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Democracy, Cities and Space

South African conceptions of local government

Ivor Chipkin

A dissertation submitted in the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, in the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Political Studies.

I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work, and has not been submitted for any degree or examination at another university.

Ivor Chipkin

Johannesburg, 1997

Degree awarded with distinction on 10 December 1998

Acknowledgments

I have been looking forward to writing my thanks. There are many people I have reason to be immeasurably grateful to.

I want to thank my remarkable, remarkable family and Katrin for the courage, love, hope and health they gave me.

to my beautiful friends.

to the nurses of the Neurosurgical Intensive Care Unit and the High Care ward at the Milpark hospital, and to Dr. Snyckers

to my supervisor Peter Hudson for inspiring me to the end

to Steven Friedman and the staff of the Centre for Policy Studies

to Professor Tom Lodge and the Political Studies Department

I would like to record my thanks to the Human Sciences Research Council for the grant that helped make this research possible

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACO – Alexandra Civic Organisation

ANC – African National Congress

AZAPO – Azanian People's Organisation

BC – Black Consciousness

BCM – Black Consciousness Movement

BLA - Black Local Authority

CAST - Civic Association for Southern Transvaal

CDF – Community Development Forum

CODESA – Convention for a Democratic South Africa

COSAS – Congress of South African Students

COSATU - Congress of South African Trade Unions

CWNC – Central Witwatersrand Negotiating Chamber

ESC – Eastern Services Council

EGSC – Eastern Gauteng Services Council

ERRSC – East Rand Regional Services Council

FOSATU – Federation of South African Trade Unions

IFP – Inkatha Freedom Party

IMLGA – Interim Measures for Local Government Act

KATORUS - Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus

KCC – KATORUS Central Command

LDF – Local Development Forum

LDO – Land Development Objectives

LGNF – Local Government Negotiating Forum

LGTA – Local Government Transition Act

NAHORA – National Hostel Residents Association

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

OD – Organisational Development

RDP - Reconstruction and Development Campaign

RSC – Regional Services Council

SACP - South African Communist Party

SACTU – South African Congress of Trade Unions

SANCO – South African National Civic Organisation

SCA – Soweto Civic Association

SDU – Self-Defence Unit

SPP – Special Presidential Project

SPU – Self-Protection Unit

TUAC – Trade Union Advisory Council

THRA – Tokoza Hostels Residents Association

TLC – Transitional Local Council

UDF – United Democratic Front

UMAWUSA – United Metal and Allied Workers Union of South Africa

WCRC – Wattville Concerned Residents Committee

INTRODUCTION

In 1988 the Soweto People's Delegation and the councils of Soweto, Diepmeadow and Dobsonville began to negotiate an end to the rent boycott and the crisis in the provision of services. Discussions between civic bodies and local government officials – which eventually resulted in the Soweto accord – were increasingly informed by the slogan 'one city, one tax base'. In the wake of the accord, other parties to similarly established negotiations commonly based their approach on the 'one city' slogan. As a result, local government negotiations and the institutional arrangements that followed were increasingly informed by this notion.

The 'one city' slogan and the course of local government negotiations were premised on at least two moments of contingency. From the 1980s onwards the *city* was, for the first time, posited as a legitimate political destination in itself. Whereas urban struggles had in the past been linked to the capture of state or regional power, during the 1980s a plethora of 'civic' organisations arose that were self-consciously local in character and had as their object the appropriation of the city. This amounted to an inclusion in the South African political lexicon of a new political objective; one that was excluded by the couplet 'people–nation' entailed in then preeminent language of National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

These semantic displacements were symptomatic of the growing influence of western European Marxism in South Africa. They also signaled the reduced political significance of NDR from the late 1980's and 1990's in Alliance circles. The collapse of Eastern European regimes and the political demise of s[illegible], reduced the influence of strategic and political formulations explicitly informed by Marxism-Leninism

As it became less common to refer to the 'people', 'socialism' and 'national democracy' - to invoke the vocabulary of NDR, that is - so these terms were supplemented with other expressions. From the late 1980's, that is, it became popular to juxtapose the terms *city* and *community*. These notions had incongruent theoretical legacies that, when they were coupled, produced certain ambiguities in South African conceptions of urban government.

Section 1 will explore the genealogy of both words. The notion of 'community', had undergone an interesting mutation. It was first popularised by Black Consciousness authors of the 1970's and later appropriated by civic organisations in the mid-1980's. In this regard it was invested with new meanings. We shall see also in *Section 1* that a concept of the city was strongly informed by the work of Manuel Castells, and in particular by his text *The City and the Grassroots.* In this regard certain activist-intellectuals, primarily based at the Johannesburg non-governmental organisation (NGO), Planact, began exploring the political and social consequences of the apartheid geography. These findings informed Planact's influential relationship with many civic organisations.

We shall see in *Section 2* that the notion of community drew its meaning from the theory of National Democratic Revolution which was in turn premised on a classical reading of historical materialism. In contrast the notion of city, partly inherited from the work of the Castells, was influenced by the European Marxism of the 1960's and after. It shall be argued, moreover, that a condition for thinking the city theoretically was Louis Althusser's concept of relative autonomy.

The tensions that the couplet city-community produced were not readily apparent. Their heterogeneous philosophies were obscured by the opacity of their theoretical origins. The substitution of 'community' for 'people' and 'city' for 'nation' did not seem to subvert the relationship between the historical subject and its objective that the theory of NDR established between 'people' and 'nation'. If in the original grammar the people's will was believed interested in national democracy and then socialism, the 'One City' slogan replaced 'people' for 'community' and articulated their interest to urban integration. In this regard, the 'One City' slogan and the theory of National Democratic Revolution seemed to share a common philosophical premise. They appeared both to posit a necessary relation between subject and political destination that rested on two related elements: *experience* and *objective interests*. In this regard the common experience of racial capitalism and the apartheid city produced for the people/community objective interests in national democracy and urban political integration respectively.

City and *community* seemed perfectly reconciled in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the communist party had originally argued that the RDP was a programme of 'socialist social investment' (SACP: 1994, p.3.). In their eyes the adoption of the RDP as official policy by the ANC confirmed the credentials of the new government as an agent of national democracy. In the words of the SACP: the challenge ahead is to pursue the "... the logic and assumptions of democracy - majority rule, participation, empowerment, answerability, equality of citizenship - into all other spheres of our society - the economic, cultural, and in regard to gender relations. The Reconstruction and Development Programme maps out the broad lines for advance on these fronts" (Ibid., p.8). In this regard it is "...also the most direct route towards socialism in our country" (ibid., p.7).

We shall see also that the RDP was easily coupled to notions of urban integration. RDP capital assets could be located to simultaneously realise a post-apartheid geography. In this regard the national democratic revolution seemed also to address the spatial and economic legacy of urban segregation.

The apparent retention of NDR's philosophical grammar was symptomatic of the appropriation of the 'city' to the grammar of NDR. Yet the theoretical legacy of the city was not easily reconciled with the latter. In this regard its philosophical origin interrupted local government policy as ambiguity in certain formulations. These tensions have become more explicit as the political transition has progressed.

Constitutional negotiations were informed by a natural law jurisprudence and a liberal-pluralist political vocabulary. The notion of 'rights' had long been part of the Alliance vocabulary and yet prior to the unbanning of political organisations, its language had co-existed uneasily with the theory of National Democratic Revolution. As these political vocabularies have come to dominate policy debates so the ambiguities implicit in South African local government have become more apparent.

It will be argued that the incongruence between *city* and *community* produced divergent conceptions of the local as a political space. On the one hand there was a tendency to treat local government as an managerial/ technocratic

institution for national/provincial plans, for the RDP, for example. On the other the then Interim Constitution defined local government as an autonomous sphere of government in its own right and the final version entrenched councils as a separate tier of government.

In *Section 3*, I will consider the expression of political values in the layouts of Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston. It will be argued there that competition between different conceptions of the city was symptomatic of the tension in the dominant attitude to the city. It shall be argued that the dominant conception of local government (and hence the city) was unable to accommodate local conditions as political conditions, as practices implying diverse notions of the social good. Local circumstances, that is, were treated as problems or opportunities for management. In *Section 4* I will explore the conception of democracy implicit in this formulation.

Sections 5 will explore the conflict that claimed several thousands of lives in Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus as the interruption of the local as a political space. *Section 6* will detail the durability of the managerial conception of local government by considering the practices of the local governments of Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston in the aftermath of the violence and *Section 7* will explore some of the consequences of such a role.

It will be argued the notion of the 'apartheid city' posited *space* as a political element that configured social relations in its own right. Following from this, and giving it theoretical expression, I will say that space constitutes a third category of conditions that determines the form of the social in the conjuncture. I will argue that one of the great strengths of contemporary political philosophy has been its rigorous attention to the relationship between *subject*, *time* and the *social*. I want to suggest, however, that a further element must be added to this chain of concepts. If we problematise, that is, the relationship between 'experience' and 'interests' we do not simply give relative *temporal* autonomy to the social whole, but relative *spatial* autonomy as well. In this regard space constitutes a further dimension of the social whole.

SECTION 1: ONE-CITY-ONE-TAX-BASE

On the evening of 30 August 1990, representatives of the Soweto People's Delegation and various Black Local Authorities in Soweto emerged from a 15-hour meeting to announce that an agreement had been reached which would end the rent boycott (Swilling and Shubane, 1990). Under the settlement more than R500 million-worth of arrears would be written off, residents would begin paying an interim service charge, and a metropolitan chamber would be created, mandated to negotiate a 'new system of local government and administration for the region'. In Soweto the accord was widely celebrated as the near culmination of a long and historic struggle by African communities for citizenship in the South African city.

Since the mid-1980's[1], Planact, a developmental NGO operating out of Yeoville and the Soweto People's Delegation had argued that the segregation of urban space under apartheid necessarily led to the underdevelopment of some of its parts. What seems to have influenced the timing was the international publication of the *The City and the Grassroots* by the French academic, Emmanuel Castells. More shall be said about this later. They argued that the exclusion of mining, industrial and manufacturing enterprises from the jurisdiction of African townships both reduced them to mere labour reservoirs for local industry and deprived them of the tax-income such activities generated. That is, these locals taxes accrued not to the city as a whole, but exclusively to the institutions of 'white' local government within whose demarcation they fell. African residents were thus deprived of any industrial cross-subsidisation, so that the full cost of maintaining the urban environment fell entirely upon them.

Despite the fact, therefore, that African labour and purchasing power were integral to the urban economy, African residential areas saw none of the revenue generated by that economy. As a result, it was argued, African

[1] What seems to have influenced the timing was the international publication of the *The City and the Grassroots* by the French academic, Emmanuel Castells and the interest it provoked in the NGO. More shall be said about this in the course of the dissertation.

townships effectively subsidised local government functions in white areas. All the tax revenue received by white local authorities was used for infrastructure, utilities and maintenance in the areas under their jurisdiction. African residents, by contrast, were burdened with the full cost of services. But the system did not just benefit white property owners; it also reduced the municipal tax burden on industrial and commercial enterprises, and therefore improved their rate of profit.

When Black Local Authorities were established in 1982, they gave political status to urban segregation. The Act provided for fully fledged local government structures in so-called black areas. Like their white counterparts, they would be responsible for collecting taxes, rendering municipal services, such as sewage and refuse collection, and providing electricity, health services and housing.

Whereas in the past the cost of local government administration had rested partly with white local authorities, and after 1971 with the state, BLAs were to be entirely self-financing. This meant that African communities had to bear the costs not only of maintaining and servicing their urban environments, but also of apartheid administration.

Given that BLAs were excluded from the tax base of the city as a whole, they depended for revenue on rents and tariffs for water, sewage collection and electricity, while simultaneously paying inflated costs for these basic services. Where BLAs bought bulk electricity directly from ESCOM, for example, they were disadvantaged by the purely residential nature of the areas under their jurisdiction. That is, the formula used by the Electricity Supply Commission to calculate the cost per unit of electricity penalised clients whose demand fluctuated significantly. Areas without industrial activity experience peak demands in the mornings (when people prepare for work) and in the evenings (when they return home). This disqualified townships from the discount available to areas where the demand is regularised by the continuous consumption of industrial plants. As a result, BLAs paid more per unit of electricity than their white counterparts. Alternatively, where white local authorities bought bulk electricity from ESCOM and then sold it to their neighbouring black counterpart, they charged an additional administration fee (Swilling, Cobbett and Hunter 1991). As a result, BLAs depended on a narrow tax base to pay for their own

administration costs, the maintenance and improvement of the urban infrastructure, and the provision of services. Moreover, the price of these functions were structurally inflated, and the taxable income grossly insufficient. Councilors thus repeatedly increased charges to balance their permanent structural deficits (Planact 1992a, Seekings 1991, Shubane 1991).

Local Government Negotiations

By the late 1980s, therefore, South African local government was in a perilous condition. Rent, service and consumer boycotts had bankrupted and/or forced the collapse of 106 of the 272 Black Local Authorities nationally (Urban Foundation 1991). Many others sustained only a tenuous existence. These activities often coincided and merged with a host of other activities: the 'defiance campaign' spearheaded by the United Democratic Front (UDF), trade union activities, resistance to education, land invasions, strikes, mass marches and stay-aways. Together they contributed to a growing crisis in the management of urban areas. Against this backdrop, civic organisations were able to press for local negotiations with either the resident black local authority, but more usually with the neighbouring 'white' local authority. Both these parties had an immediate interest in negotiations. Civics believed they were potentially a way of ending electricity cut-offs. For local councils, they seemed to hold out the promise of an end to boycotts.

Initially negotiations focused primarily on so-called 'phase-one' issues: rent boycotts, and interim service charges. Some forums had even advanced to phase two discussions, involving the upgrading of certain facilities, agency agreements, electricity transfers, *etc.* Very few, however, had progressed to phase three and beyond: that is, the establishment of an interim administration. Under these conditions, the notion of structural urban underdevelopment -- as suggested by the 'one city' slogan -- grew in appeal. The slogan implied that negotiations premised on the existing apartheid geography were destined to fail precisely because the rent and services crisis was intimately related to this spatial-political configuration. The progression from phase one and two discussions to phase three negotiations thus required an important conceptual

shift: a recognition that boycotts and non-payment were symptomatic of a structural problem, rather than the source of the problem in the first place

Planact and the SCA argued that negotiations between civic organisations and local governments not premised on the reorganisation of existing municipal boundaries, that did not address the spatial-political dispensation, would merely reproduce the structure of apartheid urban underdevelopment. It followed, therefore, that negotiations about payment and the provision of services had to be linked to a broader discussion about the transformation of the urban spatial-political-economy as a whole. They demanded, therefore, that politically segregated administrations yield to single, non-racial authorities able to 'utilise their economic potential as spenders, consumers and investors... to address economic hardship at a local level' (Planact 1992a). It was this politico-strategic approach that underpinned the slogan 'one city, one tax base'. The capture of the city as a whole was thus deemed a condition of the defeat of the urban apartheid political economy.

In this regard there were major legal hurdles. The only national legislation that existed for transitional arrangements was the Interim Measures for Local Government Act (IMLGA), followed by the Provincial and Local Authority Affairs Amendment Act of 1992. The former provided for the establishment of joint administrations, the appropriation of a proportion of finance generated by the industrial and commercial tax base of white local authorities, uniform service charges, and continued central government finance for 'non-viable' joint administrations. Like the IMLGA, the amendment act was also rejected by the civic movement for 'entrenching separate and segregated apartheid local government structures' (see draft proposals by the SANCO-led delegation to the LGNF). Planact *et al* were worried that the state would seek to 'negotiate an end to the rent boycott crisis, and then draw civics into accepting "local options"' (Planact 1992c). Many local forums seemed poised to establish 'joint administrations'; that is, to institutionalise co-operation and collaboration between former 'black' and 'white' local authorities that seemed to concerned NGO's and the national civic merely to the sanction the existing spatial-political arrangement. SANCO and Planact worried, therefore, that local forums might

have pre-empted national constitutional negotiations by effectively condoning 'own affairs'- type thinking; and in so doing reproducing the terms of a political process incapable of addressing the source of the urban crisis: separate tax bases as a result of apartheid. The Alliance, under pressure from SANCO in particular, decided therefore that separate high-level negotiations were required to accelerate progress on these issues across the country. This initiative, they agreed, should occur at a national level in a local government negotiating forum (LGNF). SANCO was elected to lead the alliance's representation there. It was proposed that this body contain 'statutory' and 'non-statutory' delegations; where the former was defined as those bodies that had already participated in government structures, and the latter, those that had not.

The LGNF met for the first time in March 1993. SANCO submitted a recommendation for a Transitional Measures for Local Government Act that would dissolve existing political structures and replace them with appointed interim local councils (ILCs), and in metropolitan areas interim metropolitan councils (IMCs). These would be established on the basis of new interim local and metropolitan boundaries that would ignore existing 'homeland' borders. A two-tier system of local government was envisaged, with the functions of finance, planning, transport, bulk services and change management located at metropolitan level. A deadline of July 1993 was suggested to begin the process of dissolution, demarcation and appointment. The result of this process was the original version of the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) of 1993.

For our purposes the LGNF and the subsequent LGTA rested on the assumption, itself at the heart of the 'One City' slogan, that the South Africa political geography shared a common form and a common urban political-economy. Their *national* jurisdiction was justified, therefore, on the basis that South African cities resembled each other structurally making it legitimate to speak of the 'apartheid city' generally. As a result responsibility for policy concerning the urban form was located at higher tiers of government while local governments themselves merely deemed responsible for the execution of development plans determined elsewhere: they would be the 'hands and feet of the RDP' as the then office in the ministry of the president chose to describe it.

This thinking was a persistent legacy of the philosophical grammar of BC and NDR. It posited urban-social 'needs' as local instances, local phenomena, of the national political morphology that should be addressed by national plans and local agents.

The Notion of Community

The genealogy of the term 'community' is obscure. Despite its prominence in contemporary South African usage its meaning and origin does not appear in the recently published Oxford Dictionary of South African English. This is surprising because the term has been given peculiarly South African meanings.

An explicitly political usage was found in the Black Consciousness literature that emerged during the 1970's. Here its definition was given by the descriptions and portrayals of the 'black man's suffering' (Matlou quoted in Sole, 1993).

"We as the black community are all oppressed, landless and at the mercy of the government. So how can we as black people be different from one another? It is called a Black Experience" (Mutloatse quoted in Sole, 1993).

The community was referenced to a shared experience of suffering under apartheid such that subjectivity was reduced entirely to structure. Steve Biko thus remarked: "We are oppressed not as individuals, not as Zulus, Xhosas, Vendas or Indians. We are oppressed because we are black" (Biko quoted in Sole, 1993).

The term 'black' was used as a rubric and a short-hand. It symbolised and expressed a common 'black experience' that manifested as a certain psycho-pathology. If previous explanations of apartheid stressed oppression, material lack and exploitation, Black Consciousness emphasised the 'spiritual poverty' that 'emasculated' and 'passified' black persons. At the heart of apartheid was an anti-humanism that reduced the "black man to a man only in form" (Biko, 1996). "All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity" (Ibid., p. 29). Black Consciousness was in this way construed as a form of 'psychotherapy" (Biko, 1988) that induced

catharsis by revealing the truth of the black condition, by "showing the black people the value of their own standards and outlook" (Ibid., p. 31). In so doing the objective of BC was to "make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity" (Biko, 1996), so that he might realise his true, authentic identity. The 'truth' of apartheid, in this reading, was a primitive alienation that estranged the 'black' man from himself. Black Consciousness thus emphasised the positive elements of African history and culture as a condition of psychological synthesis and political re-awakening. Psychological emancipation as the engine of history. The reference here was Franz Fanon but also Hegel.

"The basic problem in South Africa has been analysed by liberal whites as being apartheid. They argue that in order to oppose it we have to form non-racial groups... For the liberals, the thesis is apartheid, the anti-thesis is non-racialism... Black Consciousness defines the situation differently. The thesis is in fact a strong white racism and therefore the antithesis must *ipso facto* be a strong solidarity amongst blacks..." (Biko, p. 90).

These principles required 'black unity' as a means to counter white power. BC thus invoked the common experience of black people as a condition of their unity. This was how the term 'community' was used in various texts. It denoted the shared 'black' experience of 'white' racism.

Yet the notion of 'experience', as used here, was fraught with ambiguity. This arose partly from a slippage between the psychological model and Biko's reading of Hegel. The dialectical principles were premised on a notion of white homogeneity that required their negative: black unity. BC authors were thus at pains to describe and reveal the shared circumstances of black people that issued a common interest in 'black' liberation. If this implied, however, that experience itself was unmediated and that political interests (in liberation *etc.*) arose directly from experience, the psychoanalytic model suggested otherwise.

The centre-piece of the black experience was for Biko a psychological alienation that was the cause of political *immobilisation*. In other words, Biko's thesis suggested that the 'black' condition yielded not a self-conscious realisation of

political interests but rather, political acquiescence. This was the implicit vacillation at the heart of Black Consciousness. What was the 'black experience'? oppression and exploitation that realised political action ? Or rather white racism that resulted in black psychological introjection ?

This ambiguity lay at the heart of BC's subsequent eclipse. During the 1970's the black consciousness movement seemed to its younger members fixated on the psychological nature of the 'black experience' to the neglect of what the emerging radical trade-unions were beginning to analyse as the material conditions that determined it. At the Black Renaissance Convention in 1974 younger delegates (associated or part of the growing trade-union militancy) argued that "we have little in common in our African identity alone" (Gwala quoted in Sole, 1993, p.127). At issue was the quality and uniformity of exactly this 'experience'. The term implied a monolithic racial psychology that either neglected or obfuscated the roles of class, region, gender or ethnicity in the formation of political identities. When BC activists did initiate worker organisations they tended to stress leadership, recreational programmes, black dignity and so on (Ibid., p. 128). Conspicuously absent from their early rhetoric were the notions of class and exploitation. BC thus resonated less and less with the growing tide of trade-unionism, informed as it was by various readings of Marx and Lenin. As the labour movement began to have a greater presence in South African politics, we shall see, the term 'community', by then current, began to cohabit with a new 'experiential' reference[2].

The Re-Making of Community

During the early 1980s, the then Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) was overtaken by strategic debates arising from differing notions of class and class struggle. So-called charterists suggested that class be treated in relation to the concrete historical processes through which it is was constructed and in which it had to struggle (Norval and Howarth, 1992). Political consciousness was derived not simply from the factory floor or the relations of

[22] If Steve Biko recognised that 'experience' was associated with misrecognition - it produced not self-conscious political interests but rather political stasis - he nonetheless assumed that the 'black' experience inclined 'black' towards unity and resistance.

production, but rather from a much wider discursive field. In contrast, 'workerists' in the federation, following an argument reminiscent of Sidney Bunting, insisted on the specific interests of the working class vis-à-vis the national (that is, multi-class) struggle (Hudson, 1989). More shall be said about this in Section 2.

The strategic accomplice of the Charterist line was the expansion of the political field to include additional areas of struggle. For the first time since the eclipse of SACTU in the 1960s, trade union activists began to organise amongst township residents *qua township residents*. In this regard, civic organisations emerged in the political space created by this conceptual-strategic shift.

Mzwanele Mayekiso, formerly of the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) remarks: The kind of socialist organizing (sic) project discussed in the union movement - especially by intellectuals associated with the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) - was centred on the shopfloor, and was actually opposed to community struggles. On the other hand, there were other trade unionists... who did reach out to communities, and later FOSATU's successors in COSATU reversed the older animosity to community struggles" (Mayekiso: 1996, p.51).

In Wattville, to take just one example, we can trace the origin of the civic to the organisation split within the Metal and Allied Workers' Union. Both Abie Nyalunga and Vincent Themba – founding members of the Wattville Concerned Residents Committee – remembered their interest in township politics as arising from this division. Themba explained that he was until then preoccupied with union issues and mostly not concerned with external community politics.

Across the 'East Rand' and elsewhere, therefore, the expanded scope of trade-union activists brought to the townships the strategic and conceptual repertoire of the new populist trade-unionism. In this way the term 'community', that had previously conveyed a sense of cultural and racial unity, increasingly gave way to a meaning linked to NDR.

The Theory of National Democratic Revolution

Like the Black Consciousness literature above, community here was referenced *vis-a-vis* a shared or common experience of apartheid. If the BC literati, however, emphasised its racial and psychological experience, NDR defined it differently. Apartheid was not simply a racial system. It was rather, and in addition, a system of racial *capitalism*.

"One of the peculiarities of the South African society," explained Suttner and Cronin in 1986, "is that written into its structure is this systematic national oppression of all the blacks. It is one of the factors that facilitates capitalist exploitation in South Africa. National oppression and capitalist exploitation are inextricably interlinked" (Suttner and Cronin: 1986, p.129). As a result, they continued, "a programme to end racial oppression in South Africa has to attack the key power centres of capitalism with which racial oppression is interlocked" (Ibid., p.129). The argument rested on the following syllogism: capitalism needs racial oppression so that resistance to the latter is thus simultaneously anti-capitalist.

It has been shown by Peter Hudson amongst others how the above conclusion rested partly on Lenin's analysis of imperialism and colonialism. In the *Road to South African Freedom*, the SACP's politico-strategic document of 1963, 'white South Africa', in a politico-theoretical maneuver informed by *Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism*, was identified with an advanced stage of monopoly capitalism. "Such an economy and state," observes Hudson "are, on Lenin's analysis, driven to colonise, i.e. to deprive of their political autonomy, other 'peoples and countries' in order to extract superprofits via the exploitation of two proletariats" (Ibid., p.26). South African social relations resembled colonial relations because a certain category of agents were not only exploited but had lost their political autonomy [illegible] What distinguished South African colonialism from classical examples [illegible] the presence of the colonisers (white South Africans) and the colonised (the 'non-white' majority) within a common political territory. As a result South Africa was a colonial society 'of a special type'.

Colonial domination was characterised also by the complex sociology of the colonised. Racial oppression in South Africa, argued Suttner and Cronin in repeating faithfully the analysis of the SACP, was indiscriminate affecting all black persons irrespective of class: "...traders, small farmers and petty manufacturers," they explained, "are nationally oppressed by Group Areas, and other forms of racial discrimination.... These middle elements, and not just those among them who are black, are themselves in the thrall of the big monopolies who are squeezing them... [As a result] the nationalisation of monopoly industry, banks and other financial institutions speaks not only to the interests of the workers, but is also aimed at all others who are dominated by the monopolies..." (Ibid., pp. 178/9). The local bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie thus shared with the working class and interest in defeating imperial, monopoly capital. This made possible a class alliance that would struggle for national democracy through national liberation.

For our purposes NDR, in defining the South African experience as one of *national* domination and directing political struggle, therefore, to the national state, had a monist and unitary conception of the political terrain. It encouraged a politics interested exclusively in a single objective: the capture of state power. In its theory, therefore, NDR lacked a concept for the politics which during the 1980's it would partly bear and for which it would also be found theoretically lacking.

The Notion of 'C'

Much has been written about the urban resistance of the 1980's. Many authors have located the source of protest and discontent in the contradictions inherent in the system of local government financing. Tom Lodge, for example, found the immediate origin of the 1984–5 Vaal uprising in the proposed rent increase announced in Vereeniging on 5 August 1984 (Lodge 1991). Mark Swilling and Khehla Shubane situated the Soweto rent boycott in the context of rent increases in Chiawelo Extension 3, Naledi Extension 2 and Jabulani in March 1986, and a new electricity levy introduced in May that year. So did Andrew

Boraine in respect of Mamelodi (1987), Planact in all its studies, Jeremy Seekings (1988, 1991, 1992), Chaskalson (1988), and Khehla Shubane (1991).

Seekings was thus fairly typical when he argued that the rent increases and consequent political violence were products of the system of local government financing. In this regard he explained that when township residents, already suffering at the hands of a deepening recession from 1981 onwards, were asked to pay higher rents and service charges for electricity in particular they expressed their grievance and discontent through open protest and demonstration against black local governments (Seekings 1991).

His explanation above, like the others, is premised on a tautology; on a curious 'leap of faith' not warranted by the explanatory logic. Seeking would have us believe that the local character of rents and services *in itself* determined that local government be the object of political protests; by which he means presumably that their nature as public goods provided by third tier governments constituted the 'local' as the political horison against which to direct their opposition. Politics as geometry. In this regard, most studies merely repeat the truism that popular resistance during this period was usually local in character, they being satisfied to allow description to serve as explanation. This reference to the topography of political resistance (national, regional, local), that is, does not tell us how local governments came to be considered as political targets in the first place. Indeed, there is a specious continuity in this reasoning that merely juxtaposes protest, civic organisations and local government without ever establishing the mode and form of their connection. Seekings himself made this point when he remarked that researchers merely 'read' township protest off the structural context of the political economy (Seekings 1991). It is far from obvious, that is, that protests about rent and service inflation necessarily, that is automatically, attached themselves to local governments as *local* governments and not say, as merely institutional incarnations of the apartheid state generally. After all local issues were previously deemed merely symptoms of the racial political-economy as a whole. It is instructive, in this regard, to see how Khehla Shubane inadvertently invokes exactly this last mentioned idea to reference local concerns not to local political objectives, but to national ones.

Following the logic of the theory of internal colonialism, he suggests that the structure of local government for the African population was historically conceived and implemented as a control mechanism rooted in the legacy of colonisation, and later decolonisation. The division of the city and the reduction of African townships to labour reservoirs 'originated in colonial conquest, and has been maintained through deliberate policies pursued by successive white governments ...' In this regard, the transfer of power from a colonial authority to the white population meant that for the 'indigenous populations ... power relations remained essentially unchanged' (Shubane 1991). For Shubane, then, the central logic entailed in the configuration of local government was a relationship of domination between a colonial and later internal colonial power and an (African) indigenous population.

The strategic accomplice of Shubane's argument, reminiscent too of NDR, is the deployment of local issues in the service of anti-colonial struggles that have as their object the colonial state. Shubane thus demonstrates the possibility of articulating such protests to a political destination other than local government, so that rent and service issues lose their specificity vis-à-vis these institutions and the city.

Shubane has just cause to argue as he does. Seekings himself has observed that at the moment when local movements were attracted to the ANC and UDF's national critique of and opposition to the state', the impetus to protest and demonstration was provided by "local factors ... rather than those national factors themselves ..." (Seekings 1991). Seekings here means that national issues alone were not enough to guarantee widespread support for UDF campaigns but were attached to national political agendas simply to give the latter greater resonance on the ground. This seems to confirm the ease in which such concerns were placed in the service of a variety of political objectives. Indeed, we should note that during the early and mid 1980's there was an absence in *any* major political vocabulary of the notion of local government as a political horison in itself; including that of civic organisations ! It certainly cannot be found in UDF publications or pronouncements prior to 1988. And it was only invoked by the trade union movement, the ANC or the SACP much later.

This becomes more apparent when we consider the content of demands raised by civic organisations prior to 1988. Given that all local government negotiating forums trace their origin to the precedent set by the Soweto accord, it is worth briefly reviewing the process.

Pamphlets issued by the Soweto Civic Association in 1986 juxtaposed rent, sewerage and electricity issues, on the one hand, and *national* slogans concerning the military occupation of townships, the state of emergency, detainees, *etc.* on the other. There was no mention of local government or the city. Just two years later (in 1988), however, demands made by the Soweto People's Delegation were addressed precisely to this horison. The SPD called for the writing-off of arrears, the transfer of houses to residents, the upgrading of services, affordable charges, and, most significantly, the establishment of a single tax base for Soweto and Johannesburg. Here 'local issues' were articulated not to the national political terrain, but in addition, and for the first time, to a political conception of the city. Swilling thus remarked that there was a 'strategic shift' that 'moved from protest demands to what became known as transformational demands' (Swilling, Shubane 1990). In terms of this analysis an oppositional notion of politics was replaced by something positive and programmatic. That is, 'initial demands (in 1986) merely sought to protest high rents, unfair standards of service maintenance and a range of political grievances ... The new transformational demands were in the form of alternative policy proposals' (Swilling, Shubane 1990).

Yet there is a notable omission from these sentences. Swilling nowhere mentions that in the first instance, demands were referenced to a national agenda and in the second to a localised notion of city. There is no reference to this, surely the most dramatic, shift. Indeed, the distinction is all but erased by the generic term 'political grievances'. This is precisely the site of the lapsus in the logical reasoning mentioned earlier. What were the conditions that provided for the emergence of this new political destination ? To this question we find no answer in the existing South African literature. Instead we find two explanatory tendencies that prevent the question from ever being posed. Either local government emerged as a political object in itself by a twist of geometry or their

specifically local character is erased by simply reducing them to an instance, a phenomenon of the national state. But if 'one city' initiatives were not intuitively available from the structure of the urban political economy, and if they did not figure in the strategic repertoire of political organisations, how do we account for their apparently miraculous origin? I will suggest that they are the products of a purely contingent intervention.

By the late 1980s the little theoretical coherence in the ANC Alliance, undergirded by the theory of NDR, was beginning to give way to other theoretical options. Since the beginning of the negotiated settlement, that is, ANC policy vacillated between proposals reminiscent of NDR and others more sympathetic to notions of liberal pluralism. The collapse of east European regimes after 1989 also interrupted the conceptual pre-eminence of Marxism-Leninism in the South African left. It was precisely in the hiatus provided by these disturbances that the link between community and the national democratic state became unhinged. With the decline of the NDR, 'community' became available to a variety of political destinations – including the city.

