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Participation as Popular Agency: The Limitations and Possibilities for Transforming Development in the Alexandra Renewal Project

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Development Studies)

Johannesburg, 2009

I declare that this dissertation/ thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Development Studies) in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university.

(name of candidate)

24 July, 2009.

Acknowledgements

This paper is dedicated to the residents of Alexandra whose struggles have formed the basis of this thesis and whose co-operation has enabled me to complete this work. While for the purposes of academia I have noted that this is my own unaided work, this drastically understates the role that others have played in contributing to this, and all, knowledge contributions. It is time to recognise that to deny the social component of any knowledge contribution is to deny our common humanity - we exist and, indeed, we know because of other people. This thesis represents a social rather than an individual achievement.

This paper is also dedicated to my advisor at Witwatersrand University, Noor Nieftagodien, who has gone far beyond his academic responsibilities by mentoring me to become an independent thinker and activist. To a significant extent, this work evolves out of his intellect and experiences as well. Nevertheless, I am responsible for the analysis and conclusions drawn in the pages that follow. Finally, this paper is dedicated to my parents, Joseph and Elizabeth Sinwell, and to Dr. Connie Anderson and Dr. Craig Bielert.

Abstract

Participation is often hailed as a salient component in the attainment of development. Over the past few decades a virtually universal consensus has emerged amongst conservatives, liberals and radicals alike, that development cannot occur without participation. As such, participation has become mainstreamed by development projects, governments and global institutions around the world. However, there is little agreement about what the purpose and meaning is of participation in development. This study contributes to the radical theorist's responses to the mainstreaming of participation that have tended to adopt binaries in order to settle this predicament. These scholars initially introduced an elementary framework to deal with this issue by distinguishing between participation as a means to an end (that is, participation to achieve particular development objectives) and participation as an end in itself. They continued this trend over the past decade by suggesting that participation is a way of co-opting agents into top-down development schemes that suit the interests of those in power. They went further by explaining the conditions under which participation holds the promise of achieving the emancipation of humankind from oppressive systems of power. However, these approaches are misleading even for the radical scholar because the practice, and therefore interpretations, of participation are far more eclectic. The study adopts a more nuanced interpretation by advancing beyond binary approaches to the study of participation in development.

The thesis employs this theoretical lens in order to understand the varied, multiple and contested meanings and processes of participation at the local level in the context of the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP), a flagship, nationally funded development project undertaken by the government which seeks to incorporate participation in every aspect of development. The thesis uses primarily in-depth interviews and observation of various stakeholders in Alexandra to answer the central research question: What are the possibilities and limitations for participatory spaces to influence development? Following Cornwall, it traces the inception and evolving character of "invented" (grassroots or autonomous movements) and "invited" (those induced by the government) participatory spaces in Alexandra. Participatory spaces are political and social spaces

which are determined, and altered, by power relations. As the key part of an attempt to decentralise decision-making, the dominant discourse of the ARP has been reified and constructed through an "invited" space called the Alexandra Development Forum (ADF), an umbrella organisation that claims to represent approximately seventy community-based organisations in Alexandra and therefore to speak on behalf of the community.

Aspects of Giddens's theory of "structuration" are invoked to show how "invented" spaces affiliated to the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the South African Community Party (SACP), the Umpakathi Development Forum (UDF) and the Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association (ALPOA) shape, and are shaped by, dominant development discourses and practices in the ARP. These organisations were not able to alter development within the "invited" participatory spaces provided by the government, including the ADF, because it is permeated with power relations in the form of discourse and socially excludes dissent from the local government's trajectory as a result. The above organisations have thus, in some cases, influenced development practice and reshaped what is acceptable in "invited" participatory spaces by exerting their power through popular protest and the opening of court cases.

The study concludes by arguing that, while the above participatory spaces have, at times, been successful at influencing imminent development, specific interventions, they have had very limited success at engaging immanent development, development as an underlying process of social change (i.e. the development of capitalism). Because people's agency does not affect the limited resources provided by the government under its current neoliberal policies, participation in Alexandra is "zero-sum." In other words, a win by one group within Alexandra happens at the expense of another and people's lives are not improved overall as a result of participation in development. The thesis then addresses these limitations and explains how one specific participatory space discussed in the thesis distinguishes itself from the others by its sustained action which forces the government to heed to its demands. This participatory space claims state resources on its own terms, rather than on the terms that the government has prescribed, and thereby plants the seeds for a transformative approach to participation in development which is based on the principles of non-violent direct action, a theme that has been neglected by

radical scholars who seek to understand the transformative potential for participation in development.

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Abbreviations

AAC	Alexandra Action Committee
ACA	Alexandra Civic Association
ACO	Alexandra Civic Organisation
AYCO	Alexandra Youth Congress
ADF	Alexandra Development Forum
AEC	Anti-Eviction Campaign
AHC	Alexandra Health Committee
ALC	Alexandra Liason Committee
ALPOA	Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association
ANC	African National Congress
ANCWL	African National Congress Women's League
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
APF	Anti-Privatisation Forum
ARA	Alexandra Residents Association
ARIC	Alexandra Residents Interim Committee
ARP	Alexandra Renewal Project
ATC	Alexandra Town Council
AVCC	Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee
BLA	Black Local Authority
BNG	Breaking New Ground
CAC	Citizen Advisory Committee
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
CDF	Community Development Forum
CDW	Community Development Worker
CLO	Community Liason Officer
COHRE	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
DA	Democratic Alliance
DLG	Developmental Local Government
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government

GADF	Greater Alexandra Development Forum
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
JMC	Joint Management Centre
MCR	Marlboro Concerned Residents
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAD	National Affairs Department
NP	National Party
NPA	National Peace Accord
NSMS	National Security Management System
NVDA	Non-Violent Direct Action
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACP	South African Communist Party
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SAP	Save Alexandra Party
SASM	South African Student Movement
SECC	Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
WCR	Wynberg Concerned Residents
WHAM	Winning Hearts and Minds
WPLG	White Paper on Local Government
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
UDF	Umpakathi Development Forum
UDF	United Democratic Front (referred to only in chapter 3)
URP	Urban Renewal Programme

Chapter 1
Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Participation is often hailed as a salient component in the attainment of development. Over the past few decades a virtually universal consensus has emerged amongst conservatives, liberals and radicals alike, that development cannot occur without participation. Participation has become mainstreamed by development projects and governments around the world. However, there is little agreement about what the purpose and meaning is of participation in development. This study contributes to the radical theorist's responses to the mainstreaming of participation that have tended to adopt binaries in order to deal with this. These scholars initially introduced an elementary framework to deal with this issue by distinguishing between participation as a means to an end (that is, participation to achieve particular development objectives) and participation as an end in itself. They continued this trend over the past decade by suggesting that, on the one hand, participation holds the promise of achieving the emancipation of humankind from oppressive systems of power (Hickey and Mohan 2004). On the other, they suggested that it is a way of co-opting agents into top-down development schemes that suit the interests of those in power (Cooke and Kothari 2001). However, these binaries are misleading even for the radical scholar because, the practice, and therefore interpretations, of participation are far more eclectic.

The post-apartheid government has committed itself to empower the previously disadvantaged majority in order to address the legacy of poverty and inequality that was created during aparthei. While the African National Congress's (ANC's) adoption of neoliberal policies has often been associated with a top-down approach that undermines people's participation in development (Lyons *et al* 2001), participatory democracy and development have nevertheless been treated as important tenets in the construction of a new South Africa. Various efforts have been made to place these at the centre of reconstruction and development. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG 1998), and the South African

Constitution (1996) are suffuse with the language of participation. However, the contested meanings of participation are generally not reflected in policy and there is no consistent definition of participation that is adhered to. The emphasis on participation is also not limited to the state. The participatory culture embedded in the struggle against apartheid, has also led ordinary citizens to demand that development be community driven. At a national level, the state has claimed that it has fulfilled its promise of participatory development but, in practice it is subject to contestation and uneven implementation.

The local level is critical to understanding participation since this is where the meanings and practices of participation and development are constructed and contested both by the local government, and by various aspects of the community. This thesis therefore focuses on participatory processes at the local level in the context of the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP), which was inaugurated in 2001 as a flagship urban renewal project of the new democratic South Africa. A central plank in the ARP's strategy has been to promote community participation in every aspect of its development agenda. This objective emanated from, at least, a rhetorical support by the government to the principles of a bottom-up or community driven development programme. Moreover, Alexandra has had a rich experience of struggles for such alternative forms of development.

The ARP provided an opportunity successfully to implement such a participatory development programme. But, throughout South Africa, the imperative to deliver on a wide arrange of delivery targets often seemed in practice to militate against more emancipatory forms of participation. An apparent contradiction has emerged. While communities demand a faster delivery of services, state-driven delivery targets have tended to undermine community-driven demands for inclusion in the decision-making process. Recent literature has suggested that despite the promise of building an emancipatory or transformative participatory process, the new South African state seems to have settled on weak forms of participation in practice. Alexandra, it may be argued, is an example of this apparent paradox.

1.2 Aims

The main aim of the study is critically to engage multiple, varied and contested meanings and practices of participation in development through the experience of the ARP. The study will focus particularly on an analysis of local practices and discourses of development in order to understand how power operates within participatory spaces. Participatory spaces are socially and politically constructed through agency (Cornwall 2004). Analysing these spaces enables one to see the potential that "communities" have to influence local government and state policies or, more broadly, to control the everyday aspects of their lives. These spaces are imbued with discursive power. Discursive power determines what is acceptable or unacceptable (the rules, values and norms) and therefore what can be said and done within specific social spaces. The study identifies participatory spaces that have been constructed by the local government which are supposedly intended to enable the "community" to influence development. Because the local govenrment has pre-conceived notions of development, the study explains how certain agents may be in position to become part of what the government perceives as acceptable local development practices. It also shows how other agents are initially excluded from local government development practices because their agendas are deemed unacceptable.

The study goes beyond the binaries of tyranny and transformation that several radical scholars have used in attempting to explain the meaning and practice of participation in development. In reality, the interpretation and practice of participation occupies a position in between these two extremes. Drawing from interviews and observation of local government and various members of the "community", the study therefore attempts to answer the following central research question:

> What are the possibilities and limitations of participatory spaces to influence development?

Subquestions:

-Under what conditions have participatory spaces emerged and what are the implications of this?
-What varied and contested meanings do the "community" and local government associate with development?
-What does the interface between local government and the "community" tell about power and what can and does happen in participatory spaces?

This study focuses on how development is constituted in terms of the prioritisation of housing allocations since this is one of the most charged political issues and a critical facet of delivery and development in Alexandra. It traces the traditions of revolt in Alexandra by looking through the lens of housing struggles in a relatively short period of time, primarily between 2001-2008. It does this by contextualising the structural conditions under which struggles occur and showing how movements evolve over time in response to these conditions. In doing so, it also shows the limitations that the political structure poses to different sets of agents who employ various sets of tactics and strategies to meet their objectives.

Working under the assumption that development is contested locally, the study analyses the concept of "community" or locally driven development. The study evaluates not just the extent to which civil society, understood in its broadest sense at the place between society and the state, has an impact on local government decision-making, but also, how certain knowledge regarding development gets put into practice and others do not. The study identifies dominant discourses, policies and practices and, critically, focuses on their contestation and attempts to understand the ARP holistically.

1.3 Rationale

While there appears to be a strong desire, particularly among radical scholars, to enable people to participate in decisions about their own development, what this participation actually entails is rarely questioned. Radical scholars have seemed to assume that participation is either tyrannical (in the hands of the powerful) or transformative for marginalised segments of the population (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan

2004). The literature rarely breaks with this binary thinking in order to understand the processes through which participation actually occurs in practice. Furthermore, few scholars have understood participation as the practice of popular agency in development. They have generally not focused on the possibilities and limitations that particular participatory practices have for achieving transformation through popular agency.

Only recently has the international body of literature begun to focus on the idea of participatory spaces. To my knowledge, few scholars have traced the evolution of local development practices and discourses by showing how they are shaped and reshaped by various agents. Few studies have applied Cornwall's (2004) theory of participatory spaces to a large-scale development project in which multiple agents, with various sets of interests, are attempting to influence development discourse and outcomes which are understood and shown to be on shifting grounds.

This study seeks to understand participation in development in the context of the increased international popularity of participatory governance. Indeed, governments and donors around the world have adopted participatory approaches in governannce and many scholars have argued that representative democracy is inadequate to account for the needs of today's large and heterogeneous polity (Gaventa 2004; Nylen 2003; Fung and Wright 2003). In other words, participation has arguably become a central feature of governance:

> The concept of participation is being related to rights of citizenship and to democratic governance. Nowhere is the intersection of concepts of community participation and citizenship seen more clearly than in the multitude of programmes for decentralized governance that are found in both southern and northern countries (Gaventa 2004: 25).

As alluded to above, great emphasis has been placed on participation in the context of South Africa. The White Paper on Local Government (WPLG-1998), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Municipal Systems Act (2000), and the Municipal Structures Act (1998) have all promised participation from citizens when designing and implementing state projects. Decentralisation schemes (especially ward committees) have been established to enable the participation of civil society, but local government has had an extremely difficult time establishing and making them function

properly (Oldfield 2008). Furthermore, there is growing awareness that although the local government has been elected, it does not have the power or resources to address the local demands made by its constituency. The devolution of power through decentralisation schemes has not been sufficiently problematised in this regard.

In this context, local government is now arguably in crisis due to its inability to implement service delivery. There is increasing pressure on the state, especially at the local level through civil society, for service delivery. The eruption of social movement protest over the last few years is evidence of this. While there has been a growth of literature regarding new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa (Stokke and Oldfeild 2007; Ballard *et al* 2006; Desai 2002), studies on social movements and the crisis over service delivery have tended to focus on the demands and public action of these movements, not on their internal dynamics, which is one key focus of this thesis.

Other than to say that citizen participation is not substantial in South Africa and to give reasons for why this is the case (increased state bureaucratization, the adoption of neoliberal policies, and a focus on quantitative delivery targets), little is written on what people are doing to promote participation and thus the potential for participation to work in more transformative ways for the previously excluded majority in South Africa. The South African literature generally has no core text for understanding the complex nature of participation in development in post-apartheid South Africa.

While several scholars have alluded to the contested meanings of participation and development, there are few, if any, systematic studies of how these contestations unfold over a substantial period of time within the context of a large-scale renewal project intended to symbolise the capacity and ability of the government to deliver to the previously disadvantaged. This study uses a case study of the ARP over a period between 2001 and 2008, in order to understanding the changing nature of people's participation in participatory spaces given changing structural circumstances that occur locally, provincially, and nationally. This enables one to see the shifting character of both agents (who create participatory spaces), and the local government or structure (which responds to particular demands).

More specifically, the literature does not address how practices and discourses of development shape what can happen within participatory spaces by underlining the

possibility that certain interests are acceptable within such spaces and why others are not. They have not explicitly sought to identify the strengths and weaknesses of participatory spaces in order to shed light on their transformative potential. I see this work contributing to this research area that has yet to be expanded.

Since state-society relationships are being contested in places all over the world, especially where participatory governance is being experimented with, this study could be relevant to countries in both the South and the North. To my knowledge, there has also been no in-depth study that analyses how development discourse and practice relates to what meanings of development can be put into practice at a local level. Theoretical studies that have revealed various meanings of development have, rather, been broader studies focusing on the international consequences of development discourse, *creating binaries* that focus on the negative effect of "first world" discourse on the "third world" (see Escobar 1995). This study contributes to filling these gaps and will hopefully generate further research on this crucial topic.

1.4 Methodology

The primary methods employed in this study were interviews, observation, and documentary analysis. Because there are very few written records of people's perceptions and practices of participation in Alexandra in post-apartheid South Africa, I conducted in-depth, openended interviews with a wide array of stakeholders in Alexandra who sought to influence the ARP. I also observed people's attempts to influence ARP policies and used these observations as a backdrop for my interviews. I used the ethnographic approach to gain in-depth information about interviewee's lives and the meanings that they ascribed to their actions. Furthermore, I used a case study design to paint a holistic picture of the processes of development and participation in the ARP.

The case study design was the most appropriate for this study because I wanted to grasp the entire political and development landscape of Alexandra. I used a case study of the ARP from its inception in 2001 until 2008 to give an in-depth understanding of local knowledge, people's diverse interests and needs, and the contested nature of local

development discourse and practice. Specifically, I focused on housing since this is one of the most politicised issues in Alexandra. According to Yin, the case study method:

> is appropriate when investigators desire to (a) define topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) cover contextual conditions and not just the phenomenon of study, and (c) rely on multiple and not single sources of evidence (Yin 1993: xi).

Only by using this design could I understand the repercussions that particular development interventions, as proposed by various community organisations, would have on other groups of people in Alexandra, and therefore the impact that this would have on the community of Alexandra as a whole. In other words, a case study could enable one to understand the heterogeneous nature of the community. The design enabled me to draw out the links between the different agents in Alexandra and the changing structure of the ARP.

The case study also helped me unpack what possible structural factors could have led to the influence of particular organisations over the ARP. A case study approach was useful to understand the conditions under which people's resistance was particularly effective or ineffective. For example, was the renewal project undergoing serious problems, or was it broadly considered to be achieving its goals? The importance of this kind of question raises the idea that one must seek to understand the broader context in which decisions are made by the community or officials, if one is to understand the significance of particular examples of influence that agents have over government policies.

In this line of thinking de Vaus points out that, "to isolate behaviour from this broader context and to strip it of the meaning given to it by actors is to invite misunderstanding, and thus threaten the internal validity of the study" (2001: 235). In this view, a comparative study, looking at bits and pieces of various renewal projects throughout South Africa would not have been the most appropriate. Because the researcher would be studying a limited number of aspects of each case, a comparative analysis would be limited to the extent that the researcher could not understand one case holistically, in its full context.

Applying the case study design, a wide range of viewpoints, observations, and analyses of documents regarding several interventions within the ARP, were combined to:

> Provide a much fuller, more complex understanding of the whole than would the perspective provided by any particular element in the case. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts (De Vaus 2001: 221).

The case study was intended to elaborate on theory about how power operates in a wide array of participatory spaces. Rather than generalise findings to other case studies, they should be generalised to theory (Yin 1984: 39). I therefore used international theories from pre-existing studies to inform my research. To help conceptualise my findings in the field, I kept in mind my theme of how power relations influenced participation in development. In doing so, I was ready for information that challenged theory or the possible need for the theory to be reshaped to fit the ARP's context.

A goal of this research was to reconstruct theory. In this endeavor, I followed the important approach of Michael Burawoy who states that, "we do not worry about the uniqueness of our case since we are not as interested in its "representativeness" as its contribution to "reconstructing" theory" (Burawoy 1998: 16). One of the potential weaknesses of case studies is that the extent of rigorous theoretical analysis that one applies to the empirical information, and vice versa, lies within the researcher's capacity and willingness to challenge their own pre-conceived notions of how the social world works. However, Burawoy suggests that this can also be turned into an asset if the researcher has what he calls the "courage" to challenge this:

> In our fieldwork, we do not look for confirmations but for theory's refutations. We need first the courage of our convictions, then the courage to challenge our convictions, and finally the imagination to sustain our courage with theoretical reconstruction (Burawoy 1998: 20).

Throughout the research process, I attempted to question my theoretical preconceptions against the complex empirical evidence gathered and my experience in the field. The consequence of this approach has been a profound shift in my theoretical understanding

as well as a new understanding of the practical realities of development and participation in Alexandra. My study followed Burawoy's approach that "fieldwork is a sequence of experiments that continue until one's theory is in sync with the world one studies" (1998: 17-1).

This meant that the answers to my central research question evolved over time. In order for this to occur, I found out (from residents and civil society organisations) what they knew about the renewal project, what they thought about it (perceptions), and what they have done, if anything, to try and shape the projects (processes). Unlike smaller and simpler projects that only deal with one sector (i.e., transportation or water), renewal projects such as the ARP are supposed to engage with the overall distribution of resources to disadvantaged populations in a holistic way. This means that development is likely to be perceived and targeted in a particular way by the ARP. My study of the ARP revealed dominant notions of development (or social change) in Alexandra and how those processes have been contested over time.

1.5 Interviews

The primary method of data collection used for this research was interviews. Interviews were open-ended and interviewees were given adequate time to explain their viewpoints. This meant that the interview process almost always advanced beyond the intial open-ended questions that were posed. Interviews were conducted with various stakeholders of the ARP including local government officials (Ward Councillors, Ward Committee Members, Community Development Workers, and leaders of the Alexandra Development Forum -ADF), consultants of the ARP, members of civil society organisations, ordinary residents and those directly affected by the ARP.

Clearly, diverse interests from officials, civil society and the public in general have molded discourses and practices of development. I have interviewed over eighty people and I also completed follow-up interviews with several respondents. Most of the interviews were in-depth, often lasting nearly two hours. All formal interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews are broken down below:

Table 1: The organisation and the number of people interviewed from each organisation.

Community Liason Officiers (CLOs)	3
Ward Committee Members (WCMs)	2
`Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP) Officials	7
Community Development Workers (CDWs)	1
South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO)	3
South African Communist Party (SACP)	2
Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association (ALPOA)	3
Alexandra Development Forum (ADF)	6
Marlboro Concerned Residents (MCR)	6
Wynberg Concerned Residents (WCR)	3
Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC)	3
Various Community Leaders in Alexandra	4
Ordinary Residents in Alexandra	30
Umpakathi Development Forum (UDF)	3
Democratic Alliance Councillors	2

Of the 83 interviews in total, 25 (30%) are women and 58 (70%) are men. Additionally, 12 (14%) are not from Alexandra, and 71 (86%) are from Alexandra. I used the snowball effect in order to uncover many of the key people I needed to interview which proved extremely helpful when interviewees were able to call other potential respondents for me to tell them that I seemed to be a trustworthy individual with whom they could meet with confidence. Establishing trust was absolutely critical in this process. Fortunately, I was able to win the trust of the first cohort of interviewees who then put me in touch with many of the principal actors in the field of my research. Had they not done this, I would have been treated as a stranger and the interviewees may not have opened up freely in an honest manner. During each interview, I made a point to ask: Is there any other individual or group of people that might be helpful in relation to this topic?

Interviews are the most appropriate method when obtaining opinions from the subaltern and of those movements which do not have good written records (I explain this more in-depth in a later section). While some movements may keep some records or distribute pamphlets, these documents produce only partial insights into these movements. Therefore, interviewing is necessary to obtain the opinions of the participants in civil society. Local government has written policy and others have

published on what is meant by developmental local government, but little is written that attempts to shed light on the interface between local government and civil society. There was no way to find out about the processes of participation and development in Alexandra without asking the people who are actually involved. I needed to look at the perspectives and practices of agents who were, themselves, at the forefront of the struggles over housing on the ARP. I treated the interviewees as the experts in the ARP, and followed Johnson who claims that, "the informant would be a kind of teacher and the interviewer a student, one interested in learning the roles or gaining member knowledge from a veteran informant" (2002: 106).

The interviews were usually semi-structured and in-depth. In other words, I asked broad questions in an attempt to get their general stance and then asked more specific ones depending on how they responded. Johnson explains the circumstances under which in-depth interviewing is necessary:

> If one is interested in questions of greater depth, where the knowledge sought is often taken for granted and not readily articulated by most members, where the research question involves highly conflicted emotions, where different individuals or groups involved in the same line of activity have complicated, multiple perspectives on some phenomenon, then in-depth interviewing is likely the best approach despite its known imperfections (Johnson 2002: 105).

One of the key known imperfections of in-depth interviewing is that informants might tell me what they think I want to hear. Because I have interviewed people mainly about things that happened in the past, the interviewees may not have remembered exactly what happened. Over time they may have subconsciously remembered only what they wanted to. Such setbackd can potentially undermine the validity of the research. Additionally, as Johnson points out, interviewers "don't necessarily "hear" what their informants tell them, but only what their own intellectual and ethical development has prepared them to hear" (Johnson 2002: 106).

I recognise other limitations or weaknesses to my approach as well. Because I have interviewed people about something that happened in the past the interviewees may not have remembered exactly what happened. Moreover, over time they may have subconsciously remembered only what they wanted to, or they may even choose to tell

me what they think I might have wanted to hear. However, I addressed this potential weakness by asking many people, from various political perspectives, about the same event. In other words, I interviewed as many people as possible in order to have a more complete understanding of what the issues were in each intervention. By interviewing different groups of people about the same event, I sometimes saw that there were conflicting versions of what happened. These different perspectives were meant to give a historical narrative of what happened so that I could obtain a clear sense of the processes of participation and the discourse of development on each project and in Alexandra as a whole.

Because I do not speak any of the township languages well, besides English, the need for translations could have posed methodological concerns for this study. However, except for a few informants who were not central to my study, all respondents chose to be interviewed in English. This is largely because activists in Alexandra, as well as those involved with the ADF and consultants of the ARP, generally speak English exceptionally well. I could therefore, when interviewing, also be able to participate in the interviewing process. In the very few cases where an interviewee wanted to be spoken to in another language, I brought a translator to help me conduct the interview. Most of these interviews only lasted about 5 to 10 minutes and were done at the beginning stages of my research to uncover some of the key political issues in relation to the ARP.

1.6 Documentary

I have systematically reviewed various local newspapers such as Alex Times and City Vision. Though these newspapers are not very analytical, they were useful since they provide local commentary, opinions about the ARP and a chronological record of events. I have also reviewed documentation from lawyers at the Legal Resources Centre regarding the Wynberg court case in 2006. The ARP's official newsletter, Township[1] News has also provided useful insight into the ARP and ADF's position in relation to particular projects in the ARP. The ARP Official Website provided further official

[1] Although the correct spelling of this word is "township", the ARP's newspaper is called "Tounship News".

information about the ARP. This website includes, for example, the ADF constitution, notes on the ARP Review Summit in 2004, ARP housing policy documents, as well as a survey conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) on the ARP. These documents provide useful information which suggests policy changes in the ARP as well as the types of participation that the ARP and ADF have intended to occur. Finally, I reviewed official archives at the ADF and ARP offices including notes taken at meetings. This has provided important insight into the perspective and trajectory of development at specific points in time. Finally, I have engaged several books and theses on Alexandra including, for example, Jochelson (1988), Lucas (1995), Mayekiso (1996), and Bonner and Nieftagodien (2008).

Chapter 2

Inserting "the Participant" Back into Participant Observation

2.1 Introduction

I spent as much time as possible talking to people in Alexandra informally and observation was used as a backdrop for my interviews. I observed a court case in Pretoria high court regarding the potential evictions of people from Wynberg and another court case regarding the illegal occupation of houses by the Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC). I also attended several ADF monthly meetings, witnessed mass demonstrations by the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) in Marlboro and throughout the streets of Alexandra and in the centre of town in Johannesburg, and spent time with people at their homes. I attended community meetings of the ADF and took notes at meetings of the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO).

As I will discuss in detail in the next sections, I became more than an observer with strictly academic interests. I took on aspects of being a participant observer of some of the movements that I was studying. Furthermore, I took a reflexive, as opposed to positivist, approach to science and this is explained below. This informed the way in which I related and viewed the people of Alexandra. Furthermore, it created certain challenges for me as an "activist researcher". This approach provided critical insights into radical theories on participation in development which would not have been possible as a mere "neutral" observer.

2.2 Against a "Neutral" Approach to Science

An overly positivist emphasis on scientific methods dictates that researchers must be "value-free" and "neutral observers of the social world" (Ali *et al* 2004: 22-3). In this thinking, the best science is, "dispassionate, disinterested scientific investigation. The radical became "ideologues" because they took sides" (Aronowitz 1998: 5). Put another way, if the researcher's theory functions to serve a particular political or social outcome,

then their work is labeled by positivists as "filled with "political rhetoric," rather than research-based scientific articles informed by empirical evidence" (Macedo 1998: xxi).

Responding to the positivist judgement, Macedo refers to the *Harvard Educational Review* Journal's acceptance of critical work on education. Macedo explains how senior professors at Harvard reprimanded two students for publishing too much work on education in this journal that was supposedly intended to be critical of broad social and political realities. The professors were apparently upset that this work was being published instead of theirs. According to Macedo, they seemed to believe that, "the referee process through peer review could only be considered objective if the process reproduced the dominant ideology and maintained the status quo" (ibid). Macedo went on to interpret this as meaning that their "call for objectivity and scientific rigor is subverted by the weight of its own ideology" (ibid).

However, Brodkey has contended that, "any and all knowledge, including that arrived at empirically, is necessarily partial, that is, both an incomplete and an interested account of whatever is envisioned" (in ibid). Furthermore then, "quantitative evaluation results can never escape the social construction that generated these models of analysis" (ibid). Macedo therefore insists that wider social and political processes should not be disarticulated from the findings that result from any research endeavor.

By publishing work that does not challenge the social order, researchers fail to acknowledge the role that they play in reproducing the status quo. Furthermore, they fail to accept the reality that their own privileged position may also serve to reproduce the status quo. As a result, "studying and anthropologizing subordinated cultural groups positions many liberals as tourists" (ibid). They become interested and involved with the oppressed for some time, "but always shield themselves from the reality that created the conditions they want to study" (ibid: xxviii). Liberal academics are often afraid of unveiling realities that might lead to political action that could challenge the position that they hold in society (ibid).

The approach taken in my study follows from the 1960s and 1970s liberation social movements which played a key role in questioning the traditional or positivist approach. They argued for three key points:

1. that social research should not exclude the diversity of social experiences;
2. that social research should not reproduce the values of an oppressive society but should be emancipatory (in other words, it should contribute to setting people free from oppressive social relations);
3. and that for this reason we need to find new models of social research itself (Ali *et al* 2006: 23)

Of utmost importance to this approach was not only the extent to which science displayed realities in an objective manner, but also the extent to which research contributed towards the emancipation of humankind from oppressive social relations. A key model that was adopted in this framework in the late 1960s and 1970s was Participatory Action Research (PAR). The underlying principle of PAR was that research should be done together with marginalised people with the goal of assisting them to become "conscientized" (see Freire 1972) of their social situation and thus to transform their reality through collective action.[2] The ideals of PAR represent the potential for research to lead to radical changes in the way that power relations are configured in society.

Burawoy supports this approach to research in a more theoretical tone. In so doing, he has challenged the traditional or positivist approach to science by differentiating it from reflexive science, which he describes as a "model of science that embraces not detachment but engagement as the road to knowledge" (1998: 5). Like Macedo, he has maintained that, "constructing "detachment" and "distance" depends upon unproblematized relations of power" (ibid: 24)

This approach argues that power and context need to be at the core of scientific investigations that seek to comprehend social realities. Elaborating on the "extended case method," he says further that reflexive science:

> …thrives on context and seeks to reduce the effects of power – domination, silencing, objectification, and normalization. Reflexive science realizes itself with the elimination of power effects, with the emancipation of the lifeworld (1998: 33).

[2] It should be noted that with the institutional mainstreaming of bottom-up approaches to development in the 1990s, PAR was watered-down into something called participatory research or participatory poverty assessments (PPAs) which aimed to help organisations such as the World Bank to undertake development projects that were more locally appropriate. Rather than "conscientize" the marginalised to change their structural conditions in the world, research was done mostly "on" (rather than with) the marginalised "to provide policy-makers with information about poor people's perspectives on poverty" (Brock 2002: 1).

Burroway emphasises that the goal of social scientists, from a reflective perspective, is not only to be an "objective" observer, but also to alter relations of power that serve to oppress particular groups within society.

The approach I have taken to the case study of Alexandra is at odds with the positivist notion of science and is thus, rather, centred around challenging the status quo. In taking this position, I have acknowledged that I am indeed a participant in, and part of, the reality that I have studied. As such, this thesis seeks to understand agency by using the ethnographic method in order to "speak truth to power" (Said 2003: 63) and "attack oppression at its very source" (Macedo 1998: xxix).

2.3 Romanticising Agency

This approach informed the limited way I initially viewed agency in Alexandra prior to my undertaking of the long and in-depth task of ethnography. To a significant extent, I assumed "that the poor somehow are an embodiment of the truth and, as long as they organise democratically, the line of march they take will advance the cause of freedom" (Desai 2006: 5). Although I did manage to interview several key leaders intimately involved with development and community participation in Alexandra in 2004 when I began my Master's Degree at Witwatersrand University, my understandings of people's realities was rather superficial. In other words, I asked respondents questions about development and participation, but failed to adequately understand the specific local and political connotations that their responses suggested. I was unable to adequately contextualise their responses based on their personal, ideological and career positions (for example, as a paid leader of the ANC). In other words, I was an outsider to Alexandra in 2004 and 2005.

Before I came to grips with a more nuanced approach to this study, my binary thinking led me to try and identify groups that could be defined as oppressors and the oppressed. For example, I thought that groups like the ADF could be defined solely as those that maintain the status quo. In other words, I believed that they served to inhibit more radical groups from seeking more revolutionary objectives. I did not seek to understand why these leaders would become part of the ADF and how the ADF might

have served, in a positive light, to represent the Alexandra community and enhance development.

I was, rather, interested in any kind of mass resistance and protest that could challenge the status quo, and I believed that the local Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) in Alexandra was the epitome of this. I wanted to understand the potential that these groups, affiliated to an organisation with a powerful anti-capitalist ideology, had to achieve a radical transformation in society. I focused on the APF and other organisations that claimed to represent the poor, at the expense of more conservative organisations such as the ADF and ALPOA. At this beginning stage, I romanticised their agency and gave the poor or oppressed, a "superior virtue" in my studies (Russel 1980: 8).

2.4 Embedding Myself in the Life and Culture of Alexandra

One of my first experiences of doing research in Alexandra was in 2004. Coming back from Alexandra by taxi-bus, I was mugged at knife point and strangled for a few seconds by four young men. This event had a strong influence over my psychology as I experienced a degree of post-traumatic stress syndrome and I felt extremely uncomfortable and tense in congested and poor areas. As a result, I even spoke with my supervisor about the possibility of doing research in another, what I thought would be safer, area for my Ph.D.

In 2006 however, I began to sense situations and realities in areas such as Alexandra in a much more accurate and positive light. I was now able to walk with faith and confidence in areas that I had previously been scared of and felt powerless in. It was then that I started to spend time embedding myself into the cultural life of Alexandra. I should note that due to my white skin in the midst of a township which consists of more than 350,000 black people, it was impossible for me not to physically stand out to people in a strong way. In this context, I made friends and shared music with people who were my age, stayed overnight at people's houses, drank at shebeens with longstanding Alexandra residents, and attended and took notes at community meetings. Whether asking directions by myself from my car or enjoying a few drinks late on a Friday night, I was never met with hostility.

Rather, the people of Alexandra are often proud to have visitors who are not necessarily accustomed to their way of life, and many make significant efforts to make visitors feel welcome in their environment. One example of this was the 15th February 2008. I was on the street talking on my cell phone to make final arrangements with my next interviewee, when an old man interrupted me to ask me if I was lost. When I answered that I was not, he shook my hand enthusiastically and thanked me for coming to Alexandra.

In 2006, I also started to become embedded in the politics of Alexandra (this is discussed in detail in a later section). This kind of involvement begins to raise questions about the extent to which people should be more than an observer, but also become a "participant" observer. This debate is outlined below.

2.5 The Researcher: Participant or Detached Observation?

In order to understand the complex case study of Alexandra, it was necessary to conduct ethnographic research. Ethnography involves the "in-depth study of the culture of a people, group, or community" (Sluka and Robben 2007: 4). Ethnography seeks to understand, from the people's own perspective, what they do and the meanings that they associate with their actions. Furthermore, studying a group over time allows one to see that "the poor" are not a "fixed, virtuous subject," as Walsh (2008: 256) has argued that the "left" in South Africa has mistakenly represented them, but rather one that evolves over time in order to address their interests under changing structural circumstances.

The relationship between those studied and the researcher is arguably one of the most critical components of a research project that entails ethnographic research. It raises key questions about the role of the researcher in conducting fieldwork and the meaning of the participant in "participant observation," the central method of ethnographic research. Participant observation is when the researcher attempts to understand a culture by observing what people are actually doing, and to a certain extent, as the word participant suggests, immersing and involving him or herself into the culture he or she is studying.

Beginning in the 1970s, however, there was a shift in emphasis from participant observation to observing people's participation in activities (Wolcott 1999: 50). In other

words, researchers were generally no longer expected to be part of the culture itself that they were studying, because it was thought that this could bring about sympathy for this culture and thus create bias in favour of the action of those studied. It was believed that being a participant and observer was less objective and therefore less scientific. This perspective followed from traditional models of social research which:

> Assume that it is a science and should follow scientific positivistic methods: to be a truthful description of social life our research needs to be value-free, and that as researchers we need to be neutral observers of the social world (Ali *et al* 2004: 22-3).

It was argued that in order to be "value-free" and "neutral" the researcher needed to be detached as much as possible from those being researched. Wolcott elaborates as to why the positivist research approach has been widely adopted by researchers:

> A pull toward that distanced-observer role continues to exert itself in most field research, largely as a result of our efforts to reassure ourselves that we are really behaving like real researchers. Thus the potential to overemphasize the observer dimension of participant observation is particularly inviting… The *idea* of assuming a more active role seems to have wide appeal, yet it conflicts with the ideal image of how most of us have been socialized to believe that research should be conducted (Wolcott 1999: 50).

On the other hand, researchers can learn a great deal by identifying with those that they study. It is possible to become a hard "activist" and still maintain scientific integrity when conducting research (Lichterman 2002: 143). Insiders such as these argue that, "'you can't really know us unless you are one of us'" (Wolcott 1999: 137). They suggest that it is only by becoming integral within the movement and identifying with the researched that one able to understand the complexity of the movement.

While the above approaches (detached and participant) are useful in understanding the role of the researcher in relation to those being studied, Lichterman argues that it is possible to remain somewhere in between. He emphasises that, "closeness and analytic distance are not mutually exclusive" (2002: 143). He argues that:

> We learn more when we are willing to keep an analytic lens focused on the groups we study. We learn less if we surrender that lens to the notion that we already agree with the group's cause and therefore understand what they are doing, or we already disagree with the group's cause and therefore understand – to our chagrin – what they are doing. Keeping the conceptual lens at hand hardly precludes other lenses, other relationships to the group that arise doing a project: occasional helped, fellow activist, friendly critic (2002: 127).

The approach that I take is that one can be involved with the movements they are studying but at a certain distance. Furthermore, however, it should not be assumed that involvement with a movement necessarily makes one biased or less critical of that movement. Rather, involvement and even sympathy for a movement can enable one to come to grips with the internal contradictions within a movement or the structural limitations that they are faced with. Equally as important, especially in a case study, one cannot adequately understand the local and context specific factors that contribute to various political struggles and outcomes without relating or empathising with the people involved. We cannot adequately understand the meaning of events if we do not try hard to consider the perceptions of people whose lives may depend on the outcome of them. It is with this perspective that, in the course of my research, I wanted to be involved in the practice of development, not just to study it. I still feel strongly that knowledge is useless unless it can be applied, in one way or another, to practical realities.

2.6 A Participant Observer in Alexandra

Often times, researchers go into a locality in order to obtain information from respondents, but have no commitment to them and never come back to see them again. This can create a situation in which locals are skeptical of future researchers and refuse to share the local knowledge that they possess. Several times, perhaps to my own detriment, I have made a point of not interviewing people in places such as Durban and Cape Town, due to the fact that I knew I could make no commitment to them and therefore would find it difficult to accept their trust.

My research approach corresponded with Bourgous who, through his own ethnographic study of drug addicts and the drug market in El Barrio (an innercity slum in New York City), has illustrated that:

> The participant-observation ethnographic techniques developed by cultural anthropologists since the 1920s are better suited than exclusively quantitive methodologies for documenting the lives of people who live on the margins of society... Only by establishing long-term relationships based on trust can one begin to ask provocative personal questions, and expect thoughtful, serious answers (Bourgous 1995: 12).

By relating to people and attempting to understand their situations and chosen actions, I was connected to – though I had no significant influence over - the struggles and politics of Alexandra. This made people much more willing to open up and explain themselves in an honest way. In many cases, I did not only go to interviewees once, but promised to come back and speak to them in the future. Wolcott asserts that this is a useful strategy. She reports that "fieldworkers have sometimes reported a strengthening of relationships between themselves and the community by the very act of going away and then returning as promised" (Wolcott 1999: 57). I also made documents available to people on request – these included literature on housing, evictions, or community participation - and submitted transcribed interviews to anyone who requested them.

My first observations began with the Alexandra Development Forum (ADF) in 2004. I attended these at the beginning stages of my research to get a sense of this forum but, more importantly at this time, to meet leaders of this forum that I wanted to interview. After attending a few of these ADF meetings, the community (at least those who attended these meetings) became accustomed to seeing me around their area and this made it easier for people to be more open and not weary of my presence or intentions. Eventually I managed to interview virtually all the key people involved in the ADF, some of them twice.

I also came to know one of the ADF member's home and family quite well. Sometimes, I went out drinking with him at night all around the township's local shebeens and to his friend's houses. I stayed over night at his house and spent time with his whole family, meeting his wife and playing with his children. This made me feel

more comfortable in the township and, over time, gave me a sense of belonging. I did not think it was useful to distance myself, as suggested by the some of the literature above.

My first official interview with people leading a social movement and resisting against being evicted from their homes came in 2006. I called up one of the leaders of the MCR and asked if he would meet with me. He gave me directions and I then went to him where he lived. I drove up to an old abandoned factory where people, including this activist, had occupied. The rooms were small and shared between a whole family. Electricity was wired, perhaps illegally, and there appeared to be only one bathroom for a large group of families who live there.

The interviewee, after a few opening questions, began to inform me about his life situation in the abandoned factory, about how this was his best option for him at the time. He told me about his family and his kids and how they would be affected if he was forced to leave. He then shared with me the logic behind their resistance and what collective strategies and tactics they used.

The approach which I took in the above interview, and more broadly speaking, corresponded with Johnson who argues that, "to be effective and useful in-depth interviews develop and build on intimacy; in this respect, they resemble the forms of talking one finds among close friends" (2001: 104). Throughout many of these interviews, I was utterly surprised and moved by the way in which activists opened up to me and told me anything that I wanted to know. Acess to these activists was clearly enhanced since I was often viewed as a resource that could assist their struggle. Building a relationship of mutual trust and intimacy came from listening carefully to people and empathising with them. This interview was my first indication that activists, or leaders of social movements, despite being part of a completely different community than me, might actually be more satisfying to interview than officials.

On another occasion, I attended a court case involving two of the activists I had interviewed several days earlier. I observed this case with the dozens of other APF members who were inside and around the court. Others at the court must have assumed that I was a supporter as I waved to the respondents (APF leaders of Wynberg) and they smiled at me. During a break, activists from Marlboro (different from those discussed above) introduced themselves to me and requested that I come to a meeting with them so

that they could sit down and discuss issues of development and evictions in Alexandra with me. This did not create the usual situation of having to arrange the interviews and pressure interviewees to come to meet with me at a specific time and place (see Warren 2002: 90). In fact, they arranged the interview themselves and I did not have a problem of trying to get them to attend the interview session and to come on time. This was a great example of the "snowballing" (Warren 2002: 88) effect because one member arranged for me to sit with him in a focus group with five other members of the APF in Marlboro.

These activists were accommodating to me and willing to answer any questions that I had. They were not only interested in sharing information with me about their struggle, but they also asked me to get information for them on housing policy and evictions and also to tell them about how the local government and ARP management perceived their crisis. One of the activists told me that he would inform people that I was going to be in Marlboro so that people could ask me questions, be free to talk to me, and so that I would be safer in their community. A few weeks later, I provided the people of Marlboro with literature on international evictions and with print outs of what was written online about the imminent evictions in Marlboro and Wynberg. At this point, I was beginning to play a small role as a supporter and advisor to movements such as those in Marlboro. My position as a researcher was beginning to move solely from being an outside interviewer and observer of court cases to being a "participant observer" within these movements. In other words, I was becoming, to some degree at least, attached to these movements and an insider.

I also played a role as participant observer in Alexandra in early 2006 when I had a brief involvement with the proposed revival of the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO). The ACO is one of the most widely known and most organised community-based attempts at creating a system of participatory development that could function despite, and in opposition to, the apartheid government. While the organisation dissolved in 1991, at the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, there was an attempt initiated by its previous president, Mzwanele Mayekiso, to revive it. Mzwanele contacted me and lamented about the significance of making a difference in the lives of the people that I was studying in Alexandra. He pointed out that most researchers simply

leave the area that they study without impacting it. Researchers gain from knowledge of the community, but the community does not gain from them. I became overwhelmed with excitement when he told me that there was an opportunity for me to become involved, and intimately linked to, the politics of Alexandra.

It was intended that the ACO revival in Alexandra would be an example that other townships around the country could use in their own context. The community would come together under one organisation in order to represent all the resident's interests. It was envisioned that funding would be sought so that activists could leave their day jobs and work full-time as organisers and researchers. In doing so, the ACO could radically alter the development agenda of the ARP and become hegemonic in Alexandra.

I invited members of the APF (discussed above) who came. Mzwanele arranged for previous members of ACO and ordinary residents to come together on 27 and 7th Avenue (the Mayekiso residence, though they no longer reside there permanently) to discuss issues and complaints of development in Alexandra. During the meetings, everyone (these meetings consisted of about 12 people) was allowed to speak and decisions were made unanimously. The plan was that Mzwanele's younger brother, Mzwonke Mayekiso, would organise two to three people from each block in Alexandra as well as the surrounding areas including Marlboro, Wynberg, and S'swetla.

Later plans would then involve getting all these activists together at a workshop to discuss development in Alexandra. With the notes from these meetings, a developmental agenda in Alexandra could be put together, redefined by the community at a later time if necessary, and then agreed upon. This would then be submitted to the ARP officials as a memorandum that the government would be pressured to implement. However, the ACO revival did not go much further than having a few weekly meetings. Due to financial restraints, the workshop never happened and the ACO has all but dissolved again.

Despite the ACO's short lifespan, I played a role with the organisations as someone who recorded and kept notes of what was said at the meeting (Mzwonke translated what was spoken in languages other than English), and I organised activists that I knew to come to the meetings. Furthermore, the ACO historically sided with tenants who they thought were unjustly treated by their landlords and I played a small

role in seeking legal assistance for two tenants living at 27 and 7th avenue who their landlords were attempting to evict.

Especially in the beginning of 2008, I spent some time with Mzwonke Mayekiso. He informed me about the key issues that the SACP had been involved in and what their perception of development and participation was in Alexandra presently. A few times, I met with Mzwonke on 27 and 7th avenue and shared and sat outside, discussed politics in Alexandra and shared various documents. Suggesting that I need to share current literature and the things that I have written on the ARP, he said to me at one point that, "we are also activists". I told him that I agreed and that all this was useless if it was impossible to be applied or if it was never shared with practitioners. Until today, I am in touch with Mzwonke. I provide him with documents on request and he continues to provide me with information that I could use for further research, or to inform me as to what was happening politically in the township.

In mid-2007, I decided to use a list of numbers that I had obtained from the APF offices, to call the Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC), another APF affiliate. As it happened, I called them in the midst of a protest that they were engaged with. I was able to come to Alexandra right after the protest had ended. I then interviewed the spokesperson of the AVCC who had been toyi-toying outside the newly built RDP houses around Alexandra throughout the night without resting. Again, I was met with an open informer. I sat down with her, and she explained to me what appeared to be everything she could think of regarding the cause of the AVCC. I quickly became connected to the politics of the AVCC.

Later in 2007, I attended a court case regarding the arrests of AVCC members who had been seen (peacefully) toyi-toying around the newly built RDP houses. I observed a group of around 20-25 women dancing and chanting outside the Wynberg court. They were mainly middle-aged women who were demanding houses from the government. I spoke to the spokesperson and also met a few other members who later brought me to Ghanda Square, an abandoned factory, to meet some more of their constituency and to show me the how poor the living conditions were there. I felt no fear and virtually no anxiety despite walking in between various dwellings that were separated only by the corrugated iron of the next dwelling. This created unsafe conditions for the

people who lived there as one had to walk through a dark hall, a half a meter wide, created by the next dwelling that was built across from it. People's dwellings were hardly the size of a small office and the people complained, as well, that these houses leaked, soaking their belongings and shorting the electricity, each time it rained heavily.

I walked around this area and the AVCC spoke casually and informally to me about their struggle and how they believed the people living in these places continue to be neglected by the government. This enabled me to get in-depth information that I might not have gotten in a formal interview. Wolcott argues that casual conversation is "a category of its own" (1999: 52). Researchers should therefore "not :make a pretense of treating everything said to them in the course of their research as though it was carefully elicited "interview" data" (ibid). After we left Ghanda Square, I offered to give members of the AVCC a ride back to the Far East Bank (about a five minute drive) and a few of them crammed into my car. Coming into their own space and being willing to bring them into mine was very helpful and I believe it added to their view of me as a partner in their struggle.

The AVCC also volunteered to have young men come meet me at the end of their street to ensure my safety. Both in the case of Marlboro and the AVCC, I felt as if I was protected by this group within the community. By looking after me and actively helping me to feel comfortable, they gave me the sense that I belonged in Alexandra. Once an outsider afraid of Alexandra, I presently feel comfortable in Alexandra on foot or in my car. I am well versed in the politics of Alexandra to the extent that I sometimes know more about certain aspects of the political landscape than some community members and officials of the ARP.

2.7 Dilemmas and Negotiations of an Activist Researcher

Having a small degree of insider status and actively supporting specific political organisations in Alexandra, I had to negotiate how I would deal with particular situations as a researcher in Alexandra. For example, I often had to determine how much information I could give the Marlboro Concerned Residents. I could not give them transcribed interviews from local government officials who I told that I was using their

information strictly for academic purposes. On the other hand, I could provide the people of Marlboro with what I thought was public knowledge regarding the politics in Alexandra around their particular situation, that perhaps they were not aware of. Throughout my fieldwork I knew that I was, first and foremost, a researcher and the ethics of my position as a researcher always trumped my activism.

I also had serious dilemmas regarding my degree of activism with the ACO. While I had hoped that the civic would become a powerful agent of developmental change, I had certain reservations about my involvement with this organisation. If I had become more than an observer of the ACO, and this organisation did gain influence, I knew from the start that this could affect my work in Alexandra and especially my Ph.D. research. At one point, I had nightmares about interviewees that once had trust in me, turning against me and refusing to work with me now that they knew I was a part of the ACO. This led me, early on, to meet with my supervisor, Noor Nieftagodien, and he advised me about the potential setbacks of the kind of activism I had in mind. Those not from Alexandra cannot fully understand the complexity of local community politics and the implications that specific development interventions have for different members of the community (though, overtime, I began to understand this). Secondly, the community's awareness of a researcher's involvement or support of a particular political organisation can lead other organisations to treat the researcher with great hostility and, in more extreme cases, violence. This is most likely to occur when other political organisations (government or civil society) have competing interests with the one that the researcher supports. The community could then rightfully refuse to provide information to the researcher on the grounds that their research will be used for specific (political) objectives. The main point that I took from this is that when conducting research, one must deeply question the extent to which they should, if at all, play a role in the development of that community.

During the time that I was involved with the ACO, I was also conducting interviews with ALPOA. This was awkward for me since ALPOA was supporting the rights of the land owner on 27 and 7th avenue to evict the tenants, while I was busy assisting the tenants there (see the above section). Regardless, I told ALPOA about what it was that I was studying, but I did not reveal my opinions about tenant and landlords.

Instead, I empathised with ALPOA's struggles and later came to see that what they were fighting for was, arguably, as just as any other cause in Alexandra. ALPOA came to view me as, I think, a sympathiser of their cause. This led them to ask me if I could find someone to survey or value their properties, which they thought were inadequately compensated for by the government. I pointed out to them that I was only a researcher and did not know much about surveying properties anyway. I told them, rather, that I could look into it in one way or another, but all that I could promise them were transcriptions of the interview that they took part in with me –which I gave them at a later stage. As with many cases, I had to choose which organisations I was going to actively support. I did not have the time or resources to assist everyone in Alexandra who called upon me for anything more than moral support.

By mid-2007, I knew what the key issues were in Alexandra and how each group generally perceived them. This made it so that I was aware of which issues would be sensitive to particular groups of people. At times, I had to consciously work around these issues so as not to offend or scare off the interviewee and so that he would not know where I stood politically. This embeddedness and my tight relationship with some of the community-based organisations in Alexandra, made interviews with ARP officials complex at times. Furthermore, leaders of the ARP were generally not, at least at first, happy about having to do an interview. It got in the way of what they were trying to do during the day and many could not see the significance of the kind of academic research that I was conducting.

In one instance, I hid what it was that I actually wanted to know from an ARP official. I chose not even to ask about organisations such as the APF because I knew that could lead to my interviewee putting up a barrier towards me. I did not want to probe too deep and be perceived as an intruder to this official. Instead, I stuck with very broad issues about the meaning of participation on the ARP and what that entails. I knew the types of issues that I wanted my interviewee to talk about, but asking those questions directly was not going to give me the type of response that I was seeking. I therefore followed Johnson's suggestion that the in-depth interviewer should be "prepared to follow where informants might lead" (2001: 114).

I was about to leave the interview dissatisfied with the information that I had received. Eventually, however, as the interview was coming to a close, this leader gave me the "gold". There was no prompting necessary and no question that could have been asked in order to receive what was, to me, unfiltered commentary on how the ARP relates to the housing situation in Alexandra. I therefore let him speak until he was clearly finished. Only then did I proceed to ask further questions about what he had detailed. Asking about the issues that the interviewee raised on his own made it so I could really hone in on what it was that I wanted to know about, without making myself seem as if I had a particular political agenda or affiliation. By asking questions that were intended to clarify his perspective, I could show understanding and sympathy towards the position of the ARP that he was putting forth even though I didn't necessarily agree with his perspective. Rather than feeling like I was imposing political questions towards the interviewee and potentially scaring him off, I sat quietly. Eventually, this tactic paid off and I was lucky that he decided to vent key issues about the ARP and resistance to me. The strategy used here was to remain quiet and to wait for the respondent to speak and hope that I would be lucky enough that he would touch on issues I wanted to know about. The powerful cannot answer political questions directly to interviewers because they are wary of the position that he or she is taking about them. Often therefore, "to penetrate the shields of the powerful the social scientist has to be lucky and/or devious" (Burawoy 1998: 22).

On another occasion, I was interviewing a key ARP official about a highly contested housing protest activity that I knew the ARP had to deal with.a few days earlier. These issues would be deeply engrained and fresh in the minds of the ARP leaders at this time since they had to defend their position up against community organisations**.** This meant that they were particularly emotional about the issue as well. After going through several standardised questions that I had asked many officials, I reluctantly decided to take a chance by probing, perhaps, too far. I wanted to ask a question "straight-up" that would, in a way, force the official to discuss the position regarding a particular housing protest earlier in the week.

When I did so, he asked me, "that's a political questions isn't it?" I sensed perhaps a hint of hostility in his voice and in the way that he was looking at me, but I

now had no choice but to continue and say "it's a political question". There was a feeling of discomfort in both of us. I thought, what will happen now? Is he going to answer my question or ask me to leave the interview? Throughout this time, he stared at me for what seemed like a great amount of time, though it was probably only five seconds, and I stared back without stopping making eye contact with him. I could tell he was "reading" me to find out what my motivation was for asking this particular question. I used eye contact and physical expressions as a way of maintaining cooperation and good rapport (see Johnson 2001: 109). There was nothing else I could do but sit and wait. I knew I was bordering on intrusion with the question I was asking, but I also thought it was a fair enough question that I was asking about the ARP. Eventually, he told me exactly what it was that I was seeking clarity on. The risk and discomfort was worth it for the bit of information that my informant shared with me.

2.8 The Right Degree of Attachment/Detachment

Once an "outsider" afraid of going into Alexandra and unaware of the life and politics (in 2004), I became (increasingly in 2007 and to 2008), to a certain degree, an "insider." Becoming an insider created challenges for me that I have discussed above. I was not just a researcher going into an area to extract information as a once-off journalist might. Interviewees, after all, are people with knowledge and feelings and the way in which we attempt to relate to them and show empathy and intimacy is not only significant for ethical reasons, but also in terms of the findings that we are able to gather as researchers.

Having sympathy or attachment to a particular political organisation does not have to get in the way of objectivity, or limit the researcher's findings. Rather, it can do quite the opposite by enriching it. Coming to a person's home, eating their food and drinking with them, accepting their way of life, being humble, and offering advice when appropriate, enables people to open up so that the researcher can be met with their honesty, thus enhancing one's research findings. Despite my participation, I was still able to interview anyone in Alexandra that I wanted to including officials, even though clearly I had to be careful how I responded and asked questions. Part of this is because I have

attempted to support people's resistance against structures of power that serve to undermine the government's approaches to development.

Had I been a mobilising force within one of these organisations, my study would not necessarily have been less ethnographic or less scientific. It may have enabled me to gain insight into the struggle itself, and closer to what the people are actually faced, and are up against and their limitations. It is possible to move back and forth from participant to non-participant, to be critical of the movement that one is supporting.

On the other hand, I do not think I could have played any significant role as a member in these organistions and still been able to continue on to complete my research in the manner that I have. I could not have been honest with other community organisations and they therefore would not have been able to trust and be open and honest in return. Staying to some degree an outsider helped me conduct research that provided answers to my central research questions.

Still, I was involved in this as more than an observer and I am still attached to the movements, some more than others, that I was attempting to understand. Some activists still call me up until today when they have an issue that they want to raise with me. Each researcher can choose the extent to which they are involved after weighing the costs and benefits regarding their well-being, ethics, and based on what they need to learn from their research.

2.9 Speaking Truth to Power

Ethnographic research assisted me in problematising agency and furthermore, enabled me to "speak truth to power" (Said 2003: 63).[3] Given the emancipatory approach to research taken in this study, I was not solely interested, for example, in explaining the ways in which housing policies in Alexandra have become more locally appropriate as a response to popular resistance, since this policy shift does not directly address the root causes of

[3] Desai might conclude that I have fallen short since he argues that the researcher must go further than this so that one can "speak truth within the disempowered" (Desai 2006: 8). This is an imperative, yet difficult and uncomfortable, task particularly for the researcher who has not grown organically from these movements and is critical of them. However, if we are really committed to bridging the divide between academic theory and political practice, then our task as researchers must involve engaging and sharing our knowledge with those at the forefront of the struggles that we critique.

oppression, neoliberalism, although this forms perhaps the core part of my dissertation. Rather, I viewed with a critical eye the results and possibilities of various agents' changing methods of resistance in an attempt to understand what these acts meant for wider political processes, rather than only specific interventions.

By Mid-2007 I began to see that the reality in Alexandra was far more complex than what I had previously thought. It became evident to me that simple binaries provided inadequate tools with which properly to comprehend the complexities of development, especially in a place like Alexandra, which is so rich in diversity and history. And, even if one were to persist with labels such as "oppressor" and "oppressed," it was difficult to identify any one group of people organisations that readily fitted into these categories over a period of time.

By working with agents over time and viewing them as a partner in obtaining knowledge, rather than a subject from which I could obtain information, conducting interviews was not a lonely process in which I was unable to share my research findings or theoretical approaches to development in Alexandra. Being intimately involved with (and perhaps resisting against) development in Alexandra, none could be more knowledgeable about the struggles over development and the processes through which one has to go in order to achieve specific objectives, than those at the forefront of the struggles themselves. It is because of their experiences and practices that, if they wished, the respondents and I could discuss the theoretical approaches that I was using to understand development in Alexandra. Although respondents did not determine my initial research agenda and questions, they directly influenced, through their practice and struggles and the meanings they ascribed to this, the construction and reconstruction of theory which is threaded throughout this entire thesis.

This approach has enabled me to obtain high quality results, both theoretically and empirically, which provide critical insights into contemporary radical debates about participation in development. The depth of the research has been amplified as a result of my shifting position in Alexandra from participant to non-participant observer and as someone with a keen interest that goes beyond strictly academic (or what positivists have labeled dispassionate, disinterested and detached) research interests. The research "speaks truth to power" both through the lens of the disempowered in Alexandra and

from the perspective of a researcher-activist who seeks to understand the possibilities and limitations for the disempowered to achieve emancipation from oppressive social relations.

Chapter 3

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

Participatory approaches to development emerged forcefully in the 1970s due to concerns that development practices were top-down and therefore failing to meet the needs of intended beneficiaries. In the 1980s, participation quickly became mainstreamed in development projects throughout the world and was projected by its proponents as intrinsically positive and faultless. By the mid and late 1990s, radical academics and, to a lesser extent policy makers and practitioners, questioned the purpose and outcomes that resulted from mainstreamed participatory processes. By the turn of the century, they began to argue that participation serves the interests of those in power since it provides a discourse through which to impose their priorities. Participation has never been more popular and proponents point towards how a radical and active notion of citizenship that goes beyond prescriptions provided for by the state or development organisations, could unlock participation's transformative possibilities thereby re-grounding participation as a legitimate approach to development. Advancing beyond the binaries of participation as tyranny or transformation and focusing on the multiple processes through which participation unfolds in practice, may provide further insight to this debate.

The main focus of this chapter is on the evolution of thinking about participation in development. In critically reviewing the extant literature on this theme, it is argued that one may discern three phases in the evolution of writing in participation since the 1980s, the decade in which participation emerged as a central feature of development generally. In examining the first, the popular phase, the chapter investigates how and why, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, participation became advocated on virtually every development project around the world. The second phase of thinking (from the late 1990s and early 2000s) can be described as the "backlash" against the mainstream incorporation of participation in development. This section seeks to understand how it is possible that both left-wing radicals *and* conservatives could embrace the idea of participation in development. It explains how mainstream approaches to participation

had no significant affect on the underlying structures of social change that served to oppress people (bind people into a state of poverty), or simply co-opted people into pre-determined development agendas.

As an innovative response, the third phase of thinking argues that participatory processes are neither simply tyrannical or in the hands of elites, but that even those who may seem to be the most marginal actors, may reinvent their own sites of participation in order to have their interests addressed. This section analyses the ways in which top-down approaches to participation may be contested and redefined by various agents involved in the development process. It shows how the development process is defined by both structure and agency. It uses the concept of participatory spaces (Cornwall 2004), understood as social places that are controlled by discourse, and then incorporates Giddens's conception of "structuration" (Giddens 1984) to further understand what happens in these spaces.

3.2 Mainstreaming Participation in Development

The words "participate" and "participatory" became popular beginning in the 1970s when international aid organisations' expectations to make a difference in the lives of impoverished people suffered from setbacks (Sachs 1992: 117). In response to these failures, several practitioners and commentators pointed to the lack of involvement by the intended beneficiaries in development projects as a possible cause of the shortcomings in these projects. Some extended the argument even further by attributing the failure of projects more specifically to the absence of participation in which intended beneficiaries actually shaped the development meant to impact on their lives. According to Sachs, a number of major international aid organisations "found that, whenever people were locally involved, and actively participating, in the projects, much more was achieved with much less, even in sheer financial terms" (Sachs 1992: 117). Thus, development agencies began to advocate the end of top-down approaches to development.

The perceived need for participatory approaches to development needs to be viewed within shifting discourses of development. The "positive orthodox" approach to development, dominating much of the thinking in the late 1940s and 1950s, implied that

"…technocrats should analyse the problems of bringing about economic growth, and that good 'scientific' analysis would generate 'right answers' to the question of what should be done through planning" (Harriss 2005: 19). In other words, technocrats should be responsible for determining development, which was understood purely in economic terms and could be delivered to the people of the "third world".

In 1952, the first "Report on the World Social Situation" followed this trend by initiating a programme that was based on top-down prescriptions for economic development. This publication was influential due to the interest it drew from the United Nations and other institutions. According to Esteva, documents such as this were:

> …trying to develop in the 'underdeveloped' countries the basic social services and the 'caring professions' found in the advanced countries. These pragmatic concerns, as well as early theoretical insights going beyond the dogmatic vision of economic quantifiers, were, however, overshadowed by the general obsession with all-out industrialization and GNP growth which dominated the 1950s (Esteva 1992: 12).

Esteva (1992: 12) further remarks that the social conditions in the "Third World" countries at this time were improving, and that conventional wisdom showed international development agencies and economists that this must have been a result of economic growth. There was therefore no need for international organisations or governments to involve participation because development was conceived of in technical terms as economic growth. Development was conceived as being the most effective as a top-down strategy that could be applied to the "Third World".

By the 1960s, however, the need for an approach to development that accounted for the social aspects of development was added to the language of development. The Proposals for Action of the First UN Development Decade (1960-1970) declared that:

> The problem of the underdeveloped countries is not just growth, but development… Development is growth plus change, (it added). Change, in turn, is social and cultural as well as economic, and qualitative as well as quantitative… The key concept must be improved quality of people's life (in Esteva 1992: 13).

Despite a rhetoric that emphasised the social dimensions of development, throughout the beginning and mid-1960s, the economic imperative remained the critical component of development interventions and the social aspect was sidelined or considered to be an obstacle to economic growth (Esteva 1992: 13). There was little possibility, within this paradigm, for people to participate in development, beyond being informed of, and able to take part in, market-led development programmes. The assumption was that "planning is good because it promotes the 'common good' by means of 'rational' processes" (Souza 2003: 191).

By the mid-60s, there was a "'crisis' in the prevailing orthodoxy" (Harriss 2005: 19). The first world's development plans to lead the "third world" on a path towards economic growth and modernisation were no longer left largely unquestioned (Esteva 1992: 13). It became clear that rapid economic growth came at the cost of mass inequality (Esteva 1992: 13). Furthermore, referring to the 1960s, Cohen and Uphoff confirmed that, "development specialists… expressed increasing concern over the lack of progress in altering the plight of the poor" (1980: 213).

In this context, dependency theorists, Marxists, and anti-colonialists emerged to critique the dominant imposition of development and / or capitalism onto the "third world" (for example, see Rodney 1972). Paulo Freire was among those who were the most critical of the dominant approach to development at the time. Drawing from his own experiences with poverty and his observation of the mass inequalities that existed in Brazil, Freire introduced a radical and alternative approach to development based on his attempts at achieving adult literacy in Brazil. This approach to participation in development sought to empower marginalised people to control their own destinies. This meant that people needed to be "conscientized" so that they could overcome the structures of society that served to oppress them (Freire 1972).

While participation is now often cited in academic literature as having its 'roots in Freirean philosophy' (Cleaver 2001: 37), Freire's approach to participation in development was by no means mainstreamed even in the 1960s and 1970s. This is at least partially because Freire's approach was perceived as a threat to those in power. According to Coutinhow, it is not "difficult to see why a method based on such a philosophy would be received with caution, if not alarm, by the holders of political or

academic power" (in Freire 1970: 10). This approach to participation aimed to "confront the structures of oppression" (Hickey and Mohan 2004a: 7) thereby undermining and potentially challenging the dominant political-economic order.

Most likely as a response to radical agendas such as Freire's and other Marxists (see Hailey 2001) and the perceived failure of development initiatives in the 1960s, the 1970s dominant approach to development became centred around basic needs and popular participation was conceived as a central tenet to this approach (Cornwall 2000: 18; Cohen and Uphoff 1980: 213). Unlike Freire's approach, however, participation could occur within the framework of capitalism which was supported by international organisations.

