experiences, versus the ‘to be expected’ personal and professional learning and development opportunities, seems evident in:

- ⊗ The type of practice embedded transition experiences and growth influences participants seem to have regarded as prominent in encouraging, enabling and shaping participants to face challenges and contribute in practice contexts (Section 6.5.2);
- ⊗ The significance of mentors, allies and practice relevance as fundamental to intense transformative practice experiences (Section 6.5.3); and
- ⊗ How learning, adaptation, reflexive practice, as well as personal, professional and practice development seem to obtain a generative capability and different level of meaning when embedded in practice commitment (Section 6.5.4).

### 6.5.2 Practice embedded learning and growth

From the participant work-life narratives it was evident that transition experiences (even though not referred to in the experiences using such terminology) embedded in communities of practice and transformational learning (Meyer et al., 2010) played quite a profound role (See overview of analyses in Annexure C, Tables C.6 and C.7) in enabling participant and practice contribution. On the one hand, facing daunting challenges (for which participants were never fully prepared as can be expected in a practice essentially concerned with acting towards the future from within complex – and by times probably quite chaotic – systems), provided the opportunity to learn and grow, both horizontally and vertically. On the other hand, such experiences also provided participants with opportunities to actively contribute within their practice contexts, engage in, and identify with, practice traditions (as set out in Section 6.3.3). Intense

transition experiences also provided participant with possibilities, to gain different perspectives of themselves and the practice community (in itself a critical ability as argued for in Section 6.2).

As outlined in Section 5, participant work-life narratives illustrated strong coherence with regards to significant emphasis placed on the following:

- ⌘ The choice to study or get involved in the practice of planning and why they decided to do so were emphasised. For many it was based on intense experiences that they regarded as key in making this choice (including people, circumstance, formative experiences) and why they thought that it was a good choice in hindsight (referring to personal strengths and interests). Whilst ‘stories’ and order of events and interests, etc. differed, the significance of a sense of purpose, the choice to join planning as a practice, and a strong association with the practice itself stood out as highlighted in typical ‘call to action’ experiences in Section 5.3.
- ⌘ Intense learning and early career experiences, either during the time when they studied planning or were exposed to the practice through early career experiences and practice interactions (as set out in typical ‘initiation experiences’ in Section 5.4). Experiences differed in terms of context and details, but what seem to stand out is how participants were inspired and deeply challenged by practitioners and/or educators, how they gained confidence in their own abilities not in terms of what they know, but rather in their ability to engage the unknown. Experiences entailed deeply personal ‘a-ha’ moments confirming that the practice is indeed a ‘personally fitting’ practice in which participants could extend themselves and express themselves fully, but also confirming the satisfaction in meaningful contribution and the value of practice collaboration.
- ⌘ Participants acted as drivers of change in collaboration with others through a range of challenges and experiences bringing about and/or propagating change in ways that were seemingly significant in relation to their respective work-life contexts (as set out in relation to practice challenges in Section 5.5), but more in relation to their specific quest focus areas (as discussed in Section 6.2 in relation to practice and personal quests). The socio-economic and political context of South Africa and the dynamics and challenges that surrounded the time period and efforts of bringing about change had a significant impact on these focus areas and most probably in creating a sense of urgency in the need to contribute. Whilst experiences shared were of course from a personal point of view, it illustrates the highly relational as well as deeply transformational and personal nature of practice engagement, contribution and growth – the latter referring to both horizontal growth of competence, as well as intense transformational vertical growth experiences.
- ⌘ Experiences that specifically highlight the relevance of ‘giving back’ and shifting roles, of practice association and contribution, reflective wisdom (including the significance of, even though for many seemingly frustrating, management roles), active participation within relevant communities of practice, mentorship and engagement with younger practitioners (Also see Sections 6.2 and 6.5), came to the fore.

Within this context, even if seen as if from the ‘perspective’ of the drivers of specific interest and motivation for practitioners, it is important to remember that the quest in the practice of planning (and for that matter in life) is not an individualistic endeavour. As MacIntyre (2013:276) explains it: “I am never able to seek for the good or exercise the virtues only as [in the capacity of an] individual... [Even if it does bring rewards to both the individual and practice, as a] quest is always an education both as to the

character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge”. Tom Wright (2010) describes a virtue as: “practising habits of heart and life that point toward the true goal of human existence” (Tom Wright, 2010:12 in Bennet and Lemoine, 2014:1), and asking the question about how we can acquire “that complex ‘second nature’ which will enable us to grow up as genuine human beings?” (Tom Wright, 2012:220 in Bennet and Lemoine, 2014:3).

Whilst participants have reflected on the informal learning experiences they regard as important, explicit reference thereto was quite limited. The enquiry was also not aimed *per se* at describing or identifying all the rich sets of informal learning experiences that contribute to professional and personal development (experiences as outlined by Cheetham and Chivers, 2001, as being quite formative on the road towards becoming a competent professional; a stage which they found in their study of 20 professions was often not reached until long after formal professional training had been completed).

A very high level overview of the nuanced dynamics of learning and growth influences across the different transition experiences is provided in Table 6.2. These have been selected based on significance, as well as coherence in reflecting and comparing different work-life narratives. Some examples of prominent learning experiences and significant influences are also highlighted in Table 6.2.

**Table 6-2 Significant learning and growth influences**

Typical quest experiences as outlined in Section 5	Examples of types of personal and professional transitions, learning and growth	Examples of prominent learning experiences and significant influences
<b>Learning as evident through what can be regarded as ‘call to action’ experiences (Section 5.3):</b>		
Early childhood & formative experiences & personal purpose	Perspectives and beliefs being challenged	Early childhood & formative experiences – Life influences, teachers, family
Early career introduction to planning & call to planning’s quest and personal purpose	Rapid expansion of new technical knowledge and skills	Importance of foundational education – Formal education
Planning as a fitting career	Accelerated personal growth	Intense inter-relational education experiences – Education mentors, peers and teams
Longer road to join planning’s quest or joining planning’s quest by accident	Identity formation and practice association	Intense and perspective challenging experiences as apprentice in post-graduate education, volunteering and working experiences – with highly inspirational practice mentors
Later career call to purpose	Influenced by practice traditions and habits, and building of confidence	Perspective changing travelling experiences
		Reading widely and exposure to practice traditions, heroes
		Diverse practice experiences
<b>Learning as evident through what can be regarded as ‘initiation’ experiences (Section 5.4):</b>		
Intense study and practice exposure	Applying and growing of existing competencies and strengths	Real and complex challenges Significant challenges

Typical quest experiences as outlined in Section 5	Examples of types of personal and professional transitions, learning and growth	Examples of prominent learning experiences and significant influences
Early career exposure and jumping in at the deep end  Engaging challenging contextual realities  Taking big steps  Later work-life initiation experiences	Acquiring context specific knowledge and skills under pressure  Breaking personal barriers of what was seen as possible – accelerated personal and professional development  Forming new identities and changing perspectives  Growing confidence and competence  Expanding networks	Mentors and managers as role models and motivators  Interaction and collaboration with others in practice and beyond practice and professional boundaries to innovate/add value  Trusted helpers and allies  Supportive and restrictive personal contexts
<b>Learning as evident through what can be regarded as ‘adventures/challenges’ (Section 5.5):</b>		
Adventures and challenges  Practice and personal quest experiences  Different roles and responsibilities	Strengthen and expand personal and relational competence  Changing perspectives, beliefs, approaches and exploring new skills sets  Character growth and habits of excellence and contribution  Confirmation and building of confidence  Validation of value of quest	Some short courses to extend formal education in a new area of knowledge  Real and complex challenges  Learning through ongoing quest experiences and challenges  Excelling in challenging tasks, challenging the status quo and going the extra mile  Interactions with other practitioners and contributions to the practice of planning  Mentoring, teaching, sharing

The significance of multi-faceted and multi-directional growth and learning in practice experiences is evident (Fenwick, 2000; Finger, 1994; Fischer, 1993), not merely as types of growth and learning influences, but probably as a range of growth and learning influences that enables being, becoming and contributing.

These are not only illustrative of the importance of multi-faceted learning and transformational experiences across work-life narratives, but also highlight (as briefly illustrated in Section 6.4.3 above, and the various work-life narrative analyses examples in Annexure C: Table C.7, and Text Boxes C.1 and C.2) the significance of the following aspects:

- ⌘ The purpose driven process of unfolding and inter-related personal, professional and practice development within participant work-life narratives (See Annexure B: Figures B.3 and B.4);
- ⌘ The repeated reference to intense horizontal (growth in skills, e.g. a better understanding of a wider range of knowledge fields) and intense vertical (growth relating to personal development) learning experiences (See Section 4 and Annexure B: Figure B.4); and
- ⌘ The highly relational, collective and practice nature of learning and growth influences (See Section 4 and 6.3 above, and Faulconbridge, 2007; Watson, 2014).

Many of the experiences described can be related to what is termed ‘heat’ experiences (Petrie, 2015a and b). These are often mentioned in relation to people’s first real encounters within contributing experiences in planning. Some of these experiences involve being thrown in at the deep end and being trusted with huge responsibilities (beyond capacity and capability) in significant processes and projects (See Section 5.4 for examples from work-life narratives in this regard) – experiences requiring practitioners to extend their abilities. These experiences often have much at stake, both in terms of real life impact and contribution, and in terms of the risk of disappointing oneself and others or even mentors in the process. These experiences are often mentioned in the form of intense-studio and ‘student’ or voluntarily work experiences and especially in taking on much responsibility in early careers.

For example, within typical ‘call to action’ experiences, the value that formal education and especially the intense studio-type of interactive and intense learning experiences played in challenging participants’ perspectives and beliefs, in enabling rapid expansion of new technical knowledge and skills and accelerated personal growth is clearly evident. With exposure to the practice and practice mentors that inspire through commitment to causes and levels of excellence, new practitioners seemed to be able to identify with and shape their practice association, whilst being exposed to relevant practice traditions and habits, which enabled confidence building.

Mention was also made of ‘colliding experiences’ and ‘shift experiences’ (Petrie, 2005), referring to experiences where beliefs, world views, embedded perceptions and values are challenged and participants are confronted with alternative options (e.g. In being exposed to critical thinking approaches in post-graduate courses, or to diversity and opposing world views in other countries, or in engagement with mentors or new work-contexts) (See Section 4 and Annexure B, Figure B.2) These vertical learning and growth experiences are characterised by – as mentioned in relation to challenges and practice quests within the context of work-life narratives – moments of intense growth and transition in personal capacity (meta-competencies) and the gaining of new insights (See Text Box 6.4 and Table C.9 Annexure C).

As explained by Cook-Greuter and Soulen (2007:13), transformative and vertical development experiences are not only much rarer than horizontal experiences, but also extremely significant, as they entail “the literal transformation of a person’s view of reality. In such cases, we learn to see the world with new eyes and experience novel forms of interpreting our external and internal world.” Reference to such personally transformative experiences and moments were often made by participants in relation to the significant impact thereof in opening their eyes to an appreciation of diversity, to seeing the world as interconnected, and in realising that alternative ways of living are possible.

Even if deeply personal, such experiences seem to be facilitated by, as well as contribute towards ongoing practice commitment (e.g. intense engagement, striving for excellence, purpose-infused action) In hindsight, these same intense experiences also played a significant role in confirming the value of participant commitment to purpose, as well as in shaping beliefs and perceptions about personal and practice abilities and the future.

Explicit references relate to the way in which such highly relational, intense and often quite challenging experiences seem to have enabled highly transformational changes in perceptions. Acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of the world and appreciation for diversity rewarded the participants with confidence in their ability to jump in at the deep end, and especially in confirming the value and satisfaction felt by contributing to the common good and an unfolding future in meaningful ways. The significance of vertical growth and perspective-changing experiences within the range of ‘call for action’ and ‘initiation



experiences' is prominent and was often mentioned explicitly in relation to its generative and transformative role in bringing about the deepening of purpose and subsequent changes in beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour (See Section 4.5 and Figure B.5 in Annexure B, where the possible impact that such vertical learning and transition experiences can have in terms of making meaning, as illustrated by the simplified model set out in the Logical Levels Framework, is evident).

Together with a transformative perspective of the world as an interconnected place, a belief in the ability to influence the future and a sense of purpose in many of the work-life adventures, are the ability and willingness to take action. This is seemingly closely related to a belief, not only sited in the value of the quest, but also in creating confidence in the ability of planning as a practice/tradition and the participant's own abilities and competence to contribute.

### 6.5.3 Mentors and fellow travellers

The influence of 'hero' figures in society or personal experience with teachers, mentors and family members in formative years also seem to stand out. Interestingly the impact of early mentors has been possibly more profoundly described by the older participants, who reflected on the impact that respected, intellectually stimulating and passionate peers, early career managers, professors and teaching staff with high levels of appreciation had on them.

The role of mentor-educators within participants' undergraduate and postgraduate study experiences is critical. There are many accounts of identifying and resonating with 'enthused' educators, who inspired with their words, but also with their own practice contributions, experience, dedication and excellence, and who seem to have challenged, but also believed in, participants and thus provided them with an opportunity to extend and gain confidence in their own abilities. These experiences also include, for example, exposure to grassroots structures, planning practices, community associations and watching how people communicate and negotiate.

The influences of fellow travellers on the journey, as set out above, are mentioned as profound in relation to:

- ⌘ Raising awareness about societal and ecological challenges, through critical engagement, questioning and challenging existing perspectives and world views, as well as in introducing and strengthening a sense of purpose;
- ⌘ Influencing participant perceptions about the value in taking action and the possibility of shaping not only personal but collective futures;

- ⌘ Respected practice mentors (real life and historic), educators and peers encouraging association with the practice ideals, with the practice ability and with the idea that contributing to the collective good and future has significance;
- ⌘ Exposing participants to new perspectives and new networks, or involving them in community or relevant project initiatives by expecting and trusting them to contribute, and by involving them in real projects, in which they become dedicated to excellence and performance beyond expectation; and
- ⌘ Introducing participants to planning's ability to bring about change and to the practice of planning through inspiring levels of excellence, contribution and purpose-driven action; with different participants identifying with different types of mentors (i.e. the critical academic voices, the dedicated political or spatial activists, and/or technical and project implementation experts).

“ What is useful is recruiting the right people... the right team... being a mentor... building connections and learning... from people in communities... a whole range of literature... and a wide range of people nationally and internationally (who often re-appeared over time)...  
- Lain ”

What seems to be very important from the participant work-life narratives is that this does not merely entail 'having a mentor'. But it entails being in proximity and having practice association with highly inspiring mentors, who are excellent mentors not because of their 'mentoring' approach, but because of their approach and dedication to the practice of planning and commitment to its quest. From participant work-life narratives certain characteristics appear to be critical, not only for influential mentors, but also for teams and colleagues (as summarised in the next paragraph). As clearly mentioned by participants, but unfortunately removed for the sake of anonymity (see Section 3), close interaction with highly respected practitioners had significant impacts and even influenced their decisions of where to work or study.

Some of the characteristics with which mentors were described by participants in their work-life narratives are briefly outlined below, as:

- ⌘ Believing in what they do and why, with a strong sense of purpose associated with professional vocation (not just a job or a task or career) and believing in the value of contributing to the common good of humanity and this inter-connected world, but even more so acting, driving and inspiring through their own practice examples, levels of excellence and commitment;
- ⌘ Enabling others to experience themselves and their contribution in new ways – a 'shifting' experience in itself – through the practice experiences created in working with the mentors and being exposed to their drive to stretch themselves and their team;
- ⌘ Using and calling forth personal strengths and unique abilities to add value;
- ⌘ Caring enough to keep on going – by being more intrigued by contribution than by ego/achievement/disciplinary bounds/professional ways, etc.;
- ⌘ Facing challenges: there is no story of heroes without stories of challenges, death, deceit, shadows, allies and tricksters;
- ⌘ Living with paradox – to trust and to let go versus accountability and the ability to have the wisdom to span different levels of reality (Nicolescu, 1991, 1999 and 2006; Max-Neef, 2005); and
- ⌘ Finding allies by learning in different ways and in different experiences.

The value of career imprinting and strong socialisation by mentors, teams and communities of practice (See Gunder, 2004; Higgins, 2005 in Schein, 2007:575; Lennon, 2015) might be regarded as a critical part of career motivation and identity (Fugate, 2006:3 in Potgieter, 2012:158). This is supported by the notion of

identity formation, commitment to practice quests, levels of excellence, costs and limited rewards that go with such commitment. In a very mundane way, mentors seem to have also strongly influenced participant expectations of the practice as a quest – a pathway of challenges and ordeals, in which the risks are high on a path that in itself might ask, but also offer, a lot.

#### 6.5.4 Summary reflections

The section illustrates the dynamically transformative and relational nature of learning and growth experiences in shaping and enabling competence, and the significance of:

- ⌘ Practice embedded transition experiences and growth influences that can be regarded as prominent in encouraging, enabling and shaping participants to face challenges and contribute in practice contexts;
- ⌘ The critical role of mentors, allies and practice relevance within intense practice experiences; and
- ⌘ Practice commitment as the foundation for learning, adaptation, reflexive practice, as well as for personal, professional and practice development.

The reflection on personal and professional development and the significance of inter-related transition experiences in enabling contribution in participant work-life narratives provides insights into the possibility that there might be some generative agency and feedback loops that support and are supported by horizontal and vertical growth dynamics, within and between the following (not in any particular order):

- ⌘ Participants' awareness of outer needs in their communities and society/the environment, as well as the need for action and the value of such action (#early childhood experiences), and their inner awareness of feeling inspired by their purpose and realization of personal (unique) strengths (#early mentors, #early childhood experiences), as can be seen in the examples of 'calls to action' experiences in Section 5.3;
- ⌘ Participant exposure to the practice of planning and to mentors with whom they wanted to identify (#traditions, #histories, #practice heroes, #ideals) and the belief in the possibility that the practice of planning (in terms of focus, ideals and action orientation) holds for contribution in this world on the one hand, and for enabling participants to express their full potential and purpose on the other hand;
- ⌘ Intense practice, early career or life-world experiences that entailed challenging and/or bringing about profound changes in perspectives about the world and future as interconnected and unfolding (#planning education, #travelling, #reading, #interaction with mentors, #connection, #significant life events);
- ⌘ Intense post-graduate and/or early work initiation experiences that meant facing a real and significant practice challenge. These often involved active collaboration with highly respected mentors and colleagues/team members whose abilities and dedication inspired and challenged, who set the standard of excellence, who illustrated the value in paying the cost that facing real life challenges might take (in terms of hard work and personal sacrifices) and probably illustrated the satisfaction in doing the right thing (contextual and future/broader significance) and in engaging in a challenge with excellence, stepping into the unknown, and being part of something and a community of practice that has meaning, and doing what is 'good'; and
- ⌘ 'Initiation' experiences and the proximity to dedicated and inspirational practice educators and mentors seem to have provided an opportunity for participants to not merely 'gain experience' in the practice, but led them to confirm their belief and association with planning as a practice and its quest(s), as well as their belief in their own abilities and tenacity to contribute and to step into the

unknown – experiences that might also have been instrumental in creating expectations of what being ‘dedicated to the quest’ in the practice of planning and as a practitioner entailed.

Transitions were not described in the sense of gaining experience and acquiring new skills or knowledge but in terms of gaining experience of the possibility to do the impossible. Experiences of ‘how and with whom’ challenges could best be engaged were prominent in participant work-life experiences and in their gaining the confidence to courageously face the next set of unknowns, complexities and challenges. Having had the relevant ‘experience’ to face challenges did not mean having the knowledge of what exactly to do or having done it before. It rather implied having had an experience of the possibilities that could unfold in collaboration with others, in being prepared to go deeper, and in being prepared to face the challenges and joys of intense interactions.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON TIME-SPANNING JOURNEYS

The enquiry was essentially an exploration in how planners engage their practice in ways that add value and contribute, and what they regard as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest. As argued in Section 4, such an exploration embedded in practice context has to consider competencies and virtues within work-life experiences, and recognise the way in which they relate over time.

In Section 6 some insights and reflections were shared by considering such a time-span overview. This highlighted how participants seemed to engage their practice in ways to add value and contribute, as well as what they regarded as being significant in enabling them to contribute and add value.

The time span overview of inter-related work-life experiences (journeys) enabled identifying the significance and nature of:

- ⌘ Participant commitment to highly personal and relational practice quests;
- ⌘ The interplay among transformational perspective, personal beliefs, practice and personal quests as career anchors, and the association with planning practice as drivers in career and practice decisions;
- ⌘ Practice value as a driver of participants’ commitment to excellence, and the personal, highly relational and often paradoxical nature of capabilities that enable them to create value and remain committed; and
- ⌘ Intense practice embedded contribution experiences as highly relational experiences of professional and personal growth, learning and transformation.

Findings highlighting coherence, generative capacity, and patterns that seem to be significant in terms of providing potential agency are especially valuable within a study engaging the complex adaptive systems of both planning and the field of educational and professional development.

Findings in the study strongly resonate with MacIntyre’s thesis in *After Virtue* (MacIntyre, 2013), illustrating that the dual nature of the commitment to (i) the quest within planning as a practice, as well as (ii) to excellence in this quest, seem to contribute to (i) participants’ ability to sustain their commitment to the quests through work-life adventures, and (ii) to the development and expansion of the virtues (such as tenacity, courage and purpose) required to sustain these quests. In this context, what seems invaluable is both:

- ⌘ the personal experience of ‘excellence’ evident in intense transition experiences (termed ‘heat experiences’ in the language of ‘vertical growth and learning’); and

- ⌘ practice habits of excellence (wisdom, ways of doing, examples, experiences) valued by the communities of practice (teams, groups, organisations, firms in the bigger practice), with which participants seem to have identified with.

Even though the participants interviewed could all have been regarded as ‘successful’ in their respective career paths by the time of the interviews, progress in career-paths was rarely mentioned as the explicit or only motivation for choices and changes in mostly non-linear career paths.

In exploring participant work-life narratives, it was evident that participants reflected on work-life experiences and contribution within the practice of planning in an integrated way – where the whole is much bigger than the sum of its parts.

In summary the four key themes that were outlined in the exploration within Section 6, can be described as follows:

Firstly, the significance of personal and practice purpose and quests that seem to have ‘impelled’ (driven and encouraged) participants to contribute, instead of merely being enabled or capacitated to contribute. This may seem semantic or simplistic, but it is quite critical (Section 6.2).

Secondly, participants placed significant emphasis on the role that purpose infused decisions and actions played within their work-life context. The close relation between personal and practice purpose and commitment to that purpose and quest, as well as the impact of transformational perspectives about the world (world view) and of self (which includes belief and confidence in the possibility to contribute to the future as it is unfolding), are evident (Section 6.3). Identification with the practice of planning, practice ‘heroes’, practice habits and the role of career anchors within career related decisions over time seemed quite prominent. The generative nature (high levels of agency) in this purpose-infused commitment to contribute seem significant in the way that it influenced choices, growth, attitude, and what participants valued as rewards and costs within their respective work-life contexts.

Thirdly, what stood out from time-span overviews of participant work-life narratives was the emphasis placed on adding value and contributing in terms of practice context. In most cases this seem to have implied a focus on doing things with excellence and in relation with other practitioners (Section 6.4). The value of a strong foundation in terms of knowledge, skills and competence was evident, but probably a more profound aspect (as outlined in Section 6.4.2) was that the focus never seemed to be on ‘what competence participants had’ but on ‘what was required in practice context to add value’, and what was relevant in terms of knowledge fields as explored in a boundaryless way (Section 6.4.2). Given the latter attitude as a point of departure (Sections 6.4.2. and 6.4.3), the drive to take action (driving, leading, supporting, as indicated in Section 6.4.4), and the huge emphasis on both excellence (contributing in the best ways possible), as well as finding equally committed colleagues and teams (who do not have *a priori* experience or knowledge) with whom the ‘know how’ or ‘value addition’ could be created were emphasized in numerous reflections (Section 6.4.4).

The attitude and focus on practice value (contextually relevant, with excellence and in inter-relational ways) is in stark contrast to a focus on practice engagement based on (and limited by) individual, minimum requirement and pre-existing competencies (and meta-competencies) only.

Fourthly, the exploration of participant work-life narratives with a time-span focus illustrated the significance of intense and highly inter-related, as well as practice embedded transition experiences as

highlighted in Section 6.5.2 and Section 5. The highly relational nature of these very personal transition experiences and the critical influence and profound impact of mentors, allies and practice context is illustrated in Section 6.5.3. The significance that participants attached to ‘giving their best’, to ‘finding the best way of doing something to add value,’ to ‘engaging with excellence’ (and full attention) and the emphasis on learning and growing through ‘practice to add value’; versus, having obtained the skill ‘in order to add value’, also seemed quite profound (See Section 6.5). The focus on intense inter-relational transition experiences (and the experience of operating with excellence) as means to add value and grow seems quite starkly juxtaposed with the emphasis on decontextualized and practice-uncoupled personal and professional development (including career development, training, formal and informal learning, different types of learning methods, etc.)

In summary, the time-span overviews of participant work-life narratives highlighted:

- ⌘ The significance of the interplay between purpose, belief, perspective and identity which seemed to ‘impel’, not merely ‘enable’, participants to contribute – reflecting on purpose driven decisions, actions and contemplations, and the important role that perspectives about themselves, the practice of planning, the world and the future have in instigating, cementing and sustaining contribution over time (why they have been doing what they do). This could point to the significance of “commitment to the quest of the practice of planning”, as phrased by Lennon (2015) and MacIntyre (2013), not merely the ideals;
- ⌘ Adding value in practice was associated with ‘excellence’ rather than ‘competence’, and with ‘relational capability’ rather than with ‘individual capability’ – reflecting on the significance of being willing to inquire, explore, participate with others and pursue practice habits in order to add value in practice contexts, with a limited focus on individual capability (how and with whom they have been able to contribute). This can probably be equated to what Lennon (2015) and MacIntyre (2013) refer to as the “biggest virtue” namely to be committed to excellence within the practice context; and
- ⌘ The impact of a series of practice embedded transition experiences (transitional and relational) were more prominent than the sum of the parts of the right type of learning or development outcomes and experiences in instigating, cementing and sustaining the above mentioned ‘commitment to the quest of the practice’ and the ‘willingness to add value or ‘commitment to excellence’. What seems quite significant within this context is the importance and highly relational nature of practice experience – where experience is more about gaining confidence and courage in one’s own and relational practice capability than about having gained the experience of what or how to do something. Facing the challenges of the quest ‘successfully’ might provide an experience and ‘satisfaction’ that confirms the value of the ‘commitment to the quest’ (thus where inner rewards and satisfaction might feed into beliefs and perceptions about the world and self again).



# 7

## Observations, reflections and meaning making The rewards of the enquiry –

*Excellence is thus created by 'participation in the attempts to sustain progress and to respond creatively to problems'.*

*(MacIntyre, 2013:242).*

*The modern hero, the modern individual who dares to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom it is our whole destiny to be atoned, cannot, indeed must not, wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalized avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding. 'Live,' Nietzsche says, 'as though the day were here.' It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal – carries the cross of the redeemer – not in the bright moments of this tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair.*

*(Joseph Campbell. 2008:337)*

*Where do we start? What do we have? Torn apart and thrown together deeper into contradictions, where we stretch ourselves to grasp new human possibilities.*

*(Berman, 1989:129)*

*And so the Hero's Journey ends, or at least for a while, for the journey of life and adventure of story never really end. The hero and the audience bring back the Elixir from the current adventure, but the quest to integrate the lessons goes on. It's for each of us to say what the Elixir is – wisdom, experience, money, love, fame, or the thrill of a lifetime. But a good story, like a good journey, leaves us with an Elixir that changes us, makes us more aware, more alive, more human, more whole, more a part of everything that is. The circle of the Hero's Journey is complete.*

*(Christopher Vogler, The Writer's Journey. Mythic Structure for Writers. 2007:227)*

*The way is long ... the terrain is rough, there is no path, there is no map. We need companions on this journey, but no one else can make the way for us.*

*(Kahane, 2010:140)*

## 7.1 INTRODUCING THE ‘REWARDS’

With a potent image of humans as the arrow spearheading a collective and unfolding future, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin explains: “Not only do we have the opportunity to consciously participate in our personal and communal unfolding, but, as unbelievable as this may seem, the way in which we do so will have consequences for the continuing unfolding of the cosmos” (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in Benner, 2016:xi). Shaping our unfolding collective future is not a task to be left in the hands of a few – whether elites, nations, institutions, leaders, gurus, professions, religions, sciences, disciplines or global corporations. We need caring, integrative and future-orientated communities of practice to actively contribute towards this very task (Bammer, 2005; Brown, 2011; Schein, 2015; Goldstein and Bollens et al., 2006; Hillier and Healy, 2008:xxii; du Plessis, 2009).

To contribute to our unfolding future whilst facing highly complex, unpredictable and often volatile realities is, however, not an easy task at all. Practitioners in practices, such as planning, are continually called on to act locally, consider city-wide and regional contexts, and think globally, in spite of often having very little (if any) ability to track or control foreseen and unforeseen consequences. Given the significant challenges and urgency related to capacity building and enhanced development impact in the context of global challenges, such as climate change, the enquiry is highly relevant.

The purpose of the enquiry was to gain insight and perspective into how practitioners in an action- and future-orientated practice such as planning could be enabled, encouraged and supported to contribute in increasingly complex and dynamic practice circumstances and the fast changing world of work.

Recognising the value as well as limitations of formal education and existing research approaches, one of the points of departure that shaped the specific enquiry was the question whether we (as researcher practitioners within planning and planning education) were not missing something essential through the way we ask our questions and the way we use the results thereof. For instance: (1) by an almost all-consuming emphasis on skills, knowledge and values; (2) by narrowing our questions to identify gaps in formal qualifications and education practices; and/or, (3) by focusing research on that which practitioners and/or workplace managers are explicitly aware of.

Not disputing the importance of formal and life-long planning education and qualifications, and recognising the value added by practitioners and institutions in the complex and fast changing practice of planning, the enquiry was designed to straddle the tensions between an appreciative approach, on the one hand, and an explorative and reflexive interpretative approach on the other.

Making use of in-depth, time-span work-life narratives and the quest metaphor, the enquiry provided insight into its guiding question, namely: How do planners engage their practice in ways to add value and contribute, and what do they regard as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest?

Amongst a plethora of planning education research, this study provides a unique view into the adventures, experiences, quest for purpose, and ways in which participant practitioners engaged challenges, contributed, struggled, excelled and inevitably grew and made transitions through their work-life adventures. Explorations into these participant work-life experiences enabled a unique ‘view’ into the purpose infused, highly relational and practice embedded way in which participants seem to have engaged and contributed in their practice. In addition, what stands out is the value and significance of highly inter-



related and transformative practice experiences in the ongoing process of being, becoming and contributing in (and through) planning.

Even though the study context is unique in time and space to South Africa, the complex, uncertain and rapidly changing work-life and practice challenges found here may resonate with similar calls (even though in different times and contexts) in a variety of local and global contexts and ‘the world’ of planning practice. More pertinently though is that whilst work-life contexts and the world of work has significantly changed over the last decade, the archetypical experiences and patterns and significance thereof within the complex context of planning and capability development could provide useful insights and frameworks relevant beyond the specific time space context.

The aim of Section 7 is to provide some insights into the rich meaning within these sets of findings, and share some insights and observations ensuing from the quest of this enquiry. Section 7 is also used to provide some reflections on the validity, limitations and benefits of the enquiry and research process, on significant contributions of the enquiry, and on potential future studies. Lastly, some reflections on my own process of meaning making are shared.

## **7.2 INSIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS**

### **7.2.1 Introduction**

What is clearly evident is the significance of ‘why’, ‘how’ and even ‘with whom’ versus ‘what’ in the participant work-life narratives. I initially expected that in reflecting on their work-life experiences and the way that they were able to contribute in practice contexts, participants might refer to specific competencies, skills, or ways in which they have acquired such skills, unique knowledge sets or meta-competencies but this was not the case.

Work-life narratives reflected shared attitudes of being purpose infused and intensely engaged with the practice (even if in critique thereof). These attitudes and approaches seem to resonate with well-known “Why, how, what” theories (Sinek, 2009; Bolger, 2000) and the law of diffusion of innovation (Greenhalgh, 2005; Mintrom, 1997; Katz, 1963) which both emphasise the highly generative role of inspiration, beliefs and dreams in galvanising and inspiring innovation and action.

A range of insights and observations are shared in this context, with a specific focus on a unique contribution in these deliberations through a rich process of meaning making into practitioner work-life narratives that suggests the significance of generative agency in a purpose infused process of being, becoming and contributing in (and through) planning as a practice.

### **7.2.2 The value of practice embedded transition experiences**

Explorations and reflections on participant work-life narratives clearly illustrate that participants have not ascribed contribution merely to static or achieved competences nor to formal or informal personal and professional development processes.

In contrast therewith, they rather attached significance to contribution and growth as flip sides of the same coin in intense practice embedded transition experiences, where practice embedded transition experiences are more significant than the sum of the part of personal and professional growth.

Participant work-life experiences seem to correlate with archetypal quest elements in journeys that are always as much about the inward challenges as they are about outwards rewards. In addition to the expected ‘what’ is learned or achieved, participant work-life experience narratives provided rich insight into the significance and nature of ‘how’, ‘with whom’ and ‘why’ such development took place. Work-life experiences explored in relation to the quest elements enabled a view into implicit growth and development in transition experiences. In summary:

- ⌘ Experiences related to ‘being called’ and ‘heeding the call’ to planning’s quest seemed to play a significant role in encouraging and enabling personal and professional development. Calls to action are often associated with intense real-life, highly relational and often significant, perception-changing growth experiences which facilitated strong personal association and commitment to planning’s quest as a quest that contributes within this world. It is suggested that this sense of purpose and passion, together with a belief and confidence in personal and practice abilities to enable action, provides some generative agency. Decisions to act seem infused both by the possibility to make a contribution to the ‘cause’, as well as by the ‘attraction’ of the practice, its habits and characteristics. The latter clearly highlighting the impact of inspiring and respected educators, mentors and peers.
- ⌘ In a similar way, real-life and practice enthused ‘initiation experiences’ seem to be crucial, not only in creating substantial personal and professional growth and transformation opportunities, but in the way that they seem to lay a foundation for subsequent work-life experiences. Such experiences seemed to have played a major role in confirming the personal value and satisfaction in being dedicated to the challenging quest of contributing to the ‘collective good’. They also provided opportunity for significant interaction with, and feedback from, practice enthused mentors and peers. Typical initiation experiences called forth and inspired excellence and created substantial personal and professional growth and transformation opportunities. They also seem to have confirmed practice commitment and impacted beliefs, values and perceptions.
- ⌘ Work-life adventures share characteristics of being faced by significant challenges to actively contribute to the quest and the practice of planning. Commitment to local and global/future-orientated practice quests appear to have been the driving force that encouraged participants to face challenges, pay the price, deal with the frustration and find satisfaction in contexts where achievements or success were usually difficult to ‘claim’ or isolate. It is evident that participants were encouraged to extend themselves both professionally and personally in finding creative ways of adding value as individuals, but also through connection with others and highly relational capabilities and innovation.

The impact of a series of practice-embedded transition experiences (transitional and relational) seems much more prominent than the sum of the parts of the right type of learning or development outcomes and experiences. These experiences seem to instigate, cement and sustain the above mentioned ‘commitment to the quest of the practice’ and the ‘willingness to add value or ‘commitment to excellence’. What is quite significant within this context is the importance and highly relational nature of practice experience – where such experience is more about having gained confidence and courage in one’s own and relational practice capabilities, than about the specific experience of ‘what’ or ‘how’ to do something.

T Transition experiences relate to the usually intense real life experiences (as set out in the Quest Experiences in Section 5 and Section 6.5) embedded in community of practice where proximity to inspiring and challenging mentors and allies were significant. Equally so, the myth embedded agency in being called

to action, initiation experiences and the subsequent quest-related transition experiences is highly relevant for participant's outer and inner worlds.

Transition was not described in the sense of gaining experience in new skills or knowledge but was rather described in terms of gaining experience in the possibility to do the impossible. Experiences of 'how and with whom' challenges could best be engaged also seemed prominent in participant work-life experiences, and in gaining confidence to courageously face the next set of unknowns, complexities and challenges and as such actively shape beliefs and self-perceptions.

These type of intense practice experiences include high impact learning, growth and transition experiences as well as opportunities for feedback, reflection and experience of 'self'. The latter is a quality strongly associated with a late stage of action logic that refers to an individual's ability to "build meaning through interpretation of experiences" (Brown, 2011:11) and ability for 'meaning making' (Torbet, 2004; Brown, 2011; Leydesdorff, 2010). Whilst the value of such 'meaning making' is described much more explicit in terms of sustainability leadership and related practice, the importance of this ability to be reflexive and take a step back (not only in time but in 'perspective') is highlighted in the fields of professional development and planning in arguments regarding the importance of the reflexive practitioner and reflexive practice (widely recognised as an important competency within the range of meta-competencies based on Schön, 1983; and Schön, 1987).

Little emphasis (within the above practices) is, however, placed on the types of transition and practice embedded experiences in which such learning, reflexive abilities and personal and professional development unfolds (as argued in critiques and contributions to competence-based approaches by a range of scholars engaged in the field of continued professional development, see Lester, 1999; Contin, 2000; Crowther, 2004; Cheetham and Chivers, 2005; Chivers, 2006 and 2007; Dawson et al., 2010).

Often a generative or dynamic relationship could be detected between experiences/adventures and the intensity of dedication, learning, experience, practice association, confidence, competence, courage and the rewards of practice exposure (acknowledgement and a 'sense of satisfaction' was associated with this). The latter, in spite of the recognition for the value of vertical learning and so-called shift experiences, often seem to be treated as types of learning activities to be 'created' with little reference to the value of community of practice (see Petrie, 2015a, b; Brown, 2011; Schein, 2014) as is evident in the enquiry.

Practice embedded transition experiences seem to relate to what MacIntyre terms the virtue of practice traditions:

One whose importance is perhaps most obvious when it is least present, the virtue of having an adequate sense of the traditions to which one belongs or which confront one. This virtue is not to be confused with any form of conservative antiquarianism ... It is rather the case that an adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present (attachment to ancient times). ... its presence or absence rather appears in the kind of capacity for judgement which the agent possesses in knowing how to select among the relevant stack of maxims and how to apply them in particular situations. (MacIntyre, 2013:279)

Within this context, being and becoming is thus enabled through participating in practice and the excellence called upon in "the attempts to sustain progress and to respond creatively to problems" (MacIntyre, 2013:242).

In making meaning of the findings, it should be taken into account that the work-life narratives were conducted amongst participants who seemed to be highly committed to planning as a practice but who were not necessarily registered as professional planners (given socio-political critiques at the time in South Africa). Interviews were conducted in the pre-‘continued professional development (CPD) and education period’ of South African professional planning associations, where short courses were limited and where conference attendance was not aimed at gaining CPD points or at work appearing in peer reviewed publications. They were also conducted at a time when professional registration for planners (SACPLAN) was not yet compulsory. .

### 7.2.3 Synergies between personal and practice purpose and identities

Participants illustrated high levels of dedication, accountability and often awareness of context-specific and larger scale, as well as short term and future, considerations. The possible contribution that planning as a practice could make in this regard was a strong undertone in many of the narratives (as set out in Section 6.2.2). Not surprisingly, one of the most prominent characteristics, or rather drivers of attitude and behaviour, that most participants shared was their sense of purpose and contribution. The strong sense of purpose and belief in the value of planning to make a contribution was not only mentioned (explicitly by a few participants) as being one of the attractions for selecting planning as practice and career field, but also as a reason to continue in spite of challenges and limited evidence of short-term impact.

Whilst such commitment to the quest of planning as a practice (Lennon, 2015; MacIntyre, 2013) obviously allows for expressing personal strengths and interests (often in ways that are both highly autonomous and relational), inevitably satisfaction lay in finding purpose in contribution as an individual and a professional, and the transformational value of the quest experience itself.

The strong correlation between (i) planning’s ideals and quest for the common good (as argued by many in the practice such as Friedman, 2007; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015; Kunzman, 2015; Campbell, 2006a); (ii) participants’ personal sense of purpose to contribute to the future (instigated in different ways through significant life experiences); and, (iii) participants’ perspective of the world as being highly connected (the latter often mentioned within profound early career transitional experiences) and thus the value of quests aimed at contributing to that unfolding collective future.

The importance and need for change and intervention to actively shape the long-term future, and the possible contribution that planning as a practice can make in this regard, formed a strong undertone in many narratives, not only as one of the attractions for selecting planning as practice and career field, but as a reason to continue in spite of challenges and the limited visibility of short-term impact (which was seldom mentioned by participants). At the same time, many participants also explicitly mentioned realisations related to sustainability and the importance and the need for raising awareness of development impact, urbanisation, and such like within broader ecological, regional and global contexts.

This sense of purpose and contribution resonates strongly with what MacIntyre describes as personal value in contributing to humanity and the world, and underpins the “kind of life which is a quest for the good” (MacIntyre, 2013:275).

The strong association between the community of practice and practice habits seems inevitably intertwined within this process – an identity and association that might not always be that evident, and possibly providing an impetus for identity shaping within communities of practice. An example of this is

the discussions regarding the practice of planning in the Global South (see Watson and Agbola, 2013 and Watson and Odendaal, 2012), where African-wide initiatives are echoed by recent calls from local students in South Africa to decolonise the planning curriculum.

Contrary to the notions of vertical career development in traditional worlds of work, the working lives of practitioners motivated by self-development, creativity and the desire to help others have been seen in career theory over the years as not fitting the steady-state career concept, and have rather been described in terms of the “spiral career concept” involving continual evaluation of career and choices in relation to purpose (see Sullivan and Crocitto, 2007:296). A pattern, I would argue, that is evident in the working lives and career choices of participants in the study: many of the participants were influenced by four of the eleven typical strong career anchors (identified by Schein (1985) in Sullivan and Crocitto (2007:295) and Baruch (2004)). These four career anchors were: service and dedication to a cause; autonomy and independence; creativity and entrepreneurship; and, spirituality and purposeful work.

As Nicholson argues in his discussion on career choices and influences: “[T]o put it in another way, we as agents and actors are much more influenced in our prospective choices by our fears and wishes than by dispassionate self-observation and analysis” (Nicholson, 2007:571).

#### **7.2.4 Excellence as relational in an unfolding process of becoming**

The enquiry seems to confirm the importance of a high quality formal education that entails in-depth and robust enquiry, as well as exposure to a wide range of knowledge fields and multi-faceted competencies typically associated with T-Shaped professionals (as set out in Section 6.4). It also highlights the critical importance of the wide range of integrative, meaning-making, collaborative, and leadership meta-competencies and the way in which these are deepened through personal transformation experiences. It also confirmed the inter-related nature of ongoing professional and personal development and the critical importance of practice-based horizontal and vertical learning in integrative, action and future-orientated practices such as planning (Section 6.5).

Practice embedded engagement aimed at adding value and significance strongly relates to the notion of excellence (as explained in terms of commitment to excellence by Lennon, 2015). The implication of engagement in complex systems (most often) and a commitment to adding value (excellence) inevitably results in a ‘boundary less’ approach. In the drive for value, the emphasis is on an attitude and willingness to do what is required, rather than on what is available. The inevitable result was sourcing capability, going ‘deeper’ in challenging one’s own capabilities, as well as in searching ‘wider’.

Work-life adventures and experiences clearly illustrate the role that the interplay among beliefs, identity, purpose and commitment to quest has had on the participants’ (and teams’) willingness to go the ‘extra mile’, to extend themselves, and to commit to excellence not for the sake of perfection or a self-serving perception of importance, but in order to make a contribution (in enabling, for instance, better quality of life in a rural district, or improved ward level community participation).

Excellence in practice inevitably requires active and focused engagement – driving change and action in ways that engage the heart and mind, but also in ways that relate to the ability of ‘operating in the zone’, with the benefits experienced as outcome and practice.

Being committed to excellence also implies commitment to ‘finding a way’. Being industrious in making a plan may actually be a key capability within the practice of planning. This capability and attitude of resourcefulness, also strongly associated with social entrepreneurship, is regarded by some as the new meta-competency for growing leaders (see Elmore, 2013; AshokaU, 2014:43). There are numerous examples from the work-life narratives of times when participants were willing to explore and find the best ways to bring about change, to do what they believed had to be done (Lennon, 2015:72), instead of merely taking the road of least resistance, or following generic and often minimum guidelines.

Whilst there is significant cost and disruption associated with adaptation and processes designed to allow interplay in the creative tension in paradox and between the known and unknown (see Snowden, 2007, for an in-depth discussion on the qualities leaders require for meaning making in complex contexts), the value within the acknowledgement of being willing to ‘not be comfortable’ is clearly evident. It is this dedication, willingness and ability to adapt, to care enough to ‘make a plan’, that often seems to be the most outstanding quality and capability in the work-life adventures of participants in the study. An ability probably speaking to what MacIntyre (2013) describes as one of the most important virtues – the virtue of being committed to the quest of the practice.

This attitude and a sense of purpose and commitment together seem to play a key role as a driver and motivator (i.e. to participants’ willingness to explore wider, involve other disciplines and stakeholders, illustrate increased flexibility and to have less attachment to the ‘what or how’).

Autonomy, drive, responsibility, purpose, initiative, curiosity and interest were mentioned as considerations for participants in choosing a field of work, and also in obtaining a sense of satisfaction in later work-life experiences. Interestingly, these characteristics are typically associated with excellence and are seen as an indication of employability in the field of career development theory (Potgieter, 2012:155). They are thus probably the type of characteristics that could be expected amongst participants who were seen by their peers as contributing within practice contexts.

This resonates with findings in the career development field: recognising the role that emotion plays in motivation and the energising of actions and behaviour, and that the development of emotional intelligence plays in behaviour across life span (Potgieter, 2012:6). It is argued that it is exactly through exerting themselves and practicing ‘excellence’ that practitioners gain “self-knowledge and an increasing knowledge of the good” (MacIntyre, 1984:219 in Lennon, 2015:67); thus of what is regarded as practice excellence.

Excellence requires personal and authentic contribution, purpose infused and inspired use and stretch of strengths and abilities, but also highly relational approaches to contribution that include collaboration with teams, proximity and choices of working with others that are committed to adding value (also termed co-production of knowledge).

Excellence in this context is not about ‘perfect output’ but about the attitude of giving one’s all and doing as best as one can – that inevitably on a quest will imply an inner journey of transformation as well. Purpose infused and value addition practice, associated with meaning and purpose, is increasingly seen as learning that is not located in the individual but related to community and identity, meaning and values (Wenger, 1998; Howorth, Smith, & Parkinson, 2012). AshokaU states that, “This appears to be particularly true for Generation-Y students, who seem to increasingly look for what matters to them (Fornaciari & Lund Dean,

2014). In concert, people all over the world are longing for deeper harmony between their purpose, education, and profession. Social entrepreneurship is filling those needs” (AshokaU, 2014:43).

What we see is that 'self-realisation' (extending the self) and 'contribution' (purpose) can be (and are) two sides of the same coin – not mutually exclusive. They form a tension that provides energy and movement that propels action, belief and commitment to the quest. In his seminal work, *Power & Love: Solving Tough Social and Organizational Problems*, Adam Kahane explains the same notion with the interaction between power and love – “We cannot address our tough challenges only through driving towards self-realization or only through driving towards unity” (Kahane, 2010:4).

### 7.2.5 Significance of coherence in personal and practice perspectives and beliefs

What was evident in the work-life narratives was the coherence (even in language) among participants’ perspectives and beliefs in the possibility that the future can be shaped and the strong formative significant life experiences (highly influential as argued by, for instance, Tanner (2010) and Payne (1999)) that confirmed this; their perspective of planning as a practice that could possibly contribute towards shaping or influencing the future (often instigated through the practice mentors and exposure they had (the significance as explained by Gunder, 2004; Lennon, 2015); and, lastly their perception of self and sense of personal purpose and value in contributing towards the good of humanity and the world in the unfolding future.

The latter is increasingly related to perceptions of self in relation to transformative notions of meaning making, such as the levels of existence in spiral dynamics where global perspectives and views are related to a more holistic way of thing, embedded in ecological processes and evident in a more collective and co-operative way of operating (see Beck et al. in Baker, 2000:7-8). A notion that relates strongly with moving beliefs from the subjective to the more objective realm, and thus “moving from being controlled by something to having a peer relationship with it” (Torbert and Associates, 2004:189 in Brown, 2011:22).

The value of such a world view and view of self that can be associated with ‘conscious leadership’ in terms of late-stage action logic and post-conventional abilities is explained in a very straight forward way by Schein (2015:34) in his discussion on how this concept is interpreted by the leadership consultant Barrett Brown (2012) in terms of the implications thereof for global and sustainable leadership. Schein states: “Brown ... puts the worldview concept into a sustainability context by explaining how developmental psychology can be used to map how worldviews change over time and become more complex as an individual’s span of care grows. He observes that as human beings we have the potential to develop from caring for ourselves/family/ group/nation, to eventually caring for all human beings, and ultimately to all sentient life. In the context of sustainability leadership, Brown highlights the importance of effectively communicating different worldviews. He explains that in order to enhance our effectiveness as sustainability leaders we need be able to honour all worldviews as they are, even if they differ from our own” (Schein, 2015:34). Even though this study did not include an evaluation of post-conventional leadership, the relevance might be useful in future (see Section 7.5).

The significance of belief, purpose, perspective and identity as a driving force and influencing factor (as explained in the field of behavioural science through the Logical Levels Framework (see Kessels and Smit, 2016; Dilts and DeLozier, 2016 and Section 4.6) is quite relevant.

### 7.2.6 Practice contribution and internal rewards

Contribution and rewards not only entailed experiences and outcomes through which change (as in the quest metaphor) was brought about in the outer world, but seem often to have been experiences in which participants experienced themselves differently, bringing about change in their inner worlds.

The importance of the notion of ‘contribution’ was not explained as ‘success’ or an individual achievement, but described in terms of playing a part, doing what could be done, engagement of practice with excellence, but also with others with the purpose of adding value to practice context and practice itself. This is a notion that not only speaks to purposeful commitment itself but also to the significance of purposeful commitment as career anchors in participant work-lives (Sullivan and Crocittor, 2007; Nicholson, 2007). Internal value creation for motivation is also explained in other theories such as the Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000).