Negotiations and the displacement of NDR thus made available to political organisations a host of new intellectual traditions not immediately associated with the customary centres of ANC/SACP theoretical practice. These included non-governmental organisations and, most notably, Planact. It is here that we should partly seek the origin of the 'one city' initiatives.

Planact

Planact is a funded non-governmental organisation that provides a range of urban development services to 'community-based' organisations. It was originally launched in 1985 by a group of professionals working in private practice and at universities, and it deliberately sought to maintain its professional and multidisciplinary character. As such it brought together a variety of skills: development and urban planners, architects, geographers, lawyers, political 'scientists' and former activists with diverse backgrounds. Planact thus had at its disposal a wide range of theoretical and technical vocabularies that transcended the stock of conceptual resources available to most political organisations.

Furthermore, the organisation had a network of connections with universities, other NGOs and think-tanks all over the country.

When local negotiations began in Soweto in 1988, and elsewhere in the country after the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, civic organisations found themselves inadequately equipped to manage and lead a process in which they had little (if any) experience. Whereas civics had in the past been chiefly preoccupied with the mechanics of developing and mobilising resistance to apartheid, negotiations required a new range of skills, including an ability to evaluate technical information and generate policy. Often they were dealing not just with the 'enemy', but with officials that had a virtual monopoly over local resources, were well versed in bureaucratic legalism, and were familiar with the specialised information related to the functions of local government.

Planact was well positioned to provide strategic and technical support. The organisation already had a reputation from its work in Langa in the Cape, and many of its members were known to influential political activists. When discussions began between the Soweto People's Delegation and various local authorities, Planact was invited to help. This marked the first significant joint political venture between local activists and organised activist professionals (outside the legal field).

At this time and in Planact there was growing interest in the work of Manuel Castells, and in particular in his seminal work *The City and the Grassroots.* Here Castells argued that there was insufficient understanding of the fundamental processes at work in the production of the material basis of most of our experience: the city (Castells, p.xvi). For the first time the urban form was posited as a primitive unit of social and individual experience. Our failure to appreciate the urban form, he suggested, resulted from an intellectual deficiency that lay deep in the theoretical foundations of social research (Ibid., xvi). Castells spoke here of a theoretical prejudice: "interpretations of urban crisis tend to be couched strictly in economistic terms, identifying the source of our problems in a single factor that varies (according to the author's ideological taste) from the inherent logic of monopoly capital to the inevitable incompetence of public bureaucracy" (Ibid., xvi) What Castells objected to here was the assumption that

the urban space had only an incidental bearing on political action. In all these cases the spatial setting of collective and/or individual action was either ignored altogether or reduced to a visual backdrop. The city itself did not feature as a causal element.

As a result Castells sought "cautiously [to] construct a new theory of urban change that c[ould]... determine the relationship between state, space and society" (Ibid, xv). His project was referenced, in this regard, to what he defined as the central ambivalence in Marxist theory: that Marxism was not a unified theory but rather had two emphases both equally Marxist (Ibid., 298). It was simultaneously the theory of capital and the development of history through the development of the productive forces while also being the theory of class struggle (Ibid., 298).Marxist writers had inadequately made the link between the mode of production and the historical practices of class struggle. Marx, Castells suggested, had no answer and Lenin resolved the tension by institutionalising the class struggle in the communist party. Lenin had recognised the play of contingency in the movement of a class in itself to a class for itself. But rather than notice the implicit critique of experience that his observation implied displaced political responsibility (for the revolution, for socialism) away from a spontaneous uprising of the working cla , to a well organised vanguard party. That is, the communist party represented the objective interests of the working class and in making the revolution simultaneously realised its will.

What worried Castells, however, was that Marxist theory could not account for the wave of political movements associated with the 1960's and early 1970's: May 1968 in France, Autunno Caldo in Italian factories in 1969, the Spanish resistance against Franquism, the German Student Movement, the liberation movements throughout the 'third world', the Unidad Popular in Chile and so on. "Classical Marxism," wrote Castells, "was ambiguous about the existing social movements: they were the living proof of class struggle and resistance to capitalist exploitation...On the other hand," he added, "social movements were degraded as spontaneous trade-unionism..." (Ibid., 299). They were not self-consciously proletarian (neither in fact or in ideology) and were therefore regarded as either the work of agent provocateurs or inherently reformist. As a

result Castells remarked "although Marxist theory might not have room for social movements other than the historically predicted class struggle, social movements persist" (Ibid, p.299) He concluded: "experience was right and Marxist theory was wrong on this point..." (Ibid., 299).

Castells sought, therefore, a new theory of social change. In particular he wanted to account for the "increasing contradictions in the process of urbanization, the growing number of social conflicts aimed at urban policies and the embryos of some powerful urban protests in the 1970's..." (Ibid., p.300) In this regard he posited three primary variables as the basis of a new theory of urban transformation:

- demands on collective consumption, that is, goods and services directly or indirectly provided by the state
- defense of cultural identity associated with and organised around a specific territory, and
- political mobilisation in relationship to the state, particularly emphasising the role of local government.

For South African intellectuals the theory held exciting possibilities. It addressed theoretical and historical questions to a new terrain: the urban form itself. The mass urban resistance of the 1980's, they claimed, was best explained in terms of crises in the provision of municipal services: housing[3], electricity, refuse collection, water and services - as crises resulting from demands on collective consumption, rather than as crises resulting solely from the point of production. That is, the specifically urban, or local, nature of these issues, they argued, meant that political resistance was directed at the local state; in addition to the national state. Researchers and academics began to pose new questions. They enquired about the structure of the South African city, the form of the local state and the relationship between the two. What was most exciting to activist intellectuals was the new political phenomenon of the 1980's: civic organisations. They seemed to resemble what Castells called urban social movements. Their

[3] The withdrawal of free-hold rights from township dwellers made all housing stock municipal property for which rent was owed to the relevant Provincial Administration and after 1982 to a Black Local Authority.

sociology transcended class, they addressed their grievances to local government and most interestingly, their campaigns suggested (both implicitly and explicitly) a new political *function* for the city. That is, urban social movements were not only urban-based - that is situated in urban space - but also urban orientated (Ibid., p.69). Castells meant here that social protest and organisation implied new meanings for the city. Their activities suggested in practice (at least) new functions for the urban form. In this regard he argued that the city was a social product determined by "conflicting social interests and values" (Ibid., xvii) that gave the city political meaning. He argued that the roles, purpose and structures of the city were the outcome of conflict between institutionalised dominant interests, on the one hand, and grassroots mobilisation on the other. The urban form was, in other words, not simply a spatial phenomena of other historical processes but the consequence of specifically urban processes.

Mark Swilling and Billy Cobett amongst others began to explore the meaning of what became known as the 'apartheid city'. They sought to explore the South African city as the spatial expression of what Castells called a 'social content'. Planact started to argue that the configuration of urban space reproduced the very logic of apartheid so that that urban communities had experienced a form of 'disempowerment' peculiar to their position in the apartheid city: residents were alienated from the urban social product, excluded from the political process and democratic participation, and separated from the knowledge and means to intervene effectively in their urban environment. This was manifest in the non-availability of surplus time arising *inter alia* from the long hours spent traveling to and from artificially separated work and residential areas; the depletion of discretionary household income by transport costs; hazardous neighbourhoods arising from an inadequate sewage infrastructure and refuse removal; inferior health services; a lack of recreational space and facilities; and spatial layout plans (based on the colonial grid pattern), that had failed to create supportive neighbourhoods or provide adequate protection against crime (Planact 1992a). As a result, it was held, township residents were alienated from themselves, not just in their capacity as workers or as members of a nation but equally as city

dwellers. We can see now why the theory of National Democratic Revolution was found unsatisfactory by this new generation of activist-professionals. If NDR saw only in local, urban struggles the crisis in the apartheid system generally, Planact saw in them the proof of the crisis of the urban system in particular.

The NGO thus highlighted the specific, indeed autonomous, nature of the urban political-economy and demanded, therefore, greater political attention for the urban state as its partial regulator. In this regard local campaigns, spearheaded by civic organisations seemed to offer the means not simply to undermine the state as a national body, but to incapacitate a key element of the urban apartheid system. We can say, therefore, that the condition for making of local government a horison of political struggle in itself required the positing of the urban political-economy as a social sphere in its own right.

If, prior to the 1980s, therefore, the notion of freedom implicit in the alliance politics of the ANC and SACP was defined in relation to state and parliamentary power, *the 'one city' slogan also related it to the city.* This amounted to an inclusion in the South African political vocabulary of a new objective for political struggle: the city. In this regard, the 'one city' slogan potentially expanded the terrain of democratic struggle to include other objectives in themselves.

Yet the possibility of widened political field existed only precariously. It was only a small step from simply reintegrating the political capture of the city into an narrative that reduced it to a moment in a longer historical chronology: This was implied when 'local issues' were attached to national democratic campaigns and not necessarily to the city. This dissertation will argue that this last mentioned impulse was a legacy of the notion of 'community' as discussed. This is the tension, moreover, that lies at the heart of current debates in and around the relationship between local government, community and development. At the very moment when the One City slogan suggested the specificity of the urban system and hence of local government as a political objective, another logic reduced 'local issues' to interior moments of a national political struggle.

Substitutions of the (Local) Subject

There are two moments of essentialist logic in BC, NDR: and the 'One City' slogan: The first refers to the 'blacks'/'people'/'community' as the necessary bearer of the general will; and the second fixes that subject to a pre-determined political outcome: 'black' liberation/ National Democracy and then Socialism/urban political integration. During the 1990's, however, these terms were unsettled. On the one hand the meaning of 'community' changed. On the other hand the destination of the 'people's will' again became unhinged from its previous political target.

During the early 1990's the notion of civics as agents of the public good was heavily contested. Symptomatic of this growing skepticism was an article by Steven Friedman in 1992 where he wrote a damning indictment of the tendency of civic associations to "colonise civil society" (Friedman, 1992). This argument was largely won and was manifest in the later formulation of development forums. What was interesting about this debate was that it effectively jettisoned the notion of civics as organic representatives of the community. Planact remarked. that 'no organisation should be excluded from the CDF' (Planact 1995). SANCO concurred, and added that: 'communities are never homogenous or unified ... Community groups ... must be broadly representative, reflecting the interests of all the diverse groups in the community. They cannot be dominated by one party, a warlord, traditional leaders or men' (SANCO 1994). Surely this implied a final break (at least in principle) with the authoritarian logic of NDR? To what extent, however, did it imply a space for genuine political choices?

SANCO's later interest in organisational diversity seemed to address Steven Friedman's requirements for negotiated development: inclusivity and representativeness; where the former concerned "the extent to which [processes] include all interests", and the latter by "the extent to which beneficiaries of development are represented or merely spoken for" (Friedman, 1992). This suggested that a democratic practice would contest the rights of civics to speak for communities as a whole. *Democratised* development would, therefore, require widening the field of representation on development forums.

We have already seen, however, that the notion of community was implicated in an essentialist logic premised on *two* moments. Steven Friedman's objections referred only to one of them: the identity between civic and community; that is, the assumption that civics *best* articulated the objective interests of communities. What was not addressed anywhere was the notion of the general interest to which the communities' will was apparently affixed.

Here it is worth remembering Marx's call for "universal franchise" in the *Civil War in France*. The object of general elections was to select personnel (subject to immediate recall) to realise the will of the people. In this regard the 'democratic process' was not about the content of the public good itself. That was known objectively. The space of representation was reduced to selecting priorities, choosing the most appropriate form of implementation and determining the people to do it.

The new definition of community certainly gave it a certain complexity that it was formerly lacking seeing in communities a multiplicity of groups that could not simply be represented by civic organisations. If this, however, sounded like a concession to pluralism it was not. Social 'interests' were still affixed to a common political objective; and in this case social infrastructural development. I shall come to this later. What was seldom contested in any of these narratives, however, was the position of the community as subject. As such, policy debates tended to deliberate the most appropriate means to realise the communities' will. The representative space was merely broadened to more accurately determine developmental priorities *et al*. Political choice remained circumscribed. Diverse interests implied different development priorities. They did not suggest different notions of the social good altogether.

Let us return again to the SANCO proposals on Development Finance.

While the national civic structure later recognised the presence of diverse social interests, it nonetheless believed them to share a common political interest in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The content of the RDP was sourced from the shared African experience of apartheid that determined common social 'needs' that could in turn be provided through a national

development programme. In this regard the RDP was associated (if not conflated) with the general will. The role of 'community organisations' in development was tightly circumscribed. Local Development Forums (LDFs) and Community Development Forums (CDFs) were responsible for merely implementing the RDP: identifying development 'needs' and priorities, pressurising a council to build a school, for example; ensuring the convenient positioning of services and infrastructure, guaranteeing job creation and perhaps even performing some of the physical delivery themselves (SANCO, 1994).

During the early 1990's Planact was concerned that, without additional structures, local government would remain unreceptive to the "needs' of the community' (Planact 1995). "The challenge for communities," it argued, "[was] to make sure that local government [was] democratised and that it: involve[d] communities in identifying and prioritising development needs, respond[ed] to the real needs of communities and redirect[ed] local resources to meet community needs ..." (Planact 1995). Planact was, therefore, tempted by institutional mechanisms to bind local government officials to joint decision-making with 'community' organisations; and civic organisations in particular.

In Benoni, for example, the development of the informal settlement at Tambo ville took place through a joint technical committee (JTC) that institutionalised bilateral negotiations between the Benoni Town Council and the Wattville Concerned Residents Committee. The terms of reference rendered the JTC accountable not just to the white local authority, but also to the civic association. The committee was thus intended to be a meeting place of two formally equal partners. In the context of apartheid local government, the JTC proved to be an invaluable forum: it expanded the council's responsibilities to include the African residents of Benoni in a way that both advanced the integration of the city, and set a precedent for 'community-driven development'. The apparent success of the latter encouraged Planact to suggest similar forums as institutional appendages to democratic local authorities (Chipkin, 1995).

LDF's in their original formulation, therefore, were intended to resist the racial bias of apartheid local government. They also reflected a suspicion of representative democracy. Mark Swilling summarised a widely held belief when

he once remarked: "civic associations have an accurate perception that the electoral process... is not inherently democratic. Elections are governed by rules set by people with interests... In addition, it is a universal wisdom that the better off classes in society tend to use the democratic process far more effectively than the poor..." (Swilling 1992, p.6). By implication, for democracy to address the 'needs' of the poor (or "disadvantaged communities") it needed something to moderate its class bias. This was partly the intention behind LDFs.

In this regard LDFs were intended to override political institutions potentially opposed to the general will. SANCO and certain NGOs were still inclined, therefore, to give LDFs statutory powers either to oblige elected local governments to undertake certain activities or to require them to consult and win their agreement for development plans. There was widespread support for the latter. On the 'East Rand', for example, the Eastern Services Council (for reasons associated with the complex politics of the sub-region) lobbied strongly for such a role. This would have obliged an elected body to defer to an unelected one - simply because it was believed that LDFs somehow better represented communities than local governments.

Yet the force of the South African debate made itself felt. Planact began to consider a less structured role for 'communities', including simply an advisory or monitoring function through local development forums. In this regard, it became more sympathetic to the role of civics envisaged by Friedman (1992) and Shubane and Madiba (1992). If Planact nonetheless foresaw a partnership role with local government, SANCO was still attached to older conceptions. It continued to encourage, for example, autonomous forums based on 'direct democracy' that would have 'preferential access to development finance' (SANCO 1994), and would undertake certain development projects independently.

The debate was finally superseded by the local government elections on November 1, 1995. After that day elected Councils were ostensibly 'legitimised'; that is granted the status as authentic representatives of the communities' will. We should be cautious to assume, however, that this marked a rupture with the logic we have seen above.

We have already noticed that the work of civic associations and LDFs was believed in the service of a necessary and inexorable political objective. What they assumed, in practice at least, was an unmediated relation between subject and 'experience' that determined 'objective interests'. In one sense local governments were conceived in terms of this grammar. We have already seen how this was possible when we referred to the *Civil War in France*. Local government simply superseded civic and LDF without any change to the philosophical grammar between subject and political destination. In other words they simply replaced firstly civics and then LDF's as the authentic voice of the community interested objectively in the RDP ? This is certainly the dominant conception. Local government is deemed responsible for giving physical expression to an image of the urban form determined either regionally or nationally. Take for example, the role envisaged for local authorities by the Urban Development Strategy published by the then National RDP office:

"The primary responsibility of local authorities is to ensure the delivery of services at a community level within an agreed planning framework" (Urban Development Strategy, p.35)

In other words local government is conceived here as a delivery agent. It is not responsible for the planning framework itself. South African conceptions of the local have thus partly retreated towards conceptions reminiscent of NDR. The political authority is deemed merely a functionary of the national state despite the renewed interest in so-called 'civil society' since the local government elections.

The State and Civil Society

If in earlier formulations of development forums there was a tangible suspicion of liberal democracy, today it is far more to refer to these institutions in terms of the ambiguous and equivocal language of state and 'civil society'. It is now usual to view LDFs and other such organisations as the representative bodies of a vaguely defined 'civil society' in relationship to the local state. In this regard debates have mostly focused on the inclusivity of these bodies and their capacity to truly embody all its interests. What is important about this discursive shift is the notion of plurality it suggests. The only thing definitions of the phrase seem

to share is an insistence that civil society comprises all those elements not present in the state. What the new affirmation of 'civil society' seemingly does, is contest the logic of integration implied by NDR and other logics of uniformity. In the classical Marxist formula the space between the two was progressively closed by the development of the general will and its final capture of the state - where the latter became merely an agent of the former. In this formulation the separation between state and civil society disappeared precisely because both shared a common will. And yet the new civil society rhetoric implies the permanence of that split. This has at least two explanatory forms: the first is what might be called pragmatic and skeptical, where the integration of the social is unachievable because the state tends to generate its own bureaucratic momentum that subverts the general interest. In another formulation, and more importantly, the gap is permanent precisely because the general will is impossible. That is, at any one time certain interests and political identities will not be accommodated within the state form; leaving a permanent outside arranged (and perhaps organised) in contestation to it. The notion of civil society (in some of its formulations) potentially grants a certain complexity and diversity to the notion of community. What this partly implies (in appearance anyway) is the recognition that distinct and plural identities exist that can not easily be captured by the notion of the general will.

We shall see, however, that it is not difficult to appropriate the notion of 'civil-society' to the philosophical grammar of NDR. In other words, and this is the dominant conception in South Africa, the plural and diverse interests of so-called 'civil-society' speak only to a certain political horison; they refer, that is, to the content, the priorities and schedules of developmental agendas. They do not speak of notions of the social good itself. As a result attention continues to focus on realising development and the delivery of services. This debate continues to be informed by the essentialism and teleology discussed earlier. What is not appreciated is that political diversity implies a fundamental break with NDR and like-minded grammar. It implies too that political differences are not just about the method and priorities of realising the communities' will but suggests, in addition, that there are diverse conceptions of the content of the public good

itself. There are, therefore, two political logics inscribed in the notion of civil society that have been simultaneously attached to the notion of community. This shall be explored in greater detail in section 2.

For now we can say that the conditions of the 'One City' slogan were various moments of contingency that saw subject and *telos* fluctuate - with varying degrees of stability - according to the vicissitudes of South African political practice. As a result divergent theoretical systems were sometimes juxtaposed in a set of slogans. This is the legacy of the conception of the city dominant today. The 'one city one tax base' slogan and 'community-driven development' adjoined contrary problematics. South African conceptions of local government are consequently haunted by an ambiguity arising from these differences. At the moment, that is, when the One City slogan seemed to imply the specificity of the urban political-economy, the notion of 'community' simultaneously reduced each particular city to an example of the 'apartheid city' generally. I will explore exactly this tension.

SECTION 2: THEORETICAL LEGACIES

It has been argued so far that South African conceptions of local government are shot through with ambiguity. This arises, I have suggested, from the legacy of two contrary theoretical systems unwittingly juxtaposed in a cluster of slogans: 'One-City-One-Tax-Base' and 'Community-driven-development'. What are these systems?

In *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*, Ernesto Laclau observes in Marx the juxtaposition of two non-identical contradictions. The *Communist Manifesto*, for example, refers to the contradiction between the expansion of the forces of production beyond a determinate phase of the relations of production. Here a "mechanical" tension in the system prevents the development of particular relations of production. (Laclau:, p.6) But this, he asserts, "is a contradiction *without antagonism*" (Laclau: p.6). Laclau comments: the fact that two oppositional forces cause stasis or even the collapse of one or both of them does not necessarily mean that this process will manifest itself in a hostile confrontation between groups. But this is exactly what is presupposed in the Preface to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Here Marx assumes that a period of social revolution follows necessarily from the contradiction above.[4]

This is the same theoretical ambivalence that Castells mentioned in *The City and the Grassroots*. "How is the connection established between the structure and the practices, between the mode of production and the historical process of class struggle?" (Castells, p. 298), he asked. There have been various attempts within the Marxist canon to resolve this ambiguity. Lenin spoke of a revolutionary vanguard party that would realise the objective interests of the working class by

[4]This is not a problem *in* logic. The statement that production is the basic condition of society is an ontological premise; from which Marx generates epistemological claims about the physiology of the social. This occurs within what David Hillel-Ruben has called the "correspondence" theory of knowledge. The statement that contradiction necessarily produces antagonism is an epistemological statement that has as its referent the ontological premise above. It is perfectly valid. The task of Althusser and others is to prove that it is not *true*. And here lies the difficulty: for the truth of the premise is relative to the respective epistemological subject to whom it refers. It is thus necessary to demonstrate the superiority of a certain concept of the subject over another.

advancing the class struggle to revolution. Trotsky further elucidated a theory of combined and uneven development to explain why revolution happened in the most 'backward' European country (Russia) rather than in the advanced capitalist states. What Lenin (and Trotsky) sought to understand was the 'current situation', the concrete historical circumstances in which the Mode of Production and the General Contradiction (between Capital and Labour) was specified. In so doing they returned Marxism to the conjuncture: the conditions and circumstances of empirical history. Th'- was the theoretical and historical task that South African Marxists inherited: to situate history-in-general in the existing conjuncture, in the unique conditions and circumstances of South African capitalism. Peter Hudson has demonstrated the theoretical legacy of South African formulations and in particular the theory of National Democratic Revolution. This section will attempt briefly to highlight the conceptual premises of NDR. In particular it will explore the relationship it posits between subject and telos. It will also help us realise exactly what Castells rejected and by implication the conceptual premises which made the city available for theorisation. It will also make apparent the conceptual incongruence between the concept of the city and the theoretical content of community.

For the classical Marx, the polarisation of the social 'totality' into separate classes, different spheres (political, economic) was symptomatic of the concealed nature of exploitation. The social alienation of the object of labour was expressed (under capitalism) as a relationship between commodities; as a relation between things and not people. Exploitation alienated the worker from herself, from the class that appropriated the object of labour and from the state that intervened (politically) to reproduce the structure of (economic) exploitation. If the centre-piece of capitalist exploitation was thus a primitive alienation that was the advent of all difference ('man from nature', 'class from class'), communism was its opposite: "the positive transcendence of all estrangement" (Marx, 1979). The process of social integration, however, was interior to the very motion of capitalist development itself: s.c.' division moved autogenetically towards its own synthesis. In this regard the specificity of the proletariat *vis-a-vis* the mode of production imbued it with the quality of universal agent responsible

for the reintegration of the social. In other words, the shared experience of the relations of production determined at once both the class position and the objective (or real) material interests of historical agents. For the working class this included the elimination of exploitation as the source of alienation. Put more simply: because exploitation was the author of all social difference, and the objective interest of the working class was the defeat of exploitation, the working class was the universal agent of social integration.

Whereas in this narrative, the logic of integration, passed through an intermediate phase (socialism) to Communism, the theory of NDR inserted a further stage. The specificity of South African capitalism as a special type of colonialism necessitated an additional horizon of struggle: national liberation. South African capitalism was premised on a form of racial domination that was its lifeblood. As a result the struggle against the latter was simultaneously anti-capitalist in character. The national democratic state (neither capitalist nor socialist but rather "socialist in orientation" (Suttner and Cronin, 1986)) marked an additional stage in the Marxist chronology.

NDR thus invested Marxism-Leninism with an interesting contingency: the historical task of the working class was subsumed into the category "people" or "nation" such that the latter temporarily undertook the historical task at hand. The people were defined as historical agent and the National Democratic State as their destination. NDR thus involved a certain type of linguistic displacement. That is, new words were invested with the same theoretical content: 'proletariat' for 'people' and 'nation'. During the 1980's a new substitution was made. In this regard, NDR attached itself to a term already popularised in the 1970's by Black Consciousness, making of 'communities' mere sub-units of the 'people', and imbuing them with the latter's same political will.

What did NDR assume about the relationship between the subject of history and its telos? How did it conceive the political? This section will not explore NDR as historical text, but will rather examine the conceptual logic on which it was premised. This section will also take as given the credentials of NDR as a coherent rendition of Marxism-Leninism. Indeed, the South African Communist Party never believed it was anything but that. Peter Hudson, moreover, has

demonstrated the genealogy of the concept in the international communist literature. Jonny Steinberg (Steinberg, 1996) has recently explained the identity between the SACP's major programme documents and certain Leninist texts. As a result I feel justified exploring the conceptual logic of NDR by way of a reading of Marxism generally; and in particular by way of what Louis Althusser called theoretical humanism.

The starting point for this discussion is an apparent anomaly. In 1988 the SACP published the programme of its recently-held congress. *The Path to Power*, as it was called, was produced at a time when urban struggles throughout South Africa had been one of the hallmarks of the period. Moreover, a concept of the South African city had by this time received expression in the 'One City' slogan. Nowhere is this mentioned in the booklet. Indeed, the city does not receive any comment, an aside, or even a footnote. Why? I will argue here that this omission does not simply constitute an oversight, a banal neglect, but reflects a certain *theoretical* prejudice, one that makes it impossible to see in township resistance anything other than the generalised opposition to apartheid. At the heart of this 'oversight' is certain philosophy of the political. I will permit myself, therefore, a theoretical discussion to answer this question.

Essentialism and National Democratic Revolution

Louis Althusser attached enormous theoretical significance to Lenin's writings on the Russian Revolution. Lenin argued in *Left Wing Communism, an infantile disorder* that revolution happened in Russia precisely because it was the most backward state in the chain of imperialist states. It was the 'weakest link'. Russia had accumulated the largest sum of historical contradictions that fused in a 'ruptural unity' that was the October revolution (Althusser: 1990a, p.99). As a result, Althusser concluded, "we can no longer talk of the sole, unique power of the general contradiction" (Ibid., p.100). The General Contradiction (the contradiction between the relations and forces of production) is itself determined by 'unique' contingent 'circumstances'. Its conditions of existence are not internal to itself. It is not a self-reproducing essence that encloses its own conditions of being. Rather, it is specified in the conjuncture. "Everything depends on the

conditions" (Ibid., p.206). But what are these remarkable 'conditions' that determine 'everything'? They include:

"... the forms of the superstructure (the State, the dominant ideology, religion, politically organised movements and so on)... [and] the internal and external historical situation which determines[the General Contradiction] on the one hand as a function of the existing world context (what dominates it - competition of capitalist nations, or 'imperialist internationalism', or competition within imperialism, *etc.*)..." (Ibid., p.106).

Alhusser suggests two broad categories: the *superstructure* and the *functions of the national past*. The first - the superstructural conditions - are in their nature instances of a specific mode of production at a certain time. In this regard they are internal to the General Contradiction in the sense that they are phenomena of it. The second type of condition designates 'survivals' (ideologies, 'national traditions', even the custom and 'spirit' of a people) not destroyed during the transition to a new mode of production. The chronology of the sentence is important: they are survivals of the past. They may partly determine aspects of the General Contradiction (its modality), but they are in themselves not determined by it. Althusser calls these conditions external moments.

External moments are not just historical idiosyncrasies and/or at best theoretical anomalies. They gesture towards a new concept of the social. Lenin, Althusser suggests, gave to philosophy a new concept; albeit in the practical state. What was this new concept and how was it different from the old? Althusser warns us, however, that there are no pure concepts waiting to be discovered. There are only metaphors, hints and gestures (Ibid., p. 203) that make sense relative to the Hegelian dialectic. They suggest how to specify Marxist concepts *in contrast* to the Hegelian dialectic.

For Althusser "[t]he Hegelian totality is the alienated development of a simple unity, of a simple principle, itself a moment of the development of the Idea: so, strictly speaking, it is the phenomenon, the self-manifestation of this simple principle which persists in all its manifestations... [T]he unity of a simple essence manifesting itself in its alienation produces this result: that every concrete

difference featured in the Hegelian totality, including the 'spheres' visible in this totality (civil society, the State, religion, philosophy, *etc.*), all these differences are negated as soon as they are affirmed: *for they are no more than 'moments' of the simple internal principle of the totality,* which fulfills itself by negating the alienated difference that it posed..." (Althusser:1990b, p.203) (bold-I.C) Let us unpack this description. For Hegel there is only a single contradiction of which the social totality is the manifestation. In other words, the particular form of social practice and consciousness is the merely the expression of the particular stage of development of this internal principle and does not affect the Idea itself. The simple principle is the condition of existence of the social totality. But the conditions of its own existence are internal to itself. It is a self-contained essence: determining but never determined. In other words, since the elements of the whole are merely phenomena of an essence, they all develop at the same rate -the rate of development of the Idea. They all have identical temporalities. This means too that the ideas, concepts, practices and institutions of the past can *never* effect the present. There can be no 'survivals' from the past. It means also that there can be no spheres of autonomous practice in the social. The economy, the state, science, art, philosophy all develop at exactly the same rate for they have no independent effectivity.

We are now in a better position to understand the apparent oversight in *The Path to Power.* It was an oversight in appearance only. Rather, the omission of the city was a necessary theoretical blind-spot. Classical Marxism, if it even considered the city, treated it as an insignificant spatial backdrop for social struggles arising from the economy. It is surely no coincidence that neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Lenin *etc.* ever addressed themselves to the form of the city. In South Africa too the urban character of resistance was mostly ignored until the late 1980's. It was not believed to affect the mode, quality or objective of political struggle.

We have already seen that for classical Marxism and the theory of National Democratic Revolution alike, the sole determinant of the social was the contradiction between the (racial) relations and forces of production (the General

Principle). The latter functioned like an essence. The city had no special conditions of existence. Like the rest of the social totality it was fully determined by the General Contradiction. In this regard, it featured as a phenomenon of the economy that was its essence. It had no peculiar social rhythm or history of its own and was, therefore, not able to be theorised in terms specific to it. Indeed, its concept was specified elsewhere: in the General Contradiction.

In contradistinction Manuel Castells argued that the urban form was not reducible to the General Principle. It was, he suggested, determined by 'external conditions' not arising from the economy: e.g. social demands on public goods and cultural identity. In this sense Castell implied that the city was a relatively autonomous sphere of social practices. It had its own temporality and its own peculiar conditions of existence. In so doing Castells transcended (both explicitly and in practice) the conceptual inheritance of classical Marxism. Autonomous spheres and times required a different concept of the social. They were not available to a Hegelianised Marx.

We have seen that for Althusser, Hegel reduced all the concrete elements of a historical epoch to one principle, internally unified, and entirely self-sustaining (Althusser:1990b, p.103). The Hegelian dialectic was premised on an essence that had no external conditions. We can now understand, according to Althusser, what the Marxist concept of the social was. It was not the Hegelian 'totality'! A new term had to be found that designated an entirely new concept: the social *whole*. "Instead of the ideological myth of a philosophy of origins... Marxism establishes in principle the recognition of the givenness of the complex structure...", commented Althusser. (Althusser:1990a, p.198) It had as its starting point "*the ever-pre-givenness of a structured complex unity*". There is never a simple contradiction of which the social is its expression. The Marxist whole is always already constituted in complexity: in a plurality of origins. It is complexly-structurally-unevenly-determined: that is, *overdetermined*. (Althusser: 1990a, p.209).

We can now see why the Marxist *whole* is radically different from the Hegelian *totality*. It has multiple contradictions. Social practices are not epiphenomena of an essence. They have their own effectivity and their own temporalities. Each sphere of practices has partly its own (external) conditions of existence.. "The coexistence of the different structured levels... and therefore of the economic infrastructure, of the legal and political superstructure, of ideologies and theoretical formations (philosophy, sciences) can no longer be thought in the co-existence of the Hegelian present... [;] and in consequence [in] the model of continuous and homogenous time..." (Althusser:1990a, p.99). Each instance has its own specific time (Althusser:1990a, p.99)[5]. The Marxist whole is overdetermined, however, not simply because there is reciprocal determination between base and superstructure. More importantly, social relations are not just phenomenon of an essence precisely because they are partly determined by *external conditions*: by circumstances and situations not themselves internal to the General Contradiction.