Nevertheless, the perceived need for people's involvement in decision making in development was increasing. Cornwall contends that "the welter of declarations that emerged in this period promised a decisive shift, away from top-down, technocratic economistic interventions towards greater popular involvement in the development process" (Cornwall 2000: 17). By 1975, the United Nations Economic Social Council advised that governments should:

> adopt popular participation as a basic policy measure in national development strategy… encourage the widest possible active participation of all individuals and national non-governmental organizations, such as trade unions, youth and women's organizations, in the development process in setting goals, formulating policies and implementing plans" (in Cohen and Uphoff 1980: 213).

Furthermore, the U.S. Congress's 1973 Foreign Assistance Act emphasised that intended beneficiaries needed to play a critical role in development planning, implementation and benefits (Cohen and Uphoff 1980: 213). In 1980, Cohen and Uphoff observed that participation was becoming mainstreamed on development projects throughout the world (1980).

Robert Chambers was a pioneer in promoting a development agenda in which participation featured more centrally than in most existing programmes. Chamber's work drew primarily from his experiences with failed development projects in places like South Asia and Kenya. For example, after having implemented top-down water

irrigation projects in South Asia, Chambers notes that "subsequent experience showed that the solution… was bottom-up participation with the empowerment of groups of irrigators" (Chambers 2005: 76-7). Following from this, Chambers first influential publication was called Rural Development: Putting the Last First (1983). According to Oakley, this study was the only "detailed analysis of the implications of a style of intervention which seeks to reverse decades of established practice" which favoured top-down development which disregarded the views and realities of those effected (Oakley 1991: 4). The title was suggesting that those suffering in the midst of rural poverty (the last) needed to be put first. In so doing, he stressed the idea of role reversals between development specialists and those living in rural poverty and sought to critically assess the "perceptions, attitudes, learning, ways of thinking and behaviour of professionals" (Chambers 1983: preface). Chambers asserted that so-called development specialists, who came especially from the U.S. and the U.K., were "outsiders" who did not understand the needs and realities of those living in poverty in the rural areas that they were attempting to help. To respond to this, Chambers argued that specialists needed to learn as much as possible from the rural people living in poverty by making them partners in research, interviewing and spending time with them (Chambers 1983: 47). His book therefore insisted that top-down approaches to development were inadequate, and that development specialists needed to move from "authoritarian to participatory communication" with rural people living in poverty (Chambers 1983: 190).

The neoliberal economic reform programmes in the 1980s, which sought to "roll back the state", were highly influential in mainstreaming participatory approaches to development as well (Cornwall 2000: 25). The World Bank Health Sector policy paper of 1980 illustrates the ways in which community participation came to be understood and practiced "as a means of eliciting self-help in the construction of facilities, contribution of material inputs, co-operative mechanisms to finance drug purchase and unpaid volunteer workers" (Cornwall 2000: 25). Vengroff therefore argues that participation is a critical component of structural adjustment "with a human face":

> On the one hand, it can help generating the political support needed to overcome short-term political and bureaucratic opposition. On the other, it is essential for the planning, implementing,

> and success of the approaches devised, as well as for keeping the cost of the programme down by means of community contributions (Cornia et al 1987: 295 in Cornwall 2000: 26).

In the 1980s, the idea of people's "ownership" over development projects:

> was stripped of any association with a transfer of power and control. Instead, it became associated with people 'buying in' to development intitatives for their benefit through contributions of cash and kind (Cornwall 2000: 26).

Participation was therefore perceived as a means by which to ensure the efficiency of "cost recovery" schemes in the context of the diminishing role of the state. Similarly, taking into account his field work in Sri Lanka, Woost shows how "participation came to be cast as the act of partaking in the objectives of the economy, and the societal arrangements related to it" (1997: 240 in Cornwall 2000: 32-33). He tells us further in regard to market generation projects, that "the programmes were said to be participatory because they obtained people's participation in the market-led development strategies" (1997: 243 in Cornwall 2000: 33).

By the 1990s, practitioners and theorists such as Chambers, who were still not satisfied with the quality of participation on development projects throughout the world, began to theorise the role of community participation in shaping development. Chambers' most well known contribution dealt with participatory rural appraisal (PRA), which has had great impact on the ideas of participatory development in general. The basic point of PRA is that it should facilitate the involvement of beneficiaries in their own development. Using PRA techniques, the researcher or developer is meant to "hand over the stick" (Chambers: 1997) and listen to the beneficiaries view of the situation so that the latter's agenda comes across in the development plans. In other words, development professionals must place themselves and their ego last, after those who are considered to be the "underclass," those for whom development professional are meant to be addressing the needs of (Chamber 1997: 9). This he claims, is the more difficult task than the one introduced in his previous books (see Chambers 1983 above). As he writes, "to put the first last is the easier half. Putting the first last is harder. For it means that

those who are powerful have to step down, sit, listen, and learn from and empower those who are weak and last" (Chambers 1997: 2).

Chambers makes it clear that the reality imposed upon "lowers" by "uppers" through development schemes is, all too often, one that does not relate to the reality that the former lives in. He comments that development practitioners tend to be "out of touch, out of date and wrong" (ibid: 91). They are said to be out of touch as a result of their central positioning in society. He then asks, how can one expect that an expert will understand poor people's realities, which are "local, complex, diverse, dynamic and unpredictable" if he is not anywhere near these realities (ibid: 162)?

To counteract this, Chambers discusses a situation where the relationship between the developers and beneficiaries must be one that encompasses role reversals. Rather than going into an area thinking he/she knows what is best for the beneficiaries, the developer looks to the people in the area for answers. In this way, insider or local knowledge is to be put ahead of expert knowledge, thus humbling the researcher. Therefore, those who are considered to be first in the development process (i.e. the developers of a given project) must put themselves *last*. The above points are clear even in the title of one Chambers' books: Whose Reality Counts: Putting the First Last (Chambers: 1997).

These ideas helped further inform and mainstream the view that beneficiaries of development projects were no longer to be viewed as passive recipients of development aid. Rather, their energy was considered to be an as integral component to the success of projects. Following from the key points made by PRA, "The World Bank Participation Source Book," published in 1996, contrasted the "participatory stance" with the "external expert stance" (in Francis 2001: 78). The book reported that it:

> …represents the new direction the World Bank is taking in its support of participation, by recognising that there is a diversity of stakeholders in every activity we undertake, and those people affected by the development process must be included in the decision-making process (World Bank 1996: 9).

The World Bank further declared that, the poor must be able to "influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them"

(World Bank 1996: 8). Furthermore, in 1998, the president of the World Bank expressed that, "Participation matters, not only as a means of improving development effectiveness, as we know from our recent studies – but as the key to long-term sustainability and leverage" (in Francis 2001: 72).

The World Bank's practice and understanding of participation represents the epitome of mainstream approaches to participation. In this way, participation is depoliticised and a technical fix. Referring to Rahnema, who wrote at the beginning of the 'PRA boom', Williams says that participation's rapid growth was "…an indication that it had already been politically 'tamed', and was serving important economic, institutional and legitimating functions for a mainstream vision of development" (Williams 2004: 92). Because participation is compatible with a neoliberal agenda such as that of the World Bank, Williams questions whether "the recent explosion of 'participatory' practices and discourse represent a radical paradigm shift, or the active *de*-politicization, of international development" (2004: 92)?

Williams argues that the latter is a much more accurate depiction of what participation represents in reality. He then identifies three criticisms regarding the way in which participation had been mainstreamed. First, he argues that "participation stresses personal reform over political struggle" (Williams 2004: 92). It seems to be assumed that as long as "uppers" and "lowers" (see Chambers 1998) can meet together to come to a consensus in which all are satisfied, there is no need for broader political struggles. Secondly, participatory approaches to development assume that struggles over development must happen at a local level where a homogenous community exists. They therefore tend to romanticise the community and hide inequalities within the community (Guijt and Shah 1998). Equally important, the tendency to focus on obtaining local knowledge hides wider processes of politics that occur at a national and global level and that may undermine what can happen at the local level. Participatory processes isolate what happens at the local from wider political and economic structures (Mohan and Stokke 2000: 249).

The third critique (which will be elaborated on in detail in another section) is that participation has become "the new tyranny." According to Williams:

> The argument is that participation actively 'depoliticizes' development; incorporating marginalized individuals in development projects that they are unable to question (Kothari 2001); producing 'grassroots' knowledge ignorant of its own partiality (Mosse 2001); and foreclosing discussion of alternative visions of development (Henkel and Stirrat 2001) (Williams 2004: 93).

By the 1980s and 1990s, it became widely accepted among academics and development practitioners that the local people themselves were no longer to be viewed as passive recipients of development aid from above, but needed to play an integral role in determining their own development (Woost 2002: 107). This mainstreaming of participation was perceived by many as a major advance in development, which apparently overturned the dominant "top down" approach that characterised development for decades (see Cornwall 2000).

However, even as participation established itself as an apparently indispensable tool in the hands of development practitioners, serious questions were raised about it. From the mid-1990s, an increasing number of development analysts began to pose critical questions which exposed important shortcomings in mainstream participation. In order to understand these shortcomings, the following section first engages the relatively early literature that focused attention on the ambiguous and contested nature of the concept of participation.

3.3 Early Critiques of Mainstream Views and Practices of Participation

Exactly what *kind* of participation is necessary to overcome this top-down, technical and bureaucratic form of development aid is a question often left unanswered (Cohen and Uphoff 1980: 213). For example, an organisation might get away with saying, "yes, the people are hoeing the fields like we asked them to, therefore they are participating in our development project." In one way or another, it may be justified as being a participatory project.

This is because the "slippery" nature of the term *participation* enables participation to be used to achieve virtually any outcome (Crewe and Harrison 1998: 73). Mainstream approaches to participation use the conecpt to achieve efficiency and sustainability in development projects. In other words, participation is used as a means to

achieve an end. As in the cases of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, participation is seen as something that is *practical* because it increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the development project. By involving the people's local expertise in the project, it is more likely to be sustainable because the beneficiaries will have had some stake in the decision-making and outcomes on the project, thus making it more likely that they will maintain the project after the developers have left (Francis 2001).

Because mainstream approaches are used as a means to an end, critics have doubted its transformative potential. In 2000, Cornwall revealed these perceptions by arguing that:

> there is less cause for celebration. Their [mainstream] concerns centre on the use of participation as a legitimating device that draws on the moral authority of claims to involve the poor to place the pursuit of other agendas beyond reproach. According to this perspective, most of what is hailed as 'participation' is a mere technical fix that leaves inequitable global and local relations of power, and with it the root causes of poverty, unchallenged (Cornwall 2000: 1).

Mainstream participation is viewed as a "technical fix" because people can participate in projects, perhaps even influence which ones to undertake and their outcome, but they have to do this within the parameters of global institutions. These parameters have been defined by the IMF, World Bank and other global forces which inhibit a radical redistribution of resources and the potential for people to alter broader scale power relations there are necessary to being about meaningful transformation for marginalised groups. For example, Cooke explains that the World Bank has "appropriated participatory discourse and methods" (Cooke 2004: 43) and points out that "the World Bank is an organisation that sees more neoliberalism as the remedy for the problems it has visited on the world's poor; and… it uses participatory methodologies and practitioners to enforce that agenda (ibid: 43-44).

In this line of thinking, Cornwall (2000) and Cleaver (2001) suggest that mainstream approaches to participation need to be measured against alternative approaches such as those advocated by Paulo Freire, which view participation as an end in itself. Rather than fit beneficiaries into pre-determined structures (i.e. within the

development of capitalism) that bind them into oppression, people need to be empowered to understand, and then control, structural conditions (Freire 1972). In this conception, participation is viewed as an end in itself (Cleaver 2001: 73).

To further understand what the implications of the mainstream approach to participation, and the limitations it sets, it is useful to go back to Arnstein's ladder of participation, published originally in 1969. Written in the context of the end of the civil rights struggle in the U.S., Arnstein was responding to the piecemeal approach to citizen participation on urban renewal projects in the U.S. at the time. Arnstein's ladder of participation distinguishes between eight rungs of citizen participation.

The bottom two rungs were the weakest forms of participation and fell into the sub-category called non-participation. The first rung was called manipulation which:

> In the name of citizen participation, people are placed on rubberstamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of "educating" them or engineering their support. Instead of genuine citizen participation, the bottom rung of the ladder signifies the distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle by powerholders (Arnstein 1969: 218).

This weak form of participation came into popularity in the U.S. when city housing officials invited "socially elite" people to join Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs). She cautions that these committees often have "no legitimate function or power" (ibid). Arnstein points out that:

> At meetings of the Citizen Advisory Committees, it was the officials who educated, persuaded, and advised the citizens, not the reverse. Federal guidelines for the renewal programs legitimized the manipulative agenda by emphasizing the terms "information-gathering," public relations," and "support" as the explicit functions of the committees (ibid).

Although citizens may be involved in the processes of the city, they are not intended to have any control over it. Rather, they are there to provide legitimacy to the process, gain support, and disseminate information.

The second rung under the category non-participation is called therapy. Arnstein denounces this rung as well since it involves dishonesty and arrogance. It assumed that those who are powerless are abnormal and need to be treated. She observes that:

> Common examples of therapy, masquerading as citizen participation, may be seen in public housing programs where tenant groups are used as vehicles for promoting control-your-child or cleanup campaigns. The tenants are brought together to help them "adjust their values and attitudes to those of the larger society." Under these ground rules, they are diverted from dealing with such important matters as: arbitrary evictions; segregation of the housing project; or why is there a three-month time lapse to get a broken window replaced in winter (ibid: 219).

The therapy rung of community participation means that people must be treated so that they can deal with their own problems of "pathology". Arnstein believes that this serves to distract people's attention from larger political processes that serve to perpetuate their poor living conditions in the first place.

The next three rungs of Arnstein's ladder fall under the sub-category called degrees of tokenism. The first of this category, informing, often leads to control of the developers over the beneficiaries. Arnstein cautions that:

> Informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities, and options can be the most important step toward legitimate participation…emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information – from officials to citizens – with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation. Under these conditions, particularly when information is provided at a late stage of planning, people have little opportunity to influence the program designed for their benefit (Arnstein 1970: 218)

While the next degree of tokenism, consultation, is higher up on the ladder of participation, Arnstein insists that this form of participation "offers no assurance that citizen participation and ideas will be taken into account" and that "what citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have 'participated in participation.' And what power holders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving those people" (Arnstein 1970: 219).

Certainly, participation can be a means by which developers legitimise a given development project. Patricia Feeney of Oxfam endorses this understanding when she reports that Village Forest Committees in Bengal, intended to enable locals to participate in the Joint Forest Management, never had a chance to do this. Furthermore, she reveals that, "although public meetings were held… to tell the community about the project and to listen nominally to their suggestions about planting, nurseries had already been raised and pits dug before any consultation occurred" (1998: 72).

In this case, to what extent does the *idea* of achieving participation on the project exist to lend "credibility and legitimacy to decisions that have already been made" (Hildyard 2001: 59)? Hildyard, a later theorist, contends that,

> Not only does consultation tend to be desultory, but even where meetings are held, the voices of the people rarely appear to be listened to. Local people become a ghostly presence within the planning process – visible, heard even, but ultimately they are only there because their involvement lends credibility and legitimacy to decisions that have already been made (2001: 59)

For Hildyard, there is something potentially sinister in this modus operandi favoured by many development agencies. Here, participation is utilised as a "means for top-down planning to be imposed from the bottom up" (2001:59).

The fifth rung of Arstein's ladder is called placation, another degree of tokenism. Regarding this, she refers to Model Cities advisory and planning committees in urban areas in the U.S. which:

> allow citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum but retain for powerholders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice. The degree to which citizens are actually placated, of course, depends largely on two factors: the quality of technical assistance they have in articulating their priorities; and the extent to which the community has been organized to press for those priorities (Arnstein 1969: 220)

She further remarks that the majority of Model City programs unsurprisingly go no further than this rung. Participation, in these cases, may be far from enabling local ownership, but rather, it may facilitate the dominance of outsiders over the local people.

The top three rungs of Arnstein's ladder of participation are labelled as degrees of citizen power. Regarding the first of these rungs, partnership, Arnstein emphasises that:

> At this rung of the ladder, power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses (ibid: 221).

This model has worked best when ordinary citizens had the time and resources to negotiate decisions with authorities. Arnstein insists that partnership is not bestowed on people because "those who have power normally want to hang onto it. Historically, she adds, "it has had to be wrested by the powerless rather than proffered by the powerful" (ibid: 222).

In a number of cities across the U.S. in the 1960s, Arnstein notes that citizens have reached the next rung of participation, delegated power. Arnstein endorses this rung and declares that with delegated power:

> the ladder has been scaled to the point where citizens hold the significant cards to assure accountability of the program to them. To resolve differences, powerholders need to start the bargaining process rather than respond to pressure from the other end (ibid).

In other words, it is the citizens who have the power to make decisions regarding their future, and if urban planners want to influence plans, they must negotiate with the citizens. Arnstein points out that one way of ensuring that this occurs, is by making it so that citizens have the power to vote and veto any plans that they are not in favour of.

Regarding the eighth and final rung of community participation, Arnstein makes it clear that:

> Though no one in the nation has absolute control, it is very important that the rhetoric not be confused with intent. People are simply demanding that degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them (ibid: 223)

Regarding participatory approaches to urban renewal in the U.S., Arnstein stresses that this is unlikely to occur because final approval power and accountability rest with the city council (ibid).

Finally, Arnstein warns that the participation game can create serious problems within communities if it is not dealt with appropriately. She says, "it can turn out to be a new Mickey Mouse game for the have-nots by allowing them to gain control but not allowing them sufficient dollar resources to succeed" (ibid: 224). The critical issue that comes out of Arnstein's work is, of course, that people need to understand the different levels of participation so that they understand the amount of influence citizens have over priorities. Arnstein suggests that as long as people do not have adequate citizen power to control and widen the distribution of resources, only certain members of the community will benefit, thereby creating a situation that frustrates those attempting to control the limited resources available (ibid).

Cohen and Uphoff advocate perhaps a more complex theoretical understanding than the above in terms of what kind of participation is best by arguing that developers should "seek clarity through specificity" (1980: 213). Referring especially to American foreign assistance, they claim that developers need to clarify *what* kind of participation is taking place, *who* is participating, and exactly *how* are they going about participating in the development process. They explain that developers must indicate whether the beneficiaries are intended to participate in decision-making, implementation, benefits or evaluation.

Here, the question of who is participating is also of central importance to a given development project. The *number* of people involved is often a key factor in determining what level of participation will exist on the project. Farrington and

Bebbington (1993) explain the difference between depth and width of participation. 'Deep' participation is usually only able to include a small number of people since it attempts to involve people in all the processes of development on the project. On the other hand, 'shallow' participation covers a wider extent of people in a given population and is therefore only able to use informed or consultative methods. (Farrington and Bebbington: 1993 from Cornwall 2000: 54-55).

Cornwall elaborates on this issue in her discussion entitled, 'from full to optimal participation' (Cornwall 2000: 55). She says that:

> A 'deep' and 'wide' participatory process might be the ideal, in abstract, but in practice it can prove either virtually impossible to achieve, or so cumbersome and time-consuming that everyone begins to lose interest. In this regard, it makes more sense to think in terms of optimum participation. Clearly what might be optimum for one purpose would not be so for another. Contrast, for example, the depth and breadth of participation that might be desired for the development of local institutions and for HIV/AIDS prevention activities. Neither of these purposes can be expected to involve 'full participation.' But if the former sought to include everyone and the latter worked only with a small handful of people, they would fail in their own terms (Cornwall 2002: 55).

The final, and certainly not least important factor of what one must look at carefully in order to have a clear notion of participation on a given project, is *how* the beneficiaries participate. Cohen and Uphoff ask the question, "does the initiative come from the grass roots or from the national centre?" (Cohen and Uphoff 1980: 224). This question relates to the degree to which beneficiaries have power to make decisions on the project. If the initiatives keep coming from the developers, the beneficiaries may not actually have voice in the project to make decisions, and to implement the project in such a way that they will have taken control of their own development. With the practices and rhetoric of participation becoming more mainstreamed, the thinking on participation up until the mid to late 1990s led many to conclude that the mainstream adoption of participatory approaches to development did not actually enable people to control their own lives, but was a broad term that could be used to enable outsider agendas to be met. The next

section shows the ways in which power plays a central role in determining whose agenda is put forth when stakeholders get together to influence development plans.

3.4 Power Relations at the Development Project Level

Several researchers (Chambers 1997, Woost 2002, Ferguson 1994, Crewe and Harrison 1998) have focused on the power relationship between the beneficiaries and the developers of a project. Crewe and Harrison have suggested that a common thread of criticism of development projects is that "the local organisations with whom donors work are treated as passive recipients who are unable to manage their own affairs" (Crewe and Harrison 1998: 69). They point out that there are clear difficulties in creating a role reversal between so-called development specialists and beneficiaries in practice. Not only does the process depend on the developers humbling him or herself to the beneficiary, but also as Crewe and Harrison claim, that "their relationship with recipients cannot be a meeting of equals" (1998: 74). Furthermore, they caution that, "the exchange is inherently unequal and, at times, coercive" (1998: 74). This unequal relationship is compounded by the fact that one is giving aid (resources and money) and another is waiting, with the expectation that they may receive some of this aid. Therefore, in dealing with the developers, beneficiaries will be more likely to tell them what they (the developers) want to hear rather than what the beneficiaries actually think or want. Crewe and Harrison therefore conclude that, "better communication between partners might provide a sense of equality but it does not alter the structurally unequal relationship of donor and recipient" (1998: 74).

Woost has also examined the role of participation in a number of development projects in Sri Lanka. He pointed out that "the many different players in the Sri Lankan development game – NGO employees, governmental officials, villagers – clearly have different categorical interests" (Woost 2002:110). Because of these differences, struggles take place between various positions over the very definition of participation and hence the project's goals. He further argues that since some of these positions have more power than others, the idea of a bottom-up or democratic approach is undermined along with the

project itself. According to Woost (2002), developers *outside* of the community have different interests and more power than those beneficiaries *within* the community and therefore undermine the goal of bottom-up approaches.

In seeking to address the relationship between developers and beneficiaries, one risks ignoring the power relations that exist within a community and therefore the need to define the concept of community. There has been a long debate over the meaning of the "community." For example, in the context of South Africa, Bozzoli doubts that the term represents reality or serves any analytical purpose. She argues that, in many cases:

> It is… used to refer to something perceived as socially good, constructive, to be supported and sustained. Undoubtedly it has romantic connotations. It is virtually inconveivable that anyone could be 'against' it. It is this aspect of the term that renders it useful to the government as well as its opposition (Bozzoli 1987: 5).

Problematising the community is important for the purpose of this argument since participatory processes may overlook poor and less powerful people due to the fact that developers may view the community in a romantic and monolithic manner. The fact that some members of the community will be satisfied with what a given development has to offer and others will outright resist it raises the idea that what is justified as community participation by some may be regarded as marginalisation by others. Therefore, what is counted as the "community" in the context of participation must be reconsidered as researchers such as Guijt and Shah have in their book entitled The Myth of the Community (1998), which was part of a fragmented critique of participation in development and will be elaborated on in the next section. They point out that:

> In many cases where participation has been pursued something is going wrong. Despite the stated intentions of social inclusion, it has become clear that many participatory development initiatives do not deal well with the complexity of community differences, including age, economic, religious, caste, ethnic and, in particular, gender. Looking back, it is apparent that 'community' has often been viewed naively, or in practice dealt with, as an harmonious and internally equitable collective. Too often there has been an inadequate understanding of the internal dynamics and differences, that are so crucial to positive outcomes. This mythical

> notion of community cohesion continues to permeate much participatory work, hiding a bias that favors the opinions and priorities of those with more power and the ability to voice themselves publicly (Guijt and Shah 1998: 1).

Developers often ascribe to the myth that a community is always acts in the interests of everyone within it. Failing to address power relations within communities, participatory processes may actually serve to marginalise those with less power, thus undermining the potential of empowerment on development projects. These critiques are elaborated on in the next section, which provides a more radical critique of participation in development.

3.5 Participation: The New Tyranny?

By the end of the 1990s, theorists began to sharply criticise the mainstreaming of participation in development. Cooke and Kothari captured these critiques most dramatically and influentially in their book entitled, Participation: The New Tyranny (2001). This book went beyond the routine questioning of the failure of participation to empower the poor and what steps might be taken so that participation could function to enable more meaningful participation. As the title of the book suggests, it adopted a highly contentious position that participation, in its mainstreamed version, serves to legitimate the interests of those in power. These authors were among the first advocates of participation to acknowledge the need to seriously question whether the drive for participation in development should not be abandoned completely.

A key component of their argument related to the emphasis that participatory approaches to development placed on project-level interventions. According to Cooke and Kothari, reviews and critiques of the mainstream approach to participation take two main forms:

> Those that focus on the technical limitations of the approach and stress the need for a re-examination of the methodological tools used, for example in PRA, and those that pay more attention to the theoretical, political and conceptual limitations of participation (2001: 5).

In criticising the first approach, they caution that "an emphasis on the micro level of intervention can obscure, and indeed sustain, broader macro level inequalities and injustice" (2001: 14). According to this view, there may be problems with participatory development in itself. Even if the project is as efficient and effective as possible, it still may not be satisfactory since the development project has not changed the overarching economic and political structures that shape these people's lives in various ways. Cooke and Kothari contend that it is insufficient to say that the problem of participation is with its methods or techniques.

The question they then pose is: "Has the constant methodological revisionism to which some of us have contributed (e.g. Cook: 1998), obscured the more fundamental problems within the discourse, and whether internal critiques have served to legitimize the participatory project rather than present it with a real challenge" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 7)? This outlook can be compared to the notion of giving away food at a soup kitchen since giving food to the hungry acts as a band aid which has the potential to hide structural problems. In this way, one could argue that donors are made to feel good about what they are doing because they have found at least a temporary solution to the people's hunger. But, one might ask, have the structures been changed so that these people will now have some livelihood by which they can afford to supply their own food for themselves, or do these people still remain powerless? As alluded to in the above, the same *type* of question can be asked for a given development project. The underlying question then becomes: To what extent do development projects actually contribute to hiding the root causes of powerlessness and overall distribution? Cooke and Kothari go further to ask the question, "how many such concerns need to be raised before participatory development itself comes to be seen as the real problem?" (2001: 7).

Kanji elaborated on this position by arguing that, **"**Emerging paradoxes towards the end of the 1990s with standardized approaches contradicting original aims for flexible and context-specific approaches, a more technical rather than empowerment-oriented use of methods with superficial knowledge of empowerment principles emerged" (Kanji 2002: 8). Today, it is suggested, rather than actually empowering people to take over their own development, participation has lost the radical edge it had in the 1970s (see Freire 1972), using methods (i.e. PRA) to cover up what otherwise would have been

called top-down development. As Mosse asserts, "participation no longer has the radical connotations it once had" (2001: 17).

The critique embedded in the thinking of Participation: the New Tyranny casts serious doubts about whether participatory techniques can ever challenge wider systems of power. In a similar vein, Mosse questions "the potential that a PRA-based focus on 'people's knowledge' has to provide a radical challenge to existing power structures, professional positions, and knowledge systems" (2001: 17).

To illustrate this point, Mosse draws from his experience with the Kribhco Indo-British Farming Project (KIBFP) in the Bhil tribal region of western India, which sought to improve the livelihoods of poor families in the area and create location-specific natural resource plans through the facilitation of PRA (Mosse 2001: 18). Regarding the PRA process on the KIBFP, Mosse notes that:

> In principle, local problems are identified and prioritized by villagers, workable solutions found (a joint process) and implementation regimes agreed and negotiated between project staff and members of communities (2001: 18).

However, the need for the KIBFP's donors to show signs of project implementation and delivery "involved a reassertion of hierarchical modes of operation" and undermined the participatory process (2001: 26). According to Mosse:

> Villagers became easily incorporated into program work as low-status project employees, foremen, wage laborers, and above all as clients of the project and its field-level representatives, rather than as development partners making their own investment decisions (2001: 26).

He asserts that this is because people's ideas of development are often not able to be implemented within the framework of the donors or planners who see delivery of particular items (in this case, wells, pumpsets and woodlots) as the key measures of success. As a result, participation often functions to "legitimize action, to explain, justify, validate higher policy goals, or mobilize political support rather than downwards to orientate action" (Mosse 2001: 27). In this case, the technique of PRA serves to empower planners to achieve delivery, and to enable locals to be involved to the extent that they will work within the framework of the planners. Participation therefore helps to

reinforce, rather than challenge, broader systems of power that frame the relationship between planners and locals.

While the critique of the power of outside agencies has been important, in so far as it has shed light on the deficiencies of mainstreaming participatory practices, some of these critiques have tended to treat local beneficiary community as homogenous entities, almost devoid of their own power dynamics and contestations. Moreover, Chambers' (1997) use of dichotomies such as local/expert knowledge, insider/outsider, peripheral/central and his placement of moral value on *local* knowledge may lead some to the conclusion that what the community thinks is automatically good, and what the developer thinks is necessarily bad (see Kothari 2001: 140). However, by ignoring the fact that communities are heterogeneous, *intra-community* power relations may become masked (Kothari 2001). Kothari adds that:

> The almost exclusive focus on the micro-level, on people who are considered powerless and marginal, has reproduced the simplistic notion that the sites of social power and control are to be found solely at the macro and central levels. These dichotomies further strengthen the assumption that people who wield power are located at institutional centres, while those who are subjugated and subjected to power are to be found at the local or regional level. Hence the valorization of 'local knowledge' and the continued belief in the empowerment of 'local' people through participation (Kothari 2001: 140).

Kothari concurs with Woost (2001) and Crewe and Harrison (1998) that those who wield power will ensure their interests predominate. She extends this analysis to power relations *within* the community rather than between developers and beneficiaries and suggests that powerful groups in the community will asset their separate interests and thus undermine the empowerment of the poorest. Specifically, Kothari argues:

> That participatory development can encourage a reassertion of control and power by dominant individuals and groups, that it can lead to the reification of social norms through self-surveillance and consensus building, and that it 'purifies' knowledge and the spaces of participation through the codification, classification, and control of information, and its analysis and (re)presentation (Kothari 2002: 142).

This "purification" is not primarily about excluding people or ideas from entering physical spaces, but is about exclusion from social spaces. Drawing from Sibley (1995), Kothari argues that this occurs through a process of "ranking knowledge" (2001: 145). By coming to "consensus" and "ranking knowledge" on a development project, those who are already marginalised within a community may become further disempowered by a participatory development project.

Hildyard *et al,* have also questioned the potential for participatory methodologies to challenge the poor's structural position in society. Referring to the Village Forest Committees (VFCs - intended to enable villager participation in decision making) in Joint Forest Management (JFM) in Bengal, Hildyard *et al* emphasise that the poor were excluded from influencing decision-making. They declare that this was because elites dominated the VFCs. It is "these village bigwigs who wind up being the president of the VFC or becoming its members," thus undermining the potential for the marginalised to be included (Hildyard *et al* 2001: 65). The participatory techniques that enabled the VFCs to influence JFM therefore actually ended up reproducing, rather than challenging, power relations because the elites make decisions about forest management in favour of their own interests. Hildyard *et al* therefore contend that "a participation that fails to engage within local communities and the wider society in which they live is likely to offer little to marginalized groups" (2001: 57).

Even if the poor did *attend* a given development forum, as Hildyard *et al* point out, "many participatory projects rest on the dubious assumption that simply identifying different "stakeholders" and getting them around the table will result in a consensus being reached that is 'fair' to all. He goes on, "facilitating measures may be important in negotiations, but they are not enough to grant marginal groups the bargaining power they require to overcome the structural dominance enjoyed by more powerful groups." (2001: 69) Indeed, while it is not always the case, if a poor individual chose to attend a development forum, he/she might lack the necessary education, articulation, or organisational skills that would permit his/her interests to be taken into consideration. It is probable that those making decisions in a given community about what should happen

on a development project would be representative of the most powerful, the wealthy and the articulate within the community.

As Kothari points out, the tendency to focus on the power relationship between the developer and beneficiary, may mask local power relations within the community (Kothari: 2002 175-177). Kothari contends that because local knowledge within a given community is thought of as an unambiguous knowledge (by developers), this leaves power relations within the community unquestioned and thus they remain unchallenged. She goes further to inform us that, "by not recognizing that knowledge is produced out of power relations in society and through practitioners' acceptance of 'local knowledge' as some kind of objective truth, participatory methodologies are in danger of reifying these inequalities and of affirming the agenda of elites and more powerful groups" (Kothari 2002: 146). Woodhouse argues that, "the more participatory the inquiry, the more its outcome will mask the power structure of the community" (1998: 144).

To further emphasise the inability of mainstream approaches to participation to influence structural change, Cleaver draws from the World Bank's discourse on participation in which (as discussed above) participation is seen as something that is purely or directly practical because it increases the effectiveness, and efficiency of the development project. As Cleaver asserts:

> 'empowerment' has become a buzzword in development, an essential objective of projects, its radical, challenging and transformatory edge has been lost. The concept of action has become individualized, empowerment depoliticized (2001: 37).

He suggests that the structural constraints that bind people into a state of poverty are avoided and mainstream ways of achieving development, i.e. neoliberalism, are not intended to be engaged with or contested. In this sense, participation has been perceived primarily from its functional purpose, namely to engender efficient development projects, but never to empower people in any substantial way (Cleaver 2001).

This negative depiction of participatory approaches to development needs to be seen in its historical context. Participation: The New Tyranny? was written at a time when only fragmented critiques of participation existed and participation was becoming increasingly supported in practice. The main aim of the theorists in Participation: The

New Tyranny was therefore to cast serious doubt on the merits of participation, particularly its potential to empower the marginalised, by providing a radical critique of the theory and practice of participation. As a result, the thinking on participation engaged only with the negative and structural aspects of the processes of participation, namely the way in which the interests of those in power were legitimated or imposed through participatory processes. This, however, was a one-sided approach to the study of participation which tended to ignore the institutional innovations in participation as well as the potential for agents to challenge the imposition of top-down development schemes. The responses to Cooke and Kothari are the focus of the next section.

3.6 Alternative Approaches to Participation in Development

On the one hand, global agencies have continued to pursue mainstream ideas and practices of participation, which, as radical critiques point out, did little to change the overall agenda of their development projects and continued to exclude poor and marginalised communities. On the other hand, radical critiques appeared to have reached a point of disillusionment with participation. They seemed to have conceded to the power of the global hegemony and concluded, despairingly, that participation was a form of new tyranny. While the criticisms of Cooke and Kothari were certainly cogent, many other radical writers were not quite prepared so easily to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

While tyrannical approaches to participation may be dominant throughout the world, they are not the only kind of participation that has been conceived of or practiced. Alongside and partially in response to Cooke and Kothari's (2001) critique, Hickey and Mohan (2004) have attempted to reground participation as a legitimate means of achieving development. In the process, a radical and transformative approach to participation was proposed, which drew on various critical intellectual traditions, including, most presciently, that of the reknowned Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. Nearly four decades before Participation: The New Tyranny, Freire explained both how agents could be co-opted by dominant development schemes and how a radical political project could overcome structures of oppression that served to bind the marginalised into

a state of poverty. In many ways, Freire had already revealed critical aspects of the tyranny critique of participation in development and provided a radical and transformative approach to participation in response to it. This section explains Freire's approach, which seeks to overthrow the structures of society that serve to limit people's agency and, broadly speaking, aims to empower ordinary people to control their own destinies.

I then argue that Hickey and Mohan's (2004) ideas are deeply influenced by, and should be seen as embedded in, Freirean thinking. I show how Hickey and Mohan (2004) have attempted to incorporate the underlying concepts of Freire's thinking back into the concept (and understanding of the practice) of participation in development thus building on Freire's ideas for a new radical political project. Responding to the critique raised against participatory approaches to development, Hickey and Mohan (2004) have shown how participation, when linked to particular objectives, can lead to transformative outcomes in favour of marginalised people, an objective implicit in Freire's approach.

3.7 Freire's Contribution to the Thinking on Participation

Practitioners and theorists who are interested in how people's participation might lead to tyranny or transformation, have a great deal to learn from the works of Paulo Freire, who dedicated his life to implementing his ideas of how the oppressed, through popular agency, could liberate themselves from the social structures of oppression. Many authors have noted that alternative approaches to participation (especially Participatory Action Research – PAR) have been profoundly influenced by the work of Freire (Cornwall 2000: 24; Blackburn 2000; and Rahman 1993: 5). Empowerment or radical approaches to participation are often cited as having their "roots in Freirean philosophy" (Cleaver 2001: 37).

In 1968, Freire already understood genuine participation as the process of becoming more fully human (or liberated). Paulo Freire's theory of participatory development (or what he terms "humanisation") is based on the importance of freedom for people everywhere and the capacity and right of all people to achieve freedom through self-emancipation (Horton and Freire 1990). The process of achieving freedom

(of truly participating in society) begins when people reflect on their experiences (with oppression) within the larger political/ development framework – he calls this Conscientisation - and become the active subjects of their own (rather than objects of someone else's) destiny.

His work (specifically Pedagogy of the Oppressed) identified the pitfalls of a kind of involvement that does not engage with politics and power – one that leads to, what he calls, the "domestication" of time and history, and turns the oppressed into objects of the oppressor's destiny. In this sense, participation is not intended to enable people to (re)define their own development. Instead, people's participation is intended (at most) simply to determine the direction of *projects* within the government or development agency's pre-conceived frameworks – of oppression - (Freire was referring to Capitalism. Nowadays one may refer to neoliberal capitalism) of development and people's perspectives and experiences with development are "domesticated" (Freire 1972). This technical (means to an end) approach to participation is described as "domesticated" because it occurs within the framework of the oppressors and imposes itself onto the oppressed who "internalise" their oppression (Freire 1972). The oppressed are led to view their oppression as the natural order of things, rather than something that is socially constructed through power relations and therefore able to be transformed.

It is through reflecting on and contesting through action the nature of this "truth" and offering alternatives that participatory development, in Freire's conception, can begin to take place. Participation, Freire (1972) claimed, was to occur through the education of oppressed people. By obtaining "*concientizaco"* (or the ability to look critically at the world) oppressed people would have the strength and desire to stand up to their oppressors and to determine their own destinies. Commenting on a newly educated person, Freire argued that the:

> World becomes radically transformed and he is no longer willing to be a mere object responding to changes occurring around him. He is more likely to take upon himself, with his fellow men, the struggle to change the structures of society that until now have served to oppress him (Freire 1972: back cover).

Oppressed people thus become aware of their social situation, not just to be heard, but in order to create a world that is no longer defined by their oppressors. Indeed, any material benefit that the oppressed have received from the oppressors is "false generosity" (Freire 1972) because it occurs within the framework and dictates of the oppressor, serves to give false hope to the oppressed and further enshrines the current system of "domestication". For Freire then, "there can be no valid 'aid' and there is no room in development language for the terms 'donors' and 'recipients'" since donors give "aid" on their own terms (Goulet 1974: xi). Unlike when participation is recommended as a means to achieve an end, the goal of the Freirean approach to participation, is for people to shape and control their own histories and destinies, not within the world, but in order to transform it. The oppressed must struggle to have their interests addressed as individuals and through collective and individual action because their quest of becoming more fully human can only begin when their humanity is claimed (Freire 1972).

This is done through an education process in which the teacher and the learner meet on equal grounds and dialogue to learn from each other. The learner is not an empty vessel to be filled by the teacher, but rather someone who comes with important knowledge since it is based on their own experiences (with oppression). The learning process is not possible without a relationship of "mutual understanding and trust" between the learner and educator (Freire 1972: 102). The educator must view people not as passive objects responding to the structures of society, but as active agents who have the capacity to transform structures and society to suit them in their process of becoming more fully human, liberated or emancipated. According to Freire, people are "transforming rather than adaptive beings" (1972: 114).

Freire's main contribution to the thinking on participation began with the assumption that the current mode of development is not working for those who are in fact the most vulnerable. To counteract this, Freire insisted that a radical political project should be undertaken to actively resist development that the vulnerable were not able to define themselves (in their own interests) and then redefine and create a new kind of development to suit the interests of those who are not treated justly by the current system. Elaborating on Freire's theory, Aronowitz notes that:

> Freire clearly takes his stand with those who would create social and economic arrangements that, while dedicated to more equality, go beyond the urgent task of eliminating poverty, hunger, and disease. The good life is not merely having a job, enough to eat, and decent shelter. Authoritarians have, from time to time, been able to deliver this much, at least for limited periods. Freire holds that a humanised society requires cultural freedom, the ability of the individual to choose values and rules of conduct that violate conventional norms, and, in political and civil society, requires the full participation of *all* of its inhabitants in every aspect of life (1998: 19).

While Freire did not discuss it exactly in this way, the point of his work was to demonstrate how an active notion of citizenship that engages with development as an underlying process of social change, could lead to the emancipation of oppressed people throughout the world. While contemporary theorists of participation show how "methodological revisionism" (Cooke and Kothari 2001) avoids real issues of power and politics and therefore binds the less powerful into a state of poverty, Freire also suggested that mere involvement in pre-determined projects "domesticates" the oppressed by fitting them into the current system so that they remain trapped in the oppressors world, thereby reinforcing the dehumanisation of both the oppressed and the oppressor (the oppressed also dehumanise themselves in the process of dehumanising others). As is the case with mainstream approaches to participation, the oppressed are able to adapt within prescribed boundaries but are unable to work outside the framework that has been constructed by the oppressor or to create and transform their own reality. To counteract this, Freire advocated the method of "conscentization" so that people could demand to be treated humanely. In this way, marginalised people could liberate themselves from systems of oppression, control their own destinies and thus begin to create a new world in which to live.

Hickey and Mohan's book (2004) entitled, Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation, inserts Freirean theory and suggestions for practice in contemporary debates around participation in development. They advance the purely negative portrayal of participation in Participation: The New Tyranny? by drawing from empirical and theoretically informed argument from around the world in order to suggest the ways in which participatory approaches to development might lead to transformation. Following Freire, they contend that:

> understanding the ways in which participation relates to existing power structures and political systems, provides the basis for moving towards a more transformative approach to development; one which is rooted in the exercise of a broadly defined citizenship (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 5).

Relating participation to "power structures and political systems" and understanding participation as "the exercise of a broadly defined citizenship" were arguably the critical aspects of Freire's approach. Hickey and Mohan use this as their starting point and advance the argument by delineating the specific components that they argue underpin previous successes in achieving transformative outcomes through participatory approaches to development.

Critically, they argue that for particiaptory to realise its potential of contributing to transformative outcomes for marginalised groups of people, it should meet three objectives. First, participation should engage with development as a historical process of social change or, what they call, immanent development. Immanent development is the underlying framework of development, today it can be called neoliberalism as a form of capitalism. Neoliberalism undermines the ability of the marginalised to determine their own destinies and restricts people's ability to bring about structural changes in power relations that would challenge the status quo.

For Hickey and Mohan (2004), it is imperative to distinguish immanent from imminent development. Imminent development is defined as the implementation of specific interventions (projects) "constrained" (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 168) within an underlying process or framework (immanent development). Engaging with imminent development alone means the marginalised can only bargain with power holders for slightly higher wages and, perhaps, to obtain more locally appropriate resources ("aid") within the neoliberal framework. In other words, it means that there is no challenge to the structural relations of power that bind people into a state of poverty in the first place. As discussed above, this is one of the main critiques raised against mainstream approaches to participation.

While imminent development has been seen as important to theorists and practitioners who seek to make development more "relevant" in directly effecting the success (of pre-conceived measurements to success) of specific interventions, its focus

has tended to obscure broader relations of power by focusing on "methodological revisionism" (Cooke and Kothari: 2001) and placing the role of the planner at the centre of the development intervention (Chambers 1998).

Hickey and Mohan argue that:

> To privilege the practices of imminent development risks a further type of 'irrelevance' by distracting from an engagement with the underlying forces of socio-economic and political change that shape people's livelihoods. The related assertion that development can be wilfully 'managed' through 'the right mixture' of institutional responses has further 'depoliticized' the practice of development in poor countries (Ferguson 1994), rendering it a technocratic process to be administered and planned for by agents of development rather than negotiated with and contested by its subjects (Hickey and Mohan 2004a: 10).

The objective posited by Hickey and Mohan (2004) is that participation must be pursued as part of a wider radical political project, which is intended to enable people to engage and organise against underlying processes of development, rather than work within their institutional confines. This type of project is based on an effort to transform the policy process and development discourse itself. It does so by placing inclusion of all and social justice at the centre of the approach. Responding to the central critique against the dominant practices of participation in development, Hickey and Mohan argue that participation should be part of "a project that seeks directly to challenge existing power relations rather than simply work around them for more technically efficient service delivery" (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 168).

Applying the third objective, the radical political project that seeks to engage with underlying processes of social change must also be aimed specifically at securing citizenship rights and participation to marginal or dispossessed groups. In this sense, citizenship is not something that is bestowed by the state onto people, but is rather something that is actively contested and defined by marginal or dispossessed groups and individuals. Indeed, if participation is to engage with immanent development, citizenship must be about increasing the ability of the poor to claim their rights by "placing an emphasis on inclusive participation as the very foundation of democratic practice" (Gaventa 2004: 29). Citizenship is therefore practiced rather than given (based on their

own rather than someone else's framework) and citizens move from being "users and choosers to makers and shapers" (Cornwall 2000) of policy frameworks and discourses that affect their lives. By embarking on a radical political project to assist dispossessed people to dismantle the current system of development, participation may hold the possibility of responding to the critiques raised against it.

Although there were still great cause for concern to be levelled against mainstream approaches to participation, Hickey and Mohan's (2004) contribution instilled hope that bottom up approaches need not be abandoned altogether. Rather, a transformative approach to participation, given the right preconditions, was possible. What is suprising about this literature is that it is has not raised the application of direct action as a means by which marginalised actors can claim power - thereby exercising citizenship from below. Direct action, it will be argued, presents distinct possibilities for creating the conditions in which a transformative approach to development can be achieved. The theory and practice of direct action will therefore be given attention in this thesis. While the debates over participation as tyranny or transformation have been absolutely critical in clarifying the limitations and possibilities of participation, breaking with a binary understanding provides a nuanced approach to the study of participation that permits a more accurate representation of the way in which participatory processes function in practice.

3.8 Theoretical Framework: Breaking the Binaries

The theoretical approach used in this thesis suggests that it is simplistic to define participatory processes as either "tyrannical" or "transformative." The processes of participation that result in particular developmental outcomes do not occur in a black box resulting in a scheme that is either tyrannical or transformative. These binary definitions simplify reality by failing to address the detailed and complex relationship between structure and agency. They do not address the fact that the outcome of participatory processes are the result of political struggles that occur over time and that result from power relations between various actors and changing structures. Furthermore, by locking the study of participation in development into binaries, one is unable to uncover the

possibilities and limitations of participatory processes that may hold aspects of both tyranny and transformation.

Since the end of the 1990s, most of the literature on participation has tended to focus on the tyrannical or transformative aspects of participation. My study breaks away from these binaries by using Giddens's concept of "structuration" (as suggested by Masaki 2004) and Lefebrvre's concept of space (as suggested by Cornwall). "Structuration" highlights the relationship between structure and agency and argues that social processes are the result of their interaction. Lefebrvre's (1974) concept views space as a social arena that operates on the basis of power relations. Finally, this approach draws from Cornwall (2004) by using Foucauldian thinking to highlight discourse as a key form of power that operates in these spaces.

3.9 The Social Nature of Participatory Spaces

Cornwall (2004) has highlighted the usefulness of using the concept of space to understand the dynamics of participatory processes. Participatory spaces are social arenas in which the community has the potential to impact policies, discourses and practices of development. Rather than describe a geographical space that is considered to be an empty area, this concept refers to "a dynamic, humanely constructed means of control and hence of domination, of power" (Lefebvre 1974: 24). Cornwall (2004) suggests that analysing spaces is a useful way to understand how these spaces might be used by people to enhance citizen participation for some, or be used by others to undermine citizen participation of others. According to Cornwall:

> Talking in terms of spaces for participation conveys the situated nature of participation, the bounded yet permeable arenas in which participation is invited, and the domains from within which new intermediary institutions and new opportunities for citizen involvement have been fashioned. It also allows us to think about the ways in which particular sites come to be populated, appropriated or designated by particular actors for particular kinds of purposes (2004: 75).

While these spaces can take many forms and overlap with each other, this thesis will focus on two kinds of spaces: institutional and non-institutional. Institutional spaces have been, in the main, defined and formed by the government while non-institutional spaces are sporadic and arise out of people's own experiences of exclusion. The two, however, do not have to be exclusive and can overlap at times. Cornwall differentiates between what she calls "popular spaces" and "invited spaces." Popular spaces are "those arenas in which people join together, often with others like them, in collective actions, self-help initiatives, or everyday sociality" (Cornwall 2004: 76). Invited spaces, on the other hand:

> bring together, almost by definition, a very heterogeneous set of actors among whom there might be expected to be significant differences in status. While the nature of public representation within these institutions varies enormously, 'invited spaces' assemble people who might relate very differently if they met in other settings, who may be seen (even if they don't see themselves) as representing particular interests, and who generally have rather different stakes in, accountabilities for and responsibilities following from any give outcome (Cornwall 2004: 76).

In the South African context, the main examples of invited spaces are ward committees or development forums, while popular spaces may consist of protests, resistance or letters to those in government. These invited spaces are usually used when institutional spaces have been closed or non-existent to those who are dissatisfied with government projects or policies and have been defined by people from below. Invited spaces may exist despite the institutional spaces that planners have prescribed.

This framework is based on the assumption that spaces are socially constructed and have been designed by certain (powerful) interests. What is acceptable or unacceptable in a given space may be defined before anyone arrives in it. Different agents acting within these spaces therefore have more power than others to express their interests or, more importantly, to have those expressions translate into government projects or policies that those expressions intended to produce.

Referring to Narayan *et al*. 2000, Cornwall insists that "the primary emphasis of institutions like the World Bank seems to be on *relocating* the poor within the prevailing

order: bringing them in, finding them a place, lending them opportunities, *inviting them to participate* (Cornwall 2004: 78). Opportunities to participate outside of the prescribed boundaries of the spaces that have been induced by international organisations or governments may be limited. Those participating in invited spaces may have to do so within the parameters of those who have done the inviting. Cornwall therefore cautions that:

> What remains salient from work on deliberative democracy is the extent to which official spaces, that bring together civil society representatives with the state and other non-state stakeholders (such as the public sector), can potentially help citizens to engage meaningfully in shaping public policy, or whether the forms of exclusion that operate within and around them are so potent that they are simply pseudo-democratic instruments through which authorities legitimize already-taken policy decisions (Cornwall 2004: 79-80).

Moreover, these spaces and what is or is not acceptable in them are also influenced by previous spaces or experiences in them. Cornwall argues that

> these spaces are not separable; what happens in one impinges on what happens in others, as relations of power within and across them are constantly reconfigured. Understanding their production, the actors, policies and interests giving rise to them, and the configuration of other spaces surrounding them is critical to making sense of their democratic potential (2004: 78).

One participatory space cannot be adequately understood outside of the context of other spaces. As different agents use particular tactics to put forth their interests, power relations may change, thus challenging what can happen in other spaces. Cornwall therefore also suggests that:

> the broader configuration of political institutions within which these spaces are located clearly impinges on what happens within them, making them sites that are constantly in transformation as well as potential arenas *of* transformation (Cornwall 2004: 76).

Central to Cornwall's (2004) understanding of these spaces, is the operation of power that accompanies it. Rather than using physical force to get people to comply with rules, power functions through discourse. In this vein, Cheater discusses a shift that has taken place over the last 20 years that has viewed "power (as the ability to elicit compliance against resistance) and authority (as the right to expect compliance)" (Cheater 2000: 5). Power functions because of the expectation that people will comply with the rules, norms and values (discourse) of society.

Gramsci's notion of hegemony is useful here. Gramsci understands hegemony to be when a political group is ideologically dominant. This means that the direction of society that they envision goes largely unchallenged and is considered to be (in Gramsci's words) "legitimate" even by those who do not necessarily benefit materially from it. The masses maintain this hegemony by adopting the cultural beliefs of the hegemons thereby giving their (in Gramsci's words) active "consent." Gramsci therefore argues that:

> ...a class if dominant in to ways, i.e. 'leading' and 'dominant'. It leads the classes which are its allies, and dominates those which are its enemies. Therefore, even before attaining power a class can (and must) 'lead'; when it is in power it becomes dominant, but continues to 'lead' as well… one should not count solely on the power and material force which such a position gives in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony (Gramsci 1971: 57)

The "common sense" of development is inscribed in the minds of the masses is therefore the same as that which is envisioned by those in power.

For Gramsci, intellectuals play a critical role in both maintaining and, possibly also, contesting hegemony. Gramsci argues that "all men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals" (Gramsci 1971: 9). While hegemony is maintained by intellectuals who seek to maintain the dominant social order in favour of their economic interests, counterhegemony occurs when the hegemon's system of beliefs begins to be questioned by what he terms "organic intellectuals." These intellectuals provide an alternative value system on which to base

the future development of society. Invoking Gramsci suggests that participatory spaces may be restrained by hegemonic ideologies that have been infused in people's minds.

The shift from understanding power as physical to social has also been associated with the work of Michel Foucault, who Cornwall draws on significantly. Foucault argues that "space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (1984: 252 in Cornwall 2004: 80). Cornwall therefore insists that:

> making available, claiming and taking up spaces need to be seen, then, as acts of power… Viewing participation as a spatial practice helps draw attention to the productive possibilities of power as well as its negative effects (Cornwall 2004: 5).

Rather than viewing power as zero-sum, in which power only takes place when one actor takes it from another, power influences all those people involved, including those who wield it. It does this by functioning through a discourse and producing "truth". Foucault argues:

> Manifold relations of power… cannot themselves be established, consolidated or implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth (Foucault 1980: 93).

Discourses shape what is considered to be normal or deviant (rational or irrational, good or bad for society) and thus what can be said or done within particular social spaces. These spaces according to Cornwall, however, may:

> be at one time oppositional and at another conducive to the interventions of particular kinds of agents, whether states, or supra-national institutions. Spaces produced by hegemonic authorities can be filled with those with alternative visions, whose involvement transforms their possibilities. Spaces created with one purpose in mind may be used by those who engage in them for something quite different. Efforts to control outcomes can only be partial… factoring in the agency of those who are invited to take up, or come to inhabit, spaces suggests that nothing can be prejudged (Cornwall 2004: 81).

This framework of space may *seem* to assume that the agency of certain groups is completely undermined since those (powerful) actors who have (in some manner) defined the space therefore determined which interests are or are not acceptable within that space. Since space is socially constructed, however, it may be used as a site of oppression, struggle, protest, or transformation. Space is "not only something that can be taken up, assumed or filled, but something that can be created, opened, reshaped" (Webster and Engberg-Pederson 2002 in Cornwall 2004: 77). Marginality is much more than a space of dominance, but can also be a site of resistance or struggle (Cornwall 2004: 77-78). Spaces must be thought of "less as concrete locales than as sites that are constituted as well as expressive of power relations" (Cornwall 2004: 83).

3.10 Constituting Development

I refer to the policy and practice that result from the contestation over discourse in participatory spaces as *constituting* development. The outcome of development therefore is a result of power struggles which are not determined either from above or from below. Furthermore, development outcome result from the contestation over the common or moral "good". Defining development simply as "Good Change" (Chambers 1997; Helmore and Singh 2001) avoids precisely the fact that any definition of development requires a moral judgment as to what is right and what is wrong. Clearly then, one cannot talk about the need for development as if it means the same thing to everyone, and will therefore bring the same results for everyone affected. Accordingly, this framework does not try to determine what development *is*, but rather, how it is constituted (negotiated and contested) by various actors at different points in time and place. To undertake this theoretical task, I have selected a highly politicised and contested issue in Alexandra: densification and housing allocations.

This framework elaborates on the discussion regarding the extent to which people's actions constitute development, or development constitutes people's actions. It approaches the study of social change through the lens of local participation in the struggle over development discourse and outcomes. The core components of evaluating

or studying what happens in a participatory space are to identify a dominant discourse and attempt to understand the extent to which that discourse can be, and is, molded or reshaped. Central to this argument is that development is constituted by both structure and agency and that structure and agency reconstitute each other in participatory social spaces. Participatory social spaces are intimately linked to development discourse (what is considered to be correct and normal) and this influences what kind of development is acceptable, and what may be outright rejected. Structure is defined as the social practices or policies that support the hegemonic (dominant) discourse, while agency is defined as social practices that run counter (hegemonic) to those.

Agency may therefore occur within institutional confines defined by the authorities or in popular spaces that are less controlled. What was once considered dominant development discourse in a particular space may change as a result of agency. At the same time, agency is a function of structure. The two are therefore inextricably intertwined and change over time. Moreover, what is acceptable in one space, may not be acceptable/dominant in another. One can identify dominant/ hegemonic discourses and how they have been contested over time: some have been completely altered while others merely punctured (but still remain embedded).

3.11 "Structuration" in Participatory Spaces

The second key aspect for understanding what happens in participatory spaces is that they are defined and shaped by both structure and agency. Masaki (2004) applies Giddens's theory of "structuration" (1984) to the study of participation by showing that one cannot approach structure and agency from a dualist perspective. Rather, the two are inextricably intertwined. Furthermore, the outcome of participatory spaces are reshaped and recreated since people are not passive objects, but subjects that respond to the structural conditions around them. This helps one understand the degree to which society (structure) constitutes human agents or human agents constitute society (structure).

In this sense, it is inaccurate to view structure only as a constraint to human action. Structure is not "'external' to human action, as a source of constraint on the free

initiative of the independently constituted subject" (Giddens 1984: 16). Giddens suggests rather, that structure may actually enable agents to achieve their own objectives by creating a framework upon which to base their resistance. While spaces for participation may have intended to be dominating by the leaders who prescribed them, these spaces are contested and reshaped by those affected. It is not useful, according to Masaki, to polarise tyranny and transformation "since oppression and resistance are so interwoven that it is impossible to juxtapose them" (2004: 134). It is argued that the exclusionary and dominating nature of spaces provides the basis upon which people may transform their position in these spaces.

Unlike earlier approaches to the study of participation in development, these theorists introduced a more nuanced approach to the study of power and participation. In this sense, power is not simply oppressive, or in the hands of elites and leaders as the "backlash" critique sometimes seemed to suggest.

Masaki applies Giddens' theory of "structuration" to the study of participation arguing that even what may seem to be the most dominating practices by leaders, to achieve their interest-based objectives, can lead to the transformation of those effected. Put another way, structures are the very basis upon which those affected by development interventions resist.

The theory of "structuration" (Giddens 1984) arose out of the shortcomings of structuralism and functionalism which both:

> …strongly emphasize the pre-eminence of the social whole over its individual parts (i.e., its constituent actors, human subjects)… For functionalism and structuralism, however, structure (in the divergent senses attributed to that concept) has primacy over action, and the constraining qualities of structure are strongly accentuated (Giddens 1984: 1-2).

Like in the tyranny critique, the structures that "control" actors and legitimise the interests of the powerful are at the forefront, agency is ignored, and the structures are not seen to have a dualistic function, but rather, power and structure are one-sided. Power is not circular, but static, and the structural conditions that disable participation can only be described as tyrannical or not.

Using the "backlash" critique alone to understand participatory processes ignores the complexity of power relations. Rather than be either transformative or tyrannical, the outcome of participatory processes are reshaped and remolded since people are not passive objects, but subjects that respond to the structural conditions around them. This helps one understand the degree to which society (structure) constitutes human agents or human agents constitute society (structure). Following from Giddens, it is useful to take a dual approach and therefore show how the two are inextricably intertwined.

Scott (1985: 319), describing Paul Willis' (Learning to Labor) critique of Althusser, argued that:

> Structuralist theories of reproduction present the dominant ideology (under which culture is subsumed) as impenetrable. Everything fits too neatly. Ideology always pre-exists and preempts any authentic criticism. There are no cracks in the billiard ball smoothness of process. All specific contradictions are smoothed away in the reproductive functions of ideology…. On the contrary, and in my view more optimistically… there are deep disfunctions and desperate tensions within social and cultural reproduction. Social agents are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation, and a partial penetration of those structures (Scott 1985: 319).

Discourses, because their association with being the way that society should operate and as being a kind of common "good", often entail forceful or oppressive practices. Some kinds of development discourse serve to marginalise the interests of those affected or of those who claim to represent those affected. Resistance therefore occurs in response to oppressive discourses or practices. According to Masaki, "power falls into the hands of both "dominant" and "less powerful" players, thus interweaving domination with resistance in ongoing power contestation" (2004: 126).

3.12 Participatory Governance in South Africa: From Top-Down to Bottom-Up

Many authors point out that participation in South Africa remains weak presently (Neocosmos 2006; Heller 2000; Southhall 2003). This literature tends to be state-centred because it focuses on the ways in which the state functions to include or exclude civil

society from participating in decision making. This is a one-sided and top-down approach to the study of participation in development since it does not appear to recognise the potential for groups within the community to create their own non-institutional sites of participation in order to influence development priorities. Furthermore, the literature also does not show the specific processes through which this outcome occurs, i.e., the interface between local government and civil society. The complexity of the process is lost if one does not understand the local processes that have unfolded as a result of various, and often conflicting, local government and community members' actions.

One set of literature is overly optimistic about ordinary people's ability to participate in local government decision making that affects their lives. Much of this is because the authors appear to lack sufficient concern about the contested meanings of participation. This literature rests under the assumption that since structures such as the White Paper on Local Government and the Constitution exist to enable civil society participation at the local level, effective and substantial participation exists in South Africa. For example, Beall *et al* point out that Community Development Forums (CDF's) have been put in place to enable officials to elicit participation from civil society organisations at the local level. They say further:

> It is likely that local government will continue to seek out community-based consultation, through CDF representatives. The imperative of participatory planning is now legally inscribed in the legislative code of land development in South Africa. It is thus technically *impossible* for development to occur without community input and engagement with local authorities, even if the political imperative is absent. In other words, a devolved, participatory model of urban development now exists in South Africa (Beall *et al* 2002: 85, my emphasis).

This analysis is problematic for two key reasons. Firstly, law does not necessarily translate into practice. Secondly, "community input" and "engagement" tell us nothing about who in the community will participate, how they will participate, or what they will participate in. Projects may therefore be said to be participatory because people participated in state-led projects. In this case, the analysis fails to account for politics and power and thus leads to the false assumption that substantial participation will take place

at the local level by a homogenous community that is capable of effecting local government and state policy.

Democratising Local Government The South African Experiment (2002) which, in part, focuses on popular participation in local governance, also does not go far enough to understand the complexity of participation. For example, Pieterse discusses how the participation of civil society in local government decision-making is critical in the context of South Africa. He acknowledges that the government's policies for participation will not necessarily translate into practice. Furthermore, he begins to identify the ambiguous nature of participation by pointing out that the participation of civil society may be sought after by the local government either to legitimate state actions, or to empower civil society to control state resources. He is correct to point out that these two aims, "would lead to very different approaches to promoting and establishing participatory governance" (Pieterse 2002: 7). However, he does not explain the *kind* of participation that the local government intends to elicit.

Additionally, when discussing Developmental Local Government in South Africa, Parnell and Pieterse argue, "ensuring that ongoing community participation informs all municipal planning" (2002: 87) is critical to addressing the inequality and poverty created during apartheid. However, they have not defined the type of participation that local government (supposedly) intends to elicit. Rather, they maintain:

> The principle is that local community participation and experience will feed back into the revision of legislation and procedure *where necessary*, thus ensuring the ultimate power of community voices in development (Parnell and Pieterse 2002: 83, my emphasis).

According to this framework, local government determines what type of participation is or is not necessary, thus potentially excluding particular voices that do not match the agenda of the local or national government. This could lead one to conclude that the decentralisation scheme in South Africa is mere window dressing since local government may control and monitor the participation of civil society.

Other authors argue that South Africa is experiencing weak forms of citizen participation in local level decision-making due to a variety of inter-related factors including increased state bureaucratisation, the adoption of neoliberal policies, and a focus on quantitative service delivery targets (Khosa, 2003; Heller, 2000). Khosa discusses two trends that have occurred in South Africa since 1994:

> First, as part of the ANC's embrace of traditional economic policy and the accompanying public administration doctrine of new realism, the government's efforts have largely been devoted to streamlining management systems, cutting costs, and emphasizing administrative performance rather than mobilising participation, training ordinary citizens, and engaging in sustained consultative initiatives. Not only has the language of managerialism and cost-recovery displaced the language of participation and social justice; the ruling party is also arguably disengaged from vital organs of civil society. Second, due to its commitment to technocratic creep, the government has increasingly come to rely on private sector consultants. The ANC's technocratic concern with getting institutions right has all but obviated efforts to build local democracy and mobilise participation (Khosa 2003: 49).

Additionally, in a comparative study between Kerala, South Africa and Porto Allegre, Heller claims that "In South Africa, a once strong social-movement sector has been incorporated and/ or marginalized by the ANC's political hegemony, with the result that organized participation has atrophied and given way to a bureaucratic and commandist logic of local government reform" (Heller 2001). Similarly, Lyons *et al* (2001) have argued that the shift away from a people driven process enshrined by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), has been undermined by the market-oriented policy approach epitomized under Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). These studies point to the limitations imposed by the local and national state on participatory approaches to development.

Miraftab takes a similar approach in her attempt to understand why the housing policy and implementation process in South Africa lacks participation. In doing so, her study, "identifies the conceptual and operational shortcomings of the current policy that impedes active participation of communities in housing processes and precludes any synergistic relationship between communities and other actors" (2003: 227). The

conclusion stresses "the inevitability of failure for South Africa's participatory agenda in the context analysed" (ibid). Miraftab is slightly less deterministic than the above articles because she touches on the possibility for the grassroots mobilisation to influence government housing policies. Overall, however, these articles tend to assume that it is solely institutional or state structures that determine the extent to which people are able to participate in policy and project decision-making, and thereby suggest that citizens have little or no agency.

A recent book entitled Consolidating Developmental Local Government (2008) arguably represents a breakthrough in the South African literature on participation in development. Firstly, it highlights the structural issues that impede people's participation in development (Oldfield 2008: 591-592). Discussing the role of ward committees in promoting participation, Oldfield points out that:

> more often than not, ward councilors select ward committee members… Structural linkages to decision making and the shaping of policy are therefore constrained… Thus, if a community member or another organ of civil society in a community disagrees with ward committee decisions or contests the nature of representation of the committee, there is no clear institutional path through which to do so (Oldfield 2008: 491).

Oldfield argues that while ward committee members are intended to work independently from political parties and be non-partisan, these factors undermine their potential to do so. In practice, there is no clear way of deterring ward councilors from controlling and monitoring who influences decisions and who cannot. While this may be an accurate description of the structural limitations of ward committees, it is one-sided because it focuses only on the structural aspect of participation. Oldfield therefore does not discuss the potential for agents to successfully influence decisions that are made at ward committee meetings and therefore assumes that the government's approach to participation in development is static and remains uncontested at the local level. Furthermore, Oldfield's analysis does not discuss the significance of other sites of power that have been created by civil society and social movements and that may have an effect on local government decision making.

She also claims that, "ward committees can only be effective when they are complemented by pragmatic and more inclusive mechanisms for participation," (2008: 492) but she does not explain what "more inclusive mechanisms for participation" might entail. Although Oldfield refers to Nyalunga when she alludes to "alternative forms of participation" (2006: 1 in Oldfield 2008: 492), she stops short of defining what these might be.