The journey is essentially always an internal one, mirrored in the outer world, and not merely an action-packed adventure in the outer world without any growth, shifts and catharsis in character (as Vogler explained in his original notorious notes to screenplay writers at Disney – Vogler, 2007). In very similar ways, participant work-life narratives point to the satisfaction in having faced the challenges of a worthwhile quest with excellence (beyond compliance or even what was perceived as possible) as a reward in itself, endorsing the value of embarking on the next set of challenges. A possible significant consideration in the practice of planning that is often characterised by lack of proof of results and impact in complex local and inter-related global contexts. As stated by McIntyre: “A quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge” (MacIntyre, 2013:276).

The enquiry confirms the significance and role of commitment to the quest of planning as a practice (as argued by Lennon, 2015); however, it also highlights the importance of synergy between a transformational perspective of the world and future as connected and evolving, a sense of personal purpose and value in contribution, and, lastly, association with planning as a practice through which to enable such contribution. In his thesis, “After Virtue”, MacIntyre describes the different virtues of courage, justice, integrity and truthfulness. However, he also makes reference to an interesting ‘virtue’ which relates to the significance of synergy between personal and practice purpose as a virtue: “[O]ne whose importance is perhaps most obvious when it is least present, the virtue of having an adequate sense of the traditions to which one belongs or which confront one. This virtue is not to be confused with any form of conservative antiquarianism ... It is rather the case that an adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present” (MacIntyre, 2013:278).

It seems that planning as a practice not only ‘needs’ the heroic quests of its practitioners but, as a practice and ‘tradition’ (MacIntyre, 2013; Gunder, 2015), also makes a significant contribution to the ‘lives’ and the personal quests to live good lives of those very practitioners. A practice that provides the life blood, that has the ability to ‘stir one’s juices’ (as one of the young professors in the enquiry explained), and that provides an opportunity through which people can contribute towards the greater human quests, and thereby find meaning.

### 7.2.7 Being and becoming as generative process in personal and practice contexts



In addition to the significance of the transformational and highly relational growth experiences in ‘personal and professional capacity development’, the time-spanning overviews confirm the inter-related nature of these experiences, that is as strengthening anchors and drivers that impact attitude, decisions, behaviours and outcomes in subsequent experiences and career-related choices and growth (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Schultze and Miller, 2004).

They provide insight into the inter-dependent nature of how, why and with whom capacity, competence, capability, learning, and growth amongst others seem to be generated in work-life practices. Findings in Section 6 in summary highlight that participant commitment to personal and planning quests spanned over time and were not merely directly related to jobs or institutions. What is highly relevant is that this commitment to personal and practice purpose could be described as having a generative ability – not only significant in those early (or in some cases later) practice experiences. Adding value in practice is associated with ‘excellence’ rather than ‘competence’, and with ‘relational capability’ rather than with ‘individual capability’ experiences, but even more so in the way that it seems to anchor and drive unfolding career and practice decisions. The significant interplay between purpose, belief, perspective and identity seem to ‘impel’, not merely ‘enable’ participants to contribute. In this context, purpose driven decisions and ability confirming perspectives about themselves and the practice of planning seem to have instigated, cemented and sustained contribution over time. This significance of “commitment to the quest of the practice of planning”, as argued and phrased by Lennon (2015) and MacIntyre (2013), within everyday planning practice is not merely abstract, but could be related to attitudes and willingness to inquire, explore, collaborate with others and contribute, which seem to stretch beyond mere individual capability to infuse a practice capability – a generative action relating very well to a commitment to excellence within the practice context (Lennon, 2015 and MacIntyre, 2013).

The interplay between purpose, perspective, identity, belief and growth seems reinforcing and might be highly relevant in participant perceptions of being ‘impelled to contribute’. The latter is quite a contrast to an approach in which ‘practitioners’ need to be ‘enabled’ or ‘capacitated’ to contribute.

The generative capacity of this purpose-infused commitment to both the quest and ideals, as well as to the practice and identity of planning, plays a significant role in enabling and encouraging participants to contribute in practice contexts – with the influence of this meaning-making ability not only being central to planning, but (as outlined in Section 6.2.3) also playing a significant anchoring role and acting as a driving force in personal and career-related choices and growth (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Schultze and Miller, 2004).

In conclusion, it is evident that the commitment to contribute to the collective future as being a culmination of personal and practice purpose in planning’s quest is highly significant in unlocking a generative capability – impelling and encouraging contribution, but particularly personal and professional development, excellence and a passion to find a way to move forward. The quest remains just a calling without the courage to commit or the dedication, tenacity and support to remain committed. Commitment to the quest does not imply a shared pathway or approach, and it is always contextually unique. However, what is shared is that it is not for the sake of the personal, but a contribution to the future and to that which is ‘good’ for humanity (or this world) as a whole, and in doing that living a life worth living (MacIntyre, 2013). A quest inevitably made possible through finding a generative capacity and a practice (and community of practice) through which to head this call to action, and face the challenges. In this, traditions/knowledge base/practice habits also contribute on this quest for the sake of future generations.

The significant and generative role of inspiration, beliefs and dreams in galvanising and inspiring innovation and action in participant work-life narratives strongly resonates with the well-known “why, how, what” theories (Sinek, 2009; Bolger, 2000) and the law of diffusion of innovation (Greenhalgh, 2005; Mintrom, 1997; Katz, 1963) that clearly illustrates the significance of the interplay between ‘why’ and purpose and belief in capacity development in inspiring and galvanizing action. The significance of belief, purpose, perspective and identity as driving forces and influencing factors is also explained quite effectively in the field of behavioural science through the Logical Levels Framework (Kessels and Smit, 2016; Dilts and DeLozier, 2016) – as outlined in Section 4.5 and illustrated in Diagram 7.1.

Based on the enquiry, I would argue that the interplay among (i) purpose, perspective and personal transition; (ii) personal, professional and career development; and, (iii) relational practice purpose, contexts and growth experiences is significant in attempts at improving capability, competency and especially development impact. This generative capacity (See Diagram 7.1 and Text Box 7.1) can be recognised in:

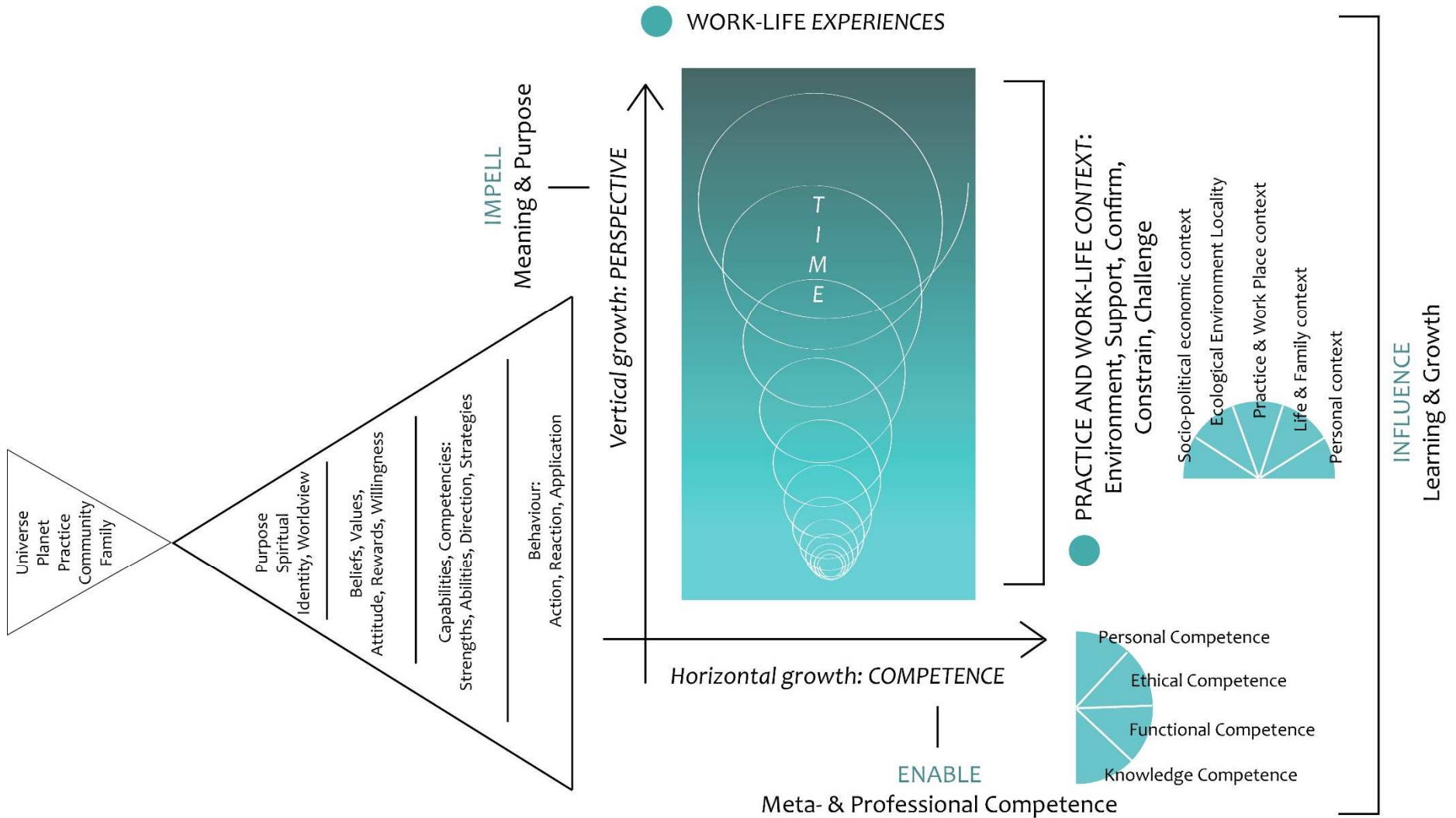
How participants seemed to be impelled to contribute to the collective future and ‘common good’ through high levels of personal, as well as practice, commitment. Practice context for many became a way to add personal value;

How contribution seems closely related to high levels of authentic and relational excellence. Critical to note is that relational value creation and practice excellence seem more significant than the mere sum of personal competencies and meta-competencies; and,

Contribution and growth that is being galvanised by transition experiences, which themselves are not isolated but highly embedded in practice. In these cases, practice-embedded transition experiences are more significant than the sum of the parts of personal and professional growth.

Figure 7.1: Enabled, Impelled and Supported to Contribute

**WORK-LIFE NARRATIVES**  
 What impelled, enabled and influenced practitioners to contribute in planning as a practice in SA during turbulent and uncertain times?



### 7.2.8 Summary reflections

The enquiry pointed to the significance and generative capability of being impelled to contribute (rather than being enabled to contribute) – reflecting on purpose-driven decisions, actions and contemplations, and the important role that planners' perspectives about themselves, the practice of planning, the world and the future has had in instigating, cementing and sustaining contribution over time: why they have been doing what they do and how and with whom growth and development took place. The culmination of personal and practice purpose, and associated perspectives, beliefs and identity, seems to have played a significant and generative role in encouraging, enabling and shaping participants' practice contribution.

It should be noted that whilst the spotlight was placed on qualities, characteristics, attitudes, competencies, as well as on influences and growth experiences that were instrumental in enabling and encouraging practitioners to contribute to planning as a practice, findings in the study do not denigrate the importance of a more formal education and qualification outcomes and process. Rather they should be seen as complementary – possibly by exploring the context through which such outcomes find tracking, are applied and have a generative impact.

Approaching practice capability as contextually dynamic and purpose driven (as set out above), as well as transformational and relational, has had a significant impact in shaping, encouraging and enabling participants' practice contribution, and their ability to handle challenges, adapt and innovate.

The research provided a perspective on the ability to contribute in planning as a dynamically evolving, highly relational and deeply transformational competence. It also enabled an exploration into significant patterns, transitions, tensions and interactions that might point to some generative agency in enabling practice contribution in complex fast-changing and uncertain contexts, where interventions designed for highly complicated systemic understanding of competence development and impact might need to be reconsidered.

The explorative and reflexive approach and the use of the quest metaphor added value in supporting meaning making to move beyond the paradigm of the complicated and into considering the complex context of planning and capability development within the practice (see Cynefin model, Snowden 2007 and Part 1, Section 4.4). It has been comprehensively argued that we need to move from the impasse of the over emphasis on silos and structuring (brought by modernity) and individualism or diversity (brought by post-modernism) (see McIntyre, 2013; Kahane, 2010; and Wilber, 2007). We need the acceptance and comfort [love] of the latter and the action [power] (Kahane, 2010) in the adventure created by the former.

The enquiry essentially highlights the central role of, and the interplay between, personal, professional and practice embedded (relational) being, becoming and contributing in (and through) the practice of planning.

## 7.3 REFLECTIONS ON VALIDITY AND LIMITATIONS

### 7.3.1 Introduction

Du Plessis (2009:22-23) explains how 'true' knowledge is arrived at through the increasing coherence of partially valid 'truths' from many different sources of knowledge, and how reflection is an inherent part of developing knowledge. In this section, reflections are shared on the limitations and validity of the research methods (in terms of data gathering and meaning making), as well as the findings. In support of coherence, value and validity, reflections on data gathering and meaning making are shared in relation to:

- ⌘ The limitations of the research focus and use of the quest metaphor (Section 7.3.2);
- ⌘ The sample and participants (Section 7.3.3);
- ⌘ Research approach (Section 7.3.4); and,
- ⌘ Meaning making (Section 7.3.5).

### 7.3.2 Reflections on the limitations of the research focus and use of the quest metaphor

It should be clearly recognised that engaging in a work-life is everything but a linear journey (Lo Presti, 2009). One of the critiques of the research approach and use of the quest metaphor is perhaps the concern that a job for most people does not equal a vocation or quest in most cases (Lester, 1999:15-16; Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:21).

Significant critique could be raised around a study that potentially positions the professional ideal of the "specialist" over the "cultivated man" (see Weber, 1958b:242-243 in Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:18). A focus that could probably be seen as arising from a highly intellectual and exclusionary view. In discussing the "loss of a Halo" in the context of capitalism, Berman (1989:155) argues in a similar way to Marx that "professionals and intellectuals ... who think they have the power to live on a higher plane than ordinary humanity, to transcend capitalism in life and work ... they turn out to be just about the only moderns who really believe that they are called to their vocations and that their work is holy".

In line with Weber's notion of the link between Calvinism and capitalism, Hughes argues that "in mobilizing people and making work the central fact of one's life, capitalism 'erase[s] the person's past so that he may be completely mobilized for carrying out his mission' (Hughes, 1928-1956/1958:32)" (Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:20).

On the one hand, professions such as the practice of planning are seen as forming part of institutions that play a moral and regulatory societal role. However, they may often be seen on the other hand as 'impermeable', serving as a source of identity and key to the operation of the post-industrial society (Moore, Gunz and Hall, 2007:20).

At the same time, the call of communism is for individuals to "freely develop [their] physical and spiritual (or mental) energies" which requires the "development of a totality of capacities in individuals themselves", but with a specific mention of the importance of doing so in community with others (Marx, 1844 in Berman, 1989:97). In the context of the study, the focus was not on practice in terms of its professional accreditation context, and this probably raises the flag about the importance of a focus on community of practice versus the fixation with accreditation and formal CPD processes.

There is much critique about the stereotyping of the typical 'male hero', warnings against the danger of assuming 'universal application' of myth (Campbell, 2007) and even debates associating the very reason for pursuing quests with childhood trauma or psychological needs (as Freud would typically argue), or with the inherent need of humanity to 'live a life worth living' and being inspired to contribute (MacIntyre, 2013).

The use of the quest metaphor probably does pose a danger, and it is important to be aware of and avoid reinforcing elitist solutions through a proliferation of expert narratives and stories and resolving competing discourses in a technocratic way or at the hand of an external power (Pellizzoni, Mar2001), thus enabling the participation of multiple voices in the construction of 'truth' (Gergen and Gergen, 1991). Acknowledging the critique against depending on and making too much about "heroes in planning" (see Hague et al., 2006) the enquiry's findings do value individual commitment to a quest that calls heroic qualities to the forth. However, more than that, it highlights the critical importance of relational capability and the importance of "heroic" practice (not profession) and maybe exactly those values and virtues that are not exclusive at all.

Whilst there was no explicit reference to, or question aimed at soliciting purpose, quest, beliefs, meta-competencies and inter-related dynamics, being asked to reflect on one's work-life through the lens of 'acts' does probably 'pave the way' for quest narratives to unfold. Given the iterative and generative nature of the research process the role of language and of framing the enquiry in a particular context should be recognised.

### **7.3.3 Reflections on the study context, sample and participants**

The sample consisted of interviews conducted with 25 participants – primarily white male planners in South Africa, representative of the planning fraternity at the time of the study. Another key question, in taking a more critical reflective position, was whether participants had a vested interest in depicting themselves in a certain way. The way in which people represent themselves is influenced by what is regarded as acceptable (Silverman, 1985 and 2006), including the social conventions typical for a certain group/occupation such as the practice of planning (Harre, 1989). Given the precarious position of the South African planning fraternity at the time of the interviews (See Annexure A, Figure A.1: @SAPlan\_16) which was considering "not just as to 'what it had done', but also, whether it was able to assist in undoing the damage, given what its competencies were and where, how and to what intent these capacities were developed" (Oranje 1998 in Oranje, 2014:5), the possible need within the practice and from participants to clearly illustrate contribution in, or redeem themselves from, past actions, or to explain certain decisions and provide motivations and reasons for decisions in hindsight cannot be excluded. However, the motivational factors and drivers, as well as endeavours embarked upon to contribute to planning's quest for a higher good appear to reflect internal congruence in the story-lines of work life narratives, resonating with my own observations and interpretations.

The work-life narratives were solicited from a time period in South Africa of huge social transition and changes, where the role of planning was central both as accomplice to the Apartheid government and as possible saviour in the New South Africa. A time when there was a spirit of hope and many causes, before the economic crunch, and before the realities of the global climate change challenges kicked in, but also at a time when urbanization, migration, dealing with racial diversity and spatial and social inequalities seemed more like a South African than a European challenge. Recent developments world-wide have however possibly increased the need for heroic virtues in planning as a practice.

Taking a more critical reflective position, there is also the possibility that work-life narratives were used by participants to cast both planning and participants in a positive light, especially given the association between apartheid and planning in South Africa's history. Whilst it could be argued that the narratives provided an opportunity to claim or disown certain associations and allegiances with critical and supportive voices in the practice of planning (as that also shifted over time), or to explain certain decisions and provide motivation and reason for decisions in hindsight, the selection of participants by peers for their contribution to the practice, as well as an internal coherence in time-span stories and experiences and passion-infused stories, seem evident (the latter might possibly point to the impact of persuasive story tellers (See Throgmorton, 1992:19)).

Lastly, conducting the study amongst participants whose work-life histories unfolded through the period of change and transition, and the intense dynamics that it brought in relation to feelings associated with planning as a practice in South Africa, could be argued as providing a specific contextual reality. Given that the 'mood' about planning as a practice at the time of the interview (besides many other factors) could be expected to influence perceptions, I have opted to only use interviews that were conducted within the space of six months. Whilst these interviews are thus all in the early 2000 period, they provide invaluable insights into the interplay between purpose, belief, ability and action and the relational nature thereof within the context of planning as a practice required to add value to contextual and collective futures.

As highlighted in Section 3, the study could possibly have made an additional contribution within the South African planning fraternity and history by acknowledging heroes in the quest of planning through not anonymising work-life narratives. A possible extension of the study to provide a wider collation of work-life narrative from heroes in South African planning for that purpose could be considered to also add value to the South African community of planning practitioners. This could include using interviews conducted in later years. Such an approach would enable the use of quotes and real life stories that would assist in making the text and examples much more vivid and less abstract.

The collaboration of a sample of participants, who have been identified by peers (through use of the snowball technique) as adding value and contributing to planning as a practice and society, enabled using an appreciative approach to explore the interplay between purpose, capability and growth (expected to be found in such participants' work-life histories).

#### **7.3.4 Reflections on the validity of the research approach**

The selected research approach and methodology enabled and supported a valuable exploration of the questions as set out in the enquiry.

Following a relational, contextual and 'whole-person' approach and making use of in-depth work-life narrative interviews enabled exploration of work-life experience contextualised within participant work-

The biographic narrative interview created a space for participants to reflect on their work-life experiences (avoiding the mere verification or exploration of pre-determined concepts) and proved highly valuable in terms of the richness of findings and in generating rich narrative material (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2007:204-209). It is, however, also this wealth of research material that made it quite a task to work through, and to keep the study focused.

It is important to note that, as a practitioner and lecturer at the time, my own role as researcher and interviewer was subjective as I obviously was not indifferent to the shared (common) passion and belief in

the value, ideals, ideas, identity and the quest of the practice of planning, and personally knew half of the participants in the study (as indicated in Section 3).

Given the iterative and generative nature of the research process, the role of language and of framing the enquiry in a particular context should be recognized. Whilst there was no explicit reference to, or question aimed at soliciting, purpose, quest, beliefs, meta-competencies and inter-related dynamics, being asked to reflect on one's work-life through the lens of 'acts' does probably 'pave the way' for quest narratives to unfold.

With regards to the research method itself and the three hours of 'space' for personal reflection it provided to the participants, they all pointed to the value they experienced in the process of appreciative reflection and meaning making of work-life reflection and reflective interpretations. Older participants had much more of a reflexive overview in considering their contribution though. Interestingly (as could probably be expected, most participants at the end of the interview also reflected on how experiences, growth, shaping influences, exposure, et cetera (being and becoming) through their respective practices prepared them for 'this moment' or 'current complex challenges' (at the time of the interview).

By granting "access" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006:115) to the imagination of practitioners, narratives not only tell us much about how those involved in planning perceive their world, but can also enrich our understanding of how such practitioners perceive themselves (Forester, 1999:2012). The research approach as such was very valuable in an exploration of implicit knowledge and perceptions.

### **7.3.5 Reflections on meaning making**

The narrative method proved very valuable for deep engagement and rich meaning making, especially as narratives can engage power and desire in complex, even though subtle ways (Reid, 1992). In this context the value and the danger of persuasive story telling were potentially relevant to the research process. As Mandelbaum (1991:211) posits: "Whenever we argue about planning choices, we are bound to struggle with competing stories, seeking to resolve differences so as to mobilize resources and consent." The argument would thus be to embrace narrative diversity and controversy rather than resolving or ignoring it; which may be more compelling in the abstract than in practice, even (and especially) when vigorous action is required (Mandelbaum, 1991:213).

Employing the quest metaphor encouraged my exploration and reflexive interpretation to move beyond that which is explicit or individual, to include the implicit and inter-relational, to recognise unfolding patterns, coherence, and paradox and hopefully shine some light on generative agency. It also enabled exploration and interpretation of dynamic experiences, decisions, moments and calls through which practitioners received and heeded the call to adventure (Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 2011; Snowden, 2007). The use of the quest metaphor supported meaning making of significant patterns and experiences and illustrated the possible value of a more integral and relational understanding in endeavours aimed at supporting and enhancing personal and professional development of practitioners in planning as a practice. It also enabled a view into the age-old pattern of myth that opened up the possibility to explore attitudes, beliefs, excellence and commitment with which we (as practitioners) engage in the practice of planning. The critical role of such 'sociability' and relational ways of thinking and its value has been soundly argued (often together with the illusion of knowledge and reason), as phrased by Kolbert (2017): "Habits of mind that seem weird or goofy or just plain dumb from an 'intellectualist' point of view prove shrewd when seen from a social 'interactionist' perspective."



In this enquiry, the reflexive approach, applied through various mixes of empirical work (which avoided pre-empted categorization as far as possible), proved very valuable in enabling meaningful interpretations, critical reflection and self-reflection. Given that this approach is said to benefit with distance from the material (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2007:285-286) – a distance, which time and exposure to a broad range of theoretical influences and research projects over the process of this specific enquiry helped to bring about, has indeed proved highly valuable in reflection and sense making that needed to add value in a complex and adaptive context. Reflection also enabled perspective on the highly complicated system, models and frameworks relevant to the fields of enquiry.

Questioning the paradigm underlying the enquiry and deliberately employing a paradigm that recognised the complex and adaptive nature of urban systems, as well as of contribution in such systems, proved to be highly valuable (as outlined in the next section). In contrast to the ‘complicated’, the use and simplicity of complexity as paradigm (see Snowden, 2007) to enable meaning making and action in complex adaptive systems is highly valued in the world of organisational change, leadership and, increasingly so, in the practice of planning – as clearly illustrated in the Cynefin model developed by Dave Snowden and colleagues to support leaders in decision making, and the highly cited article published in the Harvard Business Review on that topic (Snowden, 2007). The understanding generated by the enquiry and the challenges for meaning making probably highlight the danger and potential cost in opting for ‘chronic self-deception’ in ‘pseudo-rational models’ (Snowden, 2002:9) and disregarding the dynamics and dependence on informal and transformational interactions, tensions, paradoxes, transformative experiences and highly relational competence dynamics. As the enquiry evolved it was evident that including a paradigm of complexity within the explorative and reflexive interpretations in this study, even though not originally anticipated, would challenge and add an important methodological and framing element, introducing “a new simplicity, without being simplistic, enabling the emergence of new meaning through the interaction of the informal and the formal in a complex ecology of knowledge” (Snowden, 2002:111).

### **7.3.6 Summary reflections**

The study entailed exploring participant work-life narratives to gain a better understanding of, and learn from, significant experiences, shifts, dynamics, wisdom, competencies, capabilities, characteristics and attitudes of practitioners in the practice of planning within a ‘whole person’ context.

An approach that resonates with what Lennon (2015:71) described as:

[B]y reflecting on the purpose of our practice, we confront the very ‘idea of planning’ (Campbell 2012). Accordingly, we engage with the difficult issue of justifying ‘why’ we do ‘what’ we do the ‘way’ we do it. In this manner, narrative construction facilitates reasoning on what ought to be done and why. Consequently, reflecting through narrative on how we have acted or should act is a profoundly normative endeavour. By employing experiences to inform context-sensitive activity, this form of reflection thus helps to shape the direction of present and future engagement with the practice. Consequently, narrative introspection supplies a form of reasoning that practitioners can draw upon to determine what should be done – a form of reasoning that Aristotle termed ‘practical reasoning’. This form of reasoning differs from the ‘practical reasoning’ of the planning perspective by broadening concern beyond reflection on power differentials toward a more encompassing understanding of how one’s identity is given moral purpose through seeking to advance excellence in one’s actions.

Through reflecting on the limitations of the research approach, the study context, sample and participants, as well as the validity of the research approach and the meaning making processes, it is evident that whilst there were limitations, the insights and coherence made possible through the methods and approaches employed contributed to the validity enquiry.

## **7.4 CONSIDERING CONTRIBUTION AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **7.4.1 Introduction**

In a passionate plea, Oranje asks:

“Would it make sense to make a call on us as planners to be more passionate about what our profession stood for, to stop being only worried about the here and now, ourselves, our jobs and our immediate family members and relatives, and to care also about the world, the universe, all of us, including ‘those who hate us’? Would a reminder of the ‘tale’ of the care, compassion and passion of the first planners help? Would it be more effective if the message were served in a gentle, caring, compassionate way, or would a hard-hitting, slumber-wrecking ball-type attack be the more appropriate approach or instrument? Would a once-off story, ‘the passion of the early planner’, be adequate? Would it be of any help or make a difference to make a call for the use of the kind of metaphors that infused the early planners and framed their engagement with the world? Is this a meaningful endeavour, or it is just a futile, naive, elitist view on the complex world of planning and planners from the safety of an academic fortress?” (Oranje, 2014:8)

It is to pertinent questions such as these raised by Oranje (2014), that the enquiry can probably, even in a very indirect way, contribute the most. Questions that speak to the mind and the heart of the individual and the collective and that might benefit from a different perspective, a different ‘language game’, and different probes. I would argue that the enquiry can direct us to consider the value of engagements that delve into the often ‘un-seen’, or might illustrate the value in questioning the perspective from which we ‘look’ and the restrictions and/or possibilities that ‘new ways of seeing’ open up for ‘new ways of being’ (Norval, 2016).

The section is aimed at providing an indication of:

- ⌘ The contribution of the enquiry in the field; and
- ⌘ Relevant future areas of research, as identified through the unfolding of the enquiry.

### **7.4.2 Contribution of the enquiry in the field**

The enquiry in this study was conducted through the exploration and reflexive interpretation of work-life narrative histories (spanning an era of change and transformation) of a small group of ‘value adding’ practitioners in the context of planning as a practice in South Africa. The study generated rich insights about the nature of the ‘commitment to the quest of planning as a practice’, and endorsement for its suggested ability to generatively increase capabilities and contribution to the quest.

I do not claim that the study provides definitive answers. It does, however, contribute by raising significant pointers and questions about how we engage within and with planning as a practice, and the value we attach to the ‘spirit of planning’ (or as used in this thesis: the ‘commitment to the quest’ inherent to this practice). Not in a sentimental or merely philosophical sense, but in pragmatically enabling us to bring

about the shifts required to engage in the challenges in dynamically changing and complex cities and regions and contribute to a collective (and contextually relevant) future.

The study's theoretical contribution is largely within the knowledge field of planning, with a number of possibilities highlighted for future research and further exploration.

The study is valuable in raising awareness about the potential for profound impact harboured in relational and generative work-life experiences within the context of commitment to the quest of planning as a practice. Such impact is also highly relevant to the world of work, teams, organisations, institutions, managers, team leaders, et cetera; milieus in which practitioners committed to the quest in planning operate in, gain experience in, add value to, and have to 'perform' and lead (or follow) in.

Lastly, the study contributes to the field of planning (but probably also other integrative and future orientated practices) in terms of the research methodology by making use of time span work-life narratives, through:

- ⌘ highlighting numerous implications for the fields of planning education, especially in relation to curriculum focus, learning experiences and the role of faculty – mostly begging the question about ways to allow the 'spirit of planning' to flourish and generate its 'magic';
- ⌘ calling for reflection within the hearts, minds, souls and practices of those engaged in planning as a practice, and suggesting useful considerations for engagement, growth and contribution in the practice – relevant to individual practitioners, young and old, regardless of role or institutional affiliation; and,
- ⌘ raising questions about the critical importance of traditions of excellence embodied and advocated by communities of practice, relevant groups, networks, associations, etcetera in planning as a practice (and profession).

#### **7.4.2.1 Valuable insights into being, becoming and practice contribution**

The need to better understand the nature and shaping of contribution in planning as a practice and dynamically changing practice contexts is an age-old and ongoing endeavour, not unique to the practice of planning or a specific time period. This has been once again illustrated in the recent calls for global and sustainability leadership (McCauley et al., 2006; Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Harris and Kuhnert, 2008; Hochachka, 2006; Johansen, 2012) and radical planning capability (Mironowicz, 2015; Schein, 2014; Tubbs and Schultz, 2006). At the same time, critique and concerns have been expressed over the main focus in career and professional development being on control, accreditation and formal education processes (Lester, 1999; Contin, 2000; Chivers, 2007). A range of views, as I have argued in this study, that seem to be pointing to the need to rethink the way in which we encourage and support ourselves as practitioners in planning (and in other integrative, action and future orientated practices) to contribute in shaping the evolving future.

As set out in Part 1 in the enquiry, the calls in various fields are increasing for new ways of being, doing and practicing (e.g. Davoudi, 2012; Gunder, 2006; Sandercock, 2004; Forester, 2015; Innes and Booher, 2015; Newig et al., 2007). The enquiry supported a rich process of meaning making which afforded a wealth of insights.

The study contributed to a gap in the field of planning practice, theory and education by shedding light on the elusive notion of the commitment to 'the common good' or 'the quest in planning as a practice' (as framed in this study). The research findings pave the way for an appreciation of the highly personal, relational and dynamic nature of this 'commitment to the quest in planning as a practice' and its positive influence on the ability of practitioners in this practice to contribute to the practice. More than that, the findings also suggest that this commitment to 'the quest in planning' has the potential to dynamically increase the ability of practitioners to contribute within this practice, but even more importantly to an unfolding collective future. In this brief overview a few of the most prominent findings are shared.

In spite of the various calls to re-ignite or maybe invigorate this 'spirit of planning' or, as could possibly be stated, commitment to the quest of planning (Lennon, 2015, MacIntyre, 2013), very little has been done about 'how' this can be done. Learning about purpose, meaning and the quests in planning from the practice and experiences of practitioners has always played quite a central role within the fields of planning theory, planning education and practice (Friedman, 2007; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015; Kunzman, 2015; Campbell, 2006a). However, scholarly articles often bring more theoretical perspectives (for example including notions of identity (Gunder, 2004) and the planning endeavour), with the greatest emphases probably on the notion of common good, ethical and situated judgement (Campbell 2012 & 2002; Campbell and Marshall, 2002), calls for spirituality (Sandercock, 2004), different ways of knowing (Davoudi, 2015) and other 'virtues' or meta-capabilities associated with the 'spirit' or 'soul' in planning.

Whilst a number of studies by Friedman and others delved into the practice experience of practitioners, some biographies (e.g. Feinstein, 2014 and Stanley, 2007) and the novel of Peter Maris (1988) also touch on the subject. The recent study of Lennon (2015) focusing on the journey of a particular quest in the work-life of a practitioner is probably the closest to a dedicated practice-based exploration in this regard. The question thus remaining – amidst the 'calls for higher action' and 'commitment to the quest of planning as a practice' – is if this would indeed make a substantial difference in encouraging and supporting practitioners within planning as a practice, to enrich and improve their abilities (referring especially to the notion of meta-competencies) and contributions (tangible and intangible). And if so, can this 'spirit of planning' be called upon to herald some verve into enriching the abilities and contribution of practitioners within planning as a practice to add significant value to our unfolding future?

One way of contributing to these contemplations about re-igniting that spirit (as I argue in this thesis) is by focusing our attention on recognising, appreciating and exploring the way in which planners who are committed to making a contribution have been doing that; in whose practice the 'call to a higher cause' indeed seem to 'act as a dynamo' (Oranje, 2014:2) to engage planning as a practice, not merely as a 'job' or 'technical task' but as a quest (Lennon, 2015; MacIntyre, 2013). A quest that inevitably requires them to bring (and within which they inevitably grow) the meta-competencies of practical wisdom, situated judgement, strategic problem solving, systems understanding, ecological worldviews, et cetera, which we can argue characterises and embodies this 'spirit of planning' (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006; Davoudi, 2013; Lennon, 2015; Friedman, 1973; Oranje, 2014; Gunder, 2004; Wagenaar, 2004 in Davoudi, 2013; Sandercock, 2003; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015). The review of existing studies clearly illustrates the wide and growing list of demands (including competencies and meta-competencies) on practitioners in the practice of planning to sustain that quest on the one hand and the gap in the field for empirical studies that explore the inter-relation between purpose, role and practice on the other (Lennon, 2015:66; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015:15). The recent study by Lennon (2015) who used an in-depth interview to explore sense making of significant events and purpose in the career of a practitioner, and Fox and Rogers and Murphy

(2015) who explored the interrelation between role and purpose (making use of structured in-depth interviews) are some of the few recent studies in this regard that were done in a more nuanced and contextualized way.

Within this context, the in-depth empirical exploration into the work-life narratives of practitioners in the field of planning and the whole-person, time-span work-life narrative analyses in this exploration are seen as making a significant contribution. Exploring the interplay between purpose, significant life influences, perceptions, beliefs, career choices, competencies and the ways in which growth and development takes place in an in-depth and contextually situated way is indeed a unique contribution. Whilst generating more complex findings within the context of work-life experiences, highlighting adventures and transitions, collaboration with colleagues, peers, mentors, friends, life events, family and a wide range of other role players and influences, it also made a very unique contribution by using the quest metaphor to simplify the complexity and identify the significance of generative agency.

It is one of the few studies that does not merely focus on what the competence, quality or roles of practitioners are, but also includes a view on the way in which people (not just competencies) and their capabilities evolve, grow and develop over time, and what the context of that growth is.

Whilst many studies in the sustainability leadership field use in-depth interview analyses to identify meta-competencies, the contribution of this study in identifying generative agency is value adding and fills a huge gap in the field. This need for more biographical studies and moving away from stage analyses has also been identified in the career development field.

The enquiry reflected upon in this thesis makes a unique contribution in these deliberations through a rich process of meaning making into practitioner work-life narratives that suggests the significance of generative agency in a purpose infused process of being, becoming and contributing in (and through) planning as a practice.

Making use of time-span work-life narratives and the quest metaphor, the thesis adds value in the field of planning practice and education by pointing towards how practice contribution might be significantly influenced by the generative agency that seems to be present in:

- ⌘ Being impelled to contribute to the collective future and ‘common good’ through personal and practice commitment (where being impelled and empowered to commit in a practice context is more significant than personal purpose alone);
- ⌘ Engaging the creation of practice value with authentic and relational excellence (where relational value creation and practice excellence is more significant than the sum of personal competencies and meta-competencies); and
- ⌘ Contributing and growing through practice embedded transition experiences (where practice embedded transition experiences are more significant than the sum of the part of personal and professional growth).

The enquiry points to the clear benefit in understanding the context of work-lives, as well as the associated experiences, adventures and transitions in formal and especially informal and transformative ways, and the possible contribution thereof in contributing to practice capability.

The enquiry also points to the importance of the generative agency in intense practice interactions and transformative patterns and experiences (highly evident where perspective changes and beliefs lead to

changes in values and behaviour (Cook-Greuter and Soulen, 2007:13), and where personal and practice commitment to humanity's collective quest leads to commitment to excellence in that quest (Snowden, 2013; Lennon, 2015; MacIntyre, 2013)).

It highlights the significance of dynamic inter-dependencies, that is between practitioner and practice, mentor and mentee, peers, between the inner and outer world, as well as in the unfolding, highly personal and collective process of being and becoming (as outlined by Benner, 2016; Nicholson, 2013; and Sartre, 2006).

The study thus adds value in addressing a number of gaps, but more so in facilitating insights and an enquiry into a more holistic understanding of the often 'invisible' layer of drivers, beliefs, competencies, qualities and growth influences that enable, shape and impel practitioners to contribute in planning as a practice over time, facing the demands of challenging and fast changing work-life contexts.

As such, the study reminds us that competence development is in itself an attempt at intervening in a complex adaptive human system that is both deeply personal and highly relational. What is evident in the participant work-life narratives appears to be a mirror (and enabling agency) for planning's seemingly 'constant' adaptation and slow emergence within complex and unpredictable systems that is said to provide part of its 'coherence' (Goldstein and Carmin, 2006:76) and its ability to engage the fast-changing realities in everyday life (Harris, 1999 in Chettiparamb, 2006:190; Goldstein and Carmin, 2007; Friedmann, 1987).

These abilities and a more explicit awareness thereof may point to the value of recognising unfolding, and for that matter 'unfinished', open-ended competence. This is a notion key to planning and is important to consider within the drive to accredit qualifications and practitioners that places the focus on minimum competence instead of pushing the boundaries. It might also be quite relevant for considering ways to enable and encourage a more 'integral approach' (acknowledging also the 'I' and the 'we'), 'transdisciplinarity' (acknowledging the importance of different levels of reality to find solutions that transcend disciplinary language games), and perspectives and worldviews that consider the interconnected nature of our world. Even more so, it may be that this inherent drive and dynamic and inter-relational practice capability is critical in enabling practitioners and the practice to engage and contribute in systems characterised by complexity, emergence and chaos (Nicolescu, 2006; Snowden, 2007 & 2013).

It prompts us to reconsider the way in which we frame competence discourses in the practice of planning, and 'time-stripped' engagement about competence and capability as a practice aimed at intervening in complex adaptive urban and socio-ecological systems. It also raises a question about the way in which our engagement and research contributions in this regard are often restricted and framed by the boundaries of requirements within formal education and professional development systems and frameworks.

The study also challenges us as practitioners, mentors, educators, researchers, scholars and even more so as communities of practice to find creative ways to acknowledge, celebrate and support the often unseen transformational, highly relational and generative nature of (our own and collective) being, becoming and contributing within practices such as planning.

#### **7.4.2.2 Contribution in terms of methodology**

Even though limited, the enquiry definitely highlights the value and need to better understand the challenges, as well as the range of explicit and often implicit capabilities, that enable planners to negotiate

and add value in the midst of complexity, uncertainty and contestation. It is also evident that there is a gap in, and that much value would be added by, more in-depth understanding of what such competencies and virtues are and, more so, what the reality is of how such capabilities can be supported in a complex practice context.

In reflecting on the research method used, I would argue that using the quest metaphor to explore work-life experiences, *inter alia*, generated: (i) a more tangible and explicit set of images of the dynamic nature of such quests within the practice of planning and unfolding contextual realities; (ii) an opportunity to explore and reflect on the value and virtues brought through such quests (for practitioners, the practice of planning and beyond); (iii) identification of experiences and moments that seem to have played a critical role to lure, illustrate value, embed and accelerate practitioners' commitment to the quest in planning as a practice; and, (iv) the opportunity to acknowledge and be inspired by the everyday commitment and contribution of heroes in the quests of the practice of planning.

The significance of exploring alternative methods and the possible value thereof have also been apparent in the field of career theories. As argued by Nicolson in the *Handbook of Career Studies*:

This paradox embodies one of the most interesting, important, and neglected challenges for career theory: How do people make trade-offs in the life choices? As the gag has it, experience is something you don't get until just after you need it. Lives are interesting because maturation processes are inexorable. The timetables for key life events may have become much more irregular, but they have not ceased to operate sequentially for most people ... My own bias, as an evolutionary psychologist, is for a revival of biographical approaches to careers ... , where the call for more evolutionary concepts and enquiries into the analysis of lives over time are argued for. (Nicolson, 2007:568-569)

Conducting time-span narrative analyses and employing the metaphor of myth and quest adventures encouraged my exploration and reflexive interpretation to move beyond that which is explicit or individual, to include the implicit and inter-relational, recognise unfolding patterns, coherence, and paradox and hopefully shine some light on generative agency. It also enabled exploring and interpreting dynamic experiences, decisions, moments and calls through which practitioners received and heeded the call to adventure. The use of the quest metaphor to support meaning making of significant patterns and experiences illustrates the possible value of a more integral and relational understanding, not only in research, but particularly in endeavours aimed at supporting and enhancing the personal and professional development of practitioners in planning as a practice. Not only did this create the possibility to explore the nature, value and role of practitioners' commitment to quests within the practice of planning, but even more so to explore the virtues that seem to enable practitioners to sustain their commitment to these quests in practice (MacIntyre, 2013) and the ways in which these virtues could be supported, ignited and nurtured.

On the use of the 'quest' as metaphor – It should be acknowledged that using the metaphor of the quest obviously also shaped my own meaning making (and possibly, or rather hopefully, the meaning making of the reader). However, in reflecting on work-life narratives and meaning making in the study it became evident that there is indeed value in using the quest as a metaphor for sense making and even more so for exploring how meaning making takes place in unfolding and inter-related work-life contexts (Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 2011; Snowden, 2007). The often ignored but significant role of such inter-relational ways of thinking has been explained adroitly by Kolbert (2017) as: "Habits of mind that seem weird or goofy or

just plain dumb from an ‘intellectualist’ point of view prove shrewd when seen from a social ‘interactionist’ perspective.”

In the light of the above, it is evident that the methodology of data gathering and meaning making added value in the field. Whilst not providing clear cut answers, the exploration assisted in moving the focus from a search for critical competencies to a search for ways to acquire them in a consumer-orientated way. It probably also highlights the need for such studies to engage demand-driven education in ways that will also bring added dimensions and reflect on expectations created amongst students, that is of gaining all the outcomes required to engage any, or most, of the practice challenges with ease and confidence. In essence, laying the foundation that can become a stepping stone from which you embark on a quest; the essential characteristic of which is facing the challenges and inevitably our inner fears ... gaining a victory and confidence ... merely to have the courage to embark on an even more daunting adventure.

In this enquiry, the reflexive interpretive, explorative and narrative approach and methodology assisted exploration and acknowledgement of ways in which such personal, professional and practice capabilities to contribute are grown and sustained within the contextual realities and influences. It highlighted the trials and deprivations through the course of participants’ working-lives and within the community of practice, and as such the value in considering the deeply personal and highly relational interplay in being, becoming and contributing within the practice of planning, as a personal and practice quest. More so, how the value created within such a quest provides a context for a conception of what is good for man (humanity) and in that context the “kind of life which is a quest for the good” (MacIntyre, 2013:275).

#### **7.4.2.3 Contribution in exploring planning as a practice, tradition and ‘quest’**

Since its origin, the ideas and ideals of planning have been deeply rooted in its interventionist nature, associated with notions of bringing about change and taking action, and existential questions concerning the purpose and contribution of planning as practice and, for some, also their purpose as practitioners within planning (Lennon, 2015).

The notion of a quest and the call to contribute to the greater good of society is a call that is anything but foreign to the practice of planning (Oranje, 2014; Alexander, 2002; Campbell and Marshall, 2002; Hillier and Healy, 2007; Harrison and Todes, 2004; Hoch, 1994; Hall, 2002; and Lennon, 2015).

In planning – a practice concerned with the future and in whose past this ‘good’ has played quite a central role – we are all too familiar with the stories of the fall of the ‘good’ (Hillier and Healey, 2008; Oranje, 2014; Oranje, 1997). The stories of how the focus on the ‘good’ as outcome overtook the ‘good’ as adventure in the endeavour of modernism have been well documented (Beauregard, 1989; Oranje, 1997; Beauregard, 1991). As are the stories about how the fear of being prescriptive or of super-imposing such ‘good’ on others (and in the process also exploring it for ourselves) contributed to replacing action by paralysis in a post-modern context of appreciating multiplicity and diversity (Sandercock, 1997 & 1998; and Oranje, 2014). Or the stories about how creating ‘good’ is replaced by regulating ‘good’ (and fears of not doing ‘good’) – resulting in bureaucratic straightjackets (Friedman, 1959:328 in Oranje, 1997:98, Webber, 1963:232 in Oranje, 1997:98; Todes and Harrison, 2004; Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2011). A practice in which we are often torn between the calls for the ‘good’ and the calls to shut down all endeavours owing to a lack of evidence for delivering the ‘good’ (Lovinger, 2009; Widalsky, 1987 in Hillier and Healey, 2008:63).



Within the tensions in the practice (Goldstein & Carmin, 2006; Abbot, 2005; Innes & Booher, 2015), and amidst a magnitude of studies, contributions and increasingly longer lists of competencies and capabilities, the call to contribute to a 'higher purpose' or 'the good' remains a beacon (Fox-Rogers and Murphy; 2015; Oranje, 2014; Lennon, 2015). A beacon pointing planners towards the value and need to re-ignite the passion for the contribution to the common good, and the flame of the 'spirit' and "idealism of the early town planning movement when it was less about professional status and recognition and more about true conviction, impassioned preaching, belief and action, into planning, plans and planners" (Oranje, 2014:1).

Oranje again: "This call to a higher cause not only acted as a dynamo for the zealous proponents of this new urban pursuit (part religion, part 'contained revolution'); it also provided a powerful way of raising awareness, drawing in followers ..., challenging sceptics and non-believers, and making disciples of 'the (planning) faith' (Mackintosh & Forsberg 2013; Krieger 1972a)." (Oranje, 2014:2).

It is a call that has been central to the focus of numerous invaluable contributions about ways in which the practice and its practitioners can do so (Hillier and Healy, 2008; Campbell, 2006), fail to do so (Duminy, Odendaal and Watson, 2014 in Watson and Agbola, 2013:12; Myers, 2011; Oranje, 2014:4; Oranje, 1997:76), can be better equipped to do so (Edwards, 2011; Myers and Banjeree, 2005; Ozawa and Sheltzer, 2002; Goldstein and Carmin, 2006), can learn from practice or theory to do so (Campbell, 2012; Lennon, 2015, Watson and Agbola, 2013), can use technology to better do so ( Schaffer and Resnick, 1999), should consider context to do so (Watson and Agbola, 2013; Chettiparamb, 2006; Hossain, Scholz and Baumgart, 2015), have to be globalized to do so (Afshar and Pezzoli, date unknown; Goldstein, Bollens et al., 2006), need to reflect to do so (Schön, 1984; Goldstein, Bollens et al., 2006), need to be more communicative and spiritual (Healey, 1978 & 1991; Innes, 1997), able to make a practical judgement (Davoudi, 2015; Gunder, 2010; Campbell, 2012; Campbell, 2006), aware of power (Flyvbjerg, 2004) and need to play different roles to do so (Baum, 1997), et cetera, or at the other extreme, just need to abandon the endeavour completely and let others who are better equipped rather do so (Widalvsky 1987; Van Lovering, 2009).

I have contextualised the enquiry and the use of the notion of a 'quest within a practice' and the 'virtues' and associated qualities (which encompasses the notion of abilities and meta-capabilities) in terms of the powerful, dynamic and relational use thereof by Alasdair MacIntyre in his well-known treatise *After Virtue* (2013). A framework also effectively utilized by Lennon (2015) to explore the role of such commitment to a cause within the context of a planner's practice.

In this framework, MacIntyre (2013) views the notion of 'commitment to a quest within practice/tradition' as critical to re-igniting human virtues for the common good of humanity and this world. He explains the notion of a quest as being relational and requiring a certain level of congruency in the commitment to a quest; something that can be viewed in a three dimensional sense [this is my own description]. The type of quests MacIntyre refers to implies that they firstly find expression within the context of a tradition or practice (such as planning) with possible outcomes in the real world, but also add value and virtue to the practice. At the same time they are expressed as deeply personal and find value in the context of a 'whole human life'. In addition, and inherently part of a quest, is that the quest adds value to the greater good of 'humanity' or the world as a whole. The enquiry clearly illustrates the value of this framework and key themes underlying it, such as the strong relation between the commitment to a quest within a practice (in this case planning) and the 'ensuing' virtues and abilities.