We shall see also that multiplying the origins of the social - accommodating the possibility of external conditions - does not just expand the terrain of social experiences. It does not merely add to an experience of the economy an experience of other spheres of the social. Subjects do not just experience say, the city, in addition to the economy. There is no accumulation of experiences. Rather, the quality of experience itself is transformed. This is because the specifically monist concept of the social (according, at least, to Althusser and Castells) destroys the possibility of any relation of direct expression between the 'instances' of the social, which, as we have explained above, are relatively 'autonomous' in relation to one another. The dimension of subjectivity or consciousness cannot thus be construed as merely expressing or reflecting, via the medium of 'experience', economic, political or any other objective social identity. The forms of social consciousness are specific and not reducible to any other social dimension. The concrete individual is thus caught in the intersection

[5]Ernesto Laclau has used this concept of differential temporality to argue that the repetitive nature of pre-capitalist life, made it difficult (if not impossible) to think in anything but metaphysical terms.

of these different social instances or dimensions so that her experience of her economic and/or political identity (e.g. 'worker', 'nationally oppressed') is always and necessarily conditioned by the existing forms of social subjectivity and is thus *never* directly expressive of such identities. There is thus no direct relationship between experience and consciousness. It is not possible, therefore, to read *a priori* objective social interests from the nature of the social itself. But this is exactly what the theory of National Democratic Revolution and Black Consciousness before that, assumed. The fundamental difference between them was their description of the essential apartheid [illegible] and, therefore, of the appropriate political objectives.

BC and the theory of NDR were thus premised on t[illegible]mar: they posited a necessary relation between the subject ('blac[illegible]ssed') and her political destination ('black liberation'/'national de[illegible]sted on a certain notion of 'experience'. In this regard both discourses we[illegible]sed on a relation of identity between the objective and subjective dimensions of social life.

The implications of this grammar for democracy were ambiguous. At the moment when theorists of NDR spoke of the national democratic state as a multi-party state - as a state representing diverse interests - an alternative logic associated with "people's power" interrupted. This took seriously the identificationary reason of BC and NDR to narrow (if not annul) the distance between political subjects as national/black subjects. The distance between the representatives of the people and the people themselves was reduced or closed by definition. All had a common experience of the racial oppression/ relations of production that issued common interests in national/black liberation. It mattered not that they did not articulate this interest. It could be defined objectively. Political difference was thus circumscribed by the pre-defined destiny of political outcomes. What was eradicated was politics as a terrain of genuine contestation: as an arena of competing political wills supporting divergent political outcomes.

This logic found most cogent expression in the civic movement. Civic organisations often derived their own identity from the transfer of the theoretical

content of 'people' to a localised notion of 'community'. Dan Sandi, then General Secretary of SANCO once remarked:

"I think it should be emphasised that civics today are volunteer organisations in the sense that residents join their structures voluntarily, although one belongs to a civic structure whether he/she is registered or not. This is because the civic is the residents, and the residents is the civic" (cited in Richard Tomlinson, 1994).

In this regard the conflation between civic and residents was achieved by a logic of identity inherited from Black Consciousness and the theory of NDR. For our purposes a notion of experience was used to link the object of experience (the real) - racial oppression, racial capitalism, apartheid geography and so on - to a consciousness of the political objective (black liberation, national democracy, urban integration). We can now better understand why civic organisations in the 1980's could conflate their 'interests' with those of the community. They claimed to know the truth of the real (to understand its essential experience) and could, therefore, determine objectively the political interests of the community.

What was not apparent to civics was the theoretical substitution that had accompanied their rise. 'Community' as implied in BC texts and 'community' as used by civic organisations referred ambiguously to different political agendas: the first was referenced *vis-a-vis* black liberation and the second *vis-a-vis* national democratic revolution. These differences were obscured by the usage of just one word to denote both possibilities. Ironically this may have been a condition for its popular success. Civic organisations appropriated a term already made familiar and popular by a previous decade of political mobilisation. Implicit in the appropriation of the term was an important political substitution. Community as articulated by civics attached the 'black experience' then - implicit in the term - to a national democratic agenda, rather than BC's programme of 'black' liberation. This was made possible because both discourses shared a common theoretical grammar.

If civic organisations could not recognise the discursive changes that accompanied their rise, they were party to an even greater blindspot. The notion of city that emerged in the late 1980's and early 1990's was premised on a very

different theoretical grammar. For our purposes two theoretical elements are important: relatively autonomous spheres and experience.

We have already seen that the classical Marxism on which NDR was premised treated the social 'totality' as the epiphenomenon (the superstructure) of the essence (the economy) that determined it. In this regard it had no space for relatively autonomous spheres. It could not accommodate external circumstances that were partly their conditions of existence. NDR could thus only ever multiply the range of experiences. This was the condition of its very existence. National democratic subjects experienced economic exploitation and racial oppression *in addition*, it suggested. The politico-strategic accomplice was a two-stage path to communism: first national democracy and then socialism. The 'One-City' slogan expanded the range of experiences even further: economic exploitation, racial oppression and urban domination as well.

We have seen, however, that the notion of city rested on a completely contrary theoretical system. In its original concept it could not simply refer to an expanded political field within the Marxist-Leninist teleology. Rather, taken from Manuel Castells, the city was a relatively autonomous sphere not fully determined by the economy. Indeed, we have seen that Castells suggested certain extra-economic factors as determinants of the urban form.

We have seen also that the accomplice of *relative autonomy* was a radically different concept of *experience*. In this regard, the relation between the real and consciousness of the real as a relation of direct expression was refuted. Experience of the 'apartheid city' could not, therefore, produce uniform social interests across South African cities generally. If there is no direct relation between experience and objective political interests then it is impossible to assume to know the interests of urban residents in advance; or generally (which is the same thing).

We can now give precise theoretical expression to the ambiguity mentioned at the beginning of this section.

We have seen that a notion of 'city' and 'community' were juxtaposed during the 1980's and that community drew its theoretical meaning from the theory of NDR.

In this regard, objective political interests were referenced *vis-a-vis* the state, and the national state in particular. We have seen also that NDR could not accommodate the notion of relative autonomy either theoretically or politically but could, instead, only expand the range of political objectives in linear chronology. In this regard, the city was treated (at best) as the spatial outcome of racial capitalism. It was reduced to an expression of the racial relations of production that determined it. In contrast, and in concept, the notion of the city drawn originally from Manuel Castells refuses entirely to reduce the urban form to the economy or anything else. In this regard, it is determined by peculiar conditions that cannot be known in advance.

The political corollaries of these tendencies are quite different. The first locates political responsibility for the urban form at the national (or other tiers) of government. The second grants to local urban governments relative political autonomy to give political expression to local conditions.

In South Africa both tendencies have been given political expression alongside each other. Urban areas are variously represented by their own elected governments. This apparent autonomy is circumscribed, however, by national, Provincial and/or regional development plans, which very often define local governments in narrow technical terms. In this regard, there is a tendency for political responsibility for the urban form to be determined either regionally or at higher tiers of government; and for local governments to be treated primarily as implementing agents. In South Africa, therefore, the contradictory understanding of local government in *practice* is symptomatic of the peculiar history of the city in *concept*.

In this regard, the next section will focus on certain local governments situated in the urban conurbation east of Johannesburg. It will show how their work was torn between two contradictory political impulses that are, in turn, symptomatic of their ambiguous political formulation.

The choice of the East Rand is partly personal and partly methodological. While being the area best know to me it also serves well the purposes of this thesis. Firstly: from the point of view of national legislation the local governments there

are unexceptional. They are defined in exactly the same terms as any other urban third tier governments. Yet they are particular. Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston, the local governments that will be considered here, are respectively the same age as and older than Johannesburg. In this regard they have a long history of self-government that has seen them develop very specific ideas about their role and the areas they serve. We can see through them, therefore, the way the new South African conception of local government, on the one hand, seems to respect their autonomy (and therefore their conceptions of their function) and on the other hand wants to invest them, like all the others, with a uniform notion of their role.

In particular we can see how since 1993, Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston have struggled to assert their political autonomy from a regional development body; the Eastern Services Council (ESC) - today the Eastern Gauteng Service Council (EGSC) - interested in pursuing and implementing national and provincial development plans. In so doing they have attempted to defend their own definitions of their respective roles against the new national one represented by the EGSC.

Secondly: in the chapter after the next, we will see that in 1990 the three former African townships of Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus, recently included in the jurisdictions of Germiston, Alberton and Boksburg separately, erupted in possibly the worst example of urban civil-war in South African history. We will also see that in trying to pursue their new role these authorities not only prevented themselves from coming to terms with the political exigency thrown up by the war, but even from fulfilling their mandate in terms of the new dispensation.

SECTION 3: URBAN FORMS ON THE 'EAST RAND'

Outside the discipline of geography there has been a general neglect of *space* as an important theoretical element. This is true in political philosophy, history and sociology as well. Sue Parnell and Alan Mabin observed in 1995, for example, that in South Africa, academic inquiries often take the apartheid geography as their implicit starting-points (Parnell and Mabin, pp. 40). As a result, they note, certain authors specialised in historical and political processes in African townships, others dealt with Coloured areas and still others with White locations. What is important to notice, therefore, is that the urban form was treated simply as a spatial backdrop for other processes, and in particular the setting for class and ethnic formation and political struggles. It was judged, that is, as the place in which these events unfolded, but not as an element intrinsic to these very processes themselves. The writings after 1988, positing the notion of the 'apartheid city', thus revealed an important lack in the South African social and political history. They posited, for the first time, the spatial structure of the city, not simply as an arena in which things happened, but as a factor integral to their form and trajectories. What they also highlighted was the importance of the urban state to these processes. Unfortunately, both this state form was analysed in general terms that rendered abstract their particular configurations and their particular functions. As a result we lack in South Africa, studies of particular local governments and their specific modes of operation.

In this regard I want tentatively – tentatively, because this will not be a rigorous historical study - to show on the East Rand, and in Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston in particular, that distinctive values informed how they functioned and what they took to be their roles. These differed substantially from the generic duties that South African studies have attributed to them. In this way these local governments tried to invest their respective spatial morphologies with political meanings different to those that can be apprehended if we see them solely through the lens of the 'apartheid city' generally defined. Indeed, I will argue in this section that it is precisely the difference between their particular conceptions of their role, and the specific political meanings they have attached to the areas

under their jurisdiction, on the one hand, and a conception of local government and the urban political economy gamered from national sources on the other, that was at stake in the third tier institutional politics in the East Rand during the first half of the 1990's.

I will argue that opposition for and against the proposed East Rand Metropolitan Chamber - akin to a Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Chamber – rested on differing conceptions of the city and the role of local government. It will be argued that Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston, in their practice, wanted to defend their parochial readings of the urban form against a reading that reduced each city to a mere instance of a generic, national type. The conflicts between them and the Eastern Gauteng Services Council, therefore, were symptomatic of the differing notions of the city and of local government. One the one hand, Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston sought to defend their limited political autonomy to give expression to what they understood in practice to be their different roles. On the other hand, the EGSC sought to reduce local governments within its jurisdiction to mere 'delivery' agents for plans determined elsewhere.

A New Geographic Expression

The establishment of the East Rand Regional Services Council (ERRSC) in 1987 granted a temporary consensus to the "East Rand" as a geographic expression. The local government transition, however, rendered the term ambiguous once again. Whereas most local authorities had by 1992 agreed that the 'East Rand' was largely synonymous with the boundaries of the RSC (Humphries, 1992), the transformation of the latter into the Eastern Services Council and now Eastern Gauteng Services Council (with the associated redefinition of the EGSC's functional area) has destabilised this precarious understanding.

Prior to 1987 no regionally established body (such as the East Rand transport authority (Ormet) or the Administration Board) had the symbolic authority to give stable geographic definition to the 'East Rand'. The establishment of the RSC represented the arrival of a more powerful regional organisation, and, therefore,

also of a more durable regional definition. This settled the meaning of the area at the time around the following municipalities: Alberton, Tokoza, Boksburg, Vosloorus, Benoni, Wattville, Daveytown, Brakpan, Tsakane, Germiston, Katlehong, Kempton Park, Edenvale, Bedfordview, Nigel, Duduza, Springs and Kwa-Thema. In total 18 local authorities. Yet the more recent questioning of the place and role of a services-type council has simultaneously disrupted the territorial definition the old RSC partly steadied. In many respects ... fore, the (definitional) center of the region has been disputed and the geography of the term was once again available for contestation.

After 1993 negotiations concerning the demarcation of local governments took their cue from the options available from the Local Government Transition Act. For our purposes, debate centered on the metropolitan or non-metropolitan character of the East Rand. The outcome of this controversy ... rofound implications, not just for the nature and shape of then existing lo... horities, but for the continued existence of the then East Rand Regional Services Council.

In the obscure legalese of the LGTA, provisions were made for the "disestablishment" of RSC's[6] and their replacement with a Service Council "for non-metropolitan" local government areas. These bodies would be granted the power to raise and claim the regional services levy and the regional establishment levy referred to in the original RSC Act. Apart from these few

[6] Following the presentation of the Croeser Working Group's (Croeser, 1993) report in 1983, which recognised the need for transfer payments from wealthy white areas to less affluent black, indian and coloured areas, the government introduced Regional Services Councils (RSC's) in 1985. These were intended to provide area-wide coordination of capital projects at a local level so as to produce efficient administration through economies of scale. They were also intended to facilitate the improvement of infrastructural assets in black areas as well as provide the resources for black local authorities to effectively render services and balance their budgets.

After belatedly agreeing to include black city councillors in their membership, the RSC Act effectively marginalised their representation by defining a local authorities' voting capacity according to the amount of services it acquired from an RSC. This ensured the *de facto* dominance of wealthier white authorities. The "multiracial" nature of RSC's, therefore, addressed problems within the existing structure of local government and were thus an attempt to preempt the expansion of BLA's revenue bases without effecting changes in their actual delimitation.

Moreover, RSC capital ventures in black townships ironically further exacerbated the very crises they were designed to help alleviate. Such projects assumed that BLA's had the operating income and administrative capacity to maintain and manage the new assets. Mostly they did not.

details, however, the LGTA was silent on substantive issues relating to the character and form of these new Councils. All that was apparently clear, according to the information brochure issued at the signing of the LGTA, was that "a transitional metropolitan council [could not] co-exist with RSC's in the same area". Indeed, the same brochure continued that: "where a TMC [was] established "that area [would] have to be excised from the area of any RSC because the powers and duties of metropolitan councils and RSC's [were] essentially the same." In other words, if the 'East Rand' was defined as a single (or even several metropolitan areas), the Eastern Services Council would be "disestablished" (Local Government Transition Act, 1992).

This suggested two options to the then Regional Services Council: it could either become the bureaucratic heart of an East Rand metropolitan chamber; or mutate into a vaguely defined Services Council. Apart from a certain degree of political expedience that would see the Council choose the option most likely to see it into the future, the choice of action rested also on the RSC's own reading of the urban form. In terms of the LGTA a "metropolitan area" displayed the following characteristics:

- it comprised the areas of jurisdiction of multiple local governments;
- it was densely populated and had an intensive movement of people, goods and services within the area;
- It was extensively developed or urbanised and had more than one central business district, industrial area and concentration of employment; and
- economically it formed a functional unit comprising various units which where interdependent economically and in respect of services.

While the 'East Rand' could comfortably be said to fulfill the first three requirements, the fourth proved hotly contested. Interviews conducted with the Council in late 1994 by Richard Humphries depicted the sub-region as a "conurbation of urban areas" with an embryonic metropolitan character tending towards an integrated metropolitan whole (Humphries, 1992b). And yet the March 1992 strategic plan, developed by the RSC's consultants Wagner Nel

suggested instead that: "The East Rand has developed over the years into a unique metropolitan area which distinguishes itself from its neighbouring areas with regard to cultural value systems, socio economic conditions, industrial activity, local authority coordinating mechanisms, demographic forces, physical phenomena" (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1992). There is an important difference in these definitions that is worth dwelling on briefly.

The RSC's later thinking implied that the metropolitan form of the East Rand was then tentative, and though it was moving in that direction, there existed strong and independent units that needed to be accommodated. The political accomplice of this analysis was a "soft" metropolitan option with strong local authorities reflecting the distinct histories of its municipal components. This view was reflected in speeches by RSC spokespersons and consultants at its regional summit held in October 1994. Bill Cameron, for example, suggested that the then PWV government be requested to allow for a "bottom-up" "metropolitan services council" for the East Rand (Presentation by Bill Cameron,p.27). This was certainly not the implication of the earlier formulation. The 1992 document referred to an already complete metropolitan area such that the region even had distinct cultural values ! What could this suggest if not a robust metropolitan structure for the East Rand ? And indeed, this was reflected in proposals submitted by Wagner Nel on the 17 May 1993.

The RSC had correctly interpreted the Central Witwatersrand Negotiating Chamber (CWNC) as the precursor for local government negotiations nationally. As early as December 1992, therefore, the chairperson of the Council met with East Rand councilors and raised the prospect of the Central Wits example. After discussing the idea with the then government in January 1993 and apparently receiving approval for some type of East Rand negotiating forum, the RSC approached "representatives from Vosloorus and Daveytown" for discussions. It seems that the RSC had recognised the imminent transformation of apartheid local government and the resultant participation of what it called "non-system" players. On the 19 February 1993 the Council officially met a delegation from the Civic Association of Southern Transvaal (CAST).

These actions were informed by several related worries. The RSC was concerned that the transformation of local government might threaten its institutional status (if not existence); and, therefore, also the quality of services it could render. A Wagner Nel report repeatedly measured the desirability of institutions against their ability to "add to [the] quality of life" or "deliver the goods". Indeed, one of its major criticisms of the CWMC was precisely the "decrease" in the "quality of life" that apparently resulted. The Council identified the need to protect its future operations as a "critical issue". "Never," it remarked "destroy or substitute systems and structures that deliver" (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1994(a), p.16). The RSC management was particularly concerned at what it saw as a growing trend away from Regional Services Councils. The De Loor Commission (De Loor Commission discussed in Dewar, 1993) for example, favoured the replacement of RSC's with some form of metropolitan government. These sentiments also seemed preferable to the ANC.

This occurred at a time when the Council had just recently resolved to "extend its operations beyond those of the conventional engineering type services". At a conference at Valley Lodge in 1991 the organisation had developed a "strategic mission" that saw itself as a major political and developmental player in the future. The RSC was thus motivated not just by the desire to survive, but to expand its powers and functions. In this regard the Council interpreted political trends at the time as moving towards metropolitan-type institutions for local government. And it, therefore, imagined to that such a structure for the East Rand best ensured its survival into the new democratic age.

But the security of the RSC's future rested on another change as well: the transformation of its blighted apartheid image. The Council had clearly recognised this fairly soon after the unbanning of the ANC. At a "strategic summit" held at Valley Lodge in 1991, the RSC developed a "total strategy" consisting of 5 "strategic thrusts". These included:

- "One safe city - one tax base"
- "One person - one job"
- "One family - one house"

- "Affordable services and infrastructure for all"
- "Social Affirmative Action for all"

- If these slogans sound today like bad parodies of the 1980's, their mimicry of the style and vocabulary of the "liberation movement" was deliberate. It represented an attempt to recast their language and image in order to "win the favour" (Coetzee, Maria., Germiston 7/8/95) of the civics and the ANC. In a remarkable feat of historical myth-making the RSC reinvented itself as an agent of democratisation (apparently because in the past it included Black Local Authorities on its board), formed during the demise of the old regime, and established for the "laudable" purpose of "upgrading and improving deprived areas" (ERRSC, 1994a, p.12). This, of course, contrasted with the more respectable view that RSC's buttressed crisis-ridden apartheid local government by throwing a lifeline to the much hated BLA's Nonetheless in terms of the new mythology the Council also argued that it had a proven "track record" of achieving "commendable aims" and it was, therefore, best suited to "continue render[ing] extremely valuable services in regional planning, the provision of urban infrastructure and the collection of regional levies" (Ibid., p.13). In this view, a metro structure, formed around the RSC, could best satisfy the Councils vision of "municipal development" through long term regional planning. The Wagner Nel report, titled *Proposals in respect of the need and framework for the establishment of the proposed East Rand Metropolitan Forum* thus envisaged a single Local Government Forum for the entire region. This would have as its primary goal: "to assist with and monitor the implementation of the East Rand RSC's Total Strategy". Curiously, the document was classified as confidential and only (reluctantly) made available almost 3 years later. The embarrassing nature of the report was almost certainly related to events that superseded it.

  In early 1994 RSC notes (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1994a) record that plans for a single regional negotiating forum were scrapped and an alternative strategic intervention adopted. What seems to have been the crucial turning-point was a "summit" convened for councilors and officials at Maccaauvlei in February 1994. During an apparently tense and sometimes angry weekend it became readily apparent that delegates strongly opposed a

regional metro structure. Instead, they preferred autonomous local authorities served by an RSC-type establishment. In addition, the former Norkok local authorities (Kempton Park, Edenvale and Bedfordview) favoured an independent metropolitan structure for themselves. As a result of this opposition the East Rand Regional Services Council commissioned a "dynamic demarcation model" (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1994b, p.2) from its consultants Wagner Nel to evaluate competing options of local government in the area. According to the consultants that prepared it the model assumed that the legislative criteria for demarcation were inadequate. It included several other factors for consideration; including what it believed to be international trends in politics, management and government.

The report concluded that nine East Rand TLC's be established - integrating formerly segregated white and black local authorities - and recommended also that the RSC's area of jurisdiction be expanded to include Kempton Park, Nigel and Heidelberg. These areas, it suggested, should be served by an East Rand Metropolitan Services Council that would retain the old RSC functions. According to the consultants that devised the criteria, however, the findings reflected more the politics of the region than the "science" (Ibid., p.7) it was intended to serve. Indeed, Johan Wagner lamented the careerism of the local authority officials that undermined the prospects of an East Rand metropolitan vision. The new proposal thus represented a significant reversal from the earlier position.

When the RSC failed to convene an East Rand Local Government Forum due to well organised opposition, it resolved to participate in the various negotiating forums as a statutory participant. RSC minutes from the time suggested that this was never more than a strategic decision: it would pursue this course of action because of the "indistinctness" (sic) concerning " the practical implication involved with a Transitional Metropolitan Council..." (Ibid., p.57) In other words, having lost the fight to establish itself as the heart of a metro chamber it would temporarily settle for a "metropolitan" (Ibid., p.57) services council and take the battle to the individual LGNF's. Yet this assumed as a prerequisite that all local authorities in the area accept the TLC option. Otherwise a Services Council

could be "excised" from the territory declared "metropolitan" by any negotiating forums that chose the TMC option. As a safeguard, therefore, the RSC argued that all LGNF's "partake collectively" to develop a joint "East Rand stand-point" (Ibid., p.58) for the pre-interim period. A "uniform" approach, it continued, would not only "avoid division" but also minimise "disruption and uncertainty" (Ibid. p.58). In this regard the Council proposed that Local Authorities only consider Metropolitan options after the pre-interim phase; that is, after the first local government elections. This, it warned, would prevent opportunist councils, that opted for a TMC, from applying to incorporate neighbouring TLC's into its domain, would deter policy makers from declaring the entire PWV region one metropolitan area and would, would give local authorities time to "educate" (Ibid., p.59) new participants in Local Management matters as well as avoid making too many changes at the same time. Most of these arguments were spurious. Even at the time there was little serious talk of a provincial metropolitan area - that is, of a single chamber for the then PWV. Moreover, there was nothing in the LGTA to suggest that a metro council could unilaterally absorb neighbouring TLC's. What worried the RSC, of course, was that independent moves to establish a metropolitan structure would reduce its jurisdictional area if not eliminate it altogether.

The new tactic, however, carried certain risks for the RSC, in effect, trusted its future to the complex political processes in each forum. This was to prove even more hazardous than they expected. Richard Humphries (Humphries, 1994) observed that the ERRSC misinterpreted the Local Government Transition Act. It understood itself to be a "local government body" as defined in the Act and believed that it had a legal right to sit on each statutory delegation in each local negotiating forum. This was quite simply wrong. As a result the RSC played a limited, even non-existent role in the East Rand LGNF's.

The results of this legal oversight were costly. Apart from the failure to generate a "uniform position" (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1994b, p. 12), most damaging to the RSC was the loss of Kempton Park to a North East Rand Transitional Metropolitan Council consisting of Modderfontein, Edenvale, Tembisa and eventually Midrand. In line with LGTA provisions this area was

subsequently exempted from the Regional Services Council's area of jurisdiction. While Germiston, Alberton and Boksburg finally chose to be Transitional Local Councils the idea of a metro chamber for these areas was strongly favoured by many. Most worrying to the RSC, however, was the reduction of its urban jurisdiction and the independent tendency towards metro formation.

By the finalisation of negotiated agreements in late 1994 and their promulgation by the Gauteng premier the *East Rand* looked very different. Within the former boundaries of the East Rand Regional Services Council there now existed seven separate Transitional Local Councils: Greater Alberton, Germiston, Boksburg, Benoni, Brakpan, Springs and Nigel. In addition there was also a Metropolitan chamber with Kempton Park, Edenvale, Modderfontein and Tembisa. In other words the urban core of the "sub-region" now consisted of politically independent local authorities linked only through their degree of functional integration. In this regard the single "metropolitan" character of the entire region was disputed and lost. Indeed, if the RSC boundaries had before constituted an intelligible definition of the term 'East Rand', the sub-region ceased to exist as a political entity.

On the 1st January 1995, a Provincial Proclamation (Number 4 of that year) disestablished the East Rand Regional Services Council and established in its place an Eastern Services Council (ESC). The new institution now did not just include the urban localities of Alberton, Germiston, Boksburg, Benoni, Brakpan, Springs, Nigel and Heidelberg but also the TLC's of Devon, Bronkhorspruit and Cullinan as well as the rural Transitional Councils of Elands River, Pienaars River and Suikerbosrand. So too were the Local Area Committees of Hammanskraal, Nestpark, Roodeplaat and Vischkuil placed under its authority. The new Council was thus entrusted large rural areas over and above the urban conurbation formerly associated with the *East Rand*. Indeed, it was now responsible for areas to the North and East of Pretoria! Moreover, in addition to the former powers of the old Regional Services Council, the ESC was also granted the status of a local government charged with the actual administration

of many of these rural areas. As a result it was delegated certain functions (such as housing) that the old Regional Service Council never was.

Whereas the boundaries (and practice) of the former RSC may have given some content to the East Rand as a coherent urban unit, the loss of certain municipalities to a metropolitan government and the immersion of the remainder in a much larger territory, rendered the term meaningful in name only. There no longer existed any institution around which an 'East Rand' metropolitan form could reasonably be said to exist.

The question that we must now ask is the following: why was a regional metropolitan option defeated on the East Rand? It far from obvious that in terms of the Constitutional guidelines for demarcation the Central Witwatersrand more clearly resembled a metropolitan area than the 'East Rand'.

One response may have been implied in this paper already. The RSC read the future of local government in metropolitan structures and wanting to preserve its integrity attempted to establish itself as the heart of an East Rand metropolitan bureaucracy. When the latter option seemed unlikely the RSC simply discarded it in favour of an alternative that also secured its survival: a Services Council for a non-metropolitan area. While the then RSC was almost certainly guilty of political opportunism and bureaucratic inertia, we would be mistaken to reduce a certain culture of professionalism and a sincere reading of the urban form to political expediency.

At the RSC 'summit' in October 1994 the case for municipal integration was made. The Council argued that regional planning was required to "even-out" (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1994c, p.4) population densities affecting the distribution of wealth. The 'East Rand' also required a coordinated economic intervention to "bring work to communities" (Ibid., p.4) and to prevent the negative effects of municipal rivalry. This, it was argued, resulted in the duplication of planning and a "culture of competition" (Ibid., p.13) for commercial and industrial development that harmed prospects for growth by over-supplying floor space. The same applied to land-use. An uncoordinated land policy might create artificial scarcities in one municipality and land invasions in another.

The most cogent reason for regional coordination, the RSC explained, was the need to cross-subsidise "depressed areas" (Ibid., p.6) from affluent ones. Massive backlogs, the Council argued, required the regional "transfer of rates and levies from the affluent core to deprived peripheral areas" (Ibid., p.7) to achieve an equitable distribution of resources and infrastructure. What further worried the RSC then (and continues to worry the EGSC now), however, was that pressure on the urban infrastructure was steadily increasing as migration into the area intensified. The position of the sub-region at the intersection of the province's two primary economic corridors - the historical gold belt stretching East-West across the Witwatersrand and the more recent steel belt running North-South and linking Pretoria with the Rand - made it an attractive destination for job-seekers from all around the country; and from Southern Africa as a whole. And yet population growth would unevenly be carried by the so-called Far East Rand municipalities. That is, the lack of spare land in authorities closest to Johannesburg would see population densities in the "Far East Rand" rapidly intensify. This meant that areas experiencing serious economic decline (because of their peripheral location) would have carry the greatest pressure for development. The RSC thus requested that "well developed areas of the East Rand help... provide development capital for those... absorbing a large proportion of the impact of rapid urbanisation" (Ibid., p.8).

The RSC was argued that the region as a whole faced certain developmental problems that could not be trusted to separate and competitive local authorities to address on their own. It held that there needed to be regional coordination to plan 'rationally' for the future. What loomed heavily in the minds of officials was the prospect of uncontrolled urbanisation like they had recently seen in Cairo and Sao Paulo.

A Developmental City

We would be mistaken to believe, however, that opposition to a metropolitan structure was premised simply on bureaucratic inertia, petty localisms and/or hostility to the new political dispensation. These were certainly factors. It will be suggested here that implicit in the opposition were contrasting notions of the city and also differing understandings of the role of local government.

For the ESC (and now the EGSC) the Reconstruction and Development Programme provided an excellent opportunity to proceed with its developmental concept of the urban complex. In this regard the Council began work on a *Framework for the Reconstruction and Development Programme* that planned to address the heritage of apartheid in a "comprehensive and integrated" manner (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1995, p. 1).

The document envisaged local participatory forums (such as Community Development Forums and Local Development Forums) attended by so-called 'community organisations', that would identify and communicate 'needs' to local governments for implementation. In this way resources could be mobilised to satisfy local wants in a way that advanced a regional vision of the urban system. This included:

- making the urban environment more "compact" by improving the proximity of residential and employment areas,
- increasing the mobility of the urban population through investment in public transport infrastructure
- nurturing economic growth by lifting apartheid restrictions on entry to the market,
- encouraging the formation of small and medium sized business enterprises, and
- increasing the supply of business land to the former discriminated
- improving the human habitat by incrementally extending property rights to all families,
- re-integrating towns and townships, infilling and densification with the emphasis on the delivery of serviced residential sites; and
- making existing educational institutions, health facilities, public libraries and recreational areas more available through more compact cities (Ibid., pp.6-7).

The implementation of these proposals, however, was premised on a shared vision of the future urban form. For they required carefully planned and coordinated actions to achieve the kind of balance and equality that these plans envisaged. In this regard the Council went through a lengthy consultation

process to win approval for the ideas contained in its framework document. At three separate weekends-away, local government "experts", local government delegates and various "interest groups" (including the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), business and political parties) workshopped concepts in and around development to formulate a general agreement (Ibid, preface). After the formation of Local Development Forums, workshops where planned for these representatives as well. The gatherings apparently proved mostly successful in that unity of purpose was achieved in principle.

What worried the then ESC most was that many local authorities lacked the political will execute such projects. In private discussions with certain officials they expressed deep reservations about the commitment of local government bureaucrats to initiatives that might be unpopular with themselves and white residents in general.

As a result ESC officials where keen to find institutional mechanisms to oblige local authorities to undertake certain ventures in their own areas. In this regard a modified metropolitan structure for the region was once again proposed. This envisaged a highly devolved metro chamber (or metropolitan services council) responsible primarily for long-term planning and bulk service provision. In other words a metropolitan authority would provide a regional framework for development and relatively autonomous local authorities would implement the vision in their own areas.

- Within the ESC itself there where proponents of even stronger metropolitan measures. In this view a regional development structure - consisting of delegates from local authorities and Local Development Forums - would be established to evaluate between different capital projects. These would be measured against certain pre-defined criteria; and in this case against the ESC's development vision. Delegates would then decide which projects most advanced the plan; and budgetary expenditure would be allocated accordingly. This implied the displacement of budgetary control away from local authorities to the regional development authority itself (Interview with Coetzee, Maria. Germiston, 23/3/96).

What is important for our purposes is the very notion of a developmental city. The ESC proposals implied a consensus view of the function of local

government. It assumed as given that the urban form be the spatial expression of social egalitarianism, supported by a metropolitan structure with local authorities designed to realise an equality of services and infrastructure through a compact city in a regulated market.

No matter how laudable these proposals may be they nonetheless implied a regional urban whole; and, therefore, also a common political will. Indeed, at the moment when the EGSC seemed to have recognised the political independence of local governments' - what it called 'separate towns' accommodated in a 'devolved' metropolitan authority - a logic of uniformity interrupted its thinking to demand consensus and agreement. What was at stake was the capacity of competing notions of the city to assert themselves politically. And this lay at the heart of demarcation disputes on the 'East Rand'. What was often being contested was the very uniformity of vision required by the ESC.

A Metropolitan Structure for Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston

On Saturday the 29 July the Mayor of Boksburg made an important announcement. His council, together with Councils of Germiston and Alberton, were applying to the MEC for Local Government and Housing to be reconstituted as a Transitional *Metropolitan* Council.