Another chapter in this book, by Buccas and Hicks (2008), goes further to differentiate between various forms of participation by drawing upon international theorists. Buccas and Hicks point out that citizen participation may be intended by the government only to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of top-down development projects or, more radically, to challenge social and economic power relations (Buccas and Hicks 2008: 526). This scale helps one to understand the potential for, and substance of, the understandings and practices of participation in post-apartheid South Africa. Regarding this, Buccas and Hicks argue that:

> only a privileged few have access to these spaces, which are not sufficiently advertised or accessible, particularly to marginalised groups. Attempts to facilitate community input are largely superficial, and do not tap into the *real* powerbase where decisions are made. Most processes present pre-determined positions and programmes for limited feedback or information sharing only, or create opportunities for communities to raise concerns, and therefore make very little substantive difference to policy decisions (Buccas and Hicks 2008: 529).

This quote suggests that participation, in the context of South Africa, is "superficial" because it amounts to informing the community of top-down development that will be imposed onto them. Buccas and Hicks seem to accept the salience of top-down practice and therefore do not discuss how agents within the community might redefine, or alter, participatory mechanisms or development outcomes.

Oldfield provides insight as to why participation remains weak in the context of South Africa:

> in the rush to address political imperatives for the delivery of services, the building of infrastructure and the consolidation of the post-apartheid state, energy and resources have focused

> on the physical elements of delivery of development. In this all-consuming attention to 'deliverable' physical development, less tangible and measurable democratic processes to build inclusion have become side elements, narrow channels through which civil society is directed to participate with government (Oldfield 2008: 488).

Here, Oldfield explains that the emphasis of the government on quantitative development targets, has undermined the need for citizen participation. This appears to be a response to Democrating Local Government: the South African Experiment, which did not problematise participation and assumed that because participatory mechanisms were inscribed into law and policy, that adequate participation would occur. However, these conclusions are not completely new since they follow from studies listed above (see Heller 2001 and Khosa 2003) by arguing that local government's institutional mechanisms serve to disable people's participation.

Heller's (2008) study compares the strong examples of participatory democracy in Brazil and the Indian state of Kerala with South Africa. He points out, in the context of South Africa, that technocrats (local government) believe that too much participation in decision making can serve to "overwhelm new and fragile institutions" (2008: 153) while associationalists "believe that an over emphasis on institution building crowds out civil society" (2008: 153). He argues that this approach is "zero-sum" and further that:

> What is most problematic about these stylised narratives is that they present state and society as locked in a battle of irreconcilable logics, leaving little room for positive-sum configurations and workable strategies to achieve the double desiderata of DLG (2008: 155).

He then draws upon the technocratic and participatory elements of Kerala and Brazil to show that an active civil society and a receptive local government can benefit from each other. Unlike the current approach in South Africa, a gain by the technocrats (local government) does not have to equal a loss for the mobilisation of civil society. Rather, there can be a synergistic relationship between local government and an active and demanding civil society. The suggestion here is that a change in institutional structures of the local government can serve to enhance, rather than be at odds with, the local

government's development plans. Overall, the above studies argue that centralised state structures serve to disable citizens from determining their own development. The assumption is that these must be reformed so that people can participate in decision-making regarding development agendas.

These critiques are important as they further expose the weakness of participation, but this is neither new nor do they really advance our understanding of the actual practices of participation in local communities. Perhaps largely because of the focus of their book, "Consolidating Developmental Local Government," Oldfield, Heller and Buccas and Hicks fall into the same trap as other theorists of participation in South Africa. They tend to focus on the potential for local government to enable or disable the participation of citizens in decision-making. This is a top-down approach to the study of participation in development that underplays the role of agents in defining participatory, and even development, processes. It is not local government's institutional spaces of participation only that determine the degree of participation that may occur. Despite structures that appear to hold little possibility for meaningful community participation, people can radically alter development trajectories in their favour.

Oldfield begins to elaborate on a key point when she says that "the state is not immune from politics, neither is it a neutral player, but rather a site of, an agent in, and a product itself of economic, political and social struggle" (Oldfield 2008: 498). In other words, she is emphasising that the state is not a homogenous actor and is influenced by various agents. However, she does not sufficiently develop this idea. A series of papers published in *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, also focuses on participation in local governance in post-apartheid South Africa. While the series suggests it will focus on how "social movements shape local government practices and possibly policies" (Benit-Gbaffou 2008: 1), the primary emphasis is placed on the structural constraints of participation in local governance in post-apartheid South Africa and also how participation should be problematised in this context (see Staniland 2008; Benit-Gbaffou 2008a; Ballard 2008). My study will expand this theoretically and draw from empirical data in order to understand the locally specific processes through which agents open and reshape institutional and non-institutional spaces (see Cornwall 2004) to influence local and/ or national interventions of the state.

While these studies are informative regarding the dominant trend of participation in South Africa, their focus leads to a one-sided analysis. Surely, there is a wide array of participatory processes unfolding in South Africa in different times and places. Moreover, while the technocentric and managerial approach taken by the government may serve to undermine community participation in development, people are not passive pawns of top-down development schemes. What seems initially, or without close empirical and theoretical analysis, to be the implementation of a top-down development approach, may actually have resulted from people's active participation outside of institutional spaces for participation (see Cornwall 2004). In fact, the most exclusive approach to development could lead ordinary citizens to embark on mass protest and resistance (their own sites of non-institutional participation) in order to "reshape and recreate" development priorities and implementation (see Cornwall 2004). Furthermore, what are conceived of by citizens as exclusive structures, may provide the very basis upon which agents resist (see Masaki 2004).

The above literature has focused on institutional spaces such as ward committees and development forums at the expense of non-institutional spaces. The following addresses the literature on new social movements in South Africa, which emphasises the creation of non-institutional spaces for participation.

3.13 New Social Movements as Alternative Sites of Power

In post-apartheid South Africa, social movements have emerged in opposition to neoliberal policies, to meet basic needs, to address socio-economic rights, or to resist government's attempts at repression (Ballard *et al* 2006: 2). They are a key way though which groups of people express their dissatisfaction with dominant forces, current structures of society or the status quo in order to create a new way of living or of ordering society. The key component of social movements in this study is that they seek to challenge authority within and outside of institutional channels provided by the government. They have arisen because groups of people have felt excluded from decision making processes. They therefore have created their own spaces in which to operate, often in opposition to government policies and outside of the institutional spaces

for participation, such as ward committees and development forums that have been prescribed by the government.

Because social movements put forth alternative broad and local meanings of development, they are often stigmatised by the ANC government. According to Desai, leaders of these movements in South Africa are labeled "agitator, radical, and counter-revolutionary" (Desai 2002: 16). Social movements therefore represent alternative sites of power (see Greenstein 2003). Being excluded from the government's development plans, social movements have focused much of their energy on opening alternative spaces for participation in decision making beyond electoral politics. It is in this vain that McKinley argues that:

> it has been the inexorable push towards more inclusive and meaningful forms of direct and participatory democracy, which have little or nothing to do with the institutional forms of representation within bourgeous 'democratic' society, that provides the contextual background to the genesis and rise of social movements in South Africa (2006: 422).

Often unable to meet their demands or challenge authority within participatory spaces provided by the government, social movements may use non-institutional channels (see Cornwall 2004) to voice their demands. In South Africa, the courts have become a key non-institutional space in which to challenge the decisions made by the government. Gumede states that:

> The courts have become a favoured arena in which to fight government policy, claim constitutional rights and agitate for redistribution. Social movements have won stunning legal victories on major issues, such as shelter for children, protection from forced eviction and access to essential medicines (2005: 286).

For example, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) has campaigned since 1999 to change government policy on mother to child HIV transmission. In a case brought about by the TAC regarding the availability of Nevirapine to pregnant mothers with HIV, the Constitutional Court ruled that governmental policy was inadequate. "Government violated the Constitutional clauses mandating that it must formulate and implement a comprehensive programme to realize progressively the right of pregnant women and their

new born children to have access to health care services" (Greenstein 2003: 35). This is proof that social movements, in the context of South Africa, are able to effectively use the court system to claim rights for the poor or disadvantaged (Greenstein 2003: 35-36).

When social movements have not challenged the state to change policy directly, they have attempted to deliver on their own by creating non-institutional channels in which they can claim their rights regardless of the government. One of the central affiliates within the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), is a good example of this. SECC emerged as a result of cost recovery schemes that have been implemented in Soweto. When people's electricity gets shut off as a result of their inability to pay ESKOM, members of the SECC have illegally reconnected their electricity in order to claim what they believe is their right to electricity. Within a six month period in 2003, SECC claims to have reconnected 3000 households (Ngwane 2003: 47 in Egan and Wafer 2004: 9).

The Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC), formed in 2001, is part of a broader campaign to "resist disconnections and evictions as well as to intervene in city policies pertaining to housing and public services" (Oldfield and Stokke 2006: 111). The AEC understands that it is unlikely to be effective in the institutional spaces provided by the government. Two activists of the AEC explain that:

> Council don't listen to us if we go through the right channels. They don't listen. They make as if they listen if you go through the right channels. They don't take notice of us. But, if we do what we do, then immediately they respond… If they take too long, then we do our own thing (Interview, Anonymous, 14.08.03 in Oldfield and Stokke 2006: 118).

When resisting against evictions and claiming their right to water and electicity, the AEC uses the combination of institutional engagement with authorities, and non-institutional mechanisms such as popular protest and legal routes to meet their demands.

Drawing from the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) in Cape Town, Miraftab and Wills overcome "the selective definition of what constitutes civil society and public participation and underlining the significance of invited and invented spaces of citizen participation in the formation of inclusive citizenship and just cities" (2005: 200). They therefore look at non-institutional spaces provided by the AEC and argue that they are as

critical as institutional spaces. Miaftab and Willis "hope to contribute to this recognition of insurgency as a fair and legitimate practice of citizenship by active citizens participating in the construction of inclusive citizenship from below" (2005: 202). They look at how agents can define the development process and determine their own inclusion into policies and claim their right to the city. They show how agents respond to create their own non-institutionalised public spaces as a result of their exclusion. The authors focus on agency and look at the ways it is excluded by the discourse of the state, but do not show the ways in which the AEC and state policy shape each other.

Abahlali baseMjondolo, a social movement in Durban, has also attempted to open up alternative spaces in which marginalised groups can influence government policies. Referring to Abahlali's use of popular protest, Pithouse has noted that "this kind of direct popular confrontation with official power is where we should invest our hopes for democratization" (Pithouse 2006: 7). While authors such as Pithouse have certainly begun to engage issues of participatory spaces by working to expand non-institutional participatory spaces so that they can be understood as legitimate sites of power, they have not gone in-depth by using a specific theory to understand these spaces and their potential for bringing about transformation.

Zuern alerts readers to the fact that social movements and civil society can use strategies that work with the state, or against it. Drawing on an analysis of SANCO, she argues that SANCO works with the state when it suits them, and also in opposition when it is unsuccessful at this. The study of social movements has had a tendency to draw "boundries with the state or governing party…to assert that an actor is either critical or co-opted, either 'in' or 'out'" (Zuern 2006: 180). Zuern argues that this "creates a simple dichnotomy distinguishing those organisations independent of the state from those effectively controlled by it" (Zuern 2006: 180). In line with Zuern, my thesis attempts to understand both the institutional spaces and non-institutional (popular) spaces in which social movements attempt to influence state development trajectories or interventions.

Oldfield and Stokke have also attempted to address this issue by breaking with the binary between "liberal" thinkers who emphasise that civil society must work with the state (Parnell *et al* 2002), and "radical 'anti-neoliberal' critics" (Oldfield and Stokke 2007: 139) which create sharp distinctions between civil society opposition and the

neoliberal state (see, for example, Bond 2000). Drawing from the organisational background and tactics of the AEC, Oldfield and Stokke argue that:

> The multiple positions and strategic engagements adopted by urban community-based movements, combined with the complex character of neoliberal policies, produce often contradictory and uneven politics that at times resonate with critiques of neoliberalism, but also articulate as locally specific issues (Oldfield and Stokke 2007: 140).

Though studies such as this are useful to the extent that they explain some of the tactics of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa, they do not explain the internal dynamics of these movements and the ways in which their tactics relate to broader national and local development trajectories. Furthermore, studies tend to assume that there is a relationship between social movements and neoliberalism, but they do not discuss the potentials and limitations for social movements to challenge neoliberalism in the post-apartheid South African context.

My thesis contributes to the growing literature on social movements in South Africa by analysing the creation of spaces for ordinary citizens to engage and the potential that these spaces have for altering government development trajectories and, more strongly, the potential for acheiving transformation. The above studies represent the beginning of new literature on alternative sites of power, and I plan to take it further by using Alexandra to engage with these issues in an in-depth way. I investigate multiple sites of engagement in Alexandra, the ways in which those interface with local government's changing development trajectory and the potential for these sites of engagement to challenge neoliberalism.

3.14 Urban renewal: From Policy to Struggle Oriented

Since 1994, several urban renewal projects have been undertaken by the South African government in targeted areas to begin to reorder politics, society and the economy in an attempt to seriously address the historical inequalities and neglect that was created during apartheid. The Urban Renewal Programme (URP) was instituted in 1999 as an inter-governmental effort to hone in on focus specific areas, including Alexandra, where extra

effort and resources would be allocated. According to Maluleke and Zack, "The notion of focused development, of focusing energies in one area came out of a need to provide visible, quick delivery as a means of showing government's willingness and capacity to deliver" (Maluleke and Zack 2002: 1). Importantly, urban renewal is integrated and holistic because it attempts to address the underlying problems associated with this inequality and neglect. It intends to drastically improve physical, social, and economic issues in target areas in a sustainable manner (HSRC 2003).

Robinson *et al* dedicate a book based on the successes and lessons learned from the Cator Manor experience in Durban that highlights lessons to achieve best practice in urban reconstruction (2004). Although there is an attempt to draw conclusions about international best practice or lessons learned that could be applied to other projects, these studies are generally not theoretical and are not critical of urban renewal in South Africa.

The literature on "the urban" tends not to focus on urban renewal projects specifically, but on the policies regarding urban development. Urban regeneration therefore needs to be seen in the context of these policies. Some key texts on urban policies focus primarily on housing policy and delivery (Khan and Thring 2003, Harrison *et al*) and how these policies lead to fragmentation and divided South African cities. Other literature focuses on the processes forming and influencing South African urban policy (Pillay *et al* 2006) and on viewing South African cities in an appropriate manner (Robinson 2006; Tomlinson *et al* 2003).

Underpinning the approaches taken in this literature is that political priorities need to be radically altered and, further, that there is an urban crisis in South Africa. This crisis has been based on the fact that inequality in income and unemployment has increased from 1995 to 2000 (Statistics South Africa in Bond 2003: 40). Bond has been at the forefront of these critiques and has blamed market-driven approaches to development for this crisis. He argues that the core characteristic of urban policies after 1994 "was a *neoliberal* (market-oriented) bias that quickly codified an equally oppressive structured process that can be termed *class apartheid*" (Bond 2003: 40). Market-oriented urban policies have meant that government-subsidised resources have been minimalised so as not to interfere with the market and/ or South Africa's global competition. In this perspective, it is primarily people's ability to afford to pay for services that determines

whether or not they will receive them. In other words, an individual's class (the amount of money one has) determines the quality and availability of services. While government-subsidised services delivery clearly occurs, it is "highly biased in favour of privatization" (Bond 2003: 45).

Bond therefore argues that a "purely economic understanding of urban life" (Bond 2003: 42) cannot address the development challenges that have been created by apartheid. What is needed is the promotion of public goods and also the active revival and empowerment of the working class and poor (Bond 2003: 44). In this way, there can be a more radical change in the way in which power (and resources) are distributed so that they favour the needs and priorities of the masses.

The literature rarely looks at the ways in which agents shape, and are shaped by these urban policies. The determination of urban policies does not happen in a black box. If it is exclusive, as Bond is suggesting, the processes that create this exclusion and local resistance against that exclusion need to be explored in an in-depth fashion.

While much is known about the policy of urban renewal and how it has been formed, and the implications this has for reconstruction and development in post-apartheid, very little is known about the local level politics and perspectives of urban renewal interventions. The urban literature and the reports on urban renewal in South Africa have all tended to be policy oriented, directed at the role of planners in these development interventions, or lessons learned that could be drawn to better implement urban projects in the future. Occasionally they deal with issues of community participation (see Robinson *et al*: 2004), but they do not problematise the term in an in-depth way by attempting to investigate power dynamics on a local urban development project to show how some interests get put forth instead of others.

Moreover, few authors focus on urban renewal from various perspectives including planners and of the people actually affected to put forth the meanings they attribute to urban renewal interventions. They have not focused on local level power struggles to show how urban renewal is constituted by various stakeholders in a specific area.

3.15 Problematising Decentralisation

The South African government has embarked on an internationally renowned decentralisation scheme that highlights the integral role that local government must play in the development process in post-apartheid South Africa. Decentralisation schemes consist of the devolution of power, responsibility, and finances from the national to local government. The White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) defines Developmental Local Government (DLG) as:

> local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their lives (1998: 17).

The WPLG and its dealing with decentralisation is largely considered to be on the cutting edge of international theory. According to Mr. F. S. Mufamadi, the Minister for Provincial and Local Government, local government is:

> The sphere of government that is best placed to give practical meaning and substance to the basic political commitment, that the people shall govern. We said to our people, through local government, together with you, we shall bring democracy to where you live. In our conception of local government, we placed it at the cutting edge of addressing such basic national strategies as underdevelopment, unemployment, stagnation, and poverty (DPLG 2006: 3).

The RDP refers to the local government as the tier of government in South Africa that is "the hands and feet." Because the local government is closest to citizens, it is the sphere of government that is intended to implement service delivery and enable the community to participate in decision-making. Local government is therefore responsible for delivering local services to citizens. According to Parnell and Pieterse, "Local government holds the promise of being the crucial sphere of state action to extend democracy to all South Africans and to change the traditional relations of power and wealth" (2002: 83)

Since the local government is expected to deliver services directly to its intended constituency:

> Legitimation may well figure more prominently at the local level, and so lead the local state to oppose the central state on some issues, even when the same political party is in power at both levels. This reflects the essential ambiguity of the local state: it is part of the state apparatus but may also be used to oppose the state (Taylor 1993: 318 in Lemon 2002: 19-20).

Local government has the dual responsibility of meeting state service delivery targets as well as the needs of a demanding local constituency in an efficient manner.

To fulfill these tasks, and if local government is to enable community involvement at all, local government must use participation of citizens as an end in itself or a means to achieve an end. As Pieterse points out:

> The participation discourse tended to divide between two groups: those who saw it as a useful process to legitimate state actions and forge compliance; and the alternative and more radical version focused on civil society empowerment and state democratization as the primary functions of participation. These would lead to very different approaches to promoting and establishing participatory governance. (2002: 7).

Whichever choice is made, a paradox is likely to arise between state development and the deepening of democracy. If local government enables citizens to design their own development projects, they run a high risk of not meeting state delivery targets. In this case, even if local government is successful at meeting community-determined needs, those needs may not be the same as the state perceives them to be. Local government will therefore have failed in terms of meeting state-level objectives. The point should be made, however, that local government dissent will not lead to its elimination and it is therefore not powerless in terms of its relationship to the state:

> The state can abolish particular units of local government that are seen to frustrate central government policies… the state cannot abolish local government altogether given its need for local administration, legitimacy and a local instrument of development (Lemon 2002: 20).

On the other hand, problems arise if participation is used as a means to an end. Within this paradigm, participation is used to the extent that it may increase cost-

efficiency and effectiveness on a project. If the community is co-opted in order to gain approval of an already pre-determined and *universal* government development agenda, local government may fail to meet the *particular* demands of its constituency.

This paradox as well as local governments' tendency to be the "hands and feet" that implement state-designed projects, has led critics such as Pieterse to point out that:

> Participation as a development practice and political ideal is vulnerable to disillusionment as reform practitioners increasingly see it as a brake in rapid service delivery. It is increasingly cast as the process-versus-product dichotomy, meaning that participatory processes tend to bog down planning and implementation due to incessant conflict between different sections of communities (2002: 12).

The challenge, according to Pieterse, is "for municipalities is to create a virtuous dynamic between the participatory and efficiency imperatives in the policy framework" (2002: 14). But this has proven difficult to acheive in practice. According to Atkinson:

> Popular expectations of service delivery are high. There are increasing signs of public dissatisfaction with municipalities and many are steadily losing the political credibility they gained in the December 2000 elections (Atkinson 2003: 137).

Local government may not have the finances, nor the institutional capacity to meet the needs and priorities of citizens.

Decentralisation schemes work under the assumption that it is more efficient to have the three spheres of government all working together to bring basic services that people need. According to the South African constitution, "government is comprised of National, Provincial and Local spheres of government which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated" (dplg.gov.za). This means that they should be able to act autonomously from each other in a way that promotes efficiency while at the same time enabling citizens to have influence over decisions regarding development in their area.

However, while each sphere of government has a substantial degree of autonomy, they work within the wider national development framework. The national has had the

responsibility of setting the norms and standards, provincial for implementing national priorities, and the local for ensuring development in their localities (DPLG 2007: 3). Because local government is embedded and responsible to the national government, national policy standards guide what happens at the local level in terms of service delivery and therefore may limit the ability of the local to meet the needs of citizens and decentralisation schemes may be undermined by the state's availability of resources. For example, Parnell and Pieterse point out that, "…national reconstruction policy objectives, like providing houses for all, had to be radically trimmed to match the emerging fiscal orientation and priorities of the Department of Finance" (2002: 79).

Moreover, since decentralisation brings finances, power, and responsibility to the local level, corruption by officials or local elites may also occur there. The key point is that, "to govern is to exercise power, and there are no a priori reasons why more localized forms of governance are more democratic" (Heller 2001: 132).

Even in situations in which local government officials genuinely desire to pursue active and continual participation from citizens, this may prove structurally difficult to achieve as a result of local governments (power) relationship with the national government. If the national government has its own development trajectory that it imposes on the local government, then the latter may be expected to implement that trajectory, thus allowing little or no space for citizen's participation in decision-making. The degree of autonomy that the local government has from the national government may therefore reflect the extent to which the former can enable people's participation at the local level. Goldsmith comments that:

> The term autonomy refers to the ability of individuals and organizations to act independently irrespective of the kind of environment in which they find themselves. As such, it is difficult to conceive of sub-national or local governments being completely autonomous (1990: 15).

Hellman makes the point that complete autonomy is impossible to achieve and therefore unrealistic (1992 in Schonwalder 1997: 755). In practice, local government's autonomy from the state always falls somewhere between complete autonomy and having no autonomy at all. Without a high degree of autonomy from the state, local government is

likely to become a means through which the national government imposes its own pre-determined development plans onto citizens.

Two critical issues present themselves when this design is attempted in practice. First, it may be impossible for local government to implement a citizen-designed programme if the state has its own centralized and pre-determined plans and expects the local government to implement them. And second, local government is not necessarily more democratic or enabling of citizen participation than the state (Gaventa 2004). Two issues that then arise are the extent to which local government may be autonomous from the state, and the extent to which local government may represent and account for the interests of its constituency. Without critically engaging these issues (of politics and power), citizen participation (through decentralization) risks being "degenerated into a feel good slogan coined to convince local audiences that local government has recognised the necessity of involving people in development activities" (Mogale 2003: 223).

Decentralisation schemes have been a central component of the government's attempt to bring about renewal in urban areas. The ARP is a large-scale attempt by the government to decentralise the implementation of development priorities. These priorities are highly contested both by the ARP and by various community-based organisations in Alexandra. Moreover, the ARP is clearly confined by resource restraints and this limits its ability to meet the demands of the people of Alexandra. The study of participation in Alexandra is also a struggle over limited resources since there are not enough funds to satisfy all the people of Alexandra.

3.16 From Debating Housing Policy to Understanding Housing Struggles

Ordinary people's access to low-cost or government subsidised housing is a key way in which to measure service delivery in post-apartheid South Africa. In other words, improvements in housing opportunities give a good indication of whether or not poverty and inequality are adequately being addressed. Rust argues further that housing may be the "ideal form of state-expenditure: it is visible, can be counted, has immediate benefits, and has the potential to stimulate economic growth" (Rust 2003: 8). Housing has been a key measure by which poor communities have judged the ANC's legitimacy and / or

ability to deliver to them. Charlton and Kihato suggest that, "Housing delivery has been important in demonstrating the distribution of a tangible asset to the poor, and in this sense it can be argued to have played a key role in establishing legitimacy among low-income households" (2006: 254).

The ANC government has responded to this since 1994 by placing a strong emphasis on the delivery of housing as a key component of their development agenda. Before the 1994 elections, the ANC promised to deliver one million houses to qualifying low-income households within five years. The ANC did not reach this target, but took six years to deliver 1 066 005 (Department of Housing, 2002). Even though this ambitious target was not reached in the time promised, this was an impressive accomplishment. In 2003, Rust pointed out that:

> These numbers are phenomenal, even in global terms. In the eight years since the inclusive elections of 1994, South Africa has set an international precedent. It is widely acknowledged that its housing programme has led to the delivery of more subsidised houses than any other country in the world (Rust 2003: 5).

These quantitative delivery targets have been widely acknowledged to have occurred at the expense of quality (Charlton and Kihato 2006). The Department of Housing reported that "We approach mass delivery with a very real threat: that in our chase of the quantity, we fall short on the quality. It will be no solace at all that we created our new ghettos democratically" (Rust 2003: 8). The creation of sustainable living environments is undermined by the idea that the ANC government views housing subsides as an "event" (Rust 2003: 20). In other words, there was evidence that the government viewed the delivery housing as a developmental goal in itself.

The Breaking New Ground policy (BNG - 2004) was a response by the government to the low quality issue of houses and the need for sustainable cities. The policy emphasises that housing is also about having access to urban services. While it was always generally understood that a house was not enough to ensure the improvement in someone's life, the BNG reaffirmed this. Beyond the physical structure of a house, in the BNG document "housing delivery is more explicitly framed as a catalyst for achieving a set of broader socio-economic goals."

The BNG of the Department of Housing (2004) reported that the housing backlog was over 1.84 million and growing. Many argue that the ANC's adoption of a market-centred approach to housing has undermined the possibilities for more transformative developmental results in post-apartheid South Africa. Pottie argues that:

> While the government of South Africa is now based on democratic principles, the post-apartheid development model relies on market signals and increasing fiscal conservativism in respect of state expenditure rather than sort of community-based popular models of political activism that characterised aspects of the anti-apartheid movement which might have acquired responsibility for decisions about basic needs (Pottie 2003: 120).

As early as 1997, Bond noted that this would lead to a housing crisis (Bond and Tait 1997). Revealing the critical factor leading to this crisis, Bond quotes the Housing White Paper (RSA 1994) which states that "the fundamental pre-condition for attracting (private) investment, which is that housing must be provided within a normalised market" (Bond 2003: 46).

This means that the allocation of houses is "premised on an overall understanding of "fiscal restraints"" (Bond and Tait 1997: 21). Even the constitution takes a market-driven approach to the realisation of human rights since it suggests that, for example, the right to housing should be progressively realised within the resources that the state has available (to buy and produce houses). This could be interpreted to mean that the constitutional right to housing is only applicable if the state has the resources to buy land and produce a house.

Service delivery protests over the last few years, particular over housing, have become part of the South African political landscape. After nearly 15 years of democracy, South African citizens have begun to demand houses from the ANC government. Despite large degrees of success around the delivery of housing (see above), citizens have begun to understand the fact that they have not been given housing as a failure of the ANC government to deliver to them. This is particularly problematic since, as the ANC admits, budgetary restraints clearly inhibit everyone from being given access to housing all at the same time.

Other than a few studies, academic studies of housing policy do not focus on the local struggles over housing, but rather tend to be top-down. Top-down approaches to the study of housing investigate how policies should be improved or point that they are hampered by concessions to the global economy. Moreover, they might analyse whether or not urban policies reach the poor (Charlton and Kihato 2006) and then recommend policies that should follow in order that they be more inclusive. While this is clearly welcome, they do not draw upon the strategies and tactics used by the poor to claim their right to housing. My study will illuminate what is often ignored: the local struggles enacted by agents who claim access to housing in response to housing policies that serve to exclude them and, in doing so, alter housing policies.

Chapter 4

Struggling to Participate in Development

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how the residents of one township, Alexandra, have struggled to participate in development both by resisting the imposition of the apartheid government's plans and by controlling everyday aspects of their lives. The first part of the chapter is primarily descriptive and provides a brief history of Alexandra, including the attempts at renewal during apartheid and the resistance that was faced largely as a result of the top-down nature of this renewal. It then provides a more detailed account of the top-down renewal plans that were put in place by the apartheid government in the late 1970s and 1980s which were largely regarded as illegitimate and imposed onto the residents. It moves on to discuss the popular resistance that attempted to challenge this imposition and pays particular attention to the Alexandra Action Committee's (AAC's), and later Alexandra Civic Organisation's (ACO's), formation as it is argued that these organisaton provided a radical but brief attempt at popular participation in development. The signing of the Alexandra Accord in 1991 signified the capacity and ability of the community to determine its own development agenda from the bottom up. However, these plans were quickly undermined by several factors including political tensions and the civil war that broke out in Alexandra between 1990 and 1992.

The chapter then takes a theoretical turn by arguing that the notion of "people's power," practiced by civics across the country including the ACO, met the requirements for Hickey and Mohan's (2004) transformative project since it sought to engage with the underlying process of social change, was part of a wider and radical political project and encouraged an active notion of citizenship for the marginalised. This could have provided the platform from which, as activists suggested, the new dispensation could build upon to enhance participation in development. The legacy of popular resistance during apartheid thus led to heated debates in the late 1980s and early 1990s over the role that civics would play in relation to the state in post-apartheid South Africa and the section traces the decline of civic participation in South Africa. In practice participation has been

watered-down and mainstreamed by the ANC in post-apartheid South Africa. In other words, the transformative participatory approaches to development adopted by the ACO have been abandoned in favour of the state-driven approach to development. Lacking the theoretical tools to understand the transformative potential for participation in development, the chapter argues that scholars (Heller 2001; Zuern 2002) have not sufficiently explained the significance of the evolution of participation in development in South Africa. By paying particular attention to the height of people's power, which offered a unique and radical alternative approach to the practice of participation, the chapter discusses the decline of civic mobilisation and, relatedly, the mainstream version of participation in development that has been adopted by the ANC government.

4.2 A Brief History of the Township

Alexandra is a black township located thirteen kilometres to the north-east of the centre of Johannesburg. It is surrounded by white middle class residential and business areas including Sandton, one of the wealthiest suburbs in Africa. People have been living in Alexandra since 1904. In 1905, the area was transferred to the Alexandra Township Company Limited. At this stage, the area was intended for whites only, but due to the quality of the plots and distance from the city, whites were uninterested in living there. In 1912, in response to an application by the Alexandra Township Company Limited, the government agreed to turn Alexandra into a "Native" or "Non European" Township provided that, "no Asiatic or European shall be allowed to reside or carry on business of whatsoever nature on the property hereby transferred" (Sarakinsky 1984: i-ii).

The proclamation of a freehold township for "natives" and "coloureds" in 1912 was significant because it occurred a year before the promulgation of the 1913 Land Act which prohibited ownership of land by blacks in urban areas. Freehold property thus became an emblemic feature of Alexandra. Alexandra was one of the few townships in which blacks could actually own property. Sarakinsky points out that, "by the time this act was passed, freehold titles had already been acquired by approximately 40 "native" and coloured families" (1984: 1). This meant that Alexandra was exempt from the 1913 Land Act.

In 1916, the Alexandra Health Committee (AHC) was established under the Local Government Ordinance, to oversee the administration of the township. It represented primarily the interests of stand owners. Because the AHC had no public resources, it could not sustain any significant development interventions. But it had representation from the community, for example A.B. Xuma, and was thus perceived in a limited way as more representative than the more distant all-white councils. By the end of its tenure in 1958, the AHC had failed to "sufficiently administer the township" (Sarakinsky 1984: 1).

The lack of administration meant that Alexandra was regarded as "nobody's baby" up until 1958. Pass laws were not valid in Alexandra and there was no local authority to enforce them even if they did exist (Sarakinsky 1984: 3). The population levels were therefore not monitored and increased greatly between the 1930s and the 1950s. In fact, other locations experienced a similar fate due to the massive migration to the cities from the late 1930s. Moreover, in the 1940s work permits were often restricted from being given to people living in Alexandra to work in Johannesburg and this contributed to high levels of unemployment in Alexandra (Sarakinsky 1984: 3). By the late 1930s and into the 1940s residents from the white suburbs were beginning to fear the nearby Alexandra which they thought was becoming a crime-ridden, over-populated, "ghetto." In 1943 the population was estimated at around 50,000 (in Lodge 1983: 156). During this time, The Star stated that:

> I do no think anyone can question the growing lawlessness, lack of parental control, prostitution, defiance of authority, and signs of moral degradation, which are becoming features of the life of the Bantu in the towns, particularly the younger generation (in Sarakinsky 1984: 3).

The cost of living was rising, living conditions were worsening and an increase in the cost of bus fares on the 1st August 1943 led residents to protest. Disgruntled residents held mass meetings and within two days boycotted the buses. The commitment to the boycott was clear when, at 3am, 15,000 - 20,000 residents could be seen walking down the highway in order to make their way to work. They did not arrive back until after dark. The spokesperson for the boycott was a member of the Workers Union named A.E.P. Fish. According to Hirson:

> He protested against the high cost of transport… the inequity of a flat fare irrespective of distances traveled; and the 'wastages' caused by refusing to replace white inspectors by blacks. He wanted all the buses transferred to the Health Committee and also profits used to improve Alexandra (1989: 139).

This organisation and participation by residents in this protest signified a new kind of politics, with a radical dimension, and was the first substantial alternative to the AHC since it represented the interests of tenants who could not afford to pay for the increased prices of transport.

Health was also a major concern due to the high population density which led the sub-committee of the Johannesburg City Council to report that it was normal in Alexandra to find that three people eat, cook and sleep in one small room (Sarakinsky 1984: 3). In 1947, a doctor reported to The Star about a squatter camp in Alexandra that:

> This place is foul. It is ripe for disease. Under these conditions, anything can strike – smallpox, typhoid, enteric or venereal disease. The whole township could be exposed (in Sarakinsky 1984: 4).

Responding to these kinds of fears, the municipality attempted, but failed, in 1939, 1943, and 1950 to get rid of Alexandra completely (Sarakinsky 1984: 2).

For example, in 1943 the Johannesburg City Council discussed the possibility of expropriating Alexandra. The idea was accepted by the City Council despite the high costs of removing and resettling residents of Alexandra. However, there were other "factors weighing against the immediate implementation of this decision" (Sarakinsky 1984: 5) such as the cost of relocating people outside of Alexandra. Moreover, the City Council recognised that the people of Alexandra would resist being moved far away from Alexandra and that this would increase the costs of their transport to and from work (ibid).

In 1944 there was an unofficial report which declared that Alexandra would not be expropriated (Sarakinsky 1984: 5). Instead, the Johannesburg mayor at the time, Mr. A. Immink, suggested that Alexandra again become part of the Johannesburg municipality since many of the people living in Alexandra worked in Johannesburg. In

1952, the Mentz Commission suggested that Alexandra remain where it was so that it could serve as a labor pool for the nearby Johannesburg Northern Suburbs under the conditions that the population be de-densified to 30,000 people and that there would be a way to prevent the people of Alexandra from getting too close to the nearby white suburbs (Sarakinsky 1984: 6).

However, the population was not reduced. By the time the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board, under the guidance of Verwoerd, replaced the AHC as the administrator of the township, the population of Alexandra had jumped to nearly 100,000. This high population was unprecedented. In 1958, it was described as:

> approximately 98,000, almost three times what it should have been according to recognized yardsticks. Honorable members will be shocked to know that it 1958 there were approximately 236 people per morgen in Alexandra, as compared with 61 in Orlando, 43 in Atteridgeville, 77 in Vrededorp (whites…) and close on the heels of Alexandra we have District Six in Cape Town with 221 (Hansard 1963 in Sarakinsky 1984: 6).

In 1957, under growing conditions of unemployment, poverty, and severe overcrowding, the most renowned Bus Boycott in Alexandra was launched and lasted three months. The boycott was a reaction to the doubling increase in the bus fare between Alexandra and central Johannesburg, approximately 20kms away. This increase, Lodge notes, would have a significant effect over people's lives considering workers' low wages at the time (Lodge 1983: 155).

Bus Boycotts were also endemic throughout the country and a pamphlet distributed at the Alexandra Bus Boycott of 1957 contextualised the boycott in the context of the oppressed majority by describing the boycott as a:

> Striking illustration of the poverty of the Non-European people, … People walking 20 miles a day, week after week, through blazing heat and pouring rain to save two pence a day (in Sarakinsky 1984: 13).

The pamphlet also indicated that it was not only a result of a raise in bus fares, but that it resulted from the exclusion that blacks felt from the politics and economy of the country: The boycott was also a means by which blacks could stand up against the apartheid system:

> Of course there's more to the boycott than the question of two pence a day. Africans can't vote the Nationalists out of office – they haven't any votes. They can't strike legally for higher pay… The fair was the last straw. The people are fed up to the teeth with what has been happening in this country… people who enjoyed the ordinary rights of citizenship would not have to resort to such a measure to show their protest (in Sarakinsky 1984: 13).

Thousands of people were walking to and from work for hours in order to participate in the Boycott and this signified another working class struggle in the midst of poor living conditions.

In response to the protest, the government lent L100,000 to the Peri-Urban Health Board to be used for "the provision of better services; the reduction of the population and the purchase of properties" (Sarakinsky 1984: 6). While successive governments did intent to de-densify Alexandra, thus necessitating forced removals, Verwoerd took another approach. In 1957, Verwoerd was quoted in The Star saying that it was "not intended to remove Alexandra… but it is necessary to reduce the number of inhabitants to reasonable limits" (in Sarakinsky 1984: 22).

The idea was to keep Alexandra where it was so that residents of Alexandra could continue to work in the nearby northern suburbs. This was to be done, however, under the conditions that Alexandra did not become uncontrollable and thereby represent a threat to the neighboring white suburbs. In 1958, the Peri-Urban Health Board enforced a permit system, took a census and declared that in order to live in Alexandra, one must hold a permit (Sarakinsky 1984: 24-5). In early 1959, The Star reported the government's plans to remove 60,000 residents (in ibid: 25). Although residents were generally not against the idea of "improving the township" residents were beginning to become angry about not being consulted about the decision to remove them, and thereby, being forcibly removed (ibid).

Sarakinsky points out that by the end of 1960, 25,000 people had been resettled out of Alexandra and that by the end of 1962, the number had reached 44,196. But in the early 1960s the authorities still could not successfully control influx into the township, and the number of people had been reduced only to about 56,000 (Sarakinsky 1984: 26-27).

When a committee made up of the Department of Native Affairs, the Resettlement Board, the Peri Urban Board and the Johannesburg Rand Municipalities met in 1961, they decided that Alexandra would be turned into a hostel city, thus reinforcing the apartheid government's separate development plan "whereby Africans were 'temporary sojourners' in the urban areas, only so long as they sold their labour power to white employers" (Sarakinsky 1984: 28). This was part of the National Party's (NP's) Native Affairs Department (NAD) strategy which was based on the premise that "urban areas should accommodate only as much African labour as was necessary to meet the urban labour demand" (Posel 1991: 75). In addition, the NAD attempted to minimise the number of residents in urban areas as much as possible. Posel argues that, in the state's view, "the larger the urban African Proletariat, the greater concomitant threats to the country's political stability and industrial peace" (ibid: 76). The decision to remove surplus people in Alexandra, thereby turning Alexandra into a hostel city, was an example of the local implementation of this strategy which Sarakinsky argues was a response to "rising African political militance" (1984: 36). Accordingly, it was planned that 20,000 men and women who worked in the nearby suburbs were to live in 8 single-sex hostels in order to provide labour for whites.

In 1963, the conditions in Alexandra had not improved significantly despite the huge numbers of people being removed and the apartheid government made the decision to turn Alexandra into a hostel city in order to gain control over the area. This represented "the most concerted of many previous attempts to abolish the township" (Sarakinsky 1984: 2).

It became acknowledged that rather than create a controlled environment, removing families out of Alexandra and turning it into a hostel city, could lead to further unrest (Sarakinsky 1984: 40-1). According to Sarakinsky, "by August 1972 65 000 people had been removed from Alexandra at a rate of 250 families a month" (1984: 49).

By the mid-1970s, resistance against removals began to mount by all aspects of the population.

4.3 Save Alexandra

Between 1963 and 1979, the future of Alexandra was uncertain as the government made repeated threats to turn it into a hostel city. However, with the pressure from the Save Alexandra Campaign led by members of the standholders class and the mounting urban crisis in South Africa, Alexandra was granted a reprieve in 1979. This decision sounded the death knell of the hostel city plan. Instead, it was envisioned that Alexandra would be cleaned up and made into a place where families could live. This decision underlied the Riekert Commission's agenda of creating political stability by allowing blacks to own homes thus becoming "insiders" who were able to participate in local government (Jochelson 1990: 3).

In 1974, members of the standholders class established the Alexandra Liason Committee (ALC) to prevent the government from destroying Alexandra. The Alexandra Residents' Interim Committee (ARIC) began modestly by raising issues about the condition of the township to the government. The first two years of the ALC remained unsuccessful, and the government remained committed to the removal of Alexandra (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 220).

In 1976, however, the political landscape in South Africa opened up new opportunities as a result of the "deep-seated economic and social crisis" in South Africa (Jochelson 1988: 31). According to Jochelson, "popular dissatisfaction with the shortage of housing, overcrowding and corruption that permeated the housing permit market, fed into the unrest of 1976" (Jochelson 1988: 48). The 1976 Soweto Uprising marked a turning point in South African history. On 16 June 1976, thousands of students marched in Orlando West, Soweto, in defiance of the apartheid system's imposition of the Afrikaans language in schools. Bonner and Nieftagodien suggest that while the student uprising clearly began in Soweto, Alexandra was among the first areas in which students mobilised support for the uprising thereafter. Indeed, several members of the South African Student Movement (SASM) in Soweto lived in Alexandra. When students

returned to their homes in Alexandra, they began to mobilise support for the uprising (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 205).

The uprising sparked resistance in other black townships across the country and by the end of February 1977 the police had killed 575 people. Extreme shortage of housing, inadequate infrastructure, lack of government finances and the impact of opposition including the 1976 uprisings and the rapid formation and growth of unions from 1973, created a condition of urban crisis in South Africa (Jochelson 1988: 7-8).

On the 11th September 1977, the *Weekend World* described the deteriorating conditions in Alexandra which accompanied this crisis:

> The shame of Alex – It was once the mecca of the high life but Alexandra township today is a stinking cesspool of overflowing dustbins, litter-lined streets – and angry residents (in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 16).

At this time, the government's removal plan was clearly in crisis as well:

> The implementation of the government's plans had reached a deadlock, which was caused by a combination of the deepening financial crisis and mounting opposition from Alexandra residents and others. In retrospect it appears the government needed a face-saving strategy to justify the retreat from its policy towards Alexandra. It especially did not want to be seen to make concessions to radical organisations (ibid: 222).

Buti was the forerunner of the Save Alexandra Campaign, which sought to turn Alexandra into an elite residential area. The apartheid government, determined to undertake a very similar renewal project as a response to the failure to implement the earlier plans to remove Alexandra, thereby co-opted Buti into a leadership position. This enabled the government to gain some legitimacy since, despite the plans being run under a white government, they would have a local black face supporting the efforts that were being made.

The ALC became the most popular organisation in Alexandra since the late 1950s. According to Bonner and Nieftagodien:

> At a public meeting in February 1979, attended by about 10 000 residents, Buti expressed confidence of an imminent reprieve for the township, which he ascribed to negotiations with the government. He informed the gathering that a Liaison Committee would be created in April, along the lines of the Soweto Council. Henceforth, the Alexandra Liaison Committee would lead the campaign to save Alexandra (2008: 222).

At first, the government would not concede to these demands, but eventually it was put under popular and internal pressure and was granted a reprieve on the 8th May 1979. Since 1963, the future of Alexandra was left unknown. The reprieve meant that people would, for the time being, celebrate the township's preservation as a black family's township. On the 9th May 1979, The Citizen reported that "[t]housands of people in Alexandra stayed awake last night celebrating the good news by singing and praying. At midnight, church bells started tolling and many thronged the streets" (in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 225). The granting of the reprieve and the celebrations that ensued were attributed to Reverend Sam Buti and the ALC who were then elected into power at the governemnt's Community Council election by the majority of the popular vote of 11,000. The ALC was renamed the Save Alexandra Party (SAP). Bonner and Nieftagodien argue that:

> From the government's perspective, the timing of the announcement proved to be a stroke of genius. Support for its Community Council elections in Alexandra was overwhelming, which, together with endorsement from the party credited with saving the township, gave welcome legitimacy for its reform package, albeit only for a brief period (2008: 225).

The SAP's motto was "Renew Don't Destroy" (Jochelson 1988: 28). Drawing from an interview with former councilor Darky Rametse, Jochelson comments that "the Save Alexandra Party followed an active public information policy which probably also accounts for its legitimacy. It organized house visits to muster support and used loudhailers to announce public meetings" (in Jochelson 1988: 28). Contrary to the

decision made to turn Alexandra into a hostel city, the Save Alexandra Party campaign stressed:

> opposition policy and group areas, the demand for freehold rights and pragmatic negotiation politics…The party promised to help people acquire residence permits, protect rights to land ownership, and develop more housing (Jochelson 1988: 83).

In 1980, the Alexandra Master Plan was officially adopted. The master plan was based on the idea that Alexandra would become a residential place where families could live and become a permanent part of the city. The plan therefore reversed the decision made in 1963 to turn Alexandra into a hostel city. According to Jochelson:

> The masterplan recommended installation of basic infrastructure such as water, sewerage and electricity reticulation systems, and construction of storm-water drainage and graded, tarred roads. The government rezoned Alexandra for family housing and 99-year leasehold. The masterplan suggested demolishing the township and constructing income-differentiated housing and an elite suburb (Jochelson 1990: 3).

This was part of the apartheid government's national strategy called the 1979 Riekert Commision which was "the first coherent state reformist strategy to counter urban crisis" (Jochelson 1988: 8). Alexandra was one of the first examples in which the Riekert Reform policy began to be implemented locally. The reform strategy:

> hoped to solve influx control problems by recognizing the existence of a permanent urban population and creating a clear divide between 'insiders' and 'outsiders.' Insider's privileges arose from relaxation of influx control, participation in local government and access to homeownership through 99-year leasehold. It stressed the necessity of creating a black middle-class as a political stabiliser. The housing shortage, Riekert suggested, could be resolved by lifting the prohibition on urban family residential accommodation and shifting the responsibility for financing and constructing homes from the state to the employer and the individual. Solution to the fiscal crisis, he proposed, lay in making local government economically self-sufficient by increasing rent and service tariffs to economic levels (Jochelson 1988: 8).

Overall, there was a shift away from the government subsidisation housing. The state was therefore intended to have a smaller role to play, except to insure that blacks could own property, thus potentially facilitating class divisions and creating further conditions for black support of a capitalist system. Jochelson reveals that "Privatisation could depoliticise housing since the state was no longer the residents' landlord" (1988: 64).

The plan was intended to make Alexandra an "insider's" town mainly for landowners and one that was "a class-differentiated, politically-stable, and economically privileged permanent urban population" (Jochelson 1988: 82). Underlying this approach was the fact that housing could be used as a political tool to separate impoverished outsiders from privileged insiders. Unlike previous apartheid policies which stated that blacks were only temporary members of the urban areas, "the Riekert Commission embraced reformist philosophy in arguing for the legal recognition of de facto permanence of urban Africans" (Jochelson 1988: 54).

In late 1980, Buti made it clear to the public that the renewal in Alexandra would not only include property owners. On the 25th September 1980, Buti was quoted in The Star announcing that "no one should be victimized on the grounds that he or she doesn't have a residential permit" (in Jochelson 1988: 84)**.** Initially, Buti believed that the ALC could act outside of the government parameters in order to "use local government for its own ends" (Jochelson 1988: 82). The Sowetan reported, on the 29th July 1980, that Buti saw his party as a "Political body with clear national goals but acting on a local level. It is a party involved locally in the struggle for liberation" (in Jochelson 1988: 83)

By mid 1980, however, The Star noted that "when the estimated buying cost of R26,000 to R30,000 was announced, it became clear that the target population was not Alexandra's working class" (in Jochelson). The talk of upgrading Alexandra without excluding the working class was merely rhetoric:

> Despite a rhetoric that claimed to help all sectors of the population –especially to help illegals become legal – the ALC argued that it needed more land to solve the over-population problem. As

> a result, development could not take place without 'thinning' the population –illegals would have to go (The Star in Jochelson 1988: 90).

In late 1980, financial problems came to the forefront and Buti called upon the residents to bear more of the financial burden than they can actually afford. Buti aimed to destroy the existing grid and attempted to demolish large parts of Alex.

On 8 September 1981, Buti's Save Alexandra Party was re-elected despite a turnout of only 5779, and two opposition parties called the Alexandra People's Action Party and the Alexandra Action Committee, chaired by Mike Beea (a former Save Alexandra Party member - Jochelson 1988: 94). Despite this election, it soon became clear that there was not enough money to renew Alexandra in favour of the majority of residents and Buti began to lose support.

In September 1983, the ALC officially became part of the Black Local Authority (BLA) of the apartheid government. According to Alexandra I Love You, a book published for the ALC, the introduction of BLA's meant that:

> Alexandra's future was for the people themselves to decide. They were granted the right to establish the Town Council of Alexandra. Through the smoke of tears… and community comraderie… the realisation had finally come that people counted more than rhetoric (Dunstan 1983: 15).

However, this was not a sincere attempt by the apartheid government to enable black people to control their own development. In reality, this was an effort by the apartheid state to further impose undemocratic structures onto communities. BLA's were a way in which to decentralise authority and for local authorities to have some decision-making power, but this had to occur within the illegitimate, minority rule apartheid government's framework and was therefore a means by which the apartheid state could co-opt community members into leadership positions (where they would be paid) in order to help implement the apartheid state's objectives. Civic activists such as Mzwanele Mayekiso therefore referred to BLA's as a "racist local government system" or the "state's puppet council structures" (1996: 91). These undemocratic structures collapsed in April 1986 and again in May 1991 when they were pressured by residents to resign.

It was becoming clear that the housing projects in Alexandra were only for the black elite who could afford private housing. A survey published in Alexandra showed that between 1980 and 1983 conditions were not improving at a significant rate. For example, the "bucket system" was still being used for sewage, there was only one clinic for every 60,000 people, the population was estimated between 50 000 and 70 000, making the density between 625 and 825 persons per hectare, compared to 51 persons per hectare in the nearby white suburb called Sandton (Pillay 1983 in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 239).

The declining living standards and the growing consensus that BLAs lacked legitimacy, created the conditions in which more radical civic organisations began to emerge in Alexandra. The Alexandra Residents Association (ARA) set the stage for the emergence of highly confrontational and mass-based organisations to demand more control over development in Alexandra. The ARA was a response to the growing intolerance for the Alexandra Master Plan since it did not meet the needs of the majority of the population in Alexandra.

The ARA was previously known as Ditshwansho tsa Rona, which was intially made up of a group of students who archived their own pictures of Alexandra's housing concerns. The group conducted analysis and research of development and the functioning of capitalism in Alexandra in order to plan for political action. They sided particularly with the working class, and began to argue that the housing schemes undertaken by the ALC were only for the elite minority.

On the 31st March 1984, The Citizen noted that the Town Council would charge R15 415 for a four-roomed house, and a six-roomed house would cost R18 115. Residents earning between R451 and R650 per month would be charged between R175,36 and 200,83. Furthermore, those earning between R150 and R250 per month would be charged R130,40 for a four-roomed house, and R145,74 (for a six-roomed house) (in Jochelson 1988: 102-103).

The rise in rent under the ALC, however was more than the residents could afford. According to Jochelson:

> Rent increases contradicted the principle of affordable housing that ostensibly had been a Masterplan guideline and a die-hard Save Alexandra Party Principle. The increases also ignored the findings of a socio-economic survey commissioned by ALC (1988: 103).

The ARA's local newspaper, Izwi lase Township for July 1984, recorded that "After a long discussion on the rents issue that included criticism of the Liason Committee for not fulfilling its earlier promises of building houses people can afford, both rich and poor, and its cowardly tactic of forcing residents to pay high rentals… residents decided to form a committee" (in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 246).

Bonner and Nieftagodien point out that, "Although Ditshwantsho tsa Rona activists spearheaded the formation of the Phase 1 Neighborhood Committee, ordinary residents dominated the executive" (ibid: 247). This set the stage for street and block committees to be formed as a means by which to organise residents in numbers. Tony Kgobe, a leader in the ARA, explains:

> [W]e moved in and organized people there and then we formed the Neighbourhood Committee. It was way before you had your civic movement . . . in organizing we established what is called block committees. We had about three blocks, Block A, Block B, Block C. I was the secretary of the Neighbourhood Committee in Phase 1. We used to meet every Tuesday. We had meetings every three days a week . . . Block A, Block B, Block C. And the entire community would then meet under the tree (ibid).

By 1985, the ARA submitted a bulletin that made it clear that high rent and expensive home ownership schemes were intended to force poor workers out of Alex:

> To charge high rent is to select the wealthy for these houses… It is not the fault of the worker if he is retrenched, or if he gets a low wage. That is the fault of the apartheid and the capitalist system (in Jochelson 1990: 4).

The ARA "criticised the priorities of the development programme. People needed houses not huge leisure and sporting facilities" (Jochelson 1988: 107). Most significantly, the ARA claimed to represent the interests of the poor and argued that

Alexandra had "only been reprieved for the rich" (Jochelson 1988: 107). Resistance was clearly growing and in July 1984 Izwi Lase Township described a protest which took place on the 4th April:

> over 600 residents marched to Nobuhle Hall with placards, lit by torches, stating 'Bosses Pay Us Peanuts, Buti Charges Us The World,' 'We Demand Rents We Can Afford', and 'Is Alex Only Meant For The Rich' (in Jochelson 1988: 108).

When a representative of Buti – Deputy Mayor Harry Makubiri – publicly announced that that the council would offer no new alternatives to the high rents, residents embarked on a "partial rent boycott" (Jochelson 1988: 109) and council later agreed to reduce the rents slightly. In mid 1984, the council revealed that "a two-roomed flat would cost R183/month while a bachelor flat would cost R113" (Jochelson 1988: 110). The residents still claimed that these rents were too high and invited the council to attend a meeting, which the council neglected. In December 1984, rates for flats dropped slightly to R160/month for a two roomed flat and R100/month for a bachelor flat (The Alexandra Chronicle 1985 in Jochelson 1988: 111). The council then turned to people's employers and business to pay people higher wages or subsidise people's housing so that they could afford a higher standard of living.

In response to the protest by ARA, Buti claimed that the ARA was delaying development by resisting the removals. He argued that the resistance was:

> a deliberate attempt by ARA to retard the redevelopment of Alexandra and therefore a direct insult to those residents who have given those men in the Town Council the mandate to seek a better quality of life for them (The Alexandra Chronicle 1985 in Jochelson 1988: 112)

Responding to claims that the ATC was only helping the elite in Alexandra, the ATC started a self-help plan for the poor and stated publicly that the poor still have a place in Alexandra (Jochelson 1988: 113). At the end of 1984, the ATC established their own police forces and by mid-1985, new and lower rent tariffs were announced, but the ARA still resisted based on the assumption that, although rents were lower, the majority of

residents could not afford them. At the end of 1985, the ARA announced a rent boycott (Jochelson 1988: 114-115).

The ARA was the first main challege to Buti's top-down development approach in Alexandra which espoused a radical development approach in Alexandra The ARA, and its predecessor, Dishwantsho tsa Rona later proved to be an imperative starting point from which the residents of Alexandra would deploy methods of resistance in an attempt to participate in, and attempt to control, development in Alexandra. Bonner and Nieftagodien revealed that "the struggles led by Dishwantsho tsa Rona exposed the limitations of the Town Council's housing project and seriously dented the reputation of the Save Alexandra Party" (2008: 249). Perhaps even more significantly, he argues, "they laid the foundation for the radical and democratic civic structures that characterised Alexandra from the mid-1980s" (ibid).

Other civics were also forming in Alexandra at this time as well. Beginning in September 1983, AYCO had emerged, led by Paul Mashatile. It represented the growing political consciousness and discontent among the youth in Alexandra (Carter 1992). Bonner and Nieftagodien point out that from 1983 "Ayco forged links with the ACA, in what became the main alliance of UDF structures in the township" (2008: 281). The ACA was formed by Mike Beea in 1984, but according to Mayekiso, it "had no up-front ideology" (Mayekiso 1996: 55). Mayekiso further claims that Beea was trying "to represent the interests of Alexandra's property owners. He represented a conservative element of the township" (ibid). The ACA therefore could not represent the interests of the majority of people in Alexandra. Due to their narrow focus, none of these organisations could serve to adequately represent the people of Alexandra.

Overall, Buti's plan proved to be over-ambitious and his plan was barely implemented, and he had only succeeded in raising people's hopes, beginning to install new infrastructure and houses. While he believes they have a mandate from the people to develop Alex, in fact (as alluded to above) he is not acting as he promised. By 1986, there were reports of corruption, Buti was forced to resign, and the renewal plan was in tatters. A report released from the government in September 1986 called the Alexandra Urban Renewal Plan sharply criticised the 1980 Master plan and decleared that the vast majority of people's lives has not improved as a result. The report stated that only 480

houses and 464 flats had been produced through the Master Plan. Furthermore, the township's population had increased to at least 100 000, which fell far short of the plan to bring the population down to 60 000. Statistics from The Citizen on 9 March 1987 suggested that poverty and unemployment levels were extremely high as well. 46% were unemployed and 47% of the population that worked, earned less than R300 per month (in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 268). Bonner and Nieftagodien therefore suggest that by 1986 "very little had changed since the 1979 reprieve" (ibid).

The failure of Buti's plan coincided with the crisis occurring elsewhere in South Africa. The state's Riekert plans had faltered as a result of lack of delivery, lack of representation of the masses, and the protests that resulted from this. In July 1985, the South African government declared a state of emergency which was, according to Jochelson, already "an admission that the state had lost control and Riekert's plan, which had intended to create stability through reform, had backfired" (1988: 120). The Riekert Strategy did not establish a black middle class as it intended, and failed to divide "outsiders" from "insiders" since the "retrenchments and structural unemployment had affected privileged insiders as severely as it had outsiders" (Jochelson 1988: 167). Jochelson points out that by 1986 South Africa was in the middle of a greater urban crisis than in 1976:

> Black Local Government had collapsed in political and fiscal terms. Councillors had resigned in droves and rent boycotts had emptied council coffers… The housing crisis was everpresent… The accommodation backlog had barely been touched (1988: 166).

With the collapse of black local authorities, Joint Management Centres (JMCs) were introduced as a democratic tool to engage people at the local level of the National Security Management System (NSMS). Like BLA's, however, they did not have any executive power, and were only accountable to apartheid government officials above them who make decisions. The aim of the JMCs were "to coordinate government activity to "lower the revolutionary climate" by improving the quality of life of township inhabitants and thereby winning their hearts and minds" (Jochelson 1986: 198).

An Urbanisation Strategy for the Republic of South Africa was published in 1985 and a year later presented as a white paper. According to Jochelson:

> The new urbanisation strategy envisaged technocratic re-ordering of society according to interdependent , functional, regional units that overlooked South Africa-bantustan 'borders.' It re-examined the premises of influx control, housing, employment and black local government, retaining some elements of the Riekert Commission, and dispensing with others (1988: 68).

The new Urbanisation Strategy emphasised that the movement and settlement of blacks should be based on "economic rather than political criteria" (1985 in Jochelson 1988: 171).

According to the policy report, pass laws and influx controls should be abolished. If blacks had enough money, they could move to new metropolitan areas. The policy documents stated that:

> It is necessary for influx control to be replaced by a positive urbanisation strategy that, by making use of market forces, subsidies and development, among other things, will encourage people to settle in certain suitable areas rather than forbidding them to move to certain urban areas (Jochelson 1988: 171).

In August 1986, Steve Burger was appointed administrator of Alexandra and head of the mini-Joint Management Centre. A new Urbanisation Strategy, following the 1985 Report on Urbanisation Strategy, was undertaken called the Alexandra Urban Renewal Proposal (AURP) was put forth in 1986 and described Alexandra as an "oil spot" for development (Jochelson 1988: 198). Burger's plan neglected the old township because after 1986, the government's plan (to get rid of influx control) accepts controlled urbanisation of black people and acceptance of emergence of squatter camps. Previously the government had tried camps to get rid of them.

The new approach was critical of the Master Plan and rejected some of its key tenants and introduces a new plan in the context of what some have called the Winning Hearts And Minds (WHAM) strategy. According to Mayekiso "The strategy was designed to whitewash our minds, to confuse us to thinking the apartheid state was addressing out needs" (1996: 30). This can also be referred to as the carrot and stick

strategy. The carrot is to make an ambitious plan and finance factories surrounding Alexandra so that Alex becomes resourced, and self-sufficient, mini-town. The stick is the massive arrests and the security system of the government and Berger is the local apparatus of that. As Mayekiso put it, the WHAM strategy was a "Combination of repression and upgrading" (Mayekiso 1996: 59). According to Jochelson:

> Reinstating control over the township… had two dimensions: repression of resistance through the state of emergency, detentions and police and army presence in the township: and an ideological counter-offensive which criminalised radical ideas and actors in courts of law (1988: 188).

Burger's plan claimed that the 1980 Master Plan "placed the entire responsibility for the upgrading plan in the lap of the town council", housing was assumed to be the private or individuals owner's responsibility. However, this would only work if people could actually afford housing on their own, but obviously most could not.

In effect, Burger's intervention does not make any significant impact. The plan meant that, instead of the state providing housing, the individuals and the private sector should be responsible. This plan was therefore too narrowly shaped by privatised housing provisions and missed the needs of the majority. While by the late 80s and early 90s, there was a self-standing elite (in the East Bank), it made almost no dent in the needs of poor people for housing and living conditions remained deplorable.

4.4 The Rise of People's Power

By the end of 1985, a new era in Alexandra's politics emerged, which was underlined by a radical, socialist and participatory approach to solving local problems and resisting against apartheid. These politics quickly became deeply embedded in the community. The rise of the AAC's hegemony witnessed the virtual demise of the apartheid system's black puppet councillors. Many believed that the AAC's approach to community organising would be the building blocks, or organs of people's power from which to build a new democratic society in post-apartheid South Africa. By 1989, key activists were released from prison on charges of treason and sought to revitalise these organs under the ACO in order to build a radical development plan in Alexandra that was based

on harnessing the creative energies of residents, and meeting the basic needs of the vast majority of poor residents who had been flocking to Alexandra particularly since 1986. After negotiations, a development plan was agreed upon called the Alexandra Accord, which indicated the growing power of the community and its ability to drive development. However, this was soon undermined by the need to deal with a civil war which erupted in Alexandra in March 1991 and threatened to rip apart the entire social fabric of Alexandra.

In 1986, the police brutality, repression and political system had angered the residents of Alexandra to the point where they could take no more. The police killing on February 1, 1986 of Michael Diradeng, a youth who was not intimately involved in politics in Alexandra, was seen as the last straw of anger and resentment that led to a situation in which "people were no longer talking but acting" (Carter 1992: 154). This sparked the famous six day war in which marked a turning point in the history of resistance in Alexandra (Bozzoli 2004: 68).

On the 14th February, the night before Diradeng's mass funeral, the people of Alexandra began to mobilise by going "from yard to yard" (Richard Mdakane in Bozzoli 2004: 68). About 10,000 people in Alexandra were mobilised to attend the night vigil. When the police disrupted the night vigil with teargas and after midnight, "groups of youth rampaged through the township… using shock tactics, fire and destruction" (Bozzoli 2004: 69) to vent their anger against the police intervention. By 8:20, one policemen had been stabbed and burnt to death by an angry mob, the first instance in which this occurred in Alexandra. Later that morning, another policeman was found burnt to death on the streets of Alexandra (Bozzoli 2004: 69).

Despite what seemed to be an increasing police presence, it was negotiated that a mass funeral, for Diradeng and the 17 other war victims, would be held the next day. As many as 11,000 people attended this funeral. Drawing upon the anger and deep frustrations of the residents against the police and security force presence and repression in Alexandra, the funeral was highly politicised. Youth activists saw the funeral as an opportunitiy to express themselves and to "propagate their ideas about how to solve the problems of the township" (Bozzoli 2004: 72). There was a call for the people of

Alexandra to govern themselves and an apparent willingness to sacrifice their lives in order to achieve freedom. One pamphlet read:

> Our people want FREEDOM now. They want to govern themselves and determine the destiny of their country TODAY not TOMORROW… They will have therefore SHED ALL FEAR OF DEATH because the word TO LIVE had acquired the same meaning as the words TO BE FREE" (Alexandra Massacre: Mass Funeral of the seventeen victims in the Alexandra Massacre, 1986.03.05 in Jochelson 1988: 145).

Those who issued the pamphlet clearly believed that apartheid was more than an unjust system of governance, but one that restricted their ability to determine their own destinies. It reflected a consciousness of how apartheid structures served to limit agency. The pamphlet suggested that, as long as people's ability to act in the world was limited by the apartheid system, they could not be free.

Mzwanele Mayekiso became a leading activist in Alexandra from 1985. In his view, this period represented an "awakening." It was, he argued, "a period of growth and commitment-building, as well as an introduction to a whole community's attempt to fight apartheid and to develop a coherent political perspective." He goes on to say that the events of 1985-86 "raised the consciousness of an entire township" (Mayekiso 1996: 49). The Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) was launched in February 1986 and quickly established itself as one of the most organised and powerful movements against apartheid in history. This represents the peak of radical participation and self-governance in Alexandra.

In the end of 1985, activists had made the decision to form a new civic to address the needs and aspirations of the people themselves. In the midst of great repression and feelings of overwhelming anger by residents towards the apartheid government**,** Moses Mayekiso took the opportunity to officially launch the Alexandra Action Committee on the 17th February. Existing civic organisations, the ARA and the ACA, were deemed inadequate, albeit for different reasons. The ARA has played a leading role in struggling against deteriorating living conditions in the township and exposing the elitist character of Buti's housing programme. However, the ARA's influence was generally confined to the areas where new housing developments were taking place. The ACA, led by the

charismatic Mike Beea, never established strong roots in the township and depended heavily on Beea's public profile as well as support from AYCO. At the meeting of the AAC, it was noted that neither the ARA nor the ACA had "proper structures" to deal with people's needs (Mayekiso 1996: 61). The AAC planned to channel residents' anger in a way that could both challenge the apartheid system, and unite the people of Alexandra to take control of the everyday aspects of life in their township.

Bonner and Nieftagodien point out that "The politics and practices of the AAC were radical, infused by socialist ideas and the democratic experiences of the independent trade union movement" (2008: 293). Moses Mayekiso, who came to the AAC with trade union experiences, explained that:

> Alexandra is very different from other townships as the majority of people living there are workers . . . Workers are directly involved in the various committees and they bring with them experiences of unions' democratic structures. We believe that our struggle must be led by the working class and therefore workers should play a greater role in community organisations (in Bozzoli 2004: 188-189)

The AAC intended that the struggle for a better life for the majority would occur through resident's local struggles and their organisation. As such, the emergence of "organs of people's power" was to a large extent the product of local struggles.