The framework enables a deeper understanding of how practitioners engage with the quest for the good in the practice of planning, as well as an appreciation for the virtues (not merely competencies) in the

context of a practice related to such quests (of which the greatest virtue is the virtue of sustaining commitment to the quest (Lennon, 2015; MacIntyre, 2008)).

### **7.4.3 Possible future research areas**

The research was designed to enable an explorative and whole-person enquiry (not biased towards, or limited by, a competency framework or a formal education or professional registration lens) into how planners seemed to engage their practice in ways to add value and contribute, and what they regarded as significant in enabling them to contribute to that very quest within complex and highly challenging practice contexts. As indicated, the purpose of the enquiry was not to ask specific questions to generate specific answers, but to enable an exploration into what seemed really significant in enabling practice contribution within complex and fast adaptive systems of personal and professional development in highly complex practice contexts.

As indicated in Section 1, the purpose was not to consider possible insights as having direct implications or being 'answers to' specific practice/discourse questions, or to cast context-specific experience as relevant to global discourses. It was rather to treat insights as a finger pointing to the moon – not placing the focus of the contemplation on the finger itself, but rather on the direction in which it is pointing, contemplating potential implications and/or questions that such insights may raise for current initiatives and frameworks aimed at enabling and encouraging contribution to planning.

As such the enquiry might have raised more questions than answers through the process – of which numerous questions could potentially be future research areas. Outlined below, however, are a few of the significant potential explorations identified during the course of the enquiry.

#### **7.4.3.1 Extending similar research**

I have argued in this study that there is value in considering work-life narrative and autobiography informed enquiries, also supported by Lennon (2015:70) in regard to the narrative focused study conducted for Dr Clabby's reflection on purpose. Research relating to the seemingly generative role of commitment to purpose and the nuanced nature thereof in practice contexts is actually quite limited in the practice of planning, in spite of the various calls to re-ignite or maybe invigorate this 'spirit of planning' or, as could possibly be stated, commitment to the quest of planning (Lennon, 2015, MacIntyre, 2013), and, even though learning from practice and experiences of practitioners has always played quite a central role within the fields of planning theory, planning education and practice (Friedman, 2007; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015; Kunzmann, 2015; Campbell, 2006a).

Understanding the significance of the quest, adventures of planning and the role of planners in the narratives may enable a much more nuanced understanding of the notion of the 'spirit of planning' in planning as a practice, planning as a 'quest', 'identity', reflections on 'planning', beliefs regarding planning, and influences and shifts regarding those beliefs.

Similar studies might prove highly valuable, both in other practice contexts internationally and within South Africa, given the substantial changes in the last decade. Such studies might also add value in exploring forces that are shaping the Y- and Z-generations; for example, as set out by author Rob Johansen (2012) in an update of new leadership skills for an uncertain world that would include new dynamics and innovation possibilities by working with the "digital natives" (people fifteen years and younger at the time

who have grown up in a completely digital world) and new forms of 'knowing', gathering information and connecting opening up through cloud-based supercomputing.

This is a challenge not unique to the practice of planning, with significant progress made in related integrative and future-orientated practices such as sustainability and global leadership and management in exploring the wide range of meta-competencies and post conventional capabilities related to notions of purpose-driven transformational leadership (Brown, 2011; Schein, 2015; Visser and Crane, 2010; Mengel, 2005). These are qualities also recognised as being critical for a new cadre of social entrepreneurs and change makers and new generations of students for whom learning is increasingly related to meaning, community and identity and to harmony between practice, purpose and education (Kim, 2012; Potgieter, 2012; Van der Merwe and Verwey, 2007).

#### **7.4.3.2 Deeper exploration of the potential value of a complexity (and maybe chaos) lens on continued professional development**

As indicated in Section 4, the challenges of outcomes-driven education and a focus on assessment and control seem to be the order of the day still (See the studies and critiques of Lester, 1999, Contin, 2000; Chivers, 2007); even though, professional bodies and associations are promoting life-long and emergent learning (Nicolson, 2007:568) and reflexive learning approaches (See Schon, 1987; Pals, 2006).

However, personal and practice quests, practice identities and contribution to practice quests seem to be both highly relational and deeply personal. In many ways, participant work-life narratives in this enquiry reflected the significance of attitude, willingness, courage, beliefs, tenacity and also the intertwined nature of ongoing professional and personal development as that unfolded over time.

Commitment to personal and practice quests, the highly relational nature of contribution in this practice and the value of personal and professional growth and development through practice-embedded transition experiences (or rather challenges) seemed to play a key role in contributing (and probably equally so in the continuous process of being and becoming) within challenging practice contexts.

Findings in this enquiry pointed to the possible generative agency evident in the interplay between personal and practice purpose, commitment to practice purpose and the highly-relational and purpose-infused drive to add value, where contribution and experience became flip sides of the coin and growth and transformation was facilitated through practice-embedded transition experiences.

Equally evident was the agency within inter-relational capability, in the tensions evident in paradoxical competencies at play, in the practice-embedded 'quest and transition elements' associated with patterns in myth and in the evidence of the significance or proximity in terms of mentors, managers and teams (Snowden, 2013; MacIntyre, 2013; Campbell, 2008; Vogler, 2007).

Whilst a wide range of studies highlight the value of intuitive, incidental, unplanned, explorative and emergent learning, very little evidence can be found about exploring ways to tap into patterns, boundary conditions and potential 'action areas' from a complexity paradigm, and the possible value that could bring, especially for a field such as planning that is embedded in complex and fast adaptive, uncertain and volatile systems. In such a context, I would argue that a chaos-paradigm lens may also add value.

### 7.4.3.3 Exploring the role of practice communities and practice histories

The enquiry's results speak to the role of practice, not just as professional practice but as a community of practice. The significance of the community of practice may be worth exploring in future studies.

In his thesis, *After Virtue*, MacIntyre describes the different virtues of courage, justice, integrity and truthfulness. However, he also makes reference to an interesting 'virtue' that relates to the significance of synergy between personal and practice purpose as a virtue:

"[O]ne importance is perhaps most obvious when it is least present, the virtue of having an adequate sense of the traditions to which one belongs or which confront one. This virtue is not to be confused with any form of conservative antiquarianism ... It is rather the case that an adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present" (MacIntyre, 2013:278).

The study might have made an additional contribution within the South African planning fraternity and history by acknowledging heroes in the quest of planning through not anonymising work-life narratives. The extension of the study to provide a wider collation of work-life narrative from heroes in South African planning for that purpose would be valuable and worthwhile in adding to information on the historic contribution of actors in the South African community of planning practitioners.

As outlined in Section 3, it may be useful in future follow up studies to explore this with participants, and extend interviews to include latter-day planners and also those not included in the first round of interviews, but who have had an equally profound impact within the practice of planning. This could contribute in acknowledging practitioners and in illustrating the value of considering the transformative, dynamic and relational nature of being, becoming and contributing within an action and future orientated practice such as planning. The use of quotes and real-life stories can be much more vivid and engaging than abstract concepts.

In pursuit of anonymity, references made by participants to places, peers and mentors have been taken out or de-personalised. These references may, however, in themselves be highly valuable as they point to the extremely influential role of certain key mentors in the community of practice, and the value of proximity as explained by Snowden (2007) in complex systems, as well as the impact of interaction in bringing about change. It was evident from the work-life narratives that there are many systemic inter-relationships and also points of inter-connection that form part of significant practice networks and interactions. If the narratives are fully disclosed they could highlight shared mentors, revealing convergence in planning philosophies and also influences of ideas, major shifts and especially prominent quest heroes in the community of practice. A systemic overview of the convergence and powerful forces and influences in work-life experiences and specific communities of practice might add significant value to a deeper understanding and value of planning as a heroic and relational quest. A more systemic presentation of such inter-relationships may also in future be extremely useful in exploring the role and significance, and possible new shapes, of communities of practice in planning.

This may even prove to be 'therapeutic' for practitioners themselves (as mentioned by all participants in this study at the end of their three-hour interviews) as meaning making and finding 'coherent positive resolution' in challenging times correlates well with positive self-transformation (Pals, 2006).

Extending the celebration of practice 'heroes' internationally could be highly valuable for learning and also for potentially re-invigorating communities of practice. This could be pursued as a post-doctoral study or a collaborative online initiative.

It should be mentioned that, whilst it may not have been their ultimate aim, there are some excellent write-ups and portraits of planners' lives that much more eloquently (even though not as systematically as this exploration) shed light on the nature and virtues of practitioners and their quest in the practice of planning. These would include the semi-autobiography of Jane Stanley (2007), as well as some biographic and autobiographic career reflections (e.g. Susan Feinstein, 2014) and beautiful portraits sketched through interviews conducted in the field of planning history, and, in the South African context, the conference papers on the lives of the late Prof Page and Prof Mallows produced by Mark Oranje and University of Pretoria Town Planning Department students. Many others like these have undoubtedly been done; even though, they may not be readily accessible in official journals and conference publications, rather existing somewhere in archives.

In addition to the stories of well-known planners, the lack of 'official material' cannot for one moment negate the magnitude of learning and experiences from the hundreds and thousands of 'planners' that care and that share this quest, or the impact that these have probably had on the lives of peers and students.

#### **7.4.4 Summary reflections**

Whilst the exploration and study has value in inspiring us within our own quests, it also clearly points to the importance of considering our own role in relation to fellow travellers and the possible impact or lack thereof on future heroes within integrative and future orientated practices such as planning, and how they can be best supported in their commitment to find purpose in individual, practice-orientated and collective quests in contributing to the unfolding future.

### **7.5 REFLECTIONS ON A PERSONAL QUEST**

The call for action to embark on the quest of this enquiry (Section 2) had both a practice and personal purpose, the latter probably a vested interest given that the quest formed part of a PhD enquiry. In light thereof and given that the reflexive and interpretative research approach embarked upon (see Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2007, as set out in Section 3) required recognition and reflection of my own role within the process, a personal reflection on the enquiry's quest is included here.

Such reflection has been therapeutic, as well as critical in reflecting and obtaining closure on a process that formed part of my engagement in this practice for more than a decade (as advocated by Christensen, 2005; IDRC, 2005; Peters et al., 2004, and of course the well-known Schon, 1987).

In reflecting on the exploration and meaning making process, I should acknowledge that it was indeed also a personal challenge. It was an experience that quite often left me with much excitement about the rich insights intuitively sensed in opening Pandora's Box. However, it also brought an equal amount of despair in facing the daunting task of selecting, choosing and doing justice to effectively depict the many, rich and deeply personal insights generated in the research and ongoing process.

These personal reflections on the quest of meaning making entailed numerous trials and facing challenges over the course of time, going through moments of despair, facing inner demons, getting help on the way from personal and practice mentors, peers, friends and inspiring authors, and being influenced by perspective-changing experiences and a multitude of work-life and personal influences. Often inspired to keep going by others on the road through relational sense making and insights gained in interaction with those around me.

It is a quest where I have found myself being challenged by the examples and practice habits set by inspiring mentors and colleagues (in planning and related disciplines), who keep on reaching deep and who seem dedicated to find ways to add value, even during the often challenging and uncertain times in their personal lives and in South Africa over the last couple of years. In the same way, I have been inspired by those who participated in this study, by the work-life narratives that revealed tenacity and the determination to keep going even in challenging times. And also, I should mention, by the inspirational and resonating work-life narratives of a range of planners with whom I have conducted interviews over a number of years, but whose narratives were not included in this particular study (to enable consistency of context and time period and the 'spirit' in which the interviews were conducted).

In the same way, I think that we, as practitioners in planning (and in many other future and action orientated practices and leadership roles (Mengel, 2010 and 2011; Brown, 2011)), need to push our own boundaries and BE big – be audacious enough to go inward, to drive ourselves to learn from and support each other, to care widely and to act wisely ... To grow and be uncomfortable and vulnerable in the changes and openness and not-knowing required, to consistently engage in becoming (not merely reflecting): equipping ourselves with meaning-making capabilities, world views and capacities that can enhance our abilities to wisely contribute in shaping our own, and collective futures.

Whilst this obviously had value in inspiring me within my own quests, it also clearly points to the importance of planning as a practice and community of practice in that. As such the question posed to myself, pointing towards an end that is a new beginning, is what does this mean for ways to possibly encourage and invigorate fellow travellers, communities of practice and future heroes within integrative and future-orientated practices such as planning ... in contributing to the unfolding future?

The idea of being finished with the thesis itself might even at times have been more motivational than the idea of complying with the requirements of the qualification. Whilst the commitment to adding value remained the beacon, the experiences in the journey were challenging and stretching indeed. Experiences made possible by the support, encouragement, challenges, examples and encouragement within a community of practice – amongst those closely involved, amongst a community of practitioners and educators in planning in South Africa and internationally, amongst colleagues at work and family and friends across the time span of the enquiry – sharing moments of desperation and excitement and providing practical support.

However, as in any journey the rewards and gifts gained through this experience are of course of much more significance in the inner world in the lessons learned and the experiences of self, the realisation that the growth and transitions (even in a PhD thesis) are inevitably both personal and professional, highly relational and ultimately generative... a process of being, becoming and contributing in (and through) a quest in the practice of planning.

## 7.6 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON THE REWARDS OF THE ENQUIRY

The enquiry was framed in Section 1 as: “An exploration into how planners seemed to engage their practice in ways to add value and contribute, and what they regarded as significant in enabling them to contribute in that very quest, and in complex and highly challenging practice contexts”.

As set out in Section 2, the enquiry had its origin in the intensity of the paradox experienced between:

- ⌘ On the one hand, the practice realities of South Africa at the time when inspiring practitioners seemed to be able to face challenging contexts, make significant contributions, and thrive in making such contribution (even with limited rewards in terms of careers or with short-term results). A context that reflected something of the much deliberated spirit of planning (Oranje, 2014; Sandercock, 2004); and
- ⌘ On the other hand, the multiple initiatives (from government, professional associations and planning schools) aimed at enhancing and supporting planning capacity in the early 2000s by identifying extensive lists of competencies, learning outcomes and later accreditation standards for professionals and planning qualifications (see Section 2). Frameworks and models originally designed to ensure that minimum requirements are met in professional development contexts that were, however, increasingly setting direction and becoming the focus for educational institutions, practice associations, practitioners and the practice of planning.

However, in no way could the drive, motivation, quality, courageous (and even audacious) attitudes, spirit and ways in which participants engaged their practice be seen as reflected in, or equal to, the sum of the most extensive list of competencies and meta-competencies, formal education outcomes and requirements for continued professional development at the time (nor as it continued to unfold).

Heeding the call to action, the enquiry was kick-started. A quest that provided numerous challenges in itself. However, a quest and enquiry whose story and reflections may become more relevant over time, as evident in:

- ⌘ The remaining (and probably increasing) relevance of the original call to action in planning and a range of other integrative practices and professions (Gardner and Bartkus, 2014 in the career field; Holdsworth and Thomas, 2015; Crane and Visser, 2010 and Schein, 2014, in relation to sustainability practice and leadership; Geppert and Verhage, 2008, with regards to planning associations in Europe; Gilliard and Thierstein in relation to planning competencies, 2016; van der Merwe and Verwey in their exploration of leadership meta-competencies in the future world of work, 2007).
- ⌘ The continued concern with the so-called practice and theory/academia gap and calls for excellence in planning education (as argued, amongst others, recently by Tazan-Kok et al., 2016; Kunzman, 2014 and 2015; Mironowicz, 2015; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015; Klosterman, 2011).
- ⌘ The multiple calls for enhanced planning capacity and the need for practitioners that can engage in challenging, uncertain and complex practice contexts by taking action in contextually relevant ways whilst also contributing to the unfolding and highly connected future (Kunzman, 2015; Mironowicz, 2015; Lennon, 2015; Lai and Lorne, 2015; Hossain et al., 2015; Forester, 2015; Sykes et al., 2015; Ansaloni and Tedeschi, 2016; Arrighi et al., 2016). The latter including the need to be able to also deal with the increasing uncertainties and local realities of global change phenomena, such as climate change (Kollmus and Agyeman, 2016; Howell and Allen, 2017; Laessøe and Mochizuki, 2015).

The enquiry was not aimed at identifying or contributing to the development of competency models and frameworks, or at adding value to that. It was much rather aimed at exploring how practitioners in the practice of planning engage their practice in ways that added value, and what they regarded as significant in having enabled them to contribute. Exploring the intangible or 'invisible' layers of what seems to have encouraged and enabled them to remain motivated, to face the challenges of contributing in their practice, in spite of the lack of short term 'success' often associated with an action in a future orientated practice such a planning.

As anticipated, the use of time-span and whole person work-life narratives enabled an enquiry quite different to that of more structured qualitative interviews. The latter are often designed to solicit information from practice experiences to gain understanding into the wide range of competencies and meta-competencies or, as illustrated in Section 2, to make sense of and add value by testing a pre-determined framework. As part of the enquiry into rich work-life narratives (as set out in Part One, Section 3), the lens of myth and the quest metaphor enabled an exploration of significant patterns of interactions, tensions, paradox and insights into the generative agency that could enable contributing in planning's practice within highly complex and fast adapting systems.

As anticipated, the use of time-span and whole person work-life narratives enabled an enquiry quite different to that of more structured qualitative interviews. The latter is often designed to solicit information from practice experiences to gain understanding into the wide range of competencies and meta-competencies, or as illustrated in Section 2 to make sense of and add value by testing a pre-determined framework. As part of the enquiry into rich work-life narratives (as set out in Part One, Section 3), the lens of myth and the quest metaphor enabled an exploration of significant patterns of interactions, tensions, paradox and insights into the generative agency that could enable contributing in planning's practice within highly complex and fast adapting systems.

Whilst the study provides valuable reflections and insights into the nature of the competencies that enable planners to contribute in times of radical change, its largest contribution is probably that it serves as a reminder. A reminder that contribution to the collective future is probably less about exactly what we do, know and create as individuals, and more about recognising the value of our ability to contribute as purpose-infused, as highly inter-relational, as transformational and as generative and dynamic when embedded in practice context.

Participant work-life narratives provide a lens into the adventures, experiences, quest for purpose, as well as the ways in which participants engaged challenges, contributed, struggled, excelled and inevitably grew and made transitions through work-life adventures.

Experiences that could be regarded as typical calls to action and departure experiences (Section 5.3) seemed to not only have marked the 'start', but clearly illustrate the role of heeding the call to planning's quest in encouraging and enabling participants to contribute and, more specifically, highlight the role that a strong association with personal and practice quests seem to have played in this regard in the participant work-life narratives. It also points to the significance of belief and confidence in personal and practice abilities to encourage action in embarking on this quest in planning as an action and future orientated practice. The generative nature of this sense of purpose is not only significant in these early (or in some cases later) practice experiences, but even more so in the way that it encourages contribution, and anchors unfolding career and practice decisions. The value of real-life and highly relational growth and perception-



changing experiences seem to be highly significant in having encouraged participants to heed the call for action, and for practice association in participant work-life narratives.

In reflecting on the prominent experiences from the participant work-life narratives with regards to the first trials and practice challenges, the significance of real-life and practice-enthused initiation experiences seem to be crucial. These experiences seemed to create substantial personal and professional growth and transformation opportunities to handle significant challenges. It looks like they have a generative role in unfolding work-life experiences, confirming the value and satisfaction in being dedicated to the challenging quest of contributing to the 'collective good'. Practice-enthused mentors and peers played a key role in typical initiation experiences both in calling forth and inspiring excellence, as well as in intense interactions to adapt or craft new ways or paths to add value and contribute to the 'collective good'. These experiences created substantial personal and professional growth and transformation opportunities.

An overview was provided of a few of the many adventure experiences, significant challenges and ordeals, as shared in participant work-life narratives (Section 5.5). Commitment to context-specific and future-orientated practice quests may have been the driving force that encouraged participants to face challenges, pay the price, deal with the frustration and find satisfaction in contexts where achievements or success were usually difficult to 'claim' or isolate. In reflecting on the work-life narratives, it is evident that participants were encouraged to extend themselves both professionally and personally to find creative ways of adding value as individuals, but also often through connection with others. Given the complexity, context specific and unfolding nature of challenges and quests, practitioners have seldom taken the next step or embarked on an adventure where the answer was obvious or for which they have had all the required prior experience. What is evident though is that they have had experience of the possibilities that could unfold in being prepared to go deeper, extend themselves and face the challenges and joys of intense interactions. The transformational and highly relational nature of growth experiences is evident through all the work-life narratives.

Participant work-life narratives reflect the significance of highly relational and real-world transition experiences in facilitating, encouraging and supporting personal and professional development and transformation. The enormity and urgency brought by complex practice challenges, as well as the opportunity that practice engagement offered to actually get involved in collaborative co-creation seemed to have had a generative impact on participant's ability to contribute. Such transformation experiences did not only become experiences through which change (as in the quest metaphor) was brought about in the outer world, but have been experiences in which one could experience oneself differently, bringing about change in the inner world. As stated by McIntyre: "A quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge" (MacIntyre, 2013:276).

This significance is probably multi-faceted, but evident in the way that it grounds planning as a pragmatic endeavour in purpose-infused action, but also propelling it towards an uncharted future (Sykes, et al., 2015; Kunzmann, 2015). However, maybe equally important (even though some might argue it is on a different dimension – an idea the transdisciplinary-orientated thinkers might welcome) in providing practice and practitioners with something more than just the inspiration of its original ideals, or the examples of stories that can inspire (Oranje, 2014:8), is something of the agency created through patterns as inherent in myths, which as argued by Snowden (2013), Campbell (2008) and (Vogler, 2007) have lasted many years and are regarded as having higher agency in complex adaptive human systems than individuals. In summary:

- ⌘ Firstly, the generative nature and high levels of almost self-propelling agency that are associated with the interplay between purpose and action, between individual and practice interaction, between individuals or teams or mentors and ‘apprentices’ in the process of relational knowledge or contribution creation, between being action- and future-orientated, and between gaining experience and making a contribution (almost as two sides of the same coin).
- ⌘ Secondly, the glimpse of the dynamo effect associated with the ‘spirit of planning’ (Oranje, 2014:2) evident in the work-life narratives and practice-embedded support for individuals in heeding the call to a quest and facing the challenges through a series of transition experiences; a quest that is not just personal but also a practice quest.
- ⌘ Thirdly, the significance of practice, as an inter-relational community of practice through which personal and practice quests can become possible, and how the emphasis from work-life experiences relate much more to relational interaction and shared praxis and practice habits whilst actively participating on a quest, of which the ideals and exact pathway might differ it seems, and in which the same practitioner plays many roles – as ‘hero’, as ally, as mentor, as jester, as helper, as guardian of the entrance to the special world, or the wise old hag who guards and shares the practice stories and magic.
- ⌘ Fourthly, the highly relational but also transitional nature of all of this, where a quest in the outer world is inevitably associated with the quest of the inner-world. A seemingly simple and intuitive wisdom that does not seem profound at all, but that does point to the importance of not only the individual obtaining the wide array of meta- and post-conventional competencies and abilities, but the equally important consideration about the essence of practice as an inter-relational endeavour of practice as context for personal and professional development through the commitment to the practice. A practice that not merely needs the contribution from the individual but also provides a space for individuals to contribute in, where experience and contribution are flip sides of a coin, where challenge and growth provides transition to the next challenge, not just the next rung on the ladder. A practice space where the type of generative agency could (almost in invisible ways) make contribution possible ... not merely as a collection of unpacked competencies, types of learning experiences, career paths, mentoring plans, et cetera but through collective action in using those ‘tools’ to engage in practices with excellence ... acting now, towards a collective, unfolding future.

In the forward of her seminal book, Stanley states that one of the reasons for writing the book was that "a book had to be written about planning that explains it and its relevancy in the real world ... [to] address not only student planners but also those in practice who had lost (or otherwise needed to find) their sense of purpose ... [as] ... the world needs planners as never before, but that this will not be the same sort of planning that is currently taught or, for the large part practiced" (2007:5).

Through exploring the generative agency and deeply intertwined process of ‘being, becoming and contributing in (and through) the practice of planning, the study solicits a range of questions and contemplations, challenging us to consider the kind of stories that we find ourselves part of, and even more so, our own and collective processes of being, becoming and contributing in (and through) practices such as Planning.



Contemplations on implications  
for a return to the ordinary world

*[There is] an explicit awareness of the need to move beyond competence to a more dynamic concept of capability, embracing learning, culture and values; a concern with the education of the whole person for professional and social responsibility; a commitment to fostering critical, reflective professional practice through critical, reflective learning experiences; a willingness to grapple with the intellectual challenges of conceptualizing these new models of professional education for lifelong learning; an engagement in constructive dialogue between academia, professional bodies, employers and other interest groups about the purposes and methods of professional formation, assessment and accreditation.*

*(O'Reilly, Cunningham and Lester, 1999:16)*

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

In a world where we are faced with uncertainty, complexity and increasing volatility, the questions and challenges to the practice of planning and its practitioners to contribute within local and global contexts are probably greater and increasing at a faster rate, than ever before.

We constantly hear that we have never in our lives seen or experienced such complexities or uncertainties, nor experienced change at such a rate – a daunting idea to any practitioner in a future orientated and integrative discipline such as planning, and possibly even more so to a young cadre of practitioners.

The first reaction is probably that there is little that can be learned from generations before, from practices with origins in the past, from solutions and approaches no longer relevant, or from a handful of practitioners in a time gone by at the southern point of Africa, and that we have to rather look to the future, to innovative technologies, new approaches, new ways of doing and being. But is this true?

Since the origins of time there have been people who have seemed to be able to add value to the quest of humanity. Equally so since the origin of the practice of planning, internationally and in South Africa, there were practitioners who seem to have been able to add value during times of change and complex challenges.

One of the things I would argue that we probably can learn from, in spite of changing contexts, realities and challenges, is the very personal quest of ‘being, becoming and contributing’ that has enabled generations before us, and hopefully generations yet to come, to belief in the future, to find the courage to face daunting challenges and the tenacity and creativity to develop innovative ways and technologies to engage uncertainty and do what was not thought possible before – not just in myths and life, but also within the context of practices such as planning.

Whilst recognising the value, importance and contributions of competency and standard outcome-focused initiatives in ensuring quality education and professional practice, the point of departure in this study is that it might indeed be worthwhile to spend some time enquiring into, and reflecting on, the role and value of the seemingly invisible layer of dedication, abilities, qualities, characteristics, attitude and dynamic nature of so-called meta-competencies to add value within planning as a practice.

It is argued (as outlined in Section 3) that our world needs extraordinary capabilities, innovative approaches, solutions that are unbounded by disciplinary walls. Within the practice of planning, as in many other practices and professions, calls to recognise the invaluable role of abilities and strengths such as emotional, social and spiritual intelligences and move beyond the mere functional and technical competence and development models are no longer novel (if not necessarily being engaged in) as is evident in:

- ⌘ The way in which institutions of higher education and professional practice associations engage formal professional education qualifications and continued professional development with a significant focus on input and outcome associated paradigms;
- ⌘ The way in which evaluation and acknowledgement of practitioners, qualifications, educator role-models are done or engagement with students or young employees in a demand driven learning context; and

- ⌘ The focus and extent of research aimed at contributing to the competency and meta-competency frameworks in practice.

Through the various processes of iterative explorations, reflections, discussions and contemplations (all infused and influenced through my own ongoing processes of personal and practice contemplations, transitions and engagements), a number of questions and insights were raised. Some of these questions and contemplations merely left me with weightier questions of ‘what now?’, and ‘so what?’ Such questions and implications have not been explored, but are indeed considered relevant as shared below. Section 8 is used to share some personal thoughts and contemplations on possible implications and questions raised through the enquiry (Sections 8.2–8.5). The discussion is structured to reflect contemplations on:

- ⌘ Valuing the interplay between ‘spirit of planning’, personal transformation and contribution;
- ⌘ Considering capacity, competency and capability as non-personal;
- ⌘ Considering becoming as a relational process; and
- ⌘ Acknowledging the role of practices and practitioners in planning education and practice associations.

In conclusion, the significance of the unfolding process of (personal and relational) being, becoming and contributing in (and through) the practice of planning is highlighted.

## **8.2 VALUING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ‘SPIRIT OF PLANNING’, PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION AND CONTRIBUTION**

### **8.2.1 Introduction**

As argued by Oranje (2014:2), “Engaging the practice of planning through purposeful action, faith and belief in a ‘higher cause’ (which seem to ‘act as a dynamo’) strongly resonates with the ‘spirited, creative and reason-fuelled’ early days and origins of the town planning movement (Oranje, 1998, and Krieger, 1987a, Oranje 1998 and Lilley, 2004 in Oranje, 2014:2).”

### **8.2.2 The ‘spirit of planning’ might indeed have transformative abilities**

Findings in the study herald a good news story for practitioners, scholars and educators in planning as a practice. Findings in this study remind us, and help to illustrate, that there is indeed tangible value in re-kindling the fire, passion and spirit of planning and in engaging with histories and stories and beliefs kept alive through generations of committed practitioners in the tradition of planning as a practice, and in communities of practice within that. The enquiry also illustrates that with novel perspectives the intangible might be more tangible.

The purpose infused spirit of planning was clearly evident and influential in the work-life narratives of participants in this study – ignited by a personal and practice call to action and commitment to planning’s quest in the same vein as illustrated in the in-depth reflection of the participant work-life narrative of the study by Lennon.

The findings in this study suggest that whilst it might not be the norm, nor necessarily considered as critical for a career in planning, it definitely sparks that magic of contribution to something more than oneself.

However, whilst the study seems to contribute to a better understanding of the generative agency (magic) of the spirit of planning, it also clearly illustrates the need for dedicated communities of practice, through which highly relational, practice-embedded value addition, as well as growth and transition can take place. Whilst the good news is that the spirit of planning is not extinguished, we might need to be reminded to look for it, to acknowledge it, to value it and to nurture it – for it to do its ‘generative job’.

### **8.2.3 Moving the focus from competence to purpose, practice association and quest commitment**

Findings from the study seem to re-iterate that given the dynamic and ever expanding nature of the practice/field, there will probably never be a ‘perfect’ set of competencies and exhaustive set of meta-competencies.

The different backgrounds and starting conditions amongst participants in the enquiry, however, illustrates that the ‘magic’ may rather be in the approach, willingness and purpose-infused attitude and commitment. Where the latter would probably (as seen from the enquiry) inevitably galvanise practitioners to adapt, encourage growth and expand capabilities, and source the capability in, or create the required value addition in collaboration with others, or through a unique mix of competencies. And in the mix and the dynamic energy created between capabilities, skills and knowledge – stretch excellence in horizontal ways to know more, be able to do more and be aware of more, but also in a vertical direction to be more and continue becoming more.

This speaks to major questions within planning education, as well as within standards generation for professional registration and continued professional development, namely:

- ⌘ The drive to identify the most desired meta-competencies [in the continuously evolving or re-languaged set of competencies] to improve and escalate practice contribution, and the drive for excellence in standards generation and curriculum development [and find ways to train or clone] within professional associations and planning schools; and
- ⌘ The possibility to consider an approach that recognise the value of wisdom and contribution, purpose, personal interests and strengths, intelligences, work-life experiences, histories and the relevant contextual (including colleagues, teams, mentors, collaborators, organization, family, friends, personal needs, socio-political environment, etc.).

Acknowledging that practitioners who are committed to the quest and to learning will (and can) explore alternative pathways and identify what other sets of understandings and discipline inputs are required may lay fears aside about the impossibility of creating the ‘uber’-planner, but increases acknowledgment of the importance of attitude, relational capabilities and the importance of transdisciplinary approaches and teams (See Section 6.4 for more). This I argue should be useful in addressing some of the concerns relating to courses being ‘stacked and overburdened’ with more and more and more information, knowledge and skills bases – acquiring everything that it is necessary to know in an integrative discipline operating in a continuous and fast changing environment is impossible anyway. It, however, does point to the importance of rather cultivating commitment to the quest(s) of the practice of planning and the practitioner in that practice.

Insights from the enquiry could raise the question of whether there might be value in focusing some attention not merely on competency creation but on:

- ⌘ exploring ways to strengthen the practice of planning and communities of practice in planning so that practitioners would actually want to associate with them; and/or
- ⌘ enabling practitioners to find personal purpose which is aligned to that of planning; and/or
- ⌘ engaging in perspective challenging (colliding) experiences that might influence worldviews and perspectives of themselves; and/or
- ⌘ support 'commitment to the quest of planning as a practice and to excellence in that quest' (as also argued by Lennon, 2015).

### **Recognising the value in practice embedded transition experiences**

- ⌘ The highly relational nature of these very personal transition experiences and the critical influence and profound impact of mentors, allies and practice context, the significance of 'engaging with excellence' and the emphasis on learning and growing within the context of a practice, or tradition might call for a different emphasis on decontextualized personal and professional development, and requirements for 'practice experience' that are defined and measured as 'experience of type of activity/skill'.
- ⌘ Instead, experience and exposure to practice habits, excellence and experience of self as contributing and growing factors are accepted. An attitude that involves being ready (willing, courageous, confident and more skilled) to face (and grow through) the next challenge, not 'fixed' so that the next experience is not challenging at all.

### **8.2.4 Summary reflections**

The findings of the study (even though context specific) point to the value of the dynamic and generative nature of this 'commitment to the quest in planning as a practice' which seemed to actively influence: (i) self-perceptions regarding ability and growth; (ii) motivation for choices and shifts in the context of participant work-life adventures; and, (iii) growth in a range of virtues enabling practitioners to handle paradoxes and challenges – thus increasing their ability to contribute.

## **8.3 CONSIDERING CAPACITY, COMPETENCY AND CAPABILITY AS NON-PERSONAL**

### **8.3.1 Introduction**

A substantial and valuable focus is currently being placed on creating an enhanced understanding of professional and personal competencies and meta-competencies required by planners in diverse and challenging contexts, both within planning practice and planning education contexts. The underlying premise might be that by enhancing the competency models and frameworks used to inform the curricula of planning qualifications and ongoing professional development, the quality and practice appropriateness of personal and professional development in the practice can be improved. Especially as these competency models and frameworks are also used to set accreditation standards for professional planning qualifications and practice registration.

### **8.3.2 Can an outcomes-only focus be detrimental?**

The enquiry of the study left me with the question whether we (in attempts to control quality by massive lists of minimum requirements) might not actually be 'killing' and 'stifling' the very practice that is

essentially about finding innovative ways to contribute to the evolving future, in the same way as the bureaucratisation of planning has been said to do to the endeavour of planning (Oranje, 2014; Oranje, 1997).

By packaging all that we aim for in outcome-based lists, frameworks and bullets that can be ticked off and measured independently and, even more so, by making that the driving force of practitioners and educators and team leaders, we may be leaving no space, providing no encouragement, shining no light on that which 'actually' makes planning as a practice (in its relational and dynamic nature) 'work'. With the focus on the regulations, the rules and the standards of the various professional associations all packaged in terms of atomistic individual-focused measures, may it not be time for professional associations to consider their role in strengthening practice as a relational 'cause'? As strong communities of practice, through which learning gets generated; but, more so, through which calls for action can be heard, through which intense and practice-embedded initiation and transition experiences can be facilitated.

If we can for a moment consider how much time, money and effort are being spent to determine the lowest common denominator to 'make sure' all practitioners engage in continued professional development. Such matters which of course must be in the form of things that can be 'ticked off' in neatly defined categories. The study clearly highlights that there might be much more to be gained by also focusing on, and igniting, commitment to the quest of the practice, and to excellence in that (relational) practice – as a powerful and generative driver for self-sustained learning, for the capacity 'to make a plan', and for the quest to commit to the growth of others in the practice.

### **8.3.3 Commitment to the quest of planning as a practice, and to excellence in that practice, is a dynamic capacity but is not personal**

The findings of the study suggest that commitment to the quest of planning as a practice may – in itself – be one of the most critical and dynamic abilities a practitioner in planning can have to contribute to the quest (As suggested by Lennon, 2015 and MacIntyre, 2013). The dynamic ability and 'capacity' that this commitment creates might be highly relational. It is not just a capacity to creatively 'make a plan', to source and to build strong synergy in the belief in the quest of the practice and fellow practitioners and other practices and society at large, intertwined with a belief in one's own capacity to contribute to this quest – with the latter capacity actually being the commitment to excellence in the quest.

Planning education is (and of course has to be) focused on the 'education of individuals' only – not the teaching of a tradition – with qualifications and professional registration standards in institutions of higher learning and in professional associations increasingly refined to support, measure and evaluate the results it creates for the individual practitioner. The questions we seem to ask in terms of capacity also centre on the capabilities and capacity of individual practitioners.

The importance of 'remembering' and valuing this (possibly implicit) 'virtue' may actually be a challenge within planning education, professional associations and even work-place contexts, as it is not (and I would argue cannot and maybe even should not be) 'captured' in qualification outcomes, categorized in sets of well-defined capabilities or packaged in the form of key performance indicators.

From the work-life narratives in the study, the strong relation between purpose and practice excellence, and the satisfaction and internal awards that this brings (often more than external rewards) seem to be strongly related with self-concept and internal motivation. This is an important notion for drive and



satisfaction, perhaps particularly so for younger generations in their work-life experiences (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000).

### **8.3.4 Summary reflections**

I would argue that one of the biggest challenges is how ‘we’, as a practice that professes to be embedded in a systems understanding of the world, acknowledge the importance of the value of such connection and interrelational capability in our practices. How can we think about planning education, about professional associations, and about our communities and teams in a way that we not only consider highly ‘personal’, but also in terms of the highly ‘relational’ and ‘situated’ nature of the capacity to commit to the quest of planning as a practice and to nurture, support, encourage and recognise (acknowledge) the commitment to planning as a practice. Not for the sake of ‘planning as practice or profession’ at all – but with the value to connect into these generative and momentum creating capacities within a practice, in order to remain committed to the quest of the unfolding collective future.

## **8.4 RECOGNISING BECOMING AS A RELATIONAL PROCESS**

### **8.4.1 Introduction**

Whilst preparation is key, the commitment to the quest does not entail merely engaging the ‘known’. Contribution is made possible through engaging in the challenges of the unknown, through facing highly personal fears in ways that are purpose infused, contextually relevant and with the significant support of mentors and fellow travellers. Praxis capability and experience on the quest is not obtained in order to face the challenge, but through facing the challenge. Experience is not transferred from the mentor to the mentee, but rather obtained through facing the challenges, knowing that that is what is required and was done by others that ventured on this quest before, and in succeeding finding the reward in confirmation that the seemingly impossible is possible and is an initiation into the community of practice. The hero is not under an illusion that impact on the quest will come easily, or that he or she has already obtained all the wisdom and personal transformation that is required to face the challenges, or that engaging the quest will necessarily result in success. Contribution is not a once-off result, it requires innovation and courage, strength and wisdom, but more than that tenacity and the commitment to keep going. In facing the last ordeal and contributing to the collective, the paradox might be that personal transformation has been the biggest reward in engaging in the quest. However, perhaps merely because the quest is much bigger than the person, transformation in the outer world is much more complex and of evolving capability – that is, not personal at all.

### **8.4.2 A solid foundation to empower a courageous departure and commitment to the quest is more important, than the exact pathway or skill set chosen at the start of the quest**

The work-life narrative explorations clearly confirmed the significance of a well-grounded academic foundation provided by formal planning education, often pointing to the critical importance of deep and perspective challenging engagement, as well as ability (and confidence) stretching experiences. The study also highlights how, inevitably, the adventures encountered in the commitment to the quest, fellow travellers and ‘magical helpers’ pointed to the next turn and challenge in the road.

The value of a well-grounded education within (at least) significant ‘games’ in the practice of planning (i.e. critical-theory and policy orientated; urban design orientated; collaborative planning orientated; urban governance orientated; spatial and strategic planning orientated; land- and settlement-development orientated) was explicitly acknowledged in the participant narratives. It seems to be of critical importance in providing an application context. It is the in-depth engagement in the application context(s) that the following are experienced: the enabling and supporting of critical engagement, realisation of complexities at play, experiencing the pendulums between bright insights and knowing nothing, being stretched and building confidence in one’s capacity for growth and adaptation, and of critical importance being daunted by complexity of challenges and being inspired by heroes in the practice.

The analyses of planning adventures in the participant work-life contexts provide evidence of notable (and explicitly mentioned) shifts over time between seemingly ‘opposing’ approaches and philosophies and the critical competencies and meta-competencies regarded as critical in that.

In my mind, the findings raise questions about the importance of:

- ⌘ The selection of the most relevant ‘approach’ and planning philosophy appears to be of less importance than the solid foundations and quest experiences provided in the education context of that approach; thus raising slight possibilities of relief (and maybe warning signs) for curriculum development in planning education expected to cater for an ever growing field of highly relevant discourses, technologies, skills, knowledge fields, etc.
- ⌘ Exposure to real, meaningful and purpose-inspired action could be quite significant. Equally so, engagement with a variety of the ‘forces at play’ in complex systemic inter-relationships and networks in fast growing cities, settlements and activity regions, and appreciation for systemic and complex challenges and ‘shaping’ probabilities, processes etc. seems to be, and has often been raised, as being critical. Explicit in this is the notion of systems understanding and complexity, as well as a broader appreciation for diversity and perspectives/worldviews that are geared to a collective future.

What is evident is that whilst an issue in terms of the ‘issue-attention cycle’ (Poulton, 1991:227 in Oranje, 1997:172) is in the public eye, it becomes a central focus in discourse, in policy and inevitably in the regulatory framework. This implies that every time a ‘new’ or ‘newly phrased’ challenge becomes a focal point in the ‘issue-attention cycle’, the layers of rapidly expanding knowledge fields and issues embedded in policy, regulations, processes, guidelines, and the accompanying administrative burden systematically increases. This has implications for increasing knowledge and skills requirements and a growing bureaucracy – in spite of all the attempts at breaking the mould, and probably more so for a community of practice in planning with a focus on the whole and not the sum of the parts .

#### **8.4.3 Can ‘contribution’ and ‘experience’, as well as ‘trusting capacity’ and ‘building confidence’, be likened to different sides of a coin**

The explorations and enquiry also left me with the question about whether increasing amounts of guidelines and regulations and unwritten rules (entrenched through performance indicators measuring ‘what’ as a fixed aspect, and not ‘what’ in how it enables ‘why’) become the focus of lifeless ‘quests’? On the one hand, there is the seemingly generative inter-relationship between commitment to the quest and commitment to finding ways to make a contribution to the collective future, the satisfaction and rewards in the challenge of ‘having been able to make a plan’, and the value of both to the collective and to the personal quests.

On the other hand, there might be an increased sense of not trusting the capacity of practitioners to find ways of doing their 'jobs' in the complexity of institutional and regional interactions. Thus, providing increased momentum to regulate. (Regulations and guidelines can of course also be ticked off which, for example, elevates them to performance indicators in many government departments and even research institutions; leaving no time, budget or trust for advocacy and awareness raising that empowers contextual meaning making). When driven and measured by the 'what to do' and actively discouraged to think and generate more context and collective appropriate ways of considering the 'what to do' in terms of the quest for the future, there might be very little 'space' for practitioners to tap into the generative feedback loop of commitment, growth, excellence and internal rewards of confirmation, satisfaction and continued commitment to the quest. A 'habit' kept in place by the need for such practitioners to perform at 'work-place' by ticking the boxes, and in the professional associations by ticking even more ... Of which maybe neither has much to do with offering stretching opportunities for contribution and developing excellence, nor for appreciative reflection, confidence generating and commitment and excellence inspiring experiences, nor creative discoveries of transformative pathways to the future.

The study has not provided any insights or answers on how to address this *per se*; however, it may hopefully inspire research on the way in which operating in highly regulated environments could actually be counter effective to the endeavour of growing practitioners and practices to contribute to shifts and to shape contextually relevant and collective futures. Except in such cases, it may be that then there is no quest any longer.

#### **8.4.4 The power of perceptions – are we creating a demand or supply attitude, or a contribution attitude?**

One of the questions that came to mind during the enquiry was that of a 'time dimension' and the expectations that we as practitioners seem to create about the practice. If young and novice planners enter the practice with the expectation to 'get' the learning and capabilities and then 'apply' them in a practice context that is of course what they would demand.

Participant perceptions of being 'impelled to contribute' is quite a contrast to a focus and approach centred around the need to be 'enabled' or 'capacitated' to contribute (demand side attitude), and especially interesting given that such demand side requirements would actually very quickly be outdated and continuously unfolding. The enquiry originally included much shorter work-life narratives of practitioners with less than five years of experience. Given that there were only three, these narratives were not included; however, they showed an interesting pattern of being more focused on foundational education than the other participants. Whilst older participants all reflected on their foundational education with much appreciation, they acknowledged that its value was in it having been a 'springboard' – especially given the range of considerations in planning as a practice.

These explorations suggest value in moving the focus away from the search for critical competencies and the search for ways to acquire them in a consumer-orientated way. Instead they assisted in the exploration and acknowledgement of ways in which such personal, professional and practice capabilities to contribute are grown and sustained within the contextual realities and influences, the trials and depredations in the course of the participants' working-lives, and within communities of practice – as reflected on at the time of the interviews.

This highlights the value in considering the deeply personal and highly relational interplay in being, becoming and contributing within the practice of planning as a personal and practice quest. More so, how the value created within such a quest provides a context for a conception of what is good for man (woman and hu-man-ity) and, in that context, the “kind of life which is a quest for the good” (MacIntyre, 2013:275). Creating a space to consider the kind of stories that we find ourselves part of.

For young planners specifically, but equally so for the rest of ‘us older practitioners’, the enquiry point a finger to the significance of not only what we do in practice, of where we ‘work’, or the opportunities it might solicit, but of why we do, and with whom, we do what we do.

The significance of the internal and external rewards in the quests of practitioners who participated in this study clearly indicates the relational embeddedness and the major significance that mentors, managers, teams, colleagues and collaborators play – most significantly those that are enthused with the spirit of planning, that are able to challenge and inspire us to remain committed to the quest (and excellence in that quest) within planning as a practice. Explorations of the work-life narratives in the study illustrate the impact of these often unsung heroes and their ‘commitment to the quest of planning as a practice and to excellence in the practice’ in the highly significant early work experiences of participants in the study. It was evident in the heat-experiences created in the context of expecting and trusting the commitment to excellence. It was also evident in the initiating experiences across work-life narratives where these mentors have played key roles in calling forth commitment to the quest and the experiences (daunting and costly as some may have been) of anchoring and generating the abilities of participants in the study to contribute. Acknowledging the challenge in ‘creating such experiences and mentors’ in practice, I would argue that the study illustrates the value for practitioners in choosing and selecting workplaces and experiences, teams, mentors and professional supervisors (and even voluntary work experiences) with consideration of this virtue, and the benefits and huge challenges that working within that context brings. Indeed, often uncomfortable and demanding – but with huge rewards.

#### **8.4.5 Summary reflections**

As passionately stated by @Daib\_Exp3: “I think planning is an old person’s profession because you just keep on learning and learning from looking and doing. You don’t know that in the beginning and you are not going to find it in theory and things of that kind. You have to just do it. But it’s about asking the right questions. And that’s asking the hard questions ...” Perhaps it is exactly because of this very explanation that planning is therefore also a young person’s profession because it is not necessarily about what exactly you know but your willingness to contribute, to ask and learn, to engage practice with commitment and about being willing to ask the hard questions and do the hard work – not on your own, but with, in support of, and supported by others on this journey – where the satisfaction is not going to be in the glamorous short-term achievement *per se*.

## **8.5 ACKNOWLEDGING THE ROLE OF PRACTICES AND ROLE PLAYERS IN PLANNING EDUCATION AND PRACTICE ASSOCIATIONS**

### **8.5.1 Introduction**

I would argue that implications are raised for how we consider and thus shape one of the most crucial roles of planners: Advocates for the quest for the collective future. Whilst the findings of this study echo the calls from various scholars about the importance of the 'spirit of planning', and strongly enable us to make a case for the value in planning as a practice that is committed to the collective future, this is not always explicitly a collective driver. Articles such as that of Gunder (2004) even argue that 'focus on the collective good' is merely a 'theme' – not underlying, but equated to themes such as new-urbanism and communicative planning.

Could it be that we equate the purpose of the quest with the pathways in the quest? Maybe 'gate keepers' have more to 'gain' in a game where the emphasis is rather on the difference and the distinctness in the 'how' (whilst that is important) and where the golden thread of commitment to the underlying quest is no longer a 'by-line'. Perhaps 'we', who are in the practice, scholars who drive discourses (and of course also need to tick boxes of publications that require or solicit particular commitment to distinguish certain discourses as better or at least distinct) have more to gain by explaining the differences? This is also evident in the explorations in this study. However, it might be counterintuitive to the experiences of acknowledgement and shifts to embrace different perspectives in the context of the quest, as seen in the work-life narratives of participants in this study.

The focus is so much on all the different things and different ways and perhaps we as practitioners in research and academia are too afraid of the monster of the 'common good', and the associate labels of 'who are you to say' that could be associated with that, that we are less assertive in propagating the quest for the collective future. However, we are more than willing to cement prescriptions of what it takes to be good in guidelines and standards – with little reference to the 'good'. Are we not in the process taking away the opportunity for practitioners in planning as a practice (and those that they engage with) to commit to a worthwhile quest? A commitment on a quest to the future that might assist in providing the ethics and the moral perspectives and situated judgement we profess are what is important.

### **8.5.2 Significance of communities of practice**

Some of the most important implications and questions raised by the enquiry are not related to planning education, training or professional development. I would argue that the most significant implication is actually the questions raised about our everyday engagement and practice of 'planning' (not merely as a profession that is set up to regulate register and accredit individuals practitioners to obtain a professional registration and pursue a career in the field of planning) as an actively practiced practice, with strong ties to traditions and histories. This may no longer be the influential associations, or regional 'chapters', but rather value-adding communities of practice within the practice (and new forms of such communities). Communities of practice that play a significant part in contributing to the unfolding and collective future in the relevant contexts where, or in relation to which, they exist. And, as evident in this study, playing a significant part in the unfolding process of being, becoming and practice contribution.

The aforementioned is not about claiming a unique role for the practice of planning *per se*, but rather about highlighting the influence of communities of practice within action- and future-orientated practices. Whether these are a cluster of local municipalities or a network of research institutions. A question that this enquiry raised in my mind was not just about the many cases where there was no community of practice, but the cases where practitioners were exposed to less than ideal mentors and influenced by quite contrary habits and traditions than those described here to successfully provide foundations and identity-shaping association possibilities for practitioners in such a practice. This raises questions regarding the value we attach to such contributions.