What seems to have inspired the move was precisely the redistributive function envisaged by the Eastern Services Council. Local government officials in these areas begrudged the siphoning off of their funds to subsidise less viable municipalities elsewhere. According to figures for the years 1987/88 to 1993/94 - quoted in a demarcation report commissioned by the then East Rand Regional Services Council - the RSC's total levy income for that period was just over R875 million. Moneys raised from Germiston, Boksburg and Alberton contributed slightly more than 60% to this total: almost R530 million, that is. The effects of cross-subsidisation were felt most acutely by Germiston which contributed more than R348 million to RSC coffers (almost 40% of the total RSC income) and received only R145 million for projects in its area. It thus supported other local authorities to the tune of R202 million rands or 22% of total funds allocated (East Rand Regional Services Council, 1994c, p.E5). The

situation subsequently deteriorated. Whereas Kempton Park had historically carried some of the burden of cross-subsidisation, after the formation of the North East Rand Metropolitan Council and its exclusion from the jurisdiction of the EGSC, Germiston and other wealthier local authorities were left to make up the shortfall - in a context, moreover, of expanded financial responsibility. The inclusion of areas like Bronkhorspruit, Hammanskraal and Suikerbosrand into the new boundaries of the EGSC meant that revenue generated in Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston would be spent in these far-away rural places; at a time when the general deterioration of the 'East Rand' economy was already constraining budgets. What made matters worse was the new voting system introduced with Services Councils. Whereas in the past, ballots where weighted according to the quantity of services purchased from the then Regional Services Council - granting large and wealthy local authorities the ability to better influence the quantity and destination of RSC funds - the ESC was comprised of equal members with equal votes; thereby ending the structural disadvantage inherited by smaller councils.

'East Rand' officials resented the increased burden of cross-subsidisation to areas that where both remote and contributed little to their local economies. Frustration was further compounded by the ESC's policy of targeting areas most in need of aid that qualified rural districts for financial transfers more readily than it did urban localities. The loss of revenue to rural districts seemed particularly painful given the daunting financial obligations these authorities already faced. Not only where they expected to finance the massive infrastructural development required in former African townships, but the physical devastation to housing and infrastructure, caused by the four year war, imposed further financial demands. Officials and councillors where thus keen to retain as much revenue as possible to spend locally. By reconstituting their Transitional Local Councils as a single metropolitan authority, Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston believed they could exclude themselves from the jurisdiction of the Eastern Services Council; and in so doing end their financial obligations to it. Despite the apparent advantages of the move, it was fraught with dangers: not the least being opposition from the Provincial government - which seemed keen to realise its developmental

objectives through the various Services Councils. Indeed, when the proposal was submitted to the Demarcation Board in October 1995 it was rejected; only partially because there was insufficient time to complete the process before local government elections. More importantly, however, integration raised deep concerns from the local authorities themselves. Right from the beginning the Alberton council expressed certain reservations about the process; and when the motion was originally submitted to the council it was rejected (Interview with Welman, Johan., Alberton, 17/5/96).

There seem to have been several reasons for the Alberton decision. Unlike Germiston, and to a lesser extent Boksburg, Alberton had historically been least affected by redistribution. Indeed, over the period 1987 to 1994 the Council gained nearly R270 thousand through financial allocations from the RSC. As a result this was not the most pressing issue on its agenda. Instead, other factors worried the Council.

Through a regimen of strict fiscal conservatism, the authority had accumulated a large financial reserve that it used for capital projects[7]. Officials worried that in a metro their savings would be consumed by debt repayments for amounts raised individually from the private sector by other municipalities. Germiston, for example, had allegedly paid for its municipal offices and civic centre through external loans. Boksburg also had outstanding obligations. More worrying, however, was that the substantial discounts made available to the residents of Alberton - by cross-subsidising their rates from income generated from industry and commerce - would be reduced as Council rates where adjusted upwards to correspond with higher service charges in Boksburg and Germiston (In Alberton, 17/5/96)

The thought that troubled officials most, however, was the costs associated with integrating former African areas into an expanded municipal authority. Infrastructural development and repair in KATORUS would not just exhaust reserves but would also potentially require increases in municipal levies. Such a

[7] It should not be forgotten that the accumulation of such a reserve was made possible in the context of apartheid local government that freed the Alberton Town Council from any financial responsibility to Tokoza. Moreover, the Council itself was partly subsidised by the displacement of the costs of local government in African areas onto township residents themselves. See Planact, Swilling, *etc.*...

move was not just unpopular amongst officials. In a conservative and mostly Afrikaans-speaking town there where worries that such an option would be strongly resisted. Officials were thus keen to welcome alternative, non-refundable income for development and then recover the costs of maintenance from township residents themselves. In this regard the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and in particular the KATORUS Special Presidential Project, was supported by all three local authorities. The RDP would contribute R650 million to capital projects over five years, while a further R2,4 billion would be raised from Provincial and National governments. In this way, it was hoped, that the immediate financial costs of the transition would not be carried by the local authorities themselves, but would, instead, be shouldered by other tiers of government; in a way that partially protected white ratepayers and industry from the costs of integration. Nonetheless local authorities would be responsible for the repair and upkeep to new capital stock. This required, however, that levels of payment in African areas were enough to recover maintenance expenditure. In this regard, Alberton was reluctant to inherit the massive backlogs in Katlehong and Vosloorus where levels of payment where either extremely low or significantly below costs; in a context where payment in Tokoza was satisfactory. In other words, the local authority was unwilling to subsidise development across its municipal border.

These reservations, however, implied more than a narrowly-defined economic self-interest. What is striking is the sense of municipal autonomy upon which they were premised. Officials were concerned to protect "their" financial reserve, "their" levies, and "their" ratepayers (Ibid, 22/1/1996). There was no feeling of being part of a larger regional or even sub-regional entity. Indeed, one senior official remarked - without prompting it should be added - that a metropolitan option would deny Alberton residents their sense of "ownership" and their peculiar Alberton "identity" (Ibid., 22/1/1996). What this implied was that the boundaries of Alberton delineated not simply an area of municipal administration but rather, and in addition, a site of specific cultural and social practices as well.

Local autonomy was asserted most aggressively during the demarcation process. The latter was regarded largely as a technical issue related to

"functional integration" rather than a political issue related to the urban form. As a result discussions tended to take place in forums consisting primarily of "experts" lobbied by local government officials and former RSC's and their consultants. In terms of the Local Government Transition Act a demarcation board was required to have:

- a chairperson with considerable experience in law or local government; and
- additional members who jointly had knowledge of a) rural, town and regional planning; b) development economics; c) municipal finance; d) municipal services and administration; and e) other disciplines and skills as may be necessary. (LGTA, 1992)

This granted to the process a set of criteria strongly informed by the political agendas of local councillors, officials and their consultants. Demarcation reflected more their priorities than it did those of urban residents. This meant that on the East Rand, parochial values (articulated by local governments) interrupted moves to establish a metropolitan chamber for the East Rand as a whole; and even stalled a metropolitan option for Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston.

It would be incorrect to believe, however, that staunchly defended autonomy was simply informed by a small-minded localism. In many cases resistance to regional political options was premised on divergent urban political values.

The Balanced City

In 1959 the Germiston Chamber of Commerce together with the City Council published a 455 page honorarium to celebrate its Golden Jubilee. Poised on the dawn of unparalleled economic growth and reflecting on its transformation from impoverished agricultural dorp to "leading industrial city" (Germiston Chamber of Commerce, 1986, p.3) the book declared Germiston "the heart of South Africa" and the centre of a strident and progressive industrialism. "There are a few people in South Africa who think of Germiston as being just a suburb of Johannesburg," commented the then Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce. "When having read this book," he continued, "I hope they will be converted to my

way of thinking - that Johannesburg is just a suburb of the City of Germiston" (Ibid., p.3). This was not just puffery. It signaled a belief in the cities historical role at the vanguard of a technological modernism, advancing South Africa into a new age; one premised on leading-edge manufacturing at the service of a self-assured South African national identity. Unlike the mining industry that seemed to hanker after English respectability, the establishment of Iscor in 1936 - as the precursor for post-war industrial growth - was self-consciously attached to a project of (white) South African nation-building. Germiston was thus not simply another modern city. It believed itself to be the very crucible of South African modernity. In this regard it boasted the most advanced industrial sector in the country and a Central Business District resplendent with the city hall on President Street. If the Johannesburg equivalent reflected an old fashioned classicism that spoke of its adherence to a colonial past, Gordon Leith designed for Germiston in 1934, what was at the time regarded one of the most modern city halls in the world; and a suitable statement of Germiston's self-image[8].

If during the 1950's and 1960's Germiston believed itself to be integral to a metropolitan Johannesburg by the late 1980's there had been an important spatial shift rightwards. This was reflected in the Council's 1989 Development Profile. The front cover boasted that Germiston was "the Republic's sixth largest city - situated at the centre of the Witwatersrand" (Germiston City Council, 1989). This implicit geography was explained further by the 1992 Structure Plan: "die stad is tussen die Sentraal Witwatersrand en die Oosrand gelê"[9] (Germiston City Council, 1992, p.15). The report continued further: "die sterk ekonomiese skakeling wat Germiston met beide die Sentraal Witwatersrand en met die Oosrand het, maak duidelike indeling van Germiston by een van die twee substreke moeilik"[10] (Ibid., p.15). While this concern assumed that both the Central Witwatersrand and the East Rand would pursue Metropolitan options,

[8] These remarks come from numerous informal drives with my father, Clive Chipkin, author of *Johannesburg Style: Architecture and Society 1880's – 1960's* (David Philip Publisher's, Cape Town).
[9] Translated as: "the city lies between the Central Witwatersrand and the East Rand"
[10] Translated as: "Germiston's strong economic dealings with the Central Witwatersrand and the East Rand makes the straightforward inclusion of Translated as: "the city lies between the Central Witwatersrand and the East Rand"
[10] Translated as: "Germiston's strong economic dealings with the Central Witwatersrand and the East Rand makes the straightforward inclusion of Germiston in one of the two substructures difficult".

Germiston rejected association with either areas. Instead it saw itself at the intersection of both regions. By 1995 this had changed slightly. The structure plan for that year commented that: "Greater Germiston represents an integral component in the G iuteng region...". (Germiston City Council, 1995, p. 9). While the "spatial orientation" tactfully omitted a mention of either regional conurbation, the plan, nonetheless, acknowledged the "significant influence" (Ibid., p.11) of, what it called the Greater Germiston functional region: Alberton, Germiston/Bedfordview, Kempton Park, Edenvale, Benoni and Boksburg; a functional area, it agreed, that "was defined as the East Rand" (Ibid., p.11). This semantic equivocation reflected Germiston's growing sense of unease.

As South African manufacture began to stagnate during the 1980's, the 'East Rand' was severely affected. A report by BMI Building Research Strategy Consulting Unit noted that the sub-region's growth rate had declined from 5,3% between 1970 and 1980 to little over 1% in the following decade[11]. T is reduced the contribution of the area to South Africa as a whole from 8,52% in 1981 to 7,73% in 1988 (Ibid., p.12). In this context Germiston became worried by its status as a predominantly industrial area. The 1990/91 Budget Speech complained that slower economic growth restrained expenditure on key strategic projects. Indeed, there was growing concern that the city could no longer rely on its industrial sector to sustain growth into the future (Germiston City Council, Budget Speech, 1990/91).

This was paralleled by generalised feelings of social malaise. A survey conducted by the Eastern Gauteng Services Council found that residents of Germiston were by far the least satisfied with their environment (ERRSC, 1991, The Need for the Rendering of Services at the Regional Level). They complained of loud noises, bad air quality and a lack of facilities for public recreation. In contrast with residents of Boksburg and Alberton, many citizens of the town remarked that they would prefer to live in a neighbouring authority. So whereas in the past, Germiston had relied on its vibrant industrial profile to compensate for environmental defects, economic stagnation quickly highlighted

[11] The Region was defined as: Alberton, Bedfordview, Benoni, Boksburg, Brakpan, Edenvale, Germiston, Kempton Park and Springs.

these drawbacks. This was becoming increasingly apparent to the Council. Indeed, the structure plan for 1992 recognised that: "As gevolg van die dominante nywerheidskarakter het die dorp swak beeld as woondorp"12 (City Council of Germiston, 1992, p.16).

Growing public disenchantment and structural economic stagnation required from the Council a new strategy to urban government. That is, it needed to develop policies for the future that no longer privileged the industrial sector. This was by no means easy. The local authority was still deeply affected by its former status in the apartheid dispensation. Simply put: local authorities were entrusted with the technical provision of services within their area. They were not allowed to develop policy. Responsibility for the latter fell to the regional arm of the central government; and in particular to the Transvaal Provincial Association (TPA). In this regard councillors could exercise their preferences within a framework. They could not develop the framework itself. The neglect of strategic planning was also compounded by Germiston's prolonged reliance on its industrial sector. This meant that planning in the past had been a fairly bureaucratic task related to maximizing technical aspects of the industrial environment. In 1986 the Council, nonetheless, convened a workshop to determine a long and short-term agenda for planning. There is evidence to suggest that the gathering was largely influenced by Germiston's consultants: the company Van deer Stiff, Balleys, Greece and Drupe. The result of these sessions was a notion of the "balanced city" (Interview with Coetzee, Maria, Germiston 7/8/95). Balance here referred not to inequalities between "black" and "white" residential areas, but to Germiston's asymmetrical reliance on industry. Indeed, faced with economic stagnation (and potentially even decline), the Council was interested in a strategic framework that no longer relied chiefly on its industrial base. New thinking suggested that Germiston should moderate its industrial image, by encouraging other sectoral growth.

The 1990/91 Budget Speech, for example, prioritised municipal spending for the Central Business District. Large shopping complexes in neighbouring

[12] Translated as: "As a result of its dominant industrial character, the town has a bad image as a residential

municipalities reduced the desirability of the town centre as a prime shopping area. In 1990 this meant that the retail sector was not just underdeveloped but was in decline. The Structure Plan for that year, therefore, requested substantial investment for the 'renewal' of the inner city. Central to these plans was the construction of the 'Golden Walk' - a large shopping mall in the middle of town. Associated with this strategy where plans to 'beautify' ("aesthetically renew") the CBD, build a public library in town, expand parking facilities and improve road access to the centre. (City Council of Germiston, 1990).

If the rejuvenation of the CBD was regarded integral to 'balance', so too where residential improvements. Germiston planners provided for 'green belts' to shield homes from the noxious smells and noises of nearby industrial areas. In addition, designs were discussed to transform Germiston Lake into a prestigious office park and hotel complex. This scheme was intended to create both an attractive business address as well as draw some of the overnight, international tourist-trade away from Kempton Park. Many of these plans were superseded by subsequent events. The lifting of influx control in 1986, for example, quickly saw vacant the land occupied by homemakers from all over the region. This quickly put paid to plans for expenditure on suburban improvement in these areas.

If unexpected events interrupted Council plans, others partly realised them. As the political transition began to change the shape and jurisdiction of local authorities, Germiston lobbied vigorously for the inclusion of Bedfordview in its area. When this was achieved it gave to Germiston, not just prestigious residential areas, but also a prime site of retail and commercial activity: the Eastgate shopping complex. When combined these plans where intended to realise balance in the urban morphology; where balance referred to the growth of other economic sectors.

These development priorities may also help explain Germiston's history of (geographic) equivocation. The city council was reluctant to be part of a regional conurbation that reduced its particular needs to the needs of an area generally. It did not want to be politically subservient or financially obliged. Germiston may still have been thinking of its leading-edge past. If not, then it was certainly

area".

wanted to defend its sense of independence. If it was not the 'heart' of Johannesburg, it did not regard itself just a suburb; or later a substructure, of a Johannesburg metropole. The same applied to the East Rand. In this context Germiston preferred an orientation that situated it at the intersection of two urban regions: the Central Witwatersrand and the East Rand. As the transition progressed and it looked less and less likely that an East Rand metropolitan chamber would be formed, so Germiston increasingly defined its bearing relative to these towns. Such a location seemed best to secure its status as an independent city. And one, moreover, that pursued its own particular agenda.

A Shared Planning Vocabulary

If the 'compact' and 'balanced' city seemed to imply quite different priorities, they nonetheless shared a conceptual framework. Both notions rested on a town planning vocabulary that viewed urban (and rural) space as differentiated patterns of homogenous 'land-use'. These were arranged in either sectoral and/or corridor patterns so that a city, for example, was viewed as a complex of land-use 'sectors' - residential, industrial, commercial, environmental and so on - configured in sectors and sometimes corridors. The distinction between rural and urban was thus sustained by distinguishing between the type and scale of their respective sectors: industrial, commercial, retail *etc.* in cities and predominantly agricultural in the countryside.

Spatial planning, within this schema, was intended to integrate sectors in a form that "maximised" their respective features, generated "mutually beneficial" relationships and avoided "benefits" to the one at the expense of the other. What remained ambiguous, however, were the political criteria on which planning was premised. That is, within this spatial taxonomy, how was 'mutually beneficial', 'benefits' and so on measured? It was precisely the specificity of these criteria that remained obscured by the EGSC methodology. Notions of 'compact' and 'balanced' spatial regimes may have shared a common commitment to integration, but they nonetheless understood this term differently.

The 'compact' city was partially referenced to an urban application of underdevelopment theory. If this analysis emphasised the political and economic

separation of the city, 'compact' more recently added a specifically spatial dimension to the 'One-City' thinking. It envisaged, for example, massive infrastructural spending to physically 'integrate' African areas into the main body of the city. This was a premised on a belief that physical separation did not simply express apartheid legally and formally but also produced unequal and discriminatory access to other sectors of the city. That is, the marginal location of African residential areas prohibitively raised the costs of travel, made access to work opportunities distant and divorced these areas from the main retail and commercial sectors.

Making use of the same spatial language, Germiston granted to the term 'integration' a different focus. In this regard, it referred not specifically to the relationship between African areas and other land-use functions, but rather, to the relationship between industrial sectors and others. If thinking referenced to the 'compact city' gauged policies *vis-a-vis* the spatial separation of the apartheid city, 'balance' measured plans against their potential contribution to economic growth and also their effect on the quality of (non-industrial) land-use functions. What is important to note is that the notion of 'balance' did not necessarily exclude the 'compact city'. It was mostly a question of priorities. The physical integration of ('racially') segregated components, for example, would also improve the quality of other land-use sectors *vis-a-vis* industry. And hence also contribute to 'balance'. What differed where the criteria. 'Balance' had at the back of its mind the primacy of economic growth. In this regard it seemed entirely feasible to argue that 'balance' and 'compact' where merely separated by time: two moments in a chronology of development. First economic growth and secondly social/infrastructural spending. This may partly explain agreements reached in principle for the then ESC's development framework. Officials from Germiston may have supported such plans. But not as priorities.

The 'Complete' City

Whereas for the Germiston City Council, the history of the municipality was also largely the history of industry. This was not the case in Boksburg. According to the Council's centenary brochure, it was only after the Second World War that

the town began to encourage industrial ventures. Prior to this "efforts had been concentrated on residential and associated commercial areas" (Boksburg Town Council: 1987(a) p. 6). While Council brochures quote industrialisation as a 'turning-point' it seems not to have been a mutually exclusive departure. The Council also continued to pursue a pre-war interest in its suburban quality.

By the 1980's, for example, the Council could boast that there where 20 000 proclaimed residential erven and "thousands more in the planning stage" (Bokburg Town Council, *A Century of Progress*, p.18). These formed a 'close-knit community' served by 'well-established' (Ibid., p.18) schools, tertiary institutions, 19 crèches, kindergartens and after-school cen[illegible] In addition the town was 'extremely proud' (Ibid., p.18) of its 16ha Prince [illegible]orge Stadium, 9 municipal tennis clubs, five municipal swimming pools, a 'splendid' 18 hole golf course, a squash club, various bowling clubs and an ice-skating and roller-skating rink. Boksburg Lake also remained a 'major attraction' (Ibid., p.19), not only for the people of the town, but for residents from all over the Reef. And the brochure continued... What this meant together, according to the Council, was that: "Boksburg [was] known for its pleasant living conditions". Above all," it added, the town "means happy living". "Magnificent green suburbs; shops to cater for every conceivable need, conveniently close to Jan Smuts International Airport and major markets, with a sophisticated road and rail network; [and] superb recreation facilities" (Ibid., p.2). These qualities it claimed "represent the good life for the discerning resident who is aware of the value of money" (Ibid., p.2).

Of course, these descriptions can mostly be dismissed as hype. What is nonetheless interesting about them is the nature of the hype. They contain a very different self-image to, say, the marketing puffery of Germiston. The latter regarded itself chiefly as an industrial city seeking 'balance'. Boksburg, in contrast, believed itself to be "in every sense of the word the complete town" (Ibid., p. 22). It is interesting to note that even Reiger Park was depicted in these terms.

These descriptions contained an implicit land-use policy: an attractive residential town serviced by other sectors. Here the focus seemed to be the quality of the

urban 'lifestyle' (Ibid., p.21). If under apartheid this logic applied solely to 'white' group areas - and to a lesser degree 'coloured' townships - there were no conceptual hurdles from applying the notion of 'completion' to African areas as well. This thinking seems to have accorded far better with notions of the 'compact' city, than say, the 'balanced' city. 'Complete' and 'compact' potentially shared a common object: the improvement of the urban environment for residential usage. 'Integration' for both terms, therefore, referred to a similar process: the proximity of certain land-use clusters to residential areas.

I have argued in this section that the failure to establish a form of third tier government for the 'East Rand' as a whole was partly a result of opposition from Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston. We have seen that at stake in this contest were differing conceptions of the city and differing conceptions of local government. In particular, I have argued that the local governments discussed above sought to defend their particular conceptions of their role against one garnered from the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

In the section that will follow I will suggest that this process was a) made possible and b) reflected an ambiguity at the heart of the current formulation of South African local government. It was made possible because the instinct to grant political autonomy to third tier government enabled them to participate in the very negotiations that would determine the institutional dispensation affecting them, while at the same time it reflected that at stake in the process was the very role that local governments should perform. We shall see, that is, that that the current dispensation both wants leave political space for local government to determine their own roles and to pre-define that role *a prior*. We shall see also that this ambiguity is reconciled, today, by way of a certain theoretical maneuver concerning the notion of autonomy.

SECTION 4: THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The urban profiles discussed above have largely been gathered from readings of brochures, structure plans, mission statements, interviews and so on. They seldom appear today as explicit intentions. There may be two reasons for this. The first is implicit in the methodology of municipal planning that never gave expression explicitly to the political values that informed spatial schemes. The second reflects South Africa's apparent political consensus that sees most institutions using, at least formally, the language and metaphors of the new government. I will argue here that these factors have concealed a major political rupture that has seen South African local government invested with a radically new conception of its role.

It was common practice in South Africa for town planning to be appended to the Town/City Engineer's department. This meant that spatial design was usually subordinate to the perceived technical requirements of the urban infrastructure. In this regard, budgetary preferences privileged the engineering aspects of land use integration and/or development. This institutional arrangement was not accidental. It was allied to a certain understanding of municipal planning.

Until recently local governance was informed by a notion of 'blueprint' planning. This posited an imaginary ideal[13] that required municipal interventions to give it expression. In this regard the realisation of the 'blueprint' was conceived as the technical manipulation of existing social, demographic and transport trends. Town planners were expected to monitor land use patterns and develop proposals to encourage developments that seemed likely to promote the ideal or to discourage those that did not. Annual municipal structure plans thus contained detailed recommendations for each planning zone.

Following an international shift away from 'administration', however, blueprint planning was replaced by 'the management approach' (Germiston Structure Plan, 1995, p.4). The latter assumed that there was no direct correlation between plan and execution. It did not presume that implementation followed

[13] The supposed blueprint, however, seldom received explicit expression. Hence my circuitous reconstruction of its implicit premises.

from the technocratic application of plans. Rather, it implied that the process should simultaneously accommodate (manage) delays and interruptions. The Germiston Structure Plan for 1995 thus remarked: "the object [of the structure plan]is to enable [local government] to deal with pressing matters without losing sight of long-term ... objectives... it accepts that development is an incremental process, and that the outcome of planning interventions are not always certain" (Ibid., p.4). Moreover, it acknowledged that local government '... does not have absolute control over land usage and development ...' As a result it recommended that plan be used as "an overall development framework ... within which current issues and concerns can be addressed" (Ibid., p.4).

Whereas 'blueprint' planning was almost solely concerned with the end result, 'management' emphasised the method. It sought to accommodate (even anticipate) potential disturbances to the process. Yet both town planning approaches shared a common relation to the city. They both assumed the political values that informed their tasks as a given. The 'management approach' merely problematised the relationship between plan and execution. It did not solicit discussion about the function of the city itself[14]. 'Blueprint' planning, likewise, merely took for granted the political objectives that its technical operations sought to realise. In this way, both concealed the political values that informed local government functions, indeed displacing political conflicts away from the sphere of the political – miraculously, as we have seen, everybody in Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston apparently agreed on them – to other, more technical, "a-political" domains. As a result we find in local governments generally just a superficial rehash of principles garnered from the upper reaches of government, making, as we have seen so far, the ambiguities in South African local government appear in the practical state. To find them expressed politically, therefore, and to give them theoretical expression, we need to cast our gaze, for the moment, higher up the government hierarchy.

[14] The management approach implies similar epistemological claims to Lenin's relation to the 'current situation'. Lenin (in concept) treated the General Contradiction as given and tried merely to specify it in the conditions and circumstances of the conjuncture. In the same way, the management approach assumes the concept of the city as given and tries merely to situate it in the current situation.

The Meaning of the Political

During one or other public statement, Jay Naidoo then Minister in the Office of the President (otherwise known as the office of the RDP), referred to local government as the *hands and feet* of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The metaphor meant that third tier government was responsible for the delivery side of development plans arranged from his office.

On November 3 1995, his ministry released both an urban and rural development strategy. What was important for our purposes was the role it proposed for local government: "The primary responsibility of local authorities is to ensure the delivery of services at a community level within an agreed planning framework. In support of this, local authorities will be responsible for development and physical planning as well as the preparation of 5-year infrastructure investment programmes" (Urban Development Strategy, p.35).

In this regard delivery referred to the provision of basic services, planning spoke of a technical guide to satisfy future 'needs' and infrastructure programmes referred to investment strategies to finance further development. These elements - delivery, planning and infrastructure - were intended to align the bureaucratic capacity of the local state to the development imperatives of regional frameworks.

The logic of the UDS was partly inherited from a tendency in the 'One City' slogan. We have seen that the it stressed the common structure of urban apartheid geography and by inference also the common experience of urban residents *vis-a-vis* the city. I have already discussed the theoretical basis of this link in my discussion of 'community' and NDR. It maintained that certain objective interests resulted from these encounters that were the same across South Africa. In government circles it was self-evident that urban policy be designed nationally. The section titled "Urban Realities' (UDS, 1995) argued that the urban sector was characterised by six principal 'realities':

- four city size classes: large metropolitan, large cities, medium-sized cities, small cities and towns

- stark contrasts
- city centres under strain
- economic challenges
- links to rural areas
- urbanisation

As a result, the document suggested, urban development should "focus on critical backlogs, the restoration of infrastructure services and the formation of governance capacities through effective government and vibrant civil society" in the short term. In the medium term government would prioritise "cementing an integrated package of planning, housing, infrastructure, economic development and social policies and programmes" (Ibid., p. 10).

We can summarise the UDS as follows: The shared features of the South African urban form were believed to determine certain development principles for all South African cities. This logic was premised on the notion of experience already discussed. In this regard objective material interests were believed to issue from an experience of the real such that the real could later be configured according to those interests. I am reminded here of Althusser's 'theoreticist error' in Reading Capital, where he (and Balibar) attempted to determine the real without reference to 'external conditions'. The UDS thus posited a self-generating system: experience interests which are then processed by government who realises th

There was an apparent ity, however, in the above UDS reference. How was the notion of civil soci reconciled with this logic? How was it reconciled with the metaphor of 'hands and feet' mentioned earlier? We have already seen that 'civil society' is deemed permanently outside the state precisely because its multiple and diverse interests can never be represented by it. Has the UDS in this way not returned to urban government the conditions? Does the reference to 'vibrant' civil society not imply that a certain autonomy will be accorded the city precisely because no national policy can claim to articulate all local interests?

In this regard it is important to notice the provisions of the Interim Constitution and the Local Government Transition Act. They defined local authorities as autonomous tiers of government entitled to manage their own affairs. The Interim Constitution even went so far as to warn that "Parliament or a provincial legislature shall not encroach on the powers, functions and structure of the local government to such an extent as to compromise [its] fundamental status, purpose and character" (Interim Constitution, Section 174(4)). Some of these statements were unclear. What, for example, was the 'fundamental status' of local government? This is perhaps the crux of the question in South Africa. I want to suggest this apparent anomaly is resolved by way of a short-cut - or rather, by way of a certain conception of democracy.

The 'autonomy' mentioned above usually referred to the operational independence of local government. It was often synonymous with management autonomy *vis-a-vis* the mechanics of decision-making, organisational structure and finally, the mode of implementation. Simply put: autonomy was referenced to the internal the workings of the institution and its means of service delivery *etc.* It did not, however, refer to the choice of policy. Local government was 'free' to determine its own mode of regulation and execution provided those organisational decisions were referenced *vis-a-vis* the Reconstruction and Development Programme. This is how the term was mostly understood in South Africa.

The 1990's have thus seen considerable effort to 'change manage' various bureaucracies. The phrase - one of the key elements of the government's new vocabulary - referred to the alignment of existing institutional capacities with the values and policies of the new government. Organisational change, what is often termed 'transformation', when applied to local government, usually referred to:

- improving the authority of elected councillors *vis-a-vis* officials,
- affirmative action, and
- reconciling Council priorities with RDP principles

These elements were given causal unity in the following way: The negotiated settlement reached at Kempton Park obliged the new government, including new

local governments, to inherit officials from former local authorities. As a result new structures were staffed with persons unfamiliar and sometimes even hostile to changed policies. Old officials also lacked the experience and the knowledge effectively to implement projects premised on a new methodology: community participation. Elected councillors were thus challenged by an 'old-guard' bureaucracy that even if willing to act on council resolutions lacked the knowledge and experience to do so. Affirmative action in the administration was believed to resolve this tension. It was assumed that African officials had interests in common with their political masters by virtue of their shared experience of the 'apartheid' city. Together they shared objective concerns in the new developmental imperatives of the RDP and other regional development frameworks.

'Transformation' thus implied reconciling local capacity with national development plans and/or national political imperatives. Local conditions referred to the specific circumstances that needed to be 'handled' for the task at hand. It was common, in this regard, to view them in terms of management-type vocabularies. SWOT- analyses were often popular. This method reduced the 'current situation' to Opportunities and Threats in the 'external environment' and Strengths and Weaknesses in institutional procedures and structures. All these variables were measured implicitly against the fundamental purpose of local government: in the words of the UDS, service delivery and infrastructural development. This is how the apparent anomaly between autonomy and agency was resolved. The former referred to the internal management of the organisation to realise developmental imperatives determined elsewhere.

We are now in a better position to give meaning to the term 'local democracy' as it is used in South Africa. When local government delivers municipal services and executes infrastructural development projects it is believed simultaneously to realise the general will. In this sense there is no contradiction between local government's technocratic function and its ostensibly democratic appointment. Indeed, its technocratic function *is* its democratic mandate. We have already seen the theoretical conditions of this reconciliation: the 'apartheid city' is believed to share a common form that produces common experiences of the

city. These, in turn, issue shared urban political interests that are the task of democratic government to realise. When local government thus satisfies these interests in practice it simultaneously fulfills its democratic mandate.

This notion of democracy does make another small concession to the 'conditions'. It accepts implicitly that there are variations in each city. The latter, however, refer to the detail of the urban morphology rather than its structure. As a result the content of the general will, although similar in principle, varies circumstantially. In this regard local governments do not know the detail of infrastructural needs or the order of development priorities in advance. They must be determined locally. This is how 'community-driven-development' has come to be understood.

In their original formulation Local Development Forums and Community Development Forums were to intended to exercise a watchdog role over local government (Swilling, 1990). It was believed that they were embryonic organs of 'people's power' that operated on the basis of 'direct democracy'. In so doing, it was claimed, LDF's and CDF's would vitiate against the inherent class and race prejudice of representative democracy by monitoring and opposing any racial-class bias in the workings of local government. As the transition progressed, however, so their independent function was gradually eroded and they were seemingly appropriated for representative democracy. That is, forums have mostly been reduced to advisory bodies for when local government determines its priorities for development expenditure.

Local government is thus believed to discharge its democratic responsibility by consulting the community directly to ascertain local development needs. They are deemed to be doubly democratic when they a) determine priorities through community participation and b) implement the general will by delivering services and providing capital infrastructure. The capture of LDF's *et al* for representative democracy, however, is only superficial. Indeed, it sometimes looks like representative democracy has been captured by 'people's power'. In this regard, South African local government sometimes resembles democratic bodies envisaged by classical Marxism.