The AAC was quickly establishing itself as politically hegemonic in Alexandra as blocks, streets and schools were renamed after national and local revolutionary leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Moses Mayekiso to designate their newly librated status. First popularised in the townships of the Eastern Cape, the ideas spread rapidly, albeit unevenly, across the country. In Alexandra, the formation of such organs was inspired both by the Eastern Cape experience, as well as the influence of trade unions. At one level, this movement echoed the call by Oliver Tambo's 1984 call for ungovernability which stated:

> We must destroy the enemy organs of government. We must render them ineffective and inoperative. Indeed why should we continue to co-operate with organs of government that we have correctly denounced as institutions imposed upon us to perpetuate our own oppression… It makes no sense that we co-operate with Bantustans and community councils… We have raised the

> level of political consciousness among ourselves to the point where we can and must in practice, refuse to submit to the dictates of the Pretoria regime. In every locality, and in all parts of our country, we must fight to ensure that we remove the enemy's organs of government, using all means available to us (in Mayekiso: 1996).

But the movement went further by attempting to install alternative forms of power, informed by ideas of popular participation. To enable this to occur, minutes of the first AAC meeting said that they needed to create structures that would organise the people using "Yards/Blocks and Streets Committee(s)" (Mayekiso 1996: 61).

These were formed to enable community involvement and substantial (but limited) self-governance of the township. The segments closest to the ground were yard committees which consisted of two members of the yard who were elected by all members of the AAC in the yard (Ndletyana 1998: 31). These dealt with issues that affected people on a day to day basis especially due to the high concentrations of people living in one yard. Yard committees therefore enabled people to solve the relatively simplistic resident's issues that arise such as the order in which people should be able to use the washing line on their own. A respondent from Ndletyana explains that this was efficient because "if we are just going to take petty things to the office it will be busy for twenty four hours" (interview with Respondent (C, 04-11-'97 in Ndletyana 1998: 32).

Yard committees not only mitigated against domestic problems, but served political functions as well. Yard committees also served as a very effective and efficient means to reporting information from area committees down to all those in yard committees, and to inform people in yard committees of decisions made at the area level. A middle-aged man named Sam Radebe who was born in Alexandra, responded in an excited and upbeat tone when he highlighted how the yard committees worked:

> Now if you want to deal now only with the area committees, you will call area committees, then the message will disseminate right down to the ordinary person in the yard….I am here talking from experience, these were things that we used to do… when we were told that there is a trouble coming in Alex, to tell people… that hey, trouble is coming tonight! It's so easy to tell people, without a radio station announcing...Now the one that you have told will be telling all these members, then you have already told all the blocks. Now, they tell each and every street committee. Each and every street committee tell[s] each and every yard committee. Yard

> committees spread the message into the yards. You see? The message goes easy (interview, Radebe 2006).

The block committee is the second level and consists of all the yard committee members from within a block. Block committees are responsible for ensuring that yard committees function properly and that disputes are solved in an appropriate and timely manner. Next, a street committee "consists of all block committees that have been allocated to it by the Co-ordinating Committee" (AAC Constitution in Ndletyana 1998: 32). It ensures that yard committees and street committees are functioning properly and communicating with each other. The street committees in certain areas together formed an areas committee and elect the co-ordinating committee.

Because the apartheid state's court system was considered to be illegitimate, residents organised their own. People's courts encouraged popular participation in meditating between residents. They also functioned to raise people's consciousness about national political and economic issues. In the early stages, people's courts operated on the basis of a fair and open judicial process, which aimed to educate and rehabilitate offenders. According to Mayekiso, this system was substantially different from the state's judicial system:

> The emphasis on communities meant that instead of going to prison, people were educated about the causes of social problems. They were therefore politicized about the nature of apartheid oppression, the economic imbalances that accompanied apartheid, and the relationship of these to individual acts of crime in the black communities (1996: 82).

It should be added here that this consciousness-raising of people's courts was not the most popular form of them. Later forms of people's courts in Alexandra did indeed punish offenders, sometimes using corporal punishment, thus undermining the potential of these courts to educate offenders. This point remains, however, that people's courts in Alexandra, did at times educate people about the structural conditions in which their problems were occurring.

The AAC used the yard system and at times people's courts, though they were ot always under the direct control of the AAC, to solve local problems and direct

organisation against apartheid. For Mzwanele Mayekiso, rendering the township ungovernable was only one aspect of the AAC's struggle. Equally as important was the objective of proceeding to a new and radically different from of local politics:

> It was not only crucial to shut down the existing state apparatus. Within the decay of the old apartheid order, brought on by ungovernability, we also knew that there was great need to plant the seeds of a new approach. We would seek out, through discipline, democracy and accountability, the alternatives to apartheid. This involved assessing how much power we had to challenge the very basis of the regime, and to build new organs of people's power such as the embryonic structures of the AAC, people's courts, economic and political development institutions (Mayekiso 1996: 50).

Mayekiso and other activists argued that development was not possible, unless the people affected were directly involved in making decisions regarding the process of development (Mayekiso 1996). It was not enough to overthrow a racist and oppressive regime, and to replace it with a black majority government. Critically important was the form of governance - participatory:

> When we talked about day-to-day issues ("local grievances") caused by apartheid and capitalism, we were firstly trying to make the township ungovernable, and secondly sowing seeds so that, given the opportunity, we would actually have something in place to actually solve the problems (Mayekiso 1996: 90).

The innovative systems of participatory governance that existed autonomously from the apartheid government were intended to be the "seeds" of an approach that could eventually empower ordinary South African citizens to take even greater control over their lives once their was a new democratic government in power. Activists such as Mayekiso firmly believed that if transformation was to occur in post-apartheid South Africa, the top-down mechanisms of apartheid would need to be replaced by these bottom-up mechanisms for direct democracy.

In 1986, as a result the growing militancy in Alexandra, it quickly became a core target of the apartheid government's "efforts to regain control of black townships" (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 299). Leading AAC activists were sent to prison under

the state of emergency in mid-1986. The bottom-up and participatory nature of the AAC's structures were reflected by the fact that they displayed strong resilience in the leaders' absence - they continued to function even after their detention.

When the government abolished influx control in 1986 people there was a "mass exodus" of people moving from the rural areas to townships such as Alexandra "causing an unprecedented population explosion in these already overcrowded areas" (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 329). By 1991, the population estimates were in between a staggering 200,000 – 300,000 people, as compared to 80, 000 – 100,000 in 1986 (Daily Mail 1990 in Nieftagodien 2008: 330). The population increase resulted in an unprecedented proliferation of shacks throughout Alexandra. A key activist in the AAC estimated in mid-1989 that "1000 shacks were being constructed each month in Alexandra by incoming residents" (in Mayekiso 1996: 131). Though this was probably an over-estimation, it "reflected the perception among residents that an explosion of shacks was overwhelming the township" (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 331). The state did not deal with the deteriorating housing issues in Alexandra and throughout the end of the 1980s, living conditions continued to plummet. A survey by Planact noted that poverty levels had reached new heights with 75% of the population earning less than R1000 per month (in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 333). Bonner and Nieftagodien provide further indication of the deprivation in Alexandra at the time:

> Unemployment levels reached new peaks because of the deep economic crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and working class areas were particularly hard hit. Despite its proximity to various centres of employment, Alexandra's employment levels rarely exceeded 50 per cent during the period (ibid).

In December 1989 the AAC's core leaders were released from prison and revived the AAC in late 1989 under a new name, the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO), which initiated a radical programme intended to address the appalling living conditions that the vast majority of Alexandra's residents were faced with. The ACO continued to criticise top-down approaches to development in Alexandra and responded by deepening their commitment to people-driven development (see Mayekiso 1996: 169-189). Mayekiso

discusses the approaches to renewal made by the apartheid government, which prompted the ACO's launch:

> The apartheid government and businesses had tried to "develop" Alexandra according to their own interests for many decades. Many local initiatives had also been launched. But all failed to make a dent in the overall poverty and decay in the township. So, we concluded, a fairly revolutionary approach to development would be necessary (Mayekiso 1996: 156).

The ACO's position opposed Burger's urban renewal plan which was funded R140 million and, according to Mayekiso, was aimed at "more rapid homeownership" (Mayekiso 1996: 103). This took place primarily in the East Bank and would not satisfy the needs of the majority. Mayekiso responds about Burger's plan that it:

> gathered a middle-class strata of police, teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, and civil servants who had access to state and building society loans for housing. The point here was to continue the divide-and-conquer strategy, this time along class lines. Burger also tried to win hearts and minds by issuing newsletters with cartoon characters called Comrade Rat and Alex, who were meant to demonstrate how Alexandra's citizens should behave their lives (Mayekiso 1996: 103).

The ACO claimed that there was no consultation made by this administrator and it was therefore concluded that "no Alexandra residents, and indeed no blacks, were featured in the preparation of the report" (ibid).

The ACO put the housing crisis at the centre of their agenda and were thereby especially critical of the elitist nature of Burger's plan. Shack dwellers represented the majority in Alexandra during this time, and the ACO responded by creating an alternative development with a particularly strong emphasis on making housing affordable to all. Their approach was based on the premise that "People should have the opportunity of maximum individual choice, but within a context of providing for all, and not just a few" (ACO Proposal 1990 in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 338). For the ACO, residents of

Alexandra were not conceived as passive in the development process, but as active agents whose create energy should be harnessed to improve people's lives.

With the assistance of Planact, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), their plan argued that the needs of the people in Alexandra could not "be met by the normal functioning of the market" (Mayekiso 1996: 154). The ACO therefore educated people "about privatization in very political terms, which allowed us to build a large base of households that understood the housing question clearly" (Mayekiso 1996: 161).

In February 1991, after much negotiation and consideration, the Alexandra Accord was signed by the Tranvaal Provincial Administration (TPA), the Alex Council and the ACO. For ACO activists, the signing of the accord reflected that the National Party government had recognised the power of the community and their legitimacy as drivers of local development. A principal strategy employed by the ACO was to insist that the residents, represented by them, be given its due weight in the negotiations with the authorities.

Incorporating the ACO's proposals in the design of the accord, "it was agreed to write off rent and service arrears (estimated at R12,4 million), to upgrade the hostels, to improve services and general conditions in the township and to transfer rented houses to the ownership of residents" (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 17). The ATC was also dissolved, further signifying the ACO's authority. Furthermore, a single-tax base would be introduced so that, as ACO leaders had campaigned, funds from workers who commuted from Alexandra to Sandton or Johannesburg, could be funneled back into Alexandra rather than remaining in city centres for the benefit of the white minority. In exchange, the residents of Alexandra would end the rent boycott that the ACO had intiated for those who could not afford to pay.

However, the practical implications of these proposals were undermined when "the TPA backed down, made Sandton its development agent, and gave the Joint Negotiating Forum decision-making power" (Mayekiso 1996: 213). Moreover, the Alexandra Accord tried to cover all development issues in Alexandra but never went beyond a statement of principles.

The ACO's approach, despite its bottom-up character, was met with resistance from particular factions within Alexandra. According to Mayekiso:

> It was always a challenge to emphasize the unity of people with such varied backgrounds, especially because rival civic and political bodies sometimes attempted to organize class-based segments (Mayekiso 1996: 187).

For example, while ALPOA was concerned with the small minority of Alexandra residents who sought the restoration of their property rights, the ACO's approach was broad-based in that it to defended everyone's right to housing regardless of whether or not they could afford it. On the one hand, ALPOA believed that they should legitimately be able to collect rents from people and that the ACO was concerned with shacks dwellers at the expense of others. The ACO argued that property ownership was imposed onto communities in the absence of prominent activists who had been sent to jail (Mayekiso 1996: 162). According to Mayekiso:

> this gave those few who owned property more of an incentive to support councilors opposed to our arrangement. Some of the even formed the Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association (ALPOA) as a lobby group. They were concerned because every single case of property transfer that we heard about was blocked by lack of consensus in the yard (Mayekiso 1996: 163).

Furthermore, though the ANC and ACO untited with the goal of ending apartheid, things changed once the ANC was unbanned in February 1990. Lucas argues that:

> the relationship between ACO and ANC, while overtly one of alliance, was underlaid by serious ideological tensions. These were compounded by socio-economic differences between the two groups of leaders. Many returned exiles, who were prominent in both branch executive and as general members, came form the same middle-class social background as ACA leadership: old Alexandra families who had claims to property in the township and were dismayed at the proliferation of shacks. ACO leadership, on the other hand, had a more working-class character. Leaders such as Moses Mayekiso were also relatively recent arrivals in Alexandra and had no connection to the period of freehold property rights. These social differences served to underscore the diverging ideological standpoints of the two organizations, particularly with reference to housing and the 'squatter' issue (1992: 69).

When the ANC was unbanned, they attempted to re-establish local hegemony in townships such as Alexandra, despite the fact that the ACO clearly had a larger mass base. The ACO's difficultly in sustaining a united civic with one development agenda, began to be undermined by these political tensions as well as the socio-economic concerns of other civics such as ALPOA and Mike Beea's ACA who were intolerant of the ACO's mass-based housing plans.

The potential for the ACO to implement an alternative development programme took a final harsh blow when civil war broke out in Alexandra in 1991. While Alexandra had been relatively peaceful compared to the violence in other townships on the East Rand, two weeks after the signing of the Alexandra Accord, a war broke out in Alexandra. Broadly speaking, this war was a response to mounting frustration over the limited resources available to impoverished residents of Alexandra. More specifically, it was sparked by the local government's attempts, particularly by Prince Mokoena of the ATC, to politicise ethnic tensions within the community and thereby to regain authority in the face of the ACO's hegemony. Mokoena attempted to create allegiances with the hostel dwellers in Alexandra who supported the IFP, and to divide them from ANC supporters. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s the hostels remained a breeding ground for poverty. This heightened people's tensions in the context of the limited resources which were offered by the apartheid government to upgrade living conditions. There was little privacy in these hostels given the close quarters and shared living facilities and, despite the lack of service improvement, the prices people paid to stay in them continued to increase through the early 1990s.

According to Bonner and Nieftagodien, "Within days of the Accord being signed, Mokoena tried to rally the support of hostel dwellers by making the deliberately inflammatory claim that the ACO planned to demolish the hostels" (2008: 361). On the 7th March 1991, a group of hostel dwellers who were probably instigated by the council, violently disturbed an ACO meeting. The next day, apparently responding to a fight over a girlfriend, a group of hostel dwellers killed several people in the Freedom Park squatter settlement. Within the first week of violence "Twenty-six people were killed and scores injured. The people of Alexandra were in shock" (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 365-366). By the second week, all non-IFP and non-isiZulu speaking hostel dwellers were

forcibly removed from the hostels (ibid). Prior to this outbreak, Xhosa's and Zulu's had lived together quite harmoniously. This war dominated the political scene between late 1990 and 1992.

By the 6th April 1991, 106 people had been killed since the violence began a month earlier (Fortress of Fear in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 21) and throughout 1992 the violence continued to permeate the lives of Alexandra's residents to the point that Alexandra was deemed an unrest area on various occasions. In March 1992, the community engaged in sustained action to "secure a lasting peace in the township" (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 377). The National Peace Accord (NPA) was the most significant of these engagements and its objectives were not political, but were aimed at uniting the community to bring peace in Alexandra. By July 1993, it was clear that these efforts were largely successful as only six people were recorded killed since the beginning of that year. Reflecting on the period of violence in Alexandra between 1990-1992, Mayekiso stated that "more than two hundred people lost their lives, thousands were injured, and thousands more were displaced by invasion of their homes" (Mayekiso 1996: 190). The attempts by the ACO to further instill participatory methods, which held the promise for instilling a radical and transformative development agenda, were undermined by the violence as negotiating to end the war took precedence over civic issues. Still, the ACO's notion of people's power continues to resonate in the minds of ordinary residents in Alexandra who, even today, demand more participatory approaches to development.

4.5 Participation: From Transformative Possibilities to Mainstream Practice

The dawn of a new democratic dispensation in 1994 in South Africa meant that the methods adopted by the ACO to obtain people's participation in development could have created the conditions for a radical and transformative practice of participation in development that would radically improve the lives of the previously marginalised majority. Many therefore hoped that the traditions of participation adopted under the notion "people's power" would be nurtured by the post-apartheid government, but this did not happen. Instead, participation has become mainstreamed and, at least in terms of

the government's practices, completely disarticulated from any radical transformative agenda.

Indeed, in-depth studies have explained the decline of civil society mobilisation in the post-apartheid period which has resulted largely from the ANC's hegemony in its political "honeymoon" period (see especially, Zuern 2000 and Heller 2001), while many others (Khoza 2003; Heller 2008; Oldfield 2008) have suggested that the ANC's approach to participation has been undermined by a variety of inter-related factors including the adoption of neoliberal policies and the ANC's technocratic and managerial approach to service delivery. However, studies have not paid adequate attention to the purpose and meaning of participation that was lost in this transition. Lacking the theoretical tools to understand the transformative potential for participation in development, these studies did not sufficiently explain the significance of the evolution of participation in development in South Africa. By paying particular attention to the height of people's power, which offered a unique and radical alternative approach to the practice of participation, this section discusses the decline of civic mobilisation and, relatedly, the mainstream version of participation in development that has been adopted by the ANC government.

This shift is particularly important given the argument that the organs of people's power of the 1980s met the three preconditions for a participatory project to lead to transformative outcomes as outlined by Hickey and Mohan (2004 – see chapter 2). First, people's power engaged with development as an underlying process of social change. This is evidenced by the fact that it sought to overthrow apartheid and to enable people to control everyday aspects of life regardless of, or eventually in order to define, immanent development. People's power also met the second requirement since it was clearly part of a wider radical political project that intended to transform existing power relations. Finally, it satisfied the third since its very essence required an active, practiced and inclusive notion of citizenship.

As discussed in chapter 2, Hickey and Mohan's approach is embedded in Freirean thinking. Freire provides a useful framework in which to understand people's power. Like Freire's approach to participation, people's power was a means by which people could become active subjects of their own destinies, rather than objects of someone

else's. Obtaining people's power was not solely about taking power from the state. Rather, the objective was to claim freedom in the broader, Freirean sense. Mashamba, a leader of the United Democratic Front signified that:

> We have to understand the "dispersed" notion of people's "power" as a revolt by the people and as their taking control of their lives in the process of struggle, even before liberation, and not necessarily as a seizure of political power in the state. The people who seize and exercise "people's power" in this sense are pioneers of human freedom, and "people's power" is, therefore, an emergent form of a new supreme controlling power in the state or, more precisely, a new form of state organization in embryo (Mashamba 1986: 14-15).

Mashamba here elaborates on the meaning of the kind of people's power that was occurring throughout South Africa in the 1980s. Struggles for people's power, such as those by the AAC in Alexandra, were viewed as the means by which people could govern all aspects of their lives. Once the majority gained power, these were to be developed as means by which to continue the national liberation struggle.

Describing the meaning of "the people shall govern," as enshrined in the Freedom Charter, the United Democratic Front (UDF) portrayed a radical vision of participatory democracy:

> We are struggling to build a future in South Africa in which the broad working masses of our country have a real control over all aspects of their lives – from national policy to housing, schooling and working conditions. This, for us, is the essence of democracy…. When we demand that the people shall govern, we mean at all levels and in all spheres, and we demand that this must be real, effective control on a daily basis (Mashamba 1986: 21).

The objective of participation, as embodied in the practice of people's power, was about creating a radical project with an active notion of citizenship that could define the underlying process of social change from the perspective of the marginalised. The conception of people's power held the potential to lead South Africa onto a development path that was participatory in the Freirean sense and that could have led the black majority to transform their living conditions on their own terms.

4.6 Whither the Civics?

With the unbanning of the ANC and local government negotiations under way, the early 1990s witnessed heated debates concerning how civic movements should relate to the state in post-apartheid South Africa as various analysts and practitioners attempted to shape policies in this regard. In this context, the tides of political power shifted dramatically and the ANC consolidated its reign as the revolutionary party that would lead the masses on a development path marked by transformation. It soon became evident that while civics played a vital role in ending apartheid there was no guarantee that they would do so in achieving development in post-apartheid South Africa.

In fact, many argued that civics would not have a key role to play in local government. Seekings contended that:

> Local government will have legitimacy, in contrast to the past… The space for civics to perform either a legitimate mediating role or a watchdog role will surely diminish. The legal and policing system will no doubt be reformed, removing much of the impetus to informal justice. On the other hand, if civics take over local government, then their identity as civics will become meaningless (Seekings 1992: 235).

Also downplaying the need for civics in post-apartheid South Africa, Friedman highlighted civil society's "threat to the ability of the liberal state to provide 'representativeness, accountability, and public contest to the vital areas of social life'" (Friedman 1991 in Mayekiso 1992: 33). Similarly, Nzimande argued that civics will need to be depoliticised so that they do not hinder the post-apartheid's state's ability to implement socialist development plans. He suggested therefore, that civics would need to "collapse into the ANC" (in Mayekiso 1996: 236).

Swilling's critique, on the other hand, was based on the idea that the state does not necessarily act in the interests of the public good. He claims that the identification of the "public good with the state… has legitimised the actions of powerful elites in control of state power and has subordinated civil society" (Swilling 1992: 75). To avoid this, civil society needs to control the state in order to ensure that it acts in the interests of the public good.

He therefore argues that state-driven socialism would be an authoritarian approach to development (Swilling 1992: 75). Swilling asserts further that:

> …decentralisation and devolution to regional and local government is the only way of placing the power to govern in structures that local communities can relate to and hence participate in… a truly 'civil society' is one where the ordinary everyday citizens who do not control the levers of political and economic power have access to locally-constituted voluntary associations that have the capacity, know-how and resources to influence and even determine the structure of power and the allocation of material resources (Swilling 1992: 77-8).

In line with the conception, some argued that since civics played a crucial role in ending apartheid, they should be a vital component of the new government, not simply to deliver state defined services, but to play a key role in defining local and national development trajectories as well (see Mayekiso 1996).

Many activists believed that it would make no sense to embark on the path to liberal democracy which is based on majority rule rather than apartheid's minority rule. Adler and Steinberg supported this view:

> It was not uncommon, during the 1980s, to hear civic leaders associate the apartheid regime with the liberal democratic countries of the west and to herald their own organizational ethos as the embryo of a new form of existence (2000: 2).

Activists were concerned about the dominant model of representative democracy, based on an electoral system in which the electorate tended only to engage politically every four to five years.

There is obviously a qualitative difference between governing every few years and, as some civic leaders suggested should happen, governing all aspects of life on a daily basis. As Adler and Steinberg suggest above, a South African transition from apartheid to liberal or representative democracy would therefore be insufficient.

This line of thinking worked within the "popular-democratic" conception (Johnson 2002: 223) of state-civil society relations. It emphasised the need to change the structural relationship between state and society so that the state becomes partners with a civil society that (to a large extent) determines its own developmental agenda. In the

strongest sense of this relationship, the state may be *replaced* by civil society and be deemed unnecessary.[4] According to Johnson, it:

> focuses on those organizations and movements in Africa that actually emerged during struggles for democracy; it seeks to understand the ways in which the anti-colonial struggle, and indeed the anti-apartheid struggle, attempted to recast the relationship between state and society and between ruler and ruled (see, for example, Mamdani 1990; Neocosmos 1998) (Johnson 2002: 223).

Many activists argued that because the overthrow of the apartheid government would not have been possible without people's participation and resistance against the state, civil society needed to play a central role in post-apartheid South Africa as well (Mayekiso 2003).

These debates reflected opposing viewpoints. One side argued that civics should determine the development trajectory of the South African government, while others argued that it would no longer be necessary. Others argued that it would act as a check on power as in the liberal democratic conception. At this point, the role that civics would play in post-apartheid South Africa was not clear.

4.7 Institutionalising Participatory Democracy

The need for participation, and particularly civics, to play a key role in reconstruction and development in post-apartheid South Africa was highlighted by the ANC's key policy documents and, initially, this seemed to hold promise for those who believed that civics should play a key role in directing development. The transition to democracy brought about a situation in which the state claimed to use past experiences such as those in Alexandra to inform the meanings and practices of participation that would be necessary to bring about transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. The participatory culture of the anti-apartheid struggle informed the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was intended to be the major policy document by which development in

[4] The extent to which this conception has ever actually been put to practice is questionable. Baker comments, "regardless of how sophisticated our efforts to place the state under popular control, democracy located only at the level of the state can ever deliver the experience of democratic autonomy that we desire" (2002: 168). Furthermore, if civil society is in complete control over the state, the state may cease to exist.

South Africa would be informed. In regards to civil society, it claimed that, "trade unions and other mass organizations must be actively involved in democratic public policy-making" (ANC 1994: 131). It emphasised the need for people's participation in the development process beyond electoral politics:

> Above all, the people affected must participate in decision-making. Democratization must begin to transform both the state and civil society. Democracy is not confined to periodic elections. It is, rather, an active process enabling everyone to contribute to reconstruction and development (1994: 7).

Furthermore, the RDP places specific stress on the empowerment of the poor. It emphasises the necessity of empowerment of ordinary citizens:

> The central objective of our RDP is to improve the quality of life of all South Africans, and in particular the most poor and marginalised sections of our communities. This objective should be realized through a process of empowerment which gives the poor control over their lives and increases their ability to mobilise sufficient development resources, including from the democratic government where necessary (ibid: 15).

Thus, at the dawn of the new democratic dispensation, considerable emphasis was placed on the need for ordinary citizens to participate in decision-making in post-apartheid South Africa. In what appears to be a reference to self-governance activities during the struggle against apartheid, the RDP says the poor must have "control over their lives" (ibid) and, further, that the poor should be able to "mobilise… resources from the democratic government" (ibid). The rhetoric of the RDP could be seen to represent the post-apartheid government's commitment to the development of the embryos of people's power that began during apartheid.

The South African state continued this trend when it embarked on a decentralisation scheme arguably to give local government the substantial autonomy necessary to enable active citizen participation, especially in the form of civil society. The White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) and its dealing with decentralisation is largely considered to be on the cutting edge of international theory. The WPLG stresses

the need for participation at all levels of the development process. It defines Developmental Local Government (DLG) as "local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their lives" (1998: 17).

The Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Municipal Systems Act (2000), and the Municipal Structures Act (1998) have all promised substantial participation from citizens when designing and implementing state projects. Ward Committees have also been designed as a key mechanism to enable representatives of the community to interact with local government councilors. They are designed to "play a critical role in ensuring the necessary contact between the people and our institutions of government" (WPLG 2006: 1). Finally, Community Development Workers (CDWs) have been established to enable poor people to gain access to the government services that are entitled to. CDW's are claimed to be "at the heart of participatory democracy and developmental local government" (Baastjies 2003: 10).

Additionally, WPLG policy and the constitution reflect many broad ideas about what local government is and integrated ways to accomplish Developmental Local Government (DLG). WPLG stresses the need for participation at all levels of the development process. It defines Developmental Local Government (DLG) as "local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their lives" (1998: 17). Overall, the introduction of the new democratic order in South Africa in 1994 brought much overall emphasis on the participation of those affected in the development process. However, the degree of participation that councillors are required to elicit from communities is ambiguous, and therefore leaves councillors and other planners great space to maneuver in regards to how communities participate in achieving development. In practice, participation was to occur within specific boundaries and was never to challenge decisions made by the state.

4.8 Low Intensity Democracy

Though the language of participation exists in policy documents and among officials, the purpose of participation has been undermined by the ANC's technocratic and managerial approach to development in post-apartheid South Africa. The ANC's reputation as the main organisation that liberated the oppressed majority from the apartheid government's rule, has led to a situation in which the ANC has been able to maintain legitimacy in terms of its transformation agenda, regardless of whether or not citizens have determined this agenda. Instead of enabling communities to control their own development through civic structures, participation exists largely to enable the ANC to implement its own service delivery priorities. The inception of a new democratic order dominated by the ANC laid the foundation for a sharp decline in civic organisation and their participation in government decision-making processes.

The need for speedy negotiations and a smooth transition meant that, while members of ACO and later SANCO, such as Moses Mayekiso, were part of the local government negotiations between 1990 and 1994, key decisions were actually being made at the national level. Furthermore, one of the most demobilising effects on civics was the fact that droves of key activists were becoming a part of local government ANC branches as this was often considered to be the obvious career choice for civic leaders. Zuern explains that "the loss of popular civic leaders to the ANC became so great in the aftermath of apartheid rule that many people assumed that any "good" civic leader would became an ANC candidate" (Zuern 2002: 101). This not only negated the potential for them to become part of a powerful civic that could challenge state power, but further served to strengthen the ANC's hegemony since these new local government leaders could harness the mass base in their own communities in support of the ANC.

After the local government election of 1995 and 1996, civics:

> were called upon to play a leading role in building ANC branches. Grassroots activism thus shifted from building community structures to building party structures (Heller and Ntlokonkulu (2001).

In this context, local government ANC branches proceeded to implement development plans without informing, let alone consulting, civics "despite the fact that many of newly elected local representatives came from popular organizations that had worked so long and hard demanding participatory democratic structures" (2002: 78).

Prior to 1994 civics played a central role in the construction of organs of popular participation and in elaborating ideas on the value and necessity of such forms of democracy and development. After 1994, the role of civil society changed dramatically. In post-apartheid South Africa civil society is now most often discussed in its liberal form in which it is meant to act as a "watchdog" to the state. Since the majority has elected the state into power, the state is therefore legitimate, and uses civil society as a secondary check on its power. Civil society therefore should not have too strong of an influence over the state for fear that it may smother or over-take it in a similar way as it did when it brought about the transition to democracy in South Africa. Responding to this conception, Johnson argues that:

> In the context of transitional South Africa, scholars working in the liberal framework have effectively advocated the withdrawal of the popular movements from the political realm to the private and apolitical realm of civil society, where they should serve as interest groups or channels for community interests" (2002: 223).

Mandela and other ANC members argued that civil society must move away from resistance politics. It must now act as service delivery agents for the state's development trajectory. This had the effect of co-opting civil society into state-designed service delivery projects. Civil society organisations, though key in the ending of apartheid, would not move from protest politics to the politics of development. Gumede explains that the ANC supported this position:

> The one thing the ANC knew was that it did not want radical civil society groups acting as watchdogs over the government, as they had under apartheid. At the party's national conference in 1997, Mandela lambasted organizations and activists, such as SANCO's Mzwanele Mayekiso… for believing that civil society organizations should indeed play such a role and serve as channels for grassroots communities to voice their grievances and expectations (2005: 284).

Civil society organisations have had to come to grips with whether they should work independently from the state, or in partnership with them. While in the latter, civil society runs the risk of being co-opted into implementing state designed development plans, the former runs the risk of being ostracised by the state. For example, Zuern argues that SANCO:

> clearly assists the ANC in pursuing its goals for the development of a new South Africa and to represent those who endorse its policies. Its continued existence will therefore remain closely tied to the successes and, more importantly, shortcomings, of the ANC government (Zuern 2004: 25).

When civil society works in this kind of partnership with the state, how can they support and vote ANC and at the same time challenge its projects and policies? Sanco is closely aligned, yet independent of the ANC. Since many of its leaders took positions under the ANC as councillors, a Regional Sanco leader asked, "How will a Sanco leader, who also holds the position of councillor, conduct himself if he is called on to lead a march of residents against the local authority? Who will lead the march against – himself?" (in Zuern 2004).

South Africa could largely be considered to have embraced a representative or shallow form of democracy due to various factors including increased bureaucratisation, a focus on quantitative delivery targets and the adoption of neoliberal policies. Khosa identifies a critical shift that has occurred in South Africa since 1994:

> the government's efforts have largely been devoted to streamlining management systems, cutting costs, and emphasizing administrative performance rather than mobilising participation, training ordinary citizens, and engaging in sustained consultative initiatives. Not only has the language of managerialism and cost-recovery replaced the language of participation and social justice; the ruling party is also arguably disengaged from vital organs of society (Khosa 2003: 49).

In fact, the language of participation remains in policy documents and in practice, but its meaning and purpose has shifted dramatically at the expense of what could have been the expansion of the organs of people's power which displayed radical participatory ideals and practices. Instead of enabling citizens to mobilise collectively to determine a transformative development agenda, the ANC focuses on managing development from

the top-down, and largely views civics as a tool by which to implement its own development trajectory from the centre.

In a comparative study between Kerala, South Africa and Porto Allegre, Heller claims that "In South Africa, a once strong social-movement sector has been incorporated and/or marginalized by the ANC's political hegemony, with the result that organized participation has atrophied and given way to a bureaucratic and commandist logic of local government reform" (Heller 2001). To give another example, Zuern writes that, "representation through councilors advocating local interests and responding to local concerns is weak at best and completely non-existent at worst" (2002: 78). Finally, Neocosmos comments that the relationship between state and civil society in South African changed drastically between the 1980s and 1990s:

> This shift in the "mode of politics" has involved a process where a form of *popular politics*, with all its contradictions, has been replaced by "top down" politics, bureaucratic tendencies and, in brief, the greater centrality of *state politics* in the operation of hitherto popular organisatons which have either been, or are in the process of being, radically transformed (1998: 223).

Some argue that this is reflected as a result of the transition from *people driven* development enshrined in the RDP in 1994, to (arguably) *people centred*, neoliberal and thus market driven development epitomised through the adoption of GEAR in 1996 (Southall 2003). Bond, however, argues that the "depoliticising (of) civil society began even in the RDP, which assumed that local government is an effective tool of delivery" (2000: 92-93 in Egan and Wafer 2004: 5).

Despite a rhetoric calling for people driven development, in practice the RDP stressed the "leading role of the state" rather than the people (Chipkin 2002: 58). Chipkin further argues that:

> It was asserted that if a host of managerial and organizational changes happened to the state, it could be transformed into a coherent, purposeful unit capable of implementing the Reconstruction and Development Programme…. Councils, like all other tiers, bodies and agents of government, were deemed to be instruments of a new developmental vision… It was assumed that there was national agreement on the broad goals that unified disparate interest groups around the RDP.

> What was required, therefore, was a concerted effort to harness and manage the diverse and miscellaneous departments, tiers and resources of government to achieve the task at hand. It was assumed, therefore, that the government had the capacity to realise its objectives; that the challenge was primarily a managerial one, and the best place to drive this process was from the centre (Chipkin 2002: 58-59).

The degree to which local government in South Africa can work in partnership with citizens, may be structurally inhibited by its relationship with the state. While the constitution supposedly gives local government space to work autonomously from the state, the present local government may function as a tool to implement state-designed development plans. There is growing awareness that although the local government has been elected, it does not have the power to determine key development decisions, and is therefore unable to call upon civil society to influence state policy.

One perspective is that the ANC believes that its development agenda is correct and that it has a sufficient mandate. Zuern therefore argues that "The current ANC government, while often employing the rhetoric of participatory democracy, is following a liberal model of elite, Schumpterean democracy" (2002: 8). President Thabo Mbeki and other ANC leaders therefore have a tendency to label opposition "ultra-left" and thus perceive opposition as being opposed to progress. This stance is not against participation *per se*, but against any participation that is outside of the ANC's plans. Greenstein (2003) suggests that, following from the anti-apartheid movements struggle against a common enemy (white minority rule), the idea that local struggles must be subordinated in the name of national unity has been carried over to the post-apartheid era. While there is a verbal commitment to participation, in practice it may actually be understood as a mandate given to the ANC upon elections when the ANC obtained the majority of votes.

This possible tendency has led critics such as Jeremy Cronin, ANC MP and SACP Deputy General Secretary to comment:

> I think there are tendencies now of what some of us refer to as the zanufication of the ANC. You can see features of that, of a bureaucratisation of the struggle: thanks very much. It was important that you were mobilized then, but now we are in power, in power on your behalf: Relax and we'll deliver (Cronin 2002 in Southall 2003: 53)

Rather than people choosing for themselves what a given development intervention should be, officials have been elected to represent the people, to make decisions *for* them. Within this perspective, it appears that the ANC leaders thus believe that participation of the people is not necessary beyond taking part in elections every five years. In the context of South Africa, it can be argued that participation has been cast as partaking in the objectives of the state. A development project may therefore be said to be participatory because it obtained people's participation in state-led development strategies. Clearly, this framework leaves little (if any) structural possibility for citizens (especially in the form of civil society) to influence or oppose state development plans from the bottom-up.

4.9 From Transformation to Mainstream

While it is useful to trace the decline of civics on their own terms, what is equally important to understand is the form of politics that was lost as a result of this decline. These politics satisfied radical theorists' (see Hickey and Mohan 2004) conditions for a participatory development programme to lead to transformative outcomes for the marginalised. Under the notion of people's power, including that adopted by the ACO (which later became SANCO), the marginalised were perceived as active bearers of development who were encouraged to claim citizenship from below. It appeared obvious to many activists that a radical project was necessary to continue a broader and on-going national liberation struggle once the majority was unleashed from the grips of the apartheid government. The organs of people's power had the potential to be nurtured in the post-apartheid period and thereby to become an example of an institutional innovation in participatory governance which could be emulated around the world. Referring to only a few global examples which exemplify the significance of popular struggles, Wainwright makes reference to the transformative nature of South Africa's civics and argues that they "could have been the basis for the strengthening of the ANC by creating deeper means of popular control over the state apparatus, something urgently needed in post-apartheid South Africa" (2003: 197).

The ANC's position towards civics, that they must become arms of the state, reflects that the radical rhetoric of participation that flowed from the anti-apartheid struggles in the 1980s has been severely watered-down in practice in post-apartheid South Africa. Regardless, the ANC still espouses participation in policy documents and in the constitution and views participation as a central component of development projects. Applying the theoretical literature on participation enables one to see that this is possible because the word participation is a "slippery" concept and can be used to mean almost anything (Crewe and Harrison 2000: 63).

For the ANC, participation is closely linked to what Arnstein refers to as "degrees of tokenism" (Arnstein 1969: 217). The first degree is called informing and is the weakest degree of tokenism. Here, participation exists to tell citizens the kinds of projects and programmes that are available to them under the state. Citizens have no real possibility of influencing development, but are informed of what they are entitled to. CDWs are an excellent example of what is called participation and actually used as "informing". The ANC claims that CDWs are at the heart of participatory governance. The CDW programme exists to give vulnerable communities better access to services and claims that they are at the heart of participatory governace. According to Baastjies, the programme aims to:

> Bring public services closer to the people and to ensure that information on services and development opportunities are accessible so that they may be more effectively used, especially by poor and disadvantaged communities (2003: 10).

Citizens are not intended to influence government plans through CDWs. Rather, CDWs assist vulnerable communities to receive what the government has defined as their entitlements, opportunities and services. They do this by providing them with information, which as Arnstein notes is a form of "tokenism".

Ward committees also attempt to enable participation from those affected by development. However, they only need to meet once a month and consist of only 10 people, not the mass everyday engagement that was perceived based on the practice of people's power in the 1980s. Furthermore, there are structural aspects of ward committees that disable the ability of ward committee members to influence local

government decision-making. Ward committees are intended to be non-partisan, but in fact, the DPLG points out that "the chair of the committee is the ward counselor so this person has final say over what is on the agenda" (DPLG 2006: 20). Citizens are therefore disempowered through ward committee structures. Arnstein called this degree of tokenism, "consultation" which, she insists, "offers no assurance that citizen participation and ideas will be taken into account" (Arnstein 1969: 219). Ward Committees may also be interpreted as meeting the requirements for "placation," the third level of tokenism on Arnstein's ladder. Here, citizens can provide advice, but those in power determine whether that advice is adopted.

Moreover, the adoption of "consultation" and "placation" forms of participation are also evident in the WPLG. While policy as well as the constitution reflect many broad ideas about what local government is and integrated ways to accomplish DLG, but degree of participation that councilors are required to elicit from communities is ambiguous, and therefore leaves councilors and other planners great space to maneuver in regards to whether or not they adopt citizen's development priorities In fact, the WPLG says that, "where municipalities do not develop their own strategies to meet community needs and improve citizens quality of life, national government may have to adopt a more *prescriptive* approach towards municipal transformation" (1998: 17, my emphasis).

If plans are prescriptive or top-down, this explicitly leaves little structural space for local governments to enable communities to participate in decision-making. The local government can choose whether to adopt citizen's ideas or to refuse them. No matter the case, local government (those in power) remains in control of the development process.

Within the ANC's framework, participatory governance has strong aspects of what Cooke and Kothari (2001) called "tyranny." Citizen participation never gives citizens control and participation does not go beyond "placation," as discussed above. Rather, the ANC determines what the final development decisions will be, thus enabling participation to function to facilitate the dominance of the government over local people. It was precisely this kind of situation that Cooke and Kothari (2001) were referring to when they hinted that the idea of participation should perhaps be completely abandoned.

Participation that functions outside of the government framework, or challenges the state, is not tolerable.

In Alexandra, as occurred throughout the country, prominent SANCO (previously ACO) leaders joined the ranks of the ANC and pronounced staunch support for its electoral victories, thereby ascribing to its policies under the assurance that the ANC would implement the pro-poor RDP policies that it had promised. In doing so, SANCO undermined its own potential to draw upon the creative energies of residents in order to define a transformative development agenda. The rise of ANC hegemony throughout the 1990s therefore witnessed a sharp turn away from the kind of participation that was reflected in the practice of people's power which held the possibility for transformation. Far from empowering people to control their own destinies, participation is used when the government views the input from participatory processes as useful. It appears that participation has become "mainstreamed" in South Africa and has therefore lost the transformative edge that it provided in the 1980s.

4.10 Socio-economic Conditions in Alexandra

Perhaps it is not surprising then that without a transformative development agenda, the ANC government in Alexandra between 1994 and 1998, did not serve to drastically improve people's living conditions. By 1994, the population of Alexandra had risen to close to a 500,000 people in two square kilometers, though many have suggested that it remained below 300,000 (HSRC 2003). Its close proximity to Johannesburg and Sandton has meant that people have come in great numbers from rural areas and other countries to seek employment. This has led to great congestion and has meant that living conditions are stressful, unhealthy and dangerous (HSRC 2003: 3). By 1998, the government had not been able to make significant changes in the socio-economic conditions of people living in Alexandra. According to a survey undertaken by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) for the CF Beyers Naude Development Foundation, only 62% of households had electricity in their homes and 23% had access to water in their homes (with 63% on stand /in yard and 13% communal - CASE 1998 in CASE 2005: 137). Moreover, the unemployment conditions were as follows:

Employment	
Employed Full-time	37%
Employed Part-time	14%
Self Employed	7%
Unemployed	33%
Student	5%
Housewife	1%
Pensioner	2%

From CASE 2005: 137

This indicates that 51% of the population of adults in Alexandra were either unemployed or only employed part-time.

The housing and income and housing figures in Alexandra perhaps indicate the most about the degree of poverty that existed there, in 1998, prior to the renewal project. The average income in 1998 was just R964, with 50% earning less than R1,000 per month and only 1% earning more than R5000 per month (CASE 2005: 139). The following table represents the percentage of adults and the percentage of households who were living in various dwellings:

	Adults	%	Households	%
Formal House on Stand	63892	40.6	15739	31.7
Backyard Shack/ Room on Stand	71060	45.2	22308	44.9
Flats	6200	3.9	1452	2.9
Hostel	11454	7.3	8411	16.9
Shacks in Shack Settlement	8411	3	1787	3.6
Total	157329	100	49697	100

From CASE 2005: 132

This means that 49.4 % of adults were not living in a formal house and that 69.3% of households in Alexandra were not formal houses. Levels of poverty, over-crowding and unemployment were not dealt with in Alexandra in the first few years of the new democratic dispensation. Local government did not achieve substantial development and by the end of the 1990s there was a feeling that something urgent needed to be done in Alexandra.

Chapter 5

Mainstreaming Participation in Local Development: the Case of the ARP

5.1 Introduction

Previous attempts by the apartheid government to renew Alexandra had been done without consulting residents and failed to improve the lives of the majority, but the ANC government promised something very new. The first section of this chapter introduces the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP), a national flagship, renewal project funded R1.3 billion by the South African government, which signified a completely different approach to renewal. It was committed to people-driven development, at least rhetorically, and there was great political support and vast resources which would be funnelled into Alexandra. The expectations of the ARP to deliver were therefore high, but many were quickly disappointed. The first phase of this project witnessed the ARP's implementation of gentrification policies and forced removals, which necessitated a decidedly top-down approach to participation in decision making that excluded the most vulnerable. In this context and as a result of the ARP's slow delivery especially in its beginning stages, community members and development analysts criticised the ARP for its failure to improve the majority of people's lives in Alexandra.

Having introduced the ARP's prospects for development, the core section of the chapter then analyses the creation of the Alexandra Development Forum (ADF), the ARP's "invited" participatory space. Understanding the ADF as an invited participatory space provides a useful framework in which to understand the processes through which the decline of people's participation in post-apartheid South Africa manifests itself at a local level. While invited spaces may hold possibilities for enabling citizens to bring about transformative development agendas, Cornwall (2004) warns that these spaces may facilitatate the exclusion citizens from policy design and implementation. To provide insight into the ADF as an invited space, the section continues by analysing the changing relationship between the ARP and the ADF (between 2001- present) and shows how the

ADF has become closely tied to the decision-making structures of the ARP. This could be seen as a significant advance towards a more decentralised and people-driven approach to participation in the ARP.

However, the chapter shows that this "partnership" does not enable the ADF to have formal power over development priorities. Moreover, the ARP and ADF's "consensus" building has inevitably marginalised certain groups within Alexandra. Finally, participation as conceived by the ADF does not seek to challenge the structural basis, status quo (of resource allocation) of the ARP, but is incorporated within its parameters. It can therefore be concluded that the ADF gives the façade of local power, when in fact it is consultants, albeit under the majority rule post-apartheid government, that has the final say and sets the initial parameters / possibilities for renewal. Though the ADF succeeds in representing a substantial constituency in Alexandra and assisting in the delivery of RDP houses to them, the ADF's approach to participation in development nevertheless has strong elements of what Cooke and Kothari (2001) referred to as tyranny.

The chapter then argues that the ADF is part of a wider process endorsed by the ANC which views participation as an add-on, rather than a central component, to development. The ANC's invited spaces for participation may hold little possibility for the marginalised to achieve transformative development outcomes. While the literature on participation in post-apartheid South Africa suggests that the ANC has adopted weak forms of participation in favour of a top-down and managerial approach to development, the analysis here suggests that the ANC's invited spaces of participation may "work to *constitute* a particular kind of measurable citizen who can be rendered amenable to intervention" (Cornwall 2004: 83).

5.2 Initiating Development Through Force

By 1998, the living conditions in Alexandra remained appalling and this indicated that the ANC's plans for the development of Alexandra in post-1994 were insufficient. A more rigorous intervention was needed and in February 2001, President Thabo Mbeki announced that Alexandra would be the subject of a seven year urban renewal

presidential project. While the ARP was intended to be holistic, combining social, economic and physical development, and to incorporate residents' participation in decision-making, this was undermined by several factors including the ARP's initial approach to urban renewal which was underpinned by its commitment to de-densify Alexandra, and thereby remove excess people (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 391-392). This approach legitimised forced removals and therefore necessitated top-down development.

The undertaking of the ARP meant that a large injection of national funds, estimated at R1.3 billion, would be allocated to improve living conditions in Alexandra. The decision to undertake an Urban Renewal Programme in Alexandra was not isolated, but was part of a broader national programme created in 2001. This programme included eight urban nodes which are: KwaMashu and Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal; Mdantsane and Motherwell in the Eastern Cape; Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain in the Western Cape, Alexandra in Gauteng and Galeshewe in the Northern Cape (HSRC 2003: 9).

The URP is an extension of the Urban Development Framework created in 1997 as well as the 1995 Urban Development Strategy (UDS) of the Government of National Unity. According to the HSRC, "the URP represents a commitment to the return to the bottom-up, people-driven approach to urban, local, social and economic development originally envisaged in the RDP" (HSRC 2003: 10-11) The URP therefore stresses the need for more decentralised approaches to development (HSEC 2003: 11). In mid-2002, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) indicated several objectives of the Urban Renewal Programme. For the purposes of this study, the most important of these were "To ensure that citizens participate in activities that seek to develop and shape their communities" and "that the programme is being defined as a systematic and sustained intervention to alleviate poverty and significantly address underdevelopment" (in HSRC 2003:11).

Working within the URP's framework, the broad aim of the ARP is to "fundamentally upgrade living conditions and human development potential within Alexandra" (ARP website) by: Substantially reducing levels of unemployment; Creating a healthy and clean living environment; Providing services at an affordable and sustainable level; Reducing levels of crime and violence; Upgrading existing housing

environments and creating additional affordable housing opportunities and; Dedensification to appropriate land (ibid)**.** Specifically, the ARP set the goal of reducing crime by 50% (ARP Overall Proposals: 29) and unemployment by 20% in the first 7 years of the project (ibid: 8). Furthermore, on the 9th June 2001, Premier Mbhazima Shilowa promised to deliver 66,000 houses in Alexandra in 7 years (The Star, 9 June 2001 in Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 402).

The ARP was intended to be undertaken in a manner that "encourages high levels of community involvement, civic pride and sustainable local authority administration" (Alexandra Renewal Project: Overall Physical Development Strategy 2001: 2). What exactly "community involvement" means in the ARP has been as highly contested as the term "participation" itself. At the start of the project, however, community participation by those affected was severly limited. The ARP's approach to de-densify, and gentrify, Alexandra, lent to an extremely top-down approach to development through *forced* removals. Julian Baskin, the current director of the ARP, noted that in the beginning stages of the ARP, "In my opinion at least, Alex was a gentrification programme. The fundamental premise was that you relocate out the shacks that occupy the roads, the school yards" (interview, Baskin 2007).

This approach stemmed from the government's negative depiction of informal settlements as obstacles to renewal or, at worst, criminal, filled with illegal immigrants, and invaders who intend to jump the ANC's housing queue (Beall *et al* 2003: 109). When people are displaced, they have most often been removed to the urban periphery with little access to socio-economic opportunities (COHRE 2005: 21). COHRE has reported that:

> Inner city slums are currently dealt with in the 'urban renewal' paradigm. Urban renewal often means the eradication of slums, which are seen to be be both [the] structural cause and result of urban decay… Inner city slums are characterized as socio-economic 'sinkholes' which require 'cleaning up', usually by means of a forced eviction (ibid: 35)

The approach to "cleaning up" cities was taken in Alexandra as well. ARP officials have highlighted the importance of removing people from unsafe and extremely congested areas in Alexandra or areas needed for the general public, before other types of projects can take place (interview, Letter 2006). The displacement of people from the banks of the Jukskei River in 2001 was the first initiative undertaken by the ARP. In the beginning of 2001, precipitated by the population and environmentally deteriorating conditions as well as people's own safety on the Jukskei River (due especially to floods), the ARP planned to remove 7,000 people from the Jukski river.

The ARP claims that a total of 7000 families were relocated from the Jukskei River (ARP website) to Bramfischerville and Diepsloot. While the necessity of removing people from the Jukskei is rarely in question, the methods used to displace people from the Jukskei have received great criticism, being labeled by some as "apartheid style" forced removals. When the removals began, "hundreds of residents, who sought to resist the plan, became embroiled in street battles with demolishers dismantling their shacks" (Molwedi 2001). As time went on however, Molwedi points out that the people eventually accepted that they would have to be displaced to Diepsloot and Bramfischerville and "the community was actively involved in the relocation process and helping demolishers take down the shacks" (ibid). This does not necessarily mean that they wanted to move, but rather, that they believed that there resistance against the removals at this point in time was no longer seen as worthwhile. Joesph Malatsi commented that, "Many of us have come to realise that it was not useful trying to resist the plan" (ibid).

In my previous study on the leadership perspectives of participation in the ARP, which pays particular attention to the Jukskei Removals intervention, I argued that the framework in which leaders "understand 'maximum' or 'full' participation does not go beyond sharing information." Rather, participation exists "to make top-down development 'go smooth[ly]'" (2008: 255). The objectives of renewal, to de-densify, could not coincide with people's control over the development process. The top-down approach to participation in development which apparently necessitated forced removals, as well as the continued poor living conditions highlighted by the housing crisis, led to

significant critiques of the ARP generally, as well as dissatisfaction and resistance by those directly affected by the Jukskei removals.

5.3 Failing to Meet Delivery Expectations

In February 2001, when President Thabo Mbeki came to Alexandra to announce the seven year presidential project in Alexandra, people came in droves to witness what they hoped was the launch of a programme that would transform the township. At the time, there was much excitement and support for the ARP because it seemed to symbolise the capacity and ability of the new government to deliver to previously neglected population (Schmidt 2005). But the project ran into problems early on.

The ARP's decision to remove people from the Jukskei River in 2001 to Bramfischerville and Diepsloot represented the first large-scale dissatisfaction with the ARP. It involved the forceful removal of poor and vulnerable people living along the banks of the river to places far away from where their social networks, children's education, and jobs (Sinwell 2005). Those who were affected were not consulted, but rather had no say in the official's decision-making process regarding the removals. For example, a young man displaced from the Jukskei claimed that they were not aware of the removals until the "red ants" came to remove them. He says that they "were not given any prior notice, we did not know anything" (interview, Thomu 2004). Highlighting the failure of the participatory processes in relation to removals, another man explained that "They don't listen, we have no choice, there is nothing like participation, they just tell you what they are going to do" (interview, anonymous 2004).

A third male respondent complained that they informed of the removals, but that the process through which they removed was inadequate because "they came in and grabbed people roughly when we were being moved. Some of the metal sheets for our houses were lost, destroyed" (interview, anonymous 2004a). He reflected further that, despite their desire to remain in the township that they had become accustomed to and depended on for their livelihoods, that "those living along the Jukskei saw that there was no possibility of staying in Alex" (ibid).

Many of the people who were moved to Bramfischerville and were given an RDP house have simply moved back to Alexandra because life was better for them there. One older man summarises an apparently widespread perception that these people had regarding the development intervention and its outcome for them. He first laments that, "the house here is alright, but the living conditions are worse**"** and then clarifies a common problem that resulted from the removals:

> The most important thing to us is the proximity of jobs. We would have rather stayed near Alex… A lot of people are not happy with the move because of work. Many people [who were displaced] are hiding in Alexandra because that's where the jobs are (interview, Thomu 2004).

Another respondent also complained that his children were adversely affected, "I could not take them with me, I had to move and identify a place for them to stay with somebody so that they might be able to continue going to school in Alex". He further conveyed the grief that he was faced with due to the removals:

> These RDP houses where I stay are not proper places, are not good because they use one bag of cement per house. So the quality of the house is not good, and it is even dangerous for my children to move with me into the house…The intentions were good because they removed us from Jukskei river and gave us houses. But then what good are those houses because they were built poorly? If it rains what good are those houses, because it goes through and then it rains on you (interview, anonymous 2004)

This respondent is obviously not content with the RDP house in Bramfischerville, but instead concludes that he is "stuck in Bramfischerville." Being given a house does not necessarily mean that the quality of one's life will improve and people's resistance and therefore the necessity for the local government to resort to *forced* removals indicates that Jukskei Removals were unsuccessful on a number of fronts. It is therefore imperative to point out that the ARP labels the Jukskei project as a success case since it has enabled them to meet quantitative delivery targets and to clean up the Jukskei.

In 2003, responding to the lack of delivery made by the ARP after a long spell of two years, other residents began to raise serious concerns about whether or not the ARP

was going to improve their lives. An editorial comment in Alex News depicted the kinds of frustrations that were apparently beginning to mount in Alexandra. While officials had declared that the slow pace of the ARP was a result of the need to spend time planning, Ncube responded that "no one told Alexandrans not to expect much in the first two and a half years" (Ncube 2003a). Criticism of the renewal project continued in 2004 as people wondered what development was happening in Alexandra. A resident of Alexandra, Matlakala asked "Will Alexandra Ever Be Changed?" Furthermore, she said:

> We were promised that shacks in Alexandra would be done away with through the Alexandra Renewal Project, but in its four years, the seven year renewal programme appears to be heading nowhere (Matlakala 2004).

Residents in Alexandra were beginning to demand that something be done to address what was considered to be the failure of the ARP.

Community leader, Mike Beea, expressed a widespread opinion about the state of the ARP. "We were all excited when this project was launched. We were hoping for more out of it. We were hoping to see a better Alex", recalled Beea. But hope turned into disappointment:

> It seems these are all just daydreams for us. There is no sign of a renewed Alex. Ask me if there's a complete major project around here. There is none. The ARP has lost focus and now deserves to be called the Alexandra Rejected People (in Tau 2005).

Criticisms of the ARP reached new heights in 2005, and Beea's viewpoint was echoed by development commentators and analysts who also lambasted the ARP. Analysts such as Schmidt claimed that only 30% of the budget had been spent and there was hardly anything to show for it. In an article entitled "Million Spent on Alex, but it is Still a Sad Slum" (2005), Schmidt argued that despite the initial plans for the ARP, the ARP "is in crisis, with the apartheid isolation of the Johannesburg township of Alexandra reinforced instead of ending" (Schmidt 2005).

On 7 November 2005, Tau reported that residents of Alexandra would hand over a memorandum to Nomvula Mokonyane (the MEC for housing). Reacting to the perceptions of residents, Tau conveyed that they:

> …never thought they would still be living in the same congested area where this is no space for their children to play. Residents say there is still no real difference in their township. Many people still live in shacks, with their furniture standing in stinking sewage water from burst pipes (Tau 2005a).

On December 8th 2005, Dale McKinley, a leading member of a social movement with affiliates in Alexandra called the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), condemned the ARP's approach to development:

> The Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP) is in shambles and no amount of spin-doctoring or opportunistic swiping at its many critics can hide this… What has been "achieved", though, is a classic example of how not to go about a state-led programme of basic services delivery and infrastructure upgrading in a poor community (2005).

Apparently referring specifically to APF affiliates that he was working with at the time, he insisted that the voices of the community "have been effectively ignored" and asked why officials of the ARP continue to ignore the voices of the marginalised "who are not *imbongis* (singing their praises)"? He claimed further that:

> Several community organisations have, since the ARP began, tried to engage both the city and the Provincial Department of Housing on problems in the implementation of the ARP, and yet at every turn they have been ignored and/ or victimised as troublemakers for doing so (ibid).

Substantive critiques were not only made by outside analysts and select leaders in Alexandra, but were also confirmed by a vast array of residents in 2006, who were primarily concerned with the ARP's failure to meet their expectations. In a survey of a

range of residents in Alexandra, including those living in their own houses, RDP houses, backyard shacks, informal settlements, and rented rooms, Sinwell (2006) reported to the South African Housing Foundation that 24 out of 31 people interviewed in Alexandra believed that the ARP had not been successful, thus confirming that there was a wide-spread perception among residents that the ARP was failing them. The remaining 7 out of 31 does not only account for those who thought that the ARP was successful, but includes several residents who did not know that the ARP existed.

For example, Mpho Ledwaba, a female youth, has been disappointed with the ARP because she believes it is not undertaking the right kinds of projects:

> I think they are bluffing us, like they just like doing like stupid things cause you know like they're painting flats… fixing the roads, it's not a big deal really you know, because people don't have houses. And I mean like we can walk down these streets but we not gonna be sleeping there or anything so I don't think they're doing much really… I think it's a scam… Why are they building a museum if people don't have houses (interview, Ledwaba 2006)?

When asked about the ARP, an elderly man who has been living in Alexandra for all of his 74 years, complained that the housing projects do not get finished and asks, "Why don't [they] bring us houses" (interview, Booysens 2006). He suggests that his housing arrangements have not improved, but that he lives in one small room, which he uses to eat, sleep and spend his leisure time. He further laments that he is forced to use the "bucket system" even though he is disabled (ibid).

Another youth named Elite Fanyana claimed that the renewal project was too slow to deliver given the large amount of money that was budgeted for it and that the ARP could be associated with "empty promises." He further identified that one of the key problems is that, "the poor are still poor" (interview, Fanyana 2006). Critically, two long-standing community leaders in Alexandra also commented that the ARP is not doing enough to help the poor. When asked about whether the ARP was successful, one of these leaders, Abednego Madu, displayed much emotion and was so discouraged that he expressed that, "Urban renewal is just a big word. It's got no meaning. I can just simply say it has got no meaning because it does not cover the poor, you see?" (interview, Madu 2006). A second leader, Thabo Mopasi who is actively engaged with the implementation

of the ARP, also responded that the ARP has yet to address the critical issues of "poverty in the community." He further asserted that "issues of illiteracy and joblessness, they haven't yet come to attempt to address them in the entire population of our people here" and that, despite the good intentions of the ARP, the most vulnerable residents of Alexandra continue to "suffer scorches of poverty" (interview, Mopasi 2006).

These criticisms have not gone unchallenged by the ARP, which has often claimed that it is successfully delivering to the residents of Alexandra. Going back to March/May 2002, Carien Engelbrecht, the first director of the ARP, reported that "implementation of the project started approximately 9 months ago and much progress has been achieved during this time" (Unknown Author: 2002). In the same edition, Mike Maile (Communications Convener of the Project at the time) contended that:

> The achievements thus far is [sic] proof of governments commitment to ensuring that life in Alexandra will never be the same again. I am extremely happy with the support being received from the community and can only hope that the spirit of co-operation and support is carried into the remaining phases of the project (Maile 2002).

Other responses to resident's concerns have been that the first two two three years were spent on planning. In mid-2003, ARP spokeswomen Xoliswa Mkhalali said R194 million had been spent on more than 160 projects and that "the ARP will build on what had been achieved so far." She suggests that the planning aspect of the ARP is over when she states that:

> We have now reached a stage of full implementation. We are going to see a significant and positive impact of the project on the township in terms of its physical appearance, social and economic development as a result of large-scale projects being undertaken (Mkhalali in Unknown Author: 2003)

At the end of 2005, when the ARP was facing its greatest criticism, officials involved with the ARP defended themselves and the project. The following response by Dumisani Zulu, director of media relations and research in the Gauteng Department of Housing,

seems typical of the ANC government's relentless insistence (perhaps even arrogance) that their development agenda is legitimate and correct, and that any opposition or disappointment regarding this is nonsensical:

> There's not a country in the world that has boldly undertaken such a socio-economic development of the scale witnessed in Alexandra. There is no benchmark for this type of development. Perhaps the skeptics of the project should first start by acknowledging this fact and then humbly proceed to applaud the government for its bold initiatives (Zulu 2005).

Julian Baskin, the current director of the ARP, has been much more critical of the ARP's first few years of operation. On the 3rd November 2005, Baskin "painted a bleak picture of the development in a damning report he submitted to the City of Johannesburg" (Cox 2005). In this report, Baskin highlighted several problems regarding the ARP's approach to development including the scrapping of the waiting list (with 10,000 people still on it), failure to upgrade backyard shacks, failing to convert hostel units into family units, and slow delivery. Furthermore, he identified that the housing plans in Alexandra were based on a number of incorrect assumption and bound to fail (in Cox 2005).

In this report, Baskin admitted that only 639 of a planned 22,250 planned housing units had been built since the inception of the project in 2001. In the press, however, Baskin gives a slightly more nuanced approach to understanding the success of the ARP. In this view, "The Alexandra Renewal Project is having a measurable impact on the community of 350,000 people in the north-east of Johannesburg" (2005). However, he concedes that "while much has been achieved, the pace of delivery has been slow and the project plans have not adequately reflected the community's priorities." He also claims that the critics of the ARP may be constructive, but that is often those with "little knowledge of, and weak connections to, the community." He concludes that his "project team is convinced that it enjoys the support of civil society within Alexandra and is confident of achieving the objectives that represent the popular will of the organised community structures" (ibid).

However, by 2005 Alexandra still had the face of a congested ghetto, and despite a decline in crime rates and some minor improvements in access to water and electricity, the majority of the population remained without access to adequate housing opportunities. Baskin himself has argued that the development of Alexandra will "take a lifetime," (in Dlamini 2006) but the inception of the ARP gave residents high hopes and the expectation that they would not need to wait that long for delivery. While the ARP aimed to deliver 22,250 in seven years, by August 2007, the ARP website noted that there were only 2727 completed housing units (including 2000 in Bramfischerville), and more than 7000 under construction (ARP website). Even if people were able to immediately occupy the other 7000 houses that were under construction, the number of households receiving houses would be 9,727. While this seems substantial at first glance, it is less so given the fact that there is a housing backlog of approximately 40,000 in Alexandra (CASE 2005: 123). As such, the ARP admits that it is not solving the housing problem in the near future, but that it attempts to divide it in half before its completion. Thus, the first main challenge faced by the ARP centred on delivery. The second one related to the participation of the community in shaping the development agenda.

5.4 Creating the ADF

The ADF was created by the provincial government (and funded by them) to become part of the ARP and is therefore an institutional or, what Cornwall calls, an "invited space" for participation (2004: 76). Invited spaces entail "constructed opportunities for 'the people,' or their representatives, to come together with those who represent public authorities" (ibid). While invited spaces theoretically have the potential to enable citizens to engage meaningfully in policy formulaton and implementation, they can also function to facilitate the exclusion of citizens. Cornwall (2004) suggests that these spaces may hold serious limitations for participation in development since they are imbued with prescribed boundaries that determine what kind of development is possible within them. She therefore suggests that they may simply be "pseudo-democratic instruments through which authorities legitimize already-taken decisions" (ibid: 79-80). Understanding the ADF as an invited participatory space provides a useful case study in which to understand

the way in which people's participation in post-apartheid South Africa manifests itself at a local level in the ARP.

Sizakele Nkosi, an active member of the ADF since its inception, revealed that the ADF formed out of a group of Alexandra's leaders and stakeholders from areas around Alexandra which was called the Greater Alexandra Development Forum (GADF). Together with the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council, they began to initiate the Greater Alexandra Development Framework which consisted of a guideline for the renewal of Alexandra (interview, Nkosi 2007). Benito Lekalakala, the current chairperson of the ADF, however, explains that the GADF was made up only of a few individuals and was not representative like the ADF "which comprises affiliates, independent organisations" (interview, Lekalakala 2007). This means that there was a clear break between the two formations.

After the announcement by the president that the ARP would be undertaken, officials from the department of housing came to Alexandra and suggested to leaders in Alexandra that they create a community development forum (ibid). Over 250 people, including community representatives from the ANC, SACP, IFP, SANCO and other civics and members of the ARP attended the first meeting where an executive was elected and a constitution adopted. One leader of SANCO at the time, Sam Radebe, however, concludes that they were informed of the first meeting of the ARP at the last minute and were therefore unable to garner sufficient civic support in order to contest leadership positions (interview Radebe, 2006). This exclusion, and perhaps more importantly, the weakness of political parties (with the exception of the ANC) and civics in Alexandra in the post-apartheid period, meant that the ADF could, without great contestation, be at the forefront of development in relation to the ARP. Since 2002, the ADF has been funded by the ARP, which claims that the ADF is its "official mouthpiece for the community" (ARP website). At least in terms of the number of community organisations that are members of the ADF, the ADF is the most representative structure to enable community participation in Alexandra. There are claims that it represents anywhere between 25 and 200 community organisations. In reality, it probably represents about 70 today and attendance sheets suggest that less than 20 attend meetings regularly.