Given the way in which practitioners in this practice galvanize inspiration and willingness to commit to the unfolding collective future with fellow practitioners, community groups, city management teams, policy teams, politicians, other sector specialists, developers, etc., the question is probably what contribution is made by planners in the multiple communities of practice within which they engage (and that involve complex systems and an array of other role players in a quagmire of different ways). How can we be more conscious and aware of the influence of the communities of practice with which we associate and identify with? And who do we actively influence (even if that might be by withholding active support and engagement)?

### **8.5.3 In planning education – commitment to the quest in planning as a practice calls for heroic practices and heroic practitioners**

The tragedy of development, as illustrated by Goethe's Faust, is exactly in this continuous process, as Berman argues: "[H]e won't be able to create anything unless he's prepared to let everything go, to accept the fact that what has been created up to now – and, indeed, all that he may create in future – must be destroyed for more creation" (Berman, 1982:48).

Abbot adds to this: "In a complex social environment, planning that only considers small proposals will have little effect in changing anything. Planning that does not consider significant change cannot be effective in reducing environmental uncertainty—to be effective, planning needs to push the bounds of possibility. Guy Benveniste (1989, 50) makes the point as follows: 'effective plans are audacious'. He says, 'effective planning cannot be measured in terms of immediate implementation . . . [it] must also include the possibility that planners take risks, which means that they sometimes attempt more than can be achieved' " (Abbot, 2005:235).

Findings in this study suggest that this 'virtue' of commitment to the practice and to excellence in the practice is critical to the practice, critical in contributing to the future, but also critical within the relational nature of the quest. The nature of the quest is to inspire, call forth, support, acknowledge, challenge and enable experiences of vertical growth for each other; sometimes as allies or collaborators, sometimes as mentors to other heroes, sometimes as magic helpers or old wise women and men, or sometimes as heroes ourselves. As illustrated in the findings, the study highlights the significant role of these 'practice-archetypes' in various experiences, and in enhancing the capacities for excellence and commitment to the quest (in its upward phases of hope and its downward spirals of deep dark shadows). However, within the complex systems in which practitioners in planning as a practice operate, unintended consequences are possibly one of the few 'givens'. A 'given' which may result in the fear, or risk, of doing something wrong becoming greater than the calling of the quest to act.

I would argue that the study illustrates the value of exploring the work-life narratives of participants (who are admittedly positioned as ‘practice-archetypes’ in my narrative) within the context of their work-life practices, but perhaps even of exploring the collective stories of communities of practice to acknowledge and celebrate such ‘practice-archetypes’. And also to learn from them, not to find gems to replicate in context-less ways but to strengthen our notion of what it takes to ‘commit to the quest of the practice of planning and excellence in that’, not merely ‘what we must be able to do to do planning related tasks properly’. The quest for the future has no ceiling and cannot ever be ticked-off as done. The rewards are internal and possibly much more influential (I would argue) in generating capacity for ongoing collective shifts, than those in the here-and-now.

A quest that is indeed, as could be expected within diverse work-life and socio-political and societal contexts, multidimensional and unique in the way it unfolds within ‘a thousand pathways’, driven in a range of diverse pathways in the contexts of different work-life narratives and communities of practice within planning as a practice.

It, however, does raise questions that have no easy answers in planning education, professional associations or for continued professional education, relating to:

- ⌘ Challenges such as the pressure for standardization that is seemingly on the increase (and to which I would argue a study such as this clearly points); where questions are asked about how faculties are evaluated in planning schools (as posed by Kunzmann (2015) in regard to their being measured by their publication records, or stature in practice, or active engagement and mentorship for students).
- ⌘ In planning education, it may also mean making sure that histories do not merely provide context and timelines of events and showy narratives, but include the notion of the ‘difference’ made by those who have chosen to commit to the future through excellence in planning as a practice. Not to ‘make heroes’ of individuals but rather to encourage us to know that it is possible, that it is worthwhile. To remind us that the ability to be strategic, or adapt or learn, or to be curious and ask and ask and ask some more is not about having the ability *per se* – but in having the meta-competencies of wisdom and judgement, of caring, of employing spiritual and emotional intelligence, of ‘wise’ action, of fundamental shifts in perspective and world view and identity, of ‘willingness to admit not-knowing’ and enough commitment to the quest ‘to make a plan’ within the contextual realities of work-life practices. These, and the many other abilities which could be required in future, are abilities that have value, and that we will be able to grow or enhance generatively within our commitment to the quest of planning as a practice, and in facing the challenges and the adventures that such a quest inevitably holds.
- ⌘ In planning schools and in faculties – how do we identify and value planning educators who are committed to this quest and to excellence in this quest? As Gunder (2004) explains, the value in having mentors with which young practitioners can identify and associate with is critical. As the study illustrates it is the experience of being stretched and inspired and shifted, it is the respect for knowledge and passion, and commitment to the quest and to excellence in that quest that stand out in the work-life narratives. It seems to be these “heroes” that prove and convince one that there is hope, and that it is indeed worth our effort to commit to the quest. But also that commitment to the quest for higher good goes hand-in-hand with commitment to excellence – which is exactly what such mentors manage to call forth in students and teams, generating expansive as well as confidence-building experiences and habits of excellence in giving what it takes.

#### **8.5.4 In professional associations – commitment to the quest in planning as a practice calls for heroic practices and heroic practitioners**

For professional associations and informal communities and networks within planning as a practice, I would argue that the study invites a rethink of honouring, acknowledging, celebrating and recognising the value such hero-mentors and wise-women/men play in keeping the spirit of planning, and the commitment to the quest alive. Not just limited to them or their practices (for in this study's work-life narratives one can pick up that the reward of recognition is less significant to them than other factors) – but even more evident in the often extensive networks of students, peers and colleagues whom they have inspired to commit to, and bring new life to, the quest to the collective and contextually relevant future! In doing this we can create spaces and opportunities for stories to be told, not about just what planners do but also in the wider context of 'Being and Becoming a Planner' (Bayer et al., 2011), generating a gallery of stories to inspire commitment to the quest. Often these are not stories of glamorous outcomes, but of heroic practice.

However, through reading about or writing more quest-infused planning stories and biographies to be shared in the work-experience context and team we find ourselves in (or if we are lucky enough to be able to choose) select to be part of, or whether it is done through more explorations such as these, or through networks or professional associations of practice it will add value – given the significance we choose to bestow of course. Sharing of stories has always been a strength in planning as a practice that we can pursue, perhaps through online galleries and collections of context related stories where relational references come to the fore strongly (such as in the case of this study), or perhaps in more traditional ways over a shared lunch or a relaxing chat between colleagues.

#### **8.5.5 Summary reflections**

May it not be that the missing link is purpose in addition to perspective – embedded in a relational context and tradition of commitment to the quest of a practice such as planning – much more than personal ethics, that will enable practitioners to consider not 'dancing to the political or popular tune' or make 'situated judgements' situated outside the context of a quest for the unfolding collective future? Something which in hindsight seems quite obvious in the highly diverse, complex and fast-changing practice contexts in which participants operate, and in relation to unfolding work-life experiences over time. Something which is, however, not reflected in the feverish drive to equip students with every possible competency possibly required.

### **8.6 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON IMPLICATIONS**

As Forester (1997:97) argues, "participatory rituals of telling and listening to stories can work transformatively in at least three ways: to transform identities, agendas, and perceptions of value in the world". The practice of ritual story telling not only provides a mechanism of collaborative and action-orientated learning, but also one for discovering value and identity and complexities that are often at risk of being ignored. Through such participatory and deliberative learning processes, the possibility can also be created to reconsider 'ends and means together'; generating new ideas, organisational forms and capacities for action.



In the same way, there is the possibility for the stories being told through this enquiry to point to what seems to be ignored, and to what has significance. However, the value is not only in what we can learn from the narratives, but essentially also the transformative value that such narrations can bring about.

In Part 1, I provide some background to the call to this enquiry – the purpose of the enquiry's quest. I highlight the relevance and value of the enquiry and provide a brief overview of the approach to the enquiry and the research methodology.

I outline how the quest metaphor has been used to support the exploration and reflective interpretation of the work-life narratives of a sample of practitioners who were seen as contributing to their practice contexts in South Africa. An overview is also provided of how the enquiry was shaped and framed through engagement with various knowledge fields in an iterative way.

In Part 2, I provide an overview of explorations into the rich work-life narratives of participants, sharing insights and meaning making in relation to the guiding question of the enquiry.

Using the quest metaphor I provide an overview and share some examples of explorations into participant work-life narratives through the lens of typical quest experiences (Section 5), and making use of a time-span perspective and overview (Section 6).

Insights and contemplations raised by the quest of the enquiry are shared in Section 7; both through reflections and some observations on the guiding research question and enquiry, as well as through some contemplations and questions on what the enquiry could potentially point towards. The last part of Section 7 was used to re-iterate the benefits, validity and limitations of the enquiry and reflect on the contribution thereof.

The enquiry provides an opportunity to make a novel contribution in the field of planning practice and education. This was done by exploring practitioners' work-life experiences and reflections on the often 'invisible' layer of drivers, beliefs, competencies, qualities and growth influences that have enabled, shaped and impelled them to contribute in planning as a practice over time, facing the challenges of complex and dynamically changing work-life contexts.

Given the rather intangible focus of the enquiry, a substantial challenge in this study was the search (quest) for appropriate, sound and value-adding ways to explore this elusive notion in its dynamic and relational context: to 'see', to 'intuitively feel', to 'make meaning' and to 'share' the learning and elixirs found.

Explorations in the enquiry point to the value of personal and practice 'sense of purpose' and commitment to the quest of planning as a practice, as well as personal transformation and practice interaction that play a role in encouraging, enabling and shaping practice contribution.

The enquiry also illustrates the important dimensions of time and practice context, and the interrelated nature of competence development (illustrated by the symbioses between being inspired and challenged, growth and learning, dedication, trust, excellence, experience, validation and confidence within practice contexts) – symbioses that exist in the spaces between being and becoming in life and in the practice of planning.

These are elixirs that in hindsight seem very familiar ... maybe never 'lost' ... but certainly in need of a proper place in our awareness. To help us remember and honour that which we most probably intuitively

know. To provide us with insight and inspiration in our individual and collective endeavours in planning as a practice. And most of all, to shine some light on the importance of the inter-related process of being, becoming and contributing within and through the quest of this practice.

The quest of this study was inevitably (as most doctorate studies probably are) a deeply challenging and transformational personal quest – interspersed with moments of despair, moments of joy and glimpses of light, moments that required facing shadows and fears, and moments filled with purpose and hope. These latter moments were especially poignant on realising once again that our quests, however personal, are actually always relational – in this case intertwined with and strengthened by the personal quests of fellow travellers, including wise mentors, supportive allies and inspiring participants.

In many ways this quest also entailed a mission to tell a story whose time has come – a commitment to sharing the findings which, in some way, acts as ‘the biggest dynamo’ to wrap up a process which, in stop-start ways, spanned more than a decade of my lifetime.

The study involved moving away from the paradigm of outcomes and competencies, and rather takes a whole person approach, by contemplating and exploring the question of how practitioners in the practice are able to contribute and what is significant in supporting them to play their part in contributing “to the creation of a very different society” (Oranje, 2014:1).

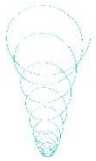
Exploratory insights into the unfolding and evolving process of being and becoming within the practice of planning obviously raise more questions at this stage than answers in contemplations about how planners are (and could be) encouraged, enabled and shaped in this unfolding process to contribute in practice contexts.

In summary, what seemed significant in enabling participants in the study to engage their practice in ways to add value and to contribute in that very quest (in complex and highly challenging practice contexts) was the generative agency that seemed to be present in the interplay between:

- ⌘ Being impelled to contribute to the collective future and ‘common good’ through personal and practice commitment (where being impelled and empowered to commit in a practice context is more significant than personal purpose alone);
- ⌘ Engaging the creation of practice value with authentic and relational excellence (where relational value creation and practice excellence is more significant than the sum of personal competencies and meta-competencies); and
- ⌘ Contributing and growing through practice-embedded transition experiences (where practice-embedded transition experiences are more significant than the sum of the parts of personal and professional growth).

It is an enquiry, I would argue, not for the sake of revising or maintaining the practice of planning, but for the sake of rekindling the hope and increasing the momentum to contribute to our collective future. Considering the value of rekindling ‘the spirit of planning’ and its call to action is thus indeed valuable.

As explained by Estés in her discussion of the young Vasilla who has learned to follow her own knowing through a range of experiences and trials, the challenge is now in utilising these virtues in the real, challenging tasks lying ahead: "She has endured through all the tasks to a full initiation. The crown is hers. Perhaps intuition is the easier task, but holding it in consciousness and letting what can live, and letting what must die, is by far the more strenuous..." (Estés, 1992:113-114).



*[M]any of us who are blessed to have our lower-level physiological and psychological needs reasonably met are keenly aware of the disquiet of ferment and the all-embracing ache of longing. We find it hard to settle for where we are. We feel called forward, even though it is often unclear whether we are actually moving forward or backward, up or down. Nonetheless, we are propelled by a hope that is strangely mixed with gnawing nostalgia.*

*We feel the hunger for something we feel sure we will recognize when we taste it and a longing that resists satisfaction when we misunderstand it and seek gratification in penultimate places.*

*We feel an instinctual draw to the horizons of further becoming; we find ourselves gazing beyond where we are as we sense the possibilities of being more than we are ....*

*This is a quest [not to be perfect, or to deny being human] ... to actualize our humanity, not escape it – to be more deeply human, not more than human.*

*(David G. Benner, 2016:x)*

Being, becoming and contributing in (and through) Planning



Strijdom van der Merwe, Meyerton South Africa

# REFERENCE LIST

---



- Abbott, J. 2005. Understanding and Managing the Unknown: The Nature of Uncertainty in Planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 24(3), pp.237–251.
- Adam, A. 2010. *Planning Competencies As They Relate To Work Reserved For Planners In Terms Of The Reservation Of Planning Work That Should Be Identified By The South African Council Of Planners*. Unpublished.
- Adomßent, M., and Hoffmann, T. 2013. *The concept of competencies in the context of Education for Sustainable Development*. ESD Expert Network. Unpublished
- Afshar, F. 2001. Preparing Planners for a Globalizing World: The Planning School at the University of Guelph. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 20(3), pp.339–352.
- Alberti, M., Marzluff, J. M., Shulenberger, E., Bradley, G., Ryan, C. and Zumbrunnen, C. 2003. Integrating Humans into Ecology: Opportunities and Challenges for Studying Urban Ecosystems. *BioScience*. 53(12), pp.1169–1179.
- Albrechts, L. 1991. "The changing role and position of planners". *Urban Studies*. 28(1), pp.123-137.
- Albrechts, L. 1999. "Planners as catalysts and initiators of change: the new structure plan for Flanders". *European Planning Studies*. 7(5), pp.567-603.
- Albrechts, L. 2013. Reframing strategic spatial planning by using a coproduction perspective. *Planning Theory*.12(1), pp.46-63.
- Alegria, R. 2005. The Appreciative Perspective of the Future. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 10(1), pp.101–108. Retrieved from <http://jfsdigital.org/articles-and-essays/2005-2/vol-10-no-1-aug/essays/the-appreciative-perspective-of-the-future/>
- Alexander, E. 2001. What do planners need to know?. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 20(3), pp.376-380.
- Alexander, E. 2005. What do Planners Need to Know: Identifying Needed Competencies, Methods, and Skills. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*. 22(92), pp.91-106.
- Alvesson, M. and Skoldberg, K. 2007. *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Alvesson, M., 2003. Beyond Neopositivists, Romantics, and Localists: A Reflexive Approach to Interviews in Organizational Research. *Academy of Management Review*. 28(1), pp. 13-33.
- Amabile, T. M. (1998). How To Kill Creativity. *Harvard Business Review*. 76(5) pp76–87.
- Andrade, S. 2013. *Visual Metaphor in Games of Chance : What You See is What You Play*. Occasional Paper, Series 21. Las Vegas: Center for Gaming Research, University Libraries.
- Ansaloni, F. and Tedeschi. M. 2016. Ethics and spatial justice: Unfolding non-linear possibilities for planning action. *Planning Theory*. 15(3), pp.316-332.

- Arimah, B. C., Jensen, I., Mutizwa- Mangiza, N. D. and Yemeru, E. A. 2009. *Global Report on Human Settlements 2009: Planning Sustainable Cities*. Nairobi. Unpublished.
- Arrighi, J., Koelle, B., Besa, M. C., Spires, M., Kavonic, J., Scott, D. and Jack, C. 2016. *Dialogue for decision-making: unpacking the “ City Learning Lab ” approach*. (No. 7). Geneva. Unpublished.
- Arthur, M., Khapova, S.N. and Wilderom, C.P.M. 2005. Career Success in a Boundaryless Career World. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. 26(2), pp.177-202.
- AshokaU. 2014. Trends in Social Innovation Education. Arlington, VA: AshokaU.
- Badenhorst, M. 1995. 'The changing profile of town and regional planners in South Africa', *Town and Regional Planning*. 38, pp.13-22.
- Bailey, N. 1998. Instruction: Into the Unknown or into Planning? Managing the Transition to Work in the U.K. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 18(1), pp.73-77.
- Baine, D. and Mwamwenda, T., 1994. Education in Southern Africa: Current conditions and future directions. *International Review of Education*. 40(2), pp.113-134.
- Balducci, A. and Bertolini. L. 2007. Reflecting on Practice or Reflecting with Practice?. *Planning Theory & Practice*. 8(4), pp.532-555.
- Bammer, G. 2005. Integration and Implementation Sciences: Building a New Specialization. *Ecology and Society*, 10(2), 1–6.
- Barile, S., Franco, G., Nota, G. and Saviano, M. 2012. Structure and Dynamics of a “ T-Shaped ” Knowledge: From Individuals to Cooperating Communities of Practice. *Service Science*. 4(2), pp.161–180.
- Barker, A. C. 2000. From Resistance to Resource! A Value Managed Approach for Meaningful Participation in the Management and Development of People and the Urban Environment. In: *Urban Futures*. Johannesburg: Urban Futures, pp. 1–13.
- Barnes, L. B., Christensen, C. R. and Hansen, A. J. 1994. *Teaching and the Case Method: Text, Cases, and Readings (3rd ed.)*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, pp.9-33.
- Barth, M., Fischer, D., Michelsen, G., Nemnich, C. and Rode, H. 2012. Tackling the Knowledge–Action Gap in Sustainable Consumption: Insights from a Participatory School Programme. *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, 6(2), 301–312.
- Baruch, Y., 2004. Transforming careers: from linear to multidirectional career paths: Organizational and individual perspectives. *Career Development International*. 9(1), pp.58-73.
- Barzelay, M. 2001. The New Public Management: Improving Research and Policy Dialogue. *Journal of Public Administration Research Theory*, 12, 156–171.
- Barzelay, M. 2004. *Narratives, Arguments, and Institutional Processualism: Learning about Implementing Presidential Priorities from Brazil in Action*. 20th Anniversary Conference of the Structure and Organization of Government Research Committee of the International Political Science



Association, Vancouver, June 15–17 (p. 46). Vancouver: Association, Anniversary Conference of the Structure and Organization of Government Research Committee of the International Political Science.

Baum, H. 1997. Teaching Practice. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Volume 17(1), pp.21-29.

Baum, H., 2005. Research and Planning Both Have Methods, But Research is not Planning. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*. 22, pp.121-147.

Bayer, M., Frank, N. and Valerius, J. 2011. *Becoming an Urban Planner: A Guide to Careers in Planning and Urban Design*. New Jersey: Wiley.

Beauregard, R., 1976. "The occupation of planning: a view from the census". *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*. 42, pp. 187-192.

Beauregard, R. 1998. Writing the Planner. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 18(2), pp.93-101.

Beck, D. and Cowan. C., 1996. *Spiral dynamics, mastering values, leadership, and change*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Benner, G.D. 2016. *Human Being and Becoming: Living the Adventure of life and love*. Washington, DC: Brazos Press.

Bennett, N. and Lemoine, G. J. 2014. What a difference a word makes : Understanding threats to performance in a VUCA world. *Business Horizons*. 57(May), pp.311–317.

Berger, J. G., Hasegawa, B. A., Hammerman, J. K. and Kegan, R. 2007. How Consciousness Develops Adequate Complexity to Deal With a Complex World: The Subject-Object Theory of Robert Kegan. *Transformation*. Available from: <http://terrypatten.typepad.com/iran/files/KeganEnglish.pdf>

Berman, M. 1982. *All that is solid melts into air*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Berrisford, S. 2006. *Towards a JIPSA Business Plan for Strengthening Urban Planning Skills in South Africa*. Report to JIPSA.

Berrisford, S. and Oranje, M. 2012. 'Planning law reform and change in post-apartheid South Africa' in Hartmann, T and B. Needham (eds.) *Planning By Law and Property Rights Reconsidered*. London: Ashgate.

Bierly, P. Kessler, E., Christensen, E. 2000. Organizational learning, knowledge and wisdom. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. 13(6), pp. 595-618.

Billett, S. 2009. Final report for ALTC Associate Fellowship: *Developing agentic professionals through practice-based pedagogies*. Queensland.

Blowers, A., 2013. *Planning for a Sustainable Environment*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bluck, S. and Glück, J. 2004. Making things better and learning a lesson: Experiencing wisdom across the lifespan. *Journal of Personality*. 72(3), pp. 543-572.

- Boiral, O., Cayer, M. and Baron, C.M. 2009. The Action Logics of Environmental Leadership: A Developmental Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 85(4) pp.479–499
- Bolan, R., 1980. The Practitioner as Theorist: The Phenomenology of the Professional Episode. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 46, pp.261-273.
- Bolger, J., 2000. *Capacity Development: Why What and How*. Capacity Development Occasional Series. Canadian International Development Agency, Policy Branch. 1 May, pp. 1-8.
- Bourantas, D. and Agapitou, V. 2014. *Leadership Meta-Competencies: Discovering Hidden Virtues*. New York: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L., 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P., Chamboredon, J.-C. and Passeron, J.C., 1991. *The Craft of Sociology. Epistemological Preliminaries*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Boyatzis, R. E., and Akrivou, K. 2006. The ideal self as the driver of intentional change. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(7), 624–642.
- Boyatzis, R. R. E., Smith, M. L., and Blaize, N. 2006. Developing Sustainable Leaders Through Coaching and Compassion. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 5(1), pp.8–24.
- Boyle, M. Peet, R. Minca, C. Samers, M. Simonsen, K. Purcell, M. Graham, E. Hubbard, P. Kitchen, R. and Valentine, G. 2005. Review essays on: Key Thinkers on Space and Place. *Environment and Planning*. 37(1), pp.161-187.
- Branch, M. 1993. Are We Really Teaching Planning?. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 12(3), pp.249-251.
- Brand, F. and Jax, K., 2007. Focusing the Meaning(s) of Resilience: Resilience as a Descriptive Concept and a Boundary Object. *Ecology and Society*. [online] 12(1) 23. [Accessed 9 June 2016] Available from: <http://ecologyandsociety.org/vol12/iss1/art23>
- Brown, B. C. 2006. *Major Initiatives which Have Used, or are Using, the Integral Framework for Social, Environmental and Economic Development*. Boulder. Available from: <https://integrallife.com/>
- Brown, B. C. 2011a. *An empirical study of sustainability leaders who hold post-conventional consciousness*. In: Ashridge International Research Conference on the Sustainability Challenge. Berkhamsted: Ashridge Business University. pp.1–13.
- Brown, B. C. 2011b. *Conscious Leadership for Sustainability: How Leaders with a Late-Stage Action Logic Design and Engage in Sustainability Initiatives*. Fielding Graduate University. Unpublished.
- Brown, B. C. 2012. Leadership at the edge: Leading complex change with post-conventional consciousness. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. 24(4), 560–577.
- Brown, R. B., and McCartney, S. 1995. Competence is not enough: meta-competence and accounting education. *Accounting Education*, 4(1), 43–53.

- Brown, S. L., and Eisenhardt, K. M. 1998. *Competing on the edge: Strategy as structured chaos*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Bunker, J. 2009. Choosing general practice as a career: The influences of education and training. *Australian Family Physician*, 38(5), 341.
- Burayidi, M., 1993. Dualism and Universalism: Competing Paradigms in Planning Education?. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 12(3), pp.223-229.
- Burns, M., Audouin, M. and Weaver, A. 2006. Advancing sustainability science in South Africa. *South African Journal of Science*, 102(1), 379–384.
- Campbell, H. 2006. Just Planning: The Art of Situated Ethical Judgment. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 26(1), 92–106.
- Campbell, H. and Marshall, R. 2002. Utilitarianism's Bad Breath? A Re-Evaluation of the Public Interest. *Justification for Planning*. 1(2) pp.163-187
- Campbell, H. Tait, M. and Watkins, C., 2013. Is There Space for Better Planning in a Neoliberal World? Implications for Planning Practice and Theory. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 34(1), pp.45-59.
- Campbell, H. 2002. 'Planning: an Idea of Value'. *Town Planning Review*. 73(3), pp.271-288.
- Campbell, H. 2012. Editorial – Lots of words ... but do any of them matter? The challenge of engaged scholarship. *Planning Theory and Practice*. 13(3), pp.349-353.
- Campbell, J. 2008. *The hero with a Thousand Faces*. 3rd Edition. California: New World Library. First Edition 1949.
- Cascella, P.W. and Vogel, D.A. 2008. Student Self-Directed Professional Development as a Formative Assessment Skill. *SIG 10 Perspectives on Issues in Higher Education*. 11, 4-8.
- Chandler, D. and Kram, K. (2007). Mentoring and Developmental Networks in the new career context. In H. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook of Career Studies* (1st ed., pp. 241–267). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.
- Chandler, D., Kram, K. and Yip, J. 2011. An Ecological Systems Perspective on Mentoring at Work: A Review and Future Prospects. *Academy of Management Annals*. 5(1), pp. 519-570.
- Cheetham, G. and Chivers, G. 2005. *Professions, competence and informal learning*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Chettiparamb, A. 2006. Bottom-Up Planning and the Future of Planning Education in India. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 26(2), pp.185-194.
- Chivers, G. 2006. Informal Learning by Professionals in the UK. In: *Professional Lifelong Learning: beyond reflective practice*. Leeds: Professional Lifelong Learning: beyond reflective practice, p.12.

- Chivers, G. 2007. Professional Competence Enhancement via Postgraduate Post-Experience Learning and Development. *Journal of European Industrial Training*. 31(8), pp.639–659.
- Christensen, K. 2005. Reflections on the Journal of Planning Education and Research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 25(1), pp.5-10.
- Christiaens, J. 1999. *Converging New Public Management Reforms And Diverging Accounting Practices In Belgian Local Governments*. Research Seminar. Gent.
- Cilliers, P. 2006. On the importance of a certain slowness. *Complexity and Organization*. 8(3), pp.105–112.
- Cilliers, P. 2000. Knowledge, Complexity, and Understanding. *Emergence*. 2(4), pp.7-13.
- Clandinin, D.J. and Huber, J. 2002. Narrative Inquiry: Toward Understanding Life's Artistry. *Curriculum Inquiry*. 32(2) pp.161-169.
- Clark, W. C. and Dickson, N. M. 2003. Sustainability science: The emerging research program. *PNAS*. 100(14), pp.8059–8061.
- Clarke, A. E. 2003. Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory Mapping After the Postmodern Turn. *Symbolic Interaction*. 26(4), pp.553–576.
- Coetzee, M.J. and Van Huyssteen, E. 2004. *Intergovernmental Planning Support Strategy*. Unpublished Report, DPLG. Pretoria
- Coetzee, M.J. Mc Carthy, M. and Meiklejohn Goss, H. 2006. *Municipal Integrated Planning Support Project Final Project Closure Report*. Unpublished confidential Report. Pretoria: DPLG.
- Coetzee, M.J. Meiklejohn, C, Goss, H and Lawrence F. 2005 *The State of Intergovernmental Development Planning in South Africa: A Substantive Analysis of the 2005 National IDP Hearings in 56 Districts and Metropolitan Areas*. Unpublished confidential report. Pretoria: DPLG.
- Cohen, B. N. 2003. Applying Existential Theory and Intervention to Career Decision-Making. *Journal of Career Development*. 29(3), pp.195–209.
- Commonwealth Association of Planners. 2011. *Professional accreditation of planning programmes in the Commonwealth*. [Online] Available from: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1559087](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1559087)
- Conle, C. 2000. Thesis as Narrative or 'What Is the Inquiry in Narrative Inquiry?'. *Curriculum Inquiry*. 30(2), pp.189-214.
- Conle, C. 2001. The Rationality of Narrative Inquiry in Research and Professional Development. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. 24(1), pp.21-34.
- Contin, J. 2000. Using theory and research to shape the practice of continuing professional development. *Journal of Education for Health Professions*. 20(4), pp.238-46.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. 2013. *Nine Levels Of Increasing Embrace In Ego Development*. Wayland: Cook-Greuter and associates.

- Cook-Greuter, S. R. 2004. Making the case for a developmental perspective. *Industrial and Commercial Training*. 36(7), pp.275–281.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. and Soulen, J. 2007. The Developmental Perspective in Integral Counseling. *Counseling and Values*. 51(3), pp.180–192.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. 1990. Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*. 13(1), pp.1–19.
- Corby, N. Enguidanos, S. and Kay, L. 1996. *Development and Use of Role Model Stories in a Community Level HIV Reduction Intervention*. Public Health Reports: Special Issue on Behavioural Science in HIV Prevention. Volume 3, pp. 54-58.
- Crane, A. and Visser, W. 2015. Corporate Sustainability and the Individual : Understanding What Drives Sustainability Professionals as Change Agents. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. (February 2010), pp.1–36. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1559087>
- Crowther, J. 2004. 'In and against' lifelong learning: flexibility and the corrosion of character. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. 23(2), pp.125-136.
- Dahlin, K., Weingart, L. and Hinds, P. 2005. Team Diversity and Information Use. *Academy of Management Journal*. 48(6), pp.1107-1123.
- Dalton, L. and Hankins, W. 1993. Educating Undergraduates in Planning: Characteristics and Prospects. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 12(3), pp.213-222.
- Dalton, L. 2001. Weaving the fabric of planning as education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 20(4), pp.423-436.
- Dalton, L. 2007. Preparing planners for the breadth of practice: What we need to know depends on whom we ask. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 73(1), pp. 35-48.
- Davenport, T. and Saunders, C. 2000. *South Africa: A modern history*. New York: Springer.
- Davies, J. 1972. *The Evangelistic Bureaucrat*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Davoudi, S. and Pendlebury, J. 2010. Centenary paper: The evolution of planning as an academic discipline. *Town Planning Review*. 81(6), pp.613-646.
- Davoudi, S. 2012. Resilience: A Bridging Concept or a Dead End?. *Planning Theory and Practice*. 13(2), pp.299-307.
- Davoudi, S. 2015. Planning as Practice of Knowing. *Planning Theory*. 14(3), pp.316-331.
- Dawson, T., Fischer, K. W. and Stein, Z. 2010. Redesigning testing: operationalizing the new science of learning. In: M. S. Khine & I. M. Saleh (Eds.), *New Science of Learning*. pp. 207–224. New York: Springer.

- Dayomi, M., Sihlongonyane, M., Nel, V., Madima, T., Ndonga, N., Lewis, M. and Robinson, P. 2014. *Report Guidelines for Competencies and Standards for Curricula Development*. Johannesburg. Available from: [www.sacplan.org.za](http://www.sacplan.org.za)
- De Roo, G. 2012. *Complexity and Spatial Planning: Systems, Assemblages and Simulations*. De Roo, G., Hillier, J. & van Wezemaal, J. (eds.). Farnham – UK: Ashgate Publishing, p. 129 – 165.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Department of Labour. 2008. *City Planners: Scarce and critical skills Research Project*. March 2008. Research Commissioned by Department of Labour South Africa. Unpublished.
- Dewar, M. and Isaac, C. 1998. Learning from Difference: The Potentially Transforming Experience of Community-University Collaboration. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 17(4), pp. 334-347.
- Dick, B. 2006. Action research literature 2004-2006: Themes and trends. *Action Research*, 4(4), pp.439–458.
- Dilts, R. B and DeLozier, J.A. 2000. *Encyclopedia of Systemic Neuro-Linguistic Programming and NLP New Coding*. NLP University Press. [online] [Accessed 28 September 2016] Available from: <http://www.nlpuniversitypress.com/> pp.667-680.
- Doornbos, A., Van Rooij, M., Smit, M. and Verdonschot, S. 2008. From Fairytales to Sphercards: Towards a New Research Methodology for Improving Knowledge Productivity. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. 9(2), pp.1438–5627.
- Droubay, S. Nelson, T. Johnson, L. and Ketring, S. 2004. Career Paths of Eminent Researchers in Marriage and Family Therapy. *Contemporary Family Therapy*. 26(4), pp.503-520.
- Du Plessis, C. 2009. *An approach to studying urban sustainability from within an ecological worldview*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. UK: University of Salford.
- Dwyer, P., Raeme Smith, G., Tyler, D. and Na Wyn, J. 2003. *Life-Patterns, Career Outcomes and Adult Choices*. Victoria: Australian Youth Research Centre.
- Dykman, J. 1973. "What makes planners plan?". In: *A Reader in Planning Theory*. A Faludi (Ed). Oxford: Pergamon Press, pp. 243-250.
- Edwards, M. 2005. A Future in the Balance : Integral Theory and Global Developmental Pathologies Future Shock Fatigue. In: *Knowledge Base of Future Studies*. Volume 3. Directions and Outlooks. Slaughter, R (Ed). Brisbane: Foresight International.
- Edwards, M. M. and Bates, L. K. 2011. Planning's Core Curriculum: Knowledge, Practice, and Implementation. *Article Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 31(2), 172–183.
- Elliott, C. 1999. *Locating the Energy for Change: An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry*. Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development.

- Elmore, T. 2013. *Resourcefulness: The New Meta Competency on Growing Leaders*. [Online] March 27. [Accesses 24 June 2016]. Available from: <http://growingleaders.com/blog/resourcefulness-the-new-meta-competency/>
- Emanuel, J. 1993. Comments Toward a Core Body of Knowledge: A New Curriculum for City and Regional Planners. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 12(2), pp.160-163.
- Eraut, M. 1998. Definition and Selection of Competencies: Concepts of Competence. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*. 12(2), 127–139.
- Estés, C. 1992. *Women Who Run With Wolves: Contracting the power of the wild woman*. London: Rider.
- Etzkowitz, H. 2002. “Incubation of Incubators: Innovation as a Triple Helix of University-Industry-Government Networks” , *Science and Public Policy*. 28(2) pp.115-128.
- Evangelista, L. 2009. *Competence, Competencies and Career Guidance*. Competencies and Career Guidance. [Online] Available from: <http://www.orientamento.it/indice/competencies-and-careers-guidance/>
- Fainstein, S. S. 2014. My Career as a Planner. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 80(3), pp.268–275.
- Faling, W. and Todes, A. 2004. ‘Employer Perceptions of Planning Education in South Africa’, *Town and Regional Planning*. 47, pp.32-43.
- Faludi, A. 2013. *Essays on Planning Theory and Education*. Great Britain: Elsevier.
- Faraday, A. and P. K., 1979. Doing Life Histories. *Sociological Review*. 27(4), pp.773-798.
- Faulconbridge, J. 2007. Exploring the role of professional associations in collective learning in London and New York's advertising and law professional-service-firm clusters. *Environment and Planning A*. 39(4), pp.965-984.
- Fenwick, T. 2000. Expanding Conceptions of Experiential Learning: A Review of the Five Contemporary Perspectives on Cognition. *Adult Education Quarterly*. 50(4), pp.243-272.
- Ferreira, N. and Coetzee, M. 2013. Psychological career meta-competencies in relation to job embeddedness among human resource employees. *African Journal of Business Management*. 7(15), 1369–1378. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2013.6880>
- Feyerabend, P. 2010. *Against methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. London: Verso Books.
- Fineman, S. 2006. On being positive: Concerns and counterpoints. *Academy of Management Review*. 31(2), pp.270-291.
- Finger, M. 1994, From Knowledge to Action? Exploring the Relationships Between Environmental Experiences, Learning, and Behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*. 50(2), pp.141–160.

- Fischer, K. Bullock, D., Rotenberg, E. and Raya, P. 1993. The Dynamics of Competence: How Context Contributes Directly to Skill. In: *Development in context: Acting and thinking in specific environments*. Hillsdale: The Jean Piaget Symposium Series, pp. 93-117.
- Fisher, W. R. 1987. *Human communication as narration: toward a philosophy of reason, value, and action*. South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press
- Fitzgerald, S. P., Murrell, K. L. and Newman, L. H. 2002. Appreciative Inquiry – The New Frontier. In: W. Janine & C. Allan H. (Eds.), *Organization Development: A Data-Driven Approach to Organizational Change* (3rd edition.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Floyd, J. 2008. Towards an Integral renewal of systems methodology for futures studies. *Futures*. 40(2), pp.138–149.
- Flyvbjerg, B. 2004. Phronetic Planning Research: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections. *Planning Theory & Practice*. 5(3), pp.283–306.
- Flyvbjerg, B. 2006. *Narrative Case Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Flyvbjerg, B. 2013. "How planners deal with uncomfortable knowledge: the dubious ethics of the American Planning Association". *Cities*. 32, pp.157-163.
- Folke, C. and Gunderson, L. 2006. *Facing global change through social-ecological research*. *Ecology and Society*. Volume 11, p. [online] Available from: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/iss2/art43>
- Forester, J. 2004a. *Dispute Resolution Meets Policy Analysis, Or Native Gathering Rights on “Private” Lands? A Profile of Peter Adler John*. [Accessed August 20, 2014]. Available from: <http://www.instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/practicestories>
- Forester, J. 2004b. *From Conflict Generation Through Consensus-Building Using Many of the Same Skills: A Profile of Frank Blechman*. New York: Cornell University.
- Forester, J. 2004c. *From “Nightmare” to National Implications: A Profile of Lisa Beutler*. Department of City and Regional Planning. New York: Cornell University.
- Forester, J. 2004d. *Land Use and Community Development in a Rural (Swedish) Setting: A Profile of Goran Cars*. New York: Cornell University.
- Forester, J. 2015. What kind of research might help us become better planners? *Planning Theory and Practice*. 16(3), pp.293-296.
- Forester, J. and Love, A. 2004a. *Consensus Building and Water Policy in San Antonio: A Profile of John Folk Williams*. [Accessed August 20, 2014], Available from: <http://www.instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/practicestories>
- Forester, J. and Love, A. 2004b. *Dispute Resolution and Deliberation and Racial Violence: A Profile of Karen Umemoto*. Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University. New York: Cornell University.
- Forester, J. 1989. *Planning in the Face of Power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



- Forester, J. 1996. Learning from practice stories. In: *Reading in Planning Theory*. Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, pp. 507-528.
- Forester, J. 1997. Beyond dialogue to transformative learning: How deliberative rituals encourage political judgement in community planning processes. In: *Evaluating Theory-Practice and Urban-Rural Interplay in Planning*. Printed in the Netherlands, pp. 81-103.
- Forester, J. 1999. *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Forester, J. 2006. Exploring urban practice in a democratising society: Opportunities, techniques and challenges. *Development South Africa*. 23(5), pp.569-586.
- Forester, J., Peters, S. and Hittleman, M. 2005. Profiles of Practitioners: Practice Stories from the Field. [Accessed November 2015] Available from: <https://courses2.cit.cornell.edu/fit117/index.htm>
- Fox-Rogers, L. and Murphy, E. 2015. Self-perceptions of the role of the planner. *Environment and Planning B*, 47(1), 74–92.
- Frank, A. 2002. *Research-led Teaching: The Contribution of Planning Educational Research*. Volos, Greece: XVI AESOP Congress.
- Frankl, V. 1966. Self-transcendence as a human phenomenon. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. 6, pp.97-107.
- Freestone, R. 2012. *Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Friedmann, J. 1996. The core curriculum in planning revisited. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 15, pp.89-104.
- Gambacorti-Passerini, M. B. 2014. *Exploring autobiographical writing as a potential formative instrument for professionals working in pediatric wards*. In: International Scientific Conference May 23th – 24th , 2014 (Vol. II, pp.61–72). International Scientific Conference.
- Gardner, H. 2003. Multiple Intelligences After Twenty Years. In: *American Educational Research Association*, p. 14. Chicago, Illinois: American Educational Research Association.
- Gardner, P. and Bartkus, K. R. 2014. What's in a name? A reference guide to work-education experiences. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*. 15(1), 37–54.
- Geppert, A. and Verhage, R. 2008. Towards a European recognition for the Planning profession. In: *AESOP: Planning Education* (Vol. 1, p.36). Leuven: Association of European Schools of Planning.
- Gergen, K. and Gergen, M. 1991. Towards reflexive methodologies. In: Steier, F (Ed) *Research and Reflexivity*. London: Sage.
- Gergena, K. J. 1978. Toward generative theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 36(11), pp.1344-1360.

- Ghadi, M., Fernando, M. and Caputi, P. 2010. *Transformational leadership, workplace engagement and the mediating influence of meaningful work: Building a conceptual framework*. In: Australian New Zealand Academy of Management Annual Conference (pp.1–15). University of Wollongong Research. [Online]. Available from: <https://doi.org/35387>
- Giddens, A. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gillert, A. 2005. *Between Tradition and Modernity Sustainable Development by Changing Perspectives*. [Accessed November 2, 2016] Available from: <http://www.kessels-smit.com/en/163>
- Gilliard, L. & Thierstein, A., 2016. Competencies Revisited. *The Planning Review*. 52(1), pp.42-55.
- Goldkuhl, G. and Cronholm, S. 2010. Multi-Grounded Theory: Adding Theoretical Grounding to Grounded Theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 9(2), pp.187–206.
- Goldstein, H. A. and Carmin, J. 2006. Compact, Diffuse or Would-be Discipline?: Assessing Cohesion in Planning Scholarship. 1963-2002. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 26(1), pp.66–79.
- Goldstein, H. A., Bollens, S., Feser, E. and Silver, C. 2006. An Experiment in the Internationalization of Planning Education: The NEURUS Program. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 25(4), pp.349–363.
- Goss, H. and Coetzee, M. 2007. Capacity building for integrated development: Considerations from practice in South Africa. *Stads-en Streeksbeplanning= Town and Regional Planning*. 2007(51), pp.46-59.
- Goulding, C. 1998. Grounded Theory-the Missing Methodology on the Interpretivist Agenda. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*. 1(1), pp.50–57.
- Goulding, C. 2002. *Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide for Management, Business and market Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Grant Long, J. 2012. State of the Studio: Revisiting the Potential of Studio Pedagogy in U.S.-Based Planning Programs. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 32(4), pp.431–448.
- Greenhalgh, T., Robert, G., Macfarlane, F., Bate, P., Kyriakidou, O. and Peacock, R. 2005. Storylines of research in diffusion of innovation: a meta-narrative approach to systematic review. *Social Science & Medicine* 61(2), pp.417-430.
- Greenleaf, R., Spears, L. and Covey, S. 2002. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Greyling A.C. 2005. *The Heart of Things: Applying Philosophy to the 21st Century*. London: Phoenix.
- Griffiths, R. 2002. *Planning education for a knowledge-based society: strengthening the links between teaching and research*. Volos, Greece: XVI AESOP Congress.
- Grinyer, A. 2002. *The Anonymity of Research Participants: Assumptions, Ethics and Practicalities in Social Research Update*. Surrey : University of Surrey

- Guest, D. and Sturges, J. 2007. Living to work – working to live. Conceptualizations of Careers Amongst Contemporary Workers. In H. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook of Career Studies*. pp.310–326. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.
- Guevara, A. J. H. and Dib, V. C. 2000. *The Age of Knowledge and the Growing Relevance of Human and Social Capital*. [Online] pp. 1–5. Available from:  
<http://in3.dem.ist.utl.pt/downloads/cur2000/papers/S26P05.pdf>
- Guhathakurta, S. 1999. Urban Modeling and contemporary Planning Theory: Is There a Common Ground?. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 18(4), pp.281-292.
- Gunder, M. 2004. Shaping the Planner's Ego-Ideal: A Lacanian Interpretation of Planning Education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 23(2), pp.299–311.
- Gunder, M. 2006. Sustainability: Planning's Saving Grace or Road to Perdition? *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 26(2), pp.208–221.
- Gunder, M. 2011. A metapsychological exploration of the role of popular media in engineering public belief on planning issues. *Planning Theory*. 10(4), pp.325–343.
- Gunderson, L. and Folke, C. 2007. Looking forward, looking back. *Ecology and Society*. 12(1), p.10. [online]  
<http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol12/iss1/art32>
- Gunn, S. and Vigar, G. 2012. "Reform processes and discretionary acting space in English planning practice, 1997-2010". *Town Planning Review*. 83(5), pp.533-551.
- Gunz, H. P. and Peiperl, M. 2007. *Handbook Career Studies*. (H. Gunz & M. Peiperl, Eds.) (First Edit). New York: SAGE Publications.
- Hadorn, G. Bradley, D., Pahl, C., Rist, S. and Wiesmann, U. 2006. Implications of transdisciplinarity for sustainability research. *Ecological Economics*. 60(1), pp.119-128.
- Hague, C., Wakely, P., Crespin, J. and Jasko, C. 2006. *Making Planning Work. A Guide to Approaches and skills*. Warwickshire: Practical Action Publishing.
- Hall, D. T. and Chandler, D. 2005. Psychological success: When the career is calling. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. 26, pp.155-176.
- Hall, D. T. and Mirvis, P. H. 1995. The new career contract: Developing the whole person at midlife and beyond. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 47(3), pp.269–289.
- Hall, D. T., Lee, M. D., Kossek, E. E. and Heras, M. L. 2012. Pursuing Career Success while Sustaining Personal and Family Well-Being: A Study of Reduced-Load Professionals over Time. *Journal of Social Issues*. 68(4), pp.742–766.
- Hall, J. and Hammond, S. 1998. *What is Appreciative Inquiry? Inner Edge Newsletter*. [Online] Available from: <http://ngobg.info/bg/documents/49/756whatisai.pdf>
- Hall, P. and Tewdwr-Jones, M. 2011. *Urban and Regional Planning*. (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Cornwall: The MPG Books Group.

- Harre, R. 1989. Language games and texts of identity. In: *Texts of Identity*. London: Sage.
- Harris, L. S. and Kuhnert, K. W. 2008a. Looking through the lens of leadership: a constructive developmental approach. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 29(1), pp.47–67.
- Harris, N. 2000. Instruction: Practice Through a Lens: A Metaphor for Planning Theory. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 19(2), pp.309-315.
- Harrison, P. 2006. On the Edge of Reason: Planning and Urban Futures in Africa. *Urban Studies*. 43(2), pp.319-335.
- Harrison, P. and Todes, A. 2004. Education after apartheid: planning and planning students in transition. *International Development Planning Review*, 26(2), pp.187-208.
- Harrison, P., Todes, A. and Watson, V. 2003. The changing nature of the job market for planning in South Africa: implications for planning educators. *Town and Regional Planning*. 46, pp.21-32.
- Hartmann, T. 2012. Wicked problems and clumsy solutions: Planning as expectation management. *Planning Theory*. 11(3), pp.242–256.
- Hayden, D., Hoch, C., Sanyal, B., Forsyth, A., Dandekar, H., Pezzoli, K. and Wachs, M. 2010. Peter Marris (1927–2007): Planning in an International Context. *Planning Theory & Practice*. 11(2), pp.269–296.
- Healey, P. and Underwood, J. 1978. "Professional ideals and planning practice". *Progress in Planning*. 9(2), pp. 73-127.
- Healey, P. 1992. "A planner's day: knowledge and action in communicative practice". *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 58(1), pp.9-20.
- Healy, P., 1991. *The Argumentative Turn*. London: University College London
- Helling, A. and Sawicky, D. 1997. The central sixth theme: Linking knowledge and collective action. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 16(3), p.228.
- Hemingway, C. and Maclagan, P. 2004. Managers' personal vules as drivers of corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 50(1), pp.33-44.
- Higgins, M. 2002. *Personal Development Planning: A Tool for Reflective Learning*. Volos, Greece: XVI AESOP Congress.
- Hillier, J. and Healy, P., 2008. Introduction. In: *Foundations of the Planning Enterprise. Critical Essays in Planning Theory: Volume 1*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Ashgate, pp. ix-xxvii.
- Hillier, J. and Gunder, M., 2003. Planning fantasies? An exploration of a potential Lacanian framework for understanding development assessment planning. *Planning Theory*. 2(3), pp.225-248.
- Hillier, J. and Gunder, M., 2005. Not over your dead bodies! A Lacanian interpretation of urban planning discourse and practice. *Environment and Planning A*. 37(6), pp.1049-1066.
- Hoch, C. 1994. *What Planners Do: Power, Politics and Persuasion*. Chicago, IL: Planners Press.