In *Civil War in France* Marx used the phrase 'universal franchise' and invoked the principle of 'immediate recall'. This was taken to mean that democratic practice in classical Marxism resembled features of liberal democratic theory. Both were premised on elections, electoral mandates and accountability. As Althusser would say: all that the two systems shared in common, however, was a loose collection of phrases. Voting in liberal democratic theory and in classical Marxism related in radically different ways to the general will. Whereas for the former elections periodically adjudicated between competing notions of the public good, for Marx and later Lenin, they merely selected personnel to implement an already given notion of the general will.

South African conceptions of local government sometime coincide with this last meaning. Indeed, this is the implication. I have suggested, of the metaphor of 'hands and feet'. As a result the role often given to local government obscures another meaning for 'autonomy': the possibility that local governments try to give their own content to the urban form. It means further that 'autonomy' as guaranteed in the Interim Constitution may have referred to quite different processes. It is likely that it meant simply that local governments had the right to manage the implementation of policy without interference; that is, develop modes of execution that paid cognisance to local conditions. But it may have also meant something different: the right of local government to determine its own political role and function.

If the meaning of autonomy was opaque in the Interim Constitution it was easier to estimate its meaning in the language of regional frameworks. There it tended to reduce the role of local government to technocratic functions *vis-a-vis* implementation. It did not refer to the relative political space of local government to give autonomous political meaning to its urban jurisdiction. This is the site of the equivocation in South Africa. Does policy simply refer to management? Does it simply detail measures to improve the capacity of the local state to implement national priorities? Or does policy, in addition, imply the formulation of local political agendas. The term policy may itself be symptomatic of this wavering. It conflates two related but distinct processes under the same word: management

autonomy and political autonomy. Recognising the difference between them allows us to better understand the terms of a much wider debate.

Relative Autonomy

Associated with the general failure of the African state to realise policy there has been growing interest in decentralisation. This is not a term widely used in South Africa. It is often displaced by debates about 'federalism'. Viewed from the rest of Africa, however, South African local government is highly devolved. What is interesting about the ambiguity discussed above is that it mirrors tensions in the practice of decentralisation more generally. In this regard decentralisation has two possibilities.

- the decentralisation of administrative/technical responsibilities such that implementation of State/regional policies can take cognisance of local conditions; or
- the decentralisation of political responsibility such that the local territory is associated with autonomous political practices[15].

Koffi Attahi, a Ghanaian academic, remarks that decentralisation encompasses: delegation, privatization and de-regulation (Attahi, p.24). In addition, he argues, it sometimes confuses administrative decentralisation or *deconcentration* and political decentralisation or *devolution*. Deconcentration and devolution are not simply management autonomy and political autonomy more elegantly re-stated. But they help better to distinguish between them.

[15] These possibilities may also help illuminate differences in South African conceptions of 'federalism'. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) sometimes implies that the Province under its jurisdiction is the site of certain political practices that require partly autonomous expression. Since 1990, for example, the IFP has to some extent sought to build a territorial base on Kwazulu-Natal's chiefs. The 1990 Amakhosi and Iziphakanyiswa Act, for example, provided for the remuneration of traditional leaders by the Chief Minister. This was aligned to what was called in October 1995 at a demonstration in Pretoria 'African-type direct democracy'. It is not clear exactly what this meant. It may have referred to the *pitso*. That is, an historical practice that apparently saw every male person of age attend a consultative gathering to review Chiefly decisions. Inkatha's more recent support for chiefly local authorities suggests that for the IFP, federalism (ambiguously) refers to the recognition of Zulu political practices. This is sometimes allied to the slogan: 'bringing democracy closer to the people'. Is it assumed that a federal provincial system will partly herald in African traditional forms? This qu' 'ion is obscured by the presence (at the same time) of another conceptual register. One that appeals to the decentralisation of national powers on the basis of better government. That is, granting Provincial governments greater independence so that they may take cognisance of local needs and conditions. Ironically, there is significant ANC provincial approval for such a conception.

Attahi quotes deconcentration as: "the organisation of the central administration's activities outside the seat of government, taking place either through administrative measures allowing for the transfer of resources and responsibilities to agents appointed by the central administration, or through political means allowing for the attribution by the government powers, of responsibilities and of resources specific to local administrative authorities" (Ibid., p.27). Deconcentration thus refers to the transfer of decision and implementation to elected leaders in local and/or regional governments. Devolution, in contrast, means the temporary transfer of authority from the central administration to external agencies for specific tasks (Ibid., p.28). In this regard, devolution and deconcentration share a common relation to national political imperatives: they are both means of realising state objectives 'outside the seat of government'. Attahi remarks: 'The approach focusing on the state (deconcentration) [is] rooted in the principle that the state is the only proper guarantor of the public interest" (Ibid., p.28). In contrast, devolution implies that local, private and community-based initiatives are better able to accommodate local preferences. Devolution is thus similar to the South African meaning of 'community-driven-development'. What is important to note is that devolution and deconcentration share a common criterion. They are both measured *vis-a-vis* the realisation of the 'public good', where the latter is determined nationally. The only difference between them is that deconcentration locates responsibility for the *execution* of policy in the local agents and decentralisation transfers that function to local institutions. What is not in dispute, however, is the very substance of 'public good' itself.

This is how the term is mostly understood. Associated with the failure of African states (and states in the so-called developing world in particular) to realise policy objectives on the ground, there has been a growing interest in decentralisation. Indeed, at the time of writing this paper the United Nations Development Programme had just commissioned a 10 country study in this regard. UNDP were interested in decentralisation as a means to "build a strong foundation for sustainable human development by improving the capabilities of local institutions, reducing the costs of governance an enabling environment for the development of social capital (UNDP, 1997). It remarked further that:

"decentralization (sic) is considered... one of the most appropriate responses to excessive centralization (sic), inefficient and ineffective public sectors, and the failure of the state and its institutions to build a sustainable basis for participation (ibid., 1997). These sorts of studies take as given exactly what this paper wants to problematise. It assumes, that is, that the problem of the 'third world' state is the inability of their national governments to execute their plans.

The very idea, however, that the national government is the sole guarantor of the public interest is premised on the essentialist philosophy explored earlier. It rests on the assumption (explicit in both Black Consciousness and the theory of National Democratic Revolution) that the political task at hand is to address the primary social experience. We saw that for BC this entailed white domination that following Hegelian principles required 'black unity' as its antithesis. The theory of NDR identified the primitive logic of capitalism as the truth of apartheid. In both cases the social 'totality' was defined by a certain essential experience. It followed that this be addressed in the national state because a) the political forces in question struggled for exclusive control in the same political territory and b) the social experience was deemed a national experience[16]. Moreover, if the social was a phenomena of an essential experience and the experience itself was a national one then it followed that there were common national political interests.

Hirst suggests, for example, that the great left-right opposition that exhausted the political topography until recently was premised on 'one great question': whether the predominant type of property relation would be private property or collective ownership (Hirst., 1994, p.1). He notes, that is: "Within the nation state's exclusive control of its territory, *subject to a single sovereign political will*, and to a coherent system of national administration, there could be but 'one' policy" (Ibid., p. 8) (my emphasis). Critical of such thinking, Hirst argues today that "new political forces are too diverse, too concerned with different issues, to be placed on a single spectrum" (ibid., p.9). By way of example he explains that

[16]This reasoning is certainly not restricted to the national state. The premise of Pan-Africanism was the continental nature of the colonial experience that required pan-african unity. The same applied to the International Communist movement. Capitalism as a global system required international revolutionary solidarity as a condition of its defeat.

"[t]here are new types of nationalist and regional autonomist parties, and ethnic and religiously-based campaigns. There are also new forms of politics centred on resistance to racism, gender issues, the environmental question and on lifestyles" (ibid., p,9). As a result Hirst concludes that: "new political problems and new social expectations are ill-accommodated by the old party systems... and the traditional parties of both left and right..." (ibid., p.9). They are unable to represent or even manage diverse interests issuing from a radically expanded political terrain.

This concern is similar to Castells' worry that institutional (or party) Marxism lacked a concept to grasp the 'social movements' of the 1960's and 1970's. That is, left politics was fixated on the state and the issue of property to the virtual exclusion of everything else. Hirst rejects monist conceptions of politics that reduce it to 'one big question'. Although, *Associative Democracy* is a popular text and polemical in nature it is premised on a anti-essentialist philosophy which Hirst has expressed elsewhere (see Hirst, P (1985) *Marxism and Historical Writing*. Routledge and Paul Kegan Ltd: London.). Both Castells and Hirst take the Althusserian defeat of the classical notions of 'experience' and 'interests' as their starting points. They reject (Hirst explicitly and Castells in practice) the reduction of the social 'totality' to a single experience that can be stated in advance and they disavow the Marxist faith that issued objective political interests from *the* experience. In so doing they multiplied the political terrain. Castells gave to political theory the city. Hirst has gone so far in this regard that he today favours ceding certain traditional state functions to voluntary and democratically self-governing associations. (ibid., p.21).

The expansion of the political field, however, does not mean simply that there are numerous interests, values and political objectives that cannot simultaneously be represented in the state. This is how classical liberal theory mostly interpreted plurality. It accommodated political surplus in a multi-party system; and today more and more through the notion of 'civil-society'. In other words it retained a monist conception of the political and the social where competition is addressed to the national state to give expression to a changed political conception *nationally*. In the aftermath of so-called totalizing ideologies,

of political discourses that reduce the social 'totality' to phenomenon of an essence, however, it is impossible to expect all political values, interests and objectives to be addressed by the national state. This would be homologous to Althusser's self-confessed 'theoreticist error': generating the real nationally from national policy.

The very authority of the national state and its sovereign jurisdiction over a national territory rested on the application of various essentialist philosophies to the boundaries of historically contingent units. That is, each territory was mythologised as the expression of some or other experience. Former colonies, for example, celebrated their independence and freedom from colonial domination generally and their peculiar experience in particular. States of the former Soviet Union often seceded on the basis of their ostensibly shared language, culture, religion, and, moreover, their common oppression by Russia. German unification was celebrated as the final victory of a *German, European, humanist* tradition over the aberrations of nazism and communism. Serbian military aggression was premised on a complaint of supposedly long-standing ethnic oppression and victimisation at the hands of nazis and later Croats. What these recently formed (or reformed) states did was apply a political logic, sedimented earlier this century by political and economic precedents, to new spatial units. From the late nineteenth century, that is, the nation state became the centre of social welfare provision, and from the 1930's the locus of effective macro-economic management (ibid., p.6). Two world-wars furthermore stimulated the growth towards centralisation and reinforced the sense that only the nation state could martial, coordinate and mobilise all the resources necessary to guarantee 'national survival' (ibid., p.6). The durability of the 'nation-state' was thus premised on three elements: an essentialist philosophy that reduced the social to a single experience, and the application of this logic to a territorial unit under the precedents of economic management and military defense/offense.

It is not the intention here to debate the whether the changed conjuncture - economic globalisation and the end of the cold war - makes the nation state as we know it obsolete. That discussion is beyond the range of this paper. What

can be said, however, is that a non-essentialist philosophy subverts (in concept) practices that give automatic primacy to the central state. We have seen also that the accomplice of such a philosophy is the notion of relative autonomy. Not decentralisation. Not deconcentration. We are not dealing here with more effective means of realising the national will. This is precisely the difference between management and political autonomy. The first is referenced *vis-a-vis* the execution of the 'general interest'. The second speaks of a limited space to determine the 'public good' autonomously[17].

In South Africa attention remains mostly fixed on national government and its political interests. Indeed, any contrary tendency has been fiercely resisted[18]. Skepticism of political autonomy may also be symptomatic of apartheid state logic, where so much of the social seemed determined by national policy and national political interventions. I want now to demonstrate the persistence and durability of this logic by considering local government responses in the aftermath of fighting in Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus (KATORUS). Despite the 'unique' conditions of civil conflict in KATORUS local governments persisted with policies determined by national development imperatives.

The following section will not simply try to demonstrate the irreducibility of the local to national political processes – by demonstrating the interruption of specifically local and contingent processes in the unfolding of national events – but more importantly, it will attempt to outline the factors making it difficult, indeed impossible, to appropriate to the conception of local government discussed, the political situation in KATORUS. I will argue there that whereas the latter assumes the interpellation of its municipal subjects as national-democratic subjects (that is, as members of the community), which justifies predefining its democratic tasks *vis-a-vis* the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the

[17] A notion of a general interest is not necessarily premised on essentialism. It can be construed in diachronic and contingent terms. Rejecting the notion of 'objective' interests, that is, does not mark a retreat towards or into radical individualism. It remains possible to assume relations of social equivalence. What becomes impossible is to generate equivalence ontologically.

war(s) in Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus is the proof exactly of the limit of such an assumption. In other words, I will argue that the conflict in KATORUS was in part provoked by the refusal of hostel dwellers to submit to a political definition (and hence political campaigns) that reduced them merely to bearers of a national democratic task. They refused, in other words, to be treated as members of the community, as defined via the Theory of National Democratic Revolution.

[18] This is manifest not simply in the antagonism between the ANC and the IFP over federalism. It is apparent also in the dismissal of Patrick Terror Lekota as premier of the Free State and the virtual appointment of Ivy Matsepe Cassaburi in his place. What was being opposed by the ANC in this case was the potential of the premiers to exercise some political independence from national party headquarters. The same logic applied when national ANC the Northern Province branch to appoint Ngoako Ramatlhodi as its chairperson. In this case the Province was defiant. The moves were widely interpreted as attempts by the ANC to retain control from the centre.

SECTION 5: KATORUS

Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus together form a zone of African residential settlements positioned on surplus and marginal land on the Southern edge of what was then the E: Rand conurbation. Their close proximity - framed together in the West by the R26 freeway and cut transversally in the East by the N3 highway to Durban - formed a logical unit for urban planners in the then East Rand Administration Board and later the Transvaal Provincial Administration. Sometime during the 1980's the acronym KATORUS was coined. It combined the first two letters of Katlehong and Tokoza and the last three letters of Vosloorus. If the expression's origin is somewhat banal, as violence escalated in the three townships from August 1990, the term 'KATORUS' was used to express South Africa's most bloody urban fighting in decades, if not ever. Indeed, fighting in these areas achieved so common an association between them that the term today barely speaks of their perceived functional integration. But rather, and more importantly, of their common bloody-mindedness.

Taxonomies of Violence

An ominous metaphor was frequently repeated in the KATORUS area. It opposed 'the forces of darkness' to a vulnerable and precarious site of 'community'. In many aspects this analogy gave expression to a profound anxiety: what many (and the media in particular) referred to as the 'senselessness' of the East Rand war. Combatants seemed to lack reasonable motive. No-one was clearly an aggressor. Everyone claimed to be acting in 'self-defense' or 'self-protection'. The 'forces of darkness' were not just pernicious, they were usually anonymous and unintelligible.

In such confusion, the identity of the 'enemy' was sourced from a variety of places: nascent images from the area itself, media stories that confirmed or resonated with existing stereotypes; perceived obstacles to political mobilization; potentially even the rumours of a 'third force'. So the enemy became: 'hostel residents' or 'the township' or 'the youth' or 'Zulus' or 'not Zulus' or 'the ANC' or the 'IFP' - depending on the terms of the reference. And yet even these

categories were at best vague and imprecise. In the absence of marked, identifiable attackers, mere membership of an alleged enemy group sufficed. Hence, all hostel residents were deemed the aggressors, or all township youth *etc.* And yet the sociological status of a person within this taxonomy was not always self-evident. As a result, various techniques (usually remarkably esoteric) were used to discover the 'benign' or 'malicious' quality of the person in question. It is explained, for example, that people were routinely questioned for obscure Zulu words that would indicate to the examiner their identity as an 'authentic' Zulu-speaker or not. In which case, depending on the desired result, the interviewee might be murdered.

What is also significant is that almost all parties denied their alleged definition in the various taxonomies of war. So former SDU commanders vehemently repudiated their alleged status as ANC soldiers, hostel dwellers outrightly rejected claims that they occupied some marginal (and hostile) position relative to the "township" or that hostels where places of "Zulu" or even IFP refuge. Indeed, almost all protagonists laid claim to their membership of the "community" as a whole, and denied the particularist agendas or sociology implied of them. One former SDU commander (F. Katlehong 13/9/96) thus explained: that apart from the military (para-military) function of the units, they were charged primarily with the responsibility of trying to identify attackers. This was more than a military-logistical requirement. It indicated the quite profound mystification experienced by combatants. Who were they supposed to defend or protect themselves against? Who was attacking the "community" ?

If this generalised mystification seems to give greater credence to the widespread belief in the 'third force' it fails to explain how conspiratorial agents where able to generate and sustain large-scale fighting - unless they provoked an already existing propensity for conflict, and hence encouraged already present myths and stereotypes.

It is perhaps worth mentioning too, as an introductory remark, that many of these taxonomies of war were variously realised, not because they spoke of a basic tension or antagonism that definitively explained the fighting, but because during the war they were sometimes believed to be true and hence became, if you like,

self-fulfilling. In an environment where the medium of communication was the rumour imagined groups actually became the adversary. Hostels were attacked, first language Zulu speakers were killed, suspected members of either the ANC or the IFP were murdered, and so on.

For example, when in June 1992, SANCO organised a march against rent increases; one that would proceed along the notorious Khumalo Street in Tokoza, past hostels 1,2 and 3, rumours were heard that hostel dwellers planned to fire on the demonstration. These reports allegedly came at a time when planning and organisation for the event was already advanced (apparently too advanced to postpone the event or even change the route). As a result many supporters, on the day of the march, carried with them various weapons. Conversely, the preparation and route of the march suggested to many hostel residents that the protest would be used as cover for an attack by militant youth. Rumours of guns merely confirmed their worries. Predictably, on the day of the demonstration, armed marchers confronted armed hostel residents. In the ensuing battle several people were killed. I believe that this incident was a turning point. It transformed the conflict from a localised clash in and around Phola Park into a generalised war affecting the whole of KATORUS. This shall be explored in greater detail later. For our purposes what is important is the self-fulfilling terms of the conflict: enemies that were made true by rumour.

If the reason for the war remained unclear to even combatants, other than as a vague will to defend the 'community', this was true for the local authorities adjacent to the KATORUS area and as well. For research purposes, moreover, existing taxonomies tended to be unhelpful. Too many 'exceptions' subverted the host of simple binary oppositions that variously served as explanations: ones that posited a rurally inclined hostel culture against a highly politicised urban youth experience, or opposed Zulu men against either Xhosa-speakers, or against a generically undefined 'township'; and/or which reduced the conflict to an omniscient and omnipotent 'third force', and/or which saw in the war an attempt by the ANC to consolidate its support (or assert its hegemony) in preparation for CODESA, or alternatively saw the Inkatha Freedom Party seek to end its parochial association only with KwaZulu/Natal by aggressively

mobilising outside its traditional domain in order to assert its status as a truly national political party.

What follows is a discussion of the fighting as an accumulation of conflicts. I will suggest that the sense of an ANC-IFP conflict or any other simple explanation functioned as a myth. Not in the colloquial sense that it was somehow imaginary, but rather in the sense that it subsumed all other antagonisms and dislocations to its terms.

Gestural Observations

There has been very little research on the KATORUS fighting. An article was written by Meshack Khosa on the taxi violence and its association with the 'war'. The Goldstone Commission heard several thousand pages worth of testimony but this was never edited into a report. The HSRC produced a compilation of work by several researchers[19] which, unfortunately, were written at a time when access to the area was hazardous - if not impossible. As a result many of these papers contain gestural observations and more usually simply repeat stereotypes prevalent at the time. It is nonetheless worth reviewing some of this material. Despite its scarcity and often tentative explar tions it has received fairly widespread currency.

One of the most enduring myths about the East Rand war in particular, and the Reef conflict in general is the notion of 'isolated' hostel residents (Minnaar, 1993) antagonised by an urban township community. In this regard, fighting between these parties is treated as the consequence of a long-standing animosity. Anthony Minnaar, for example, has argued that influx control and migrant labour, in effect, generated a cultural animus in many South African townships. "[H]ostel residents... drawn from the rural poor, largely from homeland areas... [came] to the cities as unskilled workers usually starting off as cleaners and night watchmen or in other low-paid menial jobs. Many, despite their years in the city,

[19] (1993) *Communities in Isolation: perspectives on hostels in South Africa*, edited by Anthony Minnar (Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council)

[spoke] little or no english. They tended to be looked down upon and scorned by the more sophisticated township residents" (Minnaar, p.27) "This has come about", Minnaar suggests, "with increasing urbanisation whereby the lifestyles of township residents have become more sophisticated and their links with rural areas ever more tenuous (sic)" (Ibid, p. 28). Minnaar continues: community amenities were often denied to hostel residents because they were not seen as permanent members of the community but rather as temporary sojourners. They were often accused by township inhabitants of interfering with local girls. In addition, he suggests, youths during the 1980's and early 1990's were 'envious' of hostel dwellers for their jobs and hence their income. In addition hostels attracted informal economic activity including shebeens, prostitution and drug-dealing which earned them the stigma of 'immorality' and 'depravity'. In this atmosphere "hostel residents perceive[d] themselves as being unloved and despised..." (Ibid;, p. 30). This was due, Minnaar argues, to a feeling that they had "borne the brunt of social and political insult of a hostile urban environment for many years (sic)" (Ibid., p.36). As a result recreational and/or sporting activities tended to remain secluded from wider community involvement. Moreover, hostel beer halls "discouraged any social contact between hostel residents and township inhabitants" (Minnaar, p.36) because the former were patronised exclusively by hostel residents.

Minnaar locates political animosity and the violence itself in precisely this cultural tension. He remarks: "since their contact with surrounding communities was minimal hostel residents were usually the last to know about any major community decisions such as stayaways, consumer boycotts or days of mourning...". As a result "hostel residents bec[ame] the victims of angry groups of township youths trying to ensure that stayaways or boycotts were observed..." These confrontations 'inevitably' led to violent clashes that would themselves "escalate into revenge or retaliatory attacks...". "In this way", Minnaar concludes, "the seeds of lasting ill-feeling and violence were sown between the 'rurals' and the 'urbanites'" (Ibid., p.40). When various organisations were unbanned in 1990 "there were persistent public calls by civic and political leaders at rallies that

hostel residents should vacate hostels to make way for [political] exiles". "Hostel residents resented these calls and organised to resist...". (ibid., p.41)

This is the *coup de grace* of Minnaar's argument. It rests on the following syllogism. There has been a long-standing cultural tension between hostel residents and township inhabitants. In 1990, civics, the ANC and other alliance partners organised in the townships. In so doing they gave political expression to this animosity. If Minnaar's particular causal link is perhaps tenuous - the evacuation of hostel residents for political exiles - he repeats a popular logical sequence. That is, the war is explained as the politicisation of a long-standing cultural difference.

Minnaar ostensibly even goes some way in explaining the apparent ethnic semblance of fighting. Whereas in the Transkei, land available for agricultural production was widely devastated, in the homeland areas of Zululand and Natal the same did not equally apply. As a result many Trankein migrants began leaving their homesteads permanently - many bringing their wives with them. Single-sex hostel accommodation was thus no longer suitable for these persons. Many began to settle, instead, in informal settlements often adjacent to hostels. In contrast, land in KwaZulu-Natal remained capable of sustaining settlement. Zulu-speaking migrant workers thus continued to vacillate between their urban hostel lifestyle and their family homesteads in KwaZulu-Natal. If this perhaps and partly explains 'changes in the ethnic composition of hostels' - the title of one of Minnaar's sections - it does not explain why fighting happened between these protagonists. Even if one concedes that the sociology of these groups did not itself cause fighting, but rather gave the conflict such an appearance after it had already begun, Minnaar does not explain what the antagonism between these groups was.

This is the site of an explanatory lapse. He argues that the Reef war began as a struggle between 'squatter' settlements and hostel dwellers. In August 1990, for example, an offensive attack and subsequent retaliation between inhabitants of Phola Park (an informal settlement in Tokoza) and the nearby hostels resulted in the spread of fighting - primarily to the neighbouring townships of Katlehong and Vosloorus. Given the ethnic sociology of the original clash (Xhosa-speakers in

the 'squatter' settlement and Zulu-speakers in the hostels) fighting was subsequently politicised when Zulu-speakers were associated with Inkatha. Given this political identification, non-Inkatha hostel residents were subsequently targeted for expulsion - especially those speaking Xhosa. The latter "sought refuge in the surrounding squatter settlements (such as Phola Park) and the conflict soon became one between youths (ANC-aligned comrades and self defence units) supported by township inhabitants and IFP supporters backed by Zulu-speaking -speaking hostel residents" (Ibid., p.43) There at least two contradictions in this explanation.

Given Minnaar's earlier (culturalist) description of the tension between townships and hostels it is difficult to understand the hostility between the latter and informal settlements. According to Minnaar squatter areas were themselves populated by former hostel residents - ones who presumably had a secluded relationship to the rest of the township as well. What then was the source of the antagonism between them? This explanatory flaw leads to the second contradiction. If both areas were inhabited by (former or current) hostel residents then both shared a common 'isolation' *vis-a-vis* the township. And if this was true then why did the conflict 'soon' develop into one between "township inhabitants and hostel residents" (Minnaar, 1992)? Minnaar's only way out is to assume a direct relationship between ethnicity and political affiliation. Only if attacks on hostels were assumed also to be attacks on Zulus which were, in turn, believed to be attacks on the Inkatha Freedom Party can the linkage to wider township involvement be sustained. And only if one assumes an aggressive ANC campaign against the IFP.

Minnaar's chains of explanation assume exactly what this section wants to problematise: that a certain automatism functioned between ethnicity and political allegiances. It fails to consider – because the question is never posed – that these alliances were the products of discursive political constructions forged in the peculiar labour and political history of the area. This section will explore the KATORUS war as an accumulation of conflicts given apparent unity by the generic battle between the ANC and IFP. The KATORUS war, at least in its early days, may have consisted of many wars. Each (however temporary) with

its own notion of the enemy and the allied. All given a coherence, and all apparently conflated into a single war by the sense of imminent attack, the anonymity of the attackers, and the empirical presence of the dead.

Fighting in the region was the result of at least five antagonisms: a parochial conflict between Phola Park and the Tokoza hostels, a taxi conflict, a labour tension arising from a strategic and political shift in trade-union politics, an IFP recruitment drive in preparation for CODESA and ANC activity to consolidate its strength in anticipation of those same negotiations.

Trade-Unionism

On the 19 September 1991, Sam Ntuli was murdered in Tokoza. His car was apparently forced off the road and he was subsequently gunned down by assailants in a blue Chevrolet. Ntuli's murder is more commonly attributed to his status as General Secretary of the Civic Associations of Southern Transvaal (CAST) because para-military attacks against hostel residents were ostensibly coordinated by local civic associations. His death, however, may also gesture towards an element of the conflict previously unexplored.

During the mid-1980's Sam Ntuli played a central role bridging the former gap between labour organisation and wider township struggles on the East Rand. He played, therefore, a crucial role on the side of a certain (and later dominant) political shift in union politics. It is worth exploring this briefly.

In October 1972 and February 1973 mass strikes jolted Durban. The Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) was formed that year and together with five other industrial unions they formed the Trade Union Advisory and Coordinating Committee (TUACC). By the end of the 1970's MAWU had successfully made and consolidated its transition up to the Rand. When the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) was formed in 1979, MAWU became one of its key constituents. The MAWU sociology, however, gave the union federation a curious political composition. In particular it drew substantial support on the Rand from hostel residents that gave to FOSATU a membership partly unaffected by the "leveling and homogenising" (Bonner, 1995) effects that 'stabilisation'

ostensibly gave to the rest of the urban population. This distinction is useful to make.

What was important *vis-a-vis* urbanisation, Bonner suggests, was not only the duration of the stay but also (and perhaps more importantly) the connections that resulted. "[T]hose who established new relationships with other women found it next to impossible to maintain a family in the countryside and a family in the town". Once a man had found a companion in the city "his ties with his [rural] home invariably weakened and he tended to return much less frequently" (Bonner, 1995). What this alerts us to is the centrality of durable sexual partnerships in this regard. That is, familial-type relations consecrated in the city, and not originating in rural homelands, were instrumental to new social arrangements and a partially changed attitude to the city. In particular, Bonner argues (and perhaps also exaggerates) that such liaisons created "more shared conditions of life" including a "new sense of common identity... which overrode many of the ethnic and social divisions...[of] previous decades" (Bonner, 1995). In contrast, residents that either maintained contact with their rural families or brought them to the city retained an interest in their rural homesteads or their reserve-based extended families. Following this definition of urbanisation, we can say that the East Rand townships were home to a large population living in the city but not of the city. In other words, an important segment of people resident in these areas had not been integrated into the political and social values that informed urbanised relations; ones that from the 1980's were increasingly informed by notions of solidarity and communality drawn from the Theory of National Democratic Revolution..

This social-ideological distinction was reinforced by recruitment patterns. Several large employers, including SCAW metals in Wadeville, relied on generations-old networks that stretched into KwaZulu and sometimes into the Transkei. The SCAW hostel, for example, typical of many of the East Rand foundries, mostly housed migrant men from these regions. This created on the East Rand, and especially around the steel-based foundries of Germiston and others, a large migrant population drawn from and deeply implicated in rural areas. These male workers mostly retained connections to their 'homeland' origins and in this sense

occupied a sociologically different position to permanently rooted (or 'stabilised') urban dwellers. Whereas the latter may have experienced some form of 'homogenisation and leveling' - that is, interpellation into a new, urban, social (and conceptual) form - hostel residents often still referenced their experience *vis-a-vis* a 'traditional' (i.e. non-urban) social cosmology. In this regard certain notions of masculinity and order strongly informed social and later political responses. In particular, threats to what were regarded as natural, age-based hierarchies were judged deeply disturbing to notions of nature and discipline. These ideas were not isolated to hostels only. Sustained relations with rural homesteads and partial adherence to 'traditional' cosmologies happened amongst township inhabitants as well. Indeed, this linkage was often less structured by political-economy than it was determined by often idiosyncratic choices.

Sipho Sithole, for example, moved to Johannesburg in 1980 looking for work. Here he stayed with his sister until 1985. His marriage to a woman from KwaMashu in 1985 resulted in his departure from Soweto and the later movement of himself, his new wife and children to Tokoza. "It is wise if people stay together," he explained, "because when we struggle we are together" (Interview with Sithole and Dlamini, 1995).At no stage did he reside in a hostel. This was paralleled by the personal trajectory of Thabane Dlamini. Dlamini was born in Mahlabathini in 1950 and attended school at Mkhiweni Higher Primary School in Ndebele. In 1978 he graduated to the Eikane High School in what he termed "rural Natal". Dlamini's parents had in the mean time moved to Johannesburg to look for work. By the time he arrived in Soweto in 1981, his mother and father had already been here for some time. When he failed to find permanent or even long-term employment he joined the IFP as a full-time office-bearer in 1991. At no stage did Dlamini seek accommodation in a hostel.

Both men regarded their urban biographies as utterly conventional. "It was very common," Sithole remarked, "that people from KwaZulu-Natal... had family in the townships". "Let me tell you something," he continued, " here in the location... there [was sometimes] no hot water and no bathroom[s]. [I]n the hostel, because [they] were [more] advanced than this place [the location]... people... [came]

here [to] wash themselves..." Moreover, he added "I am telling [a] fact - and you can... ask anybody - these people used to go to the hostel and wash themselves... and then there was no difference between the hostel and the location" (Interview with Sithole, 1995)[20]. In this regard Sithole and Dlamini's relation to the hostels was typical of many other township men. This observation was often repeated by second or even third generation urban youth interviewees - including some of those prominent in offensive activities during the 'war'.

What is important about these particular narratives is their source. Thabane Dlamini and Sipho Sithole were not just random voices in Tokoza. Thabane was Chairperson of the IFP Youth Brigade in Tokoza- indeed, the name for the IFP para-militaries (Self Protection Units) was reputedly his own innovation. Sipho Sithole was also involved in Youth Brigade activities and was later nominated to stand as the IFP candidate for Phenduka section - an area with a large hostel population and a housing quarter largely occupied by war-time refugees sympathetic to the Inkatha Freedom Party.

During the 1980's, therefore, both men had no special or intimate relationship to hostels. Their Youth Brigade activities were confined to sympathetic township youth and they even experienced hostel residents through a medium common to many township inhabitants: washing and sometimes drinking. Dlamini and Sithole's narratives thus suggests that the political linkage made between the IFP and hostel dwellers was neither a function of ethnicity nor language. This was clearly understood by early Inkatha ye Sizwe organisers on the Rand.

Mrs. Zikalala, the niece of Chief Luthuli's 'deputy', was involved in organising Inkatha in the Transvaal in the late 1970's. "At that time there was Black Consciousness, the ANC was in exile and quiet and Inkatha became the biggest organisation at that time" (Interview Mrs Zikalala, 1995). What is interesting about her narrative is the description of early recruits. "People who were interested were Zulus," she commented: that is, "teachers, doctors and professionals of both sexes" (Ibid., 1995). What was interesting about this remark was the mention of hostel dwellers only as an afterthought. Indeed,

[20] In the case of interviews conducted in English when English was not the interviewees home language responses have been edited for grammar.

significant recruitment amongst this quarter only began in the mid and late-1980's. Before that, she explains, Zulu-speaking hostel residents could not understand the role for an Inkatha-type organisation: they believed themselves to be loyal subjects of the King, had a direct relationship with their Chiefs through resident Indunas and could, therefore, see no place for Inkatha. A political entity that wanted to "fight for their rights" as subjects of the Kingdom of KwaZulu seemed to be superfluous. In this regard, Mrs Zikalala explains, hostel residents were concerned that Inkatha would "interfere with His Majesty the King" (Ibid., 1995). Structures already existed for them to 'exercise their rights' as Zulu subjects. What was most worrying in the cities was not their status in the Kingdom of KwaZulu, but rather, there status as industrial workers. And these concerns could be expressed through the unions.