The ADF meets monthly to discuss issues pertaining to the ARP and the executive committee normally meets weekly. Any organisation within greater Alexandra can become a member of the ADF by submitting a letter to the ADF which declares their desire to become involved. Today, the ADF consists of about 70 organisations who are community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations and political parties. In making decisions regarding its position on development in Alexandra, it states that it "should strive to arrive at decisions through consensus" (ADF 2004: 3). When this is not possible, the ADF votes on decisions, with each organisation entitled to two representatives.

The ARP expects that this participation will occur within the confines of the ADF. Paul Mashatile, the former Provincial Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for housing explains that the logic behind involving the ADF is that the "community is represented in the ADF so that we don't do what we think is right for the community, but do what the community thinks is right for them" (Mashatile, 2004: ARP video).

However, this is misleading since participation in the ADF is an add-on with little official control over the ARP's development trajectory. The ARP website substantiates this point:

> The Alexandra Renewal Project will not be bound by the decisions of the Alexandra Development Forum, but will take such decisions seriously and will make all efforts to meet such decisions (ARP website).

An ADF document thereby expresses the ADF's commitment to:

> the *implementation of the Alexandra Renewal Project*. In addition they further commit themselves to providing advice and assistance, in a spirit of co-operation and support, so as to ensure that the implementation of the Project is undertaken in a manner that meets the needs of the residents of Alexandra (ADF 2002: 6, my emphasis).

Here, participation is conceived as a means to an end – that is, to implement the ARP. The role of this invited space, the ADF, is potentially highly contradictory given its allegiance both to the ARP and to the residents of Alexandra. Another ADF document

reveals that the objective of the ADF is "to ensure that the Alexandra Renewal Project is implemented in a manner that is acceptable to and takes account of the needs of the residents of Alexandra" (ADF 2002: 2).

. The contradiction is that the ADF is intended to ensure that the ARP is implemented in such a way that the interests of the residents are taken into account but, at the same time, has no official control over the ARP's decision-making process. Rather than existing to control the development trajectory of the ARP, the ADF is an add-on. This is because the ADF is intended, and to a significant extent commits, to operate on the ARP's terms and, therefore, to assist in the implementation of the ARP**.** The ADF has been invited on the ARP's terms, and this undermines the ability of the ADF to define and practice development autonomously.

5.5 Excluding the ADF

The relationship between the ARP and the ADF has changed since the inception of the project. Two distinct phases can be distinguished. The first phase, from 2001 – 2004, may be characterised by struggles over participation, whereas the second phase may be understood in terms of the building of a partnership. It will later be explained that the fundamental nature of participation during these phases did not change. Between 2001 and 2004, the ADF leadership tended to be disenchanted with its influence over the ARP and was not closely linked to its decision-making structures. After 2004, the ADF became more satisfied with how it related to the ARP and viewed their relationship more as a partnership. In order to understand what this change meant and what it resulted from, it is first important to understand the structures of the ARP in which the first phase of participation by the ADF occurred.

Between 2001 and 2004, the project was implemented by a project manager appointed by provincial government on a contract basis. The complex structure of the ARP was inefficient and the involvement of a large number of consultants led to a top-down development process. This also meant that the ADF was side-lined since development decisions were made primarily between officials employed by the ARP to implement specific projects. Under the project manager, there were 14 functional teams

which each included a public sector official (convener) and a technical or lead consultant (Zack 2006: 13). According to Neels Letter, a lead consultant for the ARP, between 2001 and 2004:

> …the project was implemented with a project manager from provincial government. And a team of what they called lead consultants which were basically private from the outside, they were brought in on a contract basis to do the implementation (interview, Letter 2006).

Lines of authority were not clear and people often did not know who they were accountable to (interview, Baskin 2007). Letter relates that there were "too many player in the project team" (in Zack 2006: 130). Evaluating the ARP for the DPLG during this time period, Zack concludes that:

> …little responsibility was taken by officials. Several officials lost interests, stopped attending meetings and were not supportive of the projects. Some provincial level departments sent different officials to different meetings and there was little consistency. Often the official sent was too junior to make decisions or meaningful contributions to the process (ibid: 130).

According to the chairperson of the ADF, Benito Lekalakala, the ADF had no direct relationship with programme directors (interview, Lekalakala 2006). Zack endorses the claim that the ARP took an exclusionary approach and suggests that there was a lack of accountability:

> In the early days of the ARP arrangements were loosely institutionalized in local government. This, combined with the urgency attached to first interventions, such as removals of illegal shacks from the Jukskei floodplain and the identification of land and housing projects, unintentionally provided scope for individuals to maneuver processes in an exclusionary approach. Certain high level municipal officials tried to 'run their own show' (Zack 2006: 131).

There have been several programme directors of the ARP since its inception and the first few years witnessed an exceptionally high turnover rate which may be attributed to the

pressure applied on them by the community to deliver. The first directors were appointed by the Gauteng Provincial Government and these included; 2001 – March 2003: Carien Engelbrect; April 2003 - March 2004: Mike Maile; April 2004 – August 2004: Michah Sebesho; September 2004 – March 2005: Xoliswa Mkhalali. Julian Baskin was appointed by the City of Johannesburg from April 2005 until present as an attempt to embed the ARP into local government structures (ibid: 2006).

During Engelbrecht's tenure, the ARP focused on the project's design and planning. Zack comments that although Engelbrecht's approach was efficient, it was:

> …not always sufficiently collaborative and at times disempowered individuals to participate in debates around alternative ways of achieving the project aims. One local authority official remarked that project managers need to listen as well as instruct and that the more authoritarian approach of Engelbrecht did not accommodate listening (ibid: 132).

Engelbrecht's approach emanated from the ARP's early approach to development which relied heavily on consultants and left virtually no space for the community's involvement in decision-making. Nhlanhla Msimang, a leading IFP figure and member of the ADF since its inception, attributes this structural problem to Engelbrecht and therefore presents a particularly critical view of her role in the ARP:

> There was a lady Engelbrecht, pure Afrikaner… Very tough, she was very tough…. Ignorant. Difficult. Even to consult the community, she didn't like that. You could see the bridge going up. And you could ask what is happening and you say no, it was very difficult (interview, Msimang 2006).

A technical consultant of the ARP (Keith Khoza), during the early stages of the ARP, describes people's participation on the ARP from a managerial point of view:

> All development projects in Alexandra must be based on the consent of the community because it is the community that is going to benefit from the development. So the structures, in terms of how they were put together were designed in such a way that there is constant consultation within the community to make sure that there is approval to what will be presented as development

> projects… We have learned that it is important to consult at each phase of development so that people should consciously commit to abide by decisions brought about by the need for development (interview, Khoza 2004).

Keith Khoza has unintentionally associated "consultation" of the community with "consent." These are potentially two very different approaches to participation since "consent" implies that people agree with the development process, while "consultation" potentially involves input from the community affected. In a stronger sense, it could mean that people are actually able to influence the development process. However, Keith Khoza's later comments that "consultation" exists "to make sure that there is approval to what will be presented as development projects" leads one to conclude that he associates consultation with approval or consent.

According to Keith Khoza, it is development *per se* that appears to be "deciding" which projects in Alexandra should be implemented. Development thus becomes an abstract process that is independent of, and not driven by, agents. Such an approach depoliticises the decision-making processes making it appear that it is neither the wider community that is making the decisions, nor the leaders of the ARP. Within this framework, however, participation exists to turn people – who "should consciously commit to abide by decisions" – into objects of a development process that has been determined from above (by leaders).

With a frankly pessimistic view of community participation in Alexandra, a technical consultant at the beginning of the ARP, Themba Maluleke, suggests that if development is to take place it is impracticable to embrace the knowledge and action of locals themselves. :

> Some will say, 'get the community to make those decisions', but maybe you guys are still studying… In the real world, it doesn't work. It only worked… When was it? 14AD in the Greek City states because we were only having less than 200 people making a decision on behalf of the city. In today's world, you never get community involvement and it works and it makes decisions and things move… Those are the practical realities (interview, Maluleke 2004).

For Themba Maluleke, community participation is not possible. He comments that**:**

> For me, you consult as far as it suits your objectives, if it doesn't suit you, why do you do it… The agent is government and the agent is myself who is acting on behalf of government (ibid).

This viewpoint is an example of how leaders of the ARP, during the period between 2001-2004, have used participation in order to achieve their own objectives, not to enable people to participate in the broader sense of the word in which people are either "consulted" or have "citizen control" (Arnstein 1969). Managers and consultants of the ARP are hired by the government to implement government programmes. They are acting on behalf of the government, as Themba Maluleke points out. As a result, at least in the minds of previous managers, this leaves little room for the people of Alexandra to actually decide what development should be. Since the government has its own projects that it wishes to have the ARP implement, participation is intended only to amount to those affected giving their consent to or being informed about pre-determined interventions. In this perspective, participation may be used to speed up consultant or state driven development projects, but never to encourage active agency outside of the preconceived government parameters.

During this time, the ADF had little space to influence whether or not projects were undertaken since the ARP's conception of participation was about obtaining consent. The ADF, despite its position as the "official mouthpiece of the community" for the ARP, was concerned that it was only acting as a "rubberstamp" for ARP decisions that had already been made (interview, Lekalakala 2004).

This phase in participation represents what Arnstein was referring to when she was describing participation in its weaker forms as "degrees of tokenism". Specifically, she referred to a situation in which community-based organisations were told about the plans being made at a late stage in the planning process. This was, Arnstein explained, "informing." According to Arnstein:

> what citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have 'participated in participation.' And what power holders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving those people (Arnstein 1969: 219).

As Hildyard pointed out when discussing the tyranny of participation, this kind of participation may exist to lend "credibility and legitimacy to decisions that have already been made" (Hildyard 2001: 59). The ADF was demanding that it not only be informed of development decisions made by the ARP and then to provide its "rubber stamp", but it wanted to have greater control over the ARP's decision-making process.

5.6 The Alexandra Review Summit as a Turning Point

By mid-2004, half-way through the ARP's lifespan of seven years, the ARP appeared to be facing a crisis and the Alexandra Review Summit was convened in this context. As suggested above, the ARP was not showing any new physical signs of delivery and the ARP had clearly lost much of the legitimacy it once had. Furthermore, 2004 also witnessed a rapid increase in service delivery protests across the country and protests in Alexandra were beginning to be linked to them. The national elections for 2005 were also just around the corner. This was therefore an important moment which suggested to the central government that, if they did not do something quickly, the ADF could become a "dead duck." At a local level, the ARP was in a position in which it did not want to lose its institutional site for participation, and therefore risk a further proliferation of protests that could serve to challenge the ARP's authority.

The summit was also convened at a time when there were growing frustrations within the ADF, particularly amongst those in leadership positions, regarding its ability to influence the ARP. Applying Giddens's theory of "structuration" (1984) one can see that the exclusive character of the ARP provided the basis upon which agents (the ADF), resisted. In other words, they resisted because the structures of the ARP were such that the ADF could not express their agency. The ADF therefore sought to restructure the ARP so that it could have more influence. At an ADF Strategic Planning Workshop, the ADF complained that:

> Currently there are problems of communication between the ADF and the ARP. This is caused mainly by the fact that the ADF feels that the ARP plans and implements projects without proper and adequate meaningful consultation with the ADF and the community at large. The ADF feels that it is important for them to be part of the planning and implementation of these projects from conception and not to be seen to act as rubberstamps to ARP decisions (ADF 2004a: 7-8)

Because the ADF is the official space of participation for the ARP, development decisions made by the ARP implied that the ADF was in agreement with them. In practice, however, the ADF did not feel that it had enough power over the ARP's decision-making processes.

On the 2nd and 3rd December, the ARP Review Summit was held where ADF formally expressed its dissatisfaction with the degree to which the community was involved in the ARP and proposed that the ARP should undertake a more people-driven approach to development in Alexandra. The ADF invoked the RDP to supports its argument:

> **Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry**... It is about active involvement and growing empowerment (ADF 2004b: 5, their emphasis)

They elaborated on what they mean by participation:

> …It is not simply involvement for the sake of involvement but meaningful involvement through bona fide engagements. For consultation and community involvement to be effective and meaningful, the said community must be adequately capacitated and empowered as uneducated and uninformed involvement and unstructured consultation may impede rather than enhance development (ADF 2004b: 5)

The ADF argued that development in Alexandra could only take place if there was active involvement by the community affected. At this point they were not clear about exactly

how the ARP should relate to the ADF, or what kind of participation they wanted the ARP to invoke (this will be discussed in detail in a later section). What the ADF knew, however, was that it could not simply be informed of development decisions determined by the ARP and then act as a "rubberstamp," thereby legitimating ARP development decisions. At the risk of being labelled a failure and as the pressure by the ADF to be more involved in the ARP mounted, the ARP was faced with a great need to embark on a new approach to renewal in Alexandra. The government needed to change something quickly in order to avoid the potential demise, or community rejection, of the ARP. Before discussing the change in the relationship that resulted from this, the next section will briefly discuss the restructuring of the ARP which served as the outcome of the summit.

5.7 Restructuring the ARP

The ensuing restructuring of the ARP was predominantly a consequence of citizen's action. Here, as Giddens (2004) explains, there is an intimate relationship between structure and agency. The resistance by agents (the ADF) and the pressure on the ARP to deliver led to changes in the structure of the ARP. This shift entailed that the government would embed the ARP into the local government. This meant that the ARP was controlled by fewer consultants and that decisions could potentially be more easily negotiated by the ADF at the local level. However, as will be explained in detail in later sections, fundamental limitations still exist for the ADF to enable participation in development in this context.

One consequence of the restructuring was that the ARP would appoint a new director, Julian Baskin. Baskin has had extensive local and international experience. He worked in Alexandra for several years in the early 1990s, was involved in the local government negotiations with Planact (an NGO in Johannesburg) and helped design the Alexandra Accord. Furthermore, he worked in urban planning for over 25 years (interview, Baskin: 2006). Julian Baskin explains the role that the ADF played in influencing the decision to restructure the ARP:

> I think the fundamental issue here is the community summit meeting they had in 2004, where I think all this came to the fore. And I think that 2004 summit had a very clear message that you can't run a programme like this using consultants and doing things that are against the wishes of the ADF and things. And I think that's where I came in, that's when I got recruited to come in 2005… That's where the decision came from… to bring in a whole new system, to try and get it back into the control of government and… My understanding of that summit meeting, they announced that more money had been spent on consultants than on delivery. Whereas now we hardly have any consultants at all (ibid: 2007).

Rather than being controlled by a director under the provincial government and having consultants implement the ARP, the director is now appointed and employed by the local government and the local and provincial governments are accountable to him (Zack 2006: 130). Neels Letter, a technical consultant for the ARP, explains that by the end of 2004:

> … the provincial government decided to change the whole approach by putting the project within government instead of… through consultants that were outside government, basically making government more responsible for the direct implementation of the project. So they pulled the project back into the government structures (interview, Letter 2006).

Decisions were then made at the local government level and the ARP could also be expected to incorporate local demands into its project proposals through the ADF. While at the beginning of the project it was not clear where decisions were being made, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed in mid-2005 between the Gauteng Provincial Government and the City of Johannesburg (Zack 2006: 129). Prior to this, "the institutional lines of authority were not clear" (ibid: 126). Ernest Ndlovu confirms this change:

> So let me say ARP became a structure on its own that was sort of solid after there was some bled leadership, lines of communication from the province to local government, versus the ARP. You know, there was no clear lines (sic). But since ARP was brought down to local government there are some clear lines (interview, Ndlovu 2007).

Julian Baskin explains a further shift in the ARP's structure between 2001-2004 to 2005. He says that from 2001-2004, they:

> never had a project team, they were just 14 clusters operating as 14 separate clusters, you know? And they would convene meetings once a month and you know, if nothing got resolved within that, they would only find out at the next meeting. So there was no day by day pushing of project agenda. And so what I basically did was cut this down to 3. One for LED, one for housing and engineering services and one for community facilities. Just 3 different teams all in one office. And that's what we did (interview, Baskin 2007).

The new ARP structure means that there is a smaller team of consultants that work with provincial and local government all in the same office. Furthermore, the lines of decision-making are more clear, and could be more conducive for the involvement of the ADF in these decisions. However, while the ADF is able to discuss issues with the ARP on a regular basis, consultants still have the power to control and monitor the participation of the ADF and thereby choose the extent to which the ADF is able to influence development.

5.8 The ADF's relationship with the ARP (2005-present)

The ARP's structural changes that resulted from the ARP Review Summit were based both on the previous shortcomings of delivery, and by the demands made by the ADF to be more involved in the ARP's decision-making process. The change in structure and the new approach taken by the ARP meant that the ADF could have a stronger role to play and be more closely connected to the ARP. Representatives of the ADF now also have space at the ARP's offices and a direct relationship with the ARP director. This means that the ADF does not need to pressure the director in order to arrange meetings, but instead are expected to meet with the director in his office and to arrange appointments to discuss issues of development in Alexandra as they arise. The ADF and the ARP came to view each other as "partners" in determining the development agenda of the ARP.

Julian Baskin was made aware early on that Alexandra is highly complex politically and that if delivery was to be achieved, he would need to involve the community. The ADF is viewed as the central means by which to involve the community and takes a more central component through which the ARP could take advice regarding the politics of Alexandra and therefore to deliver. According to Julian Baskin:

> We don't do anything without engaging with the ADF. Their job then is to feed back in and bring information into the project…. We work very closely with the ADF, very very closely… They give us information as well. I mean they will tell us you know, this is a pressing community need. Then we will sit down and package a project and take the necessary administrates [sic] and mobilise resources for that to happen (interview, Baskin 2007)

Neels Letter explains that the ADF is an integral component in development plans in Alexandra. He says that the ARP and ADF agree on plans before implementing them:

> we have an agreed process that has been negotiated and agreed to politically by all the political groupings in Alex. And this is why we have the ADF, which is a representative forum representing, they are saying 198 organisations in Alex. So we agree to these things up front before these things are implemented (interview, Letter 2007)

The local ANC endorses the ADF's involvement in development in Alexandra. Sizakele Nkosi, Ernest Ndlovu and Justice Ngalungulu were key players in the ADF but are now ANC officials. Today, they tend to play a more marginal role in the ADF, but attend meetings when possible. ANC councilors are all aware of the ADF and speak of it as the legitimate arena in which the community can discuss development in Alexandra. For example, Miriam Makhubela, a ward councillor, referring to the ADF states that:

> All people of Alexandra, the whole greater Alex, they attend the meeting there. … Everyone is being represented by that forum…any member from Alex goes there and they discuss about the whole development and Alexandra agrees that. After that, it's whereby…ARP can proceed with any development (interview, Makhubela).

Miriam Makhubela suggests that the people of Alexandra are being represented in the ADF and that the ARP makes decisions based on suggestions made by the ADF. Sizakele Nkosi echoes this interpretation about the influence that the ADF has over the ARP:

> So now whatever is done, it is actually done in consultation with the development forum. It is no longer the development forum demanding this but it's also them saying, we think this is how things should be done. So it is now the development forum influencing government in terms of which direction they should actually take. They don't wait for government to come and say this is what we want to do and oppose it. But the development forum is now influencing whatever decisions that are actually done (interview, Nkosi 2007).

Key leaders of the ADF such Benito Lekalakala, also argue that the relationship between the ARP and ADF has changed:

> over the years it has changed. Initially, the ARP was run mainly by consultants who were employed by the provincial government… So the relationship with the ADF was not that cozy at the beginning. However, subsequently, a director was appointed and the relationship has since changed. And of course, even initially we were able to influence decisions because after conception, programmes were represented with us to interact with and engage with the concept itself, influenced how it should be brought out ultimately. So we were able to interact with them. Like I said however, the programme then was run mainly by consultant. But now we have a direct relationship with the ARP through the director of the programme (interview, Lekalakala 2007).

Both the ADF and the ARP have alluded to the idea of "corridor politics." Leaders of the ADF, such as Memela and Msimang meet with Baskin regularly to inform him of the ADF's position in relation to specific development agendas that have been determined by the ADF meetings. The ADF provides meaningful advice and information about potential community responses to particular interventions, and this makes it worthwhile for the ARP to consult with them.

Benito Lekalakala reveals that:

> for us to ensure that the project is community driven, there has to be meaningful interaction within ourselves and them so that, and then we said, where does consultation then begin. We said consultation should begin at conception of a project. We interact with that period, that stage, of conception, implementation and joint monitoring of the project (interview, Lekalakala 2007).

For Lekalakala, community driven means that once decisions are made at ADF meetings, executive members of the ADF engage in a process of lobbying the ARP. Usually, members of the executive of the ADF meet ARP officials such as Baskin to explain the decisions. Importantly, this does not mean that the ARP has to heed to the ADF's demands, which means this approach to community participation in the ARP has serious limitations.

It may appear that the change in influence of the ADF over the ARP has led to more community-driven approaches to development on the ARP. However, at least three forms of tyranny can be associated with the ARP and ADF's model of participation. The first is the consensus-building of the ARP and ADF, which results in the "purification" of space, and therefore the marginalisation of particular voices. This consensus is strengthened by the role of Community Liason Officers (CLOs), who are employed by the ARP to negotiate with those directly affected by specific development interventions, but have the affect of merely softening the blows of development by providing information to the community. The second form of tyranny is the "partnership" between the ARP and ADF which distorts how the ARP is able to control the participation of the ADF. The third is that participation within the ADF is mainstreamed or depoliticised since, as the previous point suggests, it does not challenge the basis of the ARP, and therefore does not seek to alter the status quo.

5.9 Purification Through Consensus

Through consultation with the ADF, the ARP and local ANC councillors have worked together between 2005 and 2008 to come to a consensus regarding how houses will be prioritised in Alexandra. On the one hand, consensus building is a useful tool through which the ARP can manage development and deliver to groups in Alexandra which have been earmarked for RDP houses. On the other hand, however, consensus building has

had the effect of "purifying" the ARP, ANC, and ADF's participatory space in which the people of Alexandra attempt to influence housing allocations. "Purification" is not primarily about excluding people from entering physical spaces, but is about exclusion from social spaces. Drawing on Sibley (1995), Kothari argues that "purification" occurs through a process of "ranking knowledge" (2001: 145). Accordingly, knowledge that does not fit into the ARP's "consensus" may be "ranked" as insignificant or irrelevant. Any dissent from this "consensus" is considered to be going against the common "good" of the people of Alexandra and therefore either labelled "ultra-left" or as coming from "the sides" of the plans, and therefore getting in the way of the ARP's implementation

The participatory space of the ARP, ANC, and ADF is guided by the consensus they have come to regarding the prioritisation of houses and this sets limitations for what kind of development is possible in the ARP. The participatory space of the ARP, ANC, and ADF operates at any point in time in which residents of Alexandra interact with leaders of these three organisations. It often exists in the ARP offices and at the Region E councillor offices, where residents of Alexandra come to ask questions about the ARP and submit complaints about it. It is also present at ADF meetings. Finally, the participatory space is present when protesters submit memorandums to government and demand to meet with ANC councillors and/or the director of the ARP. Because the ANC and ADF have come to what they consider to be a legitimate consensus together, regarding the trajectory of the ARP, they have "purified" their space and it is therefore difficult to challenge the consensus through negotiations.

Julian Baskin claims that the ARP will not do anything without the consent of the community. In his view, the community's views on development can only be considered if they are articulated through the ADF:

> We know we have a development forum, that everyone is welcome, where key decisions are taken. And then not to participate in that forum, makes it impossible to deal with (laughing), you know? You know, all they have to do strategically is to go in that forum and put their case on the table and argue it out and get their bit into the deal. But by not being part of that forum, well then, how do you deal with that (interview, Baskin 2007).

From Baskin's perspective, the ARP cannot be expected to work closely with every organisation in Alexandra, and this is why the ADF was chosen to represent all organisations in Alexandra. Baskin thus comments that:

> …my approach is you know, you want to be part of the action, join the ADF. ADF is a completely open forum in which they have got to lay their stakes, and it is going to be hard negotiations, there is just so many vested interests that have got to be reconciled, you know? (ibid).

It is primarily through the ADF that the ARP attempts to come to a consensus regarding development decisions. Dealing only with one organisation, the ADF, the ARP claims that the demands made by other constituencies in Alexandra are illegitimate unless they have raised them within the confines of the ADF's participatory space.

Moreover, the ADF comes to its own internal consensus regarding its position on development. In its constitution, it states that its "Vision and Mission," among other things, is to "ensure that all stakeholders act in unison for the common good of the residents of Greater Alexandra" (ADF 2004: 2). Furthermore, it says that members of the ADF shall strive to, "promote unity of purpose, common values, and a common vision to see Greater Alexandra a better place to work and to live in" and that it "should strive to arrive at decisions through consensus" (ibid: 2-3). If consensus is not possible through discussions, decisions are made by way of majority rule voting. Once this happens, the ADF reaches its consensus since "all decisions taken at the ADF are binding to all affiliates" (ibid: 3).

5.10 Community Liason Officers (CLOs): Softening the Blows of Development

While CLOs theoretically hold the possibility of challenging dominant development agendas, in the ARP they are a secondary tool used for community participation and they help enforce consensus building in the ARP. According to Township[5] News, the official newspaper of the ARP, CLOs are a critical part of the ARP. Their role is defined as:

[5] Though the correct spelling of this word is "township", the ARP's newspaper is called "Township News".

> Attending and addressing community meetings that have a potential impact on the project; Mobilising the community in support of the project through promoting the project; analyzing attitudes and perceptions of community groupings and other stakeholders towards the project and report on issues, opportunities and potential problems… Assist in collection and distribution of information to the community… To Sensitise the community to the project activities (Unknown Author 2002a).

The CLOs exist to inform the community directly affected by a development intervention. As discussed in the last chapter, informing the community is a weak form of participation and provides no real power to them. Rather, the community is told (informed) of what will happen to them at a late stage in the planning and their role is to be passive recipients of development (Arnstein 1969).

Furthermore, "the CLOs are ARP's ambassadors to the Alex community" (Township News 2002a). There are 10 CLOs in Alexandra currently. The role of CLOs has changed over time. Previously, CLOs worked around functional areas such as educations and physical clusters. However, this conflicted with the role of ward councilors. Since the new management in April 2005 (and the memorandum of understanding signed by ARP and the city), CLOs have been working on a project to project basis. In other words, the ARP brings them in when a specific project needs to be implemented. CLOs are usually involved in dealing with removals since these are instances that generate the most contestations.

Sammy Mamabulo, a CLO himself, explains that CLOs are there to help resolve disputes:

> Where relocation needs to take place, that's where you need to have a constant communication with the community. And because CLOs are the residents of Alexandra, where there is a dispute they are able to understand the dynamics of the community involved (interview, Mamabulo 2006).

Raymond Sibanda sees his role as a CLO to "get the feelings of the community" and bring them back to the ARP:

> So as liaison officers, we go there just to level the playing field so that when a contractor comes to the site, there are no squabbles, like no we were not consulted and things like that. So it's a consultation structure, it goes to the community prior to development taking place (interview, Sibanda 2006).

Sibanda identifies two primary and interrelated functions of the CLOs. They prepare targeted communities about proposed developments and where these entail disruptions to people's lives, such as evictions, they have to assuage the victims:

> the community liaison officer liaises between the ARP as a project and the community whenever there is a development to take place they are supposed to go to that community. Particularly the community who will be affected by that development because before a development takes place in a certain place there is a need to engage the community because you are going to displace people. There are people who are going to be moved from one place to another so there is some sort of discomfort when it comes to that (ibid).

In theory, CLOs are meant to be the primary facilitators of a two-way communication between the ARP and the community. But, the extent to which this happens is questionable because decisions have often been made at a higher level before CLOs are involved with consultation. Those affected may be able to inform CLOs of their grievances and the ARP may consider these, but those affected are unlikely to have a significant effect on whether or not the project actually goes ahead or the conditions under which the relocation will take place.

Mabandla Mwela, the CLO in S'swetla at the time that the ARP intended to displace people there, highlights this problematic role of the CLO. He discusses the situation in S'swetla when people were being displaced in order to make room for housing:

> They must feel themselves being part of the whole process, not just them wanting houses… They will only accept that when you communicate to them about that. So we just have to make them understand that there is this process, the process is the bridge. The process is not for you getting houses, it's the whole development (interview, Mwela 2006).

Mabandla Mwela suggests that development has been determined and that people must become a part of it because it is in the interest of the people of Alexandra. CLOs do not serve to empower the members of the community who are affected by development in Alexandra, but to provide those affected with information as a "cushion" between them and the project so that decisions made without them can be implemented. Mabandla Mwela notes the close ties that CLOs make with communities:

> I am telling you now in S'swetla, we work very harmoniously, because we are making sure that not only during working hours. We go to the community sometimes as community liason officers, sit with them, if you drink beer, you get a beer, you sit with them. You sit with people informally, that's when you get to understand exactly what the community feels so that is our strategy as CLOs… we also must go there and create friends, sit with them, make them understand what the project is doing and trying to understand what their queries exactly are (ibid).

The CLO's role is to maintain a close relationship with those affected so that development can be implemented.

CLOs have been chosen strategically by the ARP and their involvement is beneficial to the achievement of the ARP objectives. CLOs are generally articulate, well-established members of the community that understand what is happening politically in Alexandra, have negotiation skills in this regard, and can speak the local languages. Their relationship with the ARP, as paid employees to help implement ARP plans, hinders their ability to represent the community on issues of development.

Mabandla Mwela explains the reasons behind the delays in the bridge project:

> part of why its delayed initially, people were resisting to move… Probably because I don't think they understood, so we had to go… meeting, communicate them as CLOs, take what they are saying to the project and the project will explain. There was that interaction between… And that interaction is the one that delayed (ibid).

The people's refusal to move out of S'swetla meant that the ARP was forced to negotiate, or at least to talk to the people affected about their concerns. Without their consent, development would not go forward. Mabandla Mwela said that the S'swetla people were resisting because they did not have the information they needed from the ARP:

> They didn't know, they didn't have information as to what the project intends to do for them. They didn't have information so we had to make sure that they get every bit and piece. We get to understand why they are resisting so at the end of the day we understood that the timing was not correct and the second thing is that they don't really know the exacts (of what is happening). So we had to create some community committee that will sit with, understand what the community of S'swetla is saying, brief them, brief the project and so forth. So there was very good interaction with them (ibid).

Prior to the resistance, there was no substantial communication between the residents of S'swetla and the ARP. Providing the people with information was what the people needed so that development could go forward. As such, CLOs provide a "cushion" between the project and the people so that they can understand what is happening and be less likely to resist.

The ARP's employment of CLOs is also part of a larger attempt to strengthen the ARP's consensus regarding development prioritisation in Alexandra. An ARP team building report led by Julian Baskin attempts to make all structures work and speak with one development language. Referring to structures such as the ADF, Ward Committees, and CLOs, the report notes that, "the purpose of the workshop was to form a task team that will bring together all the above under one roof and talk the same language" (ARP Date Unknown: 1). He goes on to discuss the communication team which consists of (among others) the CLO's and the ADF. He says the communication team's duty is to:

> …make sure that the message is sent through to communities (to) have their buy-in. Information should be evenly spread to the recipients. CLO's are more knowledgeable than councilors. This one obstacle that stands out is about communities not having enough knowledge as far as

> development is concerned. This will only be achieved if all relevant structures come together under one roof (ARP 2005: 2).

The ARP's push to get CLO's, the ADF and Ward Committees to "come together under one roof" is an indication that the ARP seeks to gain consensus so that they can more efficiently implement development plans. The report then focuses on explaining what the ARP is doing so that these groups can inform the communities all in the same development language. If the ARP, ADF, ward committees, and councilors, are all in agreement and have reached a consensus, this consensus is very difficult to challenge and can be considered to be legitimate both on the grounds of participatory democracy (through the ADF), and on local electoral democracy (primarily through the ANC).

The ARP, ADF, ANC, and CLOs have all alluded to the significance of involving those in the community who are affected by the ARP. The ARP is content with engaging those community organisations that involve themselves with the ADF, this is its purpose. However, neither the ARP nor the ADF engage the wider community to a large extent except through CLOs who are involved with information dissemination and apparently intended to inform the community of how they will be affected by projects. This prevents them from representing those who do not participate directly in their meetings. Moreover, it prevents the majority of the community from driving the development themselves or at least from having various leaders, who work outside of the ADF, from representing their constituencies.

5.11 ANC Dominance in the ADF

The power relationship between the ARP and the ADF is further reinforced by the fact that the ADF is ANC dominated. Benito Lekalakala reveals no reluctance when he states that "the reality is that the majority of the people serving on the ADF, are of course, in one way or another associated with the ANC" (interview, 2007). The vast majority of residents in Alexandra vote for the ANC and so, for Lekalakala, it makes sense that the ADF is also dominated by the ANC. However, this has particular implications for how development is practiced, and what kinds of viewpoints, besides

that of the local ANC can be heard. It contributes to the "purification" of the ADF spaces on the ANC's terms despite claims that anyone can participate in it.

The SACP, SANCO, ALPOA and the APF have all argued that their exclusion is a result of the ANC dominance over the ADF. For example, although the SACP did not formally de-affiliate from the ADF, Germinah Dunn, General Secretary of Alexandra SACP complained that:

> Some church structures have in the past withdrawn in protest of the sorry state of affairs within the GADF… As a development forum people were not supposed to vote on developmental issues but that was the case within GADF because of the manipulation of the forum by members of the ANC… There needs to be consensus on developmental issues instead of basing things on votes (in Shivambo 2006).

While the ADF claims in its constitution that it attempts to come to "consensus," it resorts to majority rule voting when it cannot do so. According to the ADF constitution, each organisation can have four representatives. SANCO has four, and the SACP also had four. This also means that the ANC can have four, the ANCYL, and the ANCWL four (totalling twelve, which if they act in unison is difficult to contest). Members of the ANC are able to dominate at the expense of the SACP, SANCO and other organisations affiliated to the ADF. Dunn refers to the idea that the ANC controls this process by having ANC members come to an agreement prior to the ADF's meetings and then outvoting any opposition. One member of the SACP also claimed that the ADF was "illegitimate." They said, "we do not recognise a structure that is a stooge of a political organisation" (ibid).

Gabriel Ngwenya, secretary of SANCO in the East Bank, expresses concern with the ANC dominance over the ADF. He says that "in ADF you find the same officials who work in the government, ANC comrades who are in government, therefore the participation of the ordinary person on the street, he can't be heard" (Interview, Ngwenya 2006). Although the ANCYL, ANCWL and ANC are clearly not the same and do not necessarily have the same interests, Ngwenya and others are concerned that these groups connive before ADF meetings and voting and agree on particular issues in order to come

to a majority consensus that is very difficult to contest by other organisations affiliated to the ADF. Ngwenya explains that the number of representatives the ANC is able to send to vote in ADF meetings should be limited so that the civics have a change to influence the development process. He therefore says that, as civics, "We don't have equal representiation. That's the problem" (ibid).

Simon Noge, an executive member of ALPOA, also insists that the ADF is ANC dominated and therefore shuts out the viewpoints of other organisations:

> If you go to ADF now, all those members that are there now are ANC member… When the ADF was formed… it intended to include all stakeholders… Any other political party that would come in there or any other opinion that would come in, was to be congenial with the ANC majority there… And that's how it squeezed out every other person who was once in there of a different color. They are all ANC! (interview, Noge 2007)

The critiques made by all of these organisations suggest the domination by the ANC contributes to the "purification" of the ADF and thereby plays a key role in shutting out alternative visions of development that cannot be met within the ANC's confines.

5.12 Defining the Housing Consensus

The ARP, ADF and ANC have come to a consensus about the process through which to allocate housing in the ARP. From the beginning of the project in 2001 until April 2006, the ARP used the national waiting list method of allocating houses. This began in 1996 when the government asked people in Alexandra to sign up for housing so that they could wait to be prioritised. The logic behind the prioritisation under the waiting list is as follows:

> …number one gets the first house and number two shifts up to number one. And you have a clearly marked position in the waiting list. And so always the person at the top of the waiting list gets the next house (interview, Baskin 2007).

This waiting list is the government's primary housing allocation model and therefore the local, provincial and national ANC have endorsed this method of allocations. During the

time of the waiting list, the ADF also endorsed and defended the waiting list as a legitimate means by which to allocate housing (Memela 2005).

The waiting list, however, has not been the ANC's only housing allocation model. The ANC also allocates houses to people who are living in dangerous areas or that need to be cleared out so that "renewal" can take place. In Alexandra, the Jukskei River and London Road were identified as places in need of development or that were dangerous for residents to live in and these people have been provided with housing options. The residents relocated from these places were housed primarily in Bramfischerville in Soweto, 40 kilometers away from Alexandra.

By April 2006, the waiting list was scrapped and the ARP officially decided that it would undertake the block by block approach exclusively. This change in policy resulted from pressure by the ADF as well as the perceived failure of the waiting list approach to show any sign of de-densification or improvement in Alexandra as a whole.

The ARP had a serious problem when it removed people from shacks or housing based on the 1996 housing waiting list. It could not monitor the area in which people were moved and therefore there was no de-densification in Alexandra. Darlene Louw, the Deputy Director and Spokesperson of the ARP, called the waiting list the "pop-corn approach" (interview, Louw 2007) because as soon as people were moved out of densely populated areas in yards, it was impossible to regulate and ensure that other people did not occupy, or "pop-up" in the abandoned area. She therefore said that if policy works completely based on the waiting list, the problem of de-densification is perpetuated rather than solved (ibid). Neels Letter explains the difficulty of controlling settlements in Alexandra after people are displaced and given housing elsewhere:

> …Another family there, another family there… You get 2000 families scattered all over Alex. That vacates a structure where they were living, whether it be in a house or a flat or informal structure or shack. Who will live in this new housing structure? It's really difficult to control that space that they've vacated. Because how do you control that? You've got to make sure that other people arn't going to occupy it again (interview, Letter 2007).

He further explains the lack of impact on Alexandra, in terms of de-densification, that the ARP achieved when it was following the waiting list approach to housing allocations:

> Because our experience in the past has been that some of the housing development that took place before Alex project where they worked from a waiting list, is that all spaces that they were located by these families were taken over by other families. So you made no impact on the density in Alex. Made no impact. Even to the extent that when structures were broken, within a week or 2, they were re-erected, somebody else… Because you cannot police what's happening in a yard all the time. I mean, the law enforcement guys right down the street, how would they know that someone in the back of that yard, there is a structure broken in, it's just an impossibility (ibid).

Linda Memela, previous secretary of the ADF, confirms the problems with the waiting list approach and discusses the ARP's logic behind the new approach:

> …there was the feeling that the approach that the ARP is doing is not working because it does not make a difference. For instance, up 'til now, the new houses that have been built in Alex, people who were allocated, there are more than 6,000. But you can't see that vacuum in Alex. So, people cannot see that visability, that there have been about 6000 families that have moved out of Alex … So the new approach that has been adopted is that we must have a block by block approach in terms of development…. So in that way, we would be able to see exactly that something is happening around development (interview, Memela 2007).

The block by block approach identifies blocks that are in need of development, collects the data around that block and determines how many people need RDP houses, rental rooms or a housing subsidy and moves those people into the appropriate housing on that basis. Once these people are moved, the ARP can "demolish this old block and start a new development in there" (ibid).

Neels Letter gives a straightforward explanation for why the block by block approach was adopted and the implications that this has for de-densification within Alexandra:

> So our approach recently has shifted from going from a list to basically a focused area, a focused relocation. Basically a block by block approach, where we are saying… we are saying we're doing *this* housing development… We're gonna focus on *this* area (pointing to the map on the wall). Which means once they have moved, we can clear the whole area out… basically we focus so any new housing development will solve a specific problem within Alex, whether it be a school problem or a tributary problem (interview, Letter 2006).

He also gives examples to explain how the block by block approach will ensure de-densification:

> …there is an informal settlement on the Jukskei river, S'swetla. It's all shacks. Now we've developed that housing scheme on the estate all these people are gonna be moved there, so that settlement can be cleared. That's an easier way of making sure that you're not going to get re-invasions. Because your law enforcement guys say it's much easier to clear a block, totally clear, then they can make sure there is no re-invasion on that land (ibid).

The block by block approach has serious implications for local politics in Alexandra. The housing waiting list approach meant that it would be primarily "old" residents who were on the waiting list that would benefit. Residents who had just come to Alexandra would not benefit as greatly firstly because they were not on the waiting list. Secondly, as in the case of the removals of people from the Jukskei River and London Road, people would be displaced in Soweto, 40 kilometres away from Alexandra. This was not considered prime location for the people being displaced and they often resisted against the displacement from Braamfischerville (this will be discussed in the next chapter). According to Darlene Louwe, "Old" residents therefore did not view this as taking away from their housing opportunities (interview, Louwe 2007).

However, the decisions made by the MEC for housing in mid-2005 to stop moving people far away from Alexandra (part of the Breaking New Ground (BNG) national policy of 2004) compounded tensions between "old" and "new" residents in Alexandra. According to Julian Baskin, this approach has:

> …now shifted it towards is a project that looks at upgrading Alex for the residents of Alexandra irrespective, so long as you live in Alex at this point in time, you become part and parcel of our programme. Now the big difference here… of course is now you enter a whole new tension. You enter tensions between why are new residents getting over older residents. Whereas the older approach, the new residents were just taken out of Alex because they were essentially the new shack dwellers. They were just taken out and dumped and the old residents had no objections to that. But certainly the new residents did have an objection to that. And so you shifted the debate from a class debate into how you prioritise (interview, Baskin 2007).

This decision was made from the top-down. Rather than leaders at the local level (ANC, ARP, and ADF) determining consensus development in Alexandra, the consensus was determined at the provincial level and this highlights that local's subordination to the ANC provincial government.

5.13 Consensus Development in the ARP

Clearly, reaching consensus in a heterogeneous community such as Alexandra is invariably a problematic process. Since the inception of the project, the ARP has had to cope with the deep-seated political and class divisions that exist between the people of Alexandra. Regarding the allocations of housing, the ARP states that:

> …Difficult decisions need to be made and a social consensus crafted. Failure to do this can easily and predictably result in conflict. Issues related to new and old residents need to be respected and factored into the allocations policy. A housing allocation process has been discussed and broadly agreed to. Saldy such a process will inevitably have both winners and losers (ARP website (b)).

The primary division that exists in terms of housing is between so-called old and new residents. Old residents claim they and their families were the first to come to Alexandra, have been in the housing waiting lists for the longest, and therefore should be first in line to receive government subsidised housing. There is also a perception among many "old" residents of Alexandra that new residents move into risky areas such as flood lines and abandoned factories, so that they can get priority on the housing list. This has created resentment by old residents towards new residents. One woman, involved with the Alexandra Chamber of Commerce (an affiliate of the ADF), says they do this so that:

> …they can get preference on the list of houses… They build a shack on the back of a river… So maybe there should be influx control, I don't know how. I don't know how can [we] have our government to... avoid people coming in. You know, Alexandra has become more of a…Ghetto. Before you go to Soweto people start here. That's why Alexandra is the mother to all these surrounding townships. And that creates a problem for us, for the government, for the council, for the ARP (interview, anonymous 2006a).

The Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association (ALPOA), a community-based organisation in Alexandra, claims to represent all property owners who are a small fraction of old residents in Alexandra. Instead of seeking to be prioritised on the waiting list, ALPOA is pressuring the ANC and ARP to prioritise restitution of their land and property since they had it illegitimately taken by the apartheid government. Furthermore, ALPOA wants Alexandra to be de-densified (the assumption is that this will entail removing new residents) so that they can live more comfortably. The value of their property could also increase as a result of de-densification since informal settlements and backyard shacks give Alexandra the face of a congested ghetto instead of a middle-class and "up and coming" suburb that some old residents believe could result from the process of gentrification. The waiting list approach to housing in Alexandra, however, has had no influence over the density of Alexandra, which remains highly congested.

New residents, on the other hand, believe that if the ARP wants to displace them, they need to be provided with adequate housing. They cannot simply be displaced and moved onto the streets because this would violate their right to housing. Moreover, new residents tend to be living in the worst conditions – many live in shacks and abandoned factories – and, as a result, claim that they need to be prioritised for housing. Finally, the extent to which those who are considered to be new residents are actually new to Alexandra is questionable as many of them have been living in the same place for more than five years and some for over 20 years.

Because there is a limited pool of resources in which the ARP is able to operate and because houses can only be delivered at a certain pace, specific residents must be prioritised. The push and pull of interests between new and old residents puts the ARP in a precarious position when it intervenes and determines who will be the first to benefit from the available housing opportunities. This is because one group of residents will often be seen to be benefiting at the expense of another and they may attempt to influence, or disable, interventions as a result. The purification of space through consensus accepts different approaches to development that favour particular constituents within Alexandra thereby marginalising groups who are unable to influence the ARP, or have deemed the ARP to be illegitimate.

5.14 The Unequal Terms of Partnership

The use of the term "partnership" to describe the relationship between the ARP and ADF is problematic because it is invoked to denote an equal relationship. The term hides the fact that all partnerships are the products of power relations. To a significant extent, the ARP has the ability to monitor and control when, and the conditions under which, it includes the ADF's interests. While the ADF may at times exert its own agency in order to influence development processes, Darlene Louwe points out that consultants determine the extent to which they will engage the ADF (interview, Louwe 2007).

The establishment of the ADF in 2002 by the ARP suggests that the ADF is an add-on to the ARP. Benito Lekalakala declared in the ARP official newsletter that its role was to, "ensure that the community is actively involved in the implementation of the Alexandra Renewal Project as required… Advise and make recommendations on the development proposals of the Alexandra Renewal Project" (Lekalakala 2002). The ADF's purpose is to assist in the implementation of the ARP and to advise and suggest programmes to them, with the knowledge that the ARP could accept or reject its priorities if necessary. In 2001-2004 the ADF leadership felt that its suggestions were not taken seriously (interview, Lekalakala 2007). Now, the ADF leadership has a direct relationship with the director, who meets with ADF leaders on a regular basis to discuss the prioritisation of development in the ARP (ibid). However, the ADF still lacks power to control the direction of the ARP since the fundamental structural position of the ADF, as something that can advise and suggest, has remained constant over time.

This can be understood through the demands and advances made by the ARP. In 2004, the ADF was coming from a position in which the ARP imposed development onto the people of Alexandra. The ADF viewed itself as having little communication with or, as the above says, being "rubberstamps" to decisions that had already been made. In some cases, the ADF would engage with officials about the interventions that were chosen. The ADF, however, makes the point that this happened "in consultation with" them, rather than "after consultation with" them. At the ARP Review Summit, they revealed what they thought participation should mean in relation to the ARP. Firstly,

they state what "consultation" means "conferring with a group of people or an individual with a view to soliciting their opinion on a matter of mutual interest" (ADF 2004b: 5).

The ADF then asks:

> What then is the difference between "in consultation with" and "after consultation with?"… "In consultation with" means that a decision maker may consult with a person but ultimately the decision on a particular matter is his or can simply consult on a decision already taken whereas "after consultation with" means that only after consulting and having taken into account the views of the person(s) or group consulted with can a decision be made (ibid).

The ADF wanted to move from being infomed about plans after they had been made and having the ARP ask for their opinion about it, to having the ARP take into account their views and then making decisions. Benito Lekalakala later elaborates that:

> …for them community involvement and consultation would mean bouncing off ideas with us. But we said to them, for us to ensure that the project is community driven, there has to be meaningful interaction within ourselves and them so that, and then we said, where does consultation then begin. We said consultation should begin at conception of a project. We interact with that period, that stage, of conception, implementation and joint monitoring of the project. That is our understanding of what community driven is. So that, we take into account the aspirations. I mean obviously the ARP management does not live in Alex. They do not understand the community dynamics there. So we come in and then explain to them, or pilot those dynamics to them so as to take those into account in order to ensure that the community is involved (interview, Lekalakala 2007).

For Lekalakala, community driven development is not when the community controls development autonomously, on their own terms, but occurs simply when the leadership of the ADF is able to interact directly with the ARP regarding the conception, implementation and monitoring of development in Alexandra. From 2001-2004, the ARP involved the ADF to some extent by "bouncing off ideas" to the ADF after they had determined potential plans. Responding to the ARP's failure to deliver to the residents of Alexandra, the ADF sought to alter the ARP's development agenda. Having had no regular contact or direct influence over the ARP from 2001-2004, the ADF pushed to

have its voice heard at the ARP Review Summit in December 2004. Now, the ADF leadership works closely with the director and engages directly with the ARP from the conceptualisation of projects until their implementation (interview, Baskin 2007; interview, Lekalakala 2007). ARP officials and ADF leadership meet in corridors in order to discuss possibilities regarding the intervention to undertaken by the ARP from its conception to implementation. It appears that the ADF acheived what it set out to do and is satisfied with the "partnership" it has with the ARP. However, it is useful to apply theories of participation in order to better understand the implications of this shift.

The new kind of relationship that the ADF wanted from the ARP still represented, according to Arnstein's ladder of participation, a degree of "tokenism." In this sense, the ARP and the ADF get together to make decisions, but "the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice" (Arnstein 1969: 217) remains in the hands of the ARP. The fundamental relationship between the ARP and ADF remains the same. The power lies with the ARP.

Furthermore, Ernest Ndlovu confirms that the ADF is funded by the ARP thus suggesting that it is dependent on them:

> Actually, the development forum is funded also by the provincial government. The Department of Housing funds the existence of the development forum. So it was given that as soon as ARP comes into being, they will work together (interview, Ndlovu 2007).

The ADF is therefore an institutionalised or "invited" space (Cornwall 2004: 78) for participation as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Explaining the logic behind the ARP's adoption of the ADF, Neels Letter says the following:

> …ARP created the ADF. And it has been funded by us, by government. Because the government said we cannot go and talk to 198 organisations all the time. We need to have a representative body that you can speak to. That's why the ADF was created (interview, Letter 2007).

Neels Letter reveals how the creation of the ADF was intended to facilitate the ARP because it was convenient for the ARP to have a reasonably representative forum in Alexandra that they could speak with. He explains further:

> Yes, the relationship has had its ups and down as you might expect. We are talking about individuals from both sides, personalities and so on. But, we still engaging each other. I mean we are still talking, we are attending their regular meetings, and we, everything that we do is discussed with the ADF before it's being implemented to get buy-in. So I mean yes, we use them on a continuous basis (ibid)

According to Letter, the ARP engages with the ADF in order to get their "buy-in" before they implement projects. While the ADF's lobbying to be more intimately involved in decisions made by the ARP clearly had an influence over their involvement, the ADF was also included because Alexandra is such a complex and politicised community. To Julian Baskin, this meant that he could not successfully deliver services to the Alexandra community without involving and taking the local expertise from a community organisation, in this case the ADF. The ARP is not in a position to implement projects on its own. It needs locals to help them understand whether or not the projects they want to implement will be conducive to those affected. The ARP incorporates the ADF when necessary so that it is more likely to implement projects that are locally relevant and will not be resisted against by the community.

Linda Memela explains that the ADF has different approaches to development:

> We are engaging each other from time to time as the two structures. Because there are always differences that arrive along the way because ARP will base their opinions on theory, we will base our opinions on experiences on the ground. So there won't be similar approaches in development (interview, Memela 2007)

Because the ADF's approach is based on "opinions on experiences on the ground", the ARP benefits if it checks with the ADF to determine the local relevance of their projects. According to Julian Baskin, the ADF enables the ARP to share the responsibility of conflicts:

> The ulitimate decision making is really of political decisions… Conflicts are par of the course, I mean everything is conflictual, absolutely everything… Who is an actual land owner in Alex? These are all points of extreme conflict. The whole thing about new residents and old residents.

> Who benefits? Why is that it's the new residents that are benefiting, not the older residents… Evictions… These are points of conflict. But I don't take the conflict on myself. I must tell you that. I will bring the ADF in, I will (bring) local ANC in. They must engage and do those types of negotiations because I really, I don't see myself being an official making decisions on behalf of other people (interview, Baskin 2006).

Without these negotiators, it is questionable as to the extent to which the ARP could deliver. The ADF helps deliver and reduces the possibility of conflict between stakeholders in Alexandra when specific projects are undertaken. The ADF could be viewed as a part of a strategy to enhance effective and efficient delivery of services to the people of Alexandra.

The "partnership" between the ADF and the ARP also enables leaders of the ARP to abdicate some of their responsibility if the ARP fails. According to Baskin:

> I don't do anything that the ADF would be against. You know, it's not my community. All I do is bring a system into place that can receive money and account for money, and can monitor quality on projects to make sure that projects happen (ibid).

If the ARP is doing what the community (ADF) wants, it is not solely responsible for the failure of the projects.

Julian Baskin also claims that the ADF influenced the change in the ARP's housing strategy:

> The whole question of stopping the relocation of people outside, outside of Alex. The whole new housing strategy was a strategy that was born in dialogue with the ADF. Housing has changed completely really, the whole strategy has changed completely. That's very much about dialogue and understanding the different needs and affordabilities of people within (ibid).

Officials in the ARP, including Baskin, benefit significantly from their close relationship with the ADF. The ARP is able to legitimise projects to the public and to the government by using the ADF to get community buy-in, and it takes advantage of policy and project recommendations that account for the complex political issues in Alexandra. The ARP

reaps the benefits of participation without sacrificing or heeding to any of the costs. Power is not relinquished to the ADF, but remains in the hands of the ARP.

5.15 Mainstreaming Participation

The ARP, through the ADF, has mainstreamed participation in development. One primary reason why this is the case is that participation does not seek to challenge broader national and global processes that bind people into a state of poverty in the first place. Even if the ADF wanted to (and it does not appear to), its relationship with the ARP hinders the possibility to challenge the amount of national resources that have been provided for the ARP. This is because the focus of participation by the ARP and ADF is about what happens at the local. It does not seek to mobilise citizens to question broader structures of power, but tries to get them to work within the budgetary framework (R1.3 billion) that has been given by the government. In other words, for the ARP and ADF, the problems that need to be solved within the ARP are at the local, not the national or international level.

Other evidence of mainstreaming on the ARP and ADF focuses on participation as it relates to "personal reform" rather than "political struggle" (see Williams 2006). This approach assumes that because development professionals become more open to the input of communities, that participation itself is enhanced. But, great responsiveness has not fundamentally challenge the managerial strategy to ensure the implementation of service delivery on the ARP's terms.

Within this framework of participation, residents of Alexandra are not expected to reflect and create (as would be the case with a more radical approach suggested by the practice of "people's power" in the mid-1980s) but rather, should sit back and let the government deliver. This conception applies both for the ADF, and for those who are affected by the ARP but may not partake in meetings of the ADF where they could potentially be represented. In terms of those who are directly affected by decision-making on the ARP, the ADF appeared to have subscribed to this conception of participation even before 2005. Benito Lekalakala argued that:

> Without consultation with the people there would be problems. In the past they were building, developing a park there and there was insufficient consultation with the people, and consequently, there were problems. We had to come in as the ADF in order to intervene so that the program can go ahead. So without community participation, if they insist that they can implement, that development can be stalled. So to avoid that, there has to be meaningful participation (interview, Lekalakala 2004).

Linda Memela reflected a similar view about why community participation is necessary:

> Maybe you can find that there is a resistance from people because they will be feeling like they are undermined and all those things. So for every development to go smooth you must have participation from the ground (interview, Memela 2004).

These leaders have made it clear that participation is a means by which to implement development interventions that have been designed from above (be it by them or by the ARP). Rather than participation enabling people to determine their own destinies – participation exists to get buy-in, so that people will accept projects. Participation exists so that development will "go smooth." The Secretary's report for the ADF by Linda Memela shows a similar outlook:

> We hope that all of us will re-commit ourselves to ensure maximum participation of our community in development, we will do all this by making sure that information that we receive goes back to our constituencies because knowledge is power; if our people are well-informed about development there will be no room for opportunists to mislead them for their own personal gains (Memela 2004a: 1).

Unless one is talking about those people who participate directly at ADF meetings, the framework in which these leaders understand "maximum"or "full" participation does not go beyond information sharing with the entire community. People are regarded as empty vessels to be filled with information and service delivery (as defined from above) is considered to be development. In the ARP, people are considered to be potential obstacles to achieving pre-conceived development objectives rather than the key asset with which to define and achieve self-development or emancipation.

This is a sharp shift from the ideas and practices of the 1980s to enable residents to control all aspects of their lives (see chapter 3). Moreover, the ADF was never designed to conscientise the community about development but, as discussed above, existed as an add-on to the ARP. This is because the ADF plays an advisory role for the ARP and is not intended to challenge the basis upon which resources are allocated by the ARP. Rather, the ADF functions within what is possible given the amount of resources it has made available for the residents of Alexandra. Participation is not intended to challenge the status quo.

Mosse's depiction of a participatory farming systems development project in the Bhil tribal region of western India resonates with the participatory processes on the ARP. In these projects, he says that "Villager 'needs' were significantly shaped by perceptions of what the agency was able to deliver" (20-21). Mosse therefore refers to the knowledge that is created through participatory processes as "planning knowledge" rather than "people's knowledge" (Mosse 2001).

For example, Justice Ngalungulu says that "the only challenge is the pace" of delivery:

> Because people, they don't understand that there is a question of budget. They don't understand that. They understand that if we are doing housing, we must do housing to all of them. If we are saying that we must eradicate shacks, we must eradicate shacks to all of them at the same time. So they don't understand that there is process that we have to go through. There is budgeting. They don't understand that. That is why also today we have those particular projects. It's not (that) there is no development. There is the development. They can see that the development is happening in that particular one. But the problem is that it is not happening at the present moment at their particular area. Then it makes them to go out into the street to say why the development is happening there, it's not happening to us (interview, Ngalungulu 2007)

The ADF and ANC local councilors are content to work within the limited budget of the ARP, and therefore believe that people must only participate to the extent that they wait their turn for the government to deliver to them. People's knowledge becomes, at best, that which can fit within the prescribed "budget" of the ARP.

At the ARP Review Summit, the ADF also states that in order for people's lives to be changed in Alexandra, "A lot of re-alignment and reprioritisation of the budget will

be required" (ADF 2004b: 8). In an interview, Benito Lekalakala confirmed this position when he explained that the ARP:

> …will come with a whole long list of projects and then we will interact with them in determining which ones should be prioritised for optimal benefit for the community (interview, Lekalakala 2007).

Referring to people who illegally invaded factories in Marlboro, Wynberg, and Far East Bank Flats, Linda Memela suggested that the government's framework is legitimate and that jumping the government's housing cue is therefore wrong:

> These people invaded these places as a way of jumping the housing cue, so that when development has to take place in those areas they have occupied, they have to be given alternative accommodation which in most cases is a proper housing. This trend has been identified by the people of Alex and they are putting government under a lot of pressure not to accommodate these people anymore at the expense of law abiding citizens (Memela 2005).

Rather than questioning the ARP's housing allocation budget, and whether or not it is enough to satisfy all the residents of Alexandra, Memela says that people must wait their turn for government resources and thereby endorses their allocation.

5.16 The Tyranny of the ANC's Invited Participatory Spaces?

The ARP has worked hard to obtain a "partnership" with the ADF and to ensure that projects can be implemented in a locally-appropriate manner. It is imperative both to the ARP and to the ADF that the people of Alexandra are involved in development, perhaps in many aspects of decision-making. In this sense, participation on the ARP has become something that is used because it "feels good" to all parties, but does not challenge the status quo. When the book, Participation: The New Tyranny was being written, the authors were concerned about precisely this. They questioned the purpose of participation if community organisations such as the ADF still had no formal power over development implementers such as the ARP. Furthermore, they suggested that participation should be abandoned if it did not empower marginalised groups of people, but instead perpetuated

the structural conditions that bind people into a state of poverty in the first place, thereby confining participation to the local level (and therefore to available local resources). Though invited participatory spaces theoretically hold the possibility of being sites of transformation, empirical evidence has shown that the approach to participation taken by the ARP and ADF has distinct elements of tyranny.

The institutional spaces of participation in the ARP are remarkably similar to broader participatory mechanisms and spaces of the ANC which have been put in place throughout South Africa (these were described and analysed in chapter three). Just as the ADF has no formal power over decision making process, but instead lie with consultants, Ward Councillors also have the final say over what happens in Ward Committee meetings. In both cases, this undermines the potential for participatory democracy because the power to make decisions is never (at least at first) in the hands of the community, but rather must be claimed and negotiated with the authorities.

Furthermore, just as the CLOs exist primarily to give information to communities about how they will be affected by development, CDWs also exist to supply the public with how they can benefit from pre-determined policies. CLOs and Ward Councillors may avoid lending power to communities and development, if not contested by agents in a strong manner, is likely to beome a top-down, state-centric process that seeks to obtain quantitive delivery targets which have also been defined by the ANC, as many authors have suggested (see Khosa 2003; Oldfield 2008). The ANC's invited spaces of participation are clearly not intended to enable people to define and control their own development, but instread, "work to *constitute* a particular kind of measurable citizen who can be rendered amenable to intervention" (Cornwall 2004: 83). In other words, the ANC's approach to participation in development is that communities must sit back and let the government deliver legitimate services. This suggests that those who refuse to receive these services in the manner in which the ANC has determined may be stigmatised suppressed, or criminalised. The next three chapters analyse how constituencies within Alexandra, who believe they are excluded from the ARP's development trajectory, attempt to reshape development in Alexandra.

Chapter Six

The SACP and SANCO: Reactionary Participation in Development

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses how members of the Tripartite Alliance, SANCO and the SACP, enable "invented" (Cornwall 2004) participatory spaces to influence development. Invented participatory spaces emerge when residents mobilise collectively with the intention of exerting power over the development process.[6] Underlying the analytical approach to understanding these spaces is the assumption that "making available, claiming and taking up spaces need to be seen, then, as acts of power" (Cornwall 2004: 80).

Unlike the ARP's invited participatory space, the ADF, which has a specific development trajectory that can be deciphered, invented participatory spaces are very fluid, often ephemeral and intangible and therefore difficult to define in a precise manner. Nevertheless, it is possible to trace the emergence of invented participatory spaces in Iphuteng and S'swetla, where residents called upon SANCO and the SACP, respectively, to assist in their struggle against top-down development plans. Because the power to control development processes and outcomes is circular and contested, power is claimed both from above and from below. The chapter traces the interweaving of ARP dominance and grassroots resistance over time in order to understand what these struggles represent and the potential that they have, with the assistance of members of the ANC alliance, to influence the ARP's development trajectory.

Because the SACP and SANCO are formally part of the Tripartite Alliance, although SANCO has been a junior member, they may therefore be expected to subscribe to the ARP's development trajectory. However, despite the plans of the ARP and ADF, the SACP supported an invented participatory space in an informal settlement in Alexandra called S'swetla. At the end of 2005, S'swetla residents refused to be removed

[6] Aspects of invited spaces, in this case the ADF, may also fall under this category and thereby render a sharp division between invited and invented spaces problematic. Nevertheless, the distinction is analytically useful because the ARP and ADF have come to a development consensus. Furthermore, all the invented spaces discussed in the chapters that follow attempt to engage with both the ARP and the ADF in order to meet their demands.

from a shack to another shack in order for the ARP to build a bridge to link the East Bank and Old Alexandra and called upon the SACP for assistance. The SACP responded by attempting to exert power over the development process through negotiations with the ADF, but were unsuccessful. The residents of S'swetla then expressed their agency with the assistance of the SACP by resorting to direct action, a critical tactic employed by invented spaces to exert power over the development process. The direct action consisted of a march of nearly 3000 people. At this point, S'swetla residents momentarily gained power over the development process because the ARP could not go to S'swetla to remove angry protesters from their homes without negative media coverage. The initial resistance by the people of S'swetla held the possibility for altering the development practices of the ARP, but this was undermined when the ARP reasserted its power by involving Community Liason Officers (CLO's) who acted as tool by which the ARP implemented its development plans from the top-down.

The next section focuses on SANCO who sharply criticises the ADF's approach to participation in development and offers a radical alternative to the practice of participatory spaces which is based on the yard committee system that was initially adopted by the AAC in the mid 1980s. SANCO attempted to (re)establish itself as hegemonic in Alexandra by claiming to represent the community as a mass-based organisation and thereby first appears to provide a powerful example of a grassroots organisation and is successful at influencing the ARP's policy. SANCO draws upon legal resources in order to meet the demands of its local population. What was once a policy that represented the top-down implementation of development plans since 2001, has been transformed by SANCO and the build up of collective resistance over time by invented spaces independent of SANCO, in order to define development from the bottom-up.

However, while SANCO does represent the interests of a particular constituency in Alexandra, it does so only when the government intervenes to impose development directly onto its constituents in a negative manner. Other than this, SANCO (and its grassroots constituents) remains largely demobilised and functions within the confines of the ARP's resource parameters. Neither SANCO nor the SACP attempt to build a mass based development plan in opposition to the ARP. While both the SACP and SANCO do

offer alternatives to specific interventions by the ARP, they generally remain tied to government projects and subscribe to the ARP's plans. The SACP and SANCO therefore assist briefly in enabling invented participatory spaces to claim power over the development process, but they fall short of mobilising residents proactively in a sustained challenge of the underlying process of social change which guides what is possible in the ARP.

6.2 SACP: Subsumed by the ANC

As part of the Tripartite Alliance with Cosatu and the ANC, the SACP has supported the ANC in its overwhelming electoral victories since 1994 (Thomas 2007). Most members of the SACP are members of the ANC. As such, the SACP "has followed a path marked by cooperation and collaboration with the ANC" (Thomas 2007: 123). Despite the historical alliance between the ANC and the SACP, which has been strengthened since 1990, there have been important issues of contention between them, most notably over the ANC's macro-economic policies. The SACP has argued that the neoliberal macroeconomic framework of the ANC adopted in 1996 (GEAR) serves the interests of capital, primarily white business interests and a small section of black business leaders, at the expense of the majority of South Africans. Blade Nzimande, the general secretary of the SACP, noted about GEAR in 1997 that:

> …the SACP's last central committee, after a year of reflection, discussion and debate, as well as interaction with Alliance partners, came out in opposition to GEAR. The Central Committee made the point that this kind of macro-economic framework is not conducive to the implementation of the RDP (Nzimande 1997 in Thomas 2007: 125).

By 1998, the party's10th annual congress declared even more firmly that there had been a:

> …Shift towards the assumptions of an export-led growth, based on the myth that deregulation and liberalization, more or less on their own, will make the South Africa economy 'globally competitive' (SACP Central Committee 1998 in Thomas 2007: 125).

The SACP's critique of the ANC government's economic policies has been shared by COSATU, and the two bodies have been involved in several protests to voice their opposition. The SACP also participated in Cosatu's mass action against privatisation in 2001 and 2002. Despite what appears to be a fundamental difference of opinion, the SACP has however remained loyal to the alliance. In Thomas's view:

> The SACP's challenge to neoliberalism is rhetorical and ineffective. The SACP's unwavering allegiance to the ANC forces it to confront capitalism in a way that is 'safe', or perhaps 'acceptable' to the ANC. Essentially, the SACP's approach is based on the fundamental premise that the Party needs to work within the ANC in order to pull it to the 'left' (Thomas 2007: 24).