- Hoch, J. 2007. Pragmatic Communicative Action Theory. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 26, pp.272-283.
- Hochachka, G. R. 2006. Pan-African Integral Leadership Development. Ottawa: Canada's International Development Research Centre.
- Hocutt, D. L. 1997. *Translating Oral Performance into Written Narrative: Inter-textual Audience in the Coyote Stories of Simon Ortiz's A Good Journey*. The American Literature Association.
- Hofer, J. Chasiotis, A. and Campos, D. 2006. Congruence Between Social Values and Implicit Motives: Effects on Life Satisfaction Across Three Cultures. *European Journal of Personality*. 20, pp.305-324.
- Hoffman, A. 1993. The importance of fit between individual values and organisational culture in the greening of industry. *Business Strategy and the Environment*. 2(4), p.10-18.
- Holdsworth, S. and Sandri, O. 2014. Sustainability Education and the Built Environment: Experiences from the Classroom. *JEBE*. 9(1), pp.48-68.
- Holdsworth, S. and Thomas, I. 2015. Framework for Introducing Education for Sustainable Development into University Curriculum. *Research*. 9(2), pp.137-159.
- Holling, C. 2004. From Complex Regions to Complex Worlds. *Ecology and Society*. 9(1), p. [online] <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss1/art11>.
- Hossain, S., Scholz, W. and Baumgart, S. 2015. Translation of urban planning models: Planning principles, procedural elements and institutional settings. *Habitat International*. 48, pp.140-148.
- Howatson-Jones, L., 2010. Multi-layered voices of being a nurse and becoming a nurse teacher. *Reflective Practice*. 11, pp.319-329.
- Howe, E. 1980. "Role choices of urban planners". *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 46(4), pp.398-409.
- Howell, R. and Allen, S. 2017. People and planet : Values , motivations and formative influences of individuals acting to mitigate climate change. *Environmental Values*. 26(2), pp.131-155.
- Howland, M. 1997. Comments from a survivor. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 16, pp.225-226.
- Hulsebosch, J., Turpin, M. and Wagenaar, S. 2009. *Monitoring and evaluating knowledge management strategies*. IKM Background Paper. Public Policy. Information and Knowledge Management.
- Ibarra, H. and Deshpande, P. 2007. Networks and Identities. Reciprocal Influences on Career Processes and Outcomes. In H. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook of Career Studies* (First Edit, pp. 268-282). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.
- IDRC. 2005. *Deepening a Culture of Reflection: IDRC's Rolling Project Completion Report Process*. International Development Research Centre. Unpublished.
- Inayatullah, S. 2002. Layered methodology: meanings, episteme and the politics of knowledge. *Futures*. 34(6), pp.479-491.

- Innes, J. E. and Boomer, D. E. 2015. A turning point for planning theory? Overcoming dividing discourses. *Planning Theory*. 14(2), pp.195–213.
- Innes, J. 1996. "Planning through consensus building". *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 62(4), pp.460-473.
- Isenberg, M. 1997. Mapping Out Environmental Careers : The Young Professional's Perspective. *Environmental Quality Management*. 7(1), pp.115–117.
- Johansen, B. 2012. *Leaders make the future: Ten new leadership skills for an uncertain world*. San Francisco: Barrett- Koehler.
- Jones, G. 1983. Life History Methodology. In: *Beyond Method: Strategies for Social Research*. London: Sage, pp. 147-159.
- Juarrero, A. 2002. Complex Dynamical Systems and the Problem of Identity. *Emergence*. 4(1–2), 94–104.
- Kahane, A. 2010. *Power and Love. Solving Tough Social and Organizational problems*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Kanni Wignaraja, L. J. and Tripathi, R. 2006. *Leadership for Human Development: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource*. New York.
- Kasl, E.; Marsick, V. and Dechant, K. 1997 "Teams as learners: A research-based model of Team learning," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. 2(June) pp.227-246.
- Katz, E. Levin, M. and. Hamilton, H. 1963. Traditions of Research on the Diffusion of Innovation. *American Sociological Review*. 28(2 April), pp. 237-252.
- Kaufman, S. and Simons, R. 1995. Quantitative and research methods in planning: Are schools teaching what practitioners practice. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 15(1), pp.17-33.
- Kegan R. and Laskow Lahey, L. 2009. *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Kegan, R. and Laskow Lahey, L. 2001. *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work: Seven Languages for Transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Keller, A. ., Samuel, R., Bergman, M. and Semmer, N. 2014. *Psychological, Educational, and Sociological Perspectives on Success and Well-Being in Career Development*. New York: Springer.
- Keogh, P. and Polonsky, M. 1998. Environmental Commitment: A Basis for Environmental Entrepreneurship? *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. 11, pp.38-49.
- Kessels and Smit. (2016). *Logical levels (based on Gregory Bateson and Robert Dilts)*. [Accessed October 20, 2016] Available from: [www.kessels-smit.com/files/logicallevels\\_handout\\_Engli.pdf](http://www.kessels-smit.com/files/logicallevels_handout_Engli.pdf)
- Kessels, J. 2001. Learning in Organisations: A Corporate Curriculum for the Knowledge Economy. *Futures*. 33(6), pp.497–506.

- Kessels, J. W. M. and Poell, R. F. 2004. Andragogy and Social Capital Theory: The Implications for Human Resource Development Position and Chain of Reasoning. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*. 6(2), pp.1–12.
- Kessels, J., Kwakman, K., Keursten, P. and Verdonschot, S. 2006. Relating learning , knowledge creation and innovation : case studies into knowledge productivity. *International Journal of Learning and Intellectual Capital*. 3(4), pp.405–420.
- Kgobe, M. 1997. The national qualifications framework in South Africa and "out-of-school youth": problems and possibilities. *International Review of Education*. 43(4), pp.317-330.
- Kim, M. 2012. *AshokaU Curriculum and Teaching Resource Guide*. Arlington: AshokaU.
- Klosterman, R. 2011. "Planning theory education: a thirty-year review". *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 31(3), pp.319-331.
- Knox, P. and Cullen. J. 1981. "Planners as urban managers: an exploration of the attitudes and self-image of senior British planners". *Environment and Planning A*. 13(5), pp.885-898.
- Knox, P. and Masilela. C. 1990. "Role orientations of third world urban planners. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*. 17(1), pp.9-22.
- Kolbert, E. 2017. Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds: New discoveries about the human mind show the limitations of reason. *The New Yorker*. February 27, 2017 Issue. [Online] [Accessed on 1 March 2017]. Available from: <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/27/why-facts-dont-change-our-minds>>
- Kollmuss, A. and Agyeman, J. 2016. Mind the Gap : Why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior? *Environmental Education Research*. 8(3), pp.239–260.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. 2011. Creative Game in Science. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*. 25(1), pp.32-51.
- Krieker, H. 2000. Planning and Design as the Manufacture of Transcendence. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 19(3), pp.257-264.
- Krueckeberg, D. 1993. Between Self and Culture or What Are Biographies of Planners About?. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 59(2), pp.217-220.
- Kunzmann, K. and Yuan, L. 2014. Educating Planners from China in Europe. *The Planning Review*. 50(4), pp.66-70.
- Kunzmann, K. 2015. *Challenges of planning education in times of globalization*. AESOP Debates. Madrid.
- Laessøe, J. and Mochizuki, Y. 2015. Recent Trends in National Policy on Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Change Education. *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*. 9(1), pp.27–43.
- Lai, L. W. and Lorne, F. T. 2015. The Fourth Coase Theorem: State planning rules and spontaneity in action. *Planning Theory*. 14(1), 44–69.
- Lawrence, R. J. and Despre's, C. 2004. Futures of Transdisciplinarity. *Futures*. 36(1), pp.397–405.

- Le Deist, F. D. and Winterton, J. 2005. What Is Competence ? *Human Resource Development International* 8(1), pp.27–46.
- Le Roux, E. 2007. Accounting for the Potential of a Reflective Practice Framework to Enhance Environmental Management in South African Local Government. *The International Journal of Learning*. 14(8), pp.255–266.
- Lee, K.-H. and Schaltegger, S. 2014. Organizational transformation and higher sustainability management education. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*. 15(4), 450–472.
- Lee, M.-Y. 1999. *The Role of Cultural Values in the Interpretation of Significant Life Experiences*. In: Adult Education Research Conference. Conference Proceedings (pp. 1–8). San Francisco State University.
- Leggat, S. G. 2007. Effective healthcare teams require effective team members: defining teamwork competencies. *BMC Health Services Research*. 7(17), pp.1–10.
- Lemieux-Charles, L., Murray, M., Baker, G. R., Barnsley, J., Tasa, K. and Ibrahim, S. A. 2002. The effects of quality improvement practices on team effectiveness: a mediational model. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. 23(5), pp.533–553.
- Lennon, M. 2015. Finding Purpose in Planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 35(1), pp.63–75.
- Lester, S. 1999. Professional bodies , CPD and informal learning : the case of conservation. *Continuing Professional Development*. 3(4), pp.110–121.
- Leung, S. A. 2008. The Big Five Career Theories. In: J. A. Anthanasou & R. Van Esbroeck (Eds.), *International Handbook of Career Guidance*. (pp.115–132). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Levi-Strauss, C. 1978. *Myth and Meaning*. London: Routledge Classics.
- Levit, R. 1992. *Meaning, Purpose, and Leadership*. The International Forum for Logotherapy, Volume 15, pp. 71-75.
- Levleva, L. and Terry, P.C. 2008. Applying sport psychology to business. *International Coaching Psychology Review*. 3(1), pp.8-18.
- Lewis, S. 2015. *Leading through Storytelling*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Leydesdorff, L. 2010. The Knowledge-Based Economy and the Triple Helix Model. *Information Science and Technology*, 44(1), 1–54.
- Liang, B. C. 2014. Career Anchors. In: *Managing and Leading for Science Professionals* (pp. 21–32). Oxford: Academic Press, Elsevier.
- Lichtenstein, B. B., Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R., Seers, A., Orton, J. D. and Schreiber, C. 2006. Complexity leadership theory: An interactive perspective on leading in complex adaptive systems. *E:CO*. 8(4), pp.2–12.
- Lim, G. and Albrecht, J. 1987. A Search for an Alternative Planning Theory: Use of Phenomenology. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*. 4(1), pp.14-30.



- Lips-Wiersma, M. 2002. The influence of spiritual “meaning-making” on career behavior. *Journal of Management Development*. 21(7), pp.497–520.
- Lo Presti, A. 2009. Snakes and Ladders: Stressing the Role of Meta-Competencies for Post-Modern Careers. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*. 9(2) pp.125-134.
- Local Government Sector Education Training Authority (LGSETA) (2006) Sector Skills Plan for the Local Government SETA. Pretoria: LGSETA.
- Long, J. G. 2012. State of the Studio: Revisiting the Potential of Studio Pedagogy in U.S.-Based Planning Programs. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 32(4), pp.431–448.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X12457685>
- Lovering, J. 2009. The Recession and the End of Planning as We have Known It. *International Planning Studies*. 14(1), pp.1-6.
- Lucasfilms. 1999. "Star Wars: The Magic of Myth" Teachers' notes. [Online] [Accessed 15 September 2011]. Available from: <http://www.lucaslearning.com/jsv/teachers/index.html>
- Lynam, A. 2012. Navigating a Geography of Sustainability Worldviews: A Developmental Map. *Journal of Sustainability Education*, 3(March), pp.2151–7452.
- Lynam, A., Medrick, R., Terri, E. O., Davis, N. and Wallis, N. 2014. *Embracing Developmental Diversity: Developmentally Aware Teaching, Mentoring, and Sustainability Education*. Prescott College.
- Mabin, A. 1992. *Between Zevenfontein and Hillbrow: alternatives for South African urban planning*. Paper presented at SAITRP Conference in Port Elizabeth. Unpublished.
- MacDonald, K., Sanyal, B., Silver, M., Ng, M. K., Head, P., Williams, K. and Campbell, H. 2014. Challenging theory: Changing practice: Critical perspectives on the past and potential of professional planning. *Planning Theory & Practice*. 15(1), pp.95–122.
- MacIntyre, A. 1985. After Virtue. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 10, pp.209-214.
- MacIntyre, A. 2013. *After Virtue*. 3rd ed. London: Bloomsbury.
- Mandelbaum, S. 1984. Temporal conventions in planning discourse. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*. 11(1), pp.5-13.
- Mandelbaum, S. 1991. Telling Stories. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 10(3), pp.209-215.
- Marris, P. 1988. *The Dreams of General Jerusalem*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing
- Maryhofer, W., Meyer, M. and Steyrer, J. 2007. Contextual Issues in the Study of Careers. In A. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook in Career Studies* (pp. 215–240). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.
- Mason, H. M. 2013. *Environment Identity Development: Exploring The Formative Experiences And Mental Models of Teachers Engaged In Environmental Education*. University of Colorado.
- Mattila, H., Mynttinen, E., Mätysalo, R. 2012. Managing Planning Pathologies: An Educational Challenge of the New Apprenticeship Programme in Finland. *Planning Theory and Practice*. 13(3), pp.484-488.

- Max-Neef, M. A. 2005. Foundations of transdisciplinarity. *Ecological Economics*. 53(1), 5–16.
- Mccauley, C. D., Drath, W. H., Palus, C. J., O'Connor, P. M. G. and Baker, B. A. 2006. The use of constructive-developmental theory to advance the understanding of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 17(1), pp.634–653.
- McConnell, S. 1995. Rawlsian planning theory. . In: *Reader in planning ethics: Planning theory, practice and education*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 30-48.
- McDaniel, R. R., Jordan, M. E. and Fleeman, B. F. 2003. Surprise, Surprise, Surprise! A Complexity Science View of the Unexpected. *Health Care Management Review*. 28(3), pp.266–278.
- McDermott, A., Kidney, R. and Flood, P. 2011. Understanding leader development: learning from leaders. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 32(4), pp.358–378.
- McElroy, J. C., Morrow, P. C. and Wardlow, T. R. 1999. A Career Stage Analysis Of Police Officer Work Commitment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 27(6), pp.507–516.
- Mcgregor, S. L. T. 2004. *The Nature of Transdisciplinary Research and Practice*. In: Canadian Commission for UNESCO (p. 12). Ontario: UNESCO.
- Mellish, L., 1999. Appreciative Inquiry. *Liz Mellish Training Journal*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.mellish.com.au/Resources/lizarticle.html> [Accessed 23 March 2005].
- Mengel, T. 2005. Wisdom and Knowledge–Leadership in Balance. Positive Living E-Zine, June. Winlaw.
- Mengel, T. 2009. *Getting Hooked Early On: Motivating Student Learning in First Year Courses and Beyond*. In: AAU Teaching Showcase : Acadia University (pp. 69–77). Wolfville: Acadia University.
- Mengel, T. 2010. Learning That Matters: Discovery of Meaning and Development of Wisdom in Undergraduate Education. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching*. 3(1), pp.119–123.
- Mengel, T. 2012. Leading with “Emotional” Intelligence–Existential and Motivational Analysis in Leadership and Leadership Development. *Journal on Educational Psychology*. 5(4), pp.24–32.
- Methorst, J. and Van Dierendonck, D. 2004. The importance of autonomy for the new professional: A psychological perspective on autonomy in the workplace. *Human Resource Development*. 4, pp.27-32.
- Meyer, J. H. F., Land, R. and Baillie, C. 2010. *Threshold Concepts and Transformational Learning*. (M. A. Peters, Ed.). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Mezirow, J. 1991. *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco , CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. 2000. *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Miller, J. and Glassner, B. 1997. *The "inside" and "outside": Finding realities in interviews*. London: Sage.
- Mills, J. E., Bonner, A. and Francis, K. 2006. Adopting a constructivist approach to grounded theory: Implications for research design. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*. 12(1), 8–13.

- Mintrom, M. 1997. Policy Entrepreneurs and the Diffusion of Innovation. *American Journal of Political Science*. 41(3 July), pp.738-770.
- Mironowicz, I. 2015. Excellence in Planning Education: Local, European & Global Perspective. *Planning Education* (Vol. July). Wrocław.
- Moore, C., Gunz, H. and Hall, D. 2007. Tracing the Historical Roots of Career Theory in Management and Organization Studies. In A. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook in Career Studies*. (pp. 13–38). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.
- Morgenstern, E. 2012. *The Night Circus*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Morin, E. and Kelly, S. 1992. From the Concept of System to the Paradigm of Complexity. In: S. Kelly (Ed.), *The Concept Of System And The Paradigm Of Complexity* (pp. 125–138). New York: Springer.
- Muller, J. 1992. From survey to strategy: Twentieth century developments in Western planning method. *Planning Perspective*. 7, pp.125-155.
- Murinson, B. B., Klick, B., Haythornthwaite, J. A., Shochet, R., Levine, R. B. and Wright, S. M. 2010. Formative Experiences of Emerging Physicians : Gauging the Impact of Events That Occur During Medical School. *Academic Medicine: Journal of Association of American Medical Colleges*. 85(8), pp.1331–1337.
- Murphy, E. and Fox-Rogers, L. 2014. "Perceptions of the common good in planning". *Cities*. 42, pp. 231-241.
- Murphy, E. and Fox-Rogers, L. 2015. Self-Perceptions of the Role of the Planner. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*. 47, pp. 1-19.
- Musson, G. 1998. Life Histories. In: Symon, G and Cassell. (Ed) *Qualitative Methods and Analysis in Organisational Research*. London: Sage Publishers.
- Myers, D. and Banerjee, T., 2005. Toward greater heights for planning: Reconciling the differences between profession, practice and academic field. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 71(2), pp.121-129.
- Myers, D. 2001. Putting the future in planning: Introduction. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 67(4), pp.365-367.
- Nakabugo, M. and Siebörger, R. 2001. Curriculum reform and teaching in South Africa: making a 'paradigm shift'?. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 21(1), pp.53-60.
- Nel J.L., Roux D.J., Driver, A, Hill, L., Maherry, A.C., Snaddon, K., Petersen, C.R., Smith-Adao, L.B., Van Deventer, H., Reyers B. 2016. Knowledge co-production and boundary work to promote implementation of conservation plans. *Conservation Biology*. 30(1), pp.176-88.
- Newig, J., Voß, J.-P. and Monstadt, J. 2007. Editorial: Governance for Sustainable Development in the Face of Ambivalence, Uncertainty and Distributed Power: an Introduction. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*. 9(3), pp.185–192.

- Ng, T. W. H. and Feldman, D. C. 2007. Organizational embeddedness and occupational embeddedness across career stages. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 70(2), pp.336–351.
- Nicholson, N. 2013. Destiny Drama Deliberation. In: A. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *The “I” of Leadership: Strategies for Seeing, Being and Doing*. Cornwall: Jossey-Bass Publishers, pp. 183–199.
- Nicholson, N. 2007. Destiny, Drama, and Deliberation. In: *Handbook of Career Studies*. California: Sage Publishing, pp. 566-572.
- Nicolescu, B. 1999. The transdisciplinary evolution of learning. In: *Overcoming the Underdevelopment of Learning at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. (p. 11). Montreal: ResearchGate.
- Nicolescu, B. 2006. Heisenberg and the Levels of Reality. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2(1), pp.12.
- Nicolescu, B. 1991. Science, Meaning and evolution. The Cosmology of Jacob Boehme. New York: Parabola Books.
- Nicolescu, B. 2002. *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*. Translated by Voss, K. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Niebanck, P. 1993. Symposium: Creating Planning Knowledge: Emerging Directions and Critical Requirements. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 12, pp.199-201.
- Niebanck, P. 1998. Undergraduate Education with a Purpose: A Planning Program at the University of Washington. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 18(2), pp.154-160.
- Nillsson, W., Fältholm, Y. and Abrahamsson, L. 2010. Reframing practice through the use of Personas. *Reflective Practice*. 11(3), pp.285-298.
- Norval, S. 2016. Wheel of Emergence. Unpublished discussion and lecture notes.
- Odendaal, N. 2005. *The Role of Planners in Transformation*. Report to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Planning and Development Commission. Unpublished.
- Oranje, M. & Van Huyssteen, E. 2011, ‘Nestling national “transformation” imperatives in local “servicing” space: Critical reflections on an intergovernmental planning and implementation project’, *Town and Regional Planning*. 58, pp.6–16.
- Oranje, M. 2014. Back to where it all began ...? Reflections on injecting the (spiritual) ethos of the Early Town Planning Movement into Planning, Planners and Plans in post-1994 South Africa. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*. 70(3), pp.1–10.
- Oranje, M. and Merrifield, A. 2010. National spatial development planning in South Africa 1930-2010: An introductory comparative analysis. *Town and Regional Planning*. 56(0), pp.29-45
- Oranje, M. and van Huyssteen, E. 2007. A brief history of intergovernmental development planning in post-apartheid South Africa. *Town and Regional Planning*. No. 51, pp.1-15.

- Oranje, M. and van Huyssteen, E. 2005. *Not Just Another Day in Africa*. Pretoria: CSIR, Boutek.
- Oranje, M. 1997. *The Language Game of South African urban and Regional Planning: A Cognitive Mapping From the Past Into the Future*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Oranje, M., Harrison, P., van Huyssteen, E. Meyer, E. and Patel, Y. 2000. *A Policy Paper on Integrated Development Planning*. Unpublished Report. Prepared for the Department of Provincial and Local Government.
- O'Reilly, D., Cunningham, L. and Lester, S. (Ed). 1999. *Developing the Capable Practitioner Professional Capability Through Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Orme, G. 2003. Lessons learned from implementing EI programmes – the cutting edge of emotional intelligence interventions. *Competency & Emotional Intelligence*. 10(2), pp.32–39.
- Ormsbee, F. 2011. *The impact of formative work experiences on the psychological contract: The case of the Generation-X knowledge worker*. Carleton University. Unpublished.
- Ovens, W. and Associates. 2006. *An Assessment of Municipal Development Planning Capacity*. Report to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Planning and Development Commission. Unpublished.
- Oxford dictionary. [Online] Available from: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>
- Ozawa, C. and Seltzer, E. 1999. Taking Our Bearings: Mapping a Relationship Among Planning Practice, Theory, and Education. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 18(3), pp.257-266.
- Pals, J. L. 2006. Narrative identity processing of difficult life experiences: pathways of personality development and positive self-transformation in adulthood. *Journal of Personality*. 74(4), pp.1079–109.
- Park, N., Peterson, C. and Seligman, M. E. P. 2006. Character strengths in fifty-four nations and the fifty US states. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. 1(3), pp.118–129.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760600619567>
- Payne, P. 1999. The Significance of Experience in SLE Research. *Environmental Education Research*. 5(4), pp.365-381.
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. (3rd ed.). Saint Paul, MN: Sage Publications.
- Pellizzoni, L. 2001. The myth of the best argument: power, deliberation and reason. *British Journal of Sociology*. 52(1), pp.59-87.
- Perlstein, A. and Ortolano, L. 2015. Urban Growth in China: Evolution on the Role of Urban Planners. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 35(4), pp.435–443.
- Peter, C. 2008. Complexity Based Modelling for Sustainability and Resilience of Socio-ecological Systems. In: *Exploring Sustainability Science: A Southern African Perspective*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, pp. 471-506.

- Peters, S., Gregoire, H. and Hittleman, M. 2004. Practicing a pedagogy of hope: Practitioner profiles as tools for grounding and guiding collective reflection in adult, community and youth development. In: *Organizing Reflection*. (pp. 1–26). Hampshire: SAGE Publications.
- Petrie, N. 2014. *Vertical Leadership Development–Part 1: Developing Leaders for a Complex World*. Center for Creative Leadership (CCL): Colorado Springs
- Petrie, N. 2015a. *The How-To of Vertical Leadership Development–Part 2: 30 Experts, 3 Conditions, and 15 Approaches*. CCL: Colorado Springs.
- Petrie, N. 2015b. *Vertical Leadership Development–Part 1 Developing Leaders for a Complex World*. CCL: Colorado Springs.
- Pezzoli, K. and Howe, D. 2001. Planning pedagogy and globalization: A content analysis of syllabi. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 20(3), pp.365-375.
- Picciano, A. G. 2002. Beyond student perceptions: Issues of interaction, presence, and performance in an online course. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Network*. 6(1), 21–40.
- Pieterse, A.; Van Huyssteen, E.; Van Niekerk, W.; Le Roux, A.; Napier, M.; Ndaba, D. and Mahlelela, S. 2016. 'Aligning and targeting spatial investment: Exploring assumption, accomplishments & challenges' Paper presented at the International Winelands Conference. Stellenbosch, 30 March – 1 April 2016.
- Pink, D. H. 2011. *Drive The surprising truth about what motivates us*. New York: Canongate.
- Pohl, C. 2005. Transdisciplinary collaboration in environmental research. *Futures*. 37(10), pp.1159-1178.
- Potgieter, I. L. 2012. *Development of a Career Meta-Competency Model for Sustained employability*. (PhD) University of South Africa.
- Poxon, J. 2001. Shaping the planning profession of the future: the role of planning education. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*. 28(4), pp.563-580.
- Ranga, M. and Etzkowitz, H. 2013. Triple Helix Systems : An Analytical Framework for Innovation Policy and Practice in the Knowledge Society. *Industry and Higher Education*. 27(4), pp.237–262.
- Reed, B. 2007. *A Living Systems Approach to Design*. In: AIA National Convention May 2007 (pp. 1–11). American Institute of Architects.
- Reid, I. 1992. *Narrative Exchanges*. London: Routledge.
- Reitman, F. and Schneer, J. 2003. The Promised Path: A Longitudinal Study of Managerial Careers. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. 18(1), pp. 60-75.
- Reker, G. and Wong, P. 1988. Aging as an individual process: Towards a theory of personal meaning. In: *Emergent Theories of Aging*. New York: Springer, pp. 214-246.
- Rennkamp, B. 2012. *Sustainable development planning in South Africa: a case of over-strategizing?* Cape Town. Unpublished.
- Riessman, C. 2008. *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. London: Sage.

- Rittel, H. and Webber, M. 1973. Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*. 4(2), pp.155-169.
- Ritzdorf, M. 1993. Instruction: The Fairy's Tale: Teaching Planning and Public Policy in a Different Voice. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 12(2), pp.99-106.
- Roberts, G. W. 2010. Advancing new approaches to learning and teaching-introducing appreciative inquiry to a problem-based learning curriculum. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*. 2(January 2010), pp.15-24.
- Roberts, L. 2006. Response – Shifting the lens on organizational life: The added value of positive scholarship. *Academy of Management Review*. 31(2), pp.292-305.
- Rogers, K. S. 2014. Ecological Selves and Organizational Leadership Values that Matter. *South Asian Journal of Business and Management Cases*. 3(1), pp.1-6.
- Rooke, D. and Torbert, W.R. 2005. Seven Transformations of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*. (April 2005).
- Rosan, C. Vale, L. and Sanyal, B. 2012. *Planning Ideas that Matter: Livability, Territoriality, Governance and Reflective Practice*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Rosenthal, M., Breault, R. Austin, Z. and Tsuyuki, R. 2011. "Pharmacists' self-perception of their professional role: insights into community pharmacy culture". *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*. 51(3), pp.363-367.
- Rubinoff, D. 2005. Life histories in cyberspace: life writing as a development tool for rural women. *Geoforum*. 36(1), pp.59-75.
- Russel, W., Wickson, F. and Carew, A. 2008. Transdisciplinarity research: context, contradictions and capacity. *Futures*. 40(5), pp.460-472.
- Rydin, Y. 2011. *The Purpose of Planning: Creating Sustainable Towns and Cities*. (Y. Rydin, Ed.). Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Sager, T. 2009. "Planners' role: torn between dialogical ideals and neo-liberal realities". *European Planning Studies*. 17(1), pp.65-84.
- Sandercock, L. 2004. Towards Planning Imagination for the 21st Century. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 70(3), pp.133-141.
- Sandercock, L. 1997. The planner tamed: Preparing planners for the twenty first century. *Australian Planner*. 34(2), pp.90-95.
- Sandercock, L. 1999. A portrait of postmodern planning: Anti-hero and/or passionate pilgrim?. *Plan Canada*. 39(2), pp.12-15.
- Sandercock, L. 2003. Out of the closet: The power of story in planning. *Planning Theory and Practice*. 4(1), pp.11-28.
- Sartre, J. 2006. *Being and Nothingness*. London: Routledge Classics. First Edition 1943.

- Schein, S. 2014. *The Ecological Worldviews and Post-Conventional Action Logics of Global Sustainability Leaders*. Fielding Graduate University. Unpublished.
- Schein, S. 2015. *A new psychology for sustainable Leadership: The hidden power of ecological world views*. London: Greenleaf Publishing Limited.
- Schoeman, C. and Robinson, P. 2015a. Competencies and Standards Interface between Phase 1 and Phase 2. Pretoria. SACPLAN. Pretoria.
- Schoeman, C. and Robinson, P. 2015b. Professional Examination System: Competencies and Standards Project Phase 2. SACPLAN. Pretoria.
- Schoeman, C. and Robinson, P. 2015c. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure: Competencies and Standards Project Phase 2. SACPLAN. Pretoria.
- Scholz, R. W., Lang, D. J., Wiek, A., Walter, A. and Stauffacher, M. 2006. Transdisciplinary case studies as a means of sustainability learning. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*. 7(3), pp.226–251.
- Schön, D. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London: Maurice Temple Smith.
- Schön, D. 1987. *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schratz, M. and Walker, R. 1998. Towards an Ethnography of Learning: Reflection on Action as an Experience of Experience. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*. 4, pp.197-209.
- Schultze, G. and Miller, C., 2004. The search for meaning and career development. *Career Development International*. 9(2), pp.142-152.
- Schwartz-Shea, P, and Yanow, D. 2012. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Process*. Routledge. New York and London
- Sehested, K. 2009. "Urban planners as network manager and metagovernors". *Planning Theory and Practice*. 10(2), pp.245-263.
- Seidman, I. 2015. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research. A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. 4th Edition. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Seipt, C., Padgham, J., Kulkarni, J. and Awiti, A. 2013. Capacity building for climate change risk management in Africa: Encouraging and enabling research for informed decision-making. *Environmental Development*. 5(1), pp.1–5.
- Seligman, M. E. P. 1999. Positive Social Science. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*. 1(3), pp.181–182.
- Seltzer, E. and Ozawa, C. P. 2002. Clear Signals: Moving on to Planning's Promise. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 22(1), pp.77–86.
- Senge, P. M. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*. New York.: Doubleday Currency.



- Senge, P. 1999. Missing the boat on leadership. *Leader to Leader*. 38, pp.28-30.
- Shaffer, D. W. and Resnick, M. 1999. "Thick" Authenticity: New Media and Authentic Learning. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*. 10(2), pp.195–215.
- Shaw, M., Lee, A. and Williams, R. 2014. Formative journeys of first-year college students: tensions and intersections with intercultural theory. *Higher Education Research & Development*. 4(1), pp.188–204.
- Shepherd, A. and Casgrif, B. 1998. Instruction: Problem-Based Learning: A Bridge Between Planning Education and Planning Practice. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 17(4), pp.348-357.
- Shernoff, D. J. 2007. A Matter of Formative Career Influence: The Works of Mentors. *Thresholds in Education*. 33(1), pp.40–44.
- Shift. 2007. *The 2007 Shift Report: Evidence of a World Transforming*. Unpublished.
- Shum, S. B. and Ruth, D. C. 2012. Learning dispositions and transferable competencies : pedagogy , modelling and learning analytics. In: *2nd International Conference on Learning Analytics & Knowledge*. (pp. 1–10). New York: ACM Press.
- Silverman, D. 1985. *Qualitative Methodology and Sociology*. Aldershot: Gower.
- Silverman, D. 2006. *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.
- Simons, J. 2007. Game Studies – Narrative, Games, and Theory. *The international journal of computer game research*. 7(1) [No pagination]
- Sinek, S. 2009. *How great leaders inspire action*. TED Ideas worth spreading. [Online] [Accessed 29 September 2016]. Available from: [https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\\_sinek\\_how\\_great\\_leaders\\_inspire\\_action](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action)
- Small, R. 2013. *Being, Becoming, and Time in Nietzsche*. The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche. Eds Richardson, J. and Gemes, K. Oxford University Press. Oxford Handbooks Online. [Accessed 13 Sept 2016] Available from: <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199534647.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199534647-e-004>
- Smart, R. and Peterson, C. (1997). Super's Career Stages and the Decision to Change Careers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 51(3), pp.358–374.
- Snowden, D. J. 2002. Complex acts of knowing: paradox and descriptive self-awareness. *Journal of Knowledge Management*. 6(2), pp.100–111.
- Snowden, D.J. and Boone, M. 2007. A Leader's Framework for Decision making. *Harvard Business Review*. (November 2007) pp. 69–76.
- Snowden, D.J. 2013. LAS Conference 2013. *Making Sense of Complexity*. [Accessed 15 March 2017] Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6RfqmTZeIU>
- South African Cities Network. 2016. *State of Cities Report*. Unpublished.

- South African Qualifications Authority. 2007. *Trends in Public Sector Higher Education in South Africa, 1995-2004*, Pretoria: SAQA.
- Stanley, J. 2007. *Gnarly planning: Tools for local and global action*. Brisbane: Emergent Publishing.
- Stein, S. Isaacs, G. and Andrews, T. 2004. Incorporating Authentic Learning Experiences within a University Course. *Studies in Higher Education*. 29(2), pp.239-258.
- Sterner, W. R. 2012. Integrating Existentialism and Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Approach. *The Career Development Quarterly*. 60(2), pp.152-162.
- Stiftel, B. 2005. Supply Side Planning Scholarship. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 25(1), pp. 7-8.
- Stîngu, M. M. 2012. Reflexive practice in teacher education: facts and trends. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 33(1), pp.617-621.
- Stone, A. G., Russell, R. F. and Patterson, K. 2004. Transformational versus servant leadership: a difference in leader focus. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 25(4), pp.349-361.
- Strang, S. E. and Kuhnert, K. W. 2009. Personality and Leadership Developmental Levels as predictors of leader performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 20(3), pp.421-433.
- Sullivan, S. and Crocitto, M. 2007. The Developmental Theories. A Critical Examination of Their Continuing Impact on Careers Research. In A. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook in Career Studies* (pp. 283-309). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.
- Svejenova, S. 2005. The Path with the Heart: Creating the Authentic Career. *Journal of Management Studies*. 42, pp.947-974.
- Sykes, O., Jha-Thakur, U. and Potter, K. 2015. "What's Love Got to Do With It?" Some reflections on the internationalisation of planning education. Mironowicz, I. (Ed) 10th AESOP Heads of Schools Meeting & Plaza for Excellence in Education. Madrid.
- Tait, M. Padgett, M. and Baldwin, T. 1989. Job and life satisfaction: A re-evaluation of the strength of the relationship and gender effects as a function of the date of the study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 74(3), pp. 502-507.
- Tanner. T. 1998. Choosing the Right Subjects in Significant Life Experiences Research. *Environmental Education Research*. 4(4), pp 399-417.
- Tasan-Kok, T. Bertolini, L., Oliveira e Costa, S., Lothan, H., Carvalho, H., Desmet, M., De Blust, S., Devos, T., Kimyon, D., Zoete, J. and Ahmad, P. 2016. "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee": giving voice to planning practitioners. *Planning Theory & Practice*. 17(4), pp.621-651.
- Tasan-Kok, T. and Oranje, M. (Ed). Forthcoming 2017. *From student to urban planner: Young practitioners' reflections on contemporary ethical challenges*. Routledge. Forthcoming.
- Taylor, A. and Greve, H. 2006. Superman or the Fantastic Four? Knowledge combination and experience in innovative teams. *Academy of Management Journal*. 49(4), pp.723-740.

- Thatcher, D. 2013. "The professional association's role". *Cities*. 32, pp.167-170.
- Thibodeau, P. H. and Boroditsky, L. 2011. Metaphors We Think With: The Role of Metaphor in Reasoning. *PLoS ONE*. 6(2), e16782.
- Thomas, I., Hegarty, K. and Holdsworth, S. 2012. The Education for Sustainability Jig-Saw Puzzle: Implementation in Universities. *Creative Education*. 3(1), pp.840–846.
- Throgmorton, J. 1992. Planning as Persuasive Story telling About the Future: Negotiating an Electric Power Rate Settlement in Illinois. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 12, pp. 17-31.
- Throgmorton, J. 2003. Planning as Persuasive Storytelling in a Global-scale web of relationships. *Planning Theory*. 2(2), pp.125-151.
- Throgmorton, J. 2007. Inventing 'the greatest': Constructing Louisville's future out of story and clay. *Planning Theory*. 6(3), pp.237-262.
- Tjepkema, S. 2002. The Learning Infrastructure of Self-managing Work Teams. Twente University. Unpublished.
- Tobergte, D. R. and Curtis, S. (2013). The Saliency of a Career Calling Among College Students: Exploring Group Differences and Links to Religiousness, Life Meaning, and Life Satisfaction. *The Career Development Quarterly*. 53(9), pp.1689–1699.
- Todes, A. 2012. New Directions in Spatial Planning? Linking Strategic Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Development. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 32(4), pp.400–414.
- Todes, A. and Mngadi, N. 2007. *City Planners*. Report for the Human Science Research Council Study on Scarce Skills for the Department of Labour. (August 2007) Johannesburg.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. 1991. *The Lord of the Rings*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Tomlinson, R., Rizvi, A., Salinas, R., Garry, S., Pehr, J. and Rodriguez, F. 2010. The Influence of Google on Urban Policy in Developing Countries. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 34(1), pp.174–189.
- Torbert, W. R. 2004. *Action Inquiry: The Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Torbert, W. R. and Livne-tarandach, R. 2009. Reliability and Validity Tests of the Harthill Leadership Development Profile in the Context of Developmental Action Inquiry Theory , Practice and Method. *Integral Review*. 5(2), pp.133–151.
- Trevithick, P. 2003. Effective relationship-based practice: a theoretical exploration. *Journal of Social Work Practice*. 17(2), 163–176.
- Tubbs, S. L. and Schulz, E. 2006. Exploring a Taxonomy of Global Leadership Competencies and. *The Journal of American Academy of Business, Cambridge*. 8(2), pp.29–35.

- Turok, I. and Parnell, S. 2009. Reshaping cities, rebuilding nations: The role of national urban policies. *Urban Forum*. 20(2), pp.157-174.
- Urban Dictionary. [Online] Available from: <http://www.urbandictionary.com>
- United Nations. 2015. *Zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. [Accessed November 20, 2016], Available from: <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2015/06/zero-draft-outcome-document-adopt-post-2015-development-agenda/>
- Van den Haar, D. and Hosking, D. M. 2004. Evaluating Appreciative Inquiry: A Relational Constructionist Perspective. *Human Relations*. 57(8), pp.1017–1036.
- Van der Merwe, L. and Verwey, A. 2007. Leadership meta-competencies for the future world of work: an explorative study in the retail industry. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*. 5(2), pp.33–41.
- Van Eijnatten, F. M. and Putnik, G. D. 2004. Chaos, complexity, learning, and the learning organization: Towards a chaordic enterprise. *The Learning Organization*. 11(6), pp.418–429.
- Van Eijnatten, F. M., van Galen, M. C. and Fitzgerald, L. A. 2003. The art of chaos-informed transformation. *The Learning Organization*. 10(6), pp.361–367.
- Van Geert, P. and Fischer Kurt, W. 2009. Dynamic Systems and the Quest for Individual-Based Models of Change and Development. In: J. P. Spencer, M. S. C. Thomas, & J. M. McClelland (Eds.), *Toward a Unified Theory of Development* (pp. 313-). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Van Hulst, M. 2012. Storytelling, a model of and a model for planning. *Planning Theory*. 11(3), pp.299–318.
- Van Huyssteen, E. and Oranje, M. 1998. *The [Hammanskraal Campus] Mission or vice versa*. Paper presented at the SA Planning History Conference at Hammanskraal. Unpublished.
- Van Huyssteen, E. 1997. *Borders, Boundaries and barriers: A Narrative on Hammanskraal/Temba*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Van Huyssteen, E., Biermann, S., Naudé, A. and Le Roux, A. 2009. Advances in spatial analysis to support a more nuanced reading of the South African space economy. *Urban Forum*, 20(2). [No pagination]
- Van Huyssteen, E., Green, C., Paige-Green, P., Oranje, M., Berrisford, S. and McKelly, D. 2016. Impacts on Integrated Spatial and Infrastructure Planning. In: Scholes, R., Lochner, P., Schreiner, G., Snyman-Van der Walt, L. and de Jager, M. (eds.). 2016. *Shale Gas Development in the Central Karoo: A Scientific Assessment of the Opportunities and Risks*. Pretoria: CSIR. Available at <http://seasgd.csir.co.za/scientific-assessment-chapters/> pp 18-68
- Van Huyssteen, E., Mans, G., Le Roux, A., Maritz, J. and Ngidi, M. 2013. *Reaching development outcomes through a dedicated focus on cities, towns and settlements*. StepSA Policy Brief. Accessed Online on 7 March 2017 at [http://stepsa.org/pdf/implications/urban\\_and\\_town\\_growth\\_in\\_sa/CSIR%20Policy%20Brief%20%20Reaching%20development%20outcomes%20through%20a%20dedicated%20focus.pdf](http://stepsa.org/pdf/implications/urban_and_town_growth_in_sa/CSIR%20Policy%20Brief%20%20Reaching%20development%20outcomes%20through%20a%20dedicated%20focus.pdf)

- Van Huyssteen, E., Oranje, M. C., Robinson, S., and Makoni, E. (2009). South Africa's City Regions: A Call For Contemplation ... And Action, *Urban Forum* (20), pp. 175-195.
- Van Huyssteen, E and Oranje, M. 2008. From promising preaching to piloting the promise and teaching what is promising in planning practice. In: Michael Burns & Alex Weaver (Eds.). *Exploring Sustainability Science: A Southern African Perspective*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, pp 1-38.
- Van Marrewijk, M. 2003. Concepts and Definitions of CSR and Corporate Sustainability: Between Agency and Communion. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 44, pp.895-905.
- Van Noort, R. 2004. *Self-directing and self-regulating: In search of skills characteristic to the new professional*. Knowledge Creation Diffusion Utilization.
- Van Opstal, M. and Hugé, J. 2012. Knowledge for sustainable development: A worldviews perspective. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*. 15(3), pp.687-709.
- Van Zee, K. D. 2011. *Emerging Adults And A-HA Moments: Practical Theological Description Of Their Formative Experiences Involving Crisis, Relationships, And Practices*. Vanderbilt University. Unpublished.
- Vance, C. 2005. The personal quest for building global competence: A taxonomy of self-initiating career path strategies for gaining business experience abroad. *Journal of World Business*. 40(4), pp.374-385.
- Vaughan, F. 2002. What is Spiritual Intelligence?. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. 42(2), pp.16-33.
- Veenman, M. V. J., Wilhelm, P. and Beishuizen, J. J. 2004. The relation between intellectual and metacognitive skills from a developmental perspective. *Learning and Instruction*. 14(1), 89-109.
- Verdonschot, S. G. M. and Keursten, P. 2006. *Design Principles For Knowledge Productivity*. In: 7th International Conference on HRD Research and Practice Across Europe (p. 15). Tilburg: Kessels & Smit.
- Verhaeghe, A. 2010. The Development of a Sustainability Index for a Knowledge driven Organisation. *Management Today*. 28(3), pp.37-38.
- Verma, N. 1993. Metaphor and Analogy as Elements of a Theory of Similarity for Planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 13(1), pp.13-25.
- Visser, W. and Crane, A. 2010. Corporate Sustainability and the Individual : Understanding What Drives Sustainability Professionals as Change Agents. *Social Science Research Network Electronic Journal*. (February), pp.1-36.
- Vogler, C. 2007. *The Writer's Journey. Mythic Structure for Writers*. Third Edition. Studio City, Los Angeles: Micheal Wiese Productions.
- Volckmann, R. 2007. Transdisciplinarity: Basarab Nicolescu talks with Russ Wolckmann. *Integral Review*. 4, pp. 73-90.

- Watson, V. 2003. Conflicting rationalities: implications for planning theory and ethics. *Planning Theory and Practice*. 4(4), pp.395-408.
- Watson, V. 2014. Co-production and collaboration in planning: The difference. *Planning Theory & Practice*. 15(1), pp.62-76.
- Watson, V. and Agbola, B. (2013). Who will plan Africa's cities? *Africa Research Institute CounterPoints*. (1), pp.1-5.
- Watson, V. and Odendaal, N. 2012. Changing Planning Education in Africa: The Role of the Association of African Planning Schools. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 33(1), pp.96-107.
- Watts, A. 1989. *The Book On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are*. New York: Random House.
- Webber, M. 1983. The myth of rationality: development planning reconsidered. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*. 10(1), pp.89-99.
- Wei, C. W., Tung, H-H., Lin, C-F., Sun, C-C. and Shih, S-N. 2011. "Self-role perception of nurse practitioners in northern Taiwan". *Journal of Nursing*. 58(2), pp.22-30.
- Wenger, E. 1998. Communities of practice and social learning systems : the career of a concept. In: C. Blackmore (Ed.), *Social Learning Systems and Communities of Practice* (pp. 179-198). London: Springer-Verlang and The Open University.
- Wiewel, W. and Lieber, M. 1998. Goal Achievement, Relationship Building, and Incrementalism: The Challenges of University-Community Partnerships. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 17, pp. 291-301.
- Wigfield, A. and Eccles, J. S. 2000. Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), pp.68-81.
- Wilber, K. 1997. Integral Art and Literary Theory. In: *The Eye of Spirit: An Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad*. (pp.456). London: Shambhala Publications Inc.
- Wilber, K. 2007. *The Entegral Vision. A Very Short Introduction to the Revolutionary Integral Approach to Life, Fod, the Universe and Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Winterton, J., Delamare-Le Deist, F., & Stringfellow, E. 2005. *Typology of knowledge, skills and competences: Clarification of the concept and prototype*. Research report Cedefop/Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP.
- Yanow, D and Schwartz-Shea, P, eds. 2006. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Yorks, L. and Kasl, E. 2002. Toward a Theory and Practice for Whole-Person Learning: Reconceptualizing Experience and the Role of Affect. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52(3), pp.176-192.
- Zehner, R. 1999, September. Tracking planners' activities as part of the education review process: New South Wales from 1979 to 1996'. In Australia-New Zealand Association of Planning Schools Conference in Darwin, NT.

- Zika, S. and Chamberlain, K. 1992. On the relation between meaning in life and psychological well-being. *British Journal of Psychology*. 83(1), pp.133-145.
- Zikic, J. and Hall, D. T. 2009. Toward a More Complex View of Career Exploration. *The Career Development Quarterly*. 58(2), 181–191.
- Zwarenstein, M., Reeves, S., Russell, A., Kenaszchuk, C., Conn, L. G., Miller, K.-L. and Thorpe, K. E. 2007. Structuring communication relationships for interprofessional teamwork (SCRIPT): a cluster randomized controlled trial. *Trials*. 8(1), pp.23.



---

# ANNEXURE A

---

## Challenges and transitions in the South African planning context

*With all of these positive developments, apartheid slain, a planning profession growing in stature, enabling legislation and policies and a government in support of long-term planning, it would seem that the scene is set for planning, plans and planners to bring about major changes in the country and to dramatically alter the country for the better.  
(Oranje, 2012 in Oranje, 2014:5)*

*Professions differ not only in the skills they represent, but also in many other aspects. Sometimes these characteristics are related to the period during which the profession emerged, the nature of society at the time ...  
(McLoughlin, 1973:81 in Oranje, 1997:33)*



## Contents

---

A1.	Introduction .....	A1
A2.	<i>Significant events, challenges and transitions .....</i>	<i>A3</i>
A2.1	<i>Start of racial segregation and origins of a technical rational planning approach (@PlanSA_1-4)</i>	<i>A3</i>
A2.2	<i>Entrenching racial segregation and establishment of planning as a (tainted) practice (@PlanSA_5-7)</i>	<i>A4</i>
A2.3	<i>Apartheid-focused spatial policies and bureaucracy and apartheid-influenced planning (@PlanSA_8-11).....</i>	<i>A5</i>
A2.4	<i>Rising political challenges and tensions and planning torn between compliance and critique (@PlanSA_12-14).....</i>	<i>A6</i>
A2.5	<i>Times of change, negotiations and transformation and post-Apartheid reconstruction planning (@PlanSA_15-18).....</i>	<i>A8</i>
A2.6	<i>The "then" future (post-interviews) and current challenges (@PlanSA_19-24) .....</i>	<i>A11</i>
A3.	Conclusion.....	A12

## Table of Figures

---

Figure A-1: Time-Span Overview SA Planning Context (See Fold Out Diagram).....	A2
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## A1. INTRODUCTION

A brief overview has been developed of the context of the broader planning and development practice in South Africa. This was done to contextualise the ordinary and ‘special worlds’ (Campbell, 2008; Vogler, 2007) of the practice of planning in South Africa within which the various calls to action and subsequent quests discussed in this study unfolded. These include:

- ⌘ The quest of this enquiry (Part 1); as well as,
- ⌘ Work-life narratives and adventures on planning’s quest for participants in this study (Part 2).

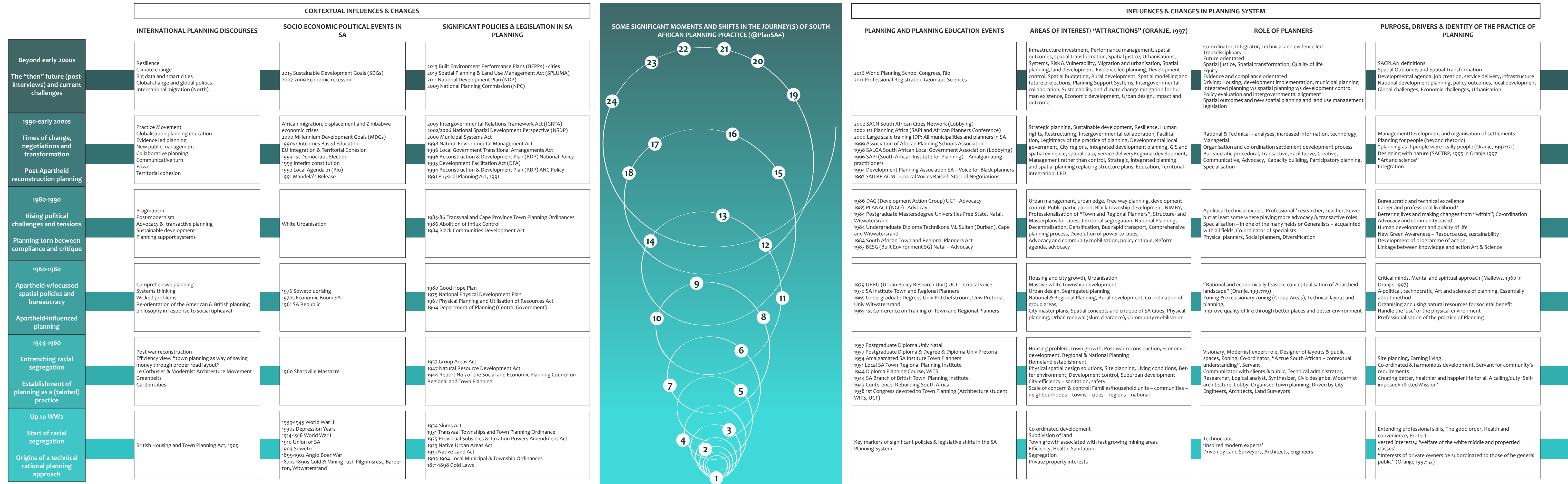
The aim of this section is not to provide an extensive historical overview of the practice of planning in South Africa (see Oranje, 1997; Mabin, 1992; Muller, 1992); rather it is aimed at providing a relevant historical and contextual backdrop for the explorations within the study and the work-life reflections of the study participants.