Until the mid-1980's union politics focused specifically on so-called shop-floor issue, that is, problems related to working conditions, dismissals and wages. Indeed, TUAC unions and later FOSATU eschewed alliances with organisations and/or groupings outside the factory. This was partially a theoretical decision: it was argued that existing political tendencies (like Black Consciousness, African Nationalism, ethnic particularism *et al*) reflected forms of consciousness that inhibited class solidarity which in turn, was best forged on the factory floor alone. It was partly also a strategic acknowledgment. Explicit political coalitions potentially alienated sections of the unions' (politically and socially) diverse membership.

The mid-1980's, however, saw an important political shift as trade-unionism after 1976 increasingly eschewed its political r -alignment. The potential consequences of such a move, however, was also legible in its origin.

Trade-Unionism and the 1976 Student Revolt

During the student revolt of that period, hostel residents from Mzimhlope hostel in Soweto repeatedly attacked student protesters. Township youth demanding compliance with work stayaways *etc.* were deeply offensive to adult hostel residents - many of whom were also parents. Children ordering parents. It appeared to many an inversion of the natural order. Sipho Sithole thus

explained: "Discipline is very important... If you are a child growing up [in a Zulu household]... you are not used to speak[ing] with your father. [Y]ou always speak with your mama. [If] you ask for something you ask your mama and... your mama tells your father... [I]f your father feels you mustn't do it, you are not going to do it" (Interview Sithole, 1995). In 1976 this was turned upside down - "children [were] telling their parents what to do". It seemed "the bottom was coming on top" (Ibid., 1995). If student 'indiscipline' seemed to challenge nature, it also seemed to threaten 'migrant' households.

Hostel workers usually had little or no regular schooling and were, therefore, reserved for menial, repetitive-type tasks that required almost no formal training. They constituted what Eddie Webster calls the 'secondary market'. That is, a category of casual employment requiring only elementary skills and offering almost no job security. This was aggravated by management policies that saw no threat to productivity by such things as low worker turn-over in this market. Regular dismissals were deemed effective for weeding out the slow and the cheeky. Faced with the 'ever-present' possibility of replacement, migrant workers were disinclined to orders from a township youth that did not fully appreciate the implications of their dismissal. In this sense, for many migrant workers, instruction to 'reckless' action may have jeopardised their families' often already tenuous subsistence.

1976 was nonetheless a turning-point. From then on it was less and less easy for labour struggles to ignore political pressures not arising from the point of production. By the mid-1980's many of the 1976 students and leaders had entered employment. Moreover, associated with the massive educational expansion after (and as a result of) the 1976 uprising, FOSATU found a new element amongst its membership. Young, militant and school educated. Many were initiated into politics through the radicalism of socialist, africanist and national revolutionary slogans. In this atmosphere there was growing irritation with FOSATU's strongly 'workerist' tendency. Many complained that the union federation was invested with a deep 'social conservatism' that militated against political interventions outside the factory. The appointment of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi to chair the Industrial Information Centre (IIC) - to give the union

respectability amongst 'traditional' quarters in KwaZulu and in Natal - seemed merely to confirm this agenda. As a result there was growing pressure for union activities to link to a host of extra-factory political currents, and in particular new recruits were eager to articulate their union activities to wider struggles for 'national liberation' through 'African Nationalism'.

These tensions came to a head after the Fatti's and Moni's strike in Cape Town in April 1979. The strike itself was accompanied by a massive consumer boycott that halved factory profits. Within seven months workers were reinstated and the union recognised. Within FOSATU the Cape action generated furious debates about the federations appropriate strategic direction. There was increased criticism of the factory-oriented nature of organisation and the community and political struggles. By the early 1980's certain FOSATU were already beginning to widen their involvement. They collaborated of 'community' struggles, explicitly spoke of National Democratic Rev... used a host of politically-aligned slogans.

Central to these changes on the East Rand was Sam Ntuli. He together with Enoch Godoma sought to link trade-union militancy to the concerns of the recently launched United Democratic Front (UDF) and the formation of civic organisations. In 1984 the Metal and Allied Workers Union split on precisely this issue. A more 'populist' union was subsequently formed: the United Metal and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (UMAWUSA). This marked the beginning of what Eddie Webster has called 'social-movement unionism' in South Africa. Throughout the Rand it began to transform the political culture.

Aggripa Shandu, today an UWUSA organiser, and in the local government elections an IFP candidate, explained: In the late that 1970's he joined MAWU in Alrode in Alberton. "When I joined," he recalls, "I thought that [MAWU] is a union that is going to stand for my rights as a worker. I did not know that [the union] was going to change name and involve politics. MAWU split... [and] I left in 1985 [to] join UMAWUSA. [W]e did not understand where [the splinter union] stood because it was confusing work and politics. When COSATU was formed in 1985 I resigned because I was not an ANC trade-union[ist]" (Interview with Aggripa Shandu, 1995). During interviews conducted by Lauren Segal, moreover, a

hostel respondent remarked: "I'm only interested in my rights as a worker, that is all." He continued: '. joined NUMSA for their protection at the workplace and not their political alliance" (Segal, 1992).

If labour's new direction accommodated the "'hidden world' of African Nationalism" (Webster, 1991), it also neglected (and alienated) a host of other political traditions. Speaking of the 1982-83 strikes at Scaw metals, Bonner is quoted as saying: "You could see their [hostel residents] interests not being properly represented, eclipsed by other constituencies. We could see migrants retreating into themselves, even when continuing to be union members, e.g. in Zulu ethnic associations" (Bonner cited in Mamdani, p.247).

What the new trade-unionism massively underestimated was the strength and durability of political sympathies premised on 'traditional' social practices and values. In this regard, the style of the new nationalist politics was often more disturbing than its content *per se*. In particular, many objected to the leading role that youth played in many township activities in the form of COSAS, Youth Leagues, civic organisations and so on. In addition the new politics seemed mostly concerned with peculiarly urban issues. To residents still deeply interested in the well-being of their rural homesteads and/or their place of origin the latter were usually secondary concerns.

In a context where trade-unionism seemed distracted by issues not arising from the shop-floor, openings were granted to organisations (like the Inkatha Freedom Party) that had previously been rejected. Whereas 'social conservatives' had felt comfortable to participate in focused (shop-floor) union activities, strategic (and ideological) shifts created an important hiatus. In this gap Inkatha could partly define its role as the new interlocutor of social worries and the defender of norms and values. In this way, the conditions for the articulation of social ethnicity to political nationalism had already been made possible. Before it could happen in KATORUS several other factors needed to intervene first.

The Threat of Hostel Conversions

From 1986 there was growing concern in government circles about living conditions in most hostels. What was apparently disturbing to state functionaries was the single-sex format of this accommodation that raised the spectre of homosexuality and seemed to dispose more readily its occupants to violence. As a result the then National Party government toyed with the idea of converting hostels into family-type units. These plans, however, stalled until the early 1990's when conversion became the focus of much political activity (Minnaar, p.32). What seems to have rejuvenated interest (in KATORUS especially) was the violent conflict that started between residents of the Phola Park informal settlement and inhabitants of the neighbouring hostel, in October 1990. Many argued at the time, that the congregation of single men in demeaning living quarters increased their propensity for violence (Zulu, p.22). If they lived with their families, the argument continued, they would be more loathe to fight lest they exposed their families to danger.

Many hostel residents found the campaign deeply disturbing. For those men reluctant or unable to move their families to the city it potentially meant the loss of their accommodation. What compounded this worry were relatively high rentals in the township. A backyard room could cost between R60 and R120 per month. The municipality, in contrast, charged only R15 a month for a hostel bed. Conversion thus seemed to make continued residence in the city unaffordable. This was further aggravated by low wages and tenuous conditions of employment - made even worse by stagnation in the economy generally and local industries in particular. Given the importance of urban remittances to the reproduction of rural economies, conversion seemed to threaten the very sustainability of the homestead unit. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the campaign was strongly resisted.

In that year the Tokoza Hostel Residents Association (THRA) was formed. Its establishment marked a fundamental re-alignment of organisation in the hostels. Contrary to Minnaar and others, hostels during the 1980's were very loosely organised. Indeed, interviewees disputed the 'hierarchical controls' that Anthony Minaar speaks of. One is left with the distinct impression that his description

draws on g[illegible]alised notions of hostels in the 1950's, 1960's and to a lesser extent the 1970's coupled with an impression of their social structure during and after the war. Hostel residents themselves observed that prior to fighting hostels were places of 'multiracial' residence - where the term here was used to denote multi-linguism: that is, the presence of "Zulus", "Xhosas", "Sothos", "Pedis" and others (Buyafuthe induna, Katlehong, 26/7/95). Indeed, there was no formal hostel-wide organisation. Indunas appointed by local chiefs in KwaZulu-Natal presided over men from their jurisdiction only. In this regard, their responsibility was curtailed to parochial functions: "Our duty," an induna from Kwesini hostel in Katlehong explained, was to "link... [the] community and amakhosi. Whatever people com[illegible]lain[ed] about we report[ed]... to the Chief and the Chief [took] it up with His Majesty [the king]" (Ibid., 26/7/95). In this regard, Indunas were responsible for communication between the city and the homestead. They presided over death, organised the conveyance of bodies "back home", arranged transport and remittances to homesteads, adjudicated between disputes amongst hostel residents, and were sometimes the first port of call for job recruitment agents.

If threatened eviction gave hostels some form of organisational unity, the brokers of that unity emerged from the Phola Park conflict and the nature of Inkatha mobilisation in the hostels.

When fighting started between the Tokoza hostels and Phola Park, the former were allegedly placed on a 'war footing'. In this regard, Indunas allegedly organised weapons and ammunition from the escalating violence in KwaZulu and Natal. Military Intelligence also recorded the movement of trained fighters from Ulundi to the Rand - what MI called Scouts (Interview with Military Intelligence, Group 41 Germiston, 14/6/95). Given recent testimony in the General Magnus Malan Trial and the evidence of Operation Marion it is tempting to source the latter from IFP men trained in the Caprivi Strip by the SANDF (Mail and Guardian 16/8/1996). Moreover, recent statements in mitigation by Colonel Eugene de Kok - of Vlakplaas infamy - suggest that the Security Branch supplied weapons to senior Inkatha persons - and Themba Khosa in particular - for use on the East Rand (Mail and Guardian 21/8/1996). Fighting in KATORUS

thus achieved an important conflation: Indunas became the agents of hostel organisation as a result of their access to the traffic of weapons feeding the armed conflict in KwaZulu-Natal. A Kwesini elder thus remarked: "They [the indunas] look after the welfare of people - mainly to see there is no provocation or violence against inmates [hostel residents]". In this way Induna political control was secured through their access to guns, bullets and training. Provision of the resources for 'war' aided an IFP recruitment drive in Reef hostels at this time - and particularly those in KATORUS. In this regard, the IFP gave the growing tension over conversion a new spin. Spokespersons argued that the issue was being used by the ANC deliberately to evict and 'disperse' single, male hostel residents. This created the conditions for an important conceptual leap: it added a third variable to a chain of political equivalence: hostels-Indunas-Inkatha.

Whereas before the 1990's Zulu ethnicity in the city was practiced mainly through 'custom', - that is, through obedience to certain dietary habits, dress codes, respect for social and gender hierarchies - after 1990 this began to change. There was a growing sense that the very Zulu polity - to which these practices were referenced - was itself under threat. We have already seen that for many hostel residents, conversion represented a danger to their own livelihood and the sustainability of their households. In the context of IFP mobilisation it was not difficult to link this issue to a sense of imminent cultural threat.

"If you are a Zulu", an interviewee explained "there are customs[to which] you have to adhere... [W]e believe in the ancestors - amadlozi... and if things go wrong you have to... slaughter a cow to remember those... forefathers who passed away. [Y]ou have to respect them... [I]f I am down in Natal... I have to wear the skin of an animal... [I] have to teach my children... where they are coming from and where I am coming from because we are the Zulus and we have hereditary [responsibilities]... [I] must know that my father's name was... a Zulu name and I have to know my father's name" (Sithole, Sipho, Tokoza 26/10/95). The interviewee then juxtaposed this description with the following: "The Zulu people are a very dangerous people in South Africa.[We] are not conquered even now. [T]hat is why the ANC is trying to fight us... [T]hey extract

the king from our nation... and by taking [him] away [they] take away the past..." (Ibid., 1995). "If you want to interrupt the system you have to go to the strongest point...and the strongest point is the King" (Ibid., 1995).

What is important about this discussion was the ease at which the respondent shifted from a description of 'Zulu customs' to an analysis of how they were politically threatened. If the 1980's witnessed the deepening alienation of socially cultured Zulu-speakers from labour and urban political movements, the 1990's saw this distance expressed as political threat, articulated as a sense of danger to the very object of Zulu identification itself: the King. We have already seen that for many hostel residents 'family-unit' conversions represented a threat to rural households themselves. In the context of aggressive IFP campaigning it was not difficult to make the following link: an apparent attack on the household was simultaneously an attack on 'Zulu culture' *per se*. In this regard, hostel conversions were not just a concern for single-sex Zulu-speaking hostel residents, they were symptomatic of a campaign against Zulu institutions and practices themselves.

This articulation created a specific and unique opportunity for Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the IFP. "When he (Buthelezi) became President of Inkatha [he] didn't move away and forget that he ha[d]...a tribal authority [to lead]" (Anonymous, Buyafuthe hostel resident (b), 1995). Given the perceived capture of King Zwelithini by the ANC, and the apparent assault on the rural homestead, Chief Buthelezi and the Inkatha Freedom Party were granted a political role. They were well positioned to defend the integrity of 'Zulu culture' and of 'Zulu institutions'. Several interviewees remarked that Chief Buthelezi is "very strong, he is very honest and that is why we are united. He is unifying us" (Ibid., 1995).

Concern during the late 1970's (and even during the 1980's), therefore, that Inkatha (or an Inkatha-type organisation) might "interfere" with the Zulu King had certainly evaporated by the early 1990's. If Zulu-speaking persons (inclined towards 'traditional' practices) had felt comfortable in the past to exercise their cultural identity through the 'traditional' system itself and their urban political interests through the trade-unions, 'interruptions' to both required created the opportunity for another political party. In this regard, Buthelezi's role as former

leader of KwaZulu and his 'traditional' status as a Chief made him best suited to come to their defense. He was ideally placed to reconcile a political intervention with a 'traditional' one. After all, he bridged both functions himself.

The Unbanning of the ANC

In this context of heightened vulnerability, civic organisations (partly bolstered by former trade-union organisers) mobilised aggressively during this time. This was compounded by the unbanning of the African National Congress in February 1990. On the East Rand, and also more generally, the effects of unbanning were initially delayed. ANC and ANC-aligned structures initially feared a public profile lest the political mood changed and they were left exposed and compromised. By the end of the year this worry had partly dissipated. All around the country ANC branches were formed and rallies attended.

The mobilisation (and consolidation) of support in preparation for national negotiations may explain the intensification of social and political animosity on the Rand; although that alone does not explain the fighting in KATORUS. Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus were not alone for having hostels adjacent to townships adjacent to informal settlements. Nor did they alone have precarious social relations potentially antagonised by aggressive political mobilisation. Despite initial and sporadic clashes, Tembisa remained relatively quiet. So too did Wattville in Benoni - notwithstanding land invasions aligned in some cases to the local civic, and in others to the IFP; in an area, moreover, proximate to an IFP hostel. As Kehla Shubane recently remarked (informal conversation at the offices of the Centre for Policy Studies, Shubane, 5/3/97) KATORUS was not alone for having 'social tensions'.

We need, therefore, to consider three more elements very briefly: a conflict between Phola Park and the Tokoza hostels, a taxi conflict and covert actions (and/or omissions) by the state.

Phola Park's Parks conflict with Khalanyoni Hostel

The particular content of the Phola Park dispute remains beyond the scope of this paper. For our purposes, however, its conflagration marked the beginning of

violent conflict. The first fighting in KATORUS seems to have happened on the evening of the 12 August 1990. That night and the next morning informal residents' and hostel dwellers clashed. By the late morning 20 people had been killed. The following night Khalanyoni hostel was attacked. On the 15 August hostel residents apparently retaliated. These incidents are [illegible]ed by many as the opening salvos of the KATORUS war. Yet the continuity [illegible]plied by such a phrase, 'KATORUS war', neglects important evidence.

Many youth combatants did not identify 1990 as the beginning of the conflict. Indeed, their chronology began almost three years later. In May 1993, they argued, a march to the stadium in Tokoza - to protest against rents and services - was fired upon. A prominent 'commander' at the time thus commented: "When [the] Phola Park - hostel violence spread to [the] township [it [illegible] strong. After [the May] march, violence became strong". Casca Mokoena - a senior combatant in 'Slovo Section' in Tokoza - remarked that many youths would sometimes watch hostel residents marching to Phola Park without intervening. "Only a few joined the fighting. It was not our fight" (Casca Mokoena, 1995).

This observation refers to a disjuncture between the politics of the informal settlement and the township. Indeed, during a focus group session a respondent suggested: "People from squatter camps are a problem. The people who hired these shacks are the ones who started the violence. Zulu people told others that they are Inkatha members and Xhosas... fought amongst themselves. It went as far as Gatsha telling his people that they must kill all the Xhosas. Xhosas fought for themselves and it affected us..." Another respondent continued: "We don't want these shacks... Sometimes a fight breaks out far away from our place. They come to fetch the people in your yard [to] fight with them. As you won't allow it you also fight and the neighbours will come to help and it will end up being a big thing" (Focus Group: Refugees, 1995).

These responses suggest the parochiality of informal settlements when viewed from the township: their politics, their sociology and their disputes. It is difficult to assume, therefore, that attacks and counter-attacks by informal and hostel residents respectively automatically 'spread' to the township. Indeed, the respondent above suggested that if fighting did spread it happened indirectly.

Evidence led during various Goldstone hearings seem partly to confirm this disjuncture. When a commission established in 1992 under the Chair of Advocate Sithole investigated "the escalation of violence in the area" (Sithole Inquiry, 1992) it mostly found protagonists to be either hostel dwellers or residents of Phola Park.

The first incident it explored was the murder of 18 hostel residents in September 1991. On the 8th day of that month a march organised by the Tokoza Hostel Dwellers Association was attacked from several directions by men firing AK47's. The Commission found that earlier in the morning 'section-leaders' in Phola Park had "arranged to mount an ambush on the hostel dwellers" (Ibid., 1992). Commission findings suggest that this pattern of conflict configured fighting late into 1992. An attack on a Rand Water Board kombi in February 1992, they found, "was planned and mounted by the Phola Park SDU". This was believed also to be the likely source of 'massacres' in the informal settlement of Crossroads between 3 and 4 April that year and also Zonkezizwe two days later.

As a result the Commission concluded that: "the most serious rivalry [was] between the residents of Phola Park and the hostel dwellers" (Sithole Inquiry, 1992). Moreover, Sithole and others concurred that "serious rivalry... [was] in itself aggravated... by the fact that the one group is predominantly Zulu and the other is predominantly non-Zulu with a heavy (but not predominant) Xhosa influence. Fighting was further "coloured" by "the fact that the one group [Zulus] tends to be affiliated to the Inkatha Freedom Party and the other [Non-Zulus/Xhosas] to the so-called Patriotic Front, which is heavily influenced by the ANC" (Sithole Inquiry, 1992). At no stage was their mention of armed groups emanating from the formal township itself. Indeed, hearings on 'the causes and phenomenon of violence in the Tokoza area (sic)' explored the quite parochial origin of this conflict. Apart from the later politicisation of these tensions - associated with national processes - variables discussed in that section were mostly peculiar to Phola Park and the hotels. Population density: 4000 - 5000 shacks in small area. Homelessness: intense competition for accommodation. Living conditions: no sewage, no sanitation, no schools, no electricity, no refuse removal, only 4 communal taps. And sociology: division between single

migratory labourers and families. These factors were seldom pertinent generally and only occasionally applied to formal township residents as well.

'Taxi-War'

If the Phola Park conflict seems to have militarised the hostels, taxi conflict in Katlehong may have had similar affects in the township. On the 24 February 1990 a "bloody and ghastly" (Khosa, p.245.) war broke out in Katlehong. Roughly 50 people were killed and more than 350 injured. Several houses were also burnt. According to Meshack Khosa fighting originated from a dispute between the Germiston and District Taxi Association (G&DTA) and the Katlehong Taxi Association (KTA) over access to routes. Members of the latter, he argued, "were mostly Katlehong residents, especially 'young' comrades" (Khosa, 1992). In contrast, members of the G&DTA "were allegedly from Natal and largely represented Zulu-speaking operators, most of whom were living in migrant hostels" (Khosa, 1992). As a result, Khosa argues, "fighting which began as a feud between two taxi groups developed into running battles between youths on the one hand and taxi operators supported by vigilante gangs on the other" (Ibid., 1992). This implies, therefore, that the fighting's subsequent taxonomy - hostel vs township - originates from the sociology of the taxi war[21].

Khosa might have confused the sociology of taxi-owners and their drivers. Mrs. Zikalala mentioned that during early recruitment campaigns in the late 1970's Inkatha was successful amongst Zulu-speaking 'professionals': nurses, teachers, clerks *et al.* (Interview with Zikalala, 1995). This points towards 'middle income' Zulu-speakers (sometimes ethnically conscious) in the township itself. When the kombi-taxi industry began to satisfy gaps left by cut-backs in public transport (and in particular the Public Utility Transport Company (PUTCO)) these people were well positioned to enter the market. They had relatively well paid

[21] What is puzzling in Khosa's account is the apparent absence of attacks against hostels. His description of fighting locates it in taxi ranks, on the streets, in schools and even in certain homes. Nowhere is there mention of a hostel. This is surprising for a 'war' in which some of the leading protagonists were accommodated there? The anomaly is not easily explained by claiming that hostel-based taxi owners used vigilantes drawn from Natal to do their fighting. Khosa has himself indicated that attacks were often launched against taxi drivers and their owners. If 'vigilantes' could attack youth 'comrades' in their homes and in their schools, it is difficult to understand why G&DTA taxi-owners were not attacked in (or even nearby) their residences.

jobs and could sometimes afford the initial financing. Many G&DTA taxi-owners were thus often township residents as well. Many drivers, on the other hand, were drawn from the Katlehong hostels.

When KTA members mobilised for battle many used Phola Park as a source of training and weapons. This almost certainly identified young, township men with the inhabitants of the informal settlement. The residence of many G&DTA taxi-drivers in the hostels had the opposite effect. It was the beginning of a deadly chain of associations. When attacks were launched on KTA vehicles along Khumalo Road in Tokoza, it is rumoured for example, that passengers and drivers alike were taken into the hostels and assaulted.

There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that this conflict was implicated in Sam Ntuli's murder. The Sithole inquiry found that there was a "vicious and sustained" (Sithole Inquiry, 1992) attack on funeral-goers after the ceremony. Despite the apparent anonymity of the killers the presence of one Ndebele implied to the Inquiry that a KAPTA (formerly the G&DTA) "squad" may have been responsible. Ndebele himself was a hostel resident and a well known taxi-driver.

The taxi feud may thus have achieved a deadly association: KCA - Phola Park - township men. This articulation was matched from the township side by the apparent collusion of hostel dwellers with the G&DTA. For many township residents the mobilisation of the IFP into these quarters seemed to confirm its aggressive posture *vis-a-vis* urban residents. When the relationship between hostels and urban youth descended into violence, the IFP's war-like instincts seemed verified. In this regard, increased social and political distance from the township, the taxi conflict, the fight with Phola Park and intensified political rivalry may have thus conflated the following elements: hostel residents - political conservatism - violent aggression - Inkatha Freedom Party.

These localised conflicts may thus have solidified and antagonised the political labeling already happening. For hostel residents the affiliation of Phola Park with the UDF and later the ANC certainly reinforced fears that they were partially threatened by these organisations. The presence, moreover, of young men (and sometimes women) in leading positions in many urban political structures made

their style uncomfortable. Later it merely emphasised their aggressive attitude to hostel residents. When Inkatha began to recruit successfully in the hostels in the early 1990's they were already extensively organised, armed, militarised and most importantly wary of young, township men. Boycotts, stay-aways and demonstrations launched from the township merely aggravated an already tense situation. In May 1993 this seems to have come to a head. As discussed in the earlier, a demonstration against rent increases resulted in a lethal clash between marchers and hostel residents in Tokoza. For the first time since fighting was reported in 1990, hostels were attacked by armed groups from the township. This gave to the violence in KATORUS a complex new sociology. One, moreover, arranged through a host of social and recreational practices that introduced a new organisational format to the conflict.

The Violence transcends its local origins

During the 1980's the informal unit of social interaction was the street or neighborhood. These tended to define the sociology of gatherings and recreational activities. In this regard the boundaries of the social group was partly determined by the form of transport available. Walking defined a much narrower spatial perimeter. Social geography was also mediated by the size of the township, socio-economic stratification, unemployment and even the ethnic layout of many African townships. In this regard, youth gangs and social clubs reflected a host of social boundaries in a customised vocabulary that reflected youth priorities. In this regard, 'starlings' (double pleated pants with turn-ups) and 'old Stars' (flat, white takkies) or 'Crocket and Jones'(leather shoes) identified the wearer as a 'clever'(as opposed to a 'stupid') - where the distinction hinged partly on one's ability to afford beers and shebeens. A bounce in one's walk, a floral shirt, bell bottoms and stretched hair (permed and straightened) marked one as an Ivie. This contrasted with Mapantsula's with their two-toned shoes and 'attitude'. Iveys (or Softies) were allegedly polite and dutiful. "They would greet their girlfriends nicely. Would buy them brown bread and acha and crisps. They weren't Mapantsulas" (Interview PT, 1996). Moreover, they were happy to do

"part-time jobs: [they] worked at Checkers, did gardening or worked as [golf] caddies" (Ibid., 1996)22.

The emergence of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) in Katlehong and Tokoza during the late 1980's, as well as various youth congresses, partly displaced these practices. Many interviewees remembered a decline in such modish appearances and their replacement by the political T-shirt. Despite appearances, however, political mobilisation seldom supplanted these social networks. What it seems to have done instead was give to youth practices a new vocabulary: politics in addition to fashion. In many cases, COSAS and the various youth congresses rested on these informal contacts. So did the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO). When the Katlehong and Tokoza Civic Associations tried to give cohesion to a fragmented political environment they were strongly resisted. An interviewee remarked that, "COSATU and the Youth [Congress] were more active in mobilising residents than the civic". The latter was weakened, he argued, when "certain Azapo and PAC elements... wanted to hijack the civic body" (Interview with Matlatsi, 1996). Internal strife apparently reflected the opposition from certain youth gangs to subordination in a larger structure.

In this context there was a notable distance between apparent organisational structures and their practice on the ground. Members were associated through networks that asserted *de facto* autonomy from the political executive. Matlatsi thus comments that when the ANC was unbanned and street committees formed in Tokoza and Katlehong "the purpose was to bring back discipline within our ranks" (Ibid., 1996). In this regard, he continued, "certain members [of the Youth Congress] were criminals and harassed people [and] some were involved in gang warfare" (Ibid., 1996). "When war started," he added, "everybody became [a] self defence unit. From the street committee to criminals to gangsters" (Ibid., 1996). This observation is crucial.

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[22] It would be misleading to assume that style and fashion were direct measures of class, geography *et al.* The choice of fashion and style often reflected idiosyncratic concerns. In this regard clothes and accessories themselves may not have spoken of political economy. Their mode of attainment certainly did.

Despite ostensible affiliation to the political organisations, SDU structures were often linked to sub-terrainean social networks. As a result they had their own internal hie. rchies and *modus operandi*. They seldom functioned according to a code or strategy determined by the civic or any political organisation. The Police and the army massively underestimated this autonomy. Military Intelligence seems to have confused civic claims with practice in the field. According to the former, that is, SDU's had the following operational structure: each street had its own commander who was in turn accountable to the Block commander who was in turn was accountable to the Sectional commander who was in turn was accountable to the Area commander who was in turn a member of the Supreme Command. This almost certainly did not happen. In many cases targets and schedules were determined idiosyncratically. A SDU combatant thus described how fightinr was often preceded by heavy drinking and dagga smoking - during which the method and objective for the day would be discussed (Casca Mokoena, .Tokoza, 18/8/95).

Numerous cease-fires were thus violated by 'renegade' units disregarding the military-political structures to whom they were supposedly accountable. In this regard, several members of the Supreme Command angrily distinguished between 'real' and 'criminal' SDU's in order to differentiate those under its control and those not . It is my belief that the conditions for a binding 'peace-treaty' were created, not by political design, but by the logistics of the war. As the fighting escalated and SDU's felt out-gunned - with their 'qutus' (home-made weapons), knives *etc.*- the conflict entered a new stage. The scale of fighting required much greater coordination between local units. Funds needed to be raised widely and training was required. Most importantly, units needed to arrange warning and defensive systems that often required a combined effort. In this way a military-type leadership emerged that had actual meaning on the ground. When a peace treaty was signed by units under the KATORUS Central Command and the leaders of the SPU's in May 1994, it thus mostly held.

I have argued so far that conflict in KATORUS was overdetermined. It was the product of the violent unity produced by three autonomous but interrelated processes. The first, and the most important, saw the progressive alienation of

hostel workers from the trade-union movement as the latter embraced political movements outside the factory gate. This created a political opening for the Inkatha Freedom Party to fill the space left by FOSATU-allied unions. But I have suggested also that whereas this shift certainly aggravated social relations betwee: hostel residents and township based political movements elsewhere, only in Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus did this take the form of a protracted urban war. What explains the particular form of the KATORUS violence, I have argued, was the force given to it separately by the battle between the Phola Park informal settlement and the Tokoza hostels and the taxi violence. It was, in this regard, a specifically local conflict that was not simply resolved by a national political settlement.

Most importantly, I have suggested that the condition of the KATORUS war(s) was the growing preeminence in trade-union politics, from the early 1980's, of what has been called social-movement unionism, or what was termed at the time as a *charterist* union tendency against a *workerist* one. The articulation between industrial unions and township-based political movements had two primary consequences: it saw the isolation of migrant workers from the new-styled unionism and it gave rise to civic organisations. These two developments must be understood together because they both shared a common denominator: the growing influence of the theory of National Democratic Revolution.

We have seen that the strategic and conceptual implications of NDR made it possible to think the possibility of a strategic alliance between working-class movements and populist ones pursuing a nationalist agenda. We have seen in an earlier section that in stressing the multi-class nature of the apartheid experience, the proponents of NDR insisted that a political unity could be forged from a complex sociology, because all black persons were oppressed as racial subjects. I have suggested, therefore, that the possibility of civic organisations emerged in this politico-theoretical space that allowed trade-unionists to think in terms of class alliances. I have suggested also was that this politico-strategic

alliance was only thinkable within the theory of NDR[23]. What this meant also was that any politics informed or arising from the theory of National Democratic Revolution was ineluctably geared to the capture of the national state and was necessarily disinterested or hostile to political issues not attached to such a horison. Indeed, a politics inspired by the theory of NDR was driven to reduce every political campaign to its terms or reveal itself to be at best a political voluntarism, or else arbitrary. This last point is important. Only if the apartheid experience was one of *national* oppression did the alliance make sense. If not, there was no common interest between workers and members of other classes. But more importantly, only if the apartheid experience generated *objective* interests in national democratic revolution, ones that could be read *a priori* from the structure of the political-economy, could political organisations seriously claim to speak on behalf of the nationally oppressed. In other words, only if the 'people' acted like the *people* as defined by the theory of National Democratic Revolution, could civics, and even the African National Congress more generally, legitimately claim to represent them. When certain migrant workers and other township residents (that I have called 'traditionally inclined) seemed disinterested in the political campaigns that issued from a nationalist politics they were defined as atavistic, that is, obstacles to the realisation of the people's will. In KATORUS, for example, 'social conservatives' were stigmatised by civic organisations and other UDF-aligned structures precisely because they were not principally attached to african nationalist political objectives. Hostel residents, that is, seemed interested in political aims different to those apparently issuing from the apartheid experience and, therefore, refused to be captured to the terms of NDR's politico-theoretical problematic. What was at stake in Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus, therefore, was precisely the definition of the *people* or the *community*. In other words, what was violently contested in the war(s), at least in practice, was the very social and political consensus both assumed and required by the nationalist politics of the 1980's; one that concerned a) the automatic right of civic organisations and UDF-aligned structures to speak on

[23] I do not mean this as an absolute statement; i.e. that only NDR permitted the notion of class alliances, but rather that within the existing political repertoire of South African trade-unions it was only NDR that permitted such a possibility.

behalf of residents, to speak as the (objectively) appointed representatives of the people and b) the content of the objective interests that the apartheid experience issued.