However, from the end of 2006, the emergence of sharp divisions within the ANC, centering on the contestation between Mbeki and Zuma, provided the Communist Party with an opportunity to mobilise more effectively against the dominant section of the ANC. A more strident critique then developed. By the end of February 2007, the SACP central committee was seriously questioning the role that it should play in the elections (SACP 2007: 8). By May 2007, reflecting on the SACP-COSATU Summit which took place at the end of March 2007, Umsebenzi, the official journal of the party, noted that:

> The alliance needs to be significantly reconfigured. The days of collective alliance campaigning for elections, but with decisions being left exclusively in the hands of the ANC, are over. The summit agreed that we need to radically change the manner of operation of the alliance, its protocols, method of deployment, and the question of accountability of government to the alliance, and the effective role of alliance partners in governance, and the possibility of an electoral pact and quotas for Alliance partners in ANC lists (SACP 2007a:3)

The SACP points out that, although it is part of an alliance with the ANC, in the end decisions are made by the ANC. At the SACP's 12th national congress in June 2007, three provinces including North West, Western Cape and Gauteng, expressed a desire to go it alone in the elections in 2009 and the SACP branch in Alexandra is also in favour of this (interview, Mbingeleli 2007). The SACP noted that the ANC was dominating the development trajectory of the so-called National Democratic Revolution, but believed that the SACP should be at the forefront instead. Prior to the ANC national conference in

Polokwane at the end of 2007, however, the SACP made a decision not to stand independently in the 2009 elections (SACP 2007b: 6-8).

The SACP feels that its development trajectory is marginalised by an ANC that imposes its own plans onto the SACP without sufficient consultation. However, because the SACP has cooperated with the ANC it has implemented, rather than fundamentally challenged, the ANC's neoliberal policies. It is therefore questionable whether the SACP has a substantially different development agenda than the ANC. The core contradiction faced by the SACP is its role in the alliance which limits the extent to which the SACP is able to offer alternatives. Thomas's (2007) assertion that the SACP works within the confines to "safely" critique the ANC still remains to be challenged by the SACP in a practical manner.

Nevertheless, the SACP has also expressed strong grievances against the ANC's top-down approach to development and has committed itself, at least rhetorically, to more bottom-up approaches to development. A central committee report by the SACP asserts that, "policy development without mass mobilization and participation is bound to fail" (SACP 2007: 8). Regarding the implementation of GEAR, the SACP argues that:

> If you are a devotee of the 1996 class project, you will pay lip-service to the working class and the poor as the 'motive forces of the revolution' – but really, in your heart of hearts, you believe the people are just ungrateful clients of a government bureaucracy that knows best. You go through the motions of consultation on where we would draw the boundary on Merafong or Matatiele – but the real decisions are made behind closed doors in horse-trading among elites (SACP 2007c: 5).

In the SACP's view, therefore, the ANC's dominant form of participation has been characterised as a practice of going "through the motion of consultation:"

> The deal behind the '1996 class project' was that the new governing elite would promote capitalist profitability. In return, so the argument went, taxes from the ensuing growth would be the basis on which to 'deliver', top-down, bureaucratic 'development'" (ibid: 4).

Decisions therefore remain in the preserve of elites and effectively exclude mass participation. This suggests that perhaps the SACP seeks to go further than this by

harnessing mass mobilisation as a tool by which to bring about radical changes in development.

The SACP's rhetoric suggests it may satisfy the three pre-conditions for a participatory project outlined by Hickey and Mohan (2004) to lead to transformation. These conditions are that participation must engage with development as an underlying process of social change, be part of a wider radical political project that intends to challenge existing power relations, and be aimed specifically at securing citizenship rights and participation to marginal or dispossessed groups. It satisfies the first requirement since it seeks to engage with development as an underlying process of social change by contesting capitalism and claiming to offer a socialist alternative. Secondly, the SACP contends that it seeks to engage with the politics of development, rather than technocratic interventions such as those which are offered through neoliberal policies. Finally, it satisfies the third criteria since the SACP's rhetoric suggests it has plans for a more bottom-up approach to development that is defined by the working class. While a clear distinction has been drawn between the SACP's rhetoric and practice, this has not been substantiated.

6.3 Supporting Grassroots Initiatives in Alexandra?

It is necessary to analyse how the SACP relates to communities at a local level in order to understand if this rhetorical approach has any practical meaning. In Alexandra, the SACP also articulates strong support for bottom-up approaches to development. Local party chairperson, Monde Mbingeleli, argues that the ADF wrongfully assumes it represents the community. "Obviously," he asserts, "the ADF thinks that when you speak to them, you have spoken to Alexandra. And we are saying you can't claim that, that's dangerous" (intierview, Mbingeleli 2007). In his view, the modus operandi does not lend itself to proper community participation:

> they are saying that because they represent a lot majority of organisations, they expect that those organisations report back to those communities. Now, my question is how do they monitor that that happens (ibid)?

Here the SACP echoes a common criticism among Alexandrans about the lack of proper communication by the ARP and the ADF. But the local leaders of the party have also provided a more fundamental critique of the ADF:

> The ADF was created so that the community through their various organisations can influence the process of development. That's central. Now what we have seen is that developers and the provincial government, through the ARP, is now imposing their ideas on the ADF. And what is said is that people agreed to be used, so we said no, no, no, no, we can't. I mean there is no project in Alex which has happening which has been initiated with the community, none. These are all projects that have been imposed (ibid).

The local party therefore appears strongly critical of the ARP's top-down approach. The SACP's position about the ARP is that it does not adequately prioritise development in favour of the people of Alexandra. This section analyses the process through which the local SACP in Alexandra provides an alternative approach to participation in development from that offered by the ARP through the ADF. It seeks to answer the question: How does the SACP enable invented participatory spaces to exert power over the development process? A specific example of how the SACP supports an invented participatory space in S'swetla, an informal settlement in Alexandra, is used to provide insight into this question.

The history and demography of S'wetla has important implications for the emergence of the participatory space which responded to an ARP intervention in that area. S'swetla was originally occupied by residents of Alexandra who were displaced during the removals initiated by Steve Burger's administration in the late 1980s. At the time, the apartheid government was attempting to formalise squatting in peri-urban areas. As part of this process, the government threatened to displace these residents living in shacks in Alexandra to Orange Farm, but they objected and preferred to occupy open space on the periphery of Old Alexandra. Ali Rasetelo, who left standard 6 in the Northern Province (Limpopo) in 1969 to come to Alexandra explains:

> I went to Alexandra up 'til now. So I grew up in Alexandra. So because I was not bona fide, so I should be treated as a second class race……most of the shacks increased during the struggle

> where you remember the Alex four, Alex five when they arrested, we say '*Phambil*' with shacks, we are staying here by force. So, it's how S'swetla started (interview, Rasetelo 2008).

Many people built shacks in Old Alexandra, but hundreds of families also erected their new dwellings in open spaces such as Green and S'swetla. About 1000 shacks were built in S'swetla.in the late 1980s and 1990s. By 2003 or 2004, the number had grown to about 1,500 shacks, indicating a relatively slow but steady increase. However, over the past four years, the number of shacks in S'swetla has more than doubled to approximately 3,500. This rapid increase is likely due to the ARP which, for many recent occupants of S'swetla, may hold the promise of government subsidised housing provision. Each of these shacks is home to one family which means the population of this squatter camp is close to 15,000, and shacks are nearly piled up on top of each other. This has created a very unhealthy, unsafe and highly congested environment in which people live.

According to the ARP Benchmark Survey compiled by CASE, only 49% of residents in S'swetla felt that the ARP had positively impacted their lives (CASE 2005: 60) and 67% felt unsafe (ibid: 93). The survey also concluded that by 2005, residents of S'swetla were not more satisfied than they were in 2001 prior to the ARP (ibid: 73). Residents reflect other concerns including the fact that they have been living without any electricity since the end of 2007. Rasetelo complains that in S'swetla:

> Even now, it's dark. There's a lot of crime. I just heard last weekend, they have raped and killed one lady… There is no lights even in the houses. There is no electricity at all. None (ibid).

Despite these clearly impoverished conditions, many residents believe that the ARP is not doing enough to assist them. When asked about the ARP, one anonymous male resident responded that, "it's not happening in S'swetla. It's happening in other parts of Alex, not S'swetla. S'swetla is being neglected" (interview, anonymous 2006).

6.4 ARP Plans and S'swetla Resistance

In 2006, the ARP intervened in S'Swetla in order to build a bridge to connect Vasco De Gama road to the East Bank so that residents would not need to go through the highly congested Old Alexandra to travel to the East Bank. The ARP, with the support of the ADF and CLOs, campaigned strongly to create consensus on this particular development initiative. Their approach was underpinned by the need to show results quickly, which compromised the process of consultation with S'swetla residents who occupied the area in which the bridge would be built and were being targeted for removal.

Sizakele Nkosi, a Proportional Representative (PR) councillor for the ANC at the time, explained that in order for the ARP to undertake the construction of the bridge, the shacks in the proposed path of the bridge needed to be removed:

> We then took a decision that in order for us to be economic active or vibrant, we need to then create a link between the old Alex and the new… Alex. And we then took a decision that we will relocate people (interview, Nkosi 2007).

Because RDP houses were not available for the people of S'swetla to be accommodated, the ARP uses what it calls the Alexandra Transit Village to provide people with temporary accommodation before they can be moved into RDP houses. According to the ARP website:

> The transit village was built to enable infrastructure to be built in densely populated areas. The rationale was that houses were demolished and households placed in the transit facility while new base infrastructure was installed. Such households are then allocated to new housing projects. The transit facilities are therefore a fundamental part of the development and allocation process (ARP website (c)).

The ARP intended to move the S'swetla people from their shacks to Silver Town, a transit camp designed by the ARP for people to be moved for temporary accommodation.

This enables the ARP to proceed with development, in this case with the construction of the bridge, before RDP houses are ready to be occupied.

The logic behind the transit camp is that people will be temporarily accommodated in the transit camps (shacks) before they are able to go to RDP houses. This approach was determined prior to consultation with the people of S'swetla who initially did not take part in determining whether or not they would be moved, or where they would be moved to. According to Ali Rasetelo, an SACP member and ANC ward councillor for S'swetla between 1995 and 2000, "A CLO came to S'swetla to tell them that they must move to the area called Silver Town" (interview, Rasetelo 2008). The decision to displace people was not made by the residents of S'swetla, but rather, the ARP informed the people that they needed to be relocated so that the bridge can be built.

S'swetla residents felt undermined by the decision to remove them since they had felt neglected by the ARP previously, as suggested above, and also because this intervention was determined from the top-down and did not adequately address their interests. They did not oppose the building of the bridge, but that it was being prioritised at their expense. The ARP's attempt to employ its power by imposing the decision to remove S'swetla residents, led to the creation of what Cornwall (2004) calls an "invented" participatory space which intended to reconstitute development on its own terms and, thereby, to challenge the ARP's imposition of power in S'swetla. This space mobilised various leaders of S'swetla, who decided to call upon the assistance of the SACP in Alexandra in order to extend their influence

The broader community of S'swetla, especially those living in this particular area of S'swetla (approximately 300 people) became concerned. Ali Rasetelo highlights how the ARP's development plans were imposed onto the community, and how the leaders of S'swetla responded to this exclusion:

> …then the resistance started because they were not consulted by the ARP… They told ARP that they can't just move without consultation. Secondly, you were moving us to shacks where pigs were living… So they said we can't go there. So rather move us from shacks to houses, rather not from shack to shack (interview, Rasetelo 2008).

Sizakele Nkosi confirmed that "the resistance was not the relocation. People were saying we can't move from one shack to another. We want to move from a shack to a house" (interview, Nkosi 2007).

Being moved from a shack to another shack was unacceptable to the people of S'swetla. Reggie Vilakazi, a SANCO representative, confirms the problem that the S'swetla people feared this supposed temporary relocation would become permanent:

> the question was, you are removing us from a squatter camp from a shack and putting us into a shack again, in other words another squatter camp and the experience of people then was that those things that are temporary, 3 months or six months, people end up staying there for years and years, five years and more (interview, Vilakazi 2006).

An invented participatory space emerged when the residents of S'swetla mobiled to discuss how to counteract this decision and thereby to reconstitute the ARP's development plans. Long-standing residents of S'swetla had previous experiences of being evicted by the apartheid government, and this meant that they were pre-disposed to resisting this kind of intervention. Ali Rasetelo expressed residents' concerns that, "We must be respected as the citizen of the country. We can't stay in a shack for 26 years and then you move us again" (interview, Rasetelo 2008). Perhaps more importantly, the people of S'swetla had already felt neglected by the ARP and these plans did not offer a drastic alternative to the harsh living conditions that they were already burdened with. For many families displaced from their own shacks or abandoned factories, moving to the transit camp was considered to be a downgrade as the transit camp in Silver Town is barely suitable for humans to inhabit. The transit camp has only a few ablution facilities for nearly 1000 people who stay there and no social services. The shacks in the transit camp are often too small for an entire family, and tend to leak when it rains (interview, Chauke 2008). To some extent, the people of S'swetla were acting out of desperation.

The ARP's plans to build a bridge for economic vibrancy in Alexandra and to achieve fast-paced delivery led the ARP to ignore the demands of S'swetla residents.

The ARP views the relocation of people to the transit camp as a means by which to implement their development plans at a faster rate. By moving people into alternative accommodation, the ARP can proceed to build the bridge without forcibly removing people. This led to a top-down process of decision making that excluded those affected from taking part in constructing development and thereby created the structural conditions upon which people mobilised and formed their own participatory space.

This space began when leaders in S'swetla met to discuss what they should do to alter the ARP's development process, and thereby to exert their power. They chose to contact the SACP for assistance who supported the demands made by the residents of S'swetla. Clearly, this support occurred in opposition to the ARP's plans. Having a significant constituency in S'swetla, a representative of the SACP, Ali Rasetelo, spoke with the S'swetla leaders in order to hear their demands. Responding to why he was sent, Rasetelo said:

> as a party yes, I mean we are representing the poor. So we have started with the community to say I think you were right to resist because you are right. You can't be staying for 26 years and then you move from shack to shack you see? But as from there, as I was a leader, the alliance itself sent me to speak with those people… So I mean we can't just play with people's life from shack to shack where pigs were living. So we supported the people's grievances (interview, Rasetelo 2008).

The community initiated the process of creating an invented participatory space and then called on the local SACP to assist them in advancing their cause. The following section discusses how this local alliance engaged the invited spaces.

6.5 From Negotiations to Direct Action

The SACP responded first by attempting negotiations with the ADF, the ARP's invited participatory space, on behalf of S'swetla's participatory space. The SACP apparently believed that the ADF could be transformed from within. Elaborating on the prospect for development to be altered within invited spaces, Cornwall argues that the "space

produced by hegemonic authorities can be filled with alternative visions, whose involvement transforms their possibilities" (2004: 81). On the other hand, these spaces are imbued with power relations and those acting within them may suppress or ignore voices that do not fit within the boundaries that have been prescribed. In this case, the SACP could not influence the ARP through the ADF. Instead of providing the possibility for transformation, the ADF's strategy of exclusion represents an example in which invited spaces of participation are "so potent that they are simply pseudo-democratic instruments through which authorities legitimize already-taken policy decisions" (Cornwall 2004: 79-80).

Perhaps believing the SACP would have more leverage to negotiate decisions made in the ADF, S'swetla residents let the SACP negotiate on their behalf. The first substantive attempt at engaging in negotiations was therefore by the SACP in the name of S'swetla residents. At an ADF meeting, Mzwonke Mayekiso, then secretary of the SACP, questioned whether the bridge was a priority for the residents of Alexandra:

> Who is it going to serve in the first place? Are the poor going to benefit out of that bridge? Or do they just want this bridge to help people who are coming from Sandton to Alexandra (Interview, Mayekiso 2008)?

He says that as the SACP, "We wanted to know [from the ADF] the process and were questioning the importance of this bridge over the lives of the people. Is it going to serve the poorest of the poor" (ibid)? However, these questions were not addressed. Instead, Mayekiso said that the SACP were stigmatised by the ADF.

He explains that the ADF, "didn't understand us, they thought we were anti-development" (interview, Mayekiso 2008). Mayekiso further claimed that the ANC and ADF did not think the SACP had a genuine concern with the people of S'sweta, but that they have "a secret agenda, they want to score a political point as SACP and make us ANC seem as if we are not caring for our people" (interview, Mayekiso 2007).

The ARP, having built a consensus around development with the ADF and CLOs (see chapter 4), apparently held similar views. Mabandla Mwela, a CLO working for the

ARP in S'swetla criticised the SACP's involvement in S'swetla suggesting they had political motives, "and remember, it was during the period of the local government elections. So some organisations were exploiting that, campaigning" (interview, Mwela 2007). He echoed a view held by the ARP that the people of S'swetla were not really against being removed into the transit village, but that the SACP was lobbying them to gain political support in the upcoming elections. Rather than dealing with the substantive criticisms raised by the Communist Party and the people of S'swetla, the ARP, though the ADF and CLOs, chose to stigmatise them.

The policy of the ARP, which has determined who will be given houses and when, tends to exclude other voices from influencing housing allocations within the invited space offered by the ARP. The SACP was therefore not able to use its alliance status with the ANC as a platform through which to negotiate with the decisions made by the ARP. It appears that because the plans for the bridge had been determined, the ARP could not afford to heed to the demands of the people of S'swetla, because this would stall the development of the bridge. This meant that the ability of residents to transform the possibilities of space provided by hegemonic authorities (Cornwall 2004: 81) were limited due to the ARP's unrelenting approach to implementing a particular kind of development. Continuing with negotiations alone would simply mean that the power to determine the fate of the residents of S'swetla would remain in the ARP's hands.

The exclusionary nature of the ADF, which closed off the potential for alternative visions and practices of development, created the structural conditions under which a new kind of agency emerged out of the participatory space in S'swetla. This consisted of direct action, which was applied through a once-off march as the tactic with which to exert their power. The adoption of direct action created the conditions in which the power to control the ARP's practice of development was, momentarily, in the hands of S'swetla residents. Direct action became a powerful weapon in the hands of the people of S'swetla since it enabled them to resist the imposition of top-down development plans not through negotiating on the terms prescribed by the ADF and ARP, but on their own terms from the bottom-up.

Remarking on the protest that occurred on the 22 February 2006, Thakali reported in Alex Voice that about 3,000 angry residents headed to the ARP offices to protest the plan to build a bridge across the Jukskei River. They waved sign that read "people first, bridge after" (Thakali 2006). The leaders of the protest handed in a memorandum and threatened further mass action if the authorities failed to respond to their grievances satisfactorily within 14 days. Friday Mabunda, a leader of the march, warned:

> The biggest protest march Alexandra has seen in 10 years, we are fed up with these people and we want them to realise that we have had enough. We will boycott the elections if nothing is done about our plight… We have been waiting for houses for too long and to be moved from a shack to another shack is just an insult (in Thakali 2005).

S'swetla residents, with the SACP, exerted their power by making threats and publicising the event through a massive outpouring of resistance. The ARP became aware that, without forcing these people to move, and perhaps involving violence, the ARP could not construct the bridge. Remaining in their shacks around the bridge would serve as a potent resistance tactic in the hands of S'swetla residents.

6.6 S'swetla's Momentary Power and Surrender

The balance of power shifted in favour of S'swetla's participatory space since residents could use the strategy of remaining in their shacks to maintain leverage over the development process. The march indicated to the ARP that their removal plan would be met with massive resistance and perhaps violence that would lead to negative media coverage. As a result, the ARP employed CLOs to negotiate with the leaders of S'swetla and they agreed that they would be moved to the transit camp, albeit for a very short period of time. The residents of S'swetla then moved willingly thereby surrendering their ability to exert power over the ARP. This is significant because it meant that when the ARP broke its promise of moving residents out of the transit camp within three months, S'swetla's participatory space had to again negotiate on the terms that the ARP had prescribed, through the ADF. While S'swetla's participatory space held the possibility of

altering development and thereby bringing about aspects of transformation, the ARP's re-exertion of power, through CLOs, undermined these prospects and thereby enabled the ARP to regain power.

After the march, Julian Baskin, the director of the ARP at the time, said that he had seen the memorandum from the S'swetla residents and that he would discuss it with the relevant people (in Thakali 2005). At this point, CLOs became more intimately involved in the process of the removals because development could not go forward. The ARP and the people of S'swetla eventually made an agreement to house the people for a short time in the transit facility, and then put them in houses in extension 7 around Alexandra. As Ali Rasetelo explained, "the resistance went well… The ARP agreed and they were sent to the new camps here in Marlboro" (interview, Rasetelo 2008). Sizakele Nkosi confirms this:

> So that's where the resistance was and we then negotiated with the community and they agreed to move to the transit camp and then after the transit camp, they will then move to houses in extension 7…in this case, they agreed to stay in a transit camp for a short time and then later move to a permanent place (interview, Nkosi 2007).

It appeared that the SACP and the people of S'swetla forced the ARP to reshape their practice of development in regard to how long they would need to wait in shacks before being moved to RDP houses. They seemed to have reconfigured the imposition of top-down development plans by the ARP into plans that expressed the concerns of the invented participatory space on the ground. However, the promises made by the ARP to move residents out of the transit camp in a short time were broken and this was facilitated by the involvement of CLOs.

Since CLOs are primarily a tool that the ARP uses to implement top-down development plans (see chapter 4), involving CLOs in this affair could not be seen as a genuine commitment by the ARP to address the demands of the people of S'swetla. Mabandla Mwela, CLO in S'swetla at the time, explains why he was involved with S'swetla residents:

> They must feel themselves being part of the whole process, not just them wanting houses… They will only accept that when you communicate to them about that. So we just have to make them understand that there is this process, the process is the bridge. The process is not for you getting houses, it's the whole development (interview, Mwela 2006).

Mabandla Mwela suggests that development has been determined and that people must become a part of it because it is in the interest of the people of Alexandra. In this case, CLOs were employed to sensitise the people to the ARP and to get them to move so that development could forward. Initially feeling excluded from the process, the involvement of the CLOs apparently represented to S'swetla leaders an attempt by the ARP to enable them to participate. As such, they then agreed to move. However, promises of staying for a short period of time were not kept. Ali Rasetelo elaborates that, "now they staying more than a year" (interview, Rasetelo 2008). He further explains that, "the problem is that you find the construction of extension 7 is also slow" (interview, Rasetelo 2008) and there is no RDP houses to put S'swetla residents.

This highlights how CLOs act as a "cushion" for the ARP since they have the effect of softening the blows of top-down development. They are able to hear the people affected, but not necessarily to heed to their demands or be held accountable. They are paid by the ARP to help implement ARP plans, refusing to do so would likely lead to unemployment. In S'swetla, CLOs can say that they have done their job and will continue to get paid by the ARP. The people had already made way for the bridge and it was in the process of being built, service delivery was being achieved. The transit camp enables service delivery to appear to be happening at a faster rate than without it, albeit at the expense of people such as those living in S'swetla, many of whom continue to remain in the transit camp for over a year even though they did not agree to do so.

The outcome, for many, was precisely what S'swetla residents were initially concerned would happen if they were displaced by the ARP. Because S'swetla residents had already been moved and the construction of the bridge was occurring, ARP leaders did not need to concern themselves with the demands of those affected anymore. Power shifted back to the ARP. In this sense, with the assistance of CLOs, the participation of the people of S'swetla is used to administer top-down development in relation to the

demands made by the residents of S'swetla, despite the resistance and negotiations that their resistance entailed. Neither the SACP nor the S'wetla residents continued to exert their power over the ARP. The SACP's support in this instance was therefore ephemeral and ineffective. As a result, the process of participation in development, in this case, continued to involve key aspects of tyranny despite what initially seemed to provide aspects of transformation through people's agency.

6.1.1 SANCO: Transformation Through Participatory Spaces?

When SANCO was launched in 1992, it brought together under a single national umbrella many of the most important civic organisations that had played a pivotal role in the anti-apartheid struggle. In the early 1990s, these civics were also in the forefront of struggles and negotiations to reconfigure local municipalities to reflect the power and interests of working class communities. During its beginning stages, SANCO played a significant role in shaping the Local Government Transition Act. Also, according to Heller and Ntlokonkulu, "Through Planact, SANCO had a role in shaping the RDP chapter on housing. And the RDP as a whole assigned a direct and critical role for the civics in the transformation process" (2001: 13).

At this point, it appeared that SANCO satisfied Hickey and Mohan's (2004) three preconditions for a participatory project to lead to transformative outcomes. In the early 1990s, SANCO articulated a radical and transformative development programme, which rested on the two crucial pillars of popular participation and eliminating poverty. SANCO's vision of civics, grassroots agents for change, or what has been termed in this thesis as participatory spaces, satisfied the third requirement since they were intended to be rooted within the community and to secure the participation of marginal groups, or what Mzwanele Mayekiso called, the interests of the "working class" (Mayekiso 1992). These participatory spaces satisfy the first and second conditions since SANCO evolved out of a radical tradition of resistance against apartheid. In other words, it was premised upon the centrality of the interests of the working class and therefore the need for a radical project that could overthrow capitalism so that the majority's needs could be met. Mzwanele Mayekiso, the then ACO (which later became SANCO) organising secretary,

came to symbolise to some activists, the desire to connect Marxist thinking to civic practice. In 1992, just prior to the launch of SANCO, he argued that "if the movement within the ANC towards meeting basic needs begins to fail, it is logical to expect that working-class organs will continue to press for programmes that meet those needs" (ibid: 38). Civil society was intended not as a support network for the ANC state's development trajectory, but rather as a means by which to bring about a significant redistribution of wealth to the working class. Mayekiso confirmed that the relationship between working class civil society means "empowered, class-conscious communities whose good relations with a progressive democratic state will permit a redistribution of wealth that also leads to new social relations" (ibid: 40).

With the ANC's rise to power, however, the role of SANCO changed dramatically. SANCO no longer was viewed as an organisation that could challenge state power, but instead, largely became a vehicle through which the ANC could implement development. As Heller and Ntlokonkulu explain, SANCO ceded its power to the ANC:

> In the euphoric aftermath of South Africa's first democratic elections – quickly followed up by local government elections – the extraordinary mass legitimacy enjoyed by the new representative government all but eclipsed the more direct and participatory forms of democracy championed by the civics. In its efforts to secure its position in the alliance, SANCO all but ruled out protest actions, depriving the movement of a key mobilisational tool and source of strategic leverage (2001: 14).

Furthermore, the leadership and organisational capacity of SANCO to represent civic structures on the ground, was undermined by its support for ANC structures, especially civic leaders' drive to become part of the ANC local government. This meant that the drive to build civic power in working class communities shifted to building party structures (Heller and Ntlokonkulu 2001: 14).

SANCO, which once held the possibility to nurture invented participatory spaces and enable them to shape the ANC's development trajectory, by 1995 became a structure through which to support the ANC. As a result, Heller and Ntlokonkulu point out that:

> The most glaring failure… has been the inability to develop and advance independent policy positions. By all accounts, SANCO has had little or no influence on government policy-making

> since 1994...Its participation in national forums has been reduced to little more than a symbolic presence (2001: 16).

1997 witnessed Mzwanele Mayekiso's expulsion from SANCO, which arguably marked a low point from which SANCO is still recovering (ibid: 12). Mayekiso's dissent resulted from his dissatisfaction with SANCO's abandonment of a bottom-up approach towards one that was top-down and corporatised (ibid: 10). SANCO no longer functioned as an autonomous space through which to offer radical alternatives which were defined by the working class.

SANCO has had particular difficulty asserting an independent role in post-apartheid South Africa, while at the same time remaining an ally of the ANC (Zuern 2002). Without the ability to make decisions independently from the ANC, it is unlikely that SANCO would be able to support the local-level demands from the people whom it claims to represent. Since many of its leaders took positions as ANC councillors, a Regional Sanco leader asked, "How will a Sanco leader, who also holds the position of councillor, conduct himself if he is called on to lead a march of residents against the local authority? Who will lead the march against – himself?" (New Nation, 28 February 1997: 33 in Zuern 2004).

This problem and SANCO's inability to raise funds to support itself has led to a situation in which:

> many local level SANCO activists and leaders of breakaway civic movements argue that SANCO, as a national organisation, has become so hierarchical and bureaucratised that internal democracy has become a sham and branches have lost their autonomy. SANCO has moreover been compromised by its close association with the ANC (Heller and Ntlokonkulu 2001: 9)

This means that SANCO's ability to construct a radical agenda based on working class interests is severely undermined. Furthermore then, SANCO's ability to contribute to the construction and sustaining of invented participatory spaces is severely limited by its relationship to the ANC. Zuern therefore suggests that "SANCO's national structure serves to undermine true participatory processes" (2004: 182).

On the other hand, Heller and Ntlokonkulu dispute the argument that SANCO is moribund since "at the branch level civics continue to play an important role in community life" (Heller and Ntlokonkulu 2001: 7). Furthermore, its leadership may be bureaucratic, but in terms of local level politics SANCO has a substantial degree of autonomy and may therefore be able to "nurture significant levels of community participation" (Heller and Ntlokonkulu 2001: 11).

They conclude that "SANCO, for all its organisational weaknesses, remains the most important community-based-organisation (CBO) in South Africa" and that it "deepens democracy by providing a community level structure through which community members can voice their everyday concerns over life as well as within the sphere of government" (2001: 8). In this sense, SANCO still has aspects of "people's power" of the 1980s.

Recently, Zuern (2006) has argued for the need to use a nuanced approach in order to analyse the strategies that SANCO uses to engage with the government. According to Zuern, the general tendency, in drawing boundaries with the state or governing party… is "to assert that an actor is either critical or co-opted, either 'in' or 'out'" (2006: 180). Zuern argues, rather, that it is possible to "employ both institutional and extra-institutional tactics, to both challenge and co-operate with the state" (ibid: 180-181). Because SANCO has both structures at the local level which SANCO claims to represent and aligns closely with the ANC, SANCO can negotiate or work closely with the ANC in order to pursue the development trajectories that its constituency demands. Instead of operating only in non-institutional spaces, which is often suggested in the literature that describes social movements, SANCO is in a position to use both institutional and non-institutional mechanisms in order to meet the demands of residents on the ground.

6.1.2 Envisioning Bottom-Up Development

In Alexandra, even today, a yard system exists in which residents meet to deal with problems that arise from within the community, but this system is severely limited since the vast majority of residents do not participate in them. Instead, many residents have

committed to themselves to the ANC's development plans. As discussed in chapter three, the yard system has strong elements of participation occurring from the bottom-up, in which information goes from yard leaders (who represent the people in the yard), to block leaders, to branch or street leaders, and then to the area committee. This system, which was highly effective in the mid 1980s and early 1990s, is often discussed with enthusiasm by SANCO members as well as other residents who were part of the civic during apartheid. In fact, many residents argue that development in Alexandra is failing because the ARP is not driven by the people of Alexandra. Adebnego Madu, a resident of Alexandra who is now involved with an NGO based in Alexandra, argues that:

> The ARP should be people driven, should be people driven. If they can take the suggestion that we used to give them that a bottom up strategy is the most important than a top-down strategy. But they don't understand what we mean. Because as far as we are here in Alexandra, we know that people of the same Avenue believes to the very same people of their avenue as we are staying in the avenues in Alexandra (interview, Madu 2006).

Another resident, Babsi Matebula, who has been living in Alexandra since 1959 argued that:

> The renewal project is not successful because they didn't engage the community. It was said in the newspapers, it was said in the billboards. It was said on the TV stations but… the community was not engaged (interview, Matebula).

The need for a bottom-up approach to development, along the lines of SANCO, and the unwillingness of people to submit to development programmes that have been designed without their active involvement, or at the very least consent, is strongly evident in Alexandra. In other words, as suggested in chapter three, there is a notably strong culture of popular participation and resistance in Alexandra. SANCO is largely a product of this, though SANCO's claims are relatively weak now and it no longer operates effectively.

Though SANCO clearly does not have the community support it once had in Alexandra under the AAC and ACO in the mid 1980s and early 1990s, it currently attempts to re-establish itself as hegemonic in Alexandra. SANCO goes well beyond the

SACP's vision of participation in development in Alexandra because it defines exactly how participatory spaces should relate to development. Gabriel Ngwenya, Secretary of the East Bank branch of SANCO in Alexandra, explains the specific participatory system that he claims SANCO adheres to in Alexandra:

> The organisation is operating very, very clear. It's operating as a mass based organization. We start from yard committee. In the yard committee, within the residents in that yard, in the yard you'll find there's about 20 to 60 families… 20 families in that area, in that yard. That yard, they elect a yard committee, a yard rep. In a yard rep., they come together with that rep., they elect a street committee. And after the street committee, they will elect an area committee (interview Ngwenya 2006).

He goes further to explain the system of governance of SANCO that operates outside of the Alexandra community and how that filters to and from the yard committee:

> After area committee, we had branch… After the branch, we've got a regional structure, it's Johannesburg region. After region we've got a structure called provincial, and we've got a structure called national that's governing. But it starts somewhere. Grassroots level. From a rep, a street committee, a block committee, a yard committee, and an area committee, a branch… Step to step (ibid).

Though this system does not function properly, this system can enable information to be disseminated from the national structure down to the grassroots. Equally important, participation at the grassroots level has the potential to direct the decision-making of SANCO as a national structure. In this manner, the development plans adopted by SANCO can become exactly those which were decided at the grassroots level. In other words, participatory spaces on the ground, through people's collective action and energy, determine development trajectories.

SANCO holds well organised meetings on a monthly basis with a broad constituency around Alexandra, as well as weekly meetings in the branch level, and other more informal meetings that go on at the yard level. Gabriel Ngwenya argues that:

> as an organisation we have been engaged in development and making sure that we understand because a civic organisation like SANCO is dealing with bread and butter, we know exactly what is happening on the ground, what our people want (ibid).

In another attempt to argue that SANCO is the most representative structure of the people of Alexandra, he explains that the purpose of SANCO is:

> To represent the community, to speak on behalf of the community. To take up issues that effect our community. To differ if something is not correct for our communities. You see the problem is that, if the community is happy, SANCO is happy. If the community is not happy, therefore SANCO is not happy. Because SANCO is the community (ibid).

While SANCO is in touch with key issues on the ground, Gabriel Ngwenya's claim that they actually "are" the community is farfetched given the fact it represents a relatively small constituency.

Furthermore, SANCO has been part of the ADF since its inception and this signifies SANCO's weakness. Instead of offering an alternative approach to development, SANCO accepts the parameters of the "invited" space, the ADF and thereby those of the ARP. Still, however, SANCO is critical of the ADF's decision-making processes regarding development. It argues that the ADF is not based within community structures and therefore does not represent a mass base. Gabriel Ngwenya is careful to lay to harsh a criticism against the ADF when he states that "we want to change ADF, not necessarily we don't want the ADF. We want the ADF but we want to restructure it" so that civic structures can have more control (interview, Ngwenya 2008). SANCO argues that instead of making decisions unilaterally, through the ADF, decisions should be made in consultation with those directly affected by development (ibid). The next section introduces the Iphuteng School Cluster where SANCO later supported an invented participatory space in opposition to the ARP and ADF.

6.1.3 Exerting Power in Iphuteng

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The Iphuteng school cluster is the primary example where SANCO has intervened to support an invented participatory space that has a development agenda which conflicts with the ARP and ADF. This provides an example in which to understand the local strategies that SANCO undertakes when faced with this situation. The Iphuteng school cluster, which is between 17th and 19th avenue along London Road in Alexandra, has been proliferated by 12,000 households (mainly shacks). This over-crowding makes access to four schools in that area difficult and is a threat to the school children who must pass there to go to and from school. There have also been allegations that some school children have been molested or robbed on their way passed the shacks. Prior to the ARP's implementation of its plan to remove the shacks to create block by block development in 2005, some of the people in Iphuteng were part of SANCO and dealt primarily with internal or domestic issues that residents were faced with. When the ARP intervened to impose development from the top-down, however, the residents of Iphuteng began to mobilise in order to exert power over the development process and thereby became an invented participatory space. While some of the residents agreed to move, others stayed because they believed that where they were being taken to, Bramfischerville, was too far away from jobs and schools.

The residents then contacted SANCO in order to obtain additional support for their cause and SANCO attempted, but failed to alter the ARP's development trajectory through negotiations with the ADF. SANCO then made a decision to act independently in support of the residents of Iphuteng and mobilised with the residents of Iphuteng who agreed that they would not leave their shacks. When bulldozers came to remove residents and destroy their shacks, the residents and SANCO exerted collective direct action by standing outside their shacks and refusing to move. This gave the residents of Iphuteng leverage over the development process and left them and the ARP deadlocked. In response, the ARP re-exerted its power by taking the residents to court and obtaining momentary victory in the court case which determined that the residents must move to Bramfischerville.

Prior to the ARP's intervention, Mahlatini Uchebe lived on 17th avenue in Alexandra, which is part of the Iphuteng School Cluster. He was Chairperson for the Freedom Charter branch of SANCO. Uchebe is 63 years old and is unemployed and

depends on his children for support. He has been living in the Iphuteng School Cluster since 1995. Uchebe moved to Iphuteng and built a shack there because the people he was living with asked him to leave (interview, Uchebe 2008). He explains that others later moved to Iphuteng so that they could have personal space:

> when the family begins to get larger, one wants to get away and get their own place. Or, maybe you have a child and the child has grown up and now the child wants his own place (ibid).

Uchebe was involved with the civics in Alexandra in the 1980s when the AAC existed. When he arrived in Iphuteng SANCO was undertaking "programmes, lobbying [and] mobilisation" to recruit members (ibid). This is when Uchebe "began to be idenitified [by SANCO] as a person who could mobilise the community against injustice" (ibid). A yard/street/block/area committee was established and remains in place to day as a tool by which to address issues of development as well as day-to-day issues that arise within yards primarily as a result of the over-crowding and poor living conditions.

Uchebe explains that in Alexandra, depending on the problem, a different layer of SANCO's organisation will get involved to help members of the community cope:

> The problems and their needs, they vary according to their intensity. There are these which are minor like women maybe fighting for water maybe splashed next to somebody or… washing line, or this family not cleaning the toilets. So these are minor issues which can be addressed at the yard level. Or maybe… they will end at the block level. But there are these now which are really challenging like housing. So these must reach the area level or maybe even the regional level (interview, Uchebe 2008)

Prior to the ARP's intervention, which threatened the living conditions in Iphuteng, residents did not mobilise substantially around issues of development, but primarily dealt with everyday issues at the yard and block level. In other words, they did not mobilise to create and sustain an invented space of participation to challenge the ARP's development trajectory.

The ARP's block by block strategy seeks to clear out the Iphuteng area in order to give nearby schools space for playgrounds and to make the area safer for children who

pass piles of shacks on their way to school. Given the ARP's perception that there was no land available in the near vicinity of Alexandra to occupy displaced residents, the ARP's housing strategy at the time stated that residents of Iphuteng would be moved out of Alexandra and given an RDP house in Bramfischerville 40kms away. Between 2001 and 2005, Alexandra lagged behind the Breaking New Ground strategy introduced by the national government in 2002 which sought to keep people closer to the city centres. Neels Letter indicates that:

> Until 2005, because of the fact that we didn't have readily available land in close proximity to Alex, and the housing projects… that we could (not) relocate the people to create the necessary space and room for development in Alex itself, people relocated to basically two areas: Diepsloot which is now North of the City and Bramfisherville which is an area in the greater Soweto area. Now that was an entrenched move until there was the political resistance built up again (interview, Letter 2007).

Due to residents' unwillingness to leave Alexandra, the ARP resorted to forced removals to ensure that development plans could be implemented. Julian Baskin explained this time period as one in which the government employed the "red ants", a security company which is notorious for assisting with forced removals (interview, Baskin 2007). Sizakele Nkosi, who was intimately involved with the early relocations that Baskin is referring to, confirms that, "by then we didn't have any land around Alex that those people could be relocated to" (interview, Nkosi 2007).

The ARP intended to clear the shacks and build a playground in the Iphuteng School Cluster. De-densifying this land is the first official block by block project to be deemed as a priority of the community:

> Some 4,800 pupils are denied the safety and security and facilities required for a decent education by the high-density shack settlement that has encroached on virtually every square inch of school land. A Court eviction order is in place. As houses become available this school site will be emptied and redeveloped as a proper school resource (The Official ARP Website (b)).

An ARP team building report between ARP officials and the ADF suggests that even by mid-2005 (shortly after the MEC announced that people would no longer be relocated outside of the greater Alexandra area), the ARP insisted that it should continue moving people far away from Alexandra:

> a Supreme Court order has been granted to ARP to evict the 509 squatters occupying the Iphuteng space that is meant for school grounds. These people have no problem in being moved to Braamfischerville. The MEC for Housing issued a directive at the ARP Review Summit that no one will be moved outside a 15km radius. This is where all the ADF will have to come in to convince MEC for Housing to change her mind about relocations to Bramfischerville. Just note that the ARP has 250 sites fully serviced at Braamfischerville that can accommodate people at any time (ARP 2005).

The ARP focused on delivery targets that it needs to achieve and is aware and must deal directly with the land cost implications that moving people closer to Alexandra will have for the ARP. The MEC is one-step removed from this and later saw forced removals as politically unsustainable. A possible decision to locate people around the general vicinity of Alexandra is compounded by the fact that Alexandra does not have open land around it that is readily available. Linda Memela points out that, unlike Soweto and Thembisa, Alexandra is surrounded by well-established and high cost residential areas including Kew, Sandton, Limbro Park, and the industrial sites of Wynberg and Marlboro. He concludes that:

> We don't have an open space in Alex. That is a challenge which leads to us looking for space somewhere else away from Alex. So it's difficult to implement even that policy of saying let us not move people away from Alex, out of Alex (interview, Memela 2007).

Prior to this policy change, the ARP used forced removals to send people to Bramfischerville, which meant that the ARP was exerting their power over the development process from the top-down. According to Mahlatini Uchebe, the ARP obtained evictions orders and councillors handed them to Iphuteng residents in the beginning of 2005, which stated that they needed to leave their properties within 10 days.

He says that "the councillors were insisting that the law says that you have to be moved away. They were not even using the fancy word "reallocated," they were being removed forcefully, whether you like it or not" (interview, Uchebe 2008). Uchebe further explains that initially, when the first bulldozers came to destroy their shacks and remove people, some people did move to Braamfischerville without knowing the repercussions and "because they needed housing" (ibid).

However, others believed that they had too much to lose by being moved to Bramfischerville and would only agree to move to the greater Alexandra area. Bramfischerville was too far from where their kids go to school, their jobs and social networks. One of those affected, Albertina Xaba – 62 years old – complained:

> I am told we might be moved to Bramfischerville near Soweto, where the people who lived along the Jukskei river were resettled when they were evicted two years ago. Will I be able to start a new life in a new place at this age?... I am not ready to be taken anywhere else while there are so many vacant spaces around Alexandra. The council should buy us land here… I would like to be buried here because Alexandra is the only place I have known in more than 30 years. I do not want to move from here, not even for a palace (in Ellis and Tau 2005).

The top-down development plans of the ARP, to forcibly remove people to Bramfischerville, clearly undermined the interests of many Iphuteng residents. This provided the impetus for residents to mobilise and form their own "invented" participatory space to challenge the ARP. Those who were left in Iphuteng resisted. Mahlatini Uchebe explains that "when the council wanted to come back with the question of reallocation, because we already knew…[from those] who were already relocated, that the situation is bad… it's not good, it's not conducive to the person living" (interview, Uchebe 2008).

SANCO was then contacted about the grievances in Iphuteng:

> members of SANCO came to our office, raise issues, saying Comrade Gab, we can't go, it's far away from where we are going… that when they move was around August. Think of children that will now travel from Braamfischer to Alex. You see? Because the bus, it was another issue.

> There are two, people have not enough money for traveling… Also, the structure itself there were not completed, you see (interview, Ngwenya 2008)?

Like the SACP's support in S'swetla, SANCO supported Iphuteng residents in opposition to the plans of the ARP. SANCO's first attempt to employ power over the development process was to negotiate with the ADF, the ARP's invited participatory space.

Representatives of SANCO went to the ADF to speak on behalf of Iphuteng residents but, according to Gabriel Ngwenya, "we couldn't reach a decision with them" (interview, Ngwenya 2008). Indeed, the ARP and ADF had already instituted consensus development and thereby "purified" (Kothari 2001: 143) its approach to development. As explained in detail in chapter four, any challenge to their consensus was therefore difficult to challenge on the terms of the ADF's participatory space. From 2001-2005, the ARP and ADF's development consensus regarding where people are moved to when they are displaced for block by block development was based on the perception that there was no land in which to accommodate people close Alexandra who needed to be displaced in order to de-densify particular areas. The ARP thus did not consider moving people to places nearby Alexandra and any resistance was met with "discursive closure" (Cornwall 2004: 75). This meant that the practical implications of meeting people's demands was unacceptable, and was therefore labeled as deviant. In other words, SANCO's ability to negotiate within the confines of the ADF was limited by the fact that the ARP and ADF's consensus approach to development shapes "the very boundaries of agency" (Cornwall 2004: 81).

Referring to SANCO's attempts at negotiation with the ADF, Gabriel Ngwenya explains that they could not meet their demands through the ADF:

> We had to, we were independent… So that, if some issues are not being addressed there, we are able to pull out as SANCO to challenge issues. That's why we can march. Not necessarily we don't have the right to march, we can march, we can protest as an organisation… we were able to do those things without the ADF. And we are still continuing engaging the authorities, the government, as an organisation without the ADF. You see (interview, Ngwenya 2008)?

When SANCO realised it was going nowhere with the ADF on this issue, it bypassed the ADF and engaged the ARP directly thereby employing power outside of the parameters of the ARP's invited participatory space. Zuern refers to SANCO's place here as shifting from institutional to "extra-institutional" tactics (Zuern 2006: 181). Mahlatini Uchebe discusses how residents of Iphuteng joined SANCO to assist their cause:

> those who remained and realised that they are being tricked by the government, they now decided to join SANCO in vast numbers. And then now when they are in SANCO, they are in a structure that is vocal and can be able to resist on their behalf. Resistance that is… without violence. So SANCO is resisting, but in a mature way (interview, Uchebe 2008).

When the bulldozers came again to remove people a second time, SANCO and the Iphuteng residents were well organised and prepared to use the strategy of direct action in order to employ their power on their own terms. SANCO explained to the people that "those who want to move, you can move, but those who want to stay, can stay," and that the majority decided to stay (ibid). Uchebe remembered that when the bulldozers arrived, the "committee did not even want to entertain the negotiation. The committee just told the people who were bulldozing, to get away, and they did until now" (ibid). It became clear that the ARP could not impose development onto this community and the balance of power was tilted momentarily in favour of Iphuteng residents since they would not be removed. This left development in this part of Alexandra deadlocked. In response, the ARP attempted to reassert its power once again by taking the residents to court since the residents remained in violation of the court interdict that the ARP had obtained. According to Uchebe, "SANCO, because of its strength and its access to strong legal representatives, like lawyers, they did resist legally" (ibid).

According to Ellis and Tau, 590 of the 703 families registered with the municipality opposed the court order (2005). As suggested above, the ARP and ADF stated that there was not anywhere closer where they could relocate the people to. After losing their case in the high court, the people of Iphuteng appealed to the Supreme Court of Appeal with the assistance of SANCO. Ellis and Tau further reveal that "one of their grounds for appeal was that the eviction notice was not in a language of the members that

the playground community understood" (2005). However, the City of Johannesburg convincingly argued that they knew about the displacement anyway and Judge Brand dismissed the appeal. The court ruled that, as long as these people are being given alternative accommodation, they can be evicted. This ruling shifted power back into the hands of the ARP and suggested that it would implement the initial top-down development plans.

6.1.4 The Straw that Broke the Camel's Back

The ARP's power was shortlived and two factors influenced a shift in power from the ARP back to the Iphuteng residents. First, the ANC provincial government was being put under increased pressure to implement the Breaking New Ground strategy (2004) in Alexandra. This policy was intended to keep displaced people close to city centres and therefore meant that people in places like Alexandra should not be displaced far away from their homes. Second, the build up of resistance by other alternative sites of participation independent of SANCO and Iphuteng, created the conditions in which power shifted in favour of the residents of Iphuteng. This change in policy was not only the result of the resistance from Iphuteng's participatory space, but was the result of an accumulation of multiple processes of resistance. The resistance in Iphuteng was therefore the "straw that broke the camel's back". Directly after the court's decision to remove Iphuteng residents, the MEC made a public announcement that people were only to be moved into houses that were 15kms away from Alexandra. Although this was the official policy, its application in Alexandra resulted in moving people within a 5km radius. This negated the court's decision that they could be moved to Bramfischerville. Before the court made its decision, the MEC for Housing, Nomvula Mokonyane, seemed to sympathise with the concerns of these people and said people will no longer be moved to Bramfischerville. Since then, the ARP and ADF have claimed that the resistance of people being moved far away (to places like Bramfischerville) built up and that the ARP "compromised" (interview, Memela 2007) to keep them within 5kms.

It became unsustainable for the ARP to continue forcibly removing people from Alexandra and the MEC therefore was forced to give in to the demands of the people. Neels Letter explains how the strategy changed in mid 2005, "due to political pressure against relocating Alex people to other parts of the city" (interview, Letter 2007). Because there was no land available near Alexandra, people were relocated to Bramfisherville (Soweto) and Diepsloot (North of the City). He makes the point that this "was an entrenched move until… the political resistance built up again":

> From the Alex people saying you know, we are being relocated far away from our social structures and job opportunities…25kms away from Alex. So the housing strategy up until then was…for housing opportunities to become available, we need to relocate Alex people. So when this resistance that was reflected in the decision that the mayoral committee took as well as the provincial housing department, so that we needed to change our strategy and we needed to identify land opportunities in the immediate vicinity of Alex to relocate people that we need to relocate from Alex (ibid).

The ADF no longer considers moving people to Bramfischerville. SANCO therefore played a key role in influencing a decision outside of the ADF's boundaries. They helped force the ARP to stop removing "new residents" to Bramfischerville against their own will and assisted shacks dwellers in obtaining victory.

The ARP website therefore states that:

> The new housing strategy (October 2005) was greatly influenced by the lessons learnt from the early years of the project… The original Alex housing strategy aimed to relocate households living within floodplains, tributaries and road reserves to large housing projects outside the Alexandra sub-region. The policy was extremely unpopular with those relocated even though they were substantially better off with regards to access to urban services. Indeed evidence exists that many have simply returned to Alexandra to live in shacks once again (ARP website (c)).

The participatory processes in relation to the removals of people from Alexandra have had aspects of tyranny and transformation. Since the Jukskei Removals in 2001, one of the very first interventions of the ARP, people had been forcibly removed out of Alexandra, against people's will. However, this was never solely top-down since people

were not passive pawns, but rather active agents who resisted from the bottom-up. The process of participation had aspects of transformation since people actively engaged with these policies, not usually formally, but through popular resistance. As the above quote states, "many have simply returned to Alexandra to live in shacks once again." Though this is probably an exaggeration, Sizakele Nkosi has suggested that 90% of the people who were removed to Bramfischerville and Diepsloot have actually come back to Alexandra creating a situation in which the ARP was achieving no de-densification of areas in Alexandra (interview, Nkosi 2007). As Julian Baskin also stated, "all the evidence was that people would come back to Alex anyhow" (interview, Baskin 2007). This is also clearly a form of resistance by the people that is less organised and more individual, but clearly effective at changing the future policy. They contributed to the unsustainable nature of the process of top-down removals far away from Alexandra as well and to the change in policy that happened after the resistance by SANCO and the people of the Iphuteng school cluster in early and mid 2005.

Even though the ADF's participatory mechanisms excluded SANCO, and other residents, from making the decision, the outcome of the change in policy has meant that development has been determined from the bottom up. This confirms the point that participatory process of particular spaces, in this case the ADF, may exclude the voices of those effected, but that people can create their own spaces, or use pre-existing spaces to grow a new movement from which to resist the top-down character of development. SANCO resisted and the combined resistance from various stakeholders led to the change in policy.

Removing people to places far away from Alexandra was the basis (i.e. structure, in Giddens's (1984) terms) upon which people resisted in order to express their dissatisfaction. In response to this resistance, the government has changed its strategy (i.e. structure) by conceding to some of the basic demands of the people. This represents, according to Giddens (1984), "the duality of structure" since resistance (or agency) happens on the basis of structure, while at the same time structure is shaped by agents.

What was once a completely unacceptable plan for the ARP and ADF, is now acceptable. The resistance by those affected has changed the policy and discourse of the ARP. In the corridors of the ARP's power, plans have now been made to move people

by blocks close to Alexandra. What was once not a conducive site of power, the ADF and ARP, for people to negotiating not to be displaced far away from Alexandra, is now accepted practice and therefore does not even need to be negotiated. This makes the ADF a site that was "in transformation" (Cornwall 2004: 76), as result of the build up of years of resistance against forced removals in Alexandra over time.

6.1.5 Reactive Participatory Spaces

The SACP and SANCO are faced with similar limitations in terms of their ability to enable invented participatory spaces to influence development. They both prescribe to the ARP's invited space and therefore do not offer alternatives that go beyond prioritising specific interventions. Because of this, they do not seek to sustain the mobilisation of the masses under an alternative development agenda. Critically, the SACP and SANCO support invented participatory spaces when the ARP imposes interventions from the top-down onto part of their constituency, but they disappear quickly thereafter.

The SACP assisted S'swetla's participatory space by attempting negotiations with the ADF on behalf of the people of S'swetla and then, when demands were not met, they organised a huge march of 3000 residents. The SACP's lack of sustained engagement with the ADF after promises are not kept points to a flaw in the SACP's ability to mobilise the residents of Alexandra. The SACP creates a spark in S'swetla, but lets it burn out. The case study of their assistance in S'swetla illustrates that while it was suggested that the SACP seeks a more meaningful version of participation than the ADF, they have not gone far in reality. While leaders of the SACP have mentioned that the people of S'swetla are still waiting to be moved to RDP houses, they have not indicated that they are assisting them in any significant manner.

Unlike the SACP, which provides initial assistance to the people of S'swetla, SANCO has a more sustained interaction with the community and continues to work with them after the protests now that houses are being allocated. SANCO engages with imminent development, but does not engage with development as an underlying process of social change by questioning the resource confines of the ARP or offering a real alternative to the ARP. For SANCO, like the SACP, Mosse's depiction of a participatory

farming systems development project in the Bhil tribal region of western India, people's "needs" are "shaped by perceptions of what the agency was able to deliver" (2001 20-21). Because the demands made by SANCO do not question the broader resource confines of the ARP. Instead, like the ADF its development agenda consists of "planning knowledge" rather than "people's knowledge" (Mosse 2001).

Instead, SANCO has helped bring about the reprioritisation of development. This means that their engagement with the community is only based around specific interventions, in this case the resistance against evictions, and they do not engage the broader community on development issues in any broad way to provide a platform from which they could articulate alternatives to the ARP's development scheme.

For example, the houses being allocated in extension 7 to the people of Iphuteng could have been based around a socialist alternative to housing in Alexandra that was more inclusive and provided greater resources to the people of Alexandra. However, the shift towards enabling the people of Iphuteng to obtain houses, has occurred in the context of limited resources provided by the ARP which operates within the framework of neoliberalism. As such, this creates a situation in which all these groups are tied up over the same resources and there is a high potential for conflict. While the ARP agreed to move people the S'swetla people out of Marlboro transit camps quickly, they have been staying there much longer than promised. Residents of Iphuteng, despite their legitimate demands, are being moved to extension 7 at the expense of those from S'swetla who have been staying in the Marlboro transit camp. Ali Rasetelo explains the problem from the perspective of the people of S'swetla:

> So they were promised to stay there roughly for 3, 4, 5 months. But some lives more than 6 months. So maybe the reason will be because the people along London road who stays around the schools. The department of Education also wants a good environment for schools so. Those people are also a part of going to extension 7. But my problem is those people go from there straight to the houses but S'swetla people must first go to Marlboro camp (interview, Rasetelo 2008).

Related to this shortcoming, SANCO's engagement with participatory spaces and the government only occurs when their constituency desires to resist the imposition of

development plans. There is no sustained interaction in which to enable the people on the ground to determine the development agenda themselves. SANCO's yard committee only influences the ARP's development agenda in the rare case when the government threatens core aspects of people's lives, such as by evicting people. Instead of engaging people to control development in general, the people generally sit back until the government intervenes in a way that affects their lives negatively. Despite having some autonomy, SANCO and the SACP are members of the ANC alliance and are consumed by the ARP. They both, at face value, appear to support invented participatory spaces that provide real alternatives to the ANC, but in fact they still remain embedded in the ARP, an ANC project, and only provide reactive and ephemeral support for their grassroots constituency.

Chapter 7

The APF: Challenging Neoliberalism Through Participation in Development?

7.1 Introduction

As a new social movement, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) has been at the forefront of challenging the ANC's neoliberal policies which has resulted in an adversarial relationship between the two. The APF has a reputation of being militant because it directly challenges the state and expresses its power through mass mobilisation and direct action, thereby "withdrawing consent from established institutions" (Brecher *et al* 2000: 25). The movement's politics suggest that its Alexandra affiliates may be better placed to provide a more transformative participatory practice than the SACP and SANCO who are members of the ANC alliance.

This chapter focuses on two different affiliates of the APF who have constructed "invented" (Cornwall 2004) participatory spaces: the Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC) and the Wynberg Concerned Residents (WCR). The differences between these two affiliates provide a starting point from which to argue that the kind of politics which underpin participatory spaces strongly influence the extent to which they are able to exert power over the development process. Although both imbibe the philosophy of new social movements and are very similar in many respects, their application of tactics at particular moments in the course of struggle reveals key differences between the two affiliates. The chapter explains how the AVCC and WCR have altered their strategies in different ways when faced with new structural circumstances. It suggests that the AVCC is more militant than the WCR since it exerted power over the development process on its own terms and is more proactive. The AVCC initiated a sustained engagement with the ARP's housing process by forcefully occupying RDP houses which were earmarked for other residents. By contrast, the WCR was a reaction to a specific development intervention, namely, the ARP's threat to evict Wynberg residents from their homes, and its militancy was reactive and short-lived. Although it expressed direct action to force the ARP to heed to its demands at one point

in time, it resorted back to negotiating with the ARP, on the terms of the ARP, to achieve its demands after the government broke its promises.

The invented participatory spaces of the AVCC and WCR have reshaped the practices of the ARP through popular protest, direct action, and by engaging in court cases. As such, they challenged what they perceived to be the top-down character of development processes especially in relation to housing allocations. It will be argued that they successfully reshaped the existing participatory process through their popular agency and transformed development practices. The APF provided these invented participatory spaces with resources for court cases, transport as well as advice about political struggles. Perhaps more importantly, it has succeeded in providing a support network for working class communities in Alexandra and has contributed to the expansion of popular democratic practices of the WCR and AVCC.

This chapter will examine the transformative character of invented participatory spaces in Alexandra which affiliated to the APF. Although these affiliates are relatively successful at exerting power over the ARP's development process, the chapter concludes by showing that the WCR and AVCC's focus on corruption regarding the allocation of housing in the ARP means that they seek a reprioritisation of housing, thus confining development to the local level and to operating within the parameters of the ARP. It will therefore be argued that these local movements do not challenge the basis upon which resources are allocated through the ANC's neoliberal policies. The APF leadership presents itself as an anti-systemic movement, but the weakness of its affiliates in Alexandra is that they do not provide an alternative to development as it is practiced by the ARP. Instead, they struggle to obtain houses from within the confines of the ANC's neoliberal policies and therefore claim limited resources that other constituencies in Alexandra also believe they have a right to.

7.2 APF: A Tool for Transformation?

The APF emerged in 2000 to oppose the ANC's neoliberal economic policies, and particularly the privatisation of goods and services. It concentrates on sustaining local struggles or invented participatory spaces in which the working class and poor can exert

their power and thereby resist neoliberal policies that serve to undermine their interests. The key argument here is that the APF's employment of mass mobilisation or direct action in opposition to the government's development trajectory provides the preconditions for implementing a radical and transformative participatory project. The APF's methods of supporting participatory spaces in obtaining power over the dominant development process have given it a reputation of being militant and of being prepared to challenge the legitimacy of the state's policies. Because the ANC views its own neoliberal policies and development agenda as legitimate, it tries to suppress the APF's opposition and labels them ultra-left, in an attempt to denigrate its political critique. This has led to mutual antagonisms at the local level between them.

The consolidation of the ANC's neoliberal policies in South Africa between 1996 and 2000, and the adoption of the Igoli 2002 plan for cost-recovery of municipal services in Johannesburg intensified the contestation between them and provided much impetus for the APF. Furthermore, the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 witnessed huge demonstrations by new social movements and helped create a link between the APF and frustrated residents in Alexandra (interview, McKinley 2008).

The APF was formed in the context of the anti-globalisation movement and this helped it to identify with other movements around the world (Buhlungu 2006: 70). These movements have challenged global political and economic institutions including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The World Social Forum (WSF) has created a platform in which activists from around the world, including leaders of the APF, meet to oppose "the dominant ideology of neo-liberalism and the dictatorship of capitalism over global society" (Houtart and Polet 2001: back cover). The assumption is that neoliberalism prevents people from controlling their own futures (anti-systemic), and must therefore be destroyed. New social movements therefore not only initiate social programmes within the neoliberal system, but aim to abolish neoliberalism and provide an alternative that places people at the centre of decision making processes.

New social movements such as the APF express their power by "developing a common vision and program, and withdrawing consent from established institutions" (Brecher et al 2000: 25). They seek decentralisation at the grassroots level and offer an alternative way of understanding politics which seeks to enable people to control and

define development on their own terms. Changing the world requires the active participation of ordinary people to ensure that power is not abused, but remains in the hands of the majority. Their participatory and anti-hierarchical character helps distinguish "new" social movements from "old" which are deemed more hierarchical and centralised in chararacter (Touraine 1981).

The centralisation of the ANC coincided with a stifling of dissent in the tri-partite alliance, thus leading to the marginalisation of alternative visions of development in its ranks (Buhlungu 2006: 69) and also the inability of the poor and working class to actively participate in determining development outside of the ANC's framework. The APF has created a new platform and called for the dismantling of the ANC's alliance, which it views as an obstacle to transforming the ANC's neoliberal development trajectory.

The APF attempts to link critiques of global capital to local struggles over service delivery. The APF explains its role:

> to unite struggles against privatisation in the workplace and community. It is open to any organisation or individual opposed to privatisation. The APF links workers' struggles for a living wage and jobs with community struggles for housing, water, electricity and fair rates and taxes. The APF has successfully linked struggles in communities in townships across Gauteng and around South Africa. It provides a forum for communities and workers to share their experiences and to strategise collectively (the APF website).

The working class, it is argued, is most adversely affected by the privatisation of goods and services and this is where struggles against privatisation are most acute. According to Miraftab and Wills, "from the perspective of APF activists, the state's policies of privatization and cost recovery should be understood as policies that in and of themselves dehumanize the poor" (2005: 210). The APF currently has 27 local affiliates in various, primarily poor and working class communities in Gauteng (the APF website). This is an attempt by the APF to connect its underlying philosophy (of anti-privatisation) to the masses on the ground. According to the APF website:

> The APF conducts workshops in communities on issues related to privatisation. These workshops focus on developing the capacity of comrades to critically analyse their situation, to understand the root causes of privatisation, to learn from the experiences of other communities, and to strategise and undertake collective action (ibid).

The APF therefore provides an alternative arena in which to understand and practice development by focusing on the attainment of people's basic needs including water, electricity, housing and education. According to a report by the APF, it engages primarily in three groups of activities:

> -mass activities: marches, pickets, demonstrations;
> -raising public awareness and influencing public opinion: media statements, interviews, submissions, cultural expression; and
> -building organisation: meetings, education and solidarity activities (APF Gauteng 2004a in Buhlungu 2006: 74).

For example, one affiliate of the APF is the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (ORFM), who opposes the privatisation of water. In Alexandra, the APF assists the Marlboro Concerned Residents (MCR) to resist the ANC's plans to evict working class residents who have occupied Marlboro factories out of desperation. APF affiliates employ a variety of tactics to pressure the government, including submitting memorandums and embarking on direct action such as blockading highways and mobilising in order to avoid being evicted from their homes.

It is argued here that the APF's struggles meet the three preconditions for a participatory project to lead to transformative outcomes as outlined by Hickey and Mohan (2004 – see chapter 2). Like the notion of people's power discussed in chapter three, the APF seeks to engage with development as an underlying process of social change. This is evidenced by the fact that it seeks to contest the ANC's project of neoliberalism as its primary goal, thus providing a platform upon which to help create alternatives. The APF's practices on the ground also meet the second requirement since it is part of a wider radical political project that is intended to transform existing power relations. Secondly, the APF seeks to transform the power relations embedded in the neoliberal policies of the ANC that the APF claims puts the rich before the poor, thereby limiting the latter's ability to meet their basic needs.

Finally, the APF as a participatory project, satisfies the third requirement because it requires an active, practiced and inclusive notion of citizenship for those who seek to

engage the government on the ground. Referring to new social movements such as the APF, Desai argues that, "what distinguishes these community groups, NGOs, and trade unions, is mass mobilisation as the primary source of social sanction" (Desai 2003: 21). For the APF, political struggles are necessary to obtain power and this is underpinned by the idea that the structures of society can and must be transformed by, and in favour of, the working class majority. As such, the APF resorts to "militant mobilisation" (Buhlungu 2006: 75). Discussing the tactics of the APF, Mckinley says that "any community organisation which simply carves out a role only dealing with institutional processes have been pro-ANC or accepting of their politics." He therefore concludes that "direct action," in non-institutional arenas, is necessary since the ANC is anti-poor (interview, McKinley 2008).

As discussed in chapter 2, Hickey and Mohan's approach is embedded in Freirean thinking. Following Freire's approach to participation, the APF provides a potential means by which people can become active subjects of their own destinies, rather than objects of someone else's. For example, Trevor Ngwane, a prominent leader of the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC, an affiliate of the APF) insists that the poor in South African are objects of the ANC's capitalist trajectory. "The ANC", he argues, "serves the interests of the black and white capitalist bosses. It does not serve the working class and the poor" (the APF Website). One can conclude that the APF sees the ANC as adopting policies that bind poor people into a state of oppression, thereby limiting their agency or ability to control their own destinies. In this sense, the objective of participation, as promoted by the APF, is about creating a radical project with an active notion of citizenship that can define the underlying process of social change from the perspective of the marginalised so that they can liberate themselves from the neoliberal system of oppression that has been adopted by the ANC.

It is no surprise then, that "most state institutions are hostile to the 'ultra-left' and seek to close down spaces for the existence of radical movements such as the APF" (Buhlungu 2006 81). This is intended to enable the ANC to maintain its hegemony as the sole political power that has a mandate to represent the black majority. It is based on the false premise that people are passive pawns who are incapable of harnessing their agency in order to determine the development process.

Michael Sachs, a former researcher of the ANC offered a typical critique of the APF when he accused it of being "strategically hostile to the institutions of democracy" and thus "unlikely to attract significant support" (2003: 23). Miraftab and Wills have argued that this vilification of new social movements is intended to delegitimise these movements. In their view:

> The mainstream media's portrayals of the [Anti-Eviction Campaign] AEC and APF as "ultra left" and "free riders embedded in a culture of nonpayment" discredit them as relevant voices in civil society and delegitimize their actions…the grassroots movements that create the innovative and invented spaces of citizenship are presented as "inauthentic," and their agency is often criminalized (2005: 209).

This trend also occurs in Alexandra. The ARP deputy director, for example, views the APF in Alexandra as a group of opportunistic individuals who do not represent a significant constituency (interview, Louwe 2007). Julian Baskin, the director of the ARP, claims that the APF does not "follow a clear logical path," but rather one that is "determined by boardroom scheming and strategising behind" closed doors (interview, Baskin 2007).