The exploration entailed considering key events, focus areas of the practice, views or perspectives related to the quest, the diverse (and conflicting) roles of planners and growth and development within the practice, with an understanding of different quests in the context of development challenges and ongoing attempts at societal and governance transformation at large during a particular stage.

The overview of the South African planning context was developed on the foundation of Oranje’s PhD Thesis (1997), which is the single most extensive and nuanced overview of the language game of planning, the actors involved in the game, the key attractions and rules, as well as influences on the game that is available for the time period 1800 to the late 1990s. Given the extensive and deep delving into a wide range of primary and secondary sources of the different time periods upon which this overview was developed, it was used as a point of departure for the historical context. The historical overview was supplemented by primarily making use of the analyses of the late 1990s to the later 2000s by Oranje and van Huyssteen (2007) which considers the key tenets, role players, focus areas and challenges that influenced planning in the three tier and inter-governmental planning context of the new South Africa. The figure below presents a summarised time-span overview of the South African planning context.

# TIME-SPAN OVERVIEW SA PLANNING CONTEXT

SOURCES: Largely based on historical overview developed by Oranje, 1997 with permission of author; as well as overview of specific time periods in planning in Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007; South African History On-line, 2016; and Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, 2016.



## **A2. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, CHALLENGES AND TRANSITIONS**

To provide insights into some of the significant moments (and also shifts) within the unfolding of events in a more relational manner, a few key 'histories' that can also serve as reference points for some of the experiences highlighted in the participants' work-life narratives have been expanded in a bit more detail. These are marked on the diagram as @PlanSA\_1-24 and discussed in some more depth below. Where relevant to the participants' work-life adventures in Section 5, significant events and transition moments are 'tagged' for easy reference and described in more detail below.

The period that formed the time-span of the interviews was indeed characterised by many challenges, turmoil and significant transitions in society, largely due to the socio-political context and implications of the South African history, societal and locational contexts and specifically also Apartheid. This was evident in the nature of the development challenges associated with cities and towns, inequalities and segregation, poverty, capacity, and resource access, but also with various endeavours and even opposing practice communities aimed at shaping the future.

In Figure A1.1: @Time-Span Overview SA Planning Context, some of the interrelated socio-political and economic influences, certain of the international and major national policy and regulatory interventions within planning, as well as key focus areas of the time within the practice and education environment are highlighted. Significant moments and transitions within the planning system and regulatory environment, in planning education and the profession are outlined in more detail to illustrate some of the challenges, struggles, shifts and contributions within the communities of practice during these times of change and transition.

The timespan diagram is used to illustrate the inter-play between contextual influences such as critical socio-political events, international discourses of the time, as well as various actors and initiatives during this time. Significant events as well as policy and legislation moments are also used as proxy reminders of the reasons, challenges and impacts of these interplays on the timespan diagram. Where relevant, significant moments are also 'tagged' in examples or snippets of the participant work-life adventures as outlined through the thesis.

The use of a time-span diagram does not suggest that inter-relationships are linear or rational. It merely provides a perspective to contextualise work-life narratives and the unfolding nature of events, change and of being, becoming and contribution of participants in the practice.

### **A2.1 Start of racial segregation and origins of a technical rational planning approach (@PlanSA\_1-4)**

To provide the background for the unfolding work-life experiences, some of the earlier shape-shifting experiences, moments and events that have significantly influenced the traditions of the practice of planning in South Africa are set out below. One of the first mentioned is the need for orderly township development and management of rapid town growth associated with the discovery of gold and diamonds from the late 1860s to the 1890s (pre-1940s) (see @PlanSA\_1), as well as with displaced families and migration to mining towns in the hope of finding employment

after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) (see @PlanSA\_2). A foundation was laid for a modernist and technical rational approach (Oranje, 1997:37-42, Davenport, 1989), with civil engineers and land surveyors playing a key role in establishing the basis of a development control orientated dimension of town planning as practice in South Africa.

The time period after the consolidation of the Union of South Africa and World War I was marked by the start of racial segregation (Oranje, 1997:41-43) and the introduction of new township development and planning legislation (Oranje, 1979:42-53) influenced by the British Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 (Oranje, 1997:47-52). It was during these early periods (@PlanSA\_3) that many voices were raising a "great concern over the future of cities" (Mabin 1992:4, Parnell et al., 1993:102-106 in Oranje, 1997:43), calling for rational comprehensive town plans/schemes (Muller, 1996:5-6 in Oranje, 1997:49) and "'scientific' and 'artistic' principles to layouts" (Oranje, 1997:44).

Amidst rising awareness of the concept of garden cities, beautiful cities, and the role of "the expert Gentlemen to take care of planning", the first planning associations in South Africa were established (Oranje, 1979:47-52). Whilst planning was increasingly steered towards bureaucracy, there was also acknowledgement by the likes of F.K. Webber (the President of the Town Planning Association of Transvaal in 1932) who viewed planning as part of a greater aim, namely "the advancement of humanity" (Webber, 1932:298 in Oranje, 1997:74).

By the time of World War II (See@PlanSA\_4), the practice of planning in South Africa was characterised by opposing but equally technocratic positions. On the one hand, a more 'timid' sentiment for order and zoning and, on the other hand, a more 'radical' call from the 'Modern Movement in Architecture', "to create a better world" (Oranje, 1997:57-61), with increasing calls for not only viewing town planning as an art, but also as a social science that could actively participate in the battle of social forces (i.e. through addressing appalling living conditions). A context that formed the backdrop for calls to action for some of the older participants in the study, who started their work-life experiences in disciplines such as land surveying and architecture during a time when planning in South Africa was finding its feet.

## **A2.2 Entrenching racial segregation and establishment of planning as a (tainted) practice (@PlanSA\_5-7)**

By the end of World War II, South Africa faced two major planning issues that henceforth play an important role throughout history (See Figure A1.1 @PlanSA\_5). The first was a major need for housing during a time in which "a substantial number of players in the planning game displayed, for the first time, a genuine concern with the living conditions of the Africans, the long commuting distances Africans suffered and seriously pondered ways to attain a more equitable, better life for all" (Oranje, 1997:83) and, the second, a focus on the coordinated use of natural resources that kick-started national and regional planning (Natural Resources Development Act, 1947). By 1944, the first Postgraduate Diploma in Planning in South Africa (at the University of the Witwatersrand) and the first South African Branch of the British Town Planning Institute were established (Oranje, 1997).

The 1950s marked a significant step in the entrenchment of racial segregation through the introduction of the Group Areas Act, 1957 (@PlanSA\_6) and the notion of 'Reserves' and 'Homelands', contributing to a growing tension in society and the practice of planning in South Africa (van Huyssteen, 1997:10-27). As stated by Friedmann: "Even Karl Mannheim misunderstood the nature of planning... He forgot that planning could become a tool in the hands of both dictators and democrats, to be used or misused by either" (Friedmann, 1959:328 in Oranje, 1979:98).

However, it is also during this time that planning found a new respectability and during which a number of participants found their calling to the practice. A time during which more postgraduate diplomas and the first postgraduate degree was established (@SAPlan\_7) due to the guidance and influence of prominent practitioners in the field such as Prof Wilfred Mallows. They were said to have had a profound and inspirational impact on "establishing planning as a separate academic/mental discipline, no longer an offshoot of architecture, surveying and/or engineering, albeit one in which these and 'all other technologies' had to be meshed/coordinated... [a] mental and spiritual approach to planning ... giving it a rigorous, disciplined, intellectually defensible foundation and methodology ... [with a] focus on the future ..." (Mallows 1965a:14 and 1965a:36 in Oranje, 1997:116).

### **A2.3 Apartheid-focused spatial policies and bureaucracy and apartheid-influenced planning (@PlanSA\_8-11)**

The social impact of Apartheid was becoming starkly evident in South Africa's urban areas (@PlanSA\_8) as well as in increasing racial inequality and in events that caused international outcries, such as the Sharpsville massacre on 21 March 1960 (Davenport, 1989; Oranje, 1997). As if in a different level of reality, the apartheid endeavour also increased in momentum and even more so in the number of rules and regulations that had to be peculiarly staggered to make it 'work', receiving more impetus with the formation of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 and the national Department of Planning in 1964 (Oranje, 1997:114-120). The latter made provision for national and regional planning, co-ordination of group areas and laid the foundation for an even stronger government hand in the processes and outcomes of technical planning processes (e.g. establishing the 1967 Physical Planning and Utilisation of Resources Act) and control of resources (van Huyssteen, 1997:37-45; Oranje, 1997:114-120). With the boom in the economy (especially for the white middle class in South Africa), township establishment, urbanisation and suburban city growth reached new heights. This was also a time for canvassing and providing for town and regional planning capacity and education (Oranje, 1997:114-120) – a time period in which a number of the older participants in the study were called to the practice to get involved in quite different ways.

It was a time (@PlanSA\_9) when there was an increased demand and emphasis on the need for technical experts, evident *inter alia* in the establishment of three new undergraduate courses across the country and upgrading of two postgraduate diplomas to postgraduate master's degree qualifications (Oranje, 1997:103). It was during this phase, of planning becoming more 'known' as field of study in South Africa in the 1970s, with an increased focus on metropolitan

planning and how that related to themes such as conservation and shopping centre development, whilst the implications of the political situation were largely negated (Oranje, 1997: 130), that a number of participants in this study kick-started their journeys in the practice.

However, whilst the a-political technical expert role of planners was emphasised in support of government machinery and development processes, some criticism, as well as the focus on research and policy advocacy, started increasing by the 1970s (@PlanSA\_10, see Oranje, 1997:112-120). This formed the backdrop to a strong call to action for a number of the participants in the study who were practicing or entered the field at that time, and led to strong critique of the inequalities and inefficiencies arising from continued development in support of the low density suburban dream and the apartheid induced urban form, where black urbanisation was regarded as 'supposed to be temporary' and townships were developed on the outskirts of cities (Oranje, 1997:112-120). The planning fraternity would become increasingly divided between those opting to operate in the government system, those opting to bring about change from 'within the system', and those opting to advocate against the system (van Huyssteen, 1997:67-93).

The hand of central government was strengthened (@PlanSA\_11) with the establishment of the new National Department of Planning and the Environment, and the release of the National Physical Development Plan in 1975 that provided for regional planning, the introduction of the decentralisation policy and optimal utilisation of resources (Oranje, 1997:125; van Huyssteen, 1997:67-77). By 1980, when the Good Hope Plan was released, some official acknowledgement that the future of the former Homeland areas was intertwined with South Africa's economic system was at least emerging (Oranje, 1997:125-126).

#### **A2.4 Rising political challenges and tensions and planning torn between compliance and critique (@PlanSA\_12-14)**

Increased societal complexities, urbanisation and a proliferation of technocratic procedures in the development of cities and towns, township establishment and housing development, infrastructure and transport provision, and city management went hand-in-hand with the professionalization of the practice of (bureaucratic) planning (with the promulgation of the Town and Regional Planners Act, 1984) (@PlanSA\_12), and the institution of yet another series of postgraduate qualifications (Oranje, 1997:138).

As reflected on by Oranje (2014:4): "Save for a few isolated spurts of hope, belief and dreams of 'a better world through planning', the town planning profession became a handmaiden of the state, utter-eager to please and to be accepted as a profession. In the process it was becoming closely associated with the few, the wealthy and the powers that be, while at the same time becoming deeply tarnished with the hate-and-fear-drenched darkness that Apartheid, and especially the Apartheid city, was for the 'en-trenched' and excluded 'many' (Mabin & Smit, 1992; Muller, 1983; Slabbert, 1994; Smit, 1989; Parnell & Mabin, 1995)."

The internal conflicts and dilemmas in the practice of planning were increasing (@PlanSA13) as most planners actively 'played the game' of development control and segregation whilst others took the route of adding their voices to the rising resistance advocating for societal and spatial

justice, equality, better living conditions and the abolition of segregatory land and planning legislation (Oranje, 1997:128-135), with many actively involved in creating and supporting organisations such as the Built Environment Action Group (BESG) in 1983 in the former Natal, the Development Action Group (DAG) in 1986 at the University of Cape Town, and PLANACT in 1985 in Johannesburg. The increased 'schism' between the 'context-aware' planners (the latter in line with the 1970s and 1980s Marxist critique of planning) and 'client-driven' planners increased (Oranje, 1997:133). However, some of the latter argued in hindsight that they were trying to make a contribution from within the system (Oranje, 1997:132), trying to turn politicians away from policies such as influx control and support service delivery (van Huyssteen, 1999:67-77) and actually attempted "to soften the blows the Apartheid system was delivering" (Oranje, 1997:132).

One of the major focus areas within the practice of planning during the 1980s was the growing realities of urbanisation and resultant, often technical and development control orientated interventions to address that (@PlanSA\_14), which went hand-in-hand with greater devolution of power to the larger local municipalities/cities (Oranje, 1997:126-129). This included attempts to address growing urbanisation, for example through an unprecedented 'development freeze' in the Witwatersrand (today's Gauteng) in 1980 for two years to enable large scale freeway planning; the promulgation of the Black Community Development Act, 1984 and new Planning Ordinances recognising the need for black township development outside the former Homeland areas; the introduction of forward planning through comprehensive structure plans and guide plans to support metropolitan and regional planning; the abolition of Influx Control in 1986 and associated increase in black township development and informal development; an increased focus on integrated transport and land development (with an increased emphasis also on geographic information systems and models); demands for public participation and the to be expected NIMBY (not in my back yard) phenomena in land development and land use change applications; as well as an interesting move to raise public awareness of the 'profession' (see the discussion of the time period in Oranje, 1997:129-134).

The state of planning in South Africa during this time is summed up appropriately by Hanson: "To date town planning in South Africa has rarely gone beyond the recording of physical data and the consequent general zoning in an area and density of population of the constituent parts of the town. The vitality and the ever-changing structure of the town in accordance with overriding social and economic changes are factors which have been seriously neglected. The result is no plan at all, but merely a sharp reflection of the schisms and class distinctions to which South African society is particularly susceptible. We have not solved or even attempted to solve the problems which our social habits and attitudes automatically raise for us" (Hanson, 1994b:191 in Oranje, 1997:76).



## **A2.5 Times of change, negotiations and transformation and post-Apartheid reconstruction planning (@PlanSA\_15-18)**

By the 1990s the wind of change and excitement for the dawn of a new era in South Africa was tangible (@PlanSA\_15) with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison (1991), the series of CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) negotiations, the passing of the Interim Constitution for a democratic South Africa in 1993 and, of course, the first democratic elections on 27 April 1994 (Oranje, et al., 2000 and Davenport and Saunders, 2000). In the practice of planning, the focus shifted to post-Apartheid reconstruction with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1996) adopted as official policy. High on the planning and development agendas were amending planning legislation and policy frameworks, addressing backlogs for housing and service delivery, facilitating instead of restricting development, and the democratisation of planning processes to provide people with a voice and access to local government (in most cases for the first time).

The planning playing field was facing major challenges and a re-organisation of the planning system and saw the introduction of: (i) inclusive and developmental local government (through the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA), 1996); (ii) democratic, developmental, integrated and strategic planning processes (through the Development Facilitation Act (DFA), 1995 and LGTA); (iii) democratic local plans in the form of spatially just Land Development Objectives (LDOs) and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs); (iv) restitution of land rights; as well as, (v) a three sphere non-hierarchical system of national, provincial and local government with huge demands on intergovernmental collaboration and alignment of priorities, plans and budgets (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007; Oranje, 1997:147-160). In addition to socio-political induced changes, the agenda was also substantially influenced by sustainability discourses, brought by new environmental management legislation and initiatives such as the Rio Declaration of Sustainable Development in 1992, Local Agenda 21 (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007; Oranje, Harrison et al., 2000). Institutional transformation and policy development was high on the agenda with the establishment of new municipalities, nine new provinces, with land development and land reform driven by the newly established Department of Land and Regional Affairs (DLRA), and more autonomous provincial and municipal planning supported by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007; Oranje & Merrifield, 2010; Oranje, 1997). A time of excitement, but also a time of substantial institutional restructuring and change, and also a time of rethinking practices, land development standards and setting grants and subsidies in place to facilitate service provision to the poorest of the poor (for instance, the Housing Subsidy to facilitate access to government promised housing to households living under certain income bands; and the setting in place of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant to facilitate service delivery especially to indigent households).

The time of negotiated settlement also provided some space for opposing voices in the practice and circles of planning networks to meet, clash, negotiate, re-negotiate and reach some agreements on new ways forward (@PlanSA\_16). From 1992 to 1996, in an interesting series of events (eloquently described in much detail by Oranje, 1997:163-168), the divisions between the mostly a-political technically orientated South African Institute for Town and Regional Planners

(SAITRP) and a much smaller number of voices from the more critical planning fraternity and specifically African planners were set on the table in much more formal ways, with the establishment of the Development Planning Association of South Africa to represent the latter groups (Oranje, 1997:163-166). Through a process of official negotiations a settlement was reached and the South African Planning Institution (SAPI) was established as a much more inclusive and legitimate voice for planners at the time, addressing key issues of opening up the profession to black planners, the ethical position of planning and the review of professional practices and reform of planning education in line with the fundamental shifts in the South African planning system (Oranje, 1997:165-166).

As reflected upon by a politician at the time: "They (the members of the town and regional planning profession) were always very conservative, but also very progressive when the time was right, especially since 1989, when the De Klerk-government began moving in a reform-minded direction" (André Fourie, NP MP South Africa (1995:32) translated by Oranje, 1997:146).

The practice of planning was, as eloquently described by Oranje (2014:5) was left: "in a precarious position – not just as to 'what it had done', but also, whether it was able to assist in undoing the damage, given what its competencies were and where, how and to what intent these capacities were developed (Oranje, 1997). Adding a further layer to this complex situation was the presence of a body of progressive planners, many of them (the younger ones) trained in planning programmes where apartheid and the apartheid state were strongly critiqued, and a few older ones, who had over the years made clear their disdain of and opposition to the prevailing unequal and unfair system (see Mabin 1991a; Muller 1991; Oranje & Berrisford 2012; Smit 1989)." It was a time where reflection was intense and the focus was just as much internal (caught up in resolving its inner struggles and tensions (Oranje, 2014:5)) whilst also needing to make much required contributions in the 'new South Africa', bring about internal changes and dealing with a rapidly changing planning system and context.

With the new millennium, major changes and increased complexity to embed the practice of integrated development planning in newly formed wall-to-wall municipalities (@SAPlan\_17) (requiring every municipality to develop an Integrated Development Plan, accompanied by a Spatial Development Framework and a whole set of environmental, infrastructure and other sector plans) put the practice of planning central in local government development and provided a huge impetus for large scale capacity building, 're-training', and an increase in the demand for training and especially for mid-career training (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007; Van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2012). This went hand in hand with the international discourses on collaborative planning, moving towards a great emphasis on the role of planners as facilitators and for communicative approaches. However as Oranje states (1997:170), "while this development represents progress in a spiritual sense, through the dignity and self-respect the participants gain", the cost of time and lack of strategic investment direction was evident in the lack of the much needed development facilitation and speedy service delivery roll-out to address dire backlogs. Tensions were evident in increasing levels of compliance orientated intricate intergovernmental planning processes (van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2007 embedded in the

discourses and multitude of performance agreements brought by the new public management agenda (Barzeley, 2001 and Christiaens, 1999).

Changes gave rise to rather complex and highly intensive annual processes to enable intergovernmental planning and alignment between the three spheres of government and to various initiatives and planning instruments aimed at addressing the major issues of unemployment, sustainable urbanisation, economic development and imbalances of the past (van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2011; Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007). Whilst South African policies were regarded as highly innovative, practical investment and location decisions, as well as financial viability implications of rolling out large scale services and housing in former Apartheid townships, were soon to cause some challenges about transformation, city form, sustainability and spatial justice (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007; Oranje & Merrifield, 2010).

The introduction of a whole new planning system and roll-out thereof within a range of newly established and/or restructured municipalities brought about not only a renewed interest in the range of masters' courses in planning (@PlanSA\_18), but large scale development of planning guidelines and the roll-out of national capacity building and training initiatives on the new ethos and approaches in planning (i.e. to managers and planners, spatial development planners, municipal managers, councillors and sector specialists – engineers, treasurers, environmentalists, etc. of the more than 240 local municipalities, district municipalities and metros). The roll-out of the new IDP process and guidelines were spearheaded by the Decentralised Development Planning Task Team (DDP) of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) in collaboration with one of the international donors, the German Technical Corporation (GTZ).

The training and development of new qualifications in planning were happening hand-in-hand with the shift to Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in South Africa (an initiative that was driven by the South African Qualifications Authority SAQA and in which Higher Learning Education Institutions took part in setting industry standards through Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs). In support of capacity building and to open the profession up (especially to planners who merely had a diploma qualification), the roll-out of in-service training and modular qualification development for IDP, as well as LED, was supported through the Local Government and Water Sector Education Training Authority (LGWSETA, also supported by GTZ) (van Huyssteen et al., 2010 and 2013). In addition to capacity building, these interventions also resulted in the opening up of the higher education sector with the inclusion of former black universities, the transformation of former Technical Colleges to Universities of Technologies and thus the addition of a range of new undergraduate degree qualifications, and the resultant process of setting standards for professional qualifications and continued education by the South African Council for Planners (the replacement of the former South African Council for Town and Regional Planners) (Schoeman and Robinson, 2015a, b, c).

However, the major emphasis on setting standards for qualifications, the generation of appropriate outputs seems once again to be going hand-in-hand with an effort to innovate, capture and then 'mould' the developmental and transformative spirit in rules, standards and tick-boxes of skills, knowledge and values. The question could be asked whether re-orientation of

the planning philosophy called for more than two decades earlier (See Muller, 1983 in Oranje 1997:121) may have been a case of too little too late.

## **A2.6 The "then" future (post-interviews) and current challenges (@PlanSA\_19-24)**

By 2010 it was evident that the country was facing major challenges and increasing complexities with service delivery and local government capacity, a lack of direction because of land use and spatial planning legislation not being promulgated and challenging economic and employment conditions. However, it was also a time of excitement around the establishment of a National Planning Commission and the development of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, released in 2011 (@PlanSA\_19). The plan included a chapter dedicated to human settlements and spatial planning, focused on climate change and issues rising from the new resilience discourse (NDP, 2011), and captured public imagination with participatory processes and clever use of stories to position the plan. However, it mostly remained fine policy objectives with little capacity to drive intergovernmental planning and galvanize much needed investment and developmental governance (Pieterse et al., 2016). Some of the many focus areas in the planning field (@PlanSA\_20) which were strongly supported through a range of funding mechanisms and a project implementation drive aimed at addressing key government priorities during this time were that of (i) housing delivery, which after much criticism in earlier years got framed as 'sustainable human settlement development'; (ii) a continued focus on addressing rural poverty and the roll-out of largely agrarian reform orientated rural development interventions; and (iii) large scale infrastructure investment aimed at galvanizing development, creating job opportunities, and enhancing access to job opportunities and services.

In recent years, bridging the urban-rural divides, the challenge of urbanisation (@PlanSA\_21) in cities and in towns across South Africa (van Huyssteen, Mans et al., 2013; Turok and Parnell, 2009) for municipalities and city governance especially in the context of the energy crunch, the economic downturn and climate change implications and service delivery have once again become key areas of concern (SACN, 2016). This went together with a major drive for spatially targeted budgeting, improved inter-government alignment (Pieterse et al., 2016) and an emphasis on evidence-based planning and monitoring and evaluation (van Huyssteen et al., 2013).

In 2013, the long awaited Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), 2013 was promulgated (@PlanSA\_22), setting out a series of spatial outcomes and providing for the development of Spatial Development Frameworks for all municipalities, provinces, selected regions and the country as a whole. The Act also enables the development of Land Use Management Schemes for all municipal areas and the introduction of new provincial specific planning legislation and regulations to guide land development and land use change processes, appeals processes, etc. in the respective provinces (SA, 2013). Thus, enabling and providing a whole new regulatory framework for municipal land development, and equally so for municipal level spatial planning, through a series of guidelines legislation and requirement for extended planning capacity, and with planning capacity yet again a key make or break for policy implementation.

In support of the increasingly tall order, rising complexity and increased set of urban challenges the 'planning profession' is once again gearing up for capacity building drives (@PlanSA\_23) and setting in place standards for professional registration and working closely with government to provide the much required technical professional support for government processes (as in the past). Interestingly, a process closely associated with the drive for professionalization in the public sector and for work reservation in the practice of planning (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2013) and "most probably not unrelated to the profession's problem of low self-esteem and its near death experience in the 1990s" (Oranje, 2014:5).

At least (as in the past) within the planning education and research fraternity, voices calling for the spirit of planning and for contextual realities to be considered (@PlanSA\_24) are continuing to be heard (in spite of the threats of side-lining and exclusion in consulting processes) (see Oranje, 2014; Watson and Odendaal, 2012). Together with increased international interaction and globalisation (Afshar, 1994; Kunzmann, 2015) there is also a continued drive for contextually relevant innovation (Watson and Odendaal, 2012) and relevance in creating an uncharted future.

### **A3. CONCLUSION**

The summary of unfolding of events, challenges, areas of attraction and roles of planners during the last century illustrates the tainted identity and often contradictory histories within the practice(s) of planning in South Africa during this time. The overview identified and highlighted a number of key aspects that provide valuable context for the exploration of the work-life narratives of participants within the study, as well as for contextualising the calls for action in which this enquiry found its origin. It also illustrates the unfolding nature of the quests of (and within) planning as a practice, and the way in which personal and professional quests evolve and contribute to the evolving nature thereof.



# ANNEXURE B

## Overview of relevant studies related to competence

*An 'ideal' core curriculum has been a subject of discussion in planning literature for decades. Planning educators have proposed various core curricular reforms, and suggestions for a new required core range from one focused on mastering a specialty along with foundational knowledge (Friedmann 1996) to one focused explicitly on responding to the skills demanded in practice (Seltzer and Ozawa 2002). Alternatively, it has been suggested that planning education be defined independently of current planning practice (Feldman 1994). Underlying the discussion is a host of challenging questions spanning issues including the role of the planner, the domain of planning as a profession (or a field), the domain of planning as a discipline, and the role of the planning educator. (Edwards, 2011:172)*

*The 'idea' that the planner, as some kind of trusted technocrat above and apart from the messy bustle of the world, could articulate programs and plans which could 'order' what would otherwise be the chaos of unfettered and unjust market processes has given way, first, to the idea of planning as more of a 'guiding hand' or a corrective 'steering' mechanism, and, second, to conceptions of how to recognize, 'shape' and manage non-linear, unpredictable emergent processes. (Hillier, 2008:xv)*

## Table of Contents

ANNEXURE B: Overview of relevant studies related to competence.....	1
<i>B1 Introduction</i> .....	1
<i>B2 Competencies and meta-competencies in planning education</i> .....	1
<i>B3 Competencies and meta-competencies learning from sustainability leadership and global leadership</i> .....	13
<i>B3.1 Vertical and horizontal growth</i> .....	13
<i>B3.2 Meta-competencies</i> .....	15
<i>B4. Work-life experiences in relation to competencies, work-life contexts and meaning making</i> ....	18

## List of Tables

Table B-1: Overview of relevant studies on meta-competencies, comparing methods and findings in the field of planning education.....	2
Table B-2: Overview of published studies (mostly seminal and internationally comparative) aimed at identifying, evaluating and informing planning competencies and curriculum .....	5
Table B-3: Sustainability leadership qualities (behaviours) related to high levels of meaning-making .....	15

## List of Figures

Figure B.1: Competencies versus meta-competencies.....	1
Figure B.2: Vertical and Horizontal growth .....	14
Figure B.3: Overview of meta-competencies as summarised from sustainability leadership competency categories .....	17
Figure B.4: Inter-related beliefs, competencies, behaviour, context, purpose and identity.....	18

## List of Text Boxes

Table B-1: Overview of relevant studies on meta-competencies, comparing methods and findings in the field of planning education.....	2
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---

Table B-2: Overview of published studies (mostly seminal and internationally comparative) aimed at identifying, evaluating and informing planning competencies and curriculum ..... 5

Table B-3: Sustainability leadership qualities (behaviours) related to high levels of meaning-making 15

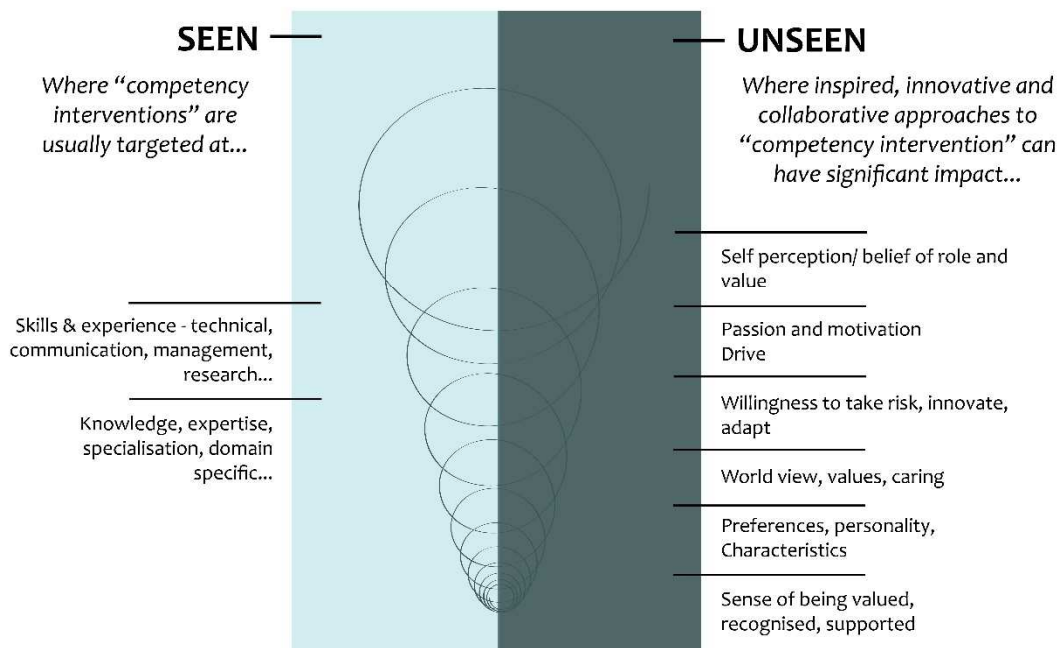


## B1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Annexure B is to provide a brief overview of some of the relevant studies related to competence (seen/competencies and un-seen/meta-competencies as set out in Figure B.1), development discourses in planning and sustainability leadership fields.

**Figure 0.1: Competencies versus meta-competencies**

The notion of ‘seen’ and ‘un-seen’ (virtues) competencies



## B2 COMPETENCIES AND META-COMPETENCIES IN PLANNING EDUCATION

Even though limited the studies, outlined in Tables B1 and B2, definitely highlight the value and need to better understand the challenges, as well as range of explicit and often implicit capabilities that enable planners to negotiate and add value in the midst of complexity, uncertainty and contestation. Table B1 provides an overview of studies on planners’ perceptions, beliefs and attitudes in terms of method and findings. It is also evident that there is a gap for (and that much value would be added by) more in-depth understanding of what such competencies and virtues are and how they relate to, and evolve through, shifting roles and the quest for purpose and excellence through changes and adventures in a working-life history, how planners adapt, and how such virtues and competencies are gained, grown and supported.

**Table B-1: Overview of relevant studies on meta-competencies, comparing methods and findings in the field of planning education**

Study	Method	Key Findings	Comments
Knox and Cullen (1981)	Quantitative survey using multiple attitudinal inventories to ascertain the attitudes, beliefs, and world view of the average planner to assess the extent to which planners viewed themselves as urban managers.	Results suggest that a conventional wisdom existed amongst planning practitioners, and that it was predominantly managerial and technocratic.	Excludes the extent to which planners' self-perceptions may be aligned with other theoretical perspectives (i.e. pluralist, reformist, neoliberal, etc.) (Fox-Rogers, 2015:6).
Knox and Masilela (1990)	Survey amongst Third World planners which consists of applying a series of Likert scale tests to the answers of attitudinal questions to uncover information on the planners' role orientations.	Highlights views of predominantly managerial and technocratic role orientations. Shows that one of the key motivating factors attracting people to the planning profession is their desire to 'make a difference'.	Methodologies employed are highly restrictive as they do not provide planners with the freedom to express how they view their role in a less-constrained manner (Fox-Rogers & Murphy, 2015:6).
Howe (1980)	Survey of planning practitioners.	Points to the prevalent views that could be aligned with the idea of a hybrid role – including technical (i.e. managerialist) and political models (i.e. reformist).	Survey method restricts expression of views or in-depth understanding regarding role (Fox-Rogers & Murphy, 2015:6).
Ozawa and Seltzer (1999)	Quantitative study looking at the skill preferences of planners.	Identifies a growing shift towards the communicative role of planners.	Quantitative method is restrictive to broader understanding.

Study	Method	Key Findings	Comments
Campbell and Marshall (1998; 2002)	Focus-group meetings with planners in 1996 obtained detailed insights into the ethical dilemmas facing planning practitioners.	Found that planners essentially held a technocratic view of their role in the planning process as there was a “strong underlying assumption that the primary obligation was to some concept of professional autonomy – to independent professional judgment”.	Valuable understanding from in-depth discussions with focus group.  Whilst the objective of their research was not to explore self-perceptions of the role of the planner <i>per se</i> , issues surrounding the planners’ view of their role did emerge in the study.
Sager (2009)	Surveys to examine whether the attitudes of the average planner reflects the values of New Public Management (NPM) or Communicative Planning Theory (CPT) by testing reactions to statements to uncover their scepticism of, or support for, the two approaches.	Suggested that Nordic planners were more supportive of Communicative Planning Theory than the New Public Management approach.	Survey method and restrictive assessment of merely two approaches excludes understanding or possible exploration of prevalence of perceptions of other approaches.
Fox-Rogers, 2015	Survey of 20 planners – Irish government system: local authority; in two areas of work, namely development management and forward planning.	Interviewed i.t.o four categories related to planning as a government activity; namely planner as mediator, administrator, advocate, and facilitator of development. Two dominant role orientations emerged from the data: namely the role of the planner as a mediator/pluralist; and, planner as an administrator/pluralist with a managerialist theoretical perspective. Prominence given to pluralist role. Interestingly,	Qualitative interviews provide in-depth learning. Restrictive as only focused on predetermined theoretical perspectives and roles re.: Pluralism / Managerialism and Reformism / Neoliberalism. Note: Fox-Rogers & Murphy (2015:15) point to possible limitations i.t.o. planners’ willingness to reflect critically on the role they play within the planning process.  Value of self-perception illustrated. In-depth interviews moved away from deterministic restrictions of surveys,

Study	Method	Key Findings	Comments
		<p>both these role orientations place considerable emphasis on the procedural aspects of planning. Fox-Rogers &amp; Murphy (2015:15) argue that there is a pressing need for planners to become more mindful and more critical of the role they play within the planning process. More specifically, they argue that planners as a professional body must become more vocal of the institutional barriers which may prevent them from acting in accordance with their own professional judgements.</p>	<p>but the restrictions of pre-selected perspectives and possible limitations in use of the specific government context and institutionalised roles, as well as coding that links statements to perspectives. Illustrates the importance of generative and reflective analyses in support of meaning making.</p>
Lennon, 2015	An in-depth interview – narrative method, reflection and meaning making.	Explores the way in which a practitioner made sense of significant events and purpose in his career within the greater idea of planning, and how pursuit of excellence through pursuit of purpose is interlinked with excellence and purpose in practice.	Only one interview and focused on specific contribution in career. Study illustrates value of in-depth narrative and rich findings in exploring perceptions of practitioners regarding pursuit of purpose. Clear illustration of value that such narratives can provide in an enhanced understanding of purpose and pursuit of excellence/purpose.

**Table B-2: Overview of published studies (mostly seminal and internationally comparative) aimed at identifying, evaluating and informing planning competencies and curriculum**

Study	Method/Approach	Relevant findings, especially relating to meta-competencies, generic competencies and development thereof
Schön, 1987	Scholarly papers to determine how professionals go about solving problems.	Considering the task of educating the reflective practitioner, Schön argues that while planners must learn to work with data and write clearly, they must learn the communicative nature of planning: dealing with people who have different views, dealing with political conflict, and working productively to resolve disagreement.
Carter, 1993 (See Edwards & Bates, 2011:173)	Defines proposed curriculum.	Findings are centred on physical design as the primary feature of planning; with the core knowledge planners' need is how to "manage evolution of community in the context of place."
Kaufman and Simons, 1995	Quantitative surveys of members of American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).	<p>Whilst not frequently used at the time, practitioners anticipated future needs for knowledge in GIS, budget preparation and capital improvement planning, and forecasting and decision analysis. They argued that academic institutions cannot respond simply to practitioners' current demands for skills in entry-level positions but need to anticipate future technologies and students' longer-term careers.</p> <p>In surveys of desired technical skills, practitioners provide only a limited push for new technologies and methods being developed in the academy.</p> <p>Practitioners placed value on high-level analytical techniques.</p>
John Friedmann, 1996 (See Edwards and Bates, 2011:173)	Analysis of urban planning core curricula – assembled data on the required courses in twenty planning programs (based on the 1993-1994 academic years) to assess the state of planning education.	A strengthened core curriculum is proposed to address what Friedmann believes to be major shortcomings. These shortcomings include inadequate preparation about the urban habitat; neglect of methods and skills necessary for planning practice, including spatial analysis, negotiation, ethics, and communication; the inclusion of core courses that would be better suited as prerequisites; and an emphasis on traditional lecture and seminar courses. His ideal core curriculum includes both substantive knowledge about the concerns of planning and a set of skills or methods for professional practice.

Study	Method/Approach	Relevant findings, especially relating to meta-competencies, generic competencies and development thereof
		<p>Substantive knowledge focuses on “understand[ing] the intersection of socio-spatial processes that produce the urban habitat” (p. 96). Friedmann’s list of planning skills and methods include the history and theory of planning practice and professional ethics; quantitative analysis, including spatial analysis and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), to be used as “a persuasive language”; program and project evaluation; and a set of skills.</p> <p>Students who are absorbing substantive knowledge about planning topics, theories, and methods can find it difficult to simultaneously apply, synthesize, and reflect. A third year for the Masters of Urban Planning (MUP) program is suggested to provide time for structured practice experiences with reflection.</p>
<p>Baum, 1997 (See Edwards and Bates, 2011:173)</p>	<p>Definition of ideal curriculum.</p>	<p>Requirement to teach students how to generate knowledge, use knowledge, and get others to use knowledge. Recognition of the social and political nature of planning problems makes research and analysis messy.</p>
<p>Zehner, 1999</p>	<p>Investigation of a similar set of capacities to that of Seltzer &amp; Ozawa (2002) through surveys (1979, 1984, 1989, 1996) of planners in New South Wales.</p>	<p>The “hardy perennials” shown high on the list each year are planning law, development control/statutory planning, administration (general), and negotiation/conflict resolution. Areas that have risen rapidly in importance are participation techniques/community liaison and communication techniques. Urban economics, GIS, statistical analysis techniques, and CAD are placed in the lower third of the rankings.</p>
<p>Dalton, 2001 (See Innes, 1997:228; Edwards and Bates, 2011:173)</p>	<p>Scholarly papers where communicative turn in planning theory is viewed as an essential shift for professional education.</p>	<p>Suggests that planning education teaches effective professional skills (e.g. communication, facilitation, negotiation) for dealing with difficult problems. This is a shift away from modernist, rational planning towards the collaborative model, with education emphasizing communicative skills. The need for group work, studios, and other practice experiences in planning education is expressed.</p>
<p>Pezzoli and Howe, 2001</p>	<p>Content analysis of 69 planning syllabi from ACSP institutional members that address</p>	<p>Survey concludes that there exists “multitudes of intriguing initiatives” among these courses that can build toward global planning education to address globalization from a theory-building perspective rather than a know-how perspective.</p>

Study	Method/Approach	Relevant findings, especially relating to meta-competencies, generic competencies and development thereof
	<p>global megatrends or give attention to non-Western planning issues.</p>	
<p>Ozawa and Seltzer, 1999 (See Ozawa and Seltzer, 2002:77)</p>	<p>Survey of senior planners in Oregon that uses an understanding of employers' expectations for the skills and competencies of entry-level planners as a lens to examine the relationship between curricula and practice, and ultimately the nature of planning itself. The survey uses a list of 45 skills and competencies generated through interviews with senior planners in the Portland metropolitan area, a review of the literature on planning curricula, and interviews with faculty teaching core courses in the planning program at Portland State University.</p>	<p>Results indicate that planners need to communicate well, work with diverse groups both within and outside of an agency, and generally engage in a style and type of planning consistent with a communicative action view of planning theory. This not to say that knowledge of planning and its substantive subfields or the ability to collect and analyse data is not important. Rather, the findings provide evidence that employers are seeking planners that able to understand their role and significance as part of a complicated process within, not apart from, the mechanisms that communities devise to do their work. Within the context of Oregon, results were highly suggestive for educators and knowledge of the planning process, laws, institutions, and regulations remains highly relevant but that phronetic knowledge — good sense and sound judgment — is the most valued.</p>
<p>Ozawa and Seltzer, 2002 (See Edwards and Bates, 2011:174)</p>	<p>Given limited geographical focus of the above study, the same survey was distributed to a population of American senior planners drawn from other states and regions.</p>	<p>Planners across America were in strong agreement about what skills and competencies are important for new hires. First set of skills relates to the ability to work with public, colleagues, understanding what public wants, ability to read zoning map, self-starter (almost more generic &amp; linked to job they will do in the office); followed by skills related to report writing, analyses, understanding of planning processes and law. This has specific relevance for entry-level planners.</p>

Study	Method/Approach	Relevant findings, especially relating to meta-competencies, generic competencies and development thereof
		<p>In addition to the skills and competencies identified by researchers, respondents were asked to list any other skills and competencies that they believe should have been included on the list. The majority of the suggestions submitted had to do with issues of attitude, motivation, work habits, and commitment. Representative comments included ability to shut up and listen; ability to manage multiple projects with overlapping deadlines; self-starter; integrity, willingness to work long hours; customer service orientation; and the like.</p> <p>Rank of top 5 skills relates to: people skills; attitude; writing; analysis; and skills/knowledge. Other skills include experience, values, vision, and goals.</p> <p>For hiring of new employees attitude is very important, whilst the main competency that would be expected of planners seeking promotion is the ability to produce. However, there is no consensus on values identified in the study.</p>
<p>Guzzetta &amp; Bollens, 2003 (See Edwards and Bates, 2011:174)</p>	<p>Survey asked 638 planning, planning-related, and non-planning professionals in Southern California which job skills they value most.</p>	<p>Emphasis on communication, writing, and presenting; with planners having a greater focus on these skills than other professionals. Practitioners placed value on high-level analytical techniques while calling the underlying methods unnecessary, e.g. listing “advanced policy analysis” as a desirable skill but suggesting a decrease in teaching economics and statistics. Advanced policy analysis, organizational development, media training, and leadership development mentioned as key skills for long-term career success.</p>
<p>Network for European-U.S. Regional and Urban Studies (NEURUS) 1999-2003 (four cohorts) (See Goldstein, Bollens et al, 2006)</p>	<p>Interview instrument asks a range of questions about the value of specific elements of the NEURUS program as well as students’ overall assessment of their NEURUS experience.</p>	<p>Some of the highest ratings of the NEURUS program were given on the personal development and social dimensions of the students’ experiences.</p>



Study	Method/Approach	Relevant findings, especially relating to meta-competencies, generic competencies and development thereof
ACSP – Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (See Myers and Banjeree, 2005; Edwards and Bates, 2011:173)	ACSP's Anchor point discussions and studies.	Describes the field as action- and future-oriented, concerned with equity, and open to participation by a diverse public. The study suggests reforming the social science-based curriculum of the 1970s to increase the emphasis on skills around problem diagnosis, policy design, decision-making, and communicative action, which they view as distinctive to planning. With multifaceted definitions of planning, the required knowledge and skills for planning include a heavy emphasis on strategic problem solving and on communicative action and an attempt at balancing academic and professional skills.
Dalton, 2007 (See Edwards & Bates, 2011:174)	Surveys of planning alumni and finds a wide range of types of professional practice, with about 40 per cent in “non-traditional” planning positions – that is, not primarily physical, land use, and development planning.	Most frequent activities of planners are communicative: preparing reports and holding public meetings – and political, strategizing to get plans adopted.
Edwards and Bates, 2011 (See Edwards and Bates, 2011:173)	Examined the core curricula of the master’s degree programs of thirty planning schools in the United States and Canada; this group of thirty schools allows us to compare directly to Friedmann’s findings and includes some of the most well-known planning programs that he did not survey.	The core requirements today are generally similar to requirements that were in place when programs were last surveyed in 1993-1994. Common themes are how planners think about the future, coping with politics and conflict, and planning ethics.
African Association of Planning	Used scholarly papers and discussions – 2008 conference in Cape Town	Five main themes emerged from the papers: namely informality; access to land; climate change; collaboration between planners, communities, civil society and other interested parties; and mismatch between

Study	Method/Approach	Relevant findings, especially relating to meta-competencies, generic competencies and development thereof
Schools (Watson and Agbola, 2013)	identified key planning issues & focus of educational reform, confirmed at AAPS Conference Dar es Salaam, 2010	<p>spatial planning and infrastructure planning. The emphasis on a more positive and inclusive approach to urban informality in research and teaching is the most contentious of the AAPS's objectives.</p> <p>Highlighted importance for "Planning educators and their students... to get their shoes dirty", and for case-study generated research to develop nuanced teaching material and knowledge of African cities and approaches that work, and to "promote initiatives, plans and policies which encourage pro-poor and inclusive cities in Africa" and "change the mind-sets of student planners". Planning ethics are further at stake in the pursuit of more inclusive, collaborative planning processes.</p> <p>AAPS aspires to produce planners equipped with a critical openness to how things are, but also imbued with creative anticipation – speculation and imagination about how things could be. Reflexive and progressive values are essential in planning. So too is a determination to ensure that equitable outcomes are as important as process.</p>

From the review of research conducted to inform the development of planning qualification curricula and related scholarly articles, a few key themes have been identified as relevant to this exploration:

- ⌘ “Notion that personal growth and development may be an integral, rather than peripheral, dimension of professional development and training for careers in the new global environment” (Goldstein and Bollens et al., 2006:358);
- ⌘ Contradictions and tensions between what is required from new practitioners at entry level/mid-level (i.e. communications skills, practical skills and knowledge often called for by new entrants into the practice) versus much deeper embedded and higher level analytical and leadership, etc. capabilities required later (termed lofty goals by Edward and Bates, 2011:181);
- ⌘ The importance of an integral approach to education, recognising that “students’ experiences with planning education are not primarily about their specializations but are equally influenced by how planning is presented” (Edward and Bates, 2011:181; Seltzer and Ozawa, 2002), referring to the notion of ‘thick authenticity’ where the means of assessment reflects the learning process, where learning is personally meaningful and relates to the

outside world and “provides the opportunity to think in the mode of a particular discipline” (Schaffer and Resnick, 1999:195). “What distinguishes this approach is less what graduates need to know and learn (which should be driven by where and on what issues they plan to practice). It is distinguished more by the tools they use to know and learn – a global frame, comparative method, mutual learning, cross-cultural sensitivity – that is, how they know and learn” (Afshar, 2001:34);

- ∅ In a similar way, the interaction of students with educators, so-called professors of practice (Edwards and Bates, 2011), who inspire and introduce them to the master shifting nature of planning (Lennon, 2015). The importance of role models and mentors to inspire with behaviour, passion and purpose for practice excellence in the context and complexity and challenged real world environment of pragmatic planning practice, action and practical judgement is clear. However, this may conflict with the requirements for faculty to primarily contribute to establishing the legitimacy of the profession and academic institutions (Lennon, 2015; Baum, 1997; Myers and Banerjee, 2005);
- ∅ Teaching of planning ethics or progressive and reflexive values is about much more than raising awareness or learning, it is indeed about inspiration to identify with the quest of planning, and to sign up to the ‘gnarly’ nature of the virtues that will sustain us to pursue that quest (Lennon, 2015:67). As Gunder (2004:308-309) explains: “Planning education supplies epistemic knowledge..., but perhaps more important, it also shapes the fledgling planner into membership of the profession through integrating into the novice’s ego-ideal a range of identifications, or ‘master signifiers’, constituting the beliefs of the profession”. Planning educators thus play a pivotal role in reshaping the ego-ideals of the novice planners: “... as students gradually acquire the identifications of planners, they are alienated from their own original desires and beliefs and are eventually obligated to reproduce, reinforce, and apply their received planning knowledge and practices on the public. Under this discourse, planning educators seek to produce new planners who are inspired agents of the academics’ own master signifiers and supporting knowledges” (Gunder, 2004:307). An example of this challenge in a very pragmatic context is the recognition of Watson and Agbola (2013:9) in their discussion for shifts in African planning curricula, even though practice might not yet be shifting: “... that even though the new knowledge might not be directly applied the importance is that they [students] are exposed to and encouraged... On graduation, they might be expected to implement outdated planning legislation, or design golf courses or gated communities for the wealthy. But unless planning students are exposed to the prevailing conditions and trends in African cities, and encouraged to consult

and interact with local communities to assess how planning might best address these, they will merely advance the marginalisation of the planning profession – and of the poor – in sub-Saharan Africa”.