We have seen so far that the current definition of local government, although making a concession to certain notions of political plurality *vis-a-vis* who represents the community, is nonetheless determined to pre-define the content of local governments function in accordance with the believed objective interests of the *community* as defined via the theory of NDR.

SECTION 6: LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE AFTERMATH

In this section I want to reconcile two major themes in this paper: the dominant conception of local government in South Africa as primarily a managerial institution and the social consensus that was contested during the KATORUS war(s). I will argue that the response of Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston to the aftermath of this conflict(s) reveals, in the practical s[illegible], exactly the consequences of the current definition of local government. That is, the authorities in question, in being deemed autonomous bodies were left to take political responsibility for the developmental requirements of the area, now enormous, while at the same time expected to fulfill their technical mandate as service delivery agents. As we shall see this not only prevented them from grasping, or even trying to grasp, the complex social conditions produced by the fighting but even from fulfilling their technocratically defined role as agents of delivery.

In the aftermath of the fighting local government plans were still informed by national development principles and regional policy that took for granted that there was social consensus in KATORUS about the broad objectives of the RDP. In this regard the 'current situation' was treated as a problem for management: how could councils realise development plans in a post-war conjuncture. Despite the violence of the conditions, despite the specificity of the local, Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston still pursued policies informed by regional frameworks and national principles. It shall be argued here that these development plans and interventions were merely inscribed in the spatial logic described earlier. Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston's very narrow conception of their political function - reinforced by the general definition of local government - meant that they were concerned primarily with management and administrative functions related to service provision and the RDP, rather than political challenges arising from the war(s). In other words, the very social consensus disputed by the war(s) was taken as the point of departure.

It will be argued here that the local governments in question tried to discharge this managerial functio by trying either to avoid or to criminalise certain political

and social practices arising from the fighting. That is, they tried doggedly to perform their role *in spite* of the conditions. The result was a general state of vacillation, delay so that in many cases very little infrastructure was repaired or rebuilt.

The Development Facilitation Act

During the course of 1994 ANC politicians and the South African National Civic Organisation began to worry that institutional obstacles were hampering reconstruction and development in former African areas. In this regard they sought remedy in legislation. The Development Facilitation Act (DFA) provided mechanisms to 'fastrack' development by 'streamlining' certain bureaucratic processes. In particular it provided for Development and Planning Commissions in each province that would advise the Premier (or appropriate MEC) on the following matters:

- policy and laws related to planning development in general; and land development in particular
- policy and laws related to the identification, assembly and release of land for development; particularly for the benefit of low-income and historically disadvantaged communities
- policy and laws related to engineering infrastructure, services and related to services to be provided by public authorities (Chapter II, Section 14, DFA).

In addition the Act allowed a Commission to perform any function related to land development; where 'function' could be determined by the Premier and/or designated MEC[24]. Moreover, the decision of a Provincial Commission was binding on all local authorities within its jurisdiction. The Act did provide for tribunals in the case of disputes or non-performance. These bodies were

[24] Provided the area of jurisdiction was compatible with Schedule 6 of the Interim Constitution.

empowered to make rulings that carried the same weight as those made by a magistrate's court[25].

The new dispensation suggested exciting opportunities for the Eastern Gauteng Services Council. It was especially encouraged by Section 14 of Act. The latter enabled a Commission to select the "appropriate levels of government at which planning should be carried out"[26] (Development Facilitation Act, p.22). This meant that a Provincial commission could recommend to the Premier that these functions be performed by, say, the EGSC. If this happened the Council would have legal (and enforceable) rights to planning and development in the region[27]. This is exactly what the EGSC was looking for. After all, we saw in section 3 that prior attempts to orchestrate regionally coordinated development produced only agreements in principle. The Services Council was thus at pains to present itself as an ideal candidate for appointment.

On the 1st and 2nd of July 1996, the EGSC hosted a *'Development Today'* roadshow. The spectacle had two primary audiences: the Gauteng Provincial Government and 'East Rand' local government officials. Presentations stressed the similarity between the EGSC's proposals and the DFA. In a speech titled *'From Current Reality to Desired Future'* the Council re-stated its *'Spatial Development Principles'*. It was difficult not to notice their convergence with some of the DFA's 'General Principles for land development'. These were followed the next day by a bus tour of the urban core and a helicopter view of rural areas. The excursions were intended to demonstrate the EGSC's familiarity

[25] The DFA potentially raises an interesting legal question. If, for example, a tribunal (as envisaged in the Act) rules unfavorably on a dispute raised by a local authority, does the latter still have recourse to the protection of the Interim Constitution ? The Interim Constitution stated that: "a local government shall be autonomous and... shall be entitled to regulate its affairs". It continues: "Parliament or a provincial legislature shall not encroach on the powers, functions and structure of a local government to such an extent as to compromise the fundamental status, purpose and character of local government". Could a local government object to an order or decision by a Provincial Development and Planning Commission on the following grounds: (1) that it interferes with the local governments' autonomy; or (2) that it "encroaches" on its powers, functions and structure or (3) that it compromises its "fundamental purpose"? And if the local authority won the case would it make the entire Act unconstitutional, or merely rule the particular instruction *ultra vires*?

[26] See the Development Facilitation Act, Section 14 (a) and (b).

[27] While it might be tempting to view such a body - that is, a regional organisation responsible for planning and development in an area - as the backdoor route to a metropolitan chamber, there is an important difference. The DFA route grants ultimate authority to the Provincial government. This is certainly not the case with a metropolitan chamber.

with the region, its understanding of developmental problems and its strategic and technical capacity to deal with them. The Council was eager to prove that it was ideally suited to prepare both a comprehensive framework for development in the area and negotiate a shared conceptual framework for growth.

If the roadshow was intended to illustrate the suitability of the EGSC for regional development and planning, it seemed to had another function as well. The event was carefully choreographed to publicize the close relationship between the Province and the Council; and in particular, the convergence of its plans with those of the DFA. This carried an implicit threat to local governments: be prepared to realise your earlier commitments in principle, or be forced to do so later.

Non-performance seemed to the Council one of two possibilities: it was either the result of apartheid belligerence or it reflected a genuine methodological dilemma. Over and above the former, it was thought unlikely that the fundamental principles of development and planning where themselves a problem. Documents produced for the 'Roadshow', for example, supposed a linear process of decision-making. It started with 'raw data' and ended finally with 'informed decision-making'. The graph assumed that the raw data spoke for itself. 'Information' when properly gathered produced 'knowledge' that would, in turn, develop into a common understanding. When conflict did arise it occurred at the level of 'understanding' precisely because the raw data and had not been properly collected. (EGSC, p.15) And this, the EGSC believed, could be remedied by an appropriate methodology.

It proposed that a development strategy be sourced from two basic processes: public participation and a scan of the 'external environment'. 'Community-based' organisations, on the one hand, would evaluate land, housing, transport and services in order to develop a schedule of social 'needs'. An environmental scan on the other hand would make for a better understanding of the institutional and administrative context in which decision-making took place. The result of the process would be a 'growth and development strategy' for eastern Gauteng.

This methodology was believed to create suitable conditions for a 'shared vision' (EGSC, p. 23). The EGSC also suggested that planning be conducted in a

federated, regional structure. 'Eastern Gauteng' would be divided into two geographic zones, urban and rural. Each would have its own Coordinating Committee, The EGSC's urban and rural planning teams would form the core of each committee respectively; and the remainder would be delegates from the local authorities within their jurisdiction. The urban committee would receive a representative from each TLC and TRC, and LAC delegates would attend in rural areas. These committees would, in effect, be the work-horses of a development framework. Here, information would be marshaled, coordinated and integrated to produce a consensus schedule of regional development (EGSC, p.19).

EGSC documentation also referred to the work of urban and rural committees as 'technical' (EGSC, p.19). This followed from the methodology discussed above. If the raw data was correctly gathered and processed in the appropriate bodies it would lead to an 'informed' vision of development - where informed here meant a vision that coincided with the then RDP. The role of committees, therefore, was to undertake these technical functions (coordination and integration) to gather the data that would speak for itself.

What eluded the EGSC methodology was the possibility that different priorities spoke, not simply of apartheid belligerence and/or of social infrastructural priorities, but rather of different concepts of the city and different functions for local governments. This was implicitly understood by the DFA itself. It sought to facilitate the implementation of the RDP by not making its implementation dependent on the political will of local government. As a result the Act effectively displaced policy-making away from local authorities to the Provincial government. Even the space granted third tier governments to develop their own Land Development Objectives (LDO's) was circumscribed by Provincial oversight. 'East Rand' officials reported at the time of writing, for example, that the EGSC had issued guidelines for determining development priorities. These came with an implicit criteria for selection: Land Development Objectives must privilege social infrastructural spending. In other words, the political choices available to local governments had effectively been narrowed. They could select land development objectives within a pre-determined range of choices. They

could choose provided they chose RDP-type 'objectives'. Local government LDOs, moreover, had to be vetted by the EGSC. If the Services Council disapproved the selection it could refer them to the MEC for Development Planning in the Gauteng Provincial Government who could, in turn, refer them back to the respective local government for reworking.

For Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston, therefore, Provincial supervision existed (in the form of the EGSC) in case local choices diverged sufficiently to be a matter of principle. In other words, if local choices did not privilege social investment they could be overruled by the Provincial Government. Most local government councillors, however, were happy to accept the political priorities of the then RDP. Even in those Councils where the ANC majority was marginal the RDP vocabulary was hegemonic. In this regard, policy-making in these Councils referred not to political policy-making proper but rather to institutional management, 'transformation' and the mechanics of implementation. That is, in Councils like Germiston, for example, the challenge was understood to be realising RDP principles.

Germiston

After the local government elections on November 1 1995, the African National Congress found itself the majority party in the Greater Germiston Transitional Local Council. In this regard it set about 'transforming' the institution. Maverick Koetz, head of the RDP department, commented:

"...you may have the electoral majority. And yet [the councillors]are meeting up against well experienced white officials that have been in power a long time. They know all the little bureaucratic procedures. They know the technical parts and how to work very well. There is a sense, in fact, [that] they are controlling the show from behind the scene. So the councils are talking all so very nicely about the RDP, but [as] someone said to me privately the politicians are busy with trivial things. Officials don't care about local development and are not interested in [the RDP]" (Interview with Maverick Koetz, 1996).

Koetz suggested here that newly elected councillors were easily distracted by details. They lacked sufficient experience to understand the political

consequences of the apparently technical reports. This gave officials latitude to make political choices by presenting them as technical decisions already determined by the situation. As a result, Koetz remarked: "my office is very close to the politicians. I am their eyes and ears in private - that is why I have the right to intervene in all departments and say: Hey guys what is happening,... why are you doing this, who are you?" (Ibid., 1996). In other words, Koetz monitored other officials to ensure that they were acting on their political instructions. In this regard the Council had granted him 'executive powers' precisely to supervise parallel departments. Koetz termed this '*steamrollering transformation*'. "The old way of thinking," he remarked, "says [that] when I want to speak about something [in another department] I have to speak to the head of the department [HOD]. With me [that] has gone... If I see non-performance... I can get [a] statement and take this matter to Council. It embarrasses them. They are silly not to perform" (Ibid., 1996).In this way, he argued, the Germiston Council was able to discard its former 'military-style' management - where inter-departmental relations were conducted only through the HOD - and was, therefore, better placed to realise its developmental mandate.

It was also suggested anonymously that 'transformation' in Germiston involved more than bureaucratic accountability. A senior ANC official remarked that policy was often formulated in the ANC caucus assisted by officials. "When [these policies] come to Council they are sort of rubber stamped. Decisions are taken before [hand]" (Germiston official, 1996). Despite claims by the Mayor to temper this account, 70% of the new budget was nonetheless allocated for capital and maintenance expenditure in Katlehong.

Council priorities thus marked an important departure. Previous interventions were mostly confined to investment in the industrial infrastructure. Even the later notion of 'balance' was referenced to the local economy. Interventions in this regard, sought to encourage a range of economic activities to include business, commerce and retail sectors, in addition to the historical role of industry. Simply put: 'balance' referred to variety in the field of supply. Prior to the new Council, therefore, the satisfaction of private choice was deemed a by-product of economic growth narrowly defined. Employment in a growing industrial,

business, retail or commercial sectors was deemed a sufficient condition for household consumption. New policies, in contrast, privileged social spending. Germiston since the 1995 election shared with other RDP-type interventions a commitment to growth through public, social expenditure. This meant that new policies did not simply re-direct municipal spending.

Council interventions were also accompanied by a changed *modus operandi*. The TLC (following the then national RDP) adopted the principle of 'community participation' to determine inventories for public expenditure. Katlehong was thus divided into 14 'Action Areas'. Each section had its own RDP committee and RDP coordinator. The latter reported directly to an RDP facilitator who, in turn, delivered all reports to the Council. The latter was then responsible for developing a schedule of social priorities based on these submissions. In this way the Council was able to 'know' what the 'key issues' were. That is, it concluded authoritatively that "the most needed thing is housing and then sports facilities and [then the] delivery of adequate services." (ibid., 1996).

Germiston thus took steps to align its bureaucratic structure to its new policy 'choices'. In this regard, the new HOD played an important political role. He made apparent to new Councillors the meaning of technical information and the choices that it made possible (or not). It was perhaps less easy, therefore, for an official in Germiston to pass off political choices as *fait accompli*, by presenting them as options already determined by the circumstances.

What is important for our purposes is that 'transformation' in Germiston was symptomatic of the dominant conception of local government in South Africa. The Council understood that its primary role was to realise the RDP. Local political choice referred almost exclusively to the mode of delivery and the order of developmental priorities. What was most remarkable in Germiston was that the conflict was thought simply to be an obstacle for delivery. It was in no way believed to affect the political choices the Council assumed as given. That is,

fighting may have altered the sequence of infrastructural expenditure, but it did not make the Germiston council think in 'new ways' about its function or role[28].

Alberton and Boksburg

In Alberton a narrow election victory by the ANC vitiated 'steamroller transformation'. As a result the Council appointed an existing official to preside over development; what it called 'Community Services'. This was true also of Boksburg where the former City Engineer was given responsibility for the RDP. In this regard it postponed sizable financial allocations to Tokoza in the short term by leaving this responsibility to the Special Presidential Project (SPP). The latter was established to rebuild the infrastructure, services and houses destroyed in the war. For this purpose it was give an up-front budget of R650 million and another R2,4 billion allocated through National and Provincial line department expenditures. For the purposes of the SPP, local authorities were made responsible for implementation and maintenance. Alberton, however, was apprehensive about this role in the aftermath of violence. Mike Morkel, leader of the Project Management Team for the Special Presidential Project, observed that in Alberton "officials fight shy of crucial decisions... They don't want to work out political strategies to deal with complex issues." Instead, they " prefer to adopt a hands-off approach," he added (Interview with Mike Morkel, 1995).

This preferred detachment certainly resulted from the Council's own understanding of the violence. John Welman, the Head of 'Community Services', explained that fighting started when the unbanning of the ANC politicised criminal, youth gangs. The latter , he suggested, then attacked IFP hostels (Interview with Welman, 1995). Since the 1994 elections, however, conflict had "... passed because youth criminal instigators [were] taken up in many community programmes" (Ibid, 1995). Alberton's interventions in

[28] E.P Thompson, in his well known book *The Poverty of Theory and other Essays* (Merlin Press: London,1978) suggested that 'experience' is a startling process. It "walks in without knocking at the door, and announces deaths, crises of subsistence, trench warfare, unemployment, inflation, genocide. People starve: their survivors think in new ways about the market. People are imprisoned: in prison they meditate in new ways about the law" (Thompson:PT, p.201). I have criticised this elsewhere for assuming exactly what needs to be doubted: the relationship between experience and knowledge and, therefore, between experience and social/political interests.

KATORUS were thus underscored by a profound anxiety: "The Alberton TLC is hoping it won't provoke politicisation" (Ibid., 1995). In this regard, and unsurprisingly, the antidote was believed to be 'depoliticisation': a situation, were "people don't take [to] boycotts and stayaways. People say they want to live their lives" (Ibid., 1995).

Alberton's usage of the term 'political' is used here in the sense I have discussed earlier. It refers to the *management* of the situation to facilitate development; in this case repairs and rebuilding to Tokoza. The council, however, is fearful of this function but has no political space to define another role for itself. This is arises partly from Alberton's own reading of the war(s) that precludes an explicitly political function. Moreover, the management role given to it by the SPP is buttressed by a national political consensus that encourages such a definition for local government. As a result, Alberton (and Boksburg) were (at the time of writing) exploring strategies that by-passed 'politics' as they understood it. Privatisation, in this regard, seemed to them promising. They were considering:

- 'privatised' contracts between the local authority and service users. They assumed that 'individualised' contracts - for rent and services, accommodation *et al*, would vitiate collective action by personalising responsibility for these items
- The term also referred to the use of intermediaries to perform a host of functions: from debt collection to refuse removal

Alberton and Boksburg were eager to enter contracts with hostel residents for accommodation and services so that they could hold them individually accountable for their bills. In this regard they simultaneously improved their legal capacity to evict defaulters through the courts. These measures were symptomatic of a deep concern. In Boksburg , the Council continued to provide services to these institutions at a cost of roughly R75 thousand a month. In return they received only R15 thousand in payment for rent *etc.* In Tokoza the Alberton TLC calculated that it required R112 500 per month to maintain accommodation for 7 500 beds. It too only received R15 000 a month (Ibid., 1995).

These problems were compounded for Alberton by the Special Presidential Project. Welman complained that "damage in Vosloorus was not as severe as in Tokoza or Katlehong. As a result RDP funding goes much further in Vosloorus" (Ibid., 1995) In Tokoza and Katlehong, in contrast, "we are virtually building new towns" (Ibid. 1995). The Boksburg TLC was thus able to finance upgrading to Nguni and Sotho hostels in Vosloorus from its portion of SPP funds. Alberton and Germiston, in contrast, had more widespread repairs to perform, which made the quality of the Vosloorus upgrade unaffordable. As a result Alberton and Germiston had not only to finance maintenance for the hostels in their jurisdiction, they had to largely pay for the improvements as well.

Upgrading for the Boksburg TLC, however, brought its own problems. Even though the costs were mostly covered by the Special Presidential Project, the Council became responsible for future maintenance to improved municipal infrastructure and, therefore, to increased upkeep costs. Boksburg too wanted to recover any future costs from municipal levies and so on.

All three Councils believed, therefore, that 'privatisation' was a way of improving levels of payment if they created the legal machinery to enforce it. It seemed attractive to officials, moreover, because it removed the day-to-day management of the hostels from the local government itself. In this way the Council hoped to displace any consequent political action away from itself - and presumably onto the private company. Local governments, that is, were not clear how to discharge their managerial function without antagonising political sensitivities. In this regard they worried about the powerful Induna structures that controlled the hostels since the conflict. In their zest to avoid confrontation, however, they overlooked (or underestimated) certain consequences of the war(s).

During the violence many hostel residents lost their jobs as a result of perennial non-attendance. The often peripheral geography of many hostels made residents utterly reliant on kombi-taxis for transport. Given their unemployment, however, many could not afford a trip even to look for work. In this regard 'no-go' zones further increased taxi costs. This was specially true of Kwesini, KwaMazibuko and Buyafuthe hostels in Katlehong; were the rail-line had been destroyed during the conflict. The cost of a return trip to look for work was

usually unaffordable. Hostel residents were thus caught in the metaphorical Catch-22 situation.

This affected the general economy of the hostels. Spaza-shop owners, shebeen proprietors, tailors and cobblers all complained that residents could no longer afford their services. This was further aggravated by the disappearance of former township clientele. Mafuleka, a hostel resident in Tokoza and a local 'businessman', complained that prior to fighting he had several taxis in his service to drive home inebriated township patrons. Since the fighting his clientele had mostly disappeared (Mafuleka, 1995).

Apart from affordability, individualised contracts ignored also the political affects of the war(s). We have seen that the threat of converting hostels into family units, the conflict with Phola Park and the KTA and later the IFP recruitment drive saw the formation of powerful hostel associations. In particular Induna-led branches of the National Hostel Residents Association (NAHORA) were established Given the militarisation of hostels during the conflict, and the consequent loss of municipal authority, moreover, Alberton and Germiston had been using Indunas and hostel associations to collect rents *etc.* Council officials worried, however, that Indunas tolerated non-payment, charged very low rates and even misappropriated funds. Individualised contracts were hoped, therefore, to make such structures dispensable by compelling ordinary residents to pay their rents and service charges directly to the local government. Individual leases were hoped, moreover, to restore municipal authority through the backdoor. Contracts would ostensibly allow TLCs accurately to determine the size of hostel populations and, therefore, regulate their occupancy.

It is difficult to understand, however, why, if Indunas received much of their post-war authority from their control of services and so on, they would *not* have opposed evictions; even if they were directed at individuals. Boksburg and Alberton's somewhat simple approach to the situation was symptomatic of their understanding of their function as local governments. More shall be said about this in a moment.

Alberton's attitude to housing repairs and refugees, moreover, was also a function of its general state of apprehension. During the violence thousands of

people fled their homes often because they were proximate to hostile neighbours, destroyed and/or were caught in areas of intensive fighting. In Phenduka Section in Tokoza houses opposite hostels 1, 2 and 3 on Khumalo Road were mostly abandoned. Shortly afterwards, several residents from Khalanyoni hostel (destroyed during fighting with Phola Park) entered these homes. More commonly, however, they were occupied by residents displaced from other areas of Tokoza and/or Katlehong - either because they were sympathetic to the IFP or because they were alleged to be so[29]. Mike Morkel, project team manager of the Special Presidential Project, once commented: "They don't want to get involved. They see it as a political issue" (Mike Morkel, 1995). Officials did attempt to negotiate with Transnet, the railways para-statal, for the vacant land behind the hostels as a potential source of alternative accommodation for the 'displacees'. After the para-statal withdrew, however, the process stalled. Officials from both the local governments and the SPP did not know what to do with existing residents. Repairs to homes in the area were thus halted because the SPP refused to repair 'illegally occupied' houses.

Repairs to hostels and housing raised also another concern. Significant RDP investment would increase the costs of maintaining the repaired (and sometimes improved) infrastructure. This was particularly true in Germiston and Alberton. Despite external financing for the projects all councils would be responsible for upkeep to the area after the project ends. Officials worried that R600 million rands worth of investment across KATORUS translated into massively increased maintenance costs all around.

RDP-type investments seemed also to neglect the long-term sustainability of such projects. There was often inadequate consideration of the capacity of local government to service the new infrastructure into the future. There was already a concern that rising maintenance costs would pressurise upwards the costs of rates and levies payable by industry, business and by households in former 'white' suburbs.

[29] The diverse geography of refugees disputes conventional taxonomies of the conflict that posit hostels against the township. 'Displacees' confirm the large (albeit minority) IFP support in the township and gesture, moreover, to significant intra-township fighting as well.

Investment plans rested on the hope, therefore, that increased financial obligations would partly be offset by increased levels of payment from township residents themselves. This made the low level of service payments in KATORUS critical. Despite the Masakhane campaign Boksburg officials widely agreed that levels of payment per household had not changed. They remained fairly stable at between 10% and 15%[30]. In Alberton the situation was similar. Levels of payment seldom rose above 20% of potential rate-payers. Germiston figures, furthermore, failed to distinguish between flat and economical rates. The latter referred to a metered charge that fluctuated according to usage. It was usually calculated to approximate the costs of providing the service - although different TLC's offered varying scales of rebate. A -rate on the other hand referred to a fixed tariff (usually substantially below cost-recovery) that was paid irrespective of consumption. Reported levels of 60% payment in Katlehong were found, therefore, to translate into 60% of households paying the R40 flat-rate!

We can characterise the management approaches of all three councils as follows. In varying degree they pursued their traditional functions *in spite* of the conditions, in spite of the KATORUS war(s). Germiston, for example, continued to try align its bureaucratic system with the developmental imperatives of the then RDP; that is 'transform' itself. And it continued to determine schedules for infrastructural expenditure. Boksburg, following the Special Presidential Project, involved itself mainly in infrastructural repair and upgrading to hostels. Alberton was more wary of a developmental role and mostly confined itself to the conventional functions of service delivery. In other words, all three local

[30] The dismal state of payment was sometimes disguised by municipal accounting. Statistics were often no more than a ratio of what the council expected to receive for the month against what it actually collected. They did not necessarily reveal how many people actually paid for their services. In Boksburg, for example, the council anticipated R2 813 489 in December 1995 to cover, not just the costs of services, but also the costs of its administration *etc.* for Vosloorus. It collected just R257 276. According to the Council levels of payment for that month where, therefore, only 9%. Contrast this with the same ratio for November 1995: just one month earlier it was as 'high' as 21%. This did not mean that levels of payment dropped 12% in Vosloorus in one month. The sometimes discrepancy between estimated levels of real household contributions and TLC figures reflected the inclusion in many statistics of income collected from other sources. In one month, therefore, a local authority might receive, in addition to service payments, 11 months of arrears - paid by people wanting to buy or sell a home for whom all outstanding amounts to the Council need to be settled in order for the transaction to proceed, a down payment by a developer or a philanthropic donation. All these contributions were included in the equation. As a result payment figures did not necessarily reveal how many households actually paid for their services.

governments treated the fighting in Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus as obstacles to the execution of their managerial functions.

We shall see, however, that it was precisely when Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston tried to exercise a primarily managerial/ administrative role that they compounded the conditions that made it difficult for them to execute this function in the first place.

Contingency

During the four-year war(s) almost all violent incidents were recorded as political. In this regard the region was (statistically) purged of crime *per se*. After the 1994 general election, however, and the formation of the Government of National Unity there was a concerted effort to de-emphasise the political dimensions of continuing sporadic incidents. This was certainly related to the official culture of reconciliation and 'nation-building' that tried to stigmatise any further incidents as a-political. Complicit with this development was the reduction of violence either to a function of socio-economic deprivation (a scarcity of resources-type argument, such that the conditions for peace were believed to be development) or a function of simple criminality.

In this regard development was believed to be a condition of lasting peace. This meant also that those bodies that were (or alleged to be) either opposed or hostile to development plans were treated simply as criminals. In this regard, former many former combatants were no longer regarded as 'freedom fighters', 'defenders of the community', or victims of apartheid repression and/or deprivation. If they had not joined the formal process the tendency was to treat them simply as criminals. As a result peace in the area was largely abrogated to the police as a security problem. In other words, peace in the area rested on two related elements: *development*, to reduce the impulse to violence and *policing* to ensure that development could proceed smoothly. This approach merely reinforced the managerial instincts of local governments.

Policing

During 1994 nine hundred former combatants were 'assimilated' into the South African police services. It was thought that the integration of former para-militaries into the formal structures of the police would remove them from the influence or control of their 'commanders'. It would subject them to a disciplined regime that would direct para-military energies away from civil conflict towards peace-keeping and crime prevention. Moreover, persons from the Gauteng Ministry of Safety and Security reasoned that if former SDU and SPU members performed duties together their joint experience would build mutual trust. This would, in turn, help them transcend their sectarian politics. Together Provincial politicians - and Jesse Duarte in particular - hoped that these changes would impose a new institutional order on former combatants and hence remove them from an environment impulsive to war.

- At the beginning of the process SDU and SPU commanders were asked to select personnel for medical and aptitude tests. These persons underwent four weeks training by the South African Police Services and if they qualified former para-militaries were deployed at police stations around the area. By the 1996 'community constables' (as they became known) constituted 60 - 70 % of the KATORUS police services (Interview with Pieterse, Dawie (Captain). at the SAPS Germiston Area Commission, Germiston 21/8/95).

  Persons invited to apply for integration usually came from para-militaries already committed to the peace process. In this regard they were drawn from the SDU's falling under the jurisdiction of the KATORUS Central Command (KCC), on the one hand, and SPU's on the other. What the process falsely assumed, however, was the political and military sovereignty of the KCC. In other words, it was believed that KCC structures spoke for most 'real' SDU's. We have already seen, however, that not all self-defence units felt themselves subordinate to this structure. Many had their own autonomous command structures motivated by often very different imperatives. Their *reason-d'être*, often related to the peculiar circumstances of the of the parochial conflict from which they originated. It was not always exhausted by the generic IFP-ANC conflict.

We have already seen also that the KATORUS war was an accumulation of wars - an accumulation of circumstances - given 'ruptural unity' by the mobilisations of the (recently unbanned) ANC and the IFP. Despite the inscription of most of these conflicts into the language and form of an ANC-IFP clash, the terms of certain micro-disputes retained their specificity. In other words, we cannot simply attribute a uniform set of motives to all combatants. Certain very local antagonisms regained preeminence after the general peace, precisely because they were no longer subsumed into the binary logic of the ANC-IFP clash.

Paradoxically these forces were often obscured by the very success of the May 1994 peace agreement. The apparent authority of the KCC and SPU commanders obscured forces that chose to opt out of the process. That is, they were concealed precisely because the KCC was assumed to be representative.

After the Central Command had been in operation for a year, a civic spokesperson boasted: "Quite honestly, we have an accountable structure where the SDU's are under control. Our commanders are very disciplined... All of them want peace" (then civic leader Louis Sebeko quoted in the Mail and Guardian, July 8 1994). When violence again disturbed Tokoza in July 1994, more than a month after the peace treaty, ANC and civic leaders were quick to disclaim responsibility. The violence, however, had been blamed on disaffected SDU's. Phillipa Garson, a correspondent for the Mail and Guardian reported at the time: "During a heated meeting this week, the SDU Central Command - a structure coordinating 600-odd SDU members operating in Tokoza's 14 Sections - vehemently denied that any of its members had [violent] intentions. [It] blamed misinformation on "opportunists who are acting on their own" (Mail and Guardian, 8 July 1994). Another person from the Central Command commented: "We are angry at some of the things being said. Those people are not SDU members. We don't know who they are, except that they come from the shebeens. Our soldiers are disciplined" (Mail and Guardian, 8 July 1994).

When seven people were killed and ten injured in Phola Park on the 15 December 1995, local and provincial politicians reacted similarly. Despite residents' claims that SDU's were involved (and despite witness accounts),

'community leaders' and the Gauteng MEC for Safety and Security, dismissed the allegations. Instead, Jesse Duarte blamed the violence on "criminals calling themselves SDU's" (Mail and Guardian, 15 December, 1995).

Phola Park continued to be a site of lethal and periodic fighting. Again in June 1996 clashes erupted in the area. Attacks sometimes targeted exactly those former combatants who had entered the police services. Indeed, some 'community constables' houses were burnt during the fighting. Cumulatively these sporadic incidents scuttled any development plans for the area. The New Housing Company (Newhco), for example, withdrew from a project to build houses there partly as a result of the violence.

Units that integrated into the police, moreover, sometimes had a dual personality. On the one hand, the SAPS demanded that 'community constables' fall under their sole jurisdiction. On the other hand former 'commanders' continued to make claims on their former combatants. There were numerous reported cases in this regard. In December, 1995, for example, there were claims that certain 'reservists' (community constables) were "undisciplined, trigger happy, out off control and unaccountable to the police" (Mail and Guardian 13 December, 1995). The accusations arose from an incident in Slovo Section were a reservist had shot and killed someone in a fit of rage. More importantly, the accusations referred to evidence that certain 'community constables' continued to take orders from their former commanders. In other words an informal leadership structure paralleled the SAPS hierarchy.

The end of fighting did not just see the criminalisation of some former combatants.[31]. It applied in certain cases to refugees as well.

[31] The semantic dispute which opposes SDU's and criminals implicitly mirrors the conceptual distinction between contingent and managed state relations. When para-military units obeyed the authority of certain political structures, they were recognised by these organisations as 'SDU's'. When they did not they were labeled criminals. In this sense 'criminal' refers to the forces of contingency. It describes those groups outside formal or acknowledged structures that interrupt the workings of the former. It is in this sense that KATORUS has seen increased criminal activity since the end of fighting.

Phenduka Section

During the conflict 'IFP' 'displacees' (as refugees were called in KATORUS) from all over KATORUS took occupancy of deserted homes in Phenduka Section in Tokoza - abandoned by families fleeing intense fighting in that area. Those new families were met by displaced persons from the ex-Khalanyoni hostel - destroyed during clashes with Phola Park.

Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston originally hoped that if repairs where undertaken impartially to all housing stock, refugees would return to their previous homes. Former residents of Phenduka Section indicated a willingness in this regard. This was not matched by existing occupants. Many claimed they were not safe in their original homes and preferred the apparent protection of proximate hostels. An IFP candidate commented at the time: "There is an attempt to find alternative places behind the hostels. People want to live in areas where they can exercise their rights and be safe. People did try to move back - but three people were killed in June [1995]. People [then] decided it was not worth trying" (Interview with Sipho Sithole, 1995).