Referring to the APF's activities in Marlboro, Wynberg, and Far East Bank Flats, Linda Memela (the Secretary of the ADF at the time) accused the movement of jumping the queue at "the expense of law abiding citizens" (Memela 2005). An ADF executive member explains the dominant view held in the forum about the APF:

> The APF doesn't affiliate to ADF…They don't want… In fact you see they oppose everything for the sake of opposing, so when you ask them the reason, they can't give you the reason. And they tell you that the ADF they are sellouts to us, they are not representing them… We can even call them to the meetings and say let us discuss our differences, they won't come. But instead of that you hear them talking some different issues in the papers and so forth (interview, Msimang 2006)

The ADF generally has not viewed the APF as a legitimate stakeholder, an opinion that is shared by the ANC. Explaining the APF's activities in Marlboro, Ernest Ndlovu, an ANC councillor, said that the people of Marlboro:

> are easily being lobbied by opportunistic organizations to say 'hey, you are being removed and you should resist', and all that. That's how they are being easily influenced. (in Ross 2005b).

This is part of an old critique that denies ordinary citizens agency and portrays them as pliant beings ready to be manipulated by outside forces. Again, it is premised on the flawed notion that only the ANC can legitimately represent black people. In this context, the WCR and AVCC have affiliated with the APF and have attempted to exert power over a flagship ANC project, the ARP. The next section discusses the context in which the WCR was formed.

7.3 Factory Life in Wynberg

Until the mid 1980s, Wynberg was a vibrant economic hub. However, the situation of ungovernability in Alexandra led to "a complete breakdown, and a high rate of vandalism, a high rate of crime" (interview, Nkosi 2007). The area was deemed unsafe and, together with the economic hardships experiences at the time, caused many owners to abandon their factories. As a result of the influx of people into Alexandra from 1986, which placed enormous pressure on housing in the township, and the fact that these factory owners were suffering losses, ACO leaders entered into negotiations with these owners with the aim of converting these places into temporary residences. Sizakele Nkosi remembers that "people moved in and they paid rent between 300 and 500 rand per month" (ibid). Others apparently invaded the factories on their own without ever paying rent.

By 2006, more than 800 people occupied unused factories in the industrial area of Wynberg, many for more than 20 years. Some moved there out of desperation for low-cost accommodation after being forcibly removed from various areas during apartheid. Others, like Dunia Mekgoe, secretary of the WCR, moved to Wynberg because:

> I was living with my father and my mother and my four brothers, so the house was very small. So I had to find a place of my own, is the reason why I moved here, to give each other a space (interview, Mekgoe 2006).

According to the attorney for the WCR, the people of Wynberg were:

> living in extremely unsafe and unhygienic conditions on the property. The buildings that they occupy, apart from the self-erected structures, were formerly office buildings, stores, warehouses, garages, factories and various buildings. There is no lawful water and electricity supplied to any of the properties, although there are illegal unmetered connections (Grosscoft 2005: 34-35).

Ellen Chauke, chairperson of the WCR, was born in Soweto in 1956 and moved to Wynberg in 1986 to establish her home. She has four children, all of whom live with her and are dependent on her. Chauke describes her living and socio-economic condition as follows:

> I am unemployed and indigent. I suffer from acute arthritis, which renders me partially disabled. I receive a monthly disability grant of R750 per month, which I use to barely feed myself (Chauke 2005: 3).

According to the WCR, in 2005, there were 839 occupants in the Wynberg area. The population that was living in Wynberg's factories was a microcosm of Alexandra's society. It included 293 households (96 were headed by women), 11 elderly (over 60 years), 252 children (under 18 years), 22 disabled, 95 unemployed, and 201 chronically poverty stricken (monthly income R800 or less) (ibid). The WCR also pointed out that most occupants had been staying in Wynberg since at least 1997 and that all the occupants had been staying there for at least 6 months (ibid: 4). The Wynberg area consisted of a set of partitioned small rooms which are linked to each other in a confined area. The occupants lived very close to each other, with only minimal privacy possible.

Prior to the establishment of the WCR, the Wynberg residents were well organised. They created four yard committees to help people to claim their rights as tenants including issues over the payment of rent and the connection of water and electricity. Chauke was elected as the chairperson of a yard committee for Erven 49 and 50 of the Wynberg area. The Wynberg yard committees sought to emulate the experiences of such structures in Alexandra in the 1980s. Chauke's role as chairperson was to collect monthly rent from the tenants to pay to the owner, and to represent the interests of the tenants generally (Chauke 2005: 8).

According to Ellen Chauke, "after the landlord's consistent failure to maintain the dwellings in good repair, the municipal services were disconnected without notice" (ibid: 12). In 1999, Wynberg residents decided to suspend payment because they were not receiving services. In 2000, in response to the "failure to maintain the dwellings…in good order and good repair and reconnect the necessary municipal services" the tenants, with Chauke as their representative, submitted a complaint to their landlord and to the Tenant Dispute Resolution Board (ibid: 10). Chauke explains that they refused to continue paying rents of around R800 because the landlord was not looking after the area as required. According to her, "the place is dirty there, no one is cleaning there, I have to clean myself, I have to install myself. There's a leakage over there. So why am I paying?" (interview, Chauke 2006). The tenants continued to withhold rent and many, sometimes reluctantly, began to connect services on their own. Because they were living in a private place that was not receiving services, they could not apply to the municipality for legal services. Consequently, residents were forced to seek alternative, in this case illegal, avenues to obtain basic services. Dunia Mekgoe explains the predicament that she, like many other poor people, are faced with when they cannot afford to pay for basic services:

> We are not living like a normal person. In a way, we are teaching our children that they should go and steal. We are not happy. Where is the electricity coming from? We stole it. Where is the water coming from? We stole it. When they just switch it off, the next day we make it operation *khanyisa*, we open it. They switch the water out, then we'll just go again and open the water. I mean that's not fair… We cannot teach our children to steal (interview, Mekgoe 2006).

Ellen Chauke and Dunia Mekgoe claimed their aim was to secure affordable and reliable services (interview, Mekgoe 2006; interview, Chauke 2006). "Operation *Khanyisa*" ("switch on") is a tactic that has been employed most visibly by the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) from 2000, but has also spread to other poor and working class communities that are unable to afford access to water and electricity and thereby seek alternative ways of reconnecting. According to Egan and Wafer, the SECC:

> is not one organisation; it is a heterogeneous movement, combining moments of strong cohesion and survivalist solidarity… born and sustained out of a 'new left ideology, it remains pluralist, comprising anarchists, ANC supporters, and everyday church-goers (2004: 1).

While this is a form of direct action that challenges the ANC government's cost recovery policies, the people of Wynberg did not initially engage directly with government officials in any substantial way until they were faced with the ARP's intention to evict them from their homes.

For example, instead of employing power proactively to put pressure on the ARP to deliver RDP housing at a faster rate, the people of Wynberg initially endorsed the waiting list approach to allocating houses in Alexandra. Chauke's affidavit stated that most of the people of Wynberg submitted their "C-forms," an application for government-subsidised housing, to the Gauteng Provincial government in 1996 (Chauke 2005: 20):

> In 1996 the Housing Department advised me that a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) house would be built for me by September 1997. No house was ever built for me. My applications for housing, as were those of my fellow Respondents, were all in vain, for I never received a house or housing subsidy, as promised by the Housing Department (ibid).

Ellen Chauke says that the Wynberg residents "were relaxed… we were left waiting for the waiting list to roll out the houses" (interview, Chauke 2006). Leaders of Wynberg were not demanding houses outside of the ARP's plans, but apparently believed that the process through which houses were being allocated was legitimate. However, this approach changed when they were faced with imminent evictions by the developers of Alexandra Plaza in the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 and the Wynberg residents began to mobilise with the intention of exerting power over the ARP's development process. The next section highlights the profoundly reactive character of the WCR since it was only when the ARP attempted to evict them that they began to pressure authorities to provide housing opportunities.

7.4 Inventing a Participatory Space in Wynberg

With threats of evictions by a private developer, who was acting with the consent and approval of the ANC and the ARP, residents of Wynberg shifted from operating as a yard committee primarily to address internal yard issues such as rent paying, into an invented participatory space called the WCR. This participatory space was initiated when Wynberg residents mobilised in order to stop the private developers of the Alexandra Plaza (part of the ARP) from evicting them. They then began to negotiate with the government to provide them with alternative accommodation. This participatory space is similar to that which was operating in Iphuteng given that, prior the government's attempt to evict them, they also remained largely de-politicised. In both cases, an ARP intervention provided the impetus for changes in the tactics and purpose of agents who organised on the ground. Invoking Giddens's theory of "structuration" (Giddens 1984) in this context highlights the "enabling" aspects of structure (for agency) as well as the inextricable relationship between structure and agency (Masaki 2004). This is because the structural exclusion of the ARP provided the basis upon which agents, Wynberg residents, resisted. In other words, the top-down imposition of development plans by the ARP provided the structural conditions for the residents of Wynberg to create a participatory space. The residents became active agents seeking to constitute one aspect of the development trajectory of the ARP in their favour.

In mid-2004, the ARP began to implement its plans to demolish some of the abandoned factories in Wynberg to make way for the construction of a new shopping centre, the Alexandra Plaza, which required the evictions of the area's 839 residents. Wynberg residents were informed of their fate in December 2004. Critically, the authorities not only sought to evict these residents, but emphatically denied responsibility to provide alternative accommodation for the affected people. Sizakele Nkosi has argued that "it is not our responsibility to offer alternative accommodation to those particular communities" (interview, Nkosi 2007). According to Linda Memela, the ARP could not offer these people alternative accommodation because:

> by so doing they would be, there was going to be a problem with the community of Alex because they would be jumping a queue. Because most of those people are new in Alex (interview, Memela 2007).

This logic legitimised a top-down approach to development in relation to the residents of Wynberg and on the 11th December 2004, a government official was sent to Wynberg to inform them that they needed to be evicted. At this point, the local government offered them rental flats in Yeoville, which appeared to be a reasonable offer. But the leadership of the Wynberg residents raised a number of problems. Ellen Chauke recalls that the first and most pertinent was affordability. "We said, 'who is going to pay those flats?' They said 'you are going to are going to pay those flats.'" This was rejected by Wynberg's residents. "We said no," remembers Chauke (interview, Chauke 2006). In her view, a critical problem with this idea was that most Wyberg residents were unemployed or only occasionally employed. They simply could not afford to pay rents that would be several times higher than the fees they paid in Wynberg. Leaders of Wynberg were adament that they would not move voluntarily unless adequate alternative accommodation was provided. Responding to the eviction notice, Mekgoe said that, "we lived here peacefully, we didn't know that such thing(s) could happen, but anyway it happened. So at the moment we are not happy." They believed that they were being "unfairly evicted" (interview, Mekgoe 2006).

Prior to this intervention, the organisation of Wynberg's yard committees were relatively de-politicised since they dealt primarily with Wynberg's internal issues. The exclusionary approach taken by the ARP created the structural conditions in which residents of Wynberg mobilised and began to construct their own invented participatory space which then mobilised in an attempt to exert power over the development process. They decided that the ARP had to "give us land or houses to stay" and named themselves the WCR. The aim of the organisation was "to give each other advices, how to handle this as Wynberg's residents" (Chauke 2005: 20).

While the ARP's discourse on housing prioritisation assumes the government is not liable to give the people of Wynberg alternative accommodation (as discussed above and in chapter four), Ellen Chauke blames the government for the situation they find themselves in. She explains, "we are in the way of their development. But it is not our

problem. It is the government, the one who authorised for this place to be demolished." Furthermore, she says, "it is for government to give us houses and they promised there are free houses for all" (interview, Chauke 2006).

The WCR questions the legitimacy of the waiting list in this instance and offers an alternative discourse through which to allocate houses. While the residents of Wynberg had generally endorsed the waiting list, the threat of eviction created an urgent need for housing. Dunia Mekgoe explains that, "we cannot move and live in the street with our children. We need an accommodation and we are free to go any day any time. As long as we have accommodation" (interview, Mekgoe 2006). The WCR is primarily defined by their immediate need to resist evictions or obtain adequate alternative accommodation so that they could move voluntarily. They have also engaged in a broader campaign to challenge corruption in the ARP, an issue that will be elaborated on in detail in the concluding section of this chapter.

The first attempts at negotiations by the WCR were made with local councillors as it was these officials who approached the residents about the plans for removal. On the 9th January 2006, Leslie Khumalo, the local ANC councillor for Wynberg at the time, attended a meeting with the WCR and explained that the area needed to be converted into a shopping area for the residents of Alexandra. He further informed them that the properties were intended for industrial purposes and not as residential sites (Khumalo 2005: 4). Khumalo explained that, "the reason for my involvement was that the ANC wished to avoid, if at all possible, a forced eviction of the respondents from the properties and would prefer, if at all possible, an arrangement with the respondents in terms of whereof they would voluntarily vacate the properties" (ibid). He claimed that, as a result of these meetings, the WCR "accepted that they would have to vacate the properties" and they agreed to do this by the end of February 2005 (ibid).

Ellen Chauke and the WCR refute this account of events. Chauke insists that they "never agreed to vacate the properties" (Chauke 2005: 32). Instead, she claims, the WCR continued their attempts at engaging local councillors, but they rarely responded. In one instance when the proportional ANC councillor, Ernest Ndlovu, responded he was allegedly quite dismissive of the plight of residents. Chauke recall that, "we met with

him several times and we spoke to him about that but all he said, there was nothing he can do because this is a private land" (ibid).

Unable to reach a satisfactory agreement with local councillors, the WCR engaged with the ARP "because they are the ones who must give us the accommodation" (interview, Chauke 2006). The ARP sent them to speak with an official of the Johannesburg City Council, who was equally unresponsive and simply told them there was nothing they could do. The WCR persisted and wrote a letter, but "he never responded". Then the WCR employ the services of a lawyer who received the same response from the authorities. He "said there was no land for us, there is nothing he can do" (ibid). Out of desperation, the WCR decided to engage the ADF but again found this space unresponsive:

> The ADF, we went there, to their meeting several times. They just say they are taking people to Bramfischerville, if you don't want to go to Bramfischerville, then its up to you. There's nothing they can do (ibid)

At this stage, the ARP and ADF were still adamant about removing surplus residents to far away places like Bramfischerville. The WCR rejected this proposal as inadequate because of the distance that they would have to travel. Mekgoe explained that, "our children are staying here, are going to school here and they do have friends here so moving into this place, it is going to be very difficult for our children" (interview, Mekgoe 2006). She further explained that as a domestic worker she would not make enough money to travel to and from her work:

> I will have to leave the job because I will be earning nothing, going to work for nothing. Because, as a part time domestic worker, I'm not getting enough money, I'm getting something to buy myself a mealie-meal (ibid).

Various efforts to engage local ANC councillors, ARP and ADF had run into a *cul-de-sac*. Still, the residents hoped the authorities would listen to their plights and decided to appeal directly to the Mayor of Johannesburg, Amos Masondo:

> but he also didn't respond. And then we talked to him face to face when he visited Alexandra, and then we told him, we wrote a letter to him why he didn't respond. He's just say, he didn't get the letter (interview, Chauke 2006).

At this point Chauke and her comrades concluded, "So we have tried everything we can do to talk to these people for housing but nothing was done for us" (ibid). While officials have remarked that the people of Wynberg could not be settled since it was a private land, Chauke reframes their predicament. She argues that because they are South Africans who voted the ANC in power, they must be provided with alternative accommodation:

> Then we went to them, we've been evicted by these people, they said there's nothing we can do because this is a private owned land so the government cannot intervene, you see? So there was nothing for us from the government side or ARP side because they keep on telling us that this is a private owned land so there's nothing they can do. What we asked them it was, "why because we are not private people, we are South African." So what you have to do is give us land or houses to stay. Because we voted for you people but you don't even care about us now. By the time you wanted our votes you came in, you never care that this land was a private owned land, you see? But now you are telling us this is a private owned land. But when you want our vote, you come in you don't care about that. So it's really a terrible for us. It's like we are not South Africans. And they keep saying that there are aliens living here and we are South Africans (interview, Chauke 2008).

Here, the WCR is positioning itself in order "to imbue their interventions with moral authority, turning the tables and contesting the frame" (Cornwall 2004: 84). The WCR argues that there is a need to put human beings at the centre of development. However, this reframing was not enough to challenge the ARP's development plans. Because the ARP had already determined the process through which it planned to allocate houses through a so-called consensus that is considered to be in the common interests of the residents of Alexandra (see chapter four), participatory spaces who recommend alternatives are largely marginalised based on what the ARP views as acceptable or unacceptable, rational or irrational. The WCR can therefore enter into negotiations and claim "moral authority" (ibid), but negotiations provide them with no leverage to force

the ARP to operate on their own terms. The WCR's participatory space therefore needed to resort to other means to exert power over the development process.

7.5 Resorting to Direct Action

Having been unsuccessful at meeting their demands through negotiations with the ARP, the WCR became uncertain about how to proceed. Its leaders were beginning to lose faith in their ability to exert their power over the ARP's development intervention in Wynberg. With threats of evictions looming and feelings of powerlessness mounting, the WCR took the APF's advice and transformed its *modus operandi*. The APF's position is that direct action is a necessary tactic by which the working class should mobilise to employ their power over the development process. While negotiations had failed because they could only occur on the ARP's terms, the method of direct action enabled the WCR to gain leverage over the ARP's development process and dictate aspects of development, albeit momentarily, on its own terms. Like the case of the people of Iphuteng and S'swetla, direct action became a powerful weapon in the hands of the WCR when they were marginalised from the government's decision making processes because it enabled them to resist the imposition of top-down development plans from the bottom-up.

Dunia Mekgoe explains that when the WCR affiliated to the APF, they began to employ direct action in order to prevent the ARP from evicting them:

> APF really gave us strength because we didn't have any. In December we were hopeless. We were fighting… mainly we were depending on discussions. That if we discuss with them maybe they are going to think that and do this. Then APF said no, this is a struggle guys… Whoever comes near you, you must try and fight yourself. Show these people that you are, start protesting from there… is then that you can, that is the only language that they can understand. You protest. They are going to understand. Whoever is the enemy will just back off. Because they can see that you have… built an iron fist (interview, Mekgoe 2006).

Dunia Mekgoe goes on to highlight that the APF sparked a shift in their struggle from one that operated "lawfully" to one that operated "politically":

> …APF is there, it's really there with us… If we do have a problem we go to them and they do advise us how to handle (it) in a political way… Because if we are doing it lawfully, we could have been moved long ago. So politically we cannot be moved. We have to fight so that these people must never remove us, we have to resist (ibid).

Mekgoe appears to equate lawful struggles with negotiating within the rules and discourse determined by the ARP, and political struggles as exerting power on their own terms through direct action. Through their own action and with the support of the APF, the WCR now became confident about its ability to halt the evictions.

Undertaking direct action was the WCR's way of expressing their power to resist evictions. When the WCR heard rumors that developers of Alexandra Plaza were sending a bulldozer on the 5th January 2005 to demolish the places in Wynberg, they were ready to employ their power by using their collective strength and non-violent physical force. Throughout January, the people of Wynberg lived in fear that the developers could come at anytime to demolish their homes:

> It was terrible for us. We didn't even know that whether we are sleeping or what. We were just living like pets. Waiting for a whistle. If someone blows whistles, you know that there is something wrong outside you have to run, to go check what is going on (interview, Mekgoe 2006).

Dunia Mekgoe explains their tactic:

> we had to stand outside from the morning toyi-toyi'ing and protesting, to stop those people to come and demolish… because what we said to the guy is that tell your boss to come and drive this because we don't want to hurt you. We don't want to fight you. Tell your boss to come and drive this thing so that we can show him that what he is doing is wrong (ibid).

The driver of the bulldozer was the private developers' way of employing power over the people of Wynberg with the aim of forcing them to submit. But Wynberg residents mobilised a counter power which caused the developers' eviction plan to be halted.

As a result, the issue remained unresolved. Several weeks later, on the 31st March 2005, the developers again attempted forcibly to break the stalemate and more than 60 security guards and police officers arrived in Wynberg to effect the evictions. IndyMedia

South Africa explains the process through which the people of Wynberg expressed their power again through direct action:

> Hundreds of people came down into the streets where they began demonstrating against the police and lighting tires on fire. Due to the massive outpouring of resistance, the police were unable to enter the factories (Indymedia South Africa 2005: 2).

The WCR sustained their method of direct action when they were faced with evictions for the second time. As a result, the police and security were unable to evict the people of Wynberg and, instead, handed over legal papers which meant that they would meet the private owners of the property in court. The WCR's employment of direct action meant that the ARP's development plans could not, for the time being, be imposed from the top-down. The WCR effectively exerted their own agency when there had been attempts at marginalising them through top-down development processes. Participatory processes and thereby the outcomes of development plans, are not solely determined by exclusive structures, but shaped by the power of agency as well.

7.6 The Disempowering Court Victory

The WCR's decision to employ direct action against evictions created a deadlock between them and the developers of Alexandra Plaza, which prompted the latter to take the WCR to court in an attempt to resolve the matter in their favour. The court is important here because the judiciary was placed in a position to wield power over the development process by determining whether or not development would be constituted in favour of popular demands represented by the WCR's participatory space. In this case, the court ruled in favour of the WCR and the residents of Wynberg celebrated when they were promised alternative housing. But what appeared to be a victory turned into a setback for the residents because they had placed their faith in the authorities' compliance with the court's ruling. As a consequence, the WCR became demobilised.

The courts provide an opportunity to enhance popular demands for housing, in this case those that have arisen due to the threat of evictions. Section 26 in the Bill of Rights states that, "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing…The state

must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right" (Constitution 1996). In 2000, the Grootboom case witnessed a landmark ruling in this regard which reinforced this right (Huchzermeyer 2003). Because the court does not have resources to supply houses to citizens it can only enjoin the state to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities in this regard.

Some commentators, like Hopkins, have been critical of the courts' intervening in matters related to government functions:

> it is because policy is political that it falls into government domain and this explains why it is governments that make policy and not judges…But if judges assume executive powers, then the essence of democracy becomes eroded because you effectively remove decision-making from the hands of a democratically-elected government and place it in the hands of judges who are not democratically elected (Hopkins 2003: 109).

Hopkins argues that courts should not intervene with decisions that have been made by locally elected authorities. Greenstein also highlights another potential problematic in this matter:

> Promoting the primacy of the Constitution and participatory democracy over the rule of elected representatives may be interpreted as an attack on majority rule (a problematic notion with distinct racial ramifications) (2003: 97).

These caveats notwithstanding, communities have often resorted to the courts to force the state to meet its obligations. The courts have provided citizens with an arena through which to challenge whether or not the decisions made by local authorities have been legitimate, thus enhancing the South African government's commitment to participatory democracy. If local authorities' decisions are deemed oppressive and/ or authoritarian despite attempted negotiations between those affected and the elected authorities, the court has the potential to be a critical arena in which the former can seek relief.

In April 2005, the developers of Alexandra Plaza resorted to courts to claim their private property so that they could begin development. The case was postponed for a year later and was to be heard in Pretoria High Court. According to Cherney:

> Ten years after South Africa adopted one of the world's most progressive constitutions, the case is weighing the right to adequate housing against the rights of property owners. And caught in the middle is the government which, lawyers for both sides say, must find new land for the occupants (2006).

Owners were angry that the construction of their mall was being delayed. They claimed (in court documents) that they were losing over R1.2 million a month in building costs and what they would have obtained from leases (Lange 2006).

On 19th April 2006, the Johannesburg High Court met with the private property owner regarding the eviction case against the residents. The judge said that he was in favour of the shopping complex being built, but that these people needed alternative accommodation and that the court needed to consider whether alternative land was available. This made the ARP, which had previously said the issue of Wynberg was a dispute between property owners and the tenants, an area of contention.

The developers argued the land was built for industrial rather than residential purposes and "that residential occupation of the land constitutes a criminal offence" (Indymedia South Africa 2005). According to Indymedia, "the judge accepted this argument, but advocates for the residents convinced him to consider whether or not there is alternative land or accommodation available for residents threatened with eviction" (ibid). Officials from the City of Johannesburg and the MEC for Housing in Gauteng were then summoned to the court to submit a letter explaining what alternatives were being made once people were evicted from their homes. Significantly, this was the first time that a judge had summoned government officials to explain what housing opportunities could be made once people were evicted. Moreover, it "constitutes recognition of the principle that no eviction should take place in the absence of a full accounting for alternative land or accommodation for the potential evictees" (ibid)

Officials filed an affidavit on the 21st April 2006 explaining that:

> The City of Johannesburg is ordered to report on Thursday 21/4/05 to this court what arrangements if any can be made to accommodate the respondents in the event of the eviction from erven 62, 49, 50, Portion 1 of Erf 51 and 397 Wynberg… **KINDLY TAKE NOTICE** that

> the City of Johannesburg has read and considered the application for this matter. **KINDLY TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality does not have any land and/or alternative accommodation available to accommodate the Respondents (City of Johannesburg 2006)

This is a typical and dominant response of the ARP to the shortage of inexpensive land in and around Alexandra as well as the potential political conflict and great demand for housing that exists there. ARP policy held that government simply did not have the resources available to house these people before other residents living in Alexandra. The ARP, in consultation with the ADF and within the policy framework of the ANC, had already determined the way in which houses were to be managed and allocated.

In the eyes of officials, the housing process was legitimate and should not be contested. The Council and others therefore insisted that "this is a private dispute between property owners and the squatters" (Russouw 2005). The government cannot be expected to intervene by providing houses every time people are being evicted from private properties.

The court did not accept the local government's argument that it did not have land nearby to accommodate Wynberg residents. The judge ruled that the City of Johannesburg did not provide the court with the requested information:

> I am of the view that the fourth (City of Johannesburg) and fifth (MEC for Housing, Gauteng Province) respondents' failure to supply the court with any information regarding the ARP and any possibilities that might exist for the future accommodation of the first, second and third respondents (occupiers of factories in Wynberg) is not only singularly impolite to the courts, but amounts to a failure to comply with their constitutional obligations to assist the courts and the poor and homeless to ensure that they are treated with dignity and provided with housing as soon as possible (Bertelsmann 2006: 7).

In this case, the court applied a different criteria for the allocation of houses than the ARP and refused to accept the simple answer that there was no land available. This did not signal a fundamental change in the discourse of housing allocation for the entire township, but did prompt the adoption of a different approach for this particular section of the community.

As Judge Bertelsmann reported regarding this case:

> the overall objective of facilitating the displacement and relocation of poor and landless black people for ideological purposes was replaced by acknowledgement of the necessitous quest for homes of victims of past racist policies. While awaiting access to new housing development programmes, such homeless people had to be treated with dignity and respect. Thus the former depersonalised processes that took no account of the life circumstances of those being expelled were replaced by humanised procedures that focuses on fairness to all. People once regarded as anonymous squatters now became entitled to dignified and individualised treatment with specific consideration for the most vulnerable (ibid).

This was not the case in terms of the policy of the ARP, ANC, or ADF which, through consensus, actually excluded voices that opposed their policy on housing allocations and therefore "depersonalised" the decision-making processes regarding specific interventions.

Neels Letter, an ARP lead official, responded in the same way as ADF and ANC officials when asked about the court's decision to involve the state in finding alternative accommodation for the people of Wynberg. He explains how the ARP was forced into decisions by the court case that ruled that their answer of not having enough land was not satisfactory:

> There was no obligation of government to provide alternative accommodation for those people. But the Wynberg case turned it all around in that sense that this person approached the court from the eviction order. The court said I cannot do so, because where would these people go? It attached government as a second and third respondent to the case… We were not even involved in that case because it was between a land owner and the tenants. And then the judge asked government, what are you doing about it? This guy has the right to evict these people because they are not paying rent. What are you going to do with these people? We were basically forced to settle (interview, Letter 2007).

Development practice regarding housing allocations was renegotiated within the confines of the court ruling**.** Despite the ARP having come to "political consensus" with the ADF regarding how housing should be allocated, the court revised this "consensus", thus puncturing the ARP official policy regarding the allocation of housing. The ARP was

reluctant to implement the court ruling because it could potentially unsettle the carefully constructed consensus reached. It was also understandably concerned that other residents would accuse the project of conceding to those people who wanted to jump the housing queue. In a deft move, the ARP proposed that Wynberg residents be relocated temporarily to the transit camp until such a time that new RDP houses were built for them in Extension 7.

Ellen Chauke explains that "verbally, we were told that it won't last even 6 months… to a year" (interview, Chauke 2008). However, this promise was broken and as Chauke explains, "we are still waiting" (ibid). Despite winning the court case in Pretoria, the people of Wynberg were moved to Silver Town, the ARP's temporary shack settlement, where they continue to wait. In February 2008, Ellen Chauke explained that the decision to move people into Silver Town was rushed because the owners of the Alexandra Plaza were losing large amounts of money of money during the court case. As long as the residents of Wynberg remained, the developers could not undertake the construction of the Plaza. Wynberg residents were thus put in temporary accommodation in which "each and every family has only one unit" (ibid).

Compounding the problem for residents is that the shacks consist of pieces of wood in each corner that are wrapped by silver slates of iron and nailed together haphazardly so that they are not insulated adequately from the weather. This means that they are a significant downgrade from the rooms that many people stayed in when they were in Wynberg. Furthermore, each family only has one small shack in which to stay. Ellen Chauke describes the harsh living conditions that they are faced with:

> So you can come and visit next time maybe we will still be here…. No this is terrible. Winter time it's very cold, when it's hot its very hot. When its raining the water comes running underground. Where you are, if you can open that vinyl you can see that it's wet here (ibid).

In February 2008, Ellen Chauke reflected that they had no idea how long they would continue to wait in these shacks:

> We really don't know for how long, because we have got already being here since 2006 August until today we are still waiting. And the transit camp it's only [intended to be] for three months, but now we really don't know when we are going to move here (ibid).

The promises of being offered adequate alternative accommodation in a period of six months were broken.

As a result, the WCR reconfigured its strategy of employing power over the development process under changing structural circumstances. Having given up the leverage they employed by staying in their homes in Wynberg, the WCR decided again to resort to negotiations with the ARP. Chauke explains that:

> We are still very much engaged because we have to make the follow ups because we can't just sit down and relax, otherwise we won't move anywhere so we have to engage ourselves, talk to the ARP, talk to our lawyers so that everything must be moved. Otherwise if you can sit and relax, there is nothing coming (ibid).

Ellen Chauke expresses the frustration that the WCR is again faced with as a result of this strategy:

> They say they don't want us to tell them what to do so it's very tough if you can't communicate with somebody... And then he just stand up and say, you don't have to tell me, this is my job. I am here to tell you what to do. …So it is very tough to talk to those people, but well, we are trying (ibid).

The WCR now battles to obtain the same limited resources within the confines of the ARP. The structural constraints they are faced with by choosing to enter back into negotiations with the ARP, is compounded by the fact that there are many people negotiating for the same housing opportunities. Ellen Chauke explains this:

> That is why I say there are so many people and there are so many projects happening. So, at the moment, we don't know which group is moving out. We are still waiting. There are so many groups, organisations just like us, who are waiting to move to the houses. So, we really don't know. Even these shacks here, S'swetla village, they have to be moved. But we really don't know

> that, are they going to be the first one or we are going to be the first one. So that is why it takes such a long time (ibid).

It "takes such a long time" to obtain housing opportunities because the demand for housing is so much greater than the need. Through negotiations, they are attempting to occupy the same houses as other "new" residents such as the people around Iphuteng and S'swetla. The agents of the WCR are faced with the same closed negotiations with the ARP and ADF and thereby are unable to exert their power over the development process. Prior to their so-called victory in court, the residents of Wynberg could remain in their homes in Wynberg and thereby exert power over the development process through direct action. When promises were broken and their victory was compromised, this specific strategy was no longer possible. As such, the WCR was disempowered due to the changing structural circumstances that resulted from the victory in court. The power to implement development has shifted back into the hands of the ARP which determines the conditions under which groups such as the WCR can negotiate.

7.7 AVCC: The Centrality of Popular Agency

Underlying the AVCC's engagement with development in Alexandra is the radical and militant philosophy that poor people's agency and struggle is imperative for achieving a better life. Unlike the WCR who remained relatively passive until they were threatened by evictions, the AVCC's militancy began prior to their involvement with the APF when they forcefully occupied flats in the Far East Bank in 1999. This approach is based on an active notion of citizenship that unintentionally aligns itself to Freire's (1972) notion of liberation which relies on the power of poor people's self-motivation and action to lift them out of poverty. The name "Vukuzenzele" is a Zulu word which means "wake up and do it yourself" referring to the idea that people need not sit around and wait for someone (or the government) to deliver to them, but that people should claim control over their futures. While it could be argued that leaders of what is now the AVCC were part of a participatory space previously, specifically the Alexandra Homeless People's Federation (AHPF), the focus here is on the invented participatory space which began

when people living along the Jukskei were threatened by removals and then responded by forcibly and "illegally" occupying flats in the Far East Bank. At this time, approximately 151 families decided to exert their power by engaging with the housing crisis directly.

The leaders of the AVCC began their struggle to obtain houses in 1998 as an organisation called the Alexandra Homeless People's Federation (AHPF) – (interview, Dlamini 2007). The AHPF was organised by Marks Modiba, who in the early 1990s, put forth a radical critique of the ACO's housing policy which helped set the stage for the AVCC's later adoption of militant approaches to accessing housing from the government. In 1999, the leaders of the AVCC were also working with Alexandra Civic Association (ACA) leader, Mike Beea, who they paid money for basic things such as petrol so that he could travel and find out about government subsidised housing from the Department of Housing in Johannesburg. But the members felt let down by Beea who they claim failed to deliver on his promises. The organisation was abruptly ended in 1999 when Beea told them that they needed to go it alone and that he would no longer "spoon-feed" them (ibid). Fredah Dlamini, now chairperson of the AVCC, later explained that "now we have to work for ourselves, we have to do things for ourselves. He is giving up on us. At that time, all our money was finished that we were popping out because we were giving money for phonecalls, transportation" (ibid).

Dlamini lived along the banks of the Jukskei River until 1999 when the government removed removing people from the Jukskei (for environmental and health reasons) to Bramfischerville. Believing the local authorities would not listen to her demands to remain in Alexandra once moved from the Jukskei, she, and approximately 150 others, set the stage for an invented participatory space by invading unoccupied flats in an area in the Far East Bank called Kwa-Bhekilanga. Dlamini commented about this, "my plan was just to move into this flat, because they don't listen to people. That's the problem" (ibid). Like many others, she did not want to move to Bramfischerville:

> if you haven't got a job, it's easy in Alexandra to go around. There is many places around Alexandra. If you haven't got money, you just walk up to go and look for a job you know? And Alexandra is the cheapest place also. So everything is around you. In Bramfischer, it's difficult. There was no schools in Bramfischer, there was no clinics, the people were suffering when they get there. So we didn't like that forced removal of them (ibid).

The people living in the flats in Kwa-Bhekilanga changed the name of the flats to Vukuzenzele to demonstrate the importance their own agency. Dlamini explains:

> The name came from those flats [Vukuzenzele] because when we moved into those flats, there was no windows, there was no doors, we had to try and get some water for ourselves in the pipes. Try and get some electricity. This is illegal from the pole. We just take it from the pole… And then the sinks that you see, we buy that to make it a nice place… I didn't have a storage pipe but I tried to get a person that know[s] about the storage pipes for the toilet outside. So, we did almost everything here (ibid).

They lived peacefully in these homes until later in 1999, when a private security company employed by the government called Wozani Security, threatened to evict them. However, residents successfully resisted this move. The threat of evictions combined with a sense of isolation in the community caused Dlamini and her comrades to seek support from an organisation outside of Alexandra. For Dlamini, affiliating to the APF was apparently an obvious choice. Dlamini explains the steps she took to affiliate with the APF:

> …So I go by myself to the APF and Trevor Ngwane at that time was the organiser of the APF. And they interview and then I told him, ok. I like the way you work because that is the thing we want. Because we have been used in Alexandra. So we don't want Alexandra's organisations anymore. And then I just told them that I will go back to the people of Alexandra to tell them that I found a better forum that can work with us. So from 2001, we are under APF (ibid)

McKinley also notes that before the APF's march from Alexandra to Sandton in late 2001 for the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), the APF made a point to contact people in Alexandra. These people later met with the APF and held meetings with them, indicating that they wanted to affiliate. He says further that the WSSD provided "a huge impetus to the AVCC," which then began to draw hundreds of residents (interview, McKinley 2008).

Previously the AVCC comprised mainly people who had occupied the flats in the Far East Bank, but since 2001 hundreds of others joined AVCC, including members from

Old Alexandra such as in 14th avenue and Ghanda Centre. The AVCC meets once a week in Fredah Dlamini's flat to discuss strategies to deal with development in Alexandra. These meetings are attended by between 15 to 60 people and afterwards information is also shared with those who could not attend.

Women play a dominant role in the AVCC. Fredah Dlamini explains why this is the case:

> there are men [in the AVCC] but most of the time they are working. Most are women here… the most person that is suffering from everything, violence, no food, no electricity. The women is the first person who is suffering because the men can go to work. He looks for food and he is ok (phone interview, Dlamini 2008).

AVCC members typically live in shacks in overcrowded and rat-infested areas in the township. Many of them have lived in these atrocious conditions for years and are understandably desperate to escape to better living conditions. This is reflected in a song that they chanted as they toyi-toyed outside Wynberg Court in October 2007: "at our homes, the shacks, there are rats, so let us go to the houses because we haven't got shelter" (translation, Dlamini 2007). The AVCC organiser, Ntombenhle Phoswa, also complained to The Citizen that the people who are living in shacks in Alexandra are dying in shack fires (Mboyisa 2007).

The AVCC also has 500 members who occupy the factory area called Ghanda Centre. These people live on the edge of survival and endure some of the worst living conditions in Alexandra. People's rooms are demarcated by corrugated iron sheets inside the factory and most cannot be locked. These makeshift constructions are especially dangerous when it rains because of the damage caused to the amateur electrical supplies. They leak when it rains thereby shorting the electricity, dampening people's clothes and blankets, and creating conditions which are ripe for the spread of illness. Furthermore, there are no bathroom facilities in the factory and water can only be obtained from a few taps around the building. There are no toilets in the factory, which forces residents to use facilities in houses across the road, which is particularly dangerous at night for women.

Many of these rooms hardly fit a small bed and are used by single people as well as entire families to eat, sleep, cook and bathe in.

Given these living conditions, it is not surprising that members of the AVCC think the ANC government is not doing enough to meet their basic needs. According to Mboyisa, "they are accusing the government of being 'fat cats' who are 'neglecting the poor who put them into power'" (2007). Members of the AVCC claim that housing officials are corrupt and do not care about them. The conclusion of this chapter will explain the role that a critique of corruption in development plays in limiting the ability of both the WCR and the AVCC to transform the ARP's development trajectory. For now, it is merely important to point out that the AVCC claims that the only people who are getting houses are those who use bribery.

Their disappointment in the ANC runs especially deep as most of them have voted for the party in the hope it would deliver on its election promise of a "better life for all". Abner Matshayana, a member who recently joined the AVCC and who works informally in Alexandra as a mechanic, says:

> In this government, they don't look after us at all, the people we voted in. They look for themselves. There is too much corruption. What about us, we are poor? This organisation [AVCC] is the best to fight for our rights, houses (Interview, Matshayana 2007).

7.8 From Memorandums to Direct Action

At an early stage, the AVCC stopped engaging with the ARP's invited participatory space, the ADF. In mid-2007, it began to make a sustained attempt at engaging the ARP, especially regarding housing provision for the poor. It then began to direct grievances where the power lies, with the ARP. Unlike the participatory spaces in Wynberg, S'swetla, and Iphuteng which were primarily a reaction to the top-down plans imposed by the ARP, the AVCC proactively engaged the ARP believing that they had a right to government resources. When the ARP failed to address their demands and concerns, the AVCC's militancy revealed itself. It then created new avenues for exerting their power

over the development process through the deployment of direct action on their own terms by occupying RDP houses which the ARP had earmarked for other groups within Alexandra. This direct action is critical not only because it enables this participatory space to employ power on it own terms, but also because this power can be sustained by reoccupying houses, or simply remaining in them. This decision flowed from the AVCC's philosophy that the action and living improvements of the poor come before any officially designed policy.

The AVCC's serious attempts at engaging the ARP over housing prioritisation began in 2007, nearly 6 years after the inception of the ARP. This late start was at least partially a result of the conflicts that occurred between leaders of the AVCC and WCR, two affiliates of the APF who initially worked together, but had difficulty determining how to move forward given their very different development agendas. While the WCR was concerned almost exclusively about winning the court case in 2005 and 2006 since this would determine whether Wynberg residents would receive alternative accommodation, the AVCC was interested in altering the development process in Alexandra on a broader level. This led to a situation in which the two camps vied for control of the APF in Alexandra. At this point, the key issue that the APF in Alexandra dealt with was around issues of evictions in Wynberg, Marlboro (where the Marlboro Concerned Residents (MCR) had affiliated to the APF), and the flats in the Far East Bank. At the APF's 2007 Annual General Meeting, a decision was made which helped set the stage for the AVCC to begin to act as an autonomous APF affiliate (interview, McKinley 2008).

The AVCC then took a decision to engage with the ARP, first through the ADF, primarily to put pressure on them to deliver houses to poor people but apparently received no adequate response. Unsuccessful with the ADF, the AVCC engaged local government officials in the hope that they would respond to their demands. Dlamini comments that "we did go to visit our councilors in region E in Sandton but we didn't get respect. It just ignored us, they don't respond" (Interview, Dlamini 2007). She explains that the officials never responded about how they would deal with their grievances:

> We didn't get anything better. So we started to do meetings and then the residents said we better go to the MEC to deliver a memorandum and give them our demands. And that same day, on that 15th of August, we did go to our Mayor, Masondo. His memorandum also. So they promised us that before 14 days, they will phone me and tell me what's happening… With the process. But it was in vain. They didn't phone, yesterday I tried to phone the offices. Nomvula's office, the mayor's office, the phone was just ringing (ibid).

In other words, excluding the AVCC from meeting their demands within the government's confines provided the conditions in which the AVCC responded by employing an alternative strategy which could be implemented on their own terms. Frustrated with having their demands ignored by government officials, the AVCC put its militant and radical politics into practice for the first time since occupying the Far East Bank Flats. Because the AVCC could not engage government officials to address their concerns, they bypassed these channels and engaged with the housing crisis directly by forcefully occupying empty RDP houses in Extension 7 which had been earmarked for other residents. This occupation therefore had the potential to create conflict within the community and the extent to which its tactics are divisive will be discussed in a later section. Nevertheless, the AVCC was apparently acting on the principle that poor people's agency and struggles needed to be at the centre of their approach to development. Dlamini comments that after being ignored by officials, "we made a decision that now we are going to go and occupy those houses" (interview, Dlamini 2007). On the 3rd September 2007, the AVCC occupied RDP houses in Extension 7 both to put pressure on the government to deliver more houses to the poor, and to receive immediate relief from their current living conditions.

The AVCC believed that in order to have their demands met, they had no alternative but to illegally occupy houses. Dale McKinley explains the logic behind the occupation in relation to the broad objectives of the APF. First, McKinley states that these "particular tactics resulted from a long period of attempting to get houses and being stymied at every turn. A long history of engagement with authorities… frustration at every turn" (interview, McKinley 2008). He explains that direct action, in this case, was part of a strategy to:

1.) Pressure to push things along;
2.)Draw attention to the plight of the people in the particular area; and
3.)Create a profile through direct action (ibid).

The AVCC's occupation of houses in Alexandra enables those living in Alexandra to be made aware of the housing crisis in Alexandra, and to highlight the urgency that people are faced with. Furthermore, McKinley states:

> it is in the open, people can see things being done…This direct action helps with mobilising the broader community to pay attention to people's needs and bring the possibility for them to join in and become part of that (ibid).

He says further that the occupation of houses by the AVCC "dovetails nicely with the tactical approach of occupying houses to use direct action in order for the AVCC to insert itself into the institutional side of things" (ibid). This method of obtaining service delivery clearly went beyond the ARP's weak approach to participation in development which expected that the masses must sit back and wait for services to be delivered to them. The AVCC directly controlled the ARP's resources and this indicated the ways in which authorities responded to them.

7.9 Authorities' Response to Direct Action

Unable to heed to the demands of the AVCC within the confines of the ARP's development trajectory, local government officials have responded to the AVCC's occupation of houses by providing them with information regarding their plans for how houses will allocated in the hope that this would quell their resistance. Furthermore, because the process through which houses are to be allocated is predetermined, they have claimed that the AVCC's demands are "unreasonable" (in Mboyisa 2005). The ARP's structure cannot be transformed from the inside, through officials, because the policy of housing allocations has already determined which members of the community are included and which are excluded. The ARP and local government officials therefore operate under the assumption that they are implementing the appropriate policies, which

allows them to delegitimise any agency that seeks to challenge these policies. The AVCC's approach to participation in development is centred around how poor people can exert their agency in order to define the development process, autonomously if necessary, in such a way that improves their living conditions. AVCC members' experience of suffering in shacks makes their demand for housing opportunities immediate. This experience and the militant philosophy that underpins their mobilisation, means that the AVCC does not demand houses only within the ARP's confines, but claims them on their own terms.

Referring to the AVCC, the housing Department's chief operating officer Mongezi Mnyani, said that "The group is not informed about the protocols and procedures of housing in Alexandra; we discussed these procedures with the Alexandra Development Forum (ADF), which is the legitimate structure that we communicate with in terms of such issues" (in Tshabalala 2007). He explained further that their concerns should be taken up with the ADF and that:

> We have arranged to meet with Vukuzenzele and some of Alexandra's Ward Councillors tomorrow and given them all the relevant information and give them understanding of the procedures (in Tshabalala 2007).

When the local councillors finally did meet with the AVCC to hear their complaints, Chuene, an ANC official remaked that, "The main issue addressed with the councillors today is the lack of first-hand information on channels they can use to get through to the councillors." He remarked further that the meeting with the AVCC was successful and said, "I think that people's perception has changed from a negative one to a positive one, and I hope that in the future they will use the relevant and available channels to voice their concerns" (in Tshabalala 2007a).

Officials imply that the AVCC's demands can be dealt with by clarifying so-called protocols (processes and procedures) through which houses are allocated in Alexandra. The official's approach to involving the AVCC is, following Arnstein, about informing, a weak form of participation which does not enable citizens "power for negotiation" (Arnstein 1969: 218). Instead, "emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information – from officials to citizens" (ibid). Local government officials endorse the

process through which houses are allocated on a block by block basis and therefore allow no room for groups such as the AVCC to influence the housing process. The assumption here is that if they understand how houses are allocated, they will not need to resort to the invasion of houses.

The ARP has not only informed the AVCC that they are making "unreasonable" demands, but they have also condemned their occupation of RDP houses, which they regard as unlawful and taking away housing opportunities from those for who they were intended. Officials therefore defended the block by block policy, which determines the prioritisation of housing allocations and thereby denounces the practice of the AVCC's participatory space, which through the direct action of occupying RDP houses, inhibits the ARP from implementing their block by block policy. This is because the ARP needs the houses in Extension 7 so that it can provide the people of Iphuteng (see chapter four) with them.

The ARP deputy director, for example, views the APF in Alexandra as a group of opportunistic individuals who do not represent a significant constituency (interview, Louwe 2007). Julian Baskin, the director of the ARP, claims that the APF does not "follow a clear logical path," but rather one that is "determined by boardroom scheming and strategising behind" closed doors (interview, Baskin 2007). Because their claims for houses go beyond what is possible through the ARP's development plans, they are labeled illegitimate.

Referring to the AVCC's occupation of RDP houses, Neels Letter claims that they are "jumping the queue":

> The people who protested on Monday are people that want to jump the cue, it's all got to do with a lot of the politics in the country at the moment. So a lot of these issues are being politicised and are not necessarily a development issue, and they must be dealt with politically (interview, Letter 2007)

Letter explains that because that there is a great demand for housing opportunities in Alexandra, but that each family needs to wait their turn for the ARP to deliver to them:

> The issue is that just the waiting list is 14000 families. We are talking about probably 70 – 90 thousand people that are waiting for houses. You cannot help them all at the same time! It's going to take time. But everybody wants to be number one (ibid).

For Letter, the housing queue, which is not led by block by block development, is the legitimate way in which houses need to be allocated and any attempt to alter this allocation is illegitimate. Julian Baskin confirmed this:

> Come to one of the allocations, you'll see what consensus development does, no police, far more consensus. No where in the world do you get co-operation like this. There is usually this huge violence, resistance. When people from outside try to disturb that, it's a huge problem. [referring to the AVCC] Our model can't deal with people coming from the side and trying to invade our houses (Interview, Baskin 2007)

The AVCC was labeled as "outsiders" who come from "the sides". The director commented further that, "Once you invade a house you are basically stealing a house from someone who has already been allocated a house" (interview, Baskin 2007). The ARP has created a consensus and violation of this is rejected and stigmatised. The ARP has already determined and "purified" (Kothari 2001: 142) the process through which housing must be allocated on the ARP, i.e. through the block by block system and any other mode of prioritisation is unacceptable.

7.10 The AVCC's Occupation of Power

The AVCC's radical and militant politics led them to quickly reject the ARP's request to leave the RDP houses in Extension 7, which created a situation in which the ARP's development plans were deadlocked. The ARP simply could not ignore the AVCC's demands and began negotiating in an attempt to break the impasse. Fredah Dlamini responded to their meeting with the councillors by explaining that their demands were not taken seriously. She says that, "first of all, there were no minutes taken at this meeting and the councillors had no agenda. That tells us that they did not see this meeting as important" (in Tshabalala 2007a). From Dlamini's perspective, the ARP must show signs

of heeding to their demands on their own terms. The AVCC's leverage over the development process is not limited by the ARP's power. Dlamini therefore responds that if the ARP does not heed to their demands, "we are going to go past them" (interview, Dlamini 2008).

Dlamini further highlights the AVCC's sustained and militant engagement with the ARP's process of housing allocation:

> After this protest, we will keep on protesting because we want everyone to live a better life. So we told our councillors that we are going to keep on, we won't leave until everybody of the poor people is in the right place. If they take us to jail, doesn't matter, we will come back there, we will come back from there, we move from there into the houses if they don't….so, we told them that, because they said… If we don't departure, they are going to tell the police to shoot us. So we told them that with pleasure, we are going to sing there, the police must come and shoot us. We won't run away, the police must come and shoot us (interview, Dlamini 2007).

Prior to the "illegal" occupation of houses, the local authorities were able to ignore the AVCC on the grounds that their demands were unreasonable and that they fell outside of the policy that was constructed by the ARP, ANC, and ADF. The local authorities claimed there was no land available, and that there were already people in line for those houses. The occupation meant the ARP could not allocated RDP houses to residents of Iphuteng, thus leaving development at a deadlock and forcing them to work with the AVCC. The tactic of entering houses that are intended to be allocated to other people puts a hold on the development agenda of the ARP. This is because the ARP does not want to be seen as forcibly removing these people from the houses and are therefore left with little option but to negotiate.

By the end of 2007, the AVCC had met with local government councillors and ARP officials to communicate their demands and negotiate approximately every two to three weeks thereby appearing to reshape what was possible within the institutional confines of the ARP and ADF. In the meantime, the 151 flats that they once occupied illegally officially became theirs due to decisions made with government officials who apparently had been forced to negotiate. Dlamini comments about this that, "They've agreed to let us keep the flats. After nine years, it's finally ok. We won that battle" (interview, 2007a).

According to Dlamini, when they met with the ADF and ARP, the AVCC demanded 300 houses (interview, Dlamini 2007a). It was agreed that these houses could not be allocated at the same time, but that the ARP would make an effort to give the AVCC 50 houses in the next few months. The AVCC became optimistic and they had plans to meet with Councillor Justice Ngalungulu and ADF member Linda Memela to show them people's living conditions and to continue negotiations (interview, Dlamini 2008).

However, it soon became clear that the official's promises of allocating an initial 50 houses would not be met. When the AVCC realised this several months later, it stopped negotiating and released a public press statement which indicated that "There are no clear processes around who is going to be allocated the houses because clear consultative meetings have not been held by the ARP" (APF Press Statement 2008). Referring to the ARP's broken promise to allocate houses, the statement further claimed that:

> the AVCC has tried in vain to engage with the forum on a regular basis. It has become clear to the AVCC that the ADF is a political football field for ward councillors to dribble past issues and pass on information selectively to their members (APF Press Statement 2008).

Because negotiations through the ARP and ADF were closed, the press statement concludes that, "the AVCC therefore resolved to engage directly with the housing crisis" (ibid). By this, they meant that it would resort back to its plan of obtaining their right to housing through the direct action of occupying RDP houses. This began on the 19th March 2008 when the AVCC occupied approximately 200 houses.

The police responded to this direct action by arresting two AVCC leaders. According to Fredah Dlamini (one of the activists who was arrested), the police told her that, "we are arresting you because we are tired of you, because you are the one who is the leadership. If we get you out of the way, we'll stop having problems" (interview, Dlamini 2008). This was reminiscent of police action during apartheid when civic leaders in Alexandra were arrested in order to suppress resistance to government authority. These arrests signify the local ANC's response to those who offer alternative

development agendas and attempt to put them into practice. The ANC delegitimises, and in this case, criminalises any action that falls outside of its trajectory

The potential for negotiations was short-lived and the official policy regarding housing allocations on the ARP meant that the AVCC could not obtain housing opportunites by engaging on the ARP's terms. Any agency attempting to alter this space, or question the prescribed practice in this space, is considered illegitimate. In fact, this approach contradicts what the ARP and ADF have described as the consensus for housing prioritisation in Alexandra. This consensus is considered to be the common "good" for residents of Alexandra. Opposition is therefore labeled in negative terms, ignored, suppressed, or treated with hostility.

The AVCC had to enter non-institutional spaces by resorting to direct action in order to force them to meet their demands. The use of the word "force" is important here because, even after many attempts at negotiation with the authorities, the government showed no signs of heeding to the demands of the people. The ARP's policy excluded them from being part of the government's decision-making processes. It was only when the AVCC made it extremely difficult for the ARP to implement their own plans that they began to influence outcomes, policies and discourses in the government's space. By occupying houses, the AVCC reframes and thereby alters the rules of development on the ARP in their favour. On the other hand, by negotiating with the ANC in their institutional space, as the WCR continues doing, they do not reap the fruits of housing opportunities.

The chapter has shown who sets the rules of the development game and, also, how that game can be altered. The rules can be changed when the government is no longer able to ignore, and are forced to negotiate, thus altering their own space as a result of agency from a non-institutional space. As has become clear, participation in South Africa cannot only be understood as a top-down process that disables citizens from partaking in decision- making. Even if decisions are imposed from above, people can take the opportunity to resist. In the case of the AVCC, they have succeeded in turning their exclusion into inclusion, thus opening and recreating, and reshaping, in Cornwall's (2004) conception, the social space of the government in order to meet their demands. In this sense, direct action is more effective and is a means to implement direct or

participatory democracy in order to take resources that the state claims it is providing to all South Africans.

7.11 Confining Development to the Local

Participatory spaces which base their critique of development on claims of corruption are faced with serious limitations in terms of their ability to engage with development. This is primarily because the critique confines itself to the local level and therefore also to the available local resources. Rather than questioning whether local resources are sufficient to meet residents needs in a community, critiquing corruption alone assumes that if the given resources were managed efficiently, they would be enough. The local critique does not seek to alter the underlying structures of social change that bind people into a state of poverty in the first place. Development critiques confined to the local level can therefore "obscure, and indeed sustain, broader macro level inequalities and injustice" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 14).

This is critical since the discourse of corruption in Alexandra has played a prominent role in the rhetoric and practice of the WCR's and AVCC's participatory spaces in Alexandra. Referring to the allocation of houses in the ARP, Ellen Chauke said:

> It's not only us. All Alexandran are suffering… There are houses that are built but they are not given to Alexandrians, only 2 or 3 who are Alexandrians. The others are from somewhere else. They are giving money to the authorities so we really don't know what is happening (interview, Chauke 2006).

The assumption here is that the appropriate people of Alexandra are not receiving the resources that they believe they have a right to. Rather, these resources are being allocated to others who do not deserve them. Dunia Mekgoe, secretary of the WCR, also echoes this view:

> …there were 1.3 billion that was given to people of Alexandra to build those houses. So our question is where are those houses and how many houses have they built so far? And who has a

> right to go to the resources? And who is in those houses? Are they Alexandrans or people from outside? Because the R1.3 billion was including us… we are included in the R1.3 billion so someone should think and say, where is that money? What have they built so far (interview, Mekgoe 2006)?

Beyond obtaining the immediate goal of acquiring houses for its constituency, the leaders of the WCR, awaiting the court's decision, also held a news conference at Alex SanKopano community centre intended to "expose corruption, nepotism and mismanagement in the Alexandra Renewal Project" (APF Press Statement 2005).

The APF elaborated on the purpose behind the WCR meeting:

> The ARP, a Presidential Project 'run' by the City of Johannesburg, has been ongoing for several years and is supposed to 'deliver' meaningful 'development and upliftment' to the residents of Alexandra, the vast majority of whom remain impoverished. The WCR will provide information about how the ARP has instead, 'delivered' missing funds, corruption in housing development, a disregard for democratic procedures and accountability as well as political, financial and technical mismanagement (ibid).

The news conference took place an hour before Johannesburg Mayor, Amos Masondo, was to hold an *imbizo* at Alexandra Stadium to address residents on the progress of the ARP. This appears to represent a challenge by the WCR to the ARP as well, which they believe is corrupt and illegitimate. Chauke, the active chairperson of the WCR, "lambasted the *imbizo* called by Mayor Masondo in June as a token and a failure." She reportedly argued that the mayor's meeting was an attempt to avert an impending uprising by the residents (Ross 2005).

In June 2005, the Alexandra Concerned Residents (ACR), another community-based organisation in Alexandra, mergered with the WCR. Chauke, also the acting secretary of the ACR, held a people's inspection at Alex SanKopano to expose the ARP's corruption and mismanagement. Before this inspection, Chauke told local newspapers that, "Lies and promises cooked up by councillors and the ARP can't fool us" (ibid). The APF (in the name of the ACR) decried the terrible living conditions in Alexandra and claim that these have not been improved since the inception of the ARP. Dale Mckinley wrote that:

> All of these problems were supposed to have been addressed by the ARP, but corruption, mismanagement, failure to involve the community, and a lack of concern for the people they are supposed to be helped has undermined the project. The ARP has carefully selected a few scattered locations in Alexandra to demonstrate to the media the success of the project. But join us the "People's Inspection" and see for yourself the miserable conditions facing all of the people of Alexandra. There has been no renewal, only forced removals (APF Press Statement 2005a)

According to the chairperson of the ACR, "the Aim of the 'People's Inspection of Alexandra' is to expose the pathetic living conditions faced by our community and the deteriorating fibre of society, due to corruption and lies" (Ross 2005).

The AVCC has also stressed the importance of corruption in undermining the ability of poor people to receive access to housing. They claimed that there is an unfair allocation of houses. Dlamini said that, "we need more houses because the houses that are available are given to people who don't deserve them. People who bribe councillors get them" (in Tshabalala 2007). Reaffirming this viewpoint, Dlamini states that the "processes of houses is not going in the right way. We need to influence how houses are going, to the poor, and not through corruption" (interview, Dlamini 2007).

Perhaps the key demand of the AVCC is to achieve "a transparent process for the allocation of houses in Extension 7" (APF Press Statement 2008a). This demand, though important on its own, seems to assume that if houses were allocated in a "transparent" manner in which the AVCC could have some direct influence, their problems would be solved within the framework of the ARP.

It seems the central objective of the APF critique in Alexandra is to claim that the ARP is corrupt and needs to reprioritise housing opportunities. While this clearly resonates with people's broad frustrations with the ARP, it is not meant to fundamentally challenge the premise of the ARP. This means that they have not offered an alternative to development, but rather, claimed a piece of the housing pie offered by the ANC through the ARP. This analysis does not intend to undermine the potential problems that exist with corruption at the local level in relation to housing allocations, but highlights that blaming corruption does not directly challenge the status quo. Any organisation, including the APF and the ANC, can challenge corrupt development practices in the

ARP. This is because it does not offer an alternative to existing policies, but assumes that if management is effective and efficient, development will be legitimate. In a similar way as SANCO and the SACP discussed in the previous chapter, the APF in Alexandra, despite how leaders of the APF write about their actions, engage only with what Hickey and Mohan (2004) have termed the imminent processes of social change – that is, specific interventions. Because they do not engage directly with immanent development – that is, the underlying processes of social change known as neoliberalism one would expect the APF to lay sharp critiques against, the participatory spaces of the AVCC and WCR arguably lack a transformative agenda through which to enable marginalised groups to claim access to a greater stake of national resources. On the other hand, they provide alternative practices through which to demand basic services that the government initially refused them.

7.12 Transformation Through Direct Action

The WCR first embarked on direct action in order to resist eviction plans and then when promises were broken resorted back to the frustrating process of negotiating on the ARP's terms. After promises were broken the AVCC reasserted its power of direct action by occupying houses and maintained power over the development process, which suggests the AVCC's occupation of RDP houses is a form of direct action that holds strong potential for enabling invented participatory spaces to transform development. It results from the AVCC's radical philosophy which places poor people's agency at the forefront of development plans and thereby operates on its own terms regardless of the government's perspective. This form of direct action is distinguished by its ability to sustain leverage over the development process, its proactive approach to development (rather than reactive), and the ability to enable poor people to make claims on their own terms

It can sustain leverage over the government since poor people can continue to occupy RDP houses as long as the government continues to build and deliver them. On the other hand, the WCR could not sustain its mode of direct action after the court case because the residents of Wynberg had already moved out of their homes. The AVCC's

approach is proactive because it does not wait for the government to intervene, like the case of the WCR who employed reactive direct action after the government threatened their living standards. The AVCC is not only based around a specific intervention as the case of the WCR which has focused primarily on resisting evictions and providing alternative accommodation to the people of Wynberg. Dale McKinley makes the case that the WCR tends to be "residents that want to deal with just one issue" and that they "win an immediate struggle and the organisation disappears and there is not basis for them to exist anymore" (interview, McKinley 2008). However, the AVCC's rhetoric suggests that it seeks to challenge housing allocations in all of Alexandra so that their distribution reaches all poor people. Finally, the occupation of houses occurs on the terms of the AVCC's constituency, not that of the government and can therefore be employed regardless of whether or not the government is willing to negotiate.

While the AVCC can be viewed as successful agents who help the poor gain access to housing opportunities, an alternative way of analysing the AVCC is to understand this participatory space as one that denies the rights of others who the ARP intended to give houses. Unlike the WCR, who was threatened with evictions and perhaps has a more legitimate claim to housing, the AVCC can be viewed as "stealing" houses from other poor people living in shacks who were to be given houses by the ARP.

In November 2007, while the people being displaced from the Iphuteng School Cluster were preparing to move to Extension 7 RDP houses, the AVCC took the opportunity to occupy those houses. While the AVCC did not know who these houses were for, they were in effect taking away the housing opportunities from the Iphuteng School Cluster. Julian Baskin commented that once "you invade a house, you are basically stealing it from somebody else who has already been allocated a house" (interview, Baskin 2007). He further explains how this occupation could lead to conflict with other new residents:

> And unless we go and deal with it… the guys in Iphuteng were mobilising to go there and whop these guys out, because those were their houses. They would have gone in there and killed these guys, literally, had it not been for our intervention with the police (ibid).

This conflict between new residents could have led to physical violence. While the AVCC claims to sympathise with the people of Iphuteng, who are also being moved from shacks to houses, they continue to occupy over 200 houses in extension 7, houses that belong to other people according to the ARP's policy. Responding to this, Ali Rasetelo, explains that, "I think the government is dealing with that. Yes, if you move to the house illegally, then the law must take its course. I mean we can't support that. I mean you can't jump the queue" (interview, Rasetelo 2008).

The AVCC believes that the houses being built are for all poor people, but that the ARP's process of allocating them has not been satisfactory. The AVCC therefore represents a wider constituency than the WCR who, for the most part, only claims to represent the interests of Wynberg residents. Drawing from a radical interpretation of the South African Constitution, Fredah Dlamini states, "if people can't afford houses, the constitution says they have to give them" (interview, Dlamini 2008). In other words, all poor people should have access to houses. This invokes the question, are these demands legitimate and are they simply jumping the housing queue, thus interfering with other people's right to housing? This depends on the position of analysis. If the ANC's housing policies are legitimate and correct, then perhaps they are. If, however, the ANC's trajectory is illegitimate, then direct action through the occupation of houses can be a legitimate means by which to put the ANC government under pressure to find resources in order to produce more houses for poor people.

The ANC's policy regarding how houses should be allocated is centred around the legitimacy of their approach, particularly the assumption that the ANC is providing government sub-sidised housing at an appropriate rate. Contesting this cannot solely be interpreted as "stealing a house" from someone else who was on the list, or in the block, but also as an instance of direct democracy. It forces the government to provide immediate relief to the AVCC's constituency and puts the government under pressure to produce more resources for the allocation of houses so that other poor people can also obtain relief. The potential long-term effect that the occupation of houses has on the ANC's net distribution of houses suggests that the AVCC's participatory space could hold the potential for transforming the ARP's development process.

Chapter Eight

ALPOA and the UDF: Reconstituting Development?

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the Umpakathi Development Forum (UDF) and the Alexandra Land and Property Owners (ALPOA), two more "invented" (Cornwall 2004) participatory spaces that seek to reconstitute development in Alexandra. They do so on the basis of placing historical property ownership at the centre of any development agenda in Alexandra. They believe that their claims are authentic and must therefore receive priority attention. While the focus of the other two chapters was on the changing relations of power, this chapter places a stronger emphasis on representation and aims to further problematise participatory spaces which claim to speak on behalf of the "community".

This chapter ulitilises Weber's conception of class as status to explain the mobilisation of these movements (Hughes *et al* 1995). Because of their relative status position in Alexandra as property owners (ALPOA) or children of property owners UDF), they mobilise when faced with exclusion. Most of the members of these movements are unemployed and in working class occupations, but nevertheless express class status. ALPOA believes that they have an original claim over the township and should thus be able to control development in Alexandra. The main point of contention has been over the ARP's block by block development, which involves the destruction of old properties which threatens the status of ALPOA members in two fundamental ways: first their original properties are destroyed and, second, by relocating them to RDP houses they are reduced to the same status as other residents. ALPOA has not succeeded with negotiating with the ARP over this issue because it is deemed to represent a narrow set of interests. They then resorted to direct action by taking the government to court and were granted an interdict that was intended to legally halt the demolishing of properties in Alexandra.

The UDF does not differ substantially from ALPOA. It was formed by residents who claim their status in Alexandra from the fact that they were born in the township and

are either the children of property owners or of long-term tenants. The UDF formed an invented participatory space when the ARP abandoned the waiting list and adopted the block by block approach to development. Because this new approach benefits new residents (those who have come to Alexandra primarily looking for jobs or cheap accommodation) at the expense of old residents who had their names on the now abandoned waiting list system, the UDF has sought to re-establish the system. They created a forum called the UDF, which claims to represent the interests of the "community". However, the UDF's definition of the community revolves around their conception of old residents. Like all the other participatory spaces discussed, the UDF has so far failed at negotiations with the invited space of the ARP and resorted to direct action in order to try and meet their demands. Furthermore, like the SACP, SANCO, WCR and AVCC, neither ALPOA nor UDF offers a radical alternative to development, nor do they attempt to unite the people of Alexandra. Instead, they claim to have a prior right to the resources provided by the ARP.