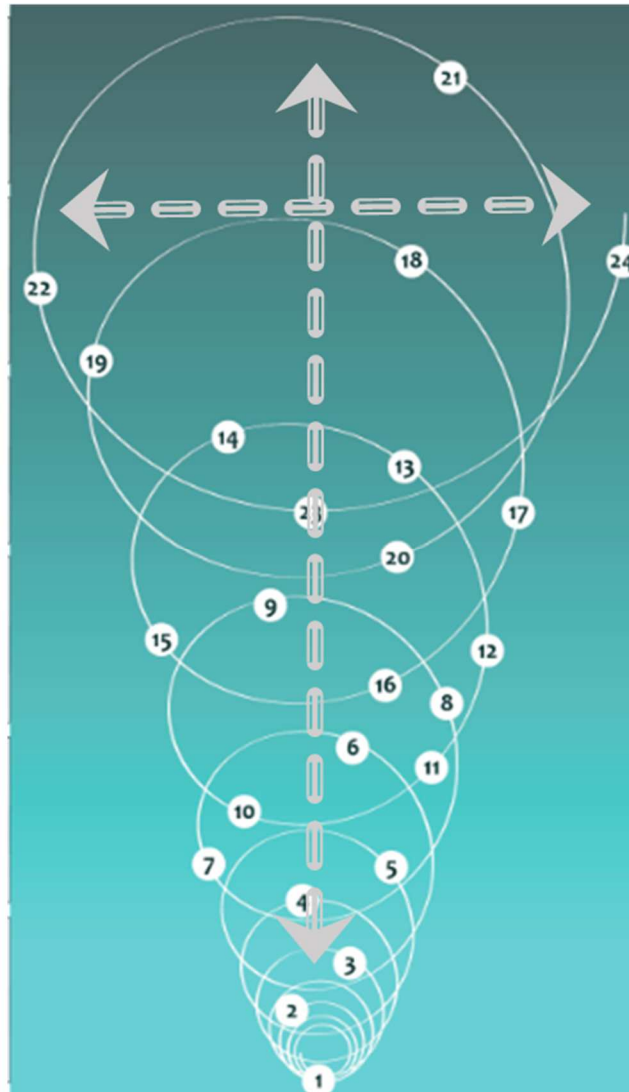
- ∅ Given the clear acknowledgement that much of the learning and growth in the practice of planning actually happens within the context of that practice (see Lennon, 2015), I would argue that this identification with the master signifiers probably also stretches (or should at least stretch) beyond the role of educators to that of mentors of young planners, to the role of peers, managers and teams, etc. in shaping and inspiring (or alternatively unwittingly stifling) planners’ beliefs. All contributing to “shaping the future out-comes that these planning practitioners will eventually help to mediate and create within society” (Gunder, 2004:309). This huge responsibility (as it is either done or not – thus having an impact consciously or unconsciously) requires ongoing reflection (Gunder, 2004:309), insight and explicit consideration. As pointed out by Lennon (2015:67), such explicit “goal-directed narrative unity prompts reflection – “in”- action, reflection –“on”-action and reflection – “for”-action as one seeks practice excellence through experience-informed activity”.

## **B3 COMPETENCIES AND META-COMPETENCIES LEARNING FROM SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP**

### **B3.1 Vertical and horizontal growth**

To differentiate between horizontal and vertical development, horizontal development (Cook-Greuter, 2004) refers to the gradual accumulation of new knowledge and skills (See Figure B.2). It occurs without a fundamental change in worldview or how we make meaning. Vertical development in adults is considerably rarer. It entails the literal transformation of a person's view of reality. In such cases, we learn to see the world with new eyes and experience novel forms of interpreting our external and internal world. As Kegan (2002:148) contends, "What gradually happens is not just a linear accretion of more and more that one can look at or think about, but a qualitative shift in the very shape of the window or lens through which one looks at the world." With vertical development comes an increase in that which we can be aware of and, therefore, in that which we can integrate and influence. These shifts in worldview, the emergence of new meaning-making systems, are often far more powerful than any degree of horizontal growth (Cook-Greuter and Soulen, 2007:13-14). Human development is seen as a sequence of integrated and increasingly complex meaning-making stages or systems, each more effective in dealing with the complexities of life than its predecessors (Cook-Greuter and Soulen, 2007). This growth process is considered to be transformative and hierarchical (du Plessis, 2009 and Berger et al., 2007).

Figure 0.2: Vertical and Horizontal growth



### B3.2 Meta-competencies

In Table B3 and Figure B3 an overview is provided of leadership qualities and capabilities (so called meta-competencies) as identified through a number of empirical studies within the field of sustainability leadership.

**Table B-3: Sustainability leadership qualities (behaviours) related to high levels of meaning-making**

Empirical studies	Qualities related to Sustainability Leadership Competencies	Relation to high levels of meaning-making capabilities
<p>In a study on qualities that distinguishes traditional leaders from those at the forefront of the corporate ‘greening’ movement, Cox (2005) identified two important notions, namely the relevance of <u>core commitments</u> and an <u>organic leadership style</u> (Brown, 2011:77).</p>	<p><b>Core commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) working from a deep sense of personal purpose;</li> <li>(2) redefining the purpose of business;</li> <li>(3) working with a broad range of stakeholders;</li> <li>(4) engaging in transformational interactions; and</li> <li>(5) embracing emergent organizing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organic leadership</b> – in which he argues for the importance of ability to create a new core identity, engage a systems view on reality, and unite and integrate ideas. His research also suggests that organic leaders can create visions with extended time frames and profound purposes, engage in transformative change, and build truly collaborative relationships. Finally, he describes leaders who can enter deeply into multiple frames of reference and perspectives, reframe and reinterpret, and tolerate ambiguity.</p>	<p>Compared to late-stage meaning-making capabilities (specifically Individualist and strategist action logic), the question is whether the same could be said for planning.</p>
<p>In a study by Wilson et al. (2006), the scholars used action-research to better understand the approach of 24 senior leaders in European multinational companies (Brown, 2011:78).</p>	<p><b>Five reflexive abilities</b> (considered to be the key competencies required to integrate social and environmental considerations into business decision making):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) systemic thinking;</li> <li>(2) embracing diversity and managing risk; and</li> <li>(3) balancing global and local perspectives.</li> </ul> <p>Also noted is the ability to create meaningful dialogue, to develop a new language for corporate responsibility, and to demonstrate emotional awareness.</p> <p><b>General competency model</b> – made up of knowledge, skills, and attitudes – for responsible business behaviour</p>	<p>Compared to Individualist and strategist competencies.</p> <p>Compared to conventional action logic (e.g. an Expert or Achiever).</p>

<p>Hames (2007) engaged in a large-scale, longitudinal project in which his team identified five “literacies” of global leadership. Over the course of 10 years, the researchers worked as consultants and mentors with 362 leaders on six continents. The sample included five heads of state, statesmen and stateswomen, CEOs and senior executives from large corporations, entrepreneurs, activists, artists, academics, and community leaders. Participants can be considered change agents who were advancing social and, in some cases, environmental agendas (Hames, 2009:6; Brown, 2011:79).</p>	<p><b>Five “literacies” of global leadership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) networked intelligence (ability to continuously connect with and relate to others in the process of sensing and making sense of complex realities);</li> <li>(2) ‘futuring’ (ability to imagine and express future possibilities while anticipating the intended and unforeseen consequences of any decisions taken – also strategic foresight);</li> <li>(3) strategic navigation (ability to learn to adapt as fast as change itself);</li> <li>(4) deep design (ability to amplify wisdom through conversation and dialogue – as long as such dialogue is informed by real-time intelligence and underpinned by profound reflection); and</li> <li>(5) brand resonance (ability to generate awareness and identity that awakens in others their unique authenticity).</li> </ul>	<p>Correlating meta-competencies to that of strategists. Abilities to continuously make sense in the face of complexity (networked intelligence), rapidly adapt to change (strategic navigation), elicit collective intelligence (deep design) and help others authentically express and align with the zeitgeist of the times (brand resonance).</p>
<p>Relevant but not empirical study – A framework was developed by Boiral et al. (2009) for environmental leadership, based on existing literature on leadership and constructive-developmental psychology (Boiral et al., 2009; Brown, 2011:81).</p>	<p><b>Environmental leaders must be able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) effectively manage the complexity of sustainability issues;</li> <li>(2) integrate seemingly contradictory perspectives;</li> <li>(3) understand and respond to the expectations of diverse stakeholders; and</li> <li>(4) drive deep change in organizational practices</li> </ul>	
<p>Visser and Crane (2010) undertook a research study into what drives</p>	<p><b>Four types of sustainability managers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Expert – Specialist input, personal development focus, technical process;</li> </ul>	<p>Typologies are not fixed like classical personality typologies</p>



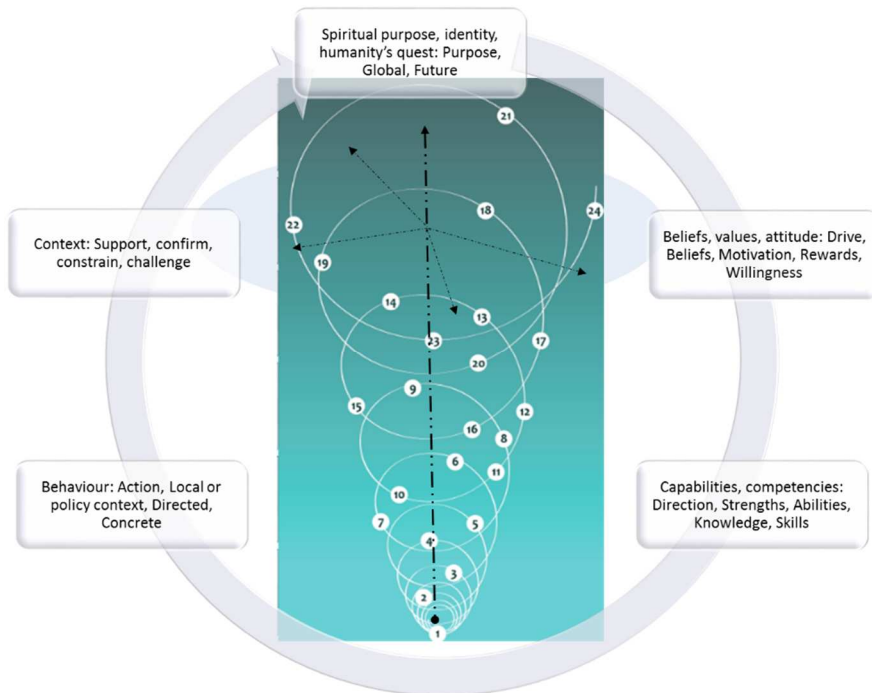


## B4. WORK-LIFE EXPERIENCES IN RELATION TO COMPETENCIES, WORK-LIFE CONTEXTS AND MEANING MAKING

In Figure B.4, the inter-relatedness of notions of purpose and identity (providing spiritual purpose), of beliefs, values and attitudes (providing overall motivation and drive), of capabilities and competencies, of action and directed behaviour, and of context, are illustrated within work-life experiences. The figure provides a summary overview of how the way in which various work-life experiences unfold over the work-life time-span; enabled through competence (horizontal growth) and meta-competence; influenced through various transition experiences; within practice and work-life context; and impelled through purpose (vertical growth).

The generative inter-relationship between purpose, belief, attitude, capability that impels contribution through a commitment to the quest and excellence in that quest, is set out in Text Box B.1

**Figure 0.4: Inter-related beliefs, competencies, behaviour, context, purpose and identity**



## Text Box Box B1

## Generative agency explained through the metaphor of a 'generator'

In considering the potential in generative agency, the generator is used in this example as a metaphor to identify a number of key elements.

Firstly – a visible form of kinetic energy generated through action (flow and friction – as provided by water in the case of hydroelectricity) which provides initial momentum.

Secondly – a more invisible form of magnetic energy, where magnetism is generated through strong pull and push factors (generated between points of strong convergence and strong polarities).

Thirdly, it is in these dynamic interactions where the 'magic' (energy) gets generated – a powerful force marked by constant change.

In this context, it might be valuable to consider:

- The commitment to action (and 'to make a plan' to sustain that commitment) as the kinetic energy – visible in moments of choice, in taking action, in proving a voice, etc.
- The set of clear synergies and pull factors between implicit and explicit commitment to purpose (reason, motivation, purpose), belief in that purpose and the 'good' of that purpose – called forth through commitment to the quest in planning (always a call for collective good) – resonating with the call to contribute to humanity, and in heeding that call also resonating with the call to live a whole life as a human being.
- The multitude of push factors between hope and despair, between driving impact and paying the price in opportunity cost in personal lives. Clear polarities between current needs and future sustainability, between moments of hope and moments of despair, between doing what needs doing to achieve impact and often huge opportunity or personal costs. Polarities are also rife, for example between the need for strong concepts and strategies on the one hand, and the need for technical and site specific considerations on the other. Consider the polarities between context and the collective, or between the urgent need for service delivery and long-term sustainability.
- Life experiences and competencies created in many ways act as windings around that spoke – windings which have much more meaning in relation to the context than as individual components, and which only have direction because of the action and the tension between positive and negatives. In the same vein much more can be achieved and done through the invisible but powerful stream of energy generated, than with the kinetic energy initially used to take action – energy opening up possibilities towards a much 'brighter' future.

In addition (and as illustration of the above), work-life experiences enabled the identification of the system inter-relation and a dynamic unfolding (for example, between caring for the local context and also wider, caring about the future, caring about the collective) – linked to the commitment and belief that something can be done. The latter offers intuitive insight into what needs doing, often related to strengths, experience, etc., and caring 'enough' to find out what would be the best way of doing, as it is not personal.

This results in commitment to take action, the courage and tenacity often required to handle challenges (or survive the mundane) and a lot of hard work, and the focus and dedication to do so (often with associated opportunity cost). In addition, it often results in clever and creative ways of managing to take action (or let others take action), galvanizing support and teams and inspiring others to buy into and commit to action – not merely for the sake of external rewards or recognition, but inherently because of the commitment to the quest. This might be just what is required to solicit the ability and competency required to take action, the confidence and belief – and often the confidence gained by taking action, seeing others take action, the willingness to adapt and face the unknown, and the willingness to be wrong – the cause provides a context for action and choice that is bigger than the person, and for growth ...

Through this there is the development and growth of new capabilities, often because that is what is required to heed the call for action to the quest and because excellence is regarded as important in heeding the call for action. This includes formal and informal learning and growth experiences wittingly created (sometimes easy and sometimes through determination which in itself required courage and belief and dedication made possible in commitment to the quest); experiences unwittingly created in the determination to act (more than often requiring commitment to the cause and willingness to do whatever is required and growing by gaining experience through trying and failing and trying again; or by sourcing capability and the willingness to ask, to learn, to listen, to look); by connecting and enabling and inspiring ...

And willingness to take action through choices and shifts in work-life contexts, to enable heeding the call to action, and also caring enough to adapt ways of contributing to the call for action if contextual influences and caring for the collective require that... (Just to 'start' the list again).



# ANNEXURE C

## Research methods and explorations of work-life narratives

*The ‘planner’ has become a character in the cast list of contemporary societies, like doctors, architects, lawyers and social workers. However ... planning activity draws in many ‘characters’ and involves all kind of people in one way or another.*

*(Hillier, 2008:xxii)*

*Storytellers recreate their world as they see it and as they want to represent it to others. These recreations are not photographically accurate accounts of events and people ... stories are not facts or evidence waiting for interpretation; they are, from the moment they are conceived through their many telling and retellings, the embodiment of the storyteller’s interpretations.”*

*(Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2006:320)*

*The wonder is that characteristic efficacy [of narratives and myths] to touch and inspire deep creative centres dwells in the smallest nursery fairy tale – as the flavor of the ocean is contained in a droplet or the mystery of life within the egg of a flea.*

*(Joseph Campbell, 2008:1)*

# 1 Contents

---

C.	ANNEXURE C: RESEARCH METHODS AND EXPLORATIONS OF WORK-LIFE NARRATIVES <sup>1</sup>	
C.1	Introduction .....	1
C.2	Participants .....	1
C.3	Explorations, comparative overviews and analyses examples.....	3
C.3.1	Introduction to participant work-life narratives .....	3
C.3.2	Primary reflexive interpretations on interviews.....	4
C.3.3	Exploration of work-life narratives in time-span and work-life context .....	6
C.3.4	Personal and practice quests .....	18
C.3.5	Quest adventures and elements .....	18
C.3.6	Comparative explorations.....	27
C.3.7	Conclusion .....	34

**List of Tables**

Table C.1: Examples of primary interpretation reflexive questions..... 4

Table C.2: Examples of first and secondary levels of enquiry .....5

Table C.3: ‘Acts/Phases’ in participant work-life narratives ..... 14

Table C.4: ‘Acts/Phases’ summary across work-life narratives ..... 17

Table C.5: Practice quests evident in time-span work-life contexts in service of a more just and sustainable future for all..... 18

Table C.6: Quest narrative elements in participant work-life adventures..... 19

Table C.7: Learning and growth themes from work-life narratives: Example @Bijan ..... 22

Table C.8: Examples of significant drivers identified within respective work-life narratives..... 27

Table C.9: Examples of qualities and competencies that seemed significant and coherent in comparing respective work-life narratives. .... 28

Table C.10: Summary of paradigms and methods that can support 'seeing' ..... 31

**List of Figures**

Figure C.1: Overview of participant demographics (gender; race; age; educational qualification)..... 2

Figure C.2: Participant ‘time spent at type of workplace’ relative to total experience in years ..... 2

Figure C.3: @Gaz Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative..... 8

Figure C.4: @Thai Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative..... 9

Figure C.5: @Yitzah Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative ..... 10

Figure C.6: @Daib Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative ..... 11

Figure C.7: @Janice Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative ..... 12

Figure C.8: @Harold Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative ..... 13

Figure C.9: Drivers of choices and transitions in work-life context: Example @Pedro..... 26

## **C.1 INTRODUCTION**

This annexure provides more detail on the research methodologies used and the exploration of participant work-life experiences, as well as giving some examples of explorations and comparative overviews conducted on their work-life narratives.

## **C.2 PARTICIPANTS**

As indicated in Part One, 25 participant work-life narratives were included in the study. The sample was selected from the population of practitioners with a formal qualification in planning in the South African planning practice context and entailed the collaboration of participants; the participants had been identified by peers through the use of the snowball technique as adding value and contributing within their practice of planning. This enabled using an appreciative approach to explore participant work-life narratives, enquiring into the nature and role of abilities, drivers and growth influences that seemed significant in enabling, encouraging and shaping contribution.

The aim of the sample was not to be representative of the South African population or planning practice. It was also not representative of the geographic regions but selected on the basis of the snowball technique, with the interviews conducted within a year's time span, but does represent the largely white and male nature of the planning fraternity at the time in South Africa. The participants' work-life narratives spanned a period from the 1960s to 2001. The number of years of experience varied as set out in the outline of the work-life time-span from just over 5 to almost 35 years (See Section 5, Figure 5.1).

Four participants' work-life experience spanned more than 30 years, nine participants' work-life experience spanned between 15-30 years and 15 participants' work-life experience spanned 5-15 years.

The sample was largely male and white, with most of the participants between the ages of 25 and 45 at the time of the interviews (See Figure C.1). Amongst the participants, the time spent at type of workplace seems widely distributed among private practice, local government, regional government and experience in research, policy and planning education. The 'other' category includes NGOs, as well as residents' and/or community associations (See Figure C.2).

Figure C.1: Overview of participant demographics (gender; race; age; educational qualification)

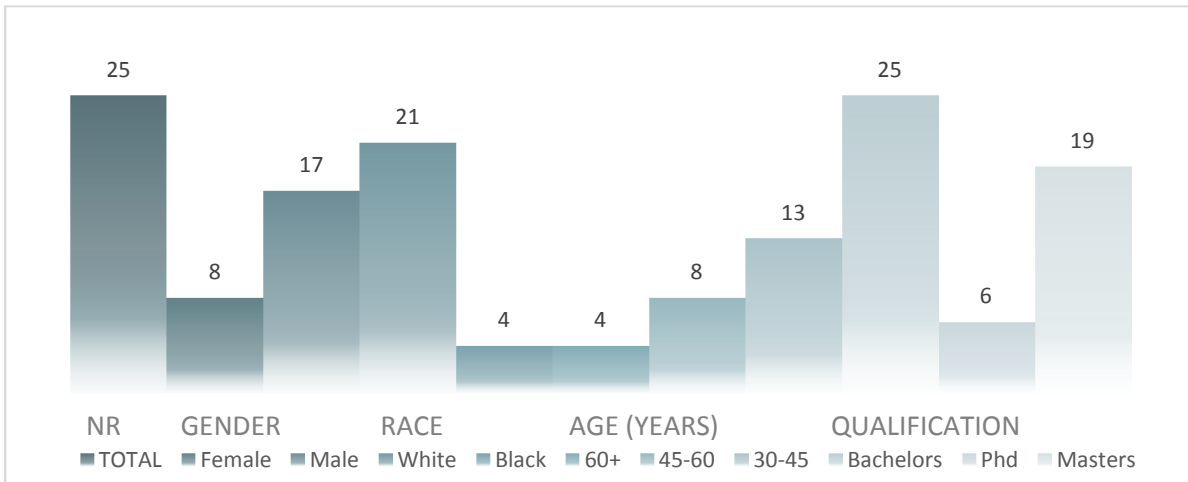
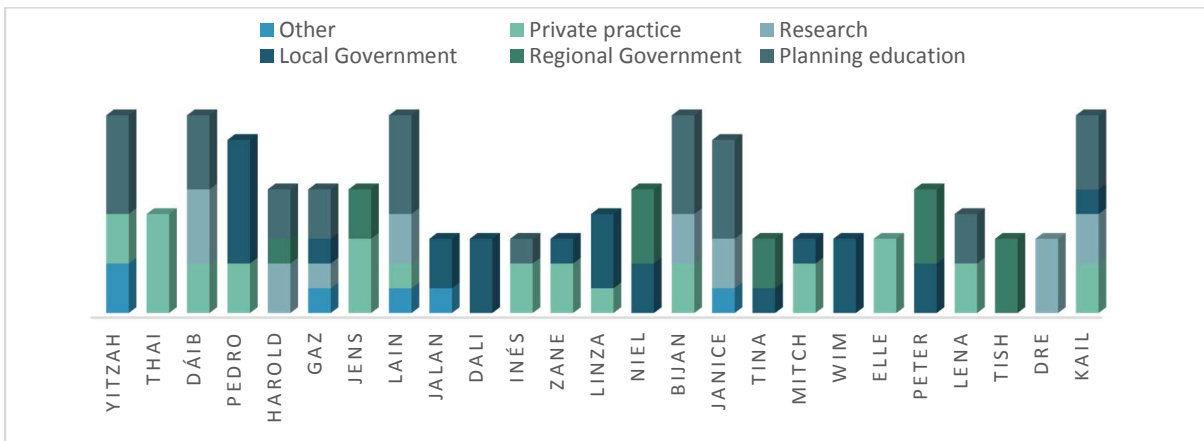


Figure C.2: Participant 'time spent at type of workplace' relative to total experience in years





### **C.3 EXPLORATIONS, COMPARATIVE OVERVIEWS AND ANALYSES EXAMPLES**

#### **C.3.1 INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPANT WORK-LIFE NARRATIVES**

As set out above, the purpose of the exploration was to generate insights about the often ‘invisible’ layer of drivers, beliefs, competencies, qualities and growth influences that seem to have enabled, shaped and impelled participants to contribute in planning as a practice over time, facing the demands of challenging and dynamically changing work-life and practice contexts.

It was evident, as expected from the start, that attempts at coding or summarising would not add value and merely result in yet another set of non-dynamic lists. It was indeed a challenge to not only conduct, but also interpret and reflect the research in a way that assisted in opening up the exploration, in doing it in a whole-person and contextually-rich way, to facilitate an appreciative, generative and reflexive interpretation.

In exploring the wide range of experiences and reflections in then participant work-life narratives, I have embarked on an iterative process of identifying and exploring some qualities (characteristics and competencies) and shaping influences that seem to have been significant in enabling and impelling participants to contribute within planning as a practice in the respective contexts. As set out in Section 1, the enquiry thus entailed more than a mere focus on the personal and professional competence and development that would enable practitioners to contribute in planning as a practice, but also includes a focus on the dynamics that seem to have inspired and impelled them to make such contributions.

Given that it is impossible to provide detailed analyses of every narrative, or to quote or make reference to every experience within the thesis, the section is structured to illustrate the types of analyses, explorations and reflections in terms of:

- ⌘ Primary interpretations of, and reflections on, the interview and interview process.
- ⌘ Secondary interpretations of:
  - Firstly, the explorations of work-life narratives in relation to work-life contexts – used to illustrate the way in which participants described ‘acts’ in relation to temporal and focus dimensions, and the way in which narratives have been explored in terms of time-span and work-life contexts.
  - Secondly, some examples of explorations in terms of categories of focus areas, competencies and types of learning experiences are provided.
  - Thirdly, examples of explorations in relation to a number of key influences and drivers are provided.
  - Fourthly, an overview of the exploration regarding quest adventures and elements – as evident within the respective work-life narratives and experiences – are provided, with reference to some examples of reconstructed ‘Quest narratives’ interspersed in the text.

### C.3.2 PRIMARY REFLEXIVE INTERPRETATIONS ON INTERVIEWS

Table C.1 indicates the types of questions and analyses explored in the primary interpretation of reflexive questions (as referred to in Part One, Section 4).

**Table C.1: Examples of primary interpretation reflexive questions**

Types of Reflexive Enquiries Considered	Notes
Basic information regarding interview (participants, date, place/venue, type of recording & notes) & transcriptions.	Set out in sample description. Transcriptions – done through notes (25 Participants for time period) and word-for-word transcriptions (available for 22 Participants)
Context of the interview (place, time, circumstances, e.g. venue and atmosphere and timing, etc.).	Informal settings. Context of the relation between the interviewer and interviewee relevant, discussed in Part One, Section 4
Expressions and expressed understandings of the subject & purpose of the interview (as stated by the interviewer, as expressed by the participants – based on the context or individual involved).	Reflections and sharing of passionate personal and planning narratives detailing experiences – 20 Reflections and sharing of personal growth narratives – 3 Reflections and sharing of opinions, more descriptive than in narrative style – 4 Reflections and sharing of passionate personal and planning narratives, but very young and limited experience in practice – 3
Basic information regarding participants	Set out in Introduction to participants – (age, gender, employer/work place, current ‘position’, geographical location, type of planning ‘job’/organisation), planning qualification – Planning education background & type of planning positions/jobs/activities/responsibilities/institutions held by interviewee.
In order to provide participants a narrative ‘hook’ to reflect on and talk about their work-life experiences in the qualitative narrative interview, they were requested at the start of the interview to reflect on their work-life experiences up to the point of the interview and divide it into ‘acts’ (as if in a play) – providing every act with a name or title, and then providing more detail on experiences, shifts, capabilities required, and growth or learning over the time period (See Table C.3).	Of note is that (as could be expected) young people’s ‘acts’ stretched over short phases, whilst older people’s ‘acts’ stretch over large periods of time. Most participants divided work-life experiences loosely in terms of growth phases or periods, whilst some actually linked it quite specifically to particular organisations or regions/countries where they worked at the time. Phases of career growth and/or context. Note that some phases are hard to break down, personal and professional life is mixed, in some cases place of work and contribution is important. The descriptions used provide an indication of a ‘view’ on work-life experiences in relation to phases of growth and a series of experiences within the practice of planning; career and job shifts forming part of a bigger ‘whole’. Themes and headings provide an indication of significance in terms of the role of planning; place of work i.t.o organisation; place of work and town/country; role of planning and belief in planning; significant people who played major role in acts and kind of work; contribution; passion; levels of autonomy; activism, passion and contribution.
Contextual influences mentioned, i.e. impact of societal changes on individual.	Significant aspects, contexts and drivers that seemed to impact participant career choices. Time-span contextual analyses conducted – See Figures C.3-C.8
Perceptions and experiences of skills and competencies explicitly mentioned as critical by the interviewee.	Analyses per career phase/act, key themes identified and explored in terms of theory of learning, personal development and growth, as well as learning and life-long learning – See Section 7: Table 7.2. For every type of transition experiences, detailed comparative analyses were conducted to compare participants’ work-life experiences, reflecting high levels of coherence i.t.o.: - beliefs, purpose, drivers, identity; - descriptions related to capability, approach, qualities, characteristics, attitude (how & approach more significant); - types of learning and growth.  Influence of institutions or mentors or peers. Methods of, and influences on learning, explicitly mentioned/expressed by the interviewee.
Explicit mention of gender/life style, etc. choices on career paths & priorities & options.	Key themes identified and explored in terms of career development theory – See Section 7

As set out in Part One: Section 5, meaning making initially entailed attempts at conducting a structured content analysis, categorising the content both in terms of a few selected broad and easy to use categories, as well as in rich detailed categories. It entailed making use of quotes and/or for example the level of intensity with which aspects were mentioned, to assign aspects to specific categories; for example, the type of planning activity embarked upon as this can be related to certain approaches in planning such as collaborative, advocacy, and technocratic planning. An overview of some of the exploratory questions initially asked is set out below in Table C.2: Examples of first and secondary levels of enquiry.

**Table C.2: Examples of first and secondary levels of enquiry**

Types of Enquiries	Notes
Vocabulary on how planning & role of planners were viewed. Vocabulary of planning jobs, actions, requirements, challenges, skills, etc. Is reference made to contribution – how?	As having impact or not in SA, etc. Changes for the better/worse How planners are described/viewed What makes a difference in effectiveness/impact? What is regarded as success?
Purpose and drivers	Drivers, motivation, contribution, relation between perceived success/joy as planner & other aspects mentioned above
Vocabulary on how own competency and skills/knowledge, etc. are described by participants	Capabilities What is implied/not implied about working in teams, leadership, creativity, innovation?
What are the implicit perceptions and experiences of skills and competencies that can be deduced from the narrative/interview – especially related to meta-competencies and capabilities?	What is implied/not implied about different personality types, intelligences (including spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence)? How do planners seem to be dealing with the unknown? How much do planners rely on their gut? How are challenges of integration & multi- and transdisciplinarity handled? What is said about dealing with complexity and complex problem solving?
What do the stories imply/tell about the kind of planners or ‘action initiators’? What kind of skills & abilities do they have?	Attitudes/Characteristics Tolerance for work effort, change, etc. Challenges Autonomy – preferred ways of ‘working’
Formal education impact i.t.o quality, focus, etc.	Impact on approach and capabilities in later years
Methods of learning that can be implicitly deduced from the narrative/interview	Formal education, informal education, courses, training Role of self-discovery, personal growth, self-autonomy Experience/mentors, etc. & role of mentors, work-place
Beliefs about the future	What is implied/not implied about the future? Capabilities to influence the future Beliefs about personal future Beliefs about planning’s ability to intervene Vocabulary on worldviews, beliefs, values & sustainability, etc.
What is implied/not implied about whole person & impact?  What shapes the career path (most significant impacts) and choices/changes?	Career paths choices & priorities & opportunities, multi-dimensional lives – role of families, community/voluntary activity, etc., balance Expectations & intentions Relationship between career choice and peoples’ attitudes toward income, independence, risk, and work effort Impact of changes in the labour market; Career barriers & dealing with this? Labour market mobility & flexibility Individual domain - Career competencies, Locus of career development responsibility, Work/personal life) Organizational domain (Nature of employment, Organizational design, Knowledge sharing systems, Organizational support practices, Staffing policy) Planning domain (SA)

Work-life context	Relation between career choice maturity (knowledge & attitude), self-esteem, etc. and career development Are there typical differences in career experiences that seem to be gender related/related to life style (i.e. having kids or not)? Influence of family and socio-economic contexts
-------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### C.3.3 EXPLORATION OF WORK-LIFE NARRATIVES IN TIME-SPAN AND WORK-LIFE CONTEXT

Explorations of work-life narratives included comparative overviews of:

- ⌘ Work-life phases as described by participants, most often outlining phases of development or contexts in which their work-life experiences and narratives unfolded (See Table C.3: ‘Acts/Phases’ in participant work-life narratives, and Table C.4: ‘Acts/Phases’ summary across work-life narratives).
- ⌘ Significant work-life events and shifts as outlined by the participants, in most cases corresponding to specific work-life contexts, including institutions, roles, mentors and teams, focus areas and other significant events such as postgraduate study interventions, re-locations, or even breaks from planning (See Figure C.3 for an example). This not only formed the backdrop for exploring participant work-life narratives, but actually a core part of interplays, interactions and transition experiences – a context not only shaping, but also shaped by participants within their work-life contexts; and
- ⌘ Work-life experiences, time-line events and contextual influences mentioned in relation to significant socio-political time periods in South Africa and major shifts and changes within the focus areas, approach, role, legal system and instruments within planning in South Africa and Internationally (See Figure A.1 in Annexure A).

The contextualisation and exploration of the participant work-life narratives within their time-span work-life context has been explored by means of participant work-life time-span diagrams (See Figure C.3, Figure C.4, Figure C.5, Figure C.6, Figure C.7 and Figure C.8 as examples). The time-span diagrams provide some illustration of how various experiences and contexts within participant work-life narratives provide a contextual interplay for practice interaction, the playing of different roles, personal and practice transitions, practice- and context-specific focus areas and personal experiences. The diagrams are used to illustrate the exploration and relational overview of key themes and ‘acts’/phases in which participants chose to reflect on their work-life narratives (Column 2) in relation to significant events, shifts and work contexts (time-line) over time, and in relation to the broader South African planning context (Column 1 – based on the summary as set out in the South African Planning Time-span Overview in Annexure A). Most narratives include references to formal qualifications in the planning field on the time-line.

The work-life time-span diagrams assisted to identify and illustrate inter-related experiences through a non-linear and inter-related fluid spiral to signify the dynamic and inter-relatedness of such experiences; as well as change, and the notion of horizontal and vertical growth that seems evident over time. Some of the most prominent contextual influences in the respective phases are briefly referred to in the second last column, and some of the key questions and/or contemplations shared in relation to challenges, opportunities in certain phases, or in relation to decisions about work-life and career shifts and choices in the last column. To illustrate that this interview and narrative is just part of an ongoing process, a few words are provided on 'life' after the interview above the 'date-line' of the interview. Reference to the examples provided in Annexure C, are found throughout the analyses in Part Two.

Whilst it is impossible to give full insight into the magnitude of inspirational experiences, wisdoms and stories shared, the referencing and 'tags' are aimed at illustrating the relational and contextual nature of experiences in participant work-life narratives – hopefully enabling readers, as co-constructors, to reflect on this through engagement with the different sections in this thesis, and specifically in the work-life narrative examples presented in text boxes in Part Two.

Figure C-3: @Gaz Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative

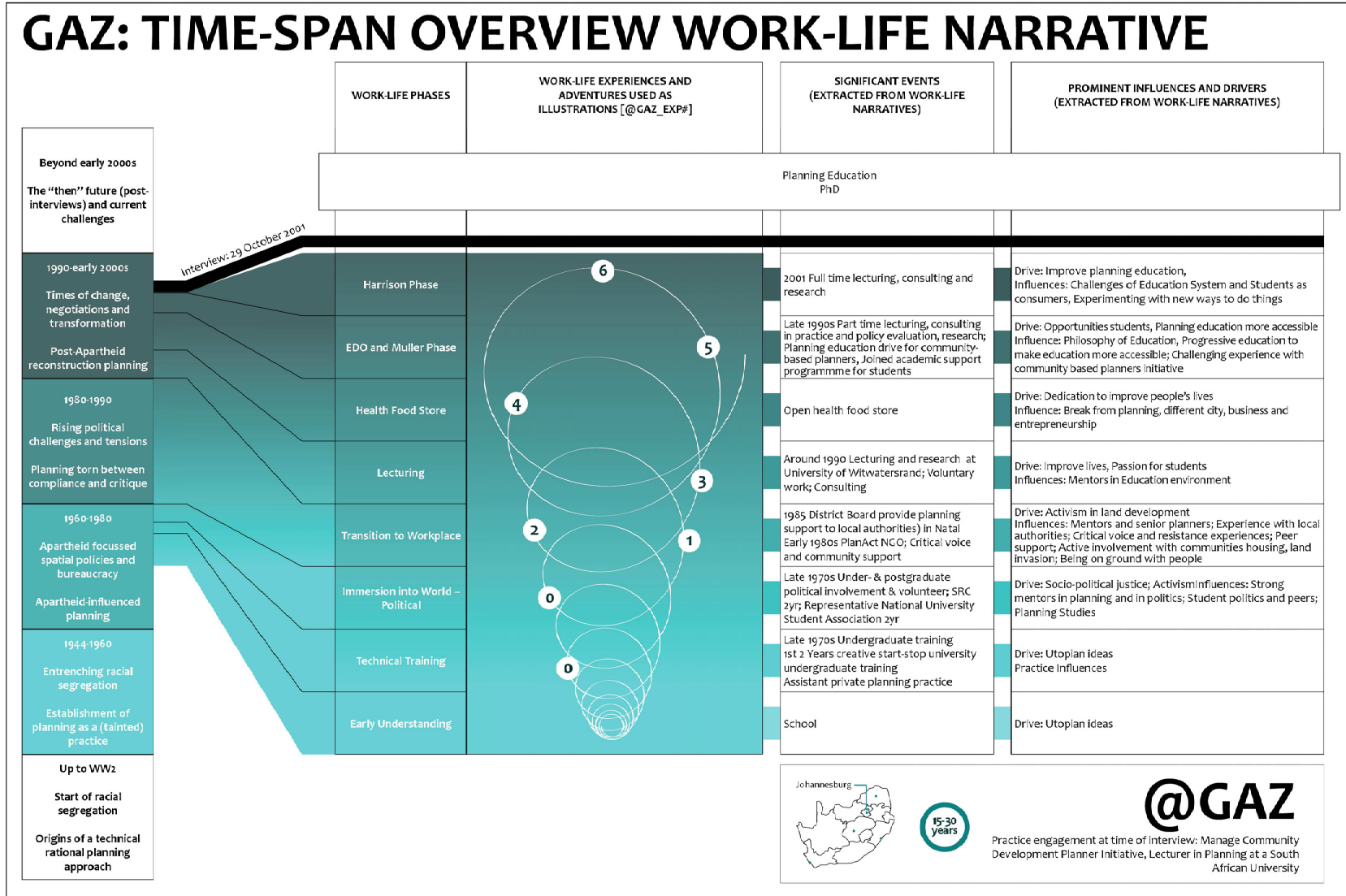


Figure C.4: @Thai Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative

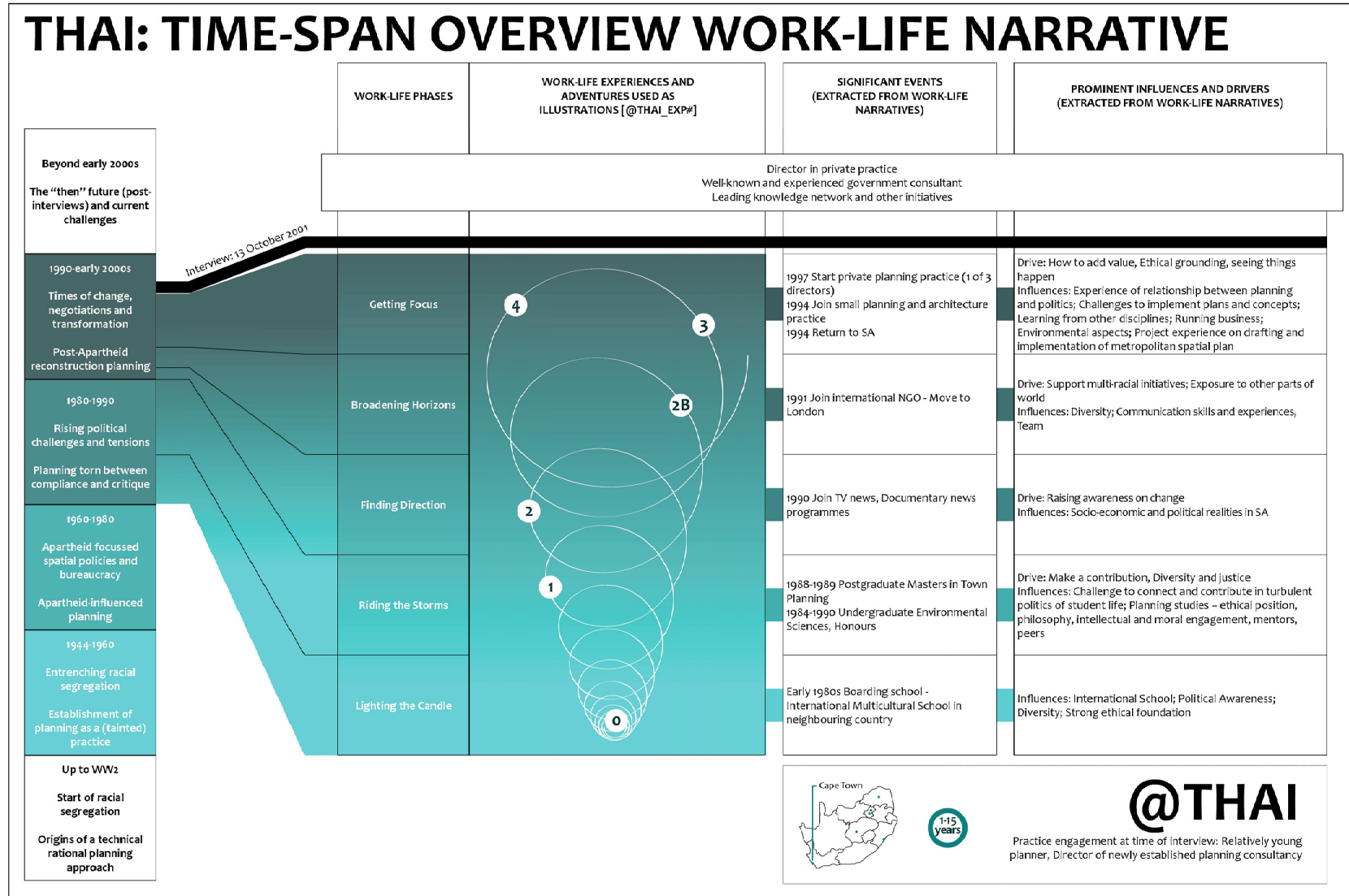


Figure C-5: @Yitzah Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative

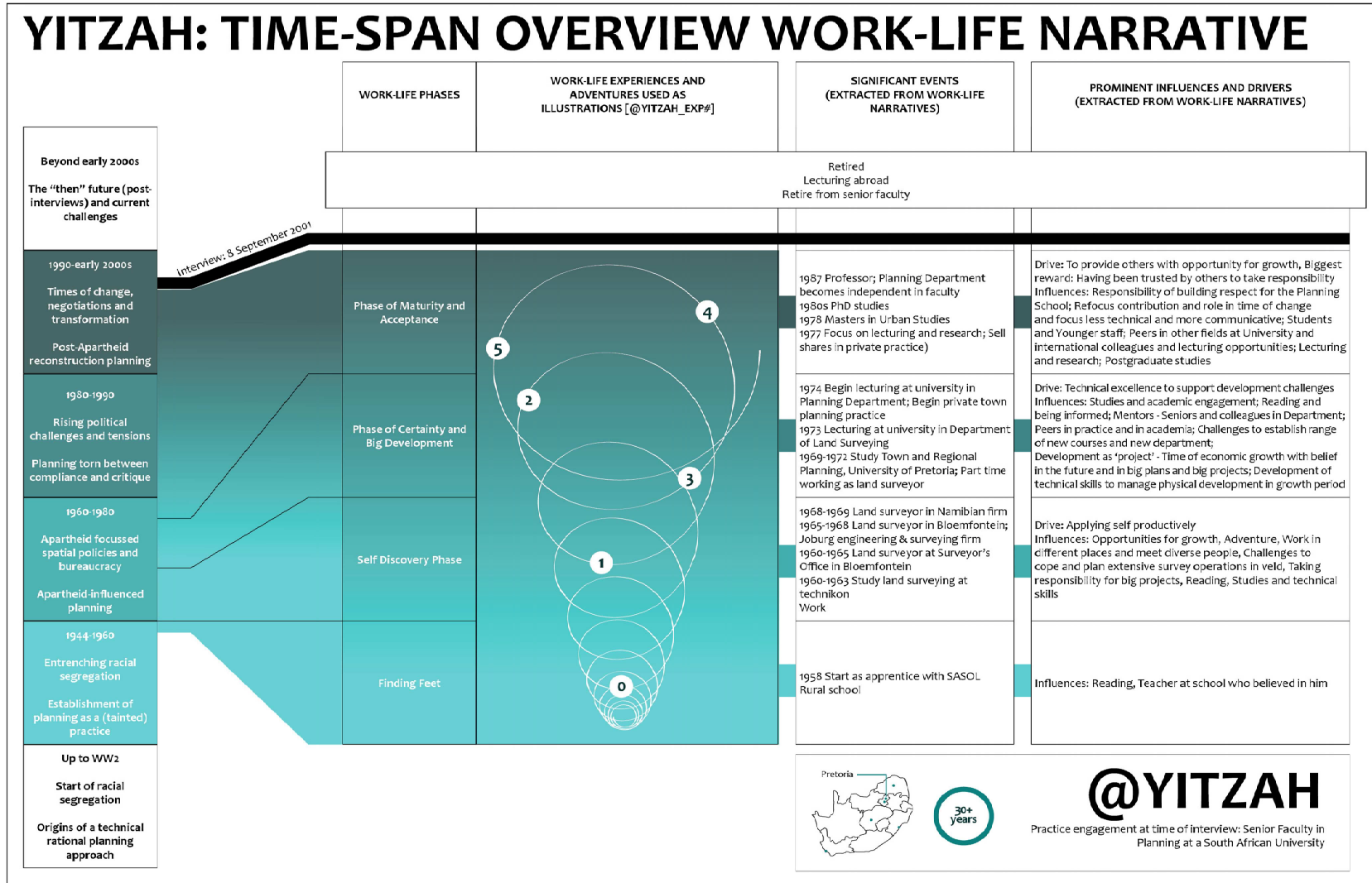




Figure C.6: @Daib Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative

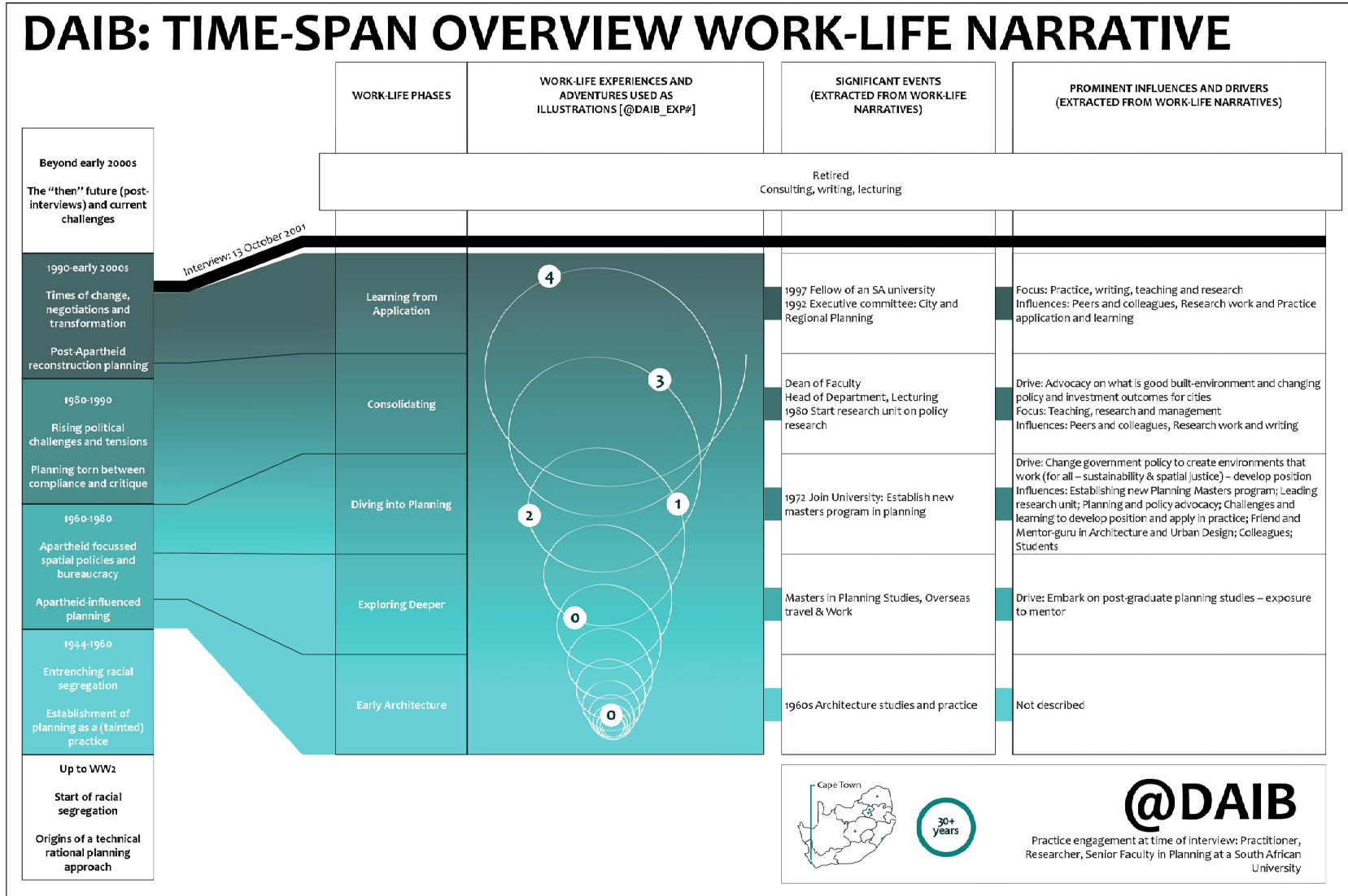


Figure C.7: @Janice Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative

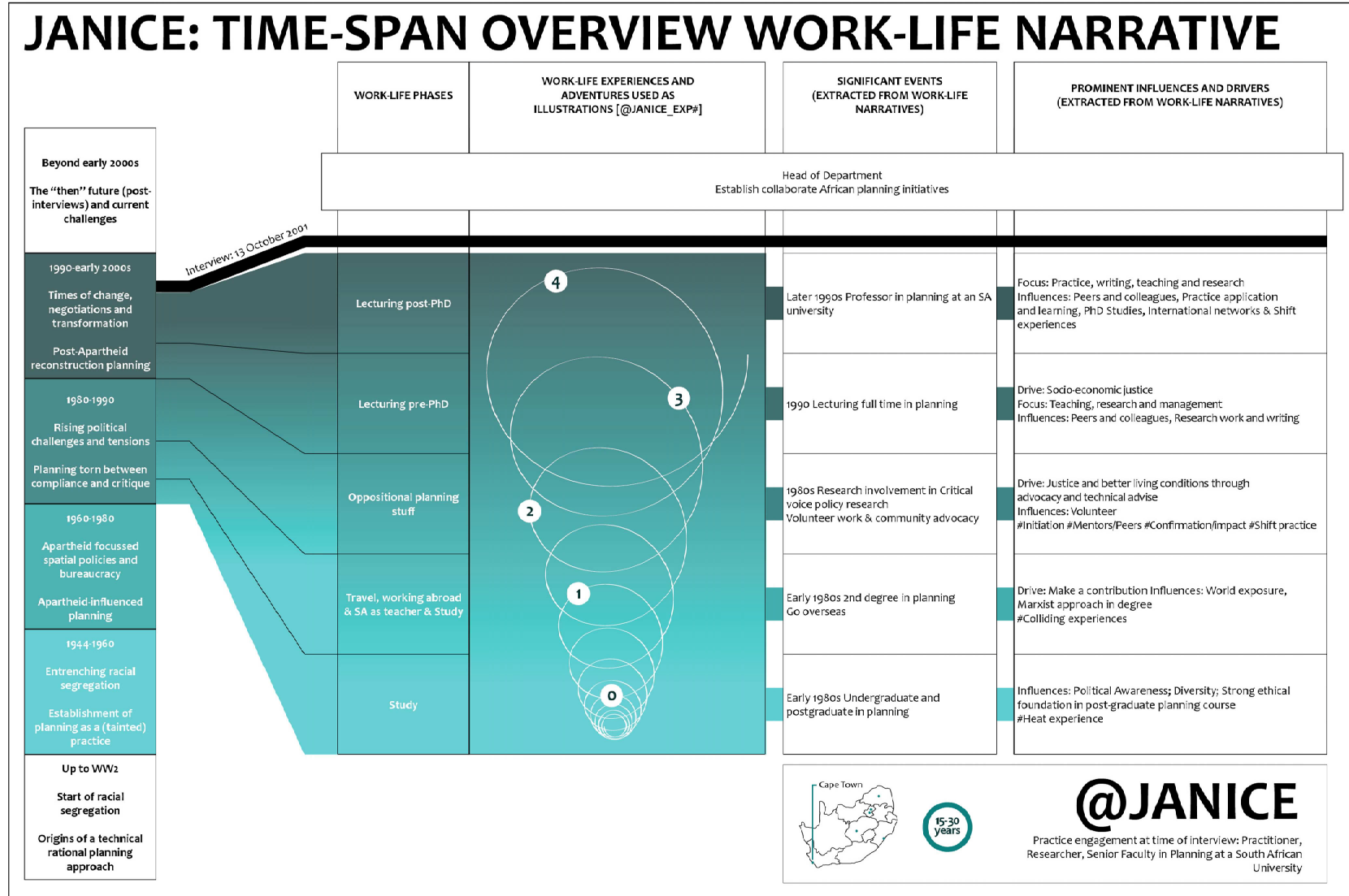
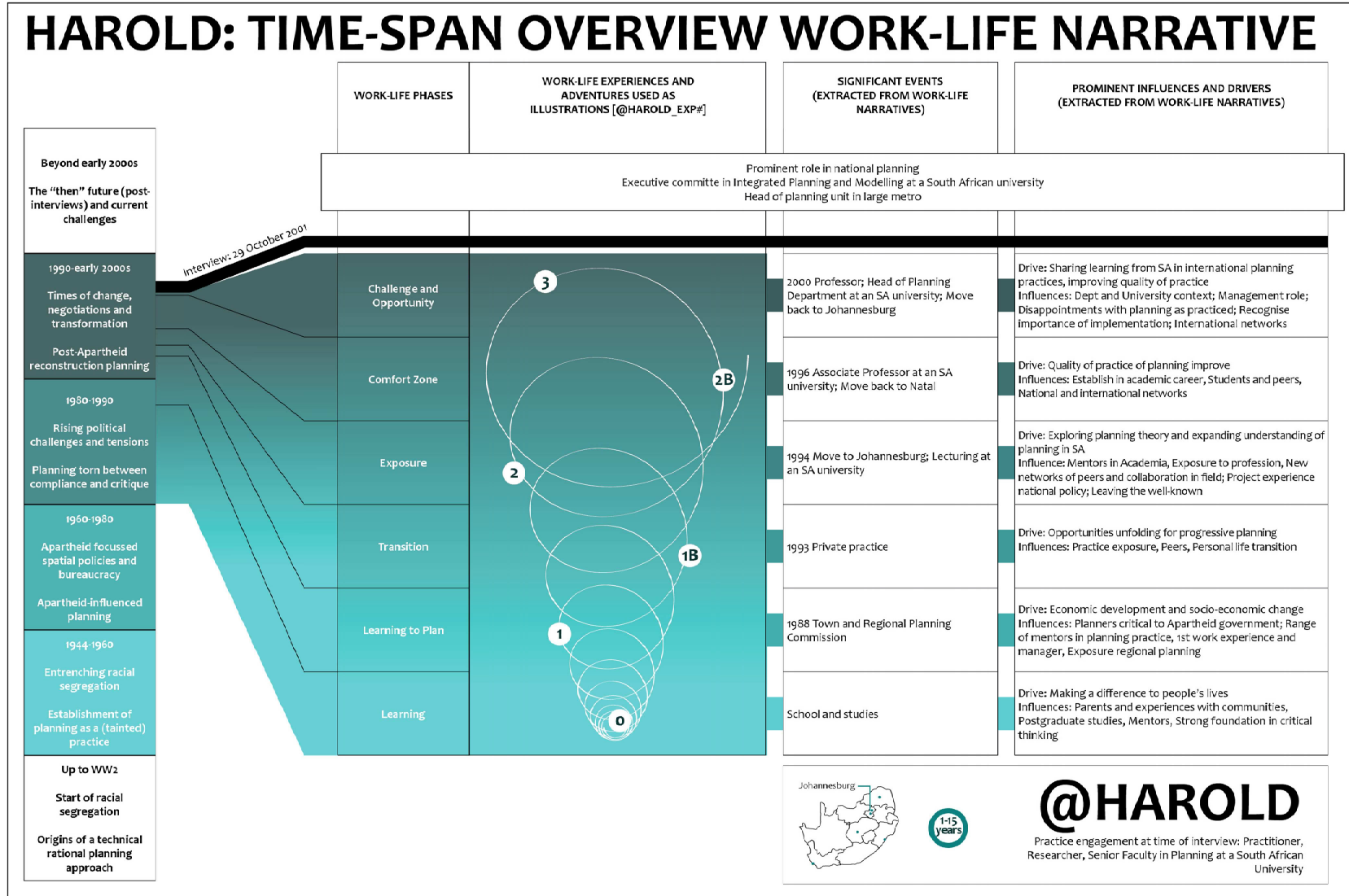


Figure C.8: @Harold Time-span Overview Work-Life Narrative



**Table C.3:** ‘Acts/Phases’ in participant work-life narratives

Name	Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5	Act 6	Act7	Act8	Year
<b>INES</b>	Self-reflection	Preparation and courage	Building a technical base	Starting afresh	Teaching & learning;	<b>Coming into my own – Realizing my potential</b>			5-15
<b>DALI</b>	Lopsided, graft and the dishwasher room – Activism to academia	IDP planning phase – Intense phase of IDP planning	<b>Transformation – where I am able to dictate where I want to be</b>						5-15
<b>ZANE</b>	Stable – education	Found interest in & re-directed to planning	<b>Putting things on the ground – real life, challenging, dynamic</b>						5-15
<b>HAROLD</b>	Learning to plan	Stepping stone/breeding	Exposure	Comfort zone	<b>Creating challenges</b>				5-15
<b>GAZ</b>	Early understanding	Technical training	Immersion into world and peers	Transition to Workplace & mentoring	Multicultural & planning education	<b>Governance &amp; education</b>			5-15
<b>THAI</b>	Lighting the candle	Riding the storms	Finding direction	Broadening horizons	<b>Getting focus</b>				5-15
<b>JALAN</b>	After school	Wits	PlanAct	<b>PIMS</b>					5-15
<b>TINA</b>	One big learning process								5-15

Being and Becoming and Contributing in (and through) Planning

Name	Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5	Act 6	Act7	Act8	Year
<b>MITCH</b>	Energetic youngster	Matured young man	Uncertainty	<b>Professional team</b>					5-15
<b>WIM</b>	Learning phase	Developing and Learning – working with municipal planning	<b>Working with management and planning</b>						5-15
<b>ELLE</b>	“It is all inter-related”								5-15
<b>PETER</b>	Training phase	Working with redevelopment	Doing something of everything	Housing Focus	<b>Private Sector</b>				15-30
<b>PEDRO</b>	Hermitically sealed off & getting ready	Coming to terms with world & development, architecture	Urban design course & first planning experience (Toronto)	Back to SA & Adaptation	Dark ages	Keagan phase	Clima & Phase	<b>Open Phase</b>	15-30
<b>JENS</b>	Namibia	Lebowa government	Private practice						15-30
<b>LINZA</b>	Undergraduate studies	Finding my feet – getting to know the area	Growing period	Dark stage – Government restructuring	Getting clarity	<b>Interacting with peers</b>			15-30
<b>JANICE</b>	Travel, working abroad & SA as teacher & study	UPRU – Oppositional planning stuff	UCT Lecturing pre-PhD	<b>UCT Lecturing post-PhD</b>					15-30
<b>LENA</b>	Study	Township Establishment	Coordinator	Doing everything on own	<b>Relearning &amp; starting afresh</b>				15-30
<b>NIEL</b>	Education	Provincial	Municipal						15-30

Being and Becoming and Contributing in (and through) Planning

Name	Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5	Act 6	Act 7	Act 8	Year
<b>TISH</b>	Starting to work & want to improve skills	Getting into social work	I'm learning phase	<b>Growing into planning</b>					15-30
<b>DRE</b>	**								15-30
<b>LAIN</b>	Early work and study	Living & working in America	Period of rapid change	Period of missed opportunities	<b>Period of P&amp;DM shifts</b>				30+
<b>BIJAN</b>	Architecture	Engaging with context – social & physical of the city	Maturing – travelling, studying abroad, reading	Getting into practice & teaching & research thrust	<b>Communication &amp; writing</b>				30+
<b>YITZAH</b>	Finding feet	Self-discovery	Stage of growth and certainty	<b>Phase of maturity</b>					30+
<b>DAIB</b>	Early Architecture	Exploring deeper – planning studies & overseas	Diving into planning	Consolidating (teaching, research, management)	<b>Writing – Teaching, research, practice</b>				30+
<b>KAIL</b>	**								30+

\*\* Transcription record does not include the participant hand drawn note of acts

**Table C.4: ‘Acts/Phases’ summary across work-life narratives**

Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5	Act 6
Finding feet	Self-discovery	Exposure	Stage of growth and certainty	Phase of maturity	Acceptance
Lighting the candle	Riding the storms	Building a technical base	Finding direction	Broadening horizons	Getting focus
Learning to plan	Stepping stone/breeding ground	Learning	Comfort zone	Teaching & learning	Creating challenges and reviving interests
Self-reflection training and learning	Preparation and courage	Lessons from local government experience	Starting afresh	Coming into my own education/study phase	Realizing my potential
Early understanding	Technical training	Immersion into world and peers	Back in SA city (urban design and city scale projects)		Olympic bid – Climax phase
Early work and study	Living & working in America	Period of P&DM shifts	Workplace & mentoring	Provincial phase; municipal phase	Governance & education
Oppositional planning stuff	Rapid change; Period of missed opportunities	Lebowa government	Multicultural & planning education	Private practice	["I was born to do that"]
Namibia		Getting to know the area	Intense phase of IDP planning	Transformation – where I am able to dictate where I want to be	Innovate & getting clarity – moving
Lopsided, graft and the dishwasher room	Activism to academia; IDP planning phase	Maturing – travelling, studying abroad, reading	Growing period: shift from planning to project orientation	Dark stage – government restructuring	Interacting with peers
Undergraduate studies	Finding my feet		Practice & teaching & research thrust	Communication & writing	Association of Planners
Architecture	Engaging with context – social & physical of the city	Part-time work		Mid-career	Autonomy
Attraction to subject & Study choice	Studies		Early career		Management

### C.3.4 PERSONAL AND PRACTICE QUESTS

Table C.5 provides examples of shared quests for the common good, contributing to the future of humanity, evident within different personal and contextually situated quests in participant work-life contexts over time. It also provides an indication of a seeming commitment to a quest of excellence and of extending one’s own abilities and experiences. The most apparent examples are from the narratives of those participants that played active roles in driving change through working with communities, as volunteers, and with non-governmental organisations (@Lain; @Pedro; @Gaz). For the more technical inclined, it was a drive to deal with housing challenges, through driving township or rural development (@Yitzah; @Jens; @Wim; @Mitch). For quite a number, it was mentioned as a passion to drive transformation processes in planning and institutions to bring about changes in investment and development priorities, and more integrated and strategic decision-making in cities or municipalities (@Kail; @Zane; @Dali; @Jalan; @Jannice). For some, it was about introducing new concepts and a different engagement with spatial planning and sustainability in practice (@Daib; @Bijan; @Jannice; @Thai; @Pedro; @Neil; @Elle). For others, the drive to bring about a shift in policy and academic debates (@Harold, @Daib, @Innes; @Lain; @Dre).

**Table C.5: Practice quests evident in time-span work-life contexts in service of a more just and sustainable future for all**

Context Specific Quest Paths (Examples)	Participant work-life narratives reflecting specific quest paths	Examples of personal quests for excellence and extending abilities to add value to practice quests
Advocacy and awareness for justice, socio-political change & sustainability	Janice, Thai, Daib, Lain	Growing wisdom, learning and agility to move forward
Shaping spaces to drive equality, justice and sustainability	Daib, Janice	Acquire new knowledge, insights and perspectives
Conceptually sound strategic plans and policies to drive change, justice and ‘reconstruction’	Pedro, Harold, Jalan, Dali, Dre	Being curious, innovate and learn (in spite of challenges)
Shaping processes and galvanise collaboration in planning for the future	Thai, Dali, Pedro, Kail	Leading change and driving justice – through excellence and extending selves in terms of social intelligence, team work, courage, connection and communication and perspective on the future
Contributing to the ‘project’ of development through technical expertise	Yitzah, Jens, Lena, Tina, Niel, Dre, Kail, Elle, Wim	Leading change and justice with strong measures of interpersonal and emotional strengths
Nature of quests for ecological world view	Thai, Pedro, Neil, Daib, Janice	Creating hope for the future and justice through new perspectives and courage

### C.3.5 QUEST ADVENTURES AND ELEMENTS

Quest adventures have been identified in most of the participant work-life narratives (See Table C.6: Quest narrative elements in participant work-life adventures). Many of the participant work-life



narratives in the established and experienced career-spanning categories include rich narrations of adventures and experiences, as well as reflections on significant shaping elements and influences within these. Fisher (in his book *Human Communication As Narration* (1989)) argues that the most important characteristics of stories are their coherence and reliability, in this case also enabling the comparison of narratives and quest elements based on their ‘narrative rationality’ (Throgmorton, 1992:19), internal coherence, as well as significance in terms of agency. The discussions in the thesis draw on findings and reflection from all of these.

All narratives referred to the significance of embarking on a career or field of study in planning, with reference to purpose and reasons and early years, as well as first practice challenges shared by most participants. Whilst most participants reflected on their work-life context in quite detail, sharing experiences and rich narratives/stories, some reflected on their work-life experiences by only providing a high level overview. Amongst older participants who only joined the practice of planning recently, the emphasis was subsequently more on their personal quests than on their experiences within the practice *per se*.

**Table C.6: Quest narrative elements in participant work-life adventures**

Quest Narrative Elements		Participant work-life narratives reflecting key narrative elements
Work-life narratives with strong personal and planning quest themes, drivers and narrative elements		Thai, Harold, Dali, Daib, Gaz, Dre, Bijan, Lain, Janice, Ines, Pedro, Jalan, Yitzah, Jens, Linza, Zane, Niel
Rich narrative story descriptions		
Work-life narratives strongly highlighting purpose but providing a high level overview of work-life experiences over time		Kail, Mitch, Tish, Wim, Peter
Work-life narrative with a strong focus on personal quest and ‘connecting’ within planning quest in later years		Tina, Lena, Tish, Elle
Call to Action and Quest Departure		
Call to action Passionately Narrated Experiences in depth	<b>Formative experiences and influences, early childhood</b>	Thai, Harold, Dali, Jalan, Yitzah, Tish
	<b>Heeding the call to action</b>	Thai, Daib, Harold, Gaz, Dali, Dre, Adrian, Bijan, Janice, Lina, Niel
		Unfolding Journey: Kail, Lain, Janice, Peter

Quest Narrative Elements		Participant work-life narratives reflecting key narrative elements
	<b>Longer road – detours</b>	Ines, Tish, Pedro, Ines, Mitch, Yitzah
	<b>Into planning by ‘accident’</b>	Jalan, Yitzah, Lena, Zane
Not mentioned in depth		Tina, Wim, Elle
1st Growth/ Initiation		
Initiation – Passionately Narrated Experiences	<b>Post-graduate studies</b>	Thai, Pedro, Lain, Bijan,
	<b>Early work</b>	Yitzah, Daib, Harold, Kail, Dre, Gaz, Jalan, Dali, Ines, Morris, Janice, Wim, Elle, Jens, Niel
	<b>Later work experience</b>	Lena, Zane, Tina, Tish, Mitch
Work-life experiences & adventures		
Reflection on quest challenges narrated as adventures in terms of quest narrative elements		Yitzah, Thai, Daib, Pedro, Harold, Kail, Gaz, Jens, Lain, Jalan, Dali, Dre, Ines, Linza, Bijan, Janice
<b>More reflection on capabilities and attitude and qualities required in handling contextual challenges – less narration on detailed experiences – thus less examples used in quest narrative</b>		Elle, Lena, Tisch, Mitch, Wim

Describing and comparing participant work-life narratives as a series of adventures and career-spanning experiences does not presuppose a linear or predetermined journey (See Part One, Sections 3 and 4). It does, however, provide a lens through which to identify and highlight cycles (often iterative) and periods of growth and learning, as well as significant shaping influences in that (i.e.: contextual realities, people, inhibiting and supporting circumstances, roles and challenges, learning and capabilities, reflective and expanding practices), and also drivers and choices.

Whilst the quest adventure elements are described in a comparative way, the golden threads and shaping influences of personal background and societal events, purpose, work place and family life contexts, personal and professional development, growth experiences, networks, mentors and choices that run across quest elements and experiences within respective work-life narratives are equally significant. Two examples of work-life narratives illustrating the quest of being and becoming in planning are provided in Text Boxes 3.1 and 3.2. These narrative examples are provided as illustration of

the rich narratives highlighting respective quest elements, as well as the golden threads and significant influences on personal and professional choices and development within specific work-life narratives over time. As set out in Chapter 3, viewing ‘work-life’ as ‘a journey’ does not pre-suppose a pre-determined path and one-directional journey, but much rather explores dedication to planning’s quest through a range of unfolding experiences. The unfolding process of formal and informal learning, as well as personal and professional development and personal and relational transition, is evident in all the work-life narratives. A wealth of information regarding this was evident in participant work-life narratives. Some insights are shared through a series of analyses examples:

- Table C.7 illustrates the learning and growth themes from work-life narratives using the work-life narrative of @Bijan;
- Figure C.9 illustrates the drivers of choices and transitions in the work-life context of @Pedro as an example;
- Examples of significant drivers identified within respective work-life narratives are set out in Table C.8; and
- Examples of significant drivers identified within respective work-life narratives, significant attitudes, qualities and competencies identified within work-life narratives, with high levels of coherency between work-life narratives are set out in Table C.9.

**Table C.7: Learning and growth themes from work-life narratives: Example @Bijan**

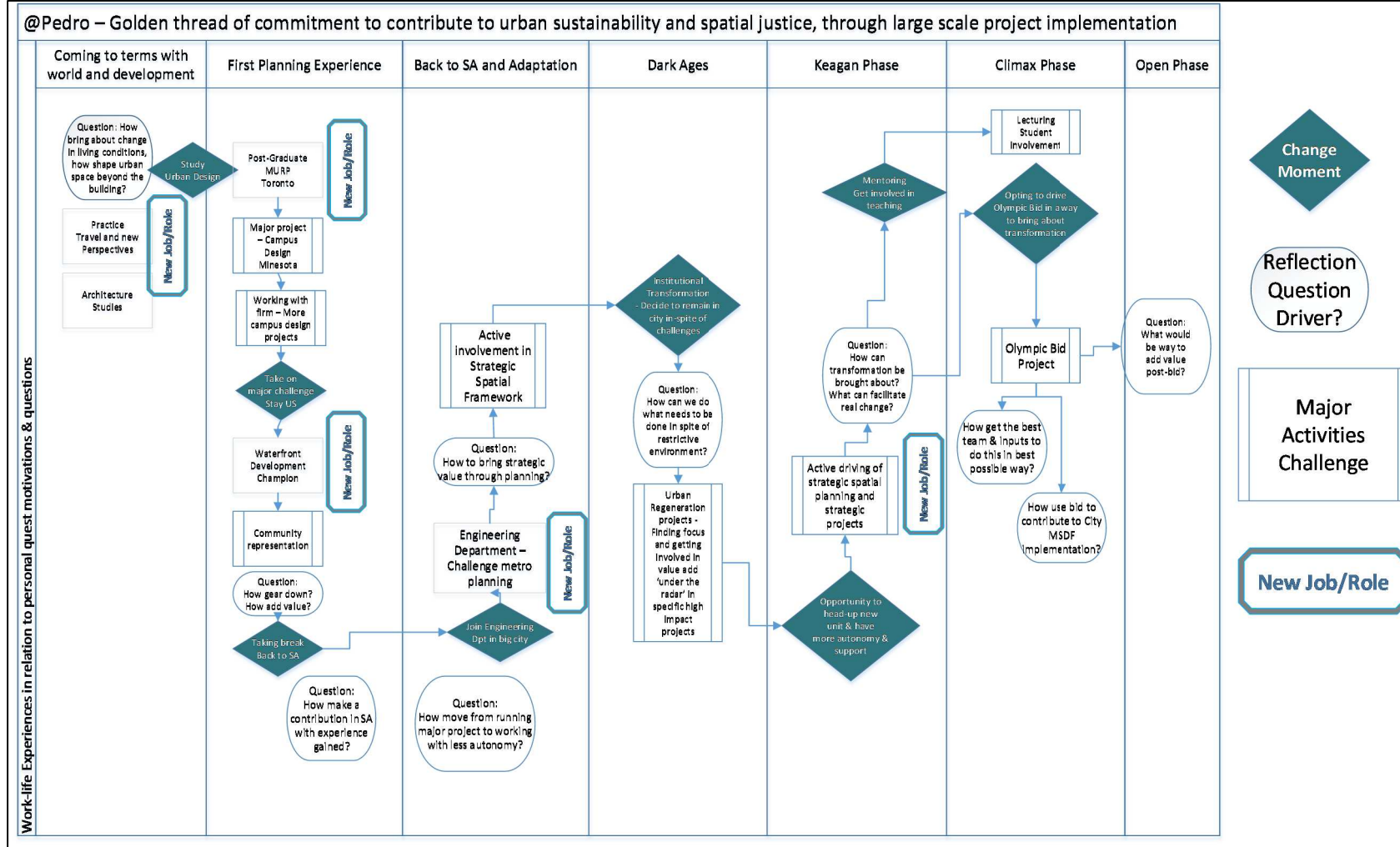
BIJAN	Events	Career choices & decisions	Influencing factors, learning & growth experiences
<b>Act 1</b>	Architecture Undergraduate UCT 1959-1961 1962 Overseas 1963-1964 SA M (Masters) Architecture 1965 Thesis	Should study in London or come to SA? – family (parents & 5 siblings all left, sister just finished matric), after working a bit in London: “I think I came back as I loved country”	Mix of things - Travel overseas 1962 (#Travel #NewPerspective) Sharpeville 1961 & aftermath & depression (#SocietalRealities #Inequality) Change in thinking – <i>The Life and Death of Great American Cities</i> , 1965 – not just about individual buildings but how larger order things affect people’s lives (#Reading ChallengedBeliefs #NewPerspectives). Then also influenced by Rudolph Uytendogaardt – really good teacher from totally different belief/approach in architecture, he “brought a view of architecture not divorced from planning”. (#NewPerspective #Mentor #Inspiration) “It was that period that changed a lot of things for me”. Influenced by the Athens Charter, Prof U’s views challenged training within the functionalist model of architecture at the time (#Mentor #Colliding experience). Intense time of change, discovered a lot of new things – took 1 year instead of 6 months for thesis. Started working with Rudolph part-time (#HeatExperiences #ShiftExperiences #ExtendSelf #Challenged #GrowthExperience #Courage #TimeEffortInvest #Reward #Dedication)
<b>Act 2</b>	Engaging with context – social & physical of the city 1966-1967 (1971) Worked for Prof U in practice Part-time teaching – UCT Architecture	Loved teaching – decided to become teaching assistant for 2 mornings a week – was working at small practice at that time and arrangement was that whatever I earned from teaching was subtracted from salary. Tough years and we worked a great	“I found that I did not know enough about various things about the environment and our consideration of building those environments. (#SocietalRealities #Inequality) Because of that from 1968 I was asked to teach. I really enjoyed teaching.” (#Passion #Dedication #InternalReward #Excellence) Also started taking selected courses part-time in Master’s in URP (did not want to do the degree but wanted to learn more about context, larger scale i.t.o politics, society, economics). “I did not know

BIJAN	Events	Career choices & decisions	Influencing factors, learning & growth experiences
		deal. (#Passion #Courage #TimeEffortInvest #ExtendSelf #Challenged #GrowthAction #Dedication)	enough about things like sociology, various things, urban geography ... I learned a whole lot of stuff.” (#SocietalRealities #Inequality #Knowledge #LearnAction #Excellence)  “Like most architects I had read very little quite frankly.”
<b>Act 3</b>	<p>Maturing – travelling, studying abroad, reading</p> <p>1968-1971 Worked for Prof U in practice</p> <p>1968 &amp; 1969 M URP classes</p> <p>Some consulting for community groups</p> <p>Full time lecturing at UCT 1972</p> <p>1973-1975 M URP University of Pennsylvania</p>	<p>1970 Scholarship approved, deferred owing to personal reasons, also got married in between (#LifeContext) – decided to study at University of Pennsylvania where Prof U studied (#Mentor), and also to first do a year of preparation by full time teaching of new course in architecture programme (#Passion #Courage #TimeEffortInvest #ExtendSelf #Challenged #GrowthAction #LearnAction #Excellence).</p> <p>In 1975 on completion of studies, there was an opportunity offered by the firm he worked with in Pennsylvania to open up an office and become partner of firm in Florida (#ExternalReward). Also an offer (one year contract) to teach in SA as Prof U was taking</p>	<p>Fair amount of travelling (#Travel #NewPerspective)</p> <p>“It was a bit of a maturing phase really. I was working, I was teaching, I was studying, and I travelled to Europe and other places ... used to hop up Africa and down. West, North and East Africa, Ethiopia, Zanzibar ... I began to see realities. Obviously I did not know what I was looking at, but I was very young. Of course it influenced me, you see different possibilities, different ways of living and doing things that is not what one is used to being surrounded by most of the time. I think that in combination, the practice, with very fine people I must tell you – interesting people – intellectuals who enjoy to debate things, all of which became teachers interestingly enough in America. This was also the time that Rudolph was beginning large planning projects with the firm. I wasn’t central to them because I wasn’t a planner, but obviously did dabble, when it came to crunch time and deadlines where there you jumped into it... So I began to develop my own views. Also a time that I decided this course was not very good and applied for bursaries overseas”. (#LearnAction #GrowthAction #ExtendSelf #Challenged #Mentors #Peers #SupportContext #NewPerspective #ShiftExperiences #HeatExperiences)</p> <p>Decided with Prof U that full time teaching for a year was important to prepare for postgraduate</p>

BIJAN	Events	Career choices & decisions	Influencing factors, learning & growth experiences
		<p>sabbatical and replacement lecturer was needed (#InternalReward). Had two weeks to decide. South Africa was the part of the world where he wanted to be (#Passion) and wife was also home sick at that time (#LifeContext) – states that “it is difficult to separate the personal from the professional” – so decided to take the latter offer and come back to Cape Town to teach (#Passion, #Dedication #Challenged).</p>	<p>studies: ”... this was a period of an enormous amount of reading. Also a lot of discussion with colleagues.” (#ExtendSelf #Challenged)</p> <p>Got married, went over to University Pennsylvania: “It was an amazing period; there were very good people there, Kahn in architecture and in planning there were some top guys, David Crane and a whole lot of other people (#Mentors #Inspiration). Not a very large class though. The joint programme never admitted more than 12 people. Most of the work and studio was a small group drawn from quite a wide array of places. India, South America, mostly Americans ... quite a broad spectrum of socio-economic strata. (#Peers #NewPerspective ShiftExperience #SupportContext) It was financially challenging as wife could not work initially and had to also find schooling for stepdaughter. Thus, had to start working so got a job with local firm for 20-25 hours a week. ... they were highly experienced and learned people, some of whom were at the forefront of the ecological revolution that was going on at the time around 1973. So I worked on a number of projects while I worked full time on the two-year programme. I have never worked so hard in all my life. So that was really study. This was really study!”</p>
<p><b>Act 4</b></p>	<p>Getting into practice &amp; teaching &amp; research thrust</p> <p>(This has been my professional period in 2</p>	<p>1975 Contract lecturing at UCT Department of Architecture</p> <p>1976 Full time senior lecture UCT</p> <p>Decided to apply and take full time lecturing post when that opened.</p> <p>After period of consolidating and finding feet as lecturer, started own practice to be able to do more than just</p>	<p>“Certainly for the first couple of years (it took me probably about 4 years) it was a period of consolidating. It’s one thing to be a student [but another] to stand up in front of them and give a class. During this stage one organizes material with colleagues.”</p> <p>Doing research and asking the question, “Why Cape Town was the way it was?” – Interested in the</p>

BIJAN	Events	Career choices & decisions	Influencing factors, learning & growth experiences
ways, academic and practice)	Department of Architecture  1980 Open up private practice	teaching. Worked with former students.	development of the city, and formation of certain patterns.  Major project set out by the City of Cape Town: Wanted an inventory of good urban fabric for the whole city bowl to Observatory. I was interested in working class housing – decided to focus on Salt River area. Other consultants worked in other areas. “There had to be some co-ordination of method, and nobody had thought through the method, including ourselves. So we learned on the job so to speak and we devised a method. All the other consultants adopted the method. This was going on around 1983/84. From then on this conservation thread has been very strong in my work. You know when you have to work out method and argue it out, the content and concepts, and the international literature may not be suited. It was in this arena that our first publications came about. A kind of research thrust began to influence and affect the teaching which was a welcomed thing because ... it had got to be a bit boring”. Since then, done a lot of work in this area.

Figure C.9: Drivers of choices and transitions in work-life context: Example @Pedro





### C.3.6 COMPARATIVE EXPLORATIONS

Examples of the significant drivers identified within the respective work-life narratives are set out in Table C.8: Examples of significant drivers identified within respective work-life narratives significant attitudes, qualities and competencies identified within work-life narratives, with high levels of coherency between work-life narratives, are set out in Table C.9.

**Table C.8: Examples of significant drivers identified within respective work-life narratives**

Quests to make a practical difference to people's lives	<i>[@Thai_Exp2:] "How can we make the world a better place? What are the problems that the world faces? And, how do we lay the right foundations for people to live positive and constructive lives?"</i>	Lena, Peter, Jalan, Harold, Gaz, Janice, Ines, Thai
Quests for justice and a sustainable future through different pathways	Raising awareness and advocacy for change	Thai, Gaz, Dali, Pedro, Janice, Lain, Jalan, Daib, Bijan, Harold
	Advocacy volunteer & student work	Thai, Gaz, Dali, Pedro, Janice
	Direct support for communities through NGOs	Lain, Gaz, Jalan
	Advocacy research	Daib, Janice, Lain, Bijan, Harold
	Transforming urban form and spatial realities	Bijan, Janice, Lain, Gaz, Ines, Harold, Thai, Daib
	Strategic plans and policies to guide investment and development	Pedro, Harold, Adrian, Dali, Jalan, Gaz, Ines, Linza
	Shaping processes and galvanizing collaboration	Lain, Jalan, Dali, Janice, Kail
Other significant quest drivers	Igniting the 'torch' and providing growth opportunities for others (more evident amongst older planners)	Yitzah, Jens, Linza, Daib, Janice, Kail, Harold, Bijan, Pedro, Lain, Morris
	Contribute to the 'project' of development through technical expertise	Yitzah, Jens, Elle, Wim, Niel, Peter
	Addressing global sustainability through ecological perspectives	Thai, Daib, Pedro

**Table C.9: Examples of qualities and competencies that seemed significant and coherent in comparing respective work-life narratives.**

Call to Action	Initiation	Adventures
Motivated to bring about change		Characteristic/attitude – sense of purpose and contribution.
Seeing the big picture, becoming aware of inter-connectedness of the world	See wider, thus tackle challenges often in somewhat different way	Experiences also speak about hope and a vision for the future, amidst the struggles of remaining committed in less than ideal circumstances.
Caring for others – ‘call for action often about need perceived in society/community at first – then exposed to the broader/humanity at large Value diversity & different shades of grey	Challenged ... Reason for action	Strong relations, caring and consideration The heartfelt caring for people whether evident in a deep concern about the living conditions of people Possibly underestimated characteristic in most of the participants work-life narratives is the incredibly profound role that strong relations with mentors and peers play
Questioning – rigor, willingness to engage complexity	Eager, engaged, willing	Ability and willingness to be agile and adaptive play in being able to face challenges and contribute over time
Appreciation and exposure to wide range of subject fields in planning AND in-depth engagement with one or two subject areas	Willing to engage new knowledge fields & acquiring new skills – realizing new strengths	Being highly knowledgeable and skilled in a core knowledge field as part of their formal education within the practice of planning, as well as having the ability to engage a challenge in an in-depth and very broad knowledge base seemed essential in all work-life adventures.
Recognition that there is much to know; Intellectual rigor & capacity – rigorous debate, articulation of viewpoints, critical thinking, being challenged by mentors, teachers, peers	Being challenged Dedication and commitment – jumping in, go extra mile, extend self	Participants seem quite comfortable in knowing that it is impossible to ever learn everything that there is to know and that learning is a constant part of planning as a practice.
Specific point of departure (more spatial/critical, etc.) i.t.o intervention preference very much linked to strengths & school/mentor approach, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ A lens of spatial processes and impact of spatial and urban form, as well as a focus on bringing about change through shaping urban form;</li> <li>☞ A lens of critical theory and socio-political processes as critical to bringing about change and developing plans and policies; and</li> <li>☞ A lens of technical, engineering and regulatory focus to enable and guide development.</li> </ul>	Willing to apply & extend skills & knowledge, pursue & test out, reflection and rigor	Broad range of strategies were evident, recognizing the importance of augmenting spatial approaches with more procedural and market related interventions, driving change in specific places and the collective future remained a common theme, i.e. in driving more just and sustainable urban form and design, the realization seems to be the need to understand the inter-relationships between the market, political will, power relations, as well as technical realities such as engineering services; Illustrated strong preference in earlier years to specific approaches and competencies in which they were deeply grounded in, of interest is the explicit acknowledgement (often by older participants) of the value in other approaches, even in competencies which they had sometimes disregarded in their own early career experiences.

Being and Becoming and Contributing in (and through) Planning

Call to Action	Initiation	Adventures
Creative expression	Try new things	Ability and willingness to be agile and adaptive play in being able to face challenges and contribute over time. The importance of this competence and attitude can be clearly seen in how participants were able to handle and utilize expected and unexpected changes in personal as well as socio-political contextual realities, how they were able to adapt to (in some cases actually driving) major changes in the planning and institutional system, and also handle challenges associated with that.
High levels of spatial intelligence		Strong spatial competency and spatial understanding for many participants were also mentioned as a key driver in engaging their work and 'quests' in planning (Thai, Bijan, Janice, Pedro, Lain, Gaz, Innés and Dáib), or a critical aspect recognized as important even though not initially having been a core skill (Harold and Dali).
Identify strengths & interests		Dedication to personal growth, growing of wisdom and the need to 'give back' to others, to young people and to the practice of planning in order to enable contribution to common good.
Social & emotional intelligence Spiritual intelligence (moving beyond ego), ability to reflect mentioned by some	Engagement with others, doing with (not alone) Ability to effectively collaboration	Senior participants were quite outspoken about the importance of such an attitude and the capacity for personal growth. The ability to be comfortable, drive collaboration and be creative amidst the uncertainties and tensions of not-knowing seem to be key. Learning how to handle situations carefully, to be thoughtful of the situations you get in, of how processes work differently in different instances, of political processes, etc.
Action orientated - voluntary work, student work, participation in student and activist activities; impact driven; determination to actively pursue dreams and ideals & courage to adapt	Action orientated in workplace – take on challenges, stepping up	Ability to deal with contextual realities and the unpredictability of life's challenges. All work-life narratives attest to the courage to adapt, determination to actively pursue dreams and ideals, and willingness to take opportunities and make changes in personal contexts as well.
Practical abilities in terms of organization, management	Practical execution & implementation	Strategic thinking, organizing, strategizing and process design were often been mentioned as personal strengths and explicitly identified by many of the participants in the study as critical competencies in meeting the challenges in work-life adventures.
Future orientation – importance and need for change and intervention to actively shape the long-term future, and the possible contribution that planning as a practice can make in this regard, seems to be a strong undertone	Dedicated to impact future in specific context & future impact	Golden thread, which in some cases was explicitly mentioned and in all of the adventure experiences implicitly applied, is a passion and an ability "to make things happen" and "to bring about change" (Pedro). Strong future orientation is evident in most participants' 'adventure' experiences

*Being and Becoming and Contributing in (and through) Planning*

Call to Action	Initiation	Adventures
Curiosity, asking questions, willingness and eagerness to learn, working hard to gain new understandings and insights, learning from experiences, learning through watching people, asking 'why?', being passionate about understanding processes affecting cities and life. Requirement mentioned by many of not being bored, keeping interested, being faced with new challenges and always engaging in something new	Do what is required to learn or galvanize input. Take on new challenges – not shy away, in new fields, i.t.o major shifts over time Excitement & RELEVANCE Requires raising questions thus answers not evident Opportunity for creativity, innovation.	The ability to engage and think about the problems the world faces even if it is hugely challenging and daunting, as well as the courage to take action regardless of the risks of failing and the lack of formal rewards seem profound, and often kept alive not because of results, but because of shared dedication and strong bonds between practitioners. Inevitability of having to operate and contribute within the context of complexity and uncertainty (as evident in all work life-narratives). Also, a lack of information and the almost impossible task of understanding multiple issues, sectors, processes and their multi-dimensional and highly dynamic inter-relatedness. Excitement of dealing with the unknown
Autonomy, being independent, being trusted – gaining confidence	Autonomy Accountability – live up to expectations	Drive and lead, in many instances seems to also go hand-in-hand with the affinity and need to work independently, to drive and 'run with' initiatives and projects
Being part of team/something/association – collaboration & meaningful connections & support; In practice & beyond & with people in non-expert capacity	Relational experiences, working with teams/mentors (even at distance – ask questions) Connect and collaborate	Significant attitude, evident throughout participant work-life adventures, is the attitude:- not of an on-looker, but as an active participant. Driving, leading and advocating for change Participants often had to adapt the role they played in relation to other people and teams Telling of good stories (with good technical understanding underneath it) implies an underlying message that speaks to people's hearts
Integrative ability – making meaning and seeing connections between different knowledge fields, stakeholders	Ability to engage complex real-world challenges in integrative ways	Willingness to explore wider, involve other disciplines and stakeholders, illustrates increased flexibility and seemingly less attachment to "what or how".
Bridging gaps & divides – always with the aim of galvanizing action, raising awareness or influencing decisions. These qualities require a level of social entrepreneurship and confidence that solutions can be 'created' even if the answers are not 'readily available'.	Importance of having been able to collaborate and relate with other people in facing initiation challenges	Ability to guide processes, to get people together, to galvanize support – whether from teams, staff, other sector specialists, politicians or communities. This in effect meant leading change with strong measures of interpersonal and emotional strengths, social intelligence, team work, courage and a perspective on the future. Playing a much more facilitative and participative role in engagement processes, operating as member of bigger teams and providing decision support to different role players, and willing to do whatever is required to be done
Excellence, going the extra mile, extending self Hard work, extra effort	Dedication & excellence	Excellence, extend self, 'going the extra mile'

Annexure C

Table C.10 provides a summary of paradigms and methods that can support ‘seeing’ explorations into complicated versus complex paradigm in reflection on the work-life narratives. The purpose is not to illustrate right/wrong but different questions and points of departure.

**Table C.10: Summary of paradigms and methods that can support 'seeing'**

Key Themes	Typical perspectives and questions within a “Complicated” paradigm	Typical perspectives and questions within a “Complex” paradigm
Enquiry focus and purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can planners be supported/enabled to be more efficient and effective in intervening in an inter-connected system?</li> <li>• Understand things as causal, inter-linked, cause &amp; effect, input &amp; output.</li> <li>• In an end-state paradigm, the focus is on closing the gap. Identify what is ideal, what we have and what else is required.</li> <li>• Want to create as much understanding of all the system components and identify the most strategic points of intervention. Focus on cohesion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can planners be supported/enabled to contribute to urban challenges in a complex adaptive system? Being able to see, attend (probe to see what is possible), and act.</li> <li>• Understanding complex interactions not as causal, but as highly dynamic.</li> <li>• Emphasis is on heightened sense of alertness, identify patterns of coherence, agency.</li> <li>• Want to manage boundary conditions, emergence of beneficial coherence, identify and manage probes. Conflict, paradox seen as part of dynamics for innovation.</li> </ul>
Competence (Described as: “The ability to do something successfully or efficiently” Oxford Dictionary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the competencies and meta-competencies required to be a competent professional in the practice of planning?</li> <li>• Described as Static picture / list and categories of competencies and meta-competencies: Complicated competence frameworks and models; Knowledge, Skills and Values – ever increasing list</li> <li>• Knowledge can be learned and transferred (often without context)</li> <li>• Competence is ‘known’, it can be unpacked &amp; re-assembled, packaged and transferred via structured learning, training, continued professional development, mentoring programs</li> <li>• Competence and knowledge is a thing to get/have</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relational and co-produced; interaction and who people interact with, and the dynamics in that interaction is most significant</li> <li>• Dynamic, co-evolving over time</li> <li>• Having agency – generative &amp; making things happen.</li> <li>• Knowledge is co-produced through interaction between people and in informal networks</li> <li>• Recognition that knowledge is volunteered – thus it is there when required / used, context and challenge induced (don’t know what you know till you need to know)</li> <li>• Competence and knowledge is dynamic: it flows, evolving</li> </ul>

Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By enhancing competence of individuals? Learning is viewed as largely individual, adaptation, on-going</li> <li>• Role of mentors is seen as important as assists in developing individual</li> <li>• Learning and adaptation is seen as learning to know more or being able to do something else, or something better</li> <li>• Continuous, reflective, formal and informal</li> <li>• Horizontal</li> <li>• Vertical (meta-competencies, world-views)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in generating knowledge through enhanced meaning-full real-life interactions and a process of transition</li> <li>• Role of mentors &amp; interaction is seen as meaningful and dynamic interaction, infused from both sides to bring about co-evolution</li> <li>• Value attributed to interactions that can disrupt or bring about perspective shifts</li> <li>• Generative – focused on what drivers are (thus what drives operate in which circumstances), e.g. purpose, having impact, or requiring a new circumstance to raise children in), agency in patterns such as that of the Hero's Journey and apprenticeship and serving time</li> </ul>
Views re. how contribution and competence can be enhanced	<p>Focus is on formal education, accreditation and CPD: All individual focused</p> <p>Control and measurement of individual achievements i.t.o 'input &amp; output' (students, faculty), accreditation of minimum standards</p> <p>Expanding the list of competencies and meta-competencies in formal qualifications</p> <p>Improving formal education methods and curricula</p> <p>Measuring continued professional development through knowledge outputs</p>	<p>Competence and contribution is dependent on informal networks, agency to influence behaviour</p> <p>Focus is on praxis, on agency, transition in complex, informal, real situations</p> <p>Improve meaningful interaction in informal networks – clustering/swarming</p> <p>Support teams and individuals to recognise and utilise agency, coherence and patterns in order to influence behaviour or act in complex contexts</p> <p>Creating active communities of practice within discipline and especially beyond discipline boundaries</p> <p>Movement and transition, managing of boundary transitions through transition processes</p>
Focus in exploration	<p>Competencies, Meta-competencies, Drivers and motivators, Norms, Values and ethical considerations, Learning, Adaptation</p>	<p>Agency in purpose, patterns of transitions, paradox and interactions in real-life learning and transitioning experiences, Abilities and attitudes, Significant influences and patterns in transitions</p> <p>How such transitions seem supported &amp; boundary conditions managed</p>
Rewards/Probes that seemed to be used	<p>Ability, affinity, strengths in choosing a fitting career</p> <p>Qualification to be able to participate in planning and benefit from a career in planning as a profession</p> <p>Registration as a professional</p> <p>Rewards in individual career progress through points system, promotion, etc.</p> <p>Awarding success and outputs that are measurable and individual</p> <p>Effective external impact</p>	<p>Purpose and commitment to personal and practice quest as career anchor</p> <p>Access to practice in order to participate and contribute to common good through planning as practice</p> <p>Association and proximity with practice heroes/strong teams, beliefs, habits, excellence, teams</p> <p>Being trusted in practice (by people that matter) and confidence in abilities</p> <p>Satisfaction of having done (and galvanized others to do) whatever was possible to contribute</p> <p>Transformation, change and growth as person and as part of a broader transformation</p>
Possible expectations encouraged	<p>A student (I) will learn, get, buy everything from the qualification,</p>	<p>I will create a base from which to learn, grow and contribute in this world</p> <p>I will be equipped to start a journey</p>

<p>amongst/about students or young people</p>	<p>training courses, career development plan, etc.  A student (I) will be a well-rounded individual who has all (or most) of the list of things I need to know and do when I register as professional to be recognised as an expert (and rewarded as such).  A student (I) will [or will not] be able to have the impact in the future that a young planner (I) 'should' have as a <u>planner</u>.  The mentoring relationship is focused on the student (me) – to enable the young planner (me) to access the knowledge (experience) that the mentor will be able to package in words to give the young planner (me), to accelerate his/her (my) career.</p>	<p>I will be able to find a community of practice and situations in which I can contribute towards shaping the future of this world/context  Mentoring is an opportunity to work alongside someone with experience, so that I can be challenged to grow and learn in practice but more so as person. This will not be easy – it is about being challenged to get out of comfort zone as that is when growth happens, the collaboration is not about me, but about forming a team to add value in complex contexts where there is no existing answer</p>
<p>Possible expectations encouraged amongst/about older and more experienced practitioners</p>	<p>Re. – CPD. I already have everything I require. I only have to stay abreast of new laws, new technologies, etc. through quick courses or attendance of conference. CPD is about me and thus career focussed, I will do what is required to stay in practice.  Mentoring is about me, setting time out to share my experience and to assist in developing young people's career. It is good for my career and focused on identifying gaps in the person's development and helping with that. It means I have something to share and the most important thing is to achieve what we have set out.  Cloning?  I AM WONDERING - Young people are either expected to have all competencies and be able to do everything; OR, placed in mentoring positions where they are protected as they are not trusted to operate. Considering they have not been growing in education but possibly being filled up.</p>	<p>In order to contribute in this world I have to be dedicated to find ways to do so, considering things are changing. I have to support myself by being in contact with people that will assist me, and that I can learn from, with whom I can figure out new and better ways, from whom I can learn. I learn and grow in ways relevant to the context I work in and for the practice I work in. I drive this for a purpose.  Passionate about the practice and the potential of it and what others can bring to it in unique ways. It is important for this practice to spend time with young people to share experience, but also for effective projects and implementation to work in teams, where younger people form part of and add value to. They are expected to do so in real time learning contexts – It is a process of learning from my peers and teams, but also of challenging perspectives and questioning, being challenged and reflecting. It will not be comfortable.  How are they supported to make the transition from apprentice to stand alone? (NOT how can I share with them everything I know?); Managing transition – experience themselves contributing and gaining confidence in their ability to extend themselves and the satisfaction of excellence (at cost) in contribution, even though the 'success' is not necessarily tangible.</p>

### **C.3.7 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this section was to provide an overview of the ‘behind the scenes’ analyses, narrative reconstructions in chronological time order, explorations, comparative overviews and types of analyses that informed, but in some cases also were used to verify, the reflexive interpretation of participant work-life narratives.

The contextual richness and time-span dimension of the work-life narratives enabled an exploration of the abilities, characteristics and meta-competencies of participants within a more dynamic and inter-related way in work-life and personal contexts, context-specific challenges and ‘adventures’, as well as within the context of broader discourses and societal and global challenges.

The explorations and findings of participant work-life narratives, as well as explicit participant insights, highlight the importance of purpose and commitment in enabling practitioners to make a contribution to the practice. It enabled confirmation of the significance of work-life context, purpose, significant experiences and choices, beliefs, personal and relational growth, etc. in influencing and increasing planners’ capabilities and willingness to contribute to the practice.