IFP 'displacees' demanded new houses on Transnet land behind the existing hostels. The SPP refused. It was opposed to the politicised spatial configuration arising from the violence. In particular consultants were worried about a *de facto* IFP island in an ANC ocea[illegible]nterview with Morkel, Mike. KATORUS Special [illegible]sidential Project, 1995

Matters were further [illegible]cated by the local government elections on November 1, 199[illegible] office-bearers, supporters and candidates were confident of a victo[illegible]ard 7. The latter included all the Tokoza hostels as well as Phenduka Section. When voting started, however, many former residents of Phenduka arrived to vote in the Section of their official address. When hostel residents realised what was happening they tried to close access to the voting-station. Violence was mostly averted by the later intervention of a large army and police force. The incident merely confirmed to hostel residents and IFP 'displacees' the sinister motives of the ANC and further strengthened their resolve not to move.

On the 28 November, however, the Alberton Council began evicting 'illegal occupants' from the houses in Phenduka. Councillors were under growing pressure to return the houses to their original owners/occupants. Indeed, days before the ANC councillor for the Section led a march by legal owners/title-holders into the area.

On Wednesday the 11th of December, police assisted by the army, evicted many of the 'IFP' refugees. They planned to remove the remaining 500 families over the following days. By the next morning, however, 10 of the 16 evictees had already returned to the houses in Phenduka. Louis Sebeko - local ANC leader and member of the Alberton Executive Committee - reacted: "the IFP can exercise its democratic right to apply for an interdict but we will oppose that application" (Saturday Star, 14 December 1996). He continued: "We have laid criminal charges against those who have gone back into the houses they were occupying..." (Ibid., 1996). The unwillingness of refugees in Phenduka to return to their original homes, however, was premised on a worry that clandestine forces continued to threaten their safety in Tokoza and Katlehong.

Local governments' managerial definition was encouraged by these semantic developments after the fighting. In particular the de-emphasis of the politi legacy of the conflict and the criminalisation of some of its resultant practices discouraged an overtly political role for local government. In this context it seemed appropriate (and there was pressure) for Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston to continue primarily with service delivery and infrastructural development. Yet local governments' technocratic function, ironically, was also a condition for failing in terms of that role.

During the 1980's electrical cut-offs and the withdrawal of services were often matched by informal arrangements: most commonly electrical cables were re-connected by local informal technicians. This demonstrated the vitality, during this period, of local agents. In KATORUS these networks were reinforced by the war(s). The following dialogue, recorded during a Centre for Policy Studies focus group, for example, indicated the range of contenders in formal areas for the exercise of municipal-type functions. When asked who was best suited to administer their area a random group responded as follows:

- Street Committees [are best suited to solve our problems]
- I don't see the need for a street committee. To me a street committee does not exist...
- It could be the civic association
- I think it's the councillors. Civic associations are just messengers. Councillors have contact with higher authorities. They are able to contact people like Tokyo [Sexwale, Premier of the Gauteng Provincial Government]. They are the ones who should solve our problems because they are closer to the people at the top.
- I think they all work together. Street committees act as middlemen between the top and us at grassroots level. (Focus Group, 1995)

This debate was implicit in many group discussions. Disagreement hinged on the following: which organisation (street committee, civic or local government) was best able to communicate social 'needs' to higher tiers of government. There was a shared understanding that real authority rested with the Provincial Government or at the National level. Local Government, in this regard, was believed to be merely a messenger amongst a host of local bodies. It was not deemed to have sole responsibility for the area under its ostensible jurisdiction. In other words local councils in KATORUS (although this may have been true nationally as well) potentially competed with a host of agents to perform municipal-type functions. Local governments in KATORUS are thus faced with competition for jurisdiction and authority from a host of formal, informal and sometimes clandestine forces.

Indeed, Alberton's hesitance to govern was compounded by precisely the multiplicity of such intermediaries in the area. Government plans seemed constantly shadowed by other bodies that threatened to disrupt their implementation. SDU's, street committees, Induna structures *etc.* all gestured towards an enduring aspect of the KATORUS wars, and a source of constant worry: the presence of robust social and political networks that mediated between township/ hostel/ informal residents on the one hand and Council plans on the other. Throughout KATORUS, therefore, various committees, organisations and bodies regulated in a host of social activities. As a result the

more Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston pursued their managerial/administrative functions, to the neglect of a political role, so they failed to address the political legacy of the conflict: durable and active socio-political networks that competed with local governments for jurisdiction over certain areas. No matter how efficiently local government performed their service delivery/ developmental function, therefore, they merely reproduced the conditions for conflict with local social groupings.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that certain ambiguities in South African notions of local government are symptomatic of the incongruent philosophies implicit in their recent history.

On the one hand, the theory of National Democratic Revolution merely accommodated contingency in diachronic time. It simply appropriated other struggles to its teleological schema by reducing them to moments in a linear sequence that culminated finally in historical closure. We saw, for example that, unlike Black Consciousness, NDR treated the struggle against racial oppression (what it called national oppression) as the first stage in the struggle for socialism. Although the city was never explicitly theorised or discussed by the South African Communist Party or by other proponents of NDR, urban struggles were treated similarly. It is unlikely that civic politics was deemed another distinct stage of struggle. If they were we could have expected literature and pronouncements in this regard. It seems more likely that the capture of the city was (later) believed to be a *moment* of the national democratic revolution.

On the other hand, contemporary local government was strongly informed by the work of certain activist-intellectuals; several situated at the Johannesburg NGO, Planact. Their work, in turn, was often influenced by the writings of the French academic, Manuel Castells. He argued in *The City and the Grassroots* that urban political movements (what he called social movements) did not simply arise from the point of production but mobilised around specifically urban issues. In this regard he defined the city as a relatively autonomous political space. Although Castells never used the term 'autonomy' I have suggested that the specificity of the city *qua* political space was only thinkable within the Marxist tradition by way of Louis Althusser's concept of the social whole. Castells even credited his early ideas to Althusser.

I have argued that this tension was implicit in the couplet *city-community*, where the first term was given its meaning vis-a-vis NDR and the second via Manuel Castells. I have argued that this couplet informed the local government

negotiations during the political transition after the unbanning of the ANC and the current structure of local governments in South Africa. Moreover, and more importantly it informed the predominant understanding of their political function and also the concept of local democracy. I have suggested that this role is rendered ambiguous, in practice, by these incongruent theoretical legacies.

This tension is also manifest theoretically in the recently published book by Mzwanele Mayekiso. In *Township Politics: civic struggles for a new South Africa*, he writes: "...to link our community struggles to the traditional struggle for socialism requires us to consider carefully the new politics of what I call *working-class civil society*" (Mayekiso: 1996, p.13) (my emphasis). This last mentioned phrase is equivalent to the couplet city-community as discussed.

Civil society, in Mayekiso's usage, is a synonym for a social movement; a term he borrows explicitly from Manuel Castells and the text *City and the Grassroots* in particular. Civic organisations, in this regard, are deemed to be social movements representing a 'working-class civil society'. Mayekiso worries, however, that the term civil society has ambiguous meanings - what he calls 'progressive' and 'reactionary' potentials. "What is needed to combat (the agenda of imperialist development agencies) is a far more class conscious perspective on civil society, one that highlights those strategies and instruments of the working class that are crucial to social, political and economic progress" (ibid., p.14). Yet Mayekiso acknowledges too that his notion of *civil* society is potentially also contradictory. In this regard he asks questions that are reminiscent of NDR: "can... township civics represent poor and working people and the small but important black middle class at the same time? Can we represent people with homes as well as the homeless? Can we confront the diverse issues that divide people and cut-across our various identities?" (ibid., p. 13). Mayekiso acknowledges it is a 'tall order' (ibid., p. 13). He assures us, however, that is possible. The apparent paradox can be resolved because: "even in a democratic society we will continue to need civics to represent (residents') interests on socioeconomic (and hence political) issues in a nonpartisan way" (ibid., p.13).

Mayekiso thus defines an ambiguous role for civic organisations. On the one hand, they must guard against reactionary agendas by highlighting working class interests. On the other hand they must impartially mediate between several class interests. This was precisely the tension that Castells used the term social movement to avoid. Social movements made political demands on the urban form that were not simply reducible to class interests.

This is also the tension that affects South African conceptions of the city. On the one hand, there is an attempt to pre-determine the political meaning of local government; and hence the political content of the urban form. In Mayekiso's terms, they must secure social, political and economic progress for the working class; that is, realise their pre-defined (i.e. objective) interests. This was the original premise of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. On the other hand, local governments must mediate between a host of social forces to reconcile their diverse interests. Given that the outcome of such a process could never be known in advance, but would depend on the configuration of local groupings, it followed that local government be granted a degree of autonomy to exercise its 'neutral' political function.

South African local government is thus shot through with ambiguities arising from these theoretical differences. The Interim Constitution, for example, recognised local government as an autonomous sphere of government. The final constitution even defines it as a distinct tier of government in its own right. In this regard local councils are elected bodies with an ostensibly political mandate: to represent their respective constituencies (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996)

. On the other hand there is a more tenacious tendency to conceive the functions and role of local government in administrative and managerial terms: they are deemed responsible for technocratic tasks related to the execution or the RDP, that is, realising the general will. I am reminded here of Lenin's suggestion that the state form during the transition to communism would resemble a post-office. It would perform purely administrative tasks related to the satisfaction of general needs.

We have seen that this apparent anomaly was resolved in South Africa by way of a theoretical maneuver implicit in classical Marxism. The definition of local

government as a *democratic* institution rested on the following syllogism. Constituents 'needed' (that is, had an objective interest in) municipal services and social infrastructure. Local governments thus discharged their democratic mandates when they provided these goods. Local councils, therefore, busied themselves with 'transformation' and 'community' participation; where the former referred to the re-alignment of institutional capacity and personnel to realise new priorities. The second referred to consultative auditing processes with 'communities' to determine inventories of social, infrastructural 'needs'. It was common in South Africa, moreover, to speak of capacity-building and organisational development (OD). When these phrases referred to local government they often spoke of the competence of elected bodies to implement certain development/ infrastructural plans. Local Government was thus measured against two criteria:

- the correspondence of policy with local 'needs' and,
- the capacity of local government to satisfy social backlogs

In this regard, local government fulfilled its democratic mandate exactly when it functioned technocratically. Indeed, its capacity problems' referred not to its local representivity but rather to its sometimes incapacity (or reluctance) to provide services or implement certain development plans. I have suggested that this managerial conception of local government obscured local conditions, that is, it restricted the local as a political space.

Following Louis Althusser, we have seen that the form of the social whole is determined by remarkable *conditions*. In this regard, Althusser spoke of two types: *survivals* from the past and *ideological apparatuses*. The former included historical practices that continued to inform social relations. The second spoke of the interpellation of individuals into ideology. We have seen also the implications of *external conditions* on the concept of time and contemporaneity. This is the great, I would go as far as to suggest unsurpassed, theoretical legacy that Althusser bequeathed us. He thought rigorously the relationship between *time*, *history* and *subject*. Althusser himself may have been unfaithful (perhaps dishonest) to his own concepts, but that in no way lessens their value. In

concept, therefore, he (perhaps it was Marx) gave to philosophy the social *whole*. He gave to political philosophy overdetermination: i.e. social relations determined in the conjuncture. I want to discuss the implications of such a concept for space.

I have argued that space, and urban space in particular, is marked with political meanings that profoundly affect the structure of the whole. The great strength of studies that culminated in the notion of the 'apartheid city' and the 'one-city-one-tax-base' slogan was precisely their attempt to think the *political* meaning of South African urban geography. Paradoxically this was also their weakness. They thought space in the same way that Althusser suggested Hegel thought time: as homogenous and contemporaneous.

We have seen that there were two primary instincts vis-a-vis the city. The first reduced urban space and its politics to phenomena of the national state. That is, the 'apartheid city' was the spatial expression of national political concerns and values. It followed, therefore, that the capture of the national state would entail also the transformation of the urban form. Local governments were deemed, in this regard, to be the work-horses of change. They were intended to realise the new values spatially. The political tasks of local governments were thus chiefly managerial: they related primarily to institutional transformation, services delivery and infrastructural development. Discrepancies between the new democratic values and their local expression referred to a bureaucratic 'error' between idea and practice. This is similar to the objection Engels raised to Conrad Schmidt: "the concept of a thing and its reality," he suggested, "run side by side like two asymptotes, always approaching each other yet never meeting. This difference between the two is the very difference which prevents the concept from being directly and immediately reality and reality from being immediately its concept." (Quoted in Althusser:p.82). In this regard, the South African instinct has been to further 'build capacity' and further to 'transform' the institution so that the discrepancy between idea and practice is narrowed.

We have seen, however, that the difference between the concept and the real is not a technical fault or a problem for management. It is symptomatic, rather, of

the presence of certain unique conditions. This was the second instinct *vis-a-vis* the city. It acknowledged that the urban form was partly configured by local social forces and interests that originated from diverse sources: consumption, identity and so on. In this regard local government required (relative) autonomy to mediate politically between these interests.

What both these instincts in the South African context have done, however, is undervalue the political content of the urban form.

I want to suggest that the South African city was overdetermined. It was a spatial product of the articulation of regional and national processes to the peculiar history of any city in relation to its location, geology, space and social forces. It is possible therefore to discuss common urban features but not permissible, in this regard, to speak of common urban functions. That is, the function of the city - the role of a particular local government and the political values expressed by the urban morphology - are determined locally and idiosyncratically. It is true, therefore, that South African cities shared certain common forms. But we have seen in the case of Boksburg, Alberton and Germiston that they sometimes expressed very different political values. In this regard a managerial conception of local government neglects the spatial implications of infrastructural development. One of the great strengths of the one-city slogan was precisely its insistence that urban development that did not address the apartheid geography merely reproduced relations of underdevelopment. This argument has been eclipsed by the Reconstruction and Development Programme. There is little debate today, outside the town-planning profession, about the relationship between the *location* of new capital assets and implicit concepts of the social 'good'. In this regard, social infrastructure can be provided in the most 'participatory', 'democratic' and 'transparent' manner - to paraphrase the language of development forums - without addressing the political affects of their location.

We can say, therefore, that the social whole is constituted not simply in heterogeneous times, but also in diverse spaces. If we return to the city the

conjuncture - the unique conditions that give specificity to the urban form - then its is no longer possible to reduce space to an epi-phenomenon of national political processes. It means also that the political role of local government is partly exercised in practice - by configuring (either through commission or omission) the spatial form under its jurisdiction. We are now in a position to conclude finally with some remarks about the meaning of a democratic *local* politics.

We have seen earlier that the democratic credentials of South African local government rested on a concession to certain liberal democratic terms and practices while retaining the style and faith of the theory of National Democratic Revolution. South African local governments were believed to discharge their democratic mandates precisely when they functioned technocratically to deliver the RDP. They resembled liberal democratic governments only in so far as they were elected bodies with an ostensibly representative function. Yet, consistent with the logic of NDR, their political role was predetermined. They were responsible for realising the 'communities' social infrastructural 'needs' which were determined objectively and could be known, therefore, in advance. As a result their representative function consisted of determining the order and detail of those 'needs'.

The marriage of a classical liberal vocabulary to NDR was most evident in the debates about the respective roles for local governments and local development forums (LDF's). We saw earlier that LDF's in their original formulation implied a suspicion of liberal democracy *per se*. Local forums were deemed, instead, to be organs of 'people's power' and as such direct expressions of the 'communities' will. As the transition progressed it became more common to reference these institutions in terms of the ambiguous and equivocal language of state and civil society and to define their role narrowly. Instead of counteracting the inherent racial class bias of representative processes they were defined simply as advisory bodies to local governments. In this regard, they participated in the selection and prioritisation of development 'needs'. It became usual to view

LDF's and other such organisations as the representative bodies of a vaguely defined 'civil society' in relationship to the local state.

What was important about the discursive shift from 'people's power' to 'civil society' was the notion of social and political plurality it seemed to accept. Civil society was deemed to comprise all those elements not present in the state. Moreover, it appeared to contest the idea that 'communities' were congregated around a common political will as suggested by the theory of National Democratic Revolution. We have seen, however, how this notion was simply re-appropriated to the logic of NDR. That is, the community as a whole was deemed to have (objective) political interests in social infrastructural development. Intra community differences were believed to manifest simply as divergent priorities.

Yet the notion of civil society (in some of its formulations) grants a certain complexity and plurality to the notion of community. What this partly implies (at least formally anyway) is the recognition that distinct and plural identities exist that can not easily be captured by the notion of the general will. In other words, it sometimes mirrors the Althusserian critique of experience and, in this sense, repudiates the politics of objective interests which can be stated generally or in advance. But what does it mean politically to entertain the notion of political difference at a *local* level ?

The main preoccupation of debates in this regard has been how to make local government more responsive to local needs, where it is often acknowledged that the latter tend to be defined by well organised interest groups within local constituencies. And yet attention continues to focus on devising mechanisms to improve the capacity of the state to deliver services. What continues not to be addressed is the political space in which these needs are defined and articulated.

If we take seriously the notion of political difference then it becomes undesirable to rely on a few articulate groups to express the general interest. Rather it is necessary to expand the political field to accommodate what might only now be potential voices. This is not simply a matter of capacity building and organisational development. It requires, rather, making possible the emergence

of new political forms. In this view the partial role of the state is to help widen the field of representation so that the character of the social (including the resources of the state) is continuously available for contestation; that is, to encourage the formation of new political entities to which the government would be responsible, who would hold the state accountable and which might even become the government. It does not mean pro-actively establishing or even encouraging the formation of certain pre-defined political entities, but rather creating the space in which organisations may emerge. In other words, the identity of these potential formations must be defined locally. The challenge is to create the conditions under which they could arise.

Some words of caution are perhaps required at this point. What this argument assumes is that the potential risk involved in the political process is unavoidable. That is, the peculiar field of political struggle in any area will depend on the presence of organisations arranged to contest that political space. Certain issues may never arise because no organisation emerges to articulate those interests. Others may well fail to make an impact. Failure, however, should not depend on the inability to access basic organisational resources. This marks a break with conventional liberal notions of the state: that are satisfied to trust the realisation of political equality to certain legal and constitutional sanctions on the right of the state to proscribe political competition. In this view the state does not just have a negative duty but a positive responsibility to partly provide the material conditions for the democratic process. Does this mean that democracy somehow has a neutral value that must be withdrawn as an object of the political process itself ? The tension here is obvious: is democracy itself available for contestation? Is it simply one of the many competing notions of the social ? The answer must be yes and no. Yes in the sense that there is no onto-political basis for treating it as the principal framework; as the 'rules of the game' so to speak. Yes in the sense that it is always associated with a political intervention which has as its task the democratisation of political space. Yes it posits a certain notion of the social. Yes, it is always historical and contingent.

And yet as a conceptual logic, historically contingent, perhaps ultimately temporary, its logic must be treated as foundational. Even if we agree that

democracy *qua* concept is not prior to any other political concept we have arrived at the very basis for treating it as supreme or sovereign; that is, for performing the very elevation which it seems to negate. In other words democracy is superior to other political practices precisely because it is rests on certain 'unique conditions' like all other concepts, precisely because, we can say, it is onto-politically equal. Let us explore this obvious paradox further.

If we agree that democracy as a political practice is merely one amongst many and that it has no onto-political claims to meta-status, then we accept also the *potential* equality of all systems of knowledge. What this implies *politically* is that all political concepts, all notions of the social 'good', should receive the opportunity for political expression. But this is only possible within the democratic space! That is, it is only possible in the space granted by democracy to plural and diverse political competition where the outcome of contestation is not predetermined.

In this regard democracy is a process supporting *indeterminate* outcomes. It is a process in which radically different notions of the social can not only compete but also affect the physical basis of everyday life. What this definition disputes is the non-materiality of the conceptual form. Democracy is not just the competition of ideas but is the competition of ideas in the practical state. As such it gives political contents to time and space.

We can finally give meaning to *local* democracy, that is, to democracy in local government. I have argued that the urban form expresses political values through the medium of space. It means that democracy at the local entails expressing new and *indeterminate* political meanings in the existing form; and re-articulating already present spatial structures to new spatial functions. In other words, space is a political medium that must be available for democratic competition. The function of local government would be to give political meanings to spatial forms in a political space where those meanings were indeterminate. That would be a *democratic* function for local government and a democratic meaning for *local* politics. In this formulation, moreover, we are also able to avoid wishing away the national state. We are able to avoid dismissing the 'conditions'. As a historical entity it exists. Within the current situation,

however, democratic local governments could express local political values through the spatial form while simultaneously discharging national political duties. In this way we can be faithful to the notion of 'relative autonomy' and avoid false oppositions between the local and the national state.

As a last remark I want to comment on a disagreement between Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on the one hand and Normas Geras on the other. I will restrict my remarks about their sometimes *ad hominem* argument to their mention of a central theme of this paper: the notion of 'relative autonomy'.

Laclau and Mouffe have argued in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* that we must discard the notion of 'relative autonomy' for many of the reasons I have critiqued the theory of National Democratic Revolution. They suggest that "either the structural framework constituted by the basic determinations of society explains not only the limits of autonomy but also the nature of the autonomous entity - in which case that entity is another structural determinant of the system and the concept of 'autonomy' is redundant; or else the autonomous entity is not determined by the system, in which case it is necessary to explain where it is constituted and the premise of a sutured society would also have to be discarded" (Laclau and Mouffe, pp. 139-140). Their grievance with 'relative autonomy' (when used by Althusser and others) is that it rests on a notion of determination in the last instance by the economy and is, therefore, implicated also in essentialism. In this regard the other spheres of the social (ideological, political, cultural and other practices) are autonomous only in so far as they are not fully determined by the economy. Autonomy is only meaningful (or meaningless as they suggest rather) in an essentialist discourse reminiscent of other essentialisms.

In reviewing this argument Norman Geras accuses Laclau and Mouffe of an 'unbending antithesis' (Geras: 1990, p.73). He writes of their critique above: "either the basic determinants explain the nature of as well as the limits on what is supposed to be relatively autonomous, so that it is not really autonomous at all; *or* it is... *not* determined by them and they cannot be basic determinants" (emphasis in original) (Ibid., 1990, pp. 73-74). Yet Geras has read their argument carelessly. He has misconstrued the object of their remarks. Their

target is not causality (or determination). They are not making an argument in logic. Rather, their object of criticism is what they term 'suture', as it is implied by 'determination in the last instance by the economy'. One could restate their argument in more familiar Althusserian terms. And in particular using Althusser's Kantian distinction between the real and the concept.

In concept overdetermination assumed that social practices were multiply determined. Certain activities were autonomous from the General Principle (the contradiction between the relations and forces of production) in so far as they were partly caused by conditions not simply arising from the economy. Althusser mentioned historical survivals and ideological practices in this regard. 'Relative autonomy', therefore, was only meaningful in the conjuncture, in the peculiar circumstances of empirical history. In his own formulation Althusser certainly devalued the 'conditions' by specifying the form of the social in advance; that is, from the concept. He did this, however, not because the concept required it, but rather because he was unfaithful to it. Again Althusser had committed a 'theoreticist error': he tried to specify the form of the real from the concept itself.

If, however, we return the concept to the conjuncture, then it becomes impossible to state in advance the precise arrangement of social practices in a hierarchical structure of determinations. Rather the configuration of spheres and their relationship to each other is itself determined in the current situation. 'Relative autonomy', therefore, is meaningful in so far as it establishes a limit to causality. That is, it posits areas of social practice not fully determined, but partly determined by other practices whose conditions are multiple and diverse. Laclau and Mouffe are concerned, therefore, not with causality *per se* or with certain statements in logic. Rather, they raise a philosophical objection to generating the real from the concept. In other words, their criticism is directed not at 'relative autonomy' *per se* but rather at 'determination in the last instance by the economy', or rather, which is the same thing, at 'relative autonomy' not specified in the conditions.

This paper has suggested a third category of remarkable conditions: space. It has argued that political contents are expressed through this medium so that it is theoretically valid to define spatial practices as another distinct sphere of social

practices. They must, therefore, join the economy and the family as a basic unit of social determination.

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ANNEXURE

Maps

1. RSC boundaries
2. Current boundaries
3. KATORUS in relation to industrial areas and suburbs
4. KATORUS from satellite

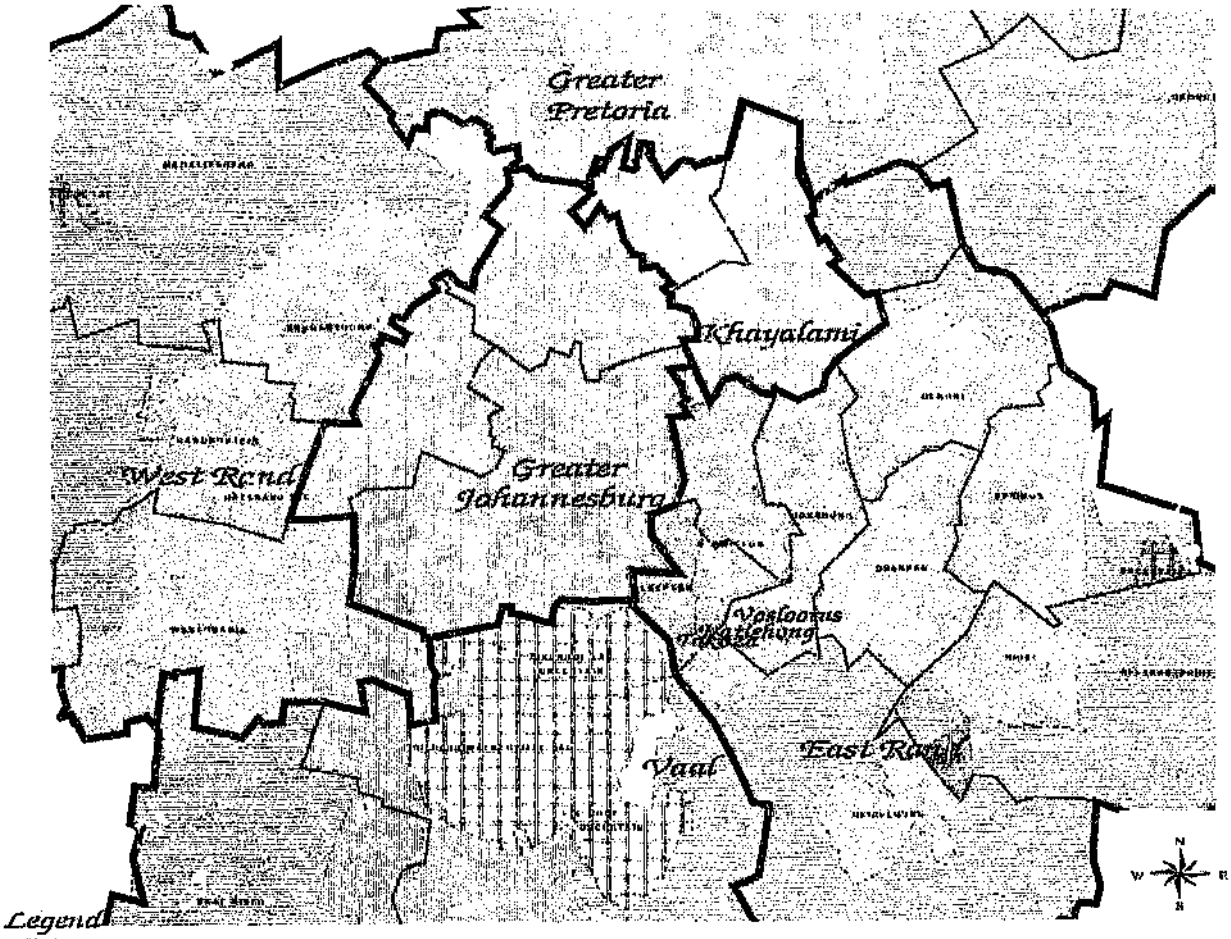
Existing Demarcation:
ERRSC boundary



ERRSC

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Boundaries of former Regional Services Council
Source: The Demarcation & Constitutioning of the proposed East Rand Services Council, Wagner Nel Consultants, Pretoria (Report 2246 R1 Nov. 94) Map 6-23



Legend

- TMC_COUNCIL_BND(TMC)
- TLC_COUNCIL_BND(TLC)
- TRC_COUNCIL_BND(TRC)
- LAC_COUNCIL_BND(LAC)
- SIX LOCAL JURISDICTION BOUNDARIES
- Magisterial_District(Magisterial_District)
- Built_up_Areas(Built_Up_Area)

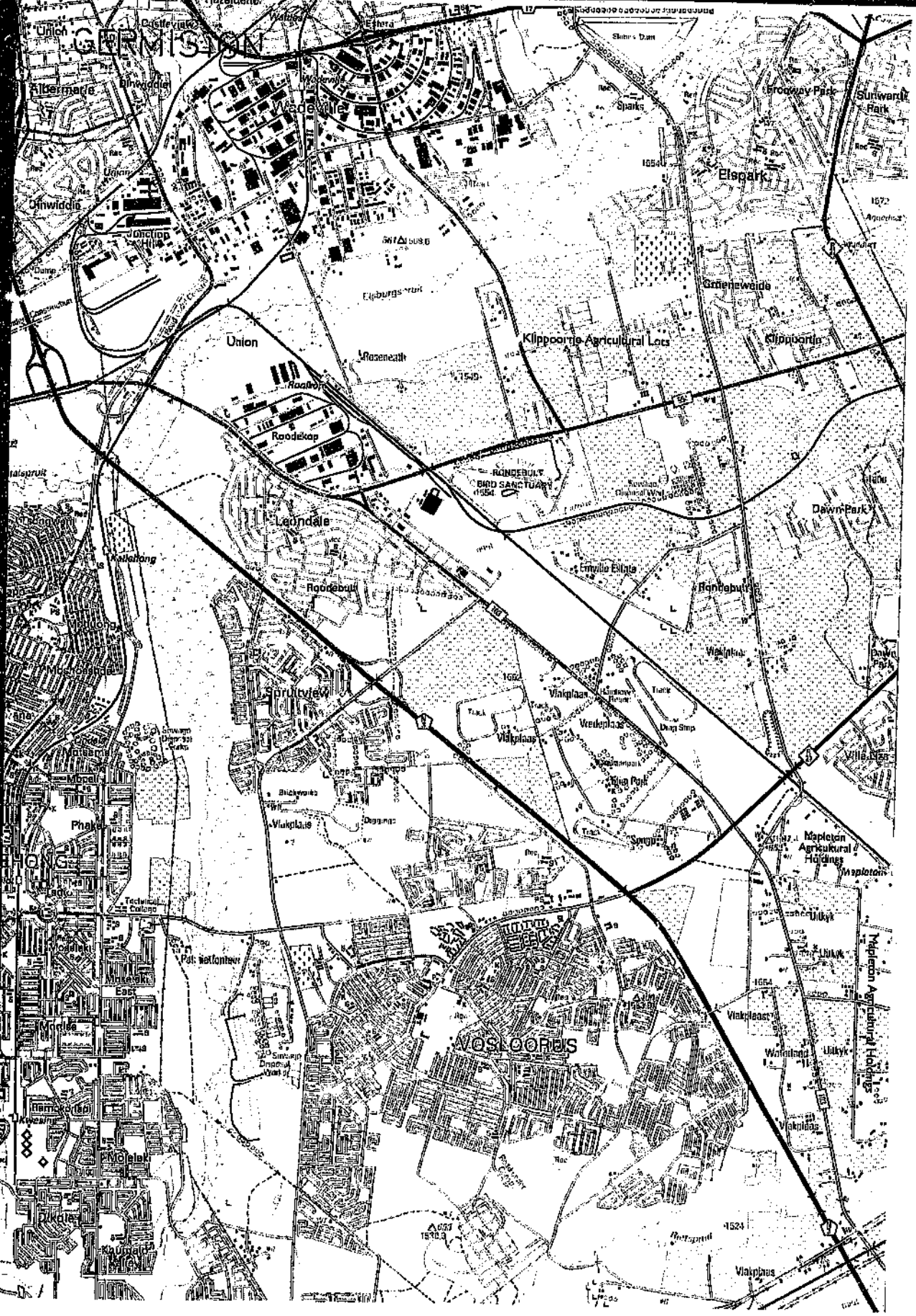
Department : Geographical Information System
Source : Gauteng Province
Scale : 1:600 000
Compiled by : Dawn Newman (GIS)
Date : 28-10-1998
Compiled for : Mr. Chipkin

Present Municipal Boundaries and
Current Services Council boundaries
Source: Gauteng Provincial Government 1998



Map showing KATLEHONG-TOKOZA-VOSLOORUS (KATORUS) in relation to adjacent industrial areas and suburbs of JOHANNESBURG, ALBERTON AND GERMISTON

Source: Surveyor's General Map Govt. Printer Pretoria: 1995


GERMISTON
Union
Wadeville
Dinwiddie
Elspark
Broadway Park
Sunward Park
Klippoortje Agricultural Lots
Klippoortje
Union
Roseneath
Roodekop
RONDEBULT
BIRD SANCTUARY
Leondale
Dawn Park
Rondebult
Sprutview
Vlakplaas
Vosloorus
Mapleton Agricultural Holdings
Uitkyk
Phake
Mokoena
Mokoena East
Dikotla
Khumalo Park



Satellite view of KATORUS indicating high density occupation zone defined by the N 3 on the East and the railway on the West. The historic development separates Kotlehong from Voskoorus

Source: Space Eye Information and Communication Technology (Pty) Ltd



Author: Chipkin, Ivor.
Name of thesis: Democracy, cities and space - South African conceptions of local government.

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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