The ARP and ADF's notion of consensus development is based on the premise that there are limited resources which need to be divided in an appropriate way in order to avoid conflict. Given its claim to be acting in the interests of the common good of the residents of Alexandra, the ARP delegitimises others who claim to be representative since they only represent a faction of residents in Alexandra. The chapter concludes by suggesting that understanding the relationship between invented participatory spaces is imperative given the struggle over limited local resources that is taking place in Alexandra.

8.2 The Roots of ALPOA

ALPOA claims to represents the interests of about 2900 property owners in Alexandra whose families have featured prominently in the township's history. In 1935, property owners created the Alexandra Standholders' Protection and Vigilance Association (ASPVA), which sought to protect the rights of property owners. ASPVA was formed as a response to the adoption of the Native Representative Council (NRC), which opened political space for influence, and to the attempts to remove Alexandra in 1935-36

(Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 54). ASPVA is the root of ALPOA as an invented participatory space since that is when property owners first mobilised in a sustained attempt to exert power over the development process. With the population explosion in Alexandra between 1935 and 1944, property owners expressed their discontent with the proliferation of tenants and shack dwellers in backyards. Tensions mounted over the massive influx and the perception that the township was being overrun by the newcomers. This historical tension between property owners and tenants manifested itself again in the 1980s and more recently (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2008: 60).

Property owners clearly believe they not only have preferential rights over new development, but also feel their particular interests have been marginalised. In fact, since at least the mid-1980s, when their hopes for the restitution of property rights were raised, these property owners have felt increasingly excluded. This disappointment deepened considerably when it became evident the new government was unlikely to meet their minimum for a return of their historical property rights.

ALPOA's current identity and claims to status can be traced back to the apartheid government's attempts at dividing Alexandra into insiders and outsiders. The apartheid government's 1980 Alexandra Master Plan sought to create the conditions for a middle class to emerge in Alexandra and to property owners it appeared that this would lead to the restoration of their properties. The decision to create a middle class was largely a response to the urban and political crisis that was graphically exposed by the 1976 uprising. The government sought to create stability by giving "insiders" access to privileges, thus inhibiting their desire to resist against apartheid. According to Jochelson, the plan divided "insiders" and "outsiders":

> signaled a change in status from slum and hostel town to an insider's township. Behind a plan to upgrade the township lay state reformist's dream of a class-differentiated, politically stable, and economically-privileged permanent urban population. Preferential access to housing an employment, homeownership and participation in local government were the hallmarks of insiders' territory (1988 82).

Buti and the SAP also supported this plan, but it soon became clear that it would not involve the restoration of properties to their original owners. In 1986, Steve Burger's

Urban Renewal Plan actually promised to restore property rights to property owners, but failed to do so. Property owners have therefore experienced mounting frustration since at least 1979, given the local authorities lack of response to their key demands.

Especially in the mid and late 1980s, property owners blamed shack dwellers for the filth, crime and disease that seemed to overwhelm the township and often treated them as outsiders. According to Lucas, shacks affected what some believed to be "the 'real' Alexandra –ie the Alexandra of the 1950s – as unchanging over time but as being invaded by outsiders who, by moving uninvited into yards and refusing to pay rent, are upsetting the 'natural' spatial order of the township, embodied in the concept of property rights" (Lucas 1995: 85). People who arrived from 1986 were considered "aliens" by many owning property (ibid: 9). Moreover, ALPOA complained in 1991 that the influx of shack dwellers in Alexandra has contributed to a situation in which "there are no property owners in this township" (quoted from City Press in Mayekiso 1996: 162).

As Jackie Segopa, the secretary of ALPOA, has affirmed regarding any development that occurs in Alexandra, "we have a simply dogmatic thing, property owners must be involved" (interview, Segopa 2007). Rather than keeping their demands and interests to themselves and then reacting to government interventions, ALPOA mobilised in a proactive way in order to constitute development in particular ways. In this way, they acted in quite similar to the AVCC. ALPOA insisted that property owners must control or give consent to development in order for it to be legitimate.

8.3 The Basis for Mobilisation: Status or Class?

According to Mzwanele Mayekiso, a key activist involved in the ACO, Alexandra's property owners "represent a conservative element of the township, an element which fared well in some other places, but not in Alexandra" (Mayekiso 1996: 55). The assumption underpinning this argument is that property owners are automatically better off than the majority of township dwellers and did not seek a radical development order. ALPOA's concerns are, in fact, similar to those who own property in elite suburbs in that they are amongst the middle class who may be highly concerned with the devaluing of properties that could result from low-cost housing or densification in their area.

But is this really an accurate depiction of ALPOA? Compared to residents of the East Bank, just around the edges of Old Alexandra, members of ALPOA endure poor living conditions. Their houses, some of which are dilapidated, are in the midst of a crowded and sprawling township. Though ALPOA members are property owners, many of them are in fact unemployed and most members are unskilled or work temporary jobs. Weber claimed that people mobilise based on their status. Elaborating on Weber's argument, Hughes *et al* explain that, "the basis for status differences is not an economic one, and people of comparable economic power can stand in differential status positions" (1995: 111). For example, members of ALPOA have "comparable economic power" to the majority of residents in Alexnadra, but believe their status is higher because they own property.

Despite its relative socio-economic position, ALPOA represents a sustained invented participatory space which challenges authority, and must be viewed, in its own right, as a social movement. It therefore represents an unusual kind of example of participation in development since agency is usually associated with the most marginalised rising up to alter development outcomes. ALPOA provides an example in which not only to analyse the agency of the most marginalised, which was the subject of the two previous chapters, but of those who assume a middle class status. ALPOA's self-proclaimed status as middle class influences the way that they perceive development in Alexandra.

8.4 Excluding ALPOA Through Consensus

ALPOA has two key concerns regarding the development of Alexandra: for property owners to reclaim their property rights from the government for their land and property that was taken away illegitimately by the apartheid government and to de-densify Alexandra so that their property values can increase. Property owners were offered R50,000 as compensation by the new government but, as Jackie Segopa explains:

> some people have not opted for the R50,000 award, precisely because they have never applied for R50,000… they have claimed their properties and not R50,000. And the government was providing an alternative way out into the restoration (interview, Segopa 2008).

Those who rejected the R50,000 did so because they believe that it is not enough to adequately compensate them for their properties. ALPOA is thus in the process of valuing the properties. Dodo Shiburi, a committee member of ALPOA, confirms this:

> All the papers have been drawn up and what is left is for the valuators to come to your stand and value it… We need these valuations to fight the government's decision to give a blanket compensation of R50,000 per stand, without taking cognisance that these stands vary in size, value and the finish of the property (in Siso 2007).

ALPOA is also strongly in favour of the de-densification of Alexandra in the hope that it would increase the value of their properties as well as enable them to live more comfortably. In their view, the terrible congestion in the township is a primary cause of the depressed values of their properties. Jackie Segopa speculates what could happen if Alexandra was administered in the interests of property owners:

> There is value, absolutely**.** Even though our properties could be valued very low, but supposing things were in order. They had proper administration, proper maintenance and control. Our properties would skyrocket, the values skyrocket. We would be looking at the region between 700 to a million rand per property But because of that not being achieved, we cannot, and the government is to blame for all that (interview, Segopa 2008).

De-densifying Alexandra is a major task given the fact that perhaps 350,000 people live there. Nevertheless, achieving their development programme is extremely important to them given the influence it could have over their standard of living and this informs their reaction to the ARP's development trajectory.

Chapter 4 discussed in detail how the ADF's approach to development functions within the ARP's resource confines. Like the ARP therefore, the ADF works under the assumption that resources are severely limited and that houses can only be delivered at a certain pace. The consensus development of the ARP, ADF, and ANC, has determined that development will first occur around the Iphuteng School Cluster and shack dwellers will be prioritised for RDP houses, albeit only a minority of them considering the huge housing backlog in the rest of Alexandra. This consensus has "purified" (Kothari 2001)

possibilities for housing allocations on the ARP and thereby de-legitimised alternative options. The ARP and ADF argue that they are not privileging any groups, but are instead providing housing on a more sustainable basis for the common good of Alexandra's residents. ALPOA disagrees and believes it should be at the forefront of development decisions and therefore claims that this consensus development excludes their demands completely.

Until 2004, there were those members of ALPOA who thought that their interests could be met by being part of the ADF, whereas other rejected the idea of being a part of the ADF altogether. Jackie Segopa recounted what happened:

> From 2000, [2001], and 2002 I was not in the leadership of ALPOA, I came back in 2003 and vehemently objected to ALPOA's participation in that forum. Because that forum saw the development of flats between London and Rooth and 5th avenue on people's properties. And that I could not accept. And the leadership which had come into play, including Gama Magagula, we strongly challenged that… And we had to phase out that leadership and that idea and practice and some of that leadership had to be sidelined and we took the reigns until today (interview, Segopa 2008)

Because the ARP was destroying old properties around London and Rooth roads, members of ALPOA were disillusioned with the ADF completely. From 2002-2004, a faction of ALPOA remained part of the ADF and negotiated with it. The current secretary of the ADF, however, claimed that "they were not getting anywhere" in terms of the restoration or their properties (interview Segopa, 2008).

Addressing a group of 300 property owners in Alexandra the current chairperson of ALPOA, Gama Magagula, complained that the ANC has ignored their demands:

> Our government doesn't want to give us a straight answer as to whether we shall be compensated or not, instead whenever the issue is raised they duck and dive. We are fed up with this attitude from people we put into power with our votes. It seems our votes only count when they want to ascend to office, and once we vote them in, they forget, neglect and abuse us… Whenever we raise the issue of our compensation, they don't respond to our letters and enquiries. They don't want to talk to us about this matter anymore. This is the same party that claims 'people first', but when it come to our claim, the people take the back seat (in Siso 2007).

Simon Noge insists that the ADF is ANC dominated and therefore shuts out the viewpoints of other organisations:

> If you go to ADF now, all those members that are there now are ANC member… When the ADF was formed… it intended to include all stakeholders… Any other political party that would come in there or any other opinion that would come in, was to be congenial with the ANC majority there… And that's how it squeezed out every other person who was once in there of a different color. They are all ANC! (interview, Noge 2007)

As noted in the discussion on the SACP, the ADF admits that it is predominantly made up of people who are affiliated with the ANC in one way or another. Given the ARP's resource constraints, the ARP cannot include "all stakeholders". ALPOA would likely be sidelined given the fact that it represents less than 1% of the population of Alexandra. However, this is not significantly different from other invented participatory spaces discussed previously, who also represent a minority of residents but nevertheless demand to be prioritised for housing.

8.5 The "Revolution" is in Court

The ARP not only fails to restore properties to ALPOA's constituency, but goes beyond this by destroying their properties in order to implement block by block development. Unable to influence the ARP through the ADF, this provoked a new response by ALPOA who decide to exert power over the development process by filing a court case against the ARP. After obtaining an interdict which stated that no one could destroy their properties, it appeared the ARP would not continue with its development plans. However, the ARP re-asserted its power by continuing to implement its development plans, thereby violating the court interdict. It justified this action on the basis that it functions in the interests of the residents of Alexandra.

Jackie Segopa argues that the ADF not only ignores the interests of ALPOA, but actually makes matter worse for them:

> We are not participating in the ADF and as such we have renamed the ADF as the Alexandra Demolishing Forum because they are hell-bent on destroying the properties which were once owned by our members, or blacks in particular. So they are doing exactly what the apartheid was doing, demolish properties and ultimately try to massacre the whole of township properties, the Alexandra township properties (interview, Segopa 2008).

Segopa misrepresents the ARP's attitude towards properties. In fact, the ARP demolishes particular areas such as the Iphuteng School Cluster in order to de-densify and "renew" them. Still, when the ARP continued demolishing properties without providing adequate compensation, ALPOA filed a case in court against the ARP. Like all the other non-institutional participatory spaces discussed thus far, the tactics that ALPOA used evolved over time as they began to see that the ARP would continue to ignore their interests despite their attempts at negotiations. Jackie Segopa explains why they took the ARP to court:

> we realised we need to go court to for us to receive fair justice. Why?... even the government that we voted for does not seem to realise that we have not been justly treated. So we believe this is the best revolution, to go to court. And get our interests right (interview, Segopa 2007).

Segopa explains that since its inception the ARP did not implement development plans that were "in recognition of property ownership rights and restoration. They were hell-bent to destroy and rebuild Alexandra. Much to the contrary of the property owners likings or interest" (ibid). ALPOA therefore concluded that it had no choice:

> but ultimately to fight a case against the ARP council, the city of Johannesburg, the land claims commission and the land affairs, because really, more than 50 properties have been demolished come 2003… And then where, to demolish the entire Alexandra (ibid)?

By December 2004, ALPOA was successful at filing a case. While the ARP was still destroying properties at the beginning of 2005, ALPOA secured an interdict which stated that the ARP was prohibited from demolishing anymore properties since it amounted to forced removals of those living there. As in the case of the WCR, the court appeared to

offer an alternative arena in which to defend the interests of an invented participatory space.

The ARP views ALPOA as a barrier to administering the block by block approach to development because the court interdict prevents the ARP from demolishing areas which they have identified for development. ALPOA is accused of slowing "the pace of turning Alex into a model city" (in Ross 2005a). The ADF argues that ALPOA has narrow interests that disregard the broaders interests of the people of Alexandra. Linda Memela states that:

> It is in the interests of all the people of Alexandra that development and improvement of living standards be achieved… Now the matter will be decided in the courts while development is held at ransom (in Ross 2005a).

This response echoes the authority's critique of the AVCC's occupation of RDP houses, who they also accused of stalling development to advance their own narrow interests. Furthermore, court cases have the possibility of forcing the ARP/ADF to alter their development agenda, legally obliging them to take account of these organisations' concerns. Linda Memela reportedly "blamed Alpoa for running to the courts instead of consulting all the stakeholders involved in developing Alex." Memela argued that:

> the problem with ALPOA was that they were so obsessed with the land and property issue, as if they were the only custodians of land in Alexandra… There is no one in Alexandra who can find a solution on how to develop this area, including ALPOA (in Shivambo 2007)

Without careful consideration, the decision by the ARP to undertake the block by block approach in April 2006 could be seen to have positive implications for ALPOA given the fact that it is a response to the perceived need to de-densify Alexandra. As stated earlier, the block by block approach is the dominant discourse regarding how houses will be allocated by the ARP. The intention is to clean up an area and then rebuild, enabling the oversight of areas to prevent the re-occupation of the areas from which people have been removed. This approach began with the Iphuteng School Cluster since that is an area which the ARP wants to de-densify so that the children at the schools there can have more space to play and be safer. In order to make this happen, the ARP offers all

families living in dwellings who qualify, be it a house or a shack, an RDP house in extension seven on the near periphery of Alexandra. Shack dwellers are generally satisfied with the ARP's offer of the exchange of their shack for a house that is nearby Alexandra. The programme is such that all residents of Alexandra become part of the plans and can obtain housing opportunities. According to Julian Baskin:

> What we now shifted it towards is a project that looks at upgrading Alex for the residents of Alexandra irrespective, so long as you live in Alex at this point in time, you become part and parcel of our programme (interview, Baskin 2007).

However, the approach undermines the interests of property owners since they believe that the houses in which they are living in are much more valuable than the RDP houses that are being offered as compensation. For ALPOA, the problem with this approach is that it treats property owners the same as everyone else in Alexandra

This explains why Jackie Segopa fumed with frustration when responding to the effects of this policy:

> Because property owners, or people who are soon to be property owners, they had houses 60, 80 years ago living in the same structure, which is a sizable house. And they have accumulated furniture. How do you remove or relocate somebody who lives in a sizeable house under the pretext that you are removing shacks? And into a one-room house (interview, Segopa 2008)!

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The trajectory of the ARP excludes ALPOA not only from meeting their objectives, but erodes their middle-class status as well. If the ARP's plans are fully implemented, members of ALPOA are in danger of losing both their property and their status as the local middle class.

Referring to the ARP's intervention around the Iphuteng School Cluster, Jackie Segopa complained that it amounts to the forced removals of property owners:

> That is precisely the violation of the interdict. That's precisely what we are contesting. It is a violation. And it goes against what the land claims commission has been advocating, it does amount to forced removals which the land claims said it would never happen again. And in 2003 and 2004, the land claims commissioner, represented by the minister of land and agriculture, Mrs.

> Toko Dediza, tabled a report that there would never be further forced removals, never again. But that is happening (interview, Segopa 2008).

It seems the ARP decided it would no longer be held hostage by ALPOA ad recommended the demolition of properties. Segopa pointed out that there was no demolishing of properties in 2006, but that at the end of 2007 the ARP began to demolish again. In order to deal with the breach of the interdict by the ARP, ALPOA went back to court beginning on the 8th October 2007. Their struggle to halt the ARP's forced evictions of property owners continues up until today.

8.6 Tyranny of the Minority?

While ALPOA's demands for restoration of their properties is no doubt legitimate, what is also significant is that ALPOA represents a tiny minority in Alexandra. Implementing ALPOA's development agenda would have to be done at the expense of other residents and as such may constitute a tyranny of the minority. Instead of tyranny being initiated through the ARP, it would do so through a small group of residents in Alexandra. In the case of ALPOA, this would mean the imposition of the interests of property owners at the expense of the rest of the township. The reality of limited resources within the ARP means that when one invented participatory space, whether it is the AVCC, the WCR, S'swetla or Iphuteng residents or ALPOA, receives resources from the ARP, it does so at the expense of another. Nevertheless, ignoring the interests of property owners also amounts to a tyranny since it imposes development onto a minority.

Perhaps because members of ALPOA have been the victims of neglect by the government for nearly 30 years, this does not effect ALPOA's perception that the ANC ignores ALPOA's interests. Gama Magagula explains that

> It has been proven that power corrupts absolutely…This is what happened to the ANC government... We voted them into power and now they are drunk with power to such an extent they don't care anymore (in Siso 2007).

Other than the reference to the compensation of land and properties, this quote nearly mirrors the criticisms leveled against the ANC by new social movements including WCR and AVCC. While AVCC and WCR complained that the ANC was corrupt because the poor did not get houses, ALPOA claims that the ANC is drunk with power because it does not address their grievances.

The ARP legitimates the exclusion of stakeholders' demands, not just ALPOA's, that fall out of this trajectory by claiming that their housing prioritisation is too narrow. While the ARP's institutional space for participation, the ADF, represents key aspects of the tyrannical approach to participation in development (described in chapter four), it at least comes to a consensus which benefits more than just, in this case, property owners (albeit not the majority of residents). In 2008, a CLO for the ARP, Sammy Mamabulo, continued to suggest that the views of the majority need to be put ahead of those of ALPOA so that development can go forward:

> when you get to the whole forum of the ADF, where everybody's there, everybody says compromise… You see, there is a shortage of land in Alexandra. And you still want so many square meters for yourselves… So you need compromise (interview, 2008)

After all, property owners represent a minority, and the ARP therefore does not face mass resistance against the removals by shack dwellers. In fact, as a result of the policy decision made by the MEC, the ARP director is proud of the process through which it removes people given the fact that the ARP no longer involves the "red ants" when displacing people. Instead, the ARP uses what Julian Baskin calls "consensus development":

> Come to one of the allocations, you'll see what consensus development does, no police, far more consensus. No where in the world do you get co-operation like this. There is usually this huge violence, resisistance (interview, Baskin 2007)

In reality, the ARP has consensus development with shack dwellers in Iphuteng who are being provided with RDP houses, but they do not have it with the people living in properties. In the context of limited resources, the ADF and ARP always face opposition

when they are attempting to achieve some kind of development. They have come to a "consensus," which shuts out stakeholder such as ALPOA. As Segopa of ALPOA noted earlier, the block by block approach amounts to the forced removals of property owners who believe they are getting a bad end of the deal by being offered the same compensation for their land and properties as shack dwellers.

The ARP and ADF seek a more holistic approach to housing development for the majority, albeit at the expense of the minority. Initiating development through consensus in the context of limited resources is therefore highly problematic since it requires the exclusion of any stakeholder that falls out of that consensus. The ARP's consensus development is tyrannical because of the way in which it imposes itself onto property owners. Rather than compromising, it seeks to forcibly remove property owners from the homes that their local middle class status largely depends on. The next section looks at a much wider constituency than that which ALPOA claims to represent. They also believe that they have the right to be prioritised for housing due to their status as people who were born in Alexandra and who remain on the government's waiting list, which has been abandoned in favour of the block by block approach.

8.1.1 Creating the Conditions for Mobilisation: the UDF

The UDF makes a dual claim for its legitimacy: they are children of property owners and long-term tenants and are perhaps the most ardent supporters of the original housing waiting list, which by definition prioritised older residents' housing claims. Again, using Weber's conception of status is useful here since many old residents are, like new residents, unemployed and do not stay in a formal house or own property. Old residents have mobilised on the basis of their perceived status in Alexandra. Many of them completed the C-form in 1996 and were on the housing waiting list, which has been abandoned in Alexandra. This exclusion has created the basis upon which a group of old residents have framed their resistance and agency.

Prior to the ARP's decision to stop removing people from Alexandra to Bramfischerville in Soweto, the ARP provided housing opportunities to people living in Alexandra through the waiting list (as discussed in chapter 4). Within this policy, once

houses were being built in Greater Alexandra, the next in the database would be prioritised. Despite some complaints of corruption, old residents generally did not resist this since they saw themselves as receiving housing opportunities before anyone else and in a manner that seemed fair.

Without consulting old residents who now form the UDF, the ARP decided to scrap the waiting list so that it could accommodate those that were to be displaced such as the people living around the Iphuteng School Cluster. The commitment to the block by block approach means that those who have been on the waiting list since 1996 are excluded from housing prioritisation and will receive no houses from the ARP despite the fact that they qualify for houses and believe that they should be prioritised.

One participatory space cannot be adequately understood outside of the context of other spaces. As different agents use particular tactics to put forth their interests, power relations may change, thus challenging what can happen in other spaces. In this case, ARP policy changed in favour of new residents and at the expense of old. As stated earlier, prior to the resistance from other participatory spaces led by SANCO and others, which led to the policy decision to stop moving people far away from Alexandra, the housing interests of old residents were, to some extent, being addressed. Having applied for a position on the waiting list using a c-form, old residents understood that this was the process through which the government was going to allocate them houses. With the ARP's abandonment of the C-form, however, it appears to old residents that their interests are marginalised in favour of others who are less deserving of the houses. Although this decision was clearly done in consultation with the ADF, many old residents were unaware of the possible policy decision and feel that this decision was made without their consent or approval.

Great frustration arose among old residents as a result of this policy change. Raymond Sibanda has been living in Alexandra all his life and is a CLO of the ARP. According to him, there is widespread dissatisfaction among old residents over this new policy:

> Now all of them are becoming the ARP's baby… I mean all of them depend on the ARP for allocation of houses. So the ARP, you can imagine what problems does it have… Start addressing the question of people who are born in Alex because they are not just sitting. They are also asking

> where are our houses? We want our houses… They've been waiting. Yea, and then people in Marlboro, we are not going anywhere until you give us houses here in Alex. Why don't you give us houses in extention 7, which there are people who have been waiting for years for the extension 7 to be developed… It's a big problem (interview, Sibanda 2006)

Tebogo Ramabulana, a young man who has lived in Alexandra all his life, also expresses a similar frustration:

> They build houses for people… But if you can go there, the people who are living there are not from Alexandra. That's my problem, those people are not from Alexandra, you know? You get people from outside you know, living there…. They were supposed to give people from Alexandra those place(s) you know. They were supposed to live in those houses. That's my problem (interview, Ramabulana 2006).

Old residents have become frustrated that new residents are getting RDP houses before them. The agency by new residents in non-institutional spaces has created structural conditions that now include new residents at the expense of the old.

8.1.2 The Formation of the UDF

A new invented participatory space called the UDF originated when old residents began to collectively mobilise in order to challenge the ARP's development agenda. What differentiates the UDF from the other participatory spaces discussed is their demand to a return to housing allocation based on the waiting list. As a result of the exclusion and frustration that old residents faced who had been on the waiting list, as well as the lack of service delivery that could be seen by them inside Old Alexandra, old residents of Alexandra began to conduct research in order to uncover what exactly it was that the ARP was doing. Blessing Mashigo and Glen Marvinbela, founders of the UDF, began to inquire to government officials about what was happening regarding housing allocations:

> Because people have tried individually, if I may say independently to go and inquire regarding the houses. But now they've failed.. So hence we came together as a community, created a platform (interview, Marvinbela).

While the UDF formed around a general concern about issues of development broadly, their main aims and objectives, according to Glen Marvinbela, were "to address the issues of the c-forms and the waiting list that the first people to benefit or to be prioritised houses are the people who had been on the queue" (interview, Marvinbela 2008).

Blessing Mashigo explains that "After the sixth year, we could notice there were extensions but now Alexandra hasn't been touched and its Alexandra Renewal Project" (interview, Mashigo 2008) Glen Marvinbela later commented about the housing allocations on the ARP that:

> What makes the people more angrier is that the system the government introduces to the people, and the people have got hope from that system, and at the end of the day those systems are not being implemented accordingly (interview, Marvinbela 2008).

The UDF created a forum where people can address development issues. Residents of Alexandra have begun to come in numbers and approximately 500 people come to the meetings which are held every week on Wednesdays at Alex Sancopano. Meetings to address development issues and to consider ways of engaging the government are the UDF's primary activities. The UDF does not have a list of members, but the number of people who attend their meetings each week suggests that they have a constituency in Alexandra that is in the thousands.

7.1.3 Unbiased Representatives of the Community?

"Umphakhathi" is a Zulu word which means "the community" or "residents." This title is intended to symbolise the forum's ability to take on issues of the community without regard for political affiliation and in an unbiased manner. The UDF is an invented participatory space which seeks to replace or, at the very least counteract, the ARP's invited space for participation. More than any other invented participatory space discussed previously, it has copied the framework of the ADF by creating a forum that meets regularly and which claims also to be non-partisan. Glenn Marvinbela explains:

> Umpakathi is there…we gathered as a community and we started a forum where we created a platform where everybody can come forward and address these issues irrespective of which political organisation you belong to. That is ANC, IFP, you name them… We are saying, let's put the organisation aside, let's talk about *the community based issues* (interview, Marvinbela 2008, my emphasis).

Like the leaders of SANCO in Alexandra, the UDF claims to represent the community, albeit not through the Yard Committee system. In fact, a leader of the UDF implies that other organisations are inadequate representatives:

> Because mainly it's not about us, it's about a community initiative, where it's a platform because now we have these organisations. They are there. But now they are not addressing these issues according to the manner in which *the community* is expecting (interview, Mashigo 2008, my emphasis).

UDF leaders suggest that their new formation is not only non-partisan, but represents the interests of the community in an objective manner. As one leader puts it, the UDF is "a platform where we address matters on a community point of view. If I may say, we address things for what they are" (interview, Marvinbela 2008).

In fact, however, they are not addressing things "as they are" or from "a community point of view", but from the perspective of particular old residents feel they have been marginalised from the housing allocation process. Contrary to the claims to be an unbiased and open forum in which to address issues of the community, Blessing Mashigo explains the discourse (rules, values and norms), that guides the interactions that occur in the UDF:

> So now, the *community* thought that seeing as the houses are being built, they are going to actually allocate people from Alexandra according to the systems introduced by the government itself, which is that there was a c-form system… So now people are wondering as to, are they going to be prioritised housing seeing as they have been waiting for houses since about 13 (years), since 1996, carrying the c-forms, waiting for the government to develop and allocate them houses? So which became a problem (interview, Mashigo 2008).

The discourse that guides the development trajectory, and what is acceptable within the participatory space of the UDF is based on the assumption that old residents are the "community". Furthermore, it is based on the assumption that old residents are neglected since the waiting list has been abandoned. Mashigo uses the word "community" to describe the dissatisfaction of old residents with the abandoning of the c-from system when, in fact, not all members of the community know about the waiting list, some are not on it, and members of SANCO around the Iphuteng school cluster indirectly fought to challenge the c-form system so that they could be provided with the RDP houses around Alexandra. Though Mashigo is referring to what "the community thought," this description hides the biased nature of the participatory space of the UDF. The UDF mobilises on the basis of their status since they are "old" residents who were born in Alexandra and believe they have a claim to resources provided by the ARP. In order to benefit from the ARP, they seek the reintroduction of the waiting list:

> There were waiting list systems, which were introduced to the communities or to the townships by the previous government… And now ARP, they are coming up with different systems such as block by block systems, you see. The block by block systems which gave people concerns as to how can they introduce such systems while there are other systems that were introduced by the government that was still in place? (ibid)

The shift from the C-form to block by block distribution of houses has led to the exclusion of old residents. Hence, Glenn has accurately pointed out that, **"**you will find that they will only take the people who are vulnerable, which are the shacks dwellers, the desparate people to get houses" (interview, Marvinbela 2008). The UDF leader's view is that the policy should not have shifted, and that those with c-forms should be prioritised for housing over new residents. Glenn Marvinbela explains the problems that old residents have with new residents who are given preference for housing in Alexandra:

> But now you will find that in the yard, there are people who just came in maybe 2 years, 3 years, but there are people who have been there over 30 years. So when the system which is being introduced by the ARP, it's sidelining the people which have been there for all these years. Because of now they are only looking at the easy way out because of what they will normally do, they will only take the people who are in the shacks and put them in the houses. And the people

> which they have been there, which they were supposed to be allocated houses, they said no they don't qualify. (interview, Marvinbela 2008)

The UDF's alternative plans for development exclude the interests of new residents living in shacks and that they are not part of the "community" that the UDF refers to.

Rather, the UDF is concerned with old residents, those who were born and are likely to be buried in Alexandra. Though leaders of the UDF claim that they represent the interests of the entire community, Marvinbela explains how the inception of the UDF occurred as a result of the exclusion of a particular aspect of the community:

> So what about the people who are Bona Fide, who have been living in Alexandra, who will, even if when they die they have to be buried here? So you find that what is actually happening is that we as Umpakathi Development Forum, we tried to mobilise, of course which we did. And then we did address the issues to the community (interview, Marvinbela 2008)

The problem that old residents have with new residents getting housing opportunities before them is rooted in the fact that old residents believe they have the right to resources in Alexandra because they were born there. Therefore, those who come to Alexandra looking for jobs are not bona fide and should not receive housing opportunities before them. The biased nature of the UDF stigmatises those new residents who came to Alexandra to find a better life:

> They are coming from Alexandra seeking for the jobs. So they don't mind what is happening around Alexandra, they don't care what is happening in Alexandra because they know it is not their home (interview, Mashigo 2008).

Old residents believe they have a greater stake in the resources than new residents and shacks dwellers who just came in and this claim guides their discourse regarding the allocation of housing as well as what is or is not acceptable positions in their meetings. This shows the discursive closure of the UDF's participatory space is one that seeks to address the interests of old residents by reintroducing the waiting list. This discourse informs their interaction with the ARP and ADF. It shows how this biased discourse,

which favours the allocation of houses to old residents through the waiting list, competes with that of the ARP.

8.1.4 The UDF's Limited Power

The UDF first attempted to engage the ARP's development through the ADF and councillors. However, they failed since their development agenda could not be implemented within the context of the ARP's consensus. The UDF then made a decision to embark on a strategy of direct action by marching to the council's office and making a list of demands, particularly for the return of the waiting list approach to housing allocations in Alexandra. However, this form of direct action is limited since it does not enable the UDF to gain leverage and thereby to put pressure on the ARP to respond to their demands.

Because the ADF has come to consensus development regarding the prioritisation of housing, its discourse conflicts with the discourse of the UDF who fall outside of that consensus and who seek the return of the waiting list approach to housing allocations on the ARP. Blessing Mashigo remarked that the concerns of the UDF were not met when they engaged the ADF:

> Even us as UDF, we were expected to affiliate with them, which we cannot. We cannot affiliate with GADF because now whatever we raise is not part of their agenda because we have burning issues. They are burning issues which we need to deal with which they are not having including on their agenda (interview, Mashigo 2008).

When new discourses enter the ADF's participatory space, they work within the discursive confines of that space and, in this case, cannot be addressed.

Glenn Marvinbela claimed, referring to the ADF, that, "They purport to be representing the inspirations and aspirations of the people of Alexandra and yet they are not" (interview, Marvinbela 2008). Marvinbela claims that because the UDF represents the interests of the community, "we are seen as opposition to the ADF" (interview, Mashigo 2008). However, they are not seen as an opposition to the ADF because they because they deal with issues of the community, but because their specific development

agenda falls outside of the ARP's discourse, of the block by block approach to housing allocations. The social space of the ARP, which is guided by discourse (rules, norms and values), in this case in terms of how houses are to be allocated in the ARP, is open to "new" residents living in shacks around Iphuteng, but closed to the old residents on the waiting list who the UDF claims to represent. The UDF is therefore able to enter the physical space of the ADF, which it did, but unable to engage in meaningful negotiations.

After failing to obtain meaningful outcomes through negotiations with the ADF and local councillors, the UDF decided that it needed to use other means to be heard. Glenn Marvinbela explains that:

> we did call like the councillors to come and attend our meetings, they never show up. We wrote letters to the executive (of the ADF), and also the ARP to come and clarify those issues, but they failed to d that. So what we did as UDF, we decided that now, as a community, we must have a way of making those people to listen to what we are saying (interview, Marvinbela 2008).

Like all the participatory spaces including that of SANCO, SACP, WCR and AVCC, failed attempts at negotiating with the ARP led the UDF to try alternative strategies. In this case, the UDF decided that they would embark on direct action. They marched with hundreds of people to the offices of the local government officials in region E in Sandton on the 6th December 2007 demanding primarily that the ARP address the issue of the waiting list. This represents, once again according to Giddens (1984), the "enabling" aspect of structure, since the exclusive nature of the structure provides the impetus for new kinds of mobilisation or agency. However, this agency has not yet been successful in achieving its objectives. Instead they continue to be ignored and have had no response from officials regarding their concerns.

Responding to the protest or engagement in direct action, Glenn Marvinbela claims that the MEC for Housing later "mentioned us as people that which do not scare her. She is not scared of us, she doesn't become scared because of people marching and stuff like that" (interview, Marvinbela 2008). Perhaps the MEC was suggesting that solely marching to the offices of the local government does not have a great potential to force the government to heed to the people's demands. This is unlike the WCR and SACP's use of direct action since they initially used physical force and strength in

numbers to avoid their removals. The government was pressured, and at some point gave in, because they did not want to forcibly remove several hundreds of protesters with brute physical force.

Referring to the AVCC's approach to obtain houses, the UDF claimed that these actions were illegitimate:

> …if you check, people were so angry, people were so frustrated in a manner that they wanted us to organise ourselves to go and invade those houses, which we feel that is not the right way to be. We cannot lead people, say we are leading people and mislead them to go and occupy those houses and get shot, get arrested. You see? So we try to educated them… Now, we cannot be seen as radicals you see? We don't have to be so unruly. You see, stoning of cars, burning of tires and burning of the councillors houses (interview, Marvinbela 2008).

Moses Mashao, another member of the UDF, responded about these tactics that, "we did that a long time ago. We used to do that, that's why you see we have this government today" (interview, Mashao 2008). They claim that these methods were useful against the apartheid regime, but that they are not necessary today. While they go through similar processes to have their voices heard, the UDF differentiates themselves from groups like the AVCC that occupy houses and burn tires.

However, as the MEC appeared to be pointing out, the methods of negotiating and marching do not necessarily enable one to have their interests addressed. Like the AVCC, the UDF is attempting to obtain housing opportunities that they believe should be theirs. The AVCC is more successful at this than the UDF because it "forces" themselves into government-subsidised houses thus putting pressure on the government to produce more houses or, at the very least, enable individuals within the constituency of the AVCC to gain immediate access to the government's resources. Direct action through marching alone does not "force" the government to heed to people's demands and the UDF will be limited until it finds other strategies through which they can exert their power.

8.1.5 Reintroducing the Waiting List: Implications for Development

The UDF is seeking to reprioritise development so that it would work within the waiting list system that was undertaken by the ANC government, but has been abandoned in Alexandra. The UDF is clearly an extension of ALPOA and therefore represents a wider constituency but even the UDF does not seek to unify the community. Like all the groups discussed, they represent particular aspects of the community in Alexandra who believe they have a legitimate claim over the ARP's resources**.** Their resistance is essentially about the prioritisation of limited resaources. They do not address the immanent process of development, but seek to engage with specific interventions that are on offer by the ARP.

In this case, the change in policy in favour of new residents became the structure upon which old residents formed their own ideas about the ARP, created a participatory space and resisted what they believe to be the top-down character of the ARP. Drawing in Giddens's theory of "structuration" shows that the change in policy (structure) that resulted from resistance/ agency by new residents has meant the exclusion of old residents. This is a prime example of how participatory spaces are influenced by experiences from other spaces. Cornwall argues that, "these spaces are not separable; what happens in one impinges on what happens in others, as relations of power within and across them are constantly reconfigured" (2004: 78). The conclusion will discuss the implications of how development is constituted through agents at the expense of other agents. As long as people's resistance functions within the ARP's conception of development, which I argue has become the "common sense" (Gramsci) of development in Alexandra, the demands of the majority of agents in Alexandra are unlikely to be addressed in the near future.

Chapter 9

From Tyranny to Transformation in Alexandra?

9.1 Introduction

The extant literature on participation in development in South Africa remains quite limited (see Khosa 2003; Beall *et al* 2002; Heller 2000), although recently several volumes have engaged the issue more seriously. While the South African literature has clearly provided an important starting point from which to understand the ANC government's top-down practices of participation in development (see Oldfield 2008; Heller 2008; Benit-Gbaffou 2008a), much of it has focused on the prospects of participation in local government or invited participatory spaces. It takes a one-sided and deterministic approach by ignoring the potential for agents, acting outside of the politics of invited spaces, to influence participatory, and even development, outcomes. The underlying argument presented here is that, without paying adequate attention to agency, the researcher is blind to the multiple, varied, contested, and perhaps contradictory, experiences which are critical to understanding the limitations and potential for participation to transform development. Placing the role of agency at the centre of this process highlights the nuances of participation in development and thereby moves beyond labeling participatory processes as either tyrannical or transformative. Indeed, participatory spaces may be interpreted as tyrannical from one perspective and, from another, appear to hold the possibility for radically altering, or redefining, development. This approach reveals specific aspects of participatory processes which may provide building blocks for the future construction of a transformative project defined from below through popular agency. It may simultaneously unveil the processes through which agency is captured by hegemonic development plans thereby rendering participatory spaces tyrannical.

Applying this approach in Alexandra, this thesis has sought to explain the dynamics of the participatory spaces. While this study has concluded that the ADF, an invited participatory space, has strong elements of tyranny, the analysis of participation in development in the ARP would be shortsighted if it stopped here. One of the primary

arguments made here is that participatory processes are always in flux and cannot easily be predetermined. In Alexandra, these salient features have been brought into sharp relief by the fact that invented participatory spaces in Alexandra have challenged the ARP's development trajectory. This chapter discusses the extent to which each invented participatory space explored in this study has been successful at influencing the ARP's practices. These spaces signify active agents who have had varying degrees of success at reconstituting the ARP's development process.

Invented participatory spaces are also fraught with contradictions, both internally and in relation to each other. It may be argued that this is primarily because each space seeks to reprioritise, rather than redefine development. This means that their agency is constrained within the ARP's dominant development trajectory. While these spaces offer alternative development practices to the ARP, they do not seriously offer alternative policies. The emphasis on reprioritisation has led to a situation in which participation in development in Alexandra is "zero-sum."

The final section suggests that the philosophy and practice of non-violent direct action (NVDA), which has been neglected by radical scholars, provides a useful framework with which to understand the potential for participation in development to enable agents to control development on their own terms. The way in which the AVCC employs power over the development process through the use of NVDA distinguishes it from the other five invented participatory spaces analyses in this thesis and suggests that, if its tactics were harnessed more carefully, it could hold transformative potential.

9.2 Asserting Agency in Development

The most recent literature on participation in South Africa shows that the government's invented mechanisms intended for community participation, such as ward committees and development forums, exclude communities from influencing development (Oldfield 2008; Heller 2008; Benit-Gbaffou 2008a). The analysis of the ARP and ADF concurs with this conclusion, and extends the analysis by suggesting that the ANC's approach to participation as practiced through the ADF has strong elements of tyranny. However, the next three chapters have shown that labeling participatory processes as merely tyrannical

ignores the potential for people to influence the development process through their own agency. While available literature no doubt provides a starting point to help explain the South African government's dominant approach to participation in development, it is arguably short-sighted. Through sustained theoretical reflection and empirical analysis of the interface between local government and civil society over time, this thesis has confirmed that this approach to the study of participation in development does not adequately reflect how agents influence development processes. People are not passive pawns of top-down development schemes, but active agents who can transform development processes which may appear, initially, to have little chance at influencing these processes.

This has been illustrated by the six invented spaces discussed in this thesis which have had varying degrees of success at influencing the ARP's development practices in their favour. Each invented space attempted to engage the invited space, the ADF, as well as local government officials, but usually with only limited success. Some responded by challenging specific aspects of the ARP's programme in court, while the majority embarked on some form of direct action in order to put pressure on the government to meet their demands. When the ARP decided to build a bridge between Old Alexandra and the East Bank so that development could proceed, the people of S'swetla, with the support of the SACP, resisted the proposed removal of residents because they were being moved from one shack to another. This was a short-lived campaign centred on the particular concerns of the people directly affected by the construction of the bridge. For its part, the UDF has developed a more sustained engagement with the ARP based on a more fundamental challenge of a principal aspect of the ARP's plans. As a participatory space that has been active for approximately a year, it seeks to re-establish the waiting list system so that "old" residents of Alexandra could be prioritised for housing. While the outcome of their resistance did not reap positive gains, it still reflects that people are not passive pawns of a top-down system of governance.

ALPOA and the WCR have won partial victories in court. The WCR has been successful to the extent that it was provided with alternative accommodation in a transit (shack) camp, but continues to wait for more than two years for RDP houses. ALPOA has also won a court case which was intended to prevent the ARP from destroying

properties, but the outcome of this win in terms of the practice of the ARP is yet to be determined. The court may provide an alternative arena in which participatory spaces can have their interests addressed, but when it comes to practically implementing judiciary's decisions, it may be less useful since it has no direct access to resources and therefore must rely on the state to implement its decisions.

The resistance of people around the Iphuteng School Cluster was the "straw that broke the camel's back." After nearly a decade of resistance by new residents who have resisted being moved far away from Alexandra from places such as London Road and the Jukskei River, the resistance from the people of Iphuteng was the final episode that led to the change in the ARP's policy of evictions. Since 2005, the ARP no longer moves people far away from Alexandra when there is a specified plan for their area which requires their displacement, but instead relocates them to areas around Alexandra, where they are close to their jobs, schools for their children, and social networks. Finally, the AVCC has reshaped the practice of the ARP through the occupation of RDP houses. This occurred despite the ARP's policy which excluded their constituency from being provided with immediate accommodation.

In response to the failure of the government's mechanisms to obtain their participation, the residents of Alexandra have created a culture of resistance against top-down development interventions, which remains embedded probably because of the strong history of struggle against apartheid that made Alexandra unique. Key changes in decision making, regarding policies or specific development interventions, do not occur in a black box and rarely are made without being contested. Rather, these decisions are negotiated by society over time. Because the act of decision making, by government officials or other authorities, is socially constructed, it can therefore be transformed by various agents along the political spectrum. This thesis reconfirms the salience of agency. It testifies to a people's desire and ability to control important aspects of their lives and, indeed, to some extent control their own destinies. As such, Alexandra is undeniably a very challenging place to implement a development project without the people themselves. Alexandra defies the assumption that the world is the way it is and cannot be changed.

There is, therefore, a serious need to understand the alternatives that exist to these institutional mechanisms and the extent to which they hold the possibility for bring about, and sustaining, transformation. Participation in Alexandra goes beyond the tyranny approach to participation in development since agents question, actively resist, and at times transform top-down processes of decision making into ones that are redefined from the bottom-up. In this view, Alexandra is a place of transformation and hope for a better world to come. It highlights a key aspect of the transformative approaches to participation, securing the participation of marginalised groups. However, a closer analysis of the literature on transformative approaches to participation when applied to this situation suggests limitations that these movements hold for reaching transformation since none of them seek to engage with immanent development, that is, development as an underlying process of social change.

9.3 Zero-Sum Agency

Each participatory space discussed in this thesis seeks to reprioritise, rather than redefine development. As a result, the underlying processes of social change are not engaged with by these spaces and the outcome of participation that alters state decision making is, in the end, "zero-sum". Participation is "zero-sum" when development is reprioritised from one individual or group to another but amounts to no net gain in the improvement of people's lives. When marginalised groups exercise their agency and thereby control resources provided by the state, this does not mean that participation will offer transformative results. Instead, confining participation in development to what is possible within the available local resources of the ARP may "obscure, and indeed sustain, broader macro level inequalities and injustice" (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 14). Arnstein's warning that, "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless" (1969: 224) is instructive here. She argues that, "It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo" (ibid).

In Alexandra, there are agents trying to pull development policy or practice in different directions. There is not one set of agents attempting to influence government

and there is no "good" or "bad" agency, so the structure must respond (albeit through the ADF) to various groups of agents. In other words, the government is caught between various agents who believe they have the prior claims or right to limited housing opportunities. Popular agency might influence political processes, but it doesn't necessarily mean that people's lives are improved overall. The organisations which create alternative sites of power represent the interests of specific constituencies and do not make a strong attempt to unify the people of Alexandra under a single alternative development banner, nor do they struggle for more resources from the government. Because there are multiple groups trying to achieve their objectives from a limited pool of resources, expressing agency by "pulling" resources in favor of one's own interests, effectively means "pushing" them away from another group.

This thesis deliberately moves beyond a romanticised vision of agency. It follows Cleaver who has argued that normative critiques which seek to understand the potential for participation in development tend to highlight "the transformation rather than the tyranny, the solidarity rather than the conflict, articulation rather than mutedness, the enablement of agency rather than the constraint of structure" (Cleaver 2004: 276). The analysis articulated throughout this thesis hopefully contributes to a more nuanced and perhaps more accurate depiction of the invented participatory spaces in Alexandra by highlighting the limitations of agency and the constraints of structure.

It argues that the case study approach and the ethnographic method are invaluable tools if one is seeking to understand the transformative potential of participatory processes. For those who advocate people's participation in development there are positive conclusions that may be drawn because the six invented participatory spaces represent examples in which those affected are not simply informed or co-opted into accepting development interventions that they believe are illegitimate or will affect their lives in a negative way. Analysing these movements individually, the main conclusion to be drawn is that they mobilise against development structures that, without their agency, would dictate development from the top-down.

The case study approach to the study of participation in development is imperative to understanding the broader implications and processes regarding the effect of participation on development. According to de Vaus, the case study:

> Provide[s] a much fuller, more complex undrstanding of the whole than would the perspective provided by any particular element in the case. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts (de Vaus 2001: 221).

When the larger political framework operating in Alexandra is taken into account, and when the outcome that these participatory processes have on residents as a whole is analysed, the picture changes. By employing a case study approach to the study of participation in development, one is able to see that participation in Alexandra primarily entails a battle over limited resources that results in a "zero-sum" delivery of housing. Although action in an invented participatory space may influence the government to provide houses, this influence has had the effect of excluding others from accessing the housing opportunities from the government.

For example, because the people of S'swetla are currently waiting and negotiating for the same housing opportunities as the people of Wynberg, they have noted that a gain by one of these groups means a loss for another. Similarly, the people of Iphuteng have accessed RDP houses, but this has been at the expense of the S'swetla and Wynberg people who complain that the Iphuteng people are occupying the houses that they are pressing for. The AVCC occupies those houses which are intended for the above groups. The UDF for its part is dissatisfied with the gains made by the Iphuteng people because their success is a consequence of the implementation of the block by block approach. The latter is now foundational to the overall programme in Alexandra and has resulted in the abandonment of the waiting list system, which prioritised older residents in the allocation of new houses. ALPOA also feels completely marginalised by the block by block development because old properties are being demolished and properties owners are being offered a small RDP house as a replacement.

The change in policy that results from the agency of new residents cannot only be seen as a victory. As shown in the last chapters, the relationship between agency and structure is intimately linked, but one must go beyond this to show how agency from one group can lead to the exclusion of others. This means that the constitution of development that results from agency in invented participatory spaces becomes about the

push and pull of the limited resources provided by the ARP. This suggests that the case study approach to understanding participation in development is necessary if one is to understand the broader implications that policy changes have for the reconfiguration of local power.

In a way, each invented space analysed gives their consent to the limited resources offered by the ARP. The example of development on the ARP shows that even if every decision made is decentralised to the local community and then determined by particular aspects of it, this is inadequate to achieve any substantial transformation. The structural conditions that bind the people of Alexandra into poverty and exclusion are still maintained and will continue for years to come, despite the ARP flagship national project undertaken by the South African government. Decentralising decision making and creating the conditions under which people are able to influence development decisions, does not (on its own) improve people's lives, or lift them out of poverty.

This pushing and pulling is occurring because the structural conditions, the status quo of the ANC's neoliberal policies in which the ARP implements development, is not engaged with by any of these participatory spaces. In other words, these movements engage only with specific or technical interventions rather than the underlying process of social change which Hickey and Mohan (2004) argue is critical for any participatory project to be successful.

The literature on participation in development does not go far enough to address how ethnography can be a useful approach to understanding participation in development. Bebbington has merely touched on its significance by suggesting that:

> ethnographic engagement with participation in practice can… throw light on how surprises emerge, on how personal transformations occur, and on how people matter to the course taken by participatory interventions (2004: 281).

Ethnography involves the "in-depth study of the culture of a people, group, or community" (Sluka and Robben 2007: 4). The Ethnographic approach to the study of participation in development is useful because it enables one to understand what these movements are fighting for and the meanings they ascribe to their actions. How else do we know whether people in these movements seek to challenge neoliberalism, perhaps

the primary indicator of a transformative participatory project outlined by Hickey and Mohan (2004)?

The ethnographic approach has uncovered that the six invented participatory spaces do not seek to dismantle the current system of development, nor do they attempt to create a new one. Rather, their agency is "constrained" (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 168) within the ANC's neoliberal policies. The APF affiliates, the WCR and AVCC, given their attachment to wider political project and its intention to engage with development as an underlying process of social change might be expected to offer an alternative to neoliberalism. Through uncovering their belief system and culture, however, chapter six concluded that the WCR and AVCC were challenging corruption at a local level.

This leads back to Freire's notion of "conscientization" (1972). "Conscientization" occurs when agents reflect on how the structures of society serve to oppress them and embark on a programme of mass action in order to destroy these structures and to create the conditions in which the masses can control their own destinies. For Gramsci, "organic intellectuals" were imperative to spark this kind of movement within the working class. These intellectuals needed to be fully embedded in the culture and language of a community. According to McLaren and Fischman, the "organic intellectual," "took a collective character within the working-class social formation in which the role of theory was organically linked with the ebb and flow of daily proletarian life" (2005: 428). They could enable the working class to go beyond expressing resistance in order to meet people's immediate needs, and towards creating a new hegemonic structure based on the perspectives of the working class. In other words, from the standpoint of Hickey and Mohan (2004), they would enable the working class to engage with immanent development, rather than only imminent.

The extent to which activists in Alexandra can be described as "organic intellectuals" is questionable. On the one hand, key activists mobilise other residents to resist plans that have been imposed onto the working class. On the other, they do not appear to advance a structural critique of the hegemonic development project in Alexandra and in post-apartheid South Africa more broadly. Instead of critiquing the ANC's hegemonic framework and seeking to understand how the capitalist structure in society enables Sandton to remain "a city of gold", while Alexandra remains "a township

of coal" (Bond 2000), members of the working class in Alexandra seek the limited resources that the ANC offers through neoliberal policies which maintain a state of poverty in places like Alexandra. In other words, the "common sense" of development is that which can occur within the ANC's neoliberal confines. The structural factors that guide social change appear to be hidden from the "cultural participants", in this case the working class agents who struggle at the grassroots. They do not understand themselves as victims of the structures in society.

When the APF, SACP, SANCO, ALPOA and UDF make claims of corruption or that the ARP is ANC dominated and not listening to the demands of the people, they suggest a reprioritisation of housing opportunities, rather than a complete overhaul of the market-driven housing policies that is necessary to create transformative results. While the APF and SACP's ideologies are clearly based on socialist principles at face value, their local practices do not reflect these same principles. They do not challenge the basic assumptions that underpin development practices in relation to housing. Without an understanding of the structural characteristics of capitalism, these participatory spaces are "trapped within the dominant ideological discourse rather than aimed at disarticulating that frame and rearticulating our own transformed socialist frame" (Allman 1988 in Ledwith 2001: 177).

As a result, the agency of the residents of Alexandra is captured by the ARP. In a way, the participatory spaces in Alexandra give their active consent to the ANC's development trajectory and lend it legitimacy by seeking to reprioritise resources rather than offer an alternative. When the ARP concedes to the demands of a particular constituency, it re-manages the resources available. The "common sense" of development is what can happen within the limited confines of the ARP and is confined to the local which does not have the power to heed to the varying demands of the residents of Alexandra.

Because the local government is closest to citizens, it is the sphere of government that is supposed to implement service delivery and enable the community to participate in decision-making. The emphasis on the local as the site for giving power to citizens in the context of South Africa, may be somewhat misplaced. Parnell and Pieterse may therefore misconstrue what is possible in reality when they suggest that, "Local government holds

the promise of being the crucial sphere of state action to extend democracy to all South Africans and to change the traditional relations of power and wealth" (2002: 83). The case study of Alexandra has shown that the local level does not have the power to meet the interests of those who are demanding resources from the government. It is in this respect that Trevor Ngwane, then a local councillor for the ANC, pointed out in 1998 that people come knocking at his door and ask for housing and employment opportunities, but that he does not make the "big" decisions which determine whether he can provide this (in Ruiters and Bond 1996). Clearly, people's participation must go beyond the local if it is to address the crisis of unemployment and housing that analysts such as Bond (2000; 2001) claim that South Africa is faced with. Despite the great participation of the residents of Alexandra and all the opposition that the ARP has been faced with, Alexandra still has the face of the congested and poor township that it was prior to the ARP's intervention, and Julian Baskin has suggested that "Renewal in Alex will take a lifetime" (in Dlamini 2005). Development has not been transformed and the invented participatory spaces in Alexandra appear to hold little possibility of doing so anytime in the near future. However, these structural constraints hide the possibility that one particular invented space holds for transformative participation if harnessed more carefully.

9.4 NVDA for Transformation?

Radical scholars have aimed to uncover participation's "potential to transform the power relations that underpin exclusion and subordination" (Hickey and Mohan 2004a: 21). Specifically, they have indicated that for participation to hold the potential for achieving transformation, it must be part of a radical political project which functions on the basis of promoting citizenship (Hickey and Mohan 2004). The underlying argument of this section is that conceptualising popular agency in terms of the philosophy of NVDA is useful and should be given greater attention in the radical literature on participation in development because of how it conceptualises power and citizenship. The philosophy and practice of NVDA provides "alternative ways of conceptualizing the ways in which

popular agency is legitimately conferred to higher level agents" (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 20).

This section focuses on one specific invented participatory space that distinguishes itself from the others by the way in which it adopts tactics of NVDA to achieve its objectives. It provides the most proactive and sustained engagement with the government on its own terms. As shown above, not all forms of action undertaken by agents hold a strong possibility of transforming development. Critiquing participatory spaces from the perspective of NVDA helps one further understand how these spaces may hold transformative possibilities if harnessed to engage the structural elements of the government's development trajectory.

Radical theorists such as Miraftab and Wills have suggested the need to move beyond "the selective definition of what constitutes civil society and public participation" (2005: 200). In doing so, they have underlined "the significance of invited and invented spaces of citizen participation in the formation of inclusive citizenship and just cities" (ibid). Rather than stigmatising agency that falls outside of the parameters of the government, they argue that it should be legitimised as an active form of citizenship. Hickey and Mohan have also cogently argued that for participation to have transformative potential, "citizenship is not being requested from a proscribed menu of rights and obligations, but actively defined and claimed on the basis of political capabilities" (2004: 169).

In a similar vein, NVDA is underpinned by an active notion of citizenship defined from below, which seeks to directly challenge power relations. The theory and practice of NVDA adds to the above theorists contributions because it addresses the specific modes through which citizens may express their power – that is, through active disobedience. Referring to the logic behind NVDA, Irwin and Faison point out that:

> …rather than seeing power as something possessed, it argues that power is a dynamic social relation. Power depends on continuing obedience. When people refuse to obey rulers, the rulers' power begins to crumble (1978: 9).

For Mahatma Ghandi, arguably the pioneer of the philosophy of NVDA, engagement with authorities was based on the premise that citizens had the capacity and ability to

employ power over decision-making processes that affect their lives. Elaborating on Gandhi's approach to power and social change, Sharpe argues that, "if the maintenance of an unjust or non-democratic regime depends on the cooperation, submission and obedience of the populace, then the means of changing or abolishing it lies in the non-cooperation, defiance and disobedience of that populace" (Sharpe 1973: 84). NVDA depends on an active notion of citizenship which is intended to define development processes and outcomes on the terms of those engaging authority. NVDA therefore "does not rely on the good will of the opponent but instead is designed to work in the face of determined opposition or violent repression" (Irwin and Faison 1978: 3).

In the context of the Xenophobic violence that initially broke out in Alexandra on 11 May 2008, this approach to participation in development may be particularly useful in providing an understanding of the transformative potential of invented spaces. To the extent that invented spaces employ NVDA to put pressure on the government (authorities) to meet their demands, they represent an alternative to violence as a means to express frustration against a government that is slow to deliver houses to the people of Alexandra. This resistance is intended to disrupt the normal operations of government authorities, so that they can no longer implement their policies without addressing those directly affected. By not conforming to their rules, it puts pressure on the government to change their policies in order to meet the demands of the masses.

The WCR, the SACP, SANCO, the UDF, and the AVCC have all embarked on direct action in order to meet their demands. Some are more successful than others as a result of the leverage that they gain over authorities. In the case of the WCR, SACP and SANCO, the initial use of direct action was effective after failed negotiations with authorities because their unwillingness to move and their strength in numbers made it virtually impossible for removals to take place without some kind of drastic force. The power lay in their own physical presence which was fueled by an inner desire to remain in the places that they lived unless they were offered a satisfactory alternative. SANCO is a peculiar case here because, while they did not win the court case against the ARP regarding where they should be moved, the MEC made a decision that it was no longer sustainable to continue moving people far away from Alexandra and the people of Iphuteng were given RDP houses around Alexandra and thus stopped mobilising. The

SACP and the WCR, under different circumstances, made an agreement with authorities regarding where they would be moved. In both cases, when this happened, authorities were able to break promises and ignore the demands of the WCR and SACP in negoitions since they had moved out of their homes thus giving up their power. On the other hand, the UDF, while it has mobilised and marched to council offices in numbers, they have not effectively gone beyond negotiating and the UDF therefore has never gained leverage over the government.

When the above non-institutional participatory spaces have attempted to negotiate, or have marched to have their interests addressed by the government, they have been ignored in every instance. This is because their demands fall back into the parameters of the government's invited space of participation which has already determined which demands can be met. It is only when agents are able to exert their power on their own terms, and thus through "force," that they are able to have an influence over the practices and policies of the ARP.

This is where the AVCC distinguishes itself from other participatory spaces in Alexandra. The AVCC has yet to give up its power. The AVCC's occupation of houses is a strategy of sustained interactions with authorities that can force, through direct action, the ARP to allocate them resources on their own terms. While the ARP maintains that this is an illegal occupation and that members of the AVCC are "stealing" houses from other people, Fredah Dlamini (the chairperson of the AVCC), responds that, "we know what we are doing is illegal, but we have no other choice" (interview, Dlamini 2008). This points to how the AVCC is meeting its demands not within the terms of the ANC as they are expected to, but on its own terms.

The limitations posed to all these participatory spaces which attempt to negotiate on the ARP's terms (as well as the decidedly centralised character of the ANC) and the relative success of the AVCC, points to an important theme which has great potential for transformation, but which has received virtually no attention in the academic literature on participation in development. This theme is the philosophy and practice of NVDA most notably associated with the work of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa and India and later developed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States.

In a way, the AVCC's occupation of houses offers a non-institutional means by which to impose development from the perspective of the working class, not from that of the ANC which operates within neoliberal confines. The working class defines their own rules of the game, rather than claiming resources which the government has to offer. The AVCC's occupation of houses involves a "direct and immediate challenge" (Irwin and Faison 1978: 3) to authority. Like sit-ins, and "obstructions of "business as usual" in offices, the streets or elsewhere," the occupation of houses by the AVCC involves the "active insertion and disruptive presence of people in the usual processes of social institutions" (ibid).

King developed Gandhi's thinking in order to delineate a programme of non-violent direct action, in which the masses mobilise in large numbers and embark on a process of "passive" resistance in order to force structural transformation in society. King is particularly useful in understanding the South African context given the parallels that can be drawn between the aftermath of the civil rights movement in the U.S. and the struggle against apartheid. King came to realise, in his last three years before he was assassinated, that there was a need to radically restructure the economy (Moses 1997). He came to see that political progress for the "negro" was not enough if they did not gain economic power. The only way to take obtain power, King thought, was through structural transformation. For King, "we shall overcome" meant that… "we shall confront structures of oppression with our bodies, and we shall overcome injustice. In other words, it signifies the process of seeking out justice through action" (ibid: 150).

For both King and Gandhi, "targets were strategically chosen in consideration of revolutionary structural change" (Moses 1997: 149). The critique of the AVCC is again that it does not adequately connect its actions within a framework of systemic change and therefore also offers no concrete alternative to the ARP's housing policies. However, in the context of the failure of invited spaces of the government to provide adequate channels through which citizens can express their creative energies in order to define development, the AVCC plants the seeds for a radical alternative to participation by offering a way for the working class to force the government to heed to the demands of the working class on their own terms within a framework of NVDA.

9.5 Conclusion

Both invited and invented participatory spaces in Alexandra clearly have significant limitations, particularly their lack of engagement with immanent development which theorists (Hickey and Mohan 2004) have argued is an essential component of any transformative project. However, the potential that these spaces in Alexandra have for achieving transformation is something that has, and will continue to, evolve over time as power relations are reshaped in unpredictable ways in post-apartheid South Africa. This thesis highlighted the fractured nature of participatory spaces which leads poor residents to compete with each other over scarce resources, instead of contesting the neoliberal framework which determines this scarcity. Nevertheless, those engaging in direct action in order to meet their demands on their own terms may help guide the South African masses on the path towards achieving the kind of transformative project that was undertaken during apartheid under the notion of "people's power", which arguably prompted the apartheid government to negotiate itself out of power. The agency in Alexandra suggests that unifying the power of these spaces, which have tended to exert their power independently from each other, could lead towards more transformative results.

The potential of these spaces also clearly goes beyond what possibilities they bring to Alexandra for transforming the ARP. It is important not to lose sight of the profound influence that struggles can have in creating and sustaining other struggles at unknown times and places. Alexandra provides a powerful example to highlight the failure of top-down development schemes to pacify and contain people within them. These invented spaces, which have emerged from people's own frustrations and creativity, are clearly where a transformative project must be located. They bring into sharp relief the power of those who may seem powerless to resist government plans that exclude them and this thesis testifies to this power and provides one with faith in the agent's ability to resist and potentially transform power structures of decisions making which were once primarily fueled with tyranny.

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Mathews, Milly. 2006. Resident of Alexandra: 1 August
Matshayana, Abner. 2007. AVCC Member, Alexandra: 31 October

Matu, Adednego. 2006. Alexandra Resident, Alexandra: 21 July
Mayekiso, Mzonke. 2008. Secretary of the SACP, Alexandra: 3 February
Mbingeleli, Monde. 2006. Chairperson of the SACP, Wynberg, 26 October
Mbingeleli, Monde. 2007. Chairperson of the SACP, Region E, Sandton: 14 August
McKinley, Dale. 2008. APF Leader, Johannesburg: 5 June
Mekgoe, Dunia. 2006. Secretary of the WCR, Wynberg: 8 May
Memela, Linda. 2004. Secretary of the ADF, Alexandra: 9 October
Memela, Linda. 2007. Secretary of the ADF, Alexandra: 8 June
Mgwena, Walter. 2006. Resident of Alexandra: 1 August
Mkhabela, Brian. 2006. Resident of Alexandra, Alexandra: 1 August
Moagi, Sinah. 2006. Resident of Alexandra, Alexandra: 22 August
Moleya, Cane. 2006. Member of MCR, Marlboro: 20 May
Monarang, Maromo 2006. Member of MCR, Marlboro: 20 May
Mopasi, Thabo. 2006. Alexandra Education Chair, Alexandra: 21 July
Morkel, Mike. 2006. ARP Technical Consultant, Rosebank: 5 May
Msimang, Nhlanhla. 2006. Executive Member of the ADF, Wynberg: 19 September
Mwela, Mabandla. 2007. CLO for the ARP, Alexandra: 21 July
Ngalungulu, Justice. 2007. ANC Councillor, Wynberg: 16 August
Ngobeni, Dennis. 2006. Resident of Alexandra, Alexandra: 16 August
Ngubane, Daisy. 2006. Resident of Alexandra, Alexandra: 17 May
Ngwenya, Gabriel. 2006. Secretary of SANCO, East Bank: 9 September
Ngwenya, Gabriel. 2008. Secretary of SANCO, East Bank: 15 February
Ngwenya, S'piwe. 2006. Resident of Alexandra, Johannesburg: 8 July
Nkosi, Sizakele. 2007. ANC Councillor, Braamfontein: 22 August
Nldovu, Ernest 2007. ANC Councillor, Johannesburg: 7 August
Noge, Simon. 2007. Executive Member of ALPOA, Alexandra: 21 February
Radebe, Sam. 2006. Alexandra Resident, Alexandra: 8 September
Ramabulana, Tebogo. 2006. Resident of Alexandra, Alexandra: 1 August 2006
Rasetelo, Ali. 2008. Leader in S'swetla, Wynberg: 6 June
Sebetola, Frank. 2006. Member of MCR, Marlboro: 20 May
Segale, Brian. 2006. Resident of Alexandra, Alexandra: 1 August

Segopa, Jackie. 2007. Secretary of ALPOA, Alexandra: 21 February
Segopa, Jackie. 2008. Secretary of ALPOA, Alexandra: 7 February
Sibanda, Raymond. 2006. CLO for the ARP, Alexandra: 17 May
Thomu, Eric. 2004. Resident of Bramfischerville, Bramfischerville: 8 November
Uchebe, Mahlatini. 2008. Chairperson of SANCO, Alexandra: 6 June
Vilakazi, Reggie. 2006. SANCO Representative, Alexandra: 19 September
Vilakazi, Reggie. 2008. SANCO Representative, Alexandra: 15 February
Zulu, Issac. 2006 Resident of Alexandra, Alexandra: 4